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UNIVERSALIZATION AND VIRTUALIZATION OF THE MARKET ECONOMY, FINANCIAL AND REAL ECONOMY AND THE CONCEPT OF GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT²

ABSTRACT. Progress of knowledge has never occurred as quickly as in the twentieth century which has also led to changes in human civilization itself, the transformation of civilization in its informatization and virtualization. These two processes, closely connected and mutually dependent, have given human society special features so that the society, on the basis of these very features, has begun to identify with a special phase in its development just as it has begun to denote itself as an information and virtual society. The Author points to the developing nature of this type of society and thus to the realization of its basic traits. It as a society whose social-economic matrix is made up of neoliberal capitalism while its theoretical-cognitive matrix is made up of the postmodern. That is why it comprises in itself an affinity for efficiency and maximization of profit which is decisive for all the forms of social organization it embraces, while Truth, Goodness, Beauty and Justice do not function in it as understandable per se.

KEY WORDS: progress, development, virtualization, neoliberal capitalism.

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1. Economic activity of man is as old as man himself as a creative and value-oriented being. In this long history of man and of his economic activity, it has developed within particular systems having their own specific attributes. And, as man has developed and increasingly taken on more, the characteristics of both a self-conscious, creative and value-oriented being, economic systems have also developed in accordance with natural and social possibilities under given historical circumstances (Опщја економическа теорија, 1995, pp. 5-20). In the context of such a historical development, in the transition from the natural to the market economy, capitalism also emerged as a system based on private property, a commodity based character of the work force and market competition with an economic, political and value system conditioned by social and state organization in particular. This was a very dynamic economic system which associated and developed social thought, influencing it in accordance with the objectives whose realization was aspired to under given natural and social conditions (Marković, 2012, pp. 135-156). In the course of this historical development alongside overgrowing (transformation) of the natural into commodity production capitalism also arose with its respective economic, political and value system.

The development and expansion of a market economy – even in its developed phase thus leading to its universalization – led to networking of national economies into a global one accompanied by increasing and concentrated capital. This pointed to internationalist and mondialist tendencies in its development which increased in intensity not earlier than the second half of the last (twentieth) century with globalization when particular social relations took on a more all-inclusive and world character regardless of all geographic, national, race, religious barriers (M. Marković, 1999, p. 71). In this way, a special phase in the evolutionary development of capitalism came into being³. In this phase capitalism has taken on a global character and, more precisely, entered into the phase of neoliberal capitalism.

In fact, due to the process of globalization, as a planetary process, contemporary society takes on the characteristics of a global neoliberal capitalist society with private property (as a dominant

³ More in the author's monograph *Sociologija i globalizacija (Sociology and Globalization)*, Belgrade, Centar za obrazovanje rukovodilaca u obrazovanju, 1999. The monograph is also published in Russian entitled *Социология и глобализация*, изд-во МНЭПУ, Moscow, 2002

form of property), market economy, (competition) and profit-orientation, that is, the aspiration to realize (and accumulate) ever larger sums of money (Marković, 2008b, pp. 41–51). In such a society there is a basic controversy manifested in the collision between the principle of profit (which is the very basis of every capitalism, of any level, of any stage of development) and the principle of humanism that the most outstanding minds of mankind advocated for and were committed to (Đorđević, 2006, p. 69). In the context of this approach it is necessary, from the standpoint of the methodology of scientific investigation, to critically study the social reality of global neoliberal capitalism while pointing to the need (as well as the necessity) to make man, in the process of social development, not only an initiator of these changes but also the one to take a central position in this. Yet such a man should not be just anybody but a man who comprises variety in terms of traditions from the different parts of the world, with their own attributes and identities (Волков, 1985, p. 128). In directing societal development with so defined position of man, an important function is allotted to the scientific approach in this study in particular evolutionary phases of the development of capitalism including the phase of its development which is denoted as global capitalism with cognitive-theoretical basis of postmodernism. Within this framework it is necessary to re-consider and be sensitive to the role of science and scientist. The scientist should not be understood as a wise man who knows something which is otherwise inaccessible to a common mortal man or as a “living library” that safeguards past achievements. The scientist should be understood as an explorer of the conscious context of knowledge and the reality challenges in the quest for new insights and as a tireless worker searching for new answers to the questions posed by the current and, as a rule, swiftly changing social reality (Камутанов, 1996, p. 210).

