# Karen Reed ~ Eigth Ways Technology Is Improving Your Health


We hear all the time about how technology is bad for us. Since the introduction of computers. Even people working on App Development have the same issues, we spend more time sitting at a desk than moving around at work. We have created this sedentary lifestyle that is causing havoc in our overall life.

What if I were to tell you that technology has produced benefits? Would you believe me if I said that technology is good for your health?

Most of you wouldn't look at first. Well, you may be able to think of a couple of ways that the computer has helped, but you are still stuck on all the negatives that 'experts' have shared in the past. The problem with the 'experts' is that they are only focused on the negatives. They haven't looked at so many of the benefits.

So, that's what we'll do today. We'll consider all the ways that technology improves our health. We'll discuss just how it has boosted results in certain areas of healthcare and what it does for us daily.

Read more: https://www.positivehealthwellness.com/fitness/8-ways-technology-improving-health/

# Marlise Simons ~ Rokende spiegel – ‘Kissinger noemde mij een rood onbetrouwbaar element’


Fatou Bensouda, chief prosecutor for the International Criminal Court, in conversation with Marlise Simons, correspondent for The New York Times.

Onder de titel *Rokende spiegel* publiceerde Vrij Nederland* op 14 mei 1988 mijn interview met de Nederlandse journaliste Marlise Simons die ik in april van dat jaar sprak in haar toenmalige woonplaats Rio de Janeiro.
Hoewel er inmiddels ruim een kwart eeuw is verstreken is het als journalistiek tijdsdocument en als portret van een bijzondere journaliste nog steeds een goede eerste kennismaking. Bij mijn weten is dit het enige geschreven portret dat van haar is verschenen in Nederland.

Simons woont en werkt vanaf 1989 in Parijs nadat ze jarenlang voor de Washington Post en vanaf 1982 voor de New York Times, Zuid – en Midden – Amerika coverde. Vanuit Parijs deed ze verslag van de oorlogen op de Balkan en van de processen die zijn gevoerd door het Joegoslavië Tribunaal. Samen met Heikelien Verrijn Stuart publiceerde ze in 2009 : *The Prosecutor and The Judge: Benjamin Ferencz and Antonio Cassese. Interviews and Writings.*

Als één van de weinige vrouwen die zich moeiteloos staande houdt in de machowereld van de internationale schrijvende journalistiek, is ze te vergelijken met een andere heldin van mij, Martha Gellhorn (1908-1998) die ik in 1991 uitgebreid heb gesproken. Ze bedrijven echter twee totaal verschillende stijlen van journalistiek: is Gellhorn persoonlijk en zeer aanwezig in haar verhalen en reportages, Simons is de spreekwoordelijke buitenstaander en de beschouwer.

Marlise Simons' eerste kennismaking met Latijns-Amerika dateert uit 1967. Na haar studie Engels en Spaans maakte ze op zevenentwintigjarige leeftijd een rondreis van drie maanden door Mexico. Ze raakte 'zo geboeid door de hoogontwikkelde beschaving, de culturele rijkdom en de bevolking die bijna van een andere planeet afkomstig leek te zijn' dat ze vier jaar later, vergezeld door collega en latere echtgenoot Alan Riding en een volgeladen 'oude Volkswagen met boeken, typemachines, pillen en kort- golfapparatuur' opnieuw naar Mexico vertrok. 'De grote kranten hadden correspondenten zitten in Buenos Aires en Santiago, maar Midden-Amerika leek in de pers helemaal niet te bestaan. Het was dus niet zo moeilijk om daar aan het werk te komen.'
Ze vestigde zich in Mexico – Stad. Van daaruit bereisde ze het gehele Latijns–Amerikaanse continent en schreef reportages voor NRC Handelsblad, Newsweek, de Washington Post en later de New York Times. Dertien jaar later, in 1984, verhuisde ze naar Brazilië. Voor haar werk ontving ze in 1981, samen met Jacobo Timmerman, de prestigieuze Maria Moors Cabbot Prize, die elk jaar door Columbia University in New York wordt uitgereikt. Na de Pulitzer Prize (waarvoor ze in 1991 werd genomineerd, B.S.) is dit de belangrijkste journalistieke onderscheiding in de Verenigde Staten. Maar ze is de eerste om het belang van deze prijs te relativeren: 'De journalist als held, zoals mijn collega's Bernstein en Woodward, is voor mij uit den boze. Of zoals Oriana Fallaci die in 1968 aanwezig was bij de rellen op de Universiteit van Mexico. De volgende dag stond met grote koppen in de krant dat ze een krasje had op haar bil. Dat nieuws was belangrijker dan het leger dat het vuur opende op driehonderd mensen. Een journalist blijft altijd een doorgeefluik. Mij gaat het erom hoe ik de ene cultuur over kan brengen naar de andere, hoe moet je iets duidelijk maken voor de huiskamer in Zutphen?'

