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SHAPING MODERNITY: CORE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DRIVERS AND THEIR SOCIETAL CONSEQUENCES

Abstract: *this article offers a systematic examination of the principal socio-economic processes that shape the structure, stability, and evolution of contemporary societies. Moving beyond reductionist economic models, it adopts an interdisciplinary framework integrating sociological theory, political economy, and empirical observation. Key processes analyzed include digitalization and platform capitalism, financialization, demographic transitions, labor market flexibilization, and the socio-economic dimensions of environmental change. The paper argues that these processes are not unfolding in isolation but interact dialectically, producing paradoxical outcomes such as simultaneous wealth concentration and precarity, hyper-connectivity and social fragmentation. Drawing on evidence from post-industrial economies and emerging markets, the article demonstrates how national institutional contexts mediate global*

pressures. The conclusion outlines policy-relevant strategies for fostering inclusive and sustainable development in an era of systemic uncertainty.

Keywords: *socio-economic processes, digitalization, financialization, labor market precarity, demographic transition, environmental inequality, platform capitalism, social stratification, welfare state transformation, just transition.*

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ФОРМИРОВАНИЕ СОВРЕМЕННОСТИ: ОСНОВНЫЕ СОЦИАЛЬНО-ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКИЕ ФАКТОРЫ И ИХ СОЦИАЛЬНЫЕ ПОСЛЕДСТВИЯ

Аннотация: *в статье предлагается систематический анализ основных социально-экономических процессов, которые формируют структуру, стабильность и эволюцию современных обществ. Выходя за рамки упрощенных экономических моделей, она опирается на междисциплинарную основу, объединяющую социологическую теорию, политическую экономию и эмпирические наблю-*

дения. Анализируемые ключевые процессы включают цифровизацию и платформенный капитализм, финансиализацию, демографические изменения, повышение гибкости рынка труда и социально-экономические аспекты изменений окружающей среды. В статье утверждается, что эти процессы разворачиваются не изолированно, а диалектически взаимодействуют, приводя к парадоксальным результатам, таким как одновременная концентрация богатства и нестабильность, взаимосвязанность и социальная фрагментация. Опираясь на опыт постиндустриальных экономик и развивающихся рынков, в статье демонстрируется, как национальные институциональные условия влияют на глобальное давление. В заключении излагаются важные для политики стратегии содействия инклюзивному и устойчивому развитию в эпоху системной неопределенности.

Ключевые слова: социально-экономические процессы, цифровизация, финансиализация, нестабильность рынка труда, демографический переход, экологическое неравенство, платформенный капитализм, социальная стратификация, трансформация государства всеобщего благосостояния, справедливый переход.

Introduction. Understanding the socio-economic processes that drive historical change and shape daily life is a foundational task of the social sciences. These processes-ranging from industrialization and urbanization in the past to financialization and digitalization today-constitute the deep structures upon which social hierarchies, cultural values, and political conflicts are built. In the early twenty-first century, the pace and complexity of these transformations have intensified dramatically, creating both unprecedented opportunities and severe dislocations.

Socio-economic processes can be defined as the recurring, structured patterns of interaction between economic activity-production, distribution, exchange, and consumption-and the social arrangements that organize human life, including class structures, status orders, family forms, and collective identities. Unlike simple economic

trends, socio-economic processes incorporate feedback loops: economic changes alter social relations, which in turn reshape economic behavior.

This article has three principal aims. First, it provides a conceptual map of the most significant socio-economic processes operating globally today. Second, it analyzes the mechanisms through which these processes generate outcomes such as inequality, social mobility, political polarization, and well-being. Third, it discusses how different national and regional contexts-varying in welfare state regimes, labor market institutions, and cultural norms-mediate the effects of these processes.