2. The considerations about the real and the financial capital in the conditions of neoliberal society of universalization of market economic activity and its virtualization and – in that context, the realization of the concept of global sustainable development – should be, in the theoretical and methodological sense, based on the scientific knowledge about the changes in the contents and character of human labor. Namely, these are the changes that are cumulatively expressed as scientific-technical progress which leads us – just as it enables - informatization and virtualization of not only economic activities but also, in a way, of overall social life

(Marković, 2007, pp. 14-24). In the context of these considerations, the exploration and guidance of the social changes and relations should provide for man as a free creator becoming a pillar of all the changes in his identity and human dignity. Both guidance and realization of social changes, understood in the above-defined direction, should enable the achievement of wide social frameworks which provide for the realization of the process of territorial manifestation of man's human considerations, even in the conditions of neoliberal global capitalism by developing the social community towards perfected democracy equipped with a system of ethics and achievement of justice (Kennedy, 1997, p. 372).

Discussion of the community with above-stated characteristics is inseparable from the scientific study of globalization as a phase in the development of capitalism and the tendencies of global society as well as possible endangerment to global society unity by the processes of the given tendencies. This consideration stems from the fact that due to globalization mankind was undergoing fast transformation, into a unique whole whose parts are either colliding or blending which is transmitted from one end of the world to the other and thus is a source of danger or confidence. The collisions in parts or among parts of society have their roots in social networks (relations) determined by particular social and economic relations in the historical development of capitalism as a social system whose essence was expressed in private property, market economy and individualism, considered and reconsidered in a variety of theoretical orientations. In this context globalization is defined as a multi-faceted social process of establishment of universal connections (including nature/societal relations) embracing practically all aspects of social life, from the economic to spiritual sphere, including culture, education, language, ideology, values that in their all-inclusiveness represent the basic attributes of global civilization so that the society manifests itself as a global "world society"⁴.

The basis for such a global system does not only consist of further expansion of the market economy, but also, in a way, of its

⁴ More in the author's paper, "Univerzalizacija tržišne privrede i njen uticaj na odnose u Evropskoj Uniji" ("Universalization of the Market Economy and its Influence upon the Relations in the European Union"), in Anthology of papers *Izazovi globalizacije i društveno-ekonomsko okruženje na ekonomsko-ekološko okolje EU (Challenges of Globalization and Socio-Economic Environment on the Economic-Ecological Environment of the EU)*, Novo Mesto, 2012