Uitgeverij Meulenhoff publiceerde in 1987 onder de titel *De rokende spiegel* een selectie uit de talrijke artikelen over Latijns–Amerika die Marlise Simons in de afgelopen zestien jaar schreef voor binnenlandse – en buitenlandse bladen. Tezamen geven deze ruim zestig achtergrondverhalen een breed, samenhangend beeld van de Latijns–Amerikaanse cultuur en de politieke – en maatschappelijke ontwikkelingen in de jaren zeventig en tachtig. Van de staatsgreep in Chili tot de teleurgestelde officier in Cuba, van de onderdrukte Indianenstammen in Guatemala tot het uitzichtloze bestaan in de krottenwijken van de grote steden.

Het balkon van het appartement van Marlise Simons in Rio de Janeiro biedt tussen de palmbomen op het strand een fraai uitzicht over de Atlantische Oceaan. Ook de inrichting van het appartement is het aanzien meer dan waard. De liefde die Marlise Simons voor Latijns–Amerika heeft opgevat wordt weerspiegeld in de inrichting van haar woning. Verspreid in de woonkamer staan de beeldhouwwerken die taferelen uit de rijke geschiedenis van Mexico voorstellen en aan de wanden hangen houtsnijwerken en fel gekleurde schilderijen uit Haïti.
Aan het begin van het gesprek excuseert ze zich voor het feit dat door haar jarenlange verblijf in het buitenland haar Nederlands achteruit is gegaan. Haar artikelen voor NRC Handelsblad worden uit het Engels vertaald. Wel klinkt nog zacht haar Limburgse accent door.

Is het voor een vrouwelijke journalist in dit continent moeilijker werken dan voor een man?
'Er zitten twee kanten aan. Enerzijds voelen mannen zich minder bedreigd door een vrouwelijke journalist. Militairen vertellen je bijvoorbeeld dingen die ze niet aan mannen zouden vertellen. Een vrouw willen ze helpen en beschermen. Ze zijn nieuwsgierig. Aan het begin van de jaren zeventig was er in Latijns–Amerika veel minder ruimte voor een vrouw. Men wilde wel eens weten wat voor vreemd iemand ze voor zich hadden en men wilde dus wel praten. Anderzijds kun je als vrouw niet met mannen optrekken zoals mannen met elkaar omgaan en een pilsje gaan drinken. Maar als je buitenlandse bent dan worden de spelregels ineens anders. Wat ze van hun eigen vrouw niet zouden tolereren, dat kan van een buitenlandse wel.'

*Staatsgreep*
Als de Washington Post haar begin jaren zeventig het correspondentschap voor geheel Latijns–Amerika aanbiedt, wijst ze het aanbod af. 'Zoiets is boeiend voor een paar maanden, maar het is een onmenselijke taak om zo'n heel continent te verslaan. Het zijn eenentwintig landen. Je zit alleen maar in hotels en op vliegvelden en je houdt geen huwelijk meer over.' Ze sluit met de krant een contract om reisverslagen te maken. In 1973 vertrekt ze naar Chili waar de positie van president Allende ernstig verzwakt is en de militairen op het punt staan de macht over te nemen.

‘In de eerste week na de staatsgreep werd ik op mijn hotelkamer in Santiago gearresteerd. Ze vonden dat ik leugens schreef. Na een paar dagen werd ik vrijgelaten en kort daarop ben ik vertrokken omdat het steeds moeilijker