

УДК 316.42

DOI: 10.18413/2408-9338-2020-6-1-0-6

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**Post-globalization, super-urbanization and prospects  
of social development**

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*Received January 30, 2020; accepted February 25, 2020;  
published March 30, 2020*

**Abstract.** The paper presents an attempt to reconceptualize social development and to measure its level for societies facing the post-globalization as globalizing networks and flows are paradoxically localized in super-urban areas. The economic and social divide between the group of the largest cities and the rest of the world supports the idea that globalization has resulted not in the ‘world society’ or ‘worldwide sociality’ but rather in networked enclaves of globality where people experience borderless, multicultural, and mobile social life in the regime of augmented modernity. In the post-globalization age, the ‘core’ of socioeconomic order is dispersed into networks of enclaves of augmented modernity contrasting with exhausted modernity outside them. The nations’ prospects of social development depend on number, size, and influence of cosmopolitan super-urban areas attracting and generating transnational material, human, and symbolic flows. The super-urbanization index is elaborated to measure nations’ prospects under post-globalization conditions. Traditional indices of standard of living and quality of life have to be augmented in the new theoretical model and system of empirical indicators of social development under post-globalization conditions.

**Keywords:** social development; post-globalization; super-urbanization index; augmented modernity

**Acknowledgements.** This paper is based on the research supported by the Russian Science Foundation (Project 18-18-00132).

**Information for citation:** Ivanov, D. V. (2020), “Post-globalization, super-urbanization and prospects of social development”, *Research Result. Sociology and management*, 6(1), 72-79. DOI: 10.18413/2408-9338-2020-6-1-0-6

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**Постглобализация, суперурбанизация и перспективы  
социального развития**

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Статья поступила 30 января 2020 г.; принята 28 февраля 2020 г.;  
опубликована 30 марта 2020 г.

**Аннотация.** В статье представлена попытка реконцептуализации социального развития и предложен подход к измерению уровня развития для обществ в условиях постглобализации, когда глобализующие жизнь структуры – сети и потоки парадоксальным образом локализованы в суперурбанизированных центрах. Экономический и социальный разрыв между группой крупнейших городов и остальным миром указывает на то, что результатом глобализации стало не возникновение «мирового общества» или «всемирной социальности», а скорее возникновение сети анклавов глобальности, где жизнь людей по-настоящему глобальна: транснациональна, мультикультуральна и мобильна. Мегаполисы притягивают и генерируют материальные, символические и человеческие потоки, и потому социальная жизнь в них сверхнасыщенная, принимающая форму дополненной современности. Суперурбанизированные анклавы дополненной современности контрастируют с окружающими территориями, откуда вымываются ресурсы и где социальная жизнь переходит в режим истощенной современности. Перспективы социального развития наций теперь зависят от числа, размеров и влияния космополитичных мегаполисов. Поэтому в условиях постглобализации традиционные средства измерения уровня развития предлагается дополнить индексом суперурбанизации.

**Ключевые слова:** социальное развитие; постглобализация; индекс суперурбанизации; дополненная современность

**Благодарность:** Статья подготовлена в рамках исследования, поддержанного грантом Российского научного фонда (проект № 18-18-00132).

**Информация для цитирования:** Иванов Д. В. Постглобализация, суперурбанизация и перспективы социального развития // Научный результат. Социология и управление. 2020. Т. 6, N 1. С. 72-79. DOI: 10.18413/2408-9338-2020-6-1-0-6

**Introduction.** Social changes of recent decades make it necessary to reconsider models of social development dominating researches and policies since the industrialization age. Study of social development considered as social change guided towards common well-being is a fundamental scientific problem in sociology. Social change as rise and spread of new social structures and new ways of social interaction creates a new space of possible development trajectories and frames a new developmentalist agenda.

The aim of the research project is elaboration of the social development model relevant to both new tendencies in social transformation and recent achievements in socio-

logical theory. Scientific importance of the research is determined by necessity to base new model of social development on an integration of theoretical concepts of social changes of recent decades (postmodernization, globalization, virtualization of society and so on) and current reinterpretations of classical theories of social systems, structures and interactions, everyday practices and life-world. Elaboration of the social development model corresponding to new tendencies of social change and to newest tendencies in sociological theory would be real contribution into the growth of theoretical and methodological base of contemporary sociology and other social sciences and humanities and into

the development of principles and strategies of social policy.