The central argument is that contemporary socio-economic dynamics are characterized by a fundamental paradox. On one hand, global productive capacity and technological sophistication have reached levels unimaginable a generation ago. On the other hand, relative deprivation, subjective insecurity, and social fragmentation have risen in many societies. This paradox cannot be explained by purely economic factors; it requires attention to institutional disintegration, the individualization of risk, and the erosion of collective bargaining power.

The article proceeds as follows. Section 2 reviews classical and contemporary theoretical frameworks for analyzing socio-economic change. Section 3 identifies and elaborates four key transformative processes: digitalization and platform capitalism, financialization, demographic and migratory dynamics, and the socio-economic dimensions of environmental degradation. Section 4 offers comparative empirical illustrations from different national contexts, highlighting variation in outcomes despite common global pressures. Section 5 concludes with theoretical reflections and policy implications.

Theoretical perspectives on socio-economic change.

No single theory fully captures the complexity of socio-economic processes. Instead, an intelligent eclecticism drawing from several traditions is required.

2.1 Classical foundations.

Marx: relations of production generate class conflict. Concepts of exploitation, commodification, and alienation remain central for analyzing gig work and financial extraction.

Durkheim: rapid change without moral regulation produces anomie-relevant to breakdown of occupational communities and rising depression under neoliberalism.

Weber: rationalization (algorithmic management, metrics) and the class/status distinction explain why credentials and cultural capital increasingly determine outcomes.

2.2 Contemporary extensions.

World-systems theory (Wallerstein): core-periphery hierarchy explains persistent underdevelopment and fragile democracies.

Regulation theory (Aglietta, Boyer): Fordism (mass production/consumption) gave way to neoliberalism (deregulation, flexibilization). Digital capitalism remains unstable.

Feminist political economy: foregrounds social reproduction (unpaid care work). Financialization cuts public services, shifting burdens onto women.

Major socio-economic processes reshaping contemporary societies.

This section examines four interconnected processes of particular salience today.

3.1 Digitalization and the rise of platform capitalism.

Platforms algorithmically manage labor, bypass protections, and concentrate power. Consequences: precarization (growth of gig work, the «precariat»), skill polarization (high and low demand, mid-skill decline), and spatial divergence (gentrification vs. peripheral decline).

3.2 Financialization.

Dominance of financial motives. Households offset wage stagnation with debt (mortgages, student loans). Corporate shareholder value maximization favors buy-backs over investment. Macro result: asset-based inequality surpasses labor income, reducing intergenerational mobility.

3.3 Demographic transitions and migration.

Aging North creates fiscal strain and care worker shortages, fueling global care chains. Youth bulges in the South, without sufficient formal jobs, drive instability and emigration. Migration generates remittances but also cultural backlash.

3.4 Environmental degradation and the green transition.

Climate impacts are unequal (poor bear more). Low-carbon transition creates new industries but destroys old jobs. A «just transition» is needed. Carbon pricing can be regressive unless revenues are redistributed.

Empirical manifestations across national contexts.

Global processes produce nationally specific outcomes mediated by institutions, path dependencies, and political struggles. Three brief case illustrations demonstrate this variation.

United States: extreme financialization, wage stagnation, union collapse, geographic disparities (coastal gentrification vs. Rust Belt «deaths of despair»), political polarization.

Germany: coordinated capitalism under strain. Hartz IV reforms expanded precarious Mini-Jobs. Aging and green transition conflicts (Energiewende) persist.

Brazil: structural heterogeneity (formal vs. 40% informal). Commodity booms helped temporarily, but middle-income trap and political crisis reversed gains. Amazon destruction linked to global demand and weak state capacity.

Conclusion.

These processes are not inevitable—they result from political choices. Reregulation and re-socialization of risk are possible. Standard metrics (GDP, unemployment) are insufficient; distributional, subjective, and ecological indicators matter.

New social contracts should decouple security from standard employment: portable benefits, universal basic services, lifelong learning.

Future research: comparative historical studies, causal mechanism analysis, and democratic experimentalism (participatory budgeting, citizen assemblies).

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