universalization with accompanying social aftermaths (Marković, 2008a) whose totality signifies global economy having, as its content, contemporary global capitalism which represents particular appropriation of the planet by transnational corporations of the developed capitalist states, a reduced activity of nation-states, widely spread mass culture and thus far achieved unity of the information space as a social reality (Бабаков, Иванов, Свечников, Челинский, 2003). Thus understood global society as global capitalism has, as its social-economic component, global neoliberal capitalism while, as its theoretical-cognitive one, postmodernism (Marković, 2013). That is why it is not a united society in the sense of the existence of one planet-wide civilization but it is one which comprises in itself many unique civilizations as a consequence of expressing different forms of family relations and social institutions which are grouped according to different criteria and yet mutually collude (Жуков, 1996). In that sense, it is concluded that the contemporary world as a united social global reality is not only united but also disunited in terms of expressed numerous differences regarding the technological basis of labor and economic development which also represents, different positions under the conditions of the market economy thus inducing many conflicts, especially those between unique civilizations (Baburin, 2007). With globalization and the creation of a “world society”, comes the generation of a global system, a new information-technical, economic-ecological, scientific-technological and socio-cultural reality with specific structures and processes (Чумаков, 2008, pp. 158–166). This system has its own autonomy and it spreads in the complex world-economic and international relations while at the same time undergoing changes according to the standards of changes of the natural and social environment of man, thus creating material and spiritual culture and forming individual-personal interests and values as well as different objectives of development (Григорьев, 2006, p. 60–61). This system creates different directions of the interrelations among its parts, especially among different unique civilizations and aspires to realize some forms of globalism regardless of pluralism of civilizations and multi-polarity of the contemporary world (ЛексбИН, 2007, p. 57). In contemporary society, in this sense, the modern world is revealing itself to be at the crossroads of centuries and historical epochs. Western modernism which ends its half-millennium journey in an already despised postmodernism is one thing. Quite another is a newly-eastern

epoch of world history which, in a way, marks new social and spiritual values, with their foundations rooted in the tradition of primarily great Eastern cultures; this division is its alternative (Kuljanin, 2013, p. 25).

3. Globalization leads to the formation of global society and, in the conditions of neoliberalism, the market system becomes, in its own way, a universal world model of development (Primakov, 2010, pp. 11-12); yet, at the same time, certain changes take place in its ideology (free market and full individuality), especially in the understanding of liberalism which has, while dissipating its essence, revealed its nihilist basis. In other words, while realizing its liberating strategy, it could not avoid suggestions of accompanying liberation from all forms of collective identity such as nation, religious confession and, in a way, human status itself. In fact, in this way liberalism has expressed its nihilism, meaning its demand for liberation from the world has expressed itself in the liberation of man from his own self, his own essence. Such an approach also assumes de-valuation of the past disregarding the fact that every civilization (especially a unique one) represents a historical-anthropological socio-cultural and historical type of social organization with culture as its own determinant with its spatial component. That is why universalization of market economy practice does not lead to unification of the forms of social organization. That is why the world in which we live – and in which a great extent of universalization of the market economy is being and has been realized – is multi-polar, with many unique civilizations, while human society has never been or will ever be uniform (Bova, 1999, p. 168).

Opinions about plurality of unique civilizations and their acceptance as the basis for accepting other views about the existence of a multi-polar world are based upon the understanding of the essence of man as a creative and free being – a creator – homo sapiens. The very differences of culture (as substratum) of unique civilizations is a faithful expression of man as a creator (Mayor, 1996, p. 70). That is why each nation safeguards and builds its culture with its own activities by taking over the universal achievements of mankind composed of people as creators. Yet, the safeguarding of one's own culture should not imply its closure for the achievements the society has made in its development. The adoption of these achievements should not be thoughtless duplication and endangerment of one's own integrity. This is pointed out by those views

which claim that, in the 21st century, one of the key problems will be safeguarding of differences from cultural uniformity (Mayor, 1996, p. 70). That is why in the scientific study of globalization and in the encounters of the civilizations involved, special care should be devoted to the problems arising from these very encounters which refer to the safeguarding of cultural self-definition and diversity⁵.

However, the twentieth century was not only that of reviving of nations and their molding into special entities as well as that of their states into special entities among which there are all sorts of interests that induce them to conflicts. These conflicts take on different forms and intensities, especially in its last decades, when capitalism assumes the character of global capitalism with the theoretical-cognitive component of globalization of the postmodern and, along with the postmodern, of an all-increasing differentiation of freedom and equality and unfolding of the process of virtualization of economic life. This process of virtualization is intertwined with the process of globalization, that is to say, with the emergence and spreading of global capitalism; in that context, relations are formed between financial and real capital with significant changes not only in global capitalism but in social life in general, to such an extent that not only virtualization of capital is talked about, but a virtual society as well.

4. Informatization and virtualization are two closely connected processes to the extent that their interrelatedness has taken on such dimensions that it can be considered as interpenetrating, while they monitor cardinal changes in the society which create such distinctiveness that the society is understood as a particular totality. Interrelatedness and conditionality of these changes is also such that the society, in its global framework, can be marked with particular characteristics which allows the phase in social development to be called an "information society"⁶. The basic char-

⁵ The author has written of some aspects of these encounters in the paper entitled "Встреча цивилизаций и культурная самобитность" ("Meetings of Civilizations and Cultural Self-Determination") in the Anthology *Диалог цивилизаций восток-запад* (*Dialogue of civilizations East-West*), 1995, Moscow, p. 14-16

⁶ More in Л.Д. Еляков, *Современное информационное общество* (*Contemporary Information Society*), Moscow, «Высшее образование в России» („Higher Education in Russia“), 4/2001 and В.И. Соколова, "Социологические проблемы информатизации современного общества" ("Sociological Problems of Contemporary Information Society"), *Ученые записки МГСУ*, 5/2003, Moscow

acteristics of this phase in the development of society, defined as an information society, are determined as: information (and knowledge as an important factor as well as a driving force of the social-economic, scientific and technological development); rapid growth of all sorts of knowledge and information dissemination; a developed information infrastructure which creates the decisive conditions of regional competitiveness and capacities; development and activities in all spheres of operation of the new information-communication technologies which change the models of education, labor and social life (Мазур, Чумаков, 2003, p. 389). In understanding and approaching the importance of the listed characteristics and their impacts, the starting point is the conceptual definition and explanation of information – as the basic product of information society – which cannot be identified with knowledge; yet, likewise, in order to understand information and its role in the contemporary epoch of human society, it should be differentiated from statement, interpretation and communication as well. The statement is a product of intellectual activities that is transferable. Interpretation is acquired knowledge. Communication is a transfer operation which, in contemporary society, becomes a defining link in the given triad (statement – communication – interpretation). The huge technical, economic, political and cultural role of information is explained by the fact that it is neither “knowledge” nor a “product” but, rather, an operation. That is why it is, as an explanation and justification of mans actions, indispensable to modern man, just as it represents a value for him and an ideal in contemporary society (ИВАНОВ, 2002, pp. 11-12, 13-15). Information as a feature of communication – not as a feature of knowledge or an object – is capable of producing new transactions. That is why information is not so much a resource as it is a stimulation of activities while the major phenomenon of the computer revolution is the Internet, (rather than electronic databases and artificial intellect) whose global network is not creating any knowledge, but rather, the possibilities of communication are increased manifold.

Communication represents an operation for establishing a relationship to the one conveying it. The relationship assumes that the interpreter always creates a positive or negative image about the person conveying it, while the existence of adequate knowledge in all this is not necessary. In this way, the power of modern business, politicians, scientists, artists, etc., is not knowledge or transmission

of knowledge, but in communication as the creation of attractive images. In this context another assumption is to be understood, that in a society where, in terms of human activities and of human relationships, images are more important than real actions and things, the information technologies development must be oriented towards data collecting and processing with the aim of all-inclusive knowledge of characteristics and future behavior of objects. In this way communication as image-production in contemporary society has a decisive role to play (ИВАНОВ, 2002, pp. 11-12, 13-15).