At the turn of the century theoretical sociology produced new social change concepts which interpreted transformation of society as decline or even disappearance of the industrial society's social structures and modes of interaction. Theories of postmodernization, globalization, virtualization of society and others reveal different aspects and tendencies of that social reality disappearance while the social development models adopted by national governments still are oriented towards support and rise of such social reality. Industrial society's structures development is main orientation of modernization projects and that social reality is just to be upgraded in projects of information society. New theories detect spread of new forms of social life – symbolic, transnational, networked, and flow structures which don't fit the usual patterns of social development. The newest challenge to sociology and social policy is paradox of globalization turned into post-globalization.

Considering tendencies presented above, it is possible to conclude that there is conceptual gap between old-fashioned social development models used as frameworks for controversial reforms and new theoretical models of social phenomena and processes created in recent decades. To overcome the conceptual gap, it is necessary to elaborate new social development model on the basis of social change trends analysis and analysis of newest trends in sociological theorizing. Such model has to be more relevant to current social processes than modernization models losing their actuality for economically advanced countries and information society models now provoking serious doubts among advanced sociologists.

**Methodology and Methods.** The classical concepts of social development and the post-globalization challenge.

The concept of social development as modernization of society, that dominated till recent times scientific and political discourses, is mirroring theories created under conditions of early industrial society. Such goals of

development as economic growth, spread of education, and general welfare provided by rational system of institutions were derived from conceptions of social life created by A. Comte, K. Marx, E. Durkheim, M. Weber and other theorists in the 19th – early 20th century. That concept of development is replaced now by the concept of informatization of society which is mirroring theoretical achievements of sociology under conditions of the transition towards postindustrial society that began at the second half of the past century with influential theories created by D. Bell, A. Touraine, A. Toffler, and M. Castells.

The social development level measures which are practically used (for example indicators included in the HDI – human development index by UN Programme: GDP per capita, expected life duration, duration of learning) now are corresponding to theoretical models which realize ideas of the past two centuries. Alternative methods proposed for example in 'Happy Planet Index' (New Economics Foundation) or 'indices of social development' (International Institute of Social Studies) are oriented toward new dimensions of social development: ecological traces, gender equality, civil activism and so on. But such methods do not take into account fundamental changes of social reality which are conceptualized in the newest sociological theories.

The new conception of social development can be elaborated on the basis of contemporary social reality analysis of two kinds. The first line of analysis is analysis of social problems arising as consequences of industrialist (modernization) and postindustrialist (informational) social development models implementation (alienation, anomy, social inequality, ecological risks, the ineffectiveness of the social control structures under conditions of globalization and virtualization of society etc.). The second line is the analysis of the newest social change tendencies including one of the most important among them – post-globalization which creates new space of possible development trajectories as well as a new dimension and orientation of develop-

ment: fullness of life, that is becoming critical alongside with traditional developmentalist dimensions – standard of living and quality of life.

Globalization processes made sociologists to reassess conceptual means and frameworks of analysis. Concepts of networks and flows promoted at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by J. Urry, M. Castells, A. Appadurai, B. Latour look more relevant than traditional concepts of institutions and interactions dominated sociological theorizing and social development discourses during two centuries. However, sociologists consider globalization effects on social development mostly in the frameworks of the world-system theory and various theories of global disparities. Problems of social development are presented in the context of globalization and its consequences in terms of the GDP / the living standard gap between the ‘core’ countries and countries belonging to ‘periphery’ and ‘semi-periphery’ of the global economy (Wallerstein 2004), or between two groups of nations identified as ‘global North’ and ‘global South’ (Arrighi, 2001). That model of international gap should be revised as socioeconomic differences do not coincide with national borders and wealth and power are concentrated in networks of super-urban areas playing a role of ‘command centers’ in transnational economy (Sassen, 2005).

**Research Results and Discussion.** Super-urbanization is radically new phenome-

non that differs from urbanization which was key component of modernization. The world has become super-urbanized as more than 50% of the world’s population live in urban areas since 2010. According to the United Nations reports on urbanization, there were 6 megacities with populations exceeding 5 million in 1950, by 2010 this number had risen to 60 and by 2018 to 81 (United Nations 2014; 2019). About the quarter of the world population is concentrated in five and half hundred cities all having more than 1 million inhabitants.

In this super-urbanized world trajectories of social development should be considered not only in the context of gap between urban and rural areas but also in the context of gap between super-urban areas and the rest of the world. According to research data of the Brookings Institution, the largest 300 metropolitan areas contain only about 20% of the world’s population but they generate nearly half of the world’s GDP (The Brookings 2012, 2018). Another research conducted by McKinsey Global Institute has revealed the top 600 cities by economic output concentrate 22% of global population and provide more than 50% of global GDP (McKinsey 2011). The super-urbanized areas outperform national economies they belong to and therefore open new dimension of inequality – disparities between the super-urban points of access to flows of resources and the surrounding regions (Table 1).

Table 1

The largest cities per capita GDP premium relative to region, %

City	Region	Per capita GDP premium (regional per capita GDP = 100%)
New York	USA	133
Los Angeles	USA	122
Paris	Western Europe	159
London	Western Europe	144
Tokyo	Japan	119
Osaka	Japan	99
Moscow	Russia	257
St. Petersburg	Russia	131

Source: (McKinsey, 2012) and (Rosstat, 2017).

Contrast between high level of social development and lower one cannot be identified only with global ‘North’ / ‘South’ divide. Brexit and Trump’s campaign have showed sharp social divides inside ‘global North’. Voters in small towns and rural areas less involved into transnational networks and flows are against political agenda supported by super-urban population. Large cities and megacities are more cosmopolitan and liberal than conservative majority of nation. Super-urban areas are detached from social reality maintained by institutions of nation-states.

The economic and social divide between the group of the largest cities and the rest of the world supports the idea that globalization has resulted not in the ‘world society’ or ‘worldwide sociality’ but rather in networked enclaves of globality. In such metropolitan areas as New York, Los Angeles, London, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Moscow, Istanbul, Seoul, Toronto and other megacities interconnected by cross-border materi-

al, human, and symbolic flows, people experience globality as borderless, mobile, and multicultural life. Therefore, ‘globalization’ does not mean planetary spread of social structures but rather localized displacement of habitual social structures by intensive flows (Appadurai 1990). It follows, that the distinction between ‘core’ and ‘periphery’ in the global socioeconomic order should be revised. The ‘core’ now is dispersed into networks of cosmopolitan super-urban areas.

Paradoxically, globality is very localized and because of that the subject-matter of global sociology is not the totality of societies and relations among them but networked (g)localities constituted by transnational flows. Globalization promising structural homogeneity and cultural unity is over. Post-globalization is the growth and decoupling of super-urban enclaves of globality. Prospects of social development now depend on this controversial process.

Table 2

National Gini vs Super-Urban Gini (Selected Countries and Cities)

Country / City	Gini index (year of estimation)
Russia	0,420 (2012)
Moscow	0,486 (2012)
St. Petersburg	0,443 (2012)
USA	0,469 (2010)
New York	0,499 (2010)
Los Angeles	0,489 (2010)
Japan	0,329 (2012)
Tokyo	0,375 (2011)
Osaka	0,400 (2011)

Source: (Ivanov, 2016).

The post-globalization challenge to habitual social development models in the super-urbanized world is characterized not only by concentration of wealth, power, and cultural dominance in the enclaves of globality. Compared to their countries, metropolitan ar-

reas outperform in economic growth and at the same time they are more unequal in terms of Gini index (Table 2). The combination of relatively higher levels of both economic performance and income disparity shows that the networked enclaves of globality represent two

faces of inequality defined as exclusion and unequal inclusion. The inhabitants of small cities and rural areas are disadvantaged because they are excluded from flows of resources circulating inside the networks of large cities / megacities. Nevertheless, people involved into such flows are disadvantaged too as they are included to be workforce for the newest form of postindustrial capitalism arising in networked enclaves of globality. People migrate to super-urban areas searching higher living standard and quality of life but they are faced with new dimension of social life – fullness measured by intensity of flows structuring fluid existence of ‘*homo super-urbanus*’.

*Super-urban enclaves of augmented modernity and the social development prospects.*

The divide between the super-urban areas and the rest of territories and communities has impacted social development in two ways. Attracting resources of all kinds and generating new social structures, such metropolitan areas as New York, Los Angeles, Toronto, London, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Moscow, Seoul, Istanbul, and other megacities become centers of new sociality creation. Social life in the access points to transnational networks and flows of material, symbolic, human, and technological resources is an existence full of cyber-physical experience. There different social realities are mutually penetrated and take form of *augmented reality* integrating physical and digital, material and symbolic, modern and ‘postmodern’ components of human life. There is an augmented sociality while small cities and rural communities are losing resources which are ‘washed away’ by outflows of human resources redirected towards super-urban hubs. Augmented sociality is in sharp contrast with an exhausted sociality apart network of globality enclaves. Globalization was expected to be planetary spread of Modernity institutions but now we are faced rather with localized displacement of habitual social structures of Modernity by intensive life in a regime of *Augmented Modernity* in the super-urban areas while in the rest

of communities outside super-urban hubs of augmented sociality tendency toward an *Exhausted Modernity* can be seen.