With the development of information society and communication as an image-production process, all economic actors, from production to payable demand are virtualized. Mass production fills the market with an immense quantity of quality-same products. Under such circumstances a problem arises for the developed economy—of transforming production objects into consumption ones. For the consumer, this problem transforms into one of making a choice from a variety of models of trademarks whose task is to express, on the given objects, their features. This problem is solved by ensuring the offer through advertising. Advertising creates an image of goods and company. It is exactly this image rather than real objects that are circulating on the postmodern market. The physical object of advertisement stops being the one which is marked and becomes “the one which is marking” with respect to the advertised image. The social status of the trademark determines the price of a given object instead of its real features assumed in the quantity of work invested in its production (ИВАНОВ, 2002, pp. 11-12, 13-15). In these conditions advertising ensures offers. Advertisements create an image of goods or companies instead of the objects that are in circulation. The economic process shifts from production to the marketing consulting office, advertising agency or media studio. An image is produced rather than an object. This process is accompanied with various effects from the cost structure to the changes in the social structure and employment regarding the sectors of economic activity. This causes, in the virtual reality, advertisement figures, that is, creation of a modal series of products which are functionally alike yet differ in terms of the details providing for advertising images and increasing demand. Alongside the above-listed changes comes virtualization of companies. Virtualization of products assumes a new organization of work while new information-communication

technologies ensure organization of a workplace practically everywhere. The work organization in office as “defined by statutes” loses its economic contents while preserving its social importance; it does not disappear but it becomes simulacrum.

Alongside virtualization, autonomization of capital market occurs while speculation on the stock exchange represents trade with images which is taking on gigantic proportions. Within the work simulation, as a productive activity organized at a particular time in a particular space, an organized form emerges which has gained the title of virtual corporation. This is a temporary alliance of independent companies with the purpose of solving a strategic and individual task. This alliance has no vertical integration, official hierarchy and other attributes of a “real” company. It can easily disappear or change its configuration. However, in contemporary economy, virtual is not only production, i.e. supply, but demand as well. Virtualization has expanded to involve money as well. Money is no longer a material substitute for goods as is the right to a loan. The system of payment cards leads to the fact that, in a contemporary and increasingly globalized society, money is increasingly substituted with the possibility of money.

Virtual product, virtual production, virtual corporation and virtual money allow and encourage the transformation of computer networks not only into the major means but also into the ambience of economic activity. “Virtualization of economy causes commercialization of cyberspace in which complete transaction cycles are usually completed and in which virtual supermarkets and virtual banks that deal with their own currency function. The total sale volume over the internet, in 2000 reached 500 billion dollars (ИВАНОВ, 2002, p. 111). Global economy and virtualization are two interpenetrating components of the contemporary globalized society. Virtualization penetrates all the fields of social life, from economy through politics, knowledge and creativity to family relationships (love) and real life, political life (government), scientific activities (knowledge), etc.. In the contemporary (post-modern) epoch the basic components of political practice are simulated thus causing virtualization of choice, state and party⁷. That is why the political struggle takes on the form of images –

⁷ For developed democracy problem number one is political engagement, or, more exactly, interests in political programs and actions of politicians on the part of the citizenry having voting rights but neither ability nor desire to estimate programs and deeds of politicians and to make choices between them.

political images created by image-makers, the press and “stars” of show business recruited in the course of political campaigns⁸. Politics is being made in PR agencies, television studios and on concert stages. In fact, governing and politics, in the 20th century, separated from each other in the same way production and economy has, as virtualization of economic life took place⁹. Through the creation of attractive imagery contemporary political practice ensures success in the struggle for power. The social life is taking place in an epoch of politics of images and images of politics. In such circumstances the internet as a global computer network becomes a means of political activity. Political activities and campaigns are monitored by creating specialized servers and web-pages by means of which the image of a politician (action, organization) is created, as is communication with one’s supporters¹⁰.

Virtualization of scientific activity and knowledge means that science is no longer a truth-searching activity, but instead becomes a word game and competition in manipulating models of scientific discourses. In that sense two tendencies are symptomatic: material experiment is more often substituted for experiment upon models, verification of hypotheses is substituted by process of counterfeiting and the creation of alternative models serves as argument. “Science becomes a permanent process of building up alternative models. Due to this the role of imagination, fantasies, and paradoxical aspect of thought has increased and this within the sphere which they used to be anathematized and in which with reference to reality were the frameworks of any increase of knowledge strictly defined” (ИВАНОВ, 2002, p. 110–111). In fact, the object of science and its procedures are virtualized. Professionalization and institutionalization of science have both led to, a crisis of the old sort of

⁸ Election campaigns become advertisements - not political in the traditional sense while the key functions of their leaders are transmitted from politicians to experts of advertising industry. In this way political process has left behind sessions of party and government committees with their program-making, allotment of functions and monitoring of their execution.

⁹ The substitution of real political programs by acting with images of “new initiatives” and “radical reforms” created by advertisement is taking place. Such an approach also creates a certain image of a politician. Multi-party and parliamentarism are simulating (being no longer genuine) by being packaged by image-makers in a style favorable for competitions of political figures.

¹⁰ Thus an opportunity is created for communication between party functionaries and state employees by means of technology outside the forms of party organization and bureaucratic procedure.

knowledge legitimacy and the appeal for benefit and development of mankind is substituted by appeal for financial efficiency. Science does not find any criterion of truth in reproducing results and consensus with experts but through the support of sponsors, the state and various funds. Thus a singular separation of science from truth has come about. Science and increases in knowledge have taken separate paths as has economics and production, politics and government. This separation of science and increase of knowledge is expressed in academic status which becomes a function of image of competence which deserves to be financed. In the activities of scientists ever more time is devoted to the creation and presentation of the image which is necessary for success in the struggle for grant acquisition or orders for consulting services. An ever increasing number of conferences is organized for this purpose and so is the publishing of an increasing number of journals; thus, the participation in an ever increasing number of conferences and having as many articles published in journals as possible are means of defining academic status. However, the higher the quality of scientific work is determined by the number of publications rather than the veracity of results, the more the shift of evaluating scientific activities from qualitative criteria to quantitative ones is made and thus the respect for institutionalized norms which serve as orientation to researchers is done while the freedom of scientific search and progress of scientific knowledge are becoming virtual. The substitution of material objects and real procedures by simulacra, the social roles of scientists, lecturers and even students become virtual. In such a situation virtualization is also present in the hierarchy of scientific degrees and titles, of scientific debate and scientific division of labor; universities and research laboratories are also virtualized. Such virtualization of the institutional organization of science fosters the development of the internet of virtual scientific publications and conferences providing for a breakthrough of scientific theories, ideas and imperial data which are not recognized by academic community. This practice could be understood as compensatory not only for the deficit of scientific information but also for the deficit of social reality.

Considerations and knowledge about positive and negative aspects of virtualization of economic life and virtualization of knowledge can serve and should serve critical thinking in directing social (economic) development and scientific politics. Such an approach is also needed for taking into consideration the effect of

economic development and the overall set of social relations as well as virtualization of the way of life.

5. Progress of knowledge has never occurred as quickly as in the twentieth century (Mayor, 1996, p. 53) which has also led to changes in human civilization itself (Fohter, 1997, p. 48), the transformation of civilization in its informatization and virtualization. These two processes, closely connected and mutually dependent, have given human society special features so that the society, on the basis of these very features, has begun to identify with a special phase in its development just as it has begun to denote itself as an information and virtual society¹¹. Since a reference is made above concerning the basic traits of information society and its linkage to the virtual one, i.e. inter-relatedness and conditionality of their traits, it is now time to refer to the basic features of the virtual society, in view of the fact that this type of society is in its beginnings and in the formation phase of its basic traits. As we point to the developing nature of this type of society and thus to the realization of its basic traits, we consider it as a society whose social-economic matrix is made up of neoliberal capitalism while its theoretical-cognitive matrix is made up of the postmodern. That is why it comprises in itself an affinity for efficiency and maximization of profit which is decisive for all the forms of social organization it embraces, while Truth, Goodness, Beauty and Justice do not function in it as understandable per se (Tomić, 2008).

By evolutionary development of neoliberal capitalism through informatization and virtualization, especially through specific interpenetration of these processes, cardinal and significant changes are taking place in it. Those enabling the neoliberal phase in the development of capitalism take on the name of a “virtual phase” or even naming the whole phase as virtual capitalism whose basic traits we have made reference to. In a greater part of its history, capitalism has been deprived of its “human face”; it has always comprised this trait (Гей, 2008, p. 24), though it has, in some of its phases or parts of some phases, ensured some human rights and social stability. However, this loss of “human face” (as realization of social rights) had its specific characteristics determined by its basic one in this phase of development, so that the same is evident in the phase of its virtualization as well, that is, in virtual society.

¹¹ More in the author's paper “Naučno-tehnološki progres” (“Scientific-technical Progress, Informatization of Society and Virtualization of Social Life”), op. cit.

This is a society with a social-economic matrix of neoliberalism with a tendency to achieve economic efficiency and maximization of profit. This is a society which believes that the need for profit is the only key to success in the market economy, rather than motivation for general benefits (Sen, 2009, p. 65). Thus, with the oncoming of virtualization, instead of considering the relationships between (material) objects that are produced and that exist in reality, the images existing about them are considered; in the sphere of education the old knowledge legitimacy card is substituted by appeal for goodness and development of mankind as an appeal for financial efficiency (ИВАНОВ, 2002, p. 100-111).

The changes in the contemporary world, above all, virtualization of scientific sphere, restrain the social space in which science, as the basic development resource of human civilization and intellectualized human working creative activity, can prevent capitalism (neoliberal and virtual) from developing and realizing its global strategy of mankind development. The world is in crisis. For the individual globalism, together with the postmodernist concept, has destroyed a methodological approach to the development of the world civilization (Sol, 2009). That is why it is necessary to perform – in order to solve the contemporary world crisis that has penetrated philosophy as well as religion, politics and economic analysis – an in-depth analysis of not only economic sphere of life (ВИУЯНИН, 1997, p. 60-63) but also the relations that exist and should exist between science, ethics and politics for the sake of preserving the specific traits of human species through the power of its creativity and life on our planet (Mayor, F., 1996, p. 39). Such an approach would show that a crisis of civilization does not inevitably lead to its destruction; quite the contrary, it is possible to safeguard and develop it, but it is necessary to launch changes in all spheres of relations in society as well as attitudes towards the planet itself – the Earth – since the future is not possible as an extension of the present practice. However, these changes are not easy to perform. Metamorphosis of overall human history has come about; the world has found itself in a phase of transformation with tectonic disturbances. In this situation it is not easy to predict the direction which the changes in society and civilization will take with any certainty. However, it is possible to predict some tendencies and changes and accordingly guide social changes towards the desired and possible directions of changes. This prediction is based on our knowledge of the present. This knowledge is, anyway, a necessary

condition for choosing the course by which the social development of society and civilization are to be guided in a possible desired direction (Beber, 2003, p. 150).

The tectonic disturbances in the contemporary world that are relying on scientific discoveries and achievements are accompanied not only by an increase of production-appropriation relation to nature as a natural cradle of human civilization, but they have also endangered this cradle as well as the civilization that was born and developed in it. That is why man was forced to seek, on the basis of his knowledge, solutions for the crisis in which the world has found itself¹². This search has led to the knowledge that social development does not exhaust itself only in economic development, but it also involves a social and cultural development which, through their connectedness, enable the safeguarding and development of human civilization and man as a creative being; more precisely, a sustainable development assumes a balance between economic activities and ecological possibilities; that is how the concept of development is formed - as sustainable development¹³.

As for the consideration of the concept of social development as a sustainable one, the starting point in its conception (as well as of the subjects that adopted it) point to the need and possibility to reconsider it not only from the standpoint of realizing economic development, but also from the standpoint of realizing social justice and humanization of mankind. If its nucleus represents the solution of ecological problems as those existing in the system man (society) - nature, then they are solved from the standpoint of a crucial assumption of the natural right, i.e., right to life, most of all, of man, whose full-fledged realization is not possible without setting up a harmonious relationship between society and nature. This concept of social development represents a way of regarding and paying due respect for the order in nature which has been created through a long process of evolution as unique and irrevocable and which has been established by a long evolution during which the human species came into being as part of this unique

¹² Author has written more in the paper on „Ekološka kriza i mogućnosti njenog rešavanja u savremenom društvu” (“Ecological crisis and Possibilities of Its Solution in the Contemporary Society”), *Naše stvaranje*, 4-5/1984, Leskovac, p. 7-23

¹³ More about sustainable development in the author's book on *Globalizacija i kriza globalne ekonomije (Globalization and the Crisis of Global Economy)*, Grafiprof, Belgrade, 2010

process and thus can survive without disturbing the basics of this unique, singular order.

The concept of sustainable development has a global direction and a commonly conceived attitude of all social communities in their singularity and totality towards nature and ecological reality; it represents an expression of equality in the attitude to nature as an important component of righteousness, justice, natural right and social justice. This is the reason why this concept of social development, based upon the physical unity of the planet as a cradle of human species, requires and has a global approach as well, since the political or, state-political division of the planet is limited by its unity and singularity, which asks for new forms of organizing human species that would not contravene planetary unity and would not endanger it with its partial domination-wise interests. Alongside these considerations, it should always be kept in mind that the aim of sustainable development is to bring into accord the economic with the ecological principles in economic development, not only for the sake of safeguarding the ecologically favorable conditions for human life, but also for realizing material and social assumptions for a dignified life of man as a natural-social being. The forms of organizing human species in the emerging global (and information) society and the realization of the model of sustainable development should ensure manifestations of human responsibility not only for sustainable development of concrete societies in which man lives, but also for sustainable development of global society (mankind).

All previous considerations and conceptions about universalization and virtualization of the market economy should be understood as a contribution to the building of a new methodological approach to the study of cardinal changes, not only in the economic sphere of life, but in all the spheres of social life which are inter-related and very often based in their search for solutions of critical situations that are becoming increasingly inter-related while the crisis of society becomes ever more present and demanding in seeking, on a scientific basis, solutions for its overcoming. These solutions can represent an alternative to existing forms of social organization and contents of life that these forms comprise. Since it is known that, as the history of mankind has shown so far, it is not possible to build the future as a simple extension of present practice.

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ДАНИЛО Ж. МАРКОВИЋ
СРПСКА АКАДЕМИЈА ОБРАЗОВАЊА
БЕОГРАД

РЕЗИМЕ

УНИВЕРЗАЛИЗАЦИЈА И ВИРТУАЛИЗАЦИЈА ТРЖИШНЕ, ФИНАНСИЈСКЕ И РЕАЛНЕ ЕКОНОМИЈЕ И КОНЦЕПТ ГЛОБАЛНОГ ОДРЖИВОГ РАЗВОЈА

Развој знања никад се није одвијао брже него у XXI веку, што је такође довело до знатних промена у самом људском друштву, до трансформације цивилизације развојем информатизације и виртуализације. Та два процеса, уско повезана и међузависна, довела су до тога да се сâмо људско друштво све више сматра информатичким и виртуалним друштвом. Аутор указује на природу развоја тог типа друштва, и, потом, на његове основне карактеристике. То је друштво чија се основна социјално-економска матрица заснива на неолибералном капитализму, док је његова когнитивна матрица постмодерна. Из таквих његових особина проистиче истакнута склоност ка ефикасности и максимизацији профита, одлучујућег елемента у свим видовима друштвеног организовања, док Истина, Доброта, Лепота и Правда постају небитне, што је разумљиво за такво друштво само по себи.

KEY WORDS: напредак, развој, виртуализација, неолиберални капитализам.