In the post-globalization age, the ‘core’ of socioeconomic order is dispersed into networks of enclaves of globality so the nations’ prospects of social development depend on number, size, and influence of cosmopolitan super-urban areas attracting and generating flows. New approach to conceptualize social development and to measure its level is needed. Indicators included in the human development index by UN (GDP per capita, expected life duration, duration of learning) are relevant to industrial society and nation-state formation. Alternative methods proposed for example in ‘Happy Planet Index’ by New Economics Foundation or ‘indices of social development’ by International Institute of Social Studies are oriented toward not only economic dimension but also toward new dimensions of social development reflecting tendencies of post-industrialization and globalization – ecological footprints, gender equality, civil activism and so on. But now the problem of social development should be considered in the context of new tendency – post-globalization.

The index of super-urbanization is proposed here to measure nations’ prospects under post-globalization conditions. Index of super-urbanization is an instrument to evaluate potential of social development which emerges in large cities and megacities. Their number and share in GDP and in population defines prospects of the augmented social reality creation. The index of super-urbanization is estimated according to the formula:

$$ISU = (N_{su2030} / P_{2030}) \times S_{GDP2014} \times S_{P2014},$$

where:

$N_{su2030}$  – number of large cities having between 5 and 10 million inhabitants and megacities having 10 million or more inhabitants expected by year 2030;

$P_{2030}$  – the country total population expected by year 2030;

$S_{GDP2014}$  – the large cities and megacities share in the national GDP in 2014;

$S_{P2014}$  – the large cities and megacities share in the national population in 2014.

To normalize estimations for different countries the standard form of index is used. For country ‘n’ index is estimated as

$$I_n = (ISU_n - ISU_{min}) / (ISU_{max} - ISU_{min}),$$

where:

$ISU_n$  – absolute magnitude of super-urbanization index for some country;

$ISU_{min}$  – the lowest level of the index among countries included in the sample;

$ISU_{max}$  – the highest level of the index.

Data for the indices estimations are extracted from UN reports (United Nations 2016) and national statistics. The index has been tested on the sample including nations participating in the G20 and Singapore selected as hypothetically the most developed super-urban area (Table 3).

Table 3

Index of Super-Urbanization (Selected Countries)

Country	Index of Super-Urbanization	Rank
Singapore	1.00	1
Australia	0.55	2
South Korea	0.28	3
Turkey	0.25	4
USA	0.22	5
South Africa	0.21	6
Japan	0.20	7
Saudi Arabia	0.19	8
Mexico	0.18	9
Russia	0.17	10
Canada	0.17	11
France	0.16	12
China	0.15	13
Brazil	0.14	14
Argentina	0.14	15
Great Britain	0.12	16
India	0.05	17
Indonesia	0.03	18
Germany	0.00	19
Italy	0.00	20

Source: Author’s own estimations.

The analysis of ranking shows that old modernization leaders (Western Europe and USA) and BRICS countries recently expected to be future leaders of the next modernization have actually moderate potential in the post-globalization age. Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa are rated below many

countries including US, South Korea, and of course the city-state Singapore which is the best example of social development on the platform of super-urban enclave of globality.

Singapore and partly Australia and South Korea can be considered as societies providing patterns of social development cor-

responding to conditions of post-globalization. Index of super-urbanization reveals new prospects of social development but it is not supposed to be unique indicator and to displace traditional indices of standard of living and quality of life. They have to be augmented in the new theoretical model and system of empirical indicators of social development under post-globalization conditions. New components of social development model are to be elaborated with use of data on population mobility, information flows, and networking activities of the Internet users in the super-urban areas.

**Conclusion.** The post-globalization changes dramatically contemporary agenda of social development. In the post-globalization age, the ‘core’ of socioeconomic order is dispersed into networks of enclaves of globality. The nations’ prospects of social development depend on number, size, and influence of cosmopolitan super-urban areas attracting and generating flows of goods, money, people, information etc. The index of super-urbanization presented here measures nations’ prospects under post-globalization conditions and it allows us to conclude that both old leaders of modernization (Western Europe and USA) and the BRICS countries recently expected to be future leaders have actually moderate potential. While Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa oriented toward modernization patterns are rated below many countries the city-state Singapore has the highest rank and provides new pattern of social development corresponding to the logic of post-globalization and super-urbanization. Taking into account such patterns, we can reformulate developmentalist agenda and to augment traditional theoretical models of development and indices of standard of living and quality of life with the new theoretical model and system of empirical indicators of social development being in accordance with post-globalization tendencies.

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**Conflicts of Interest: the author has no conflict of interest to declare.**

**Конфликты интересов: у автора нет конфликта интересов для декларации.**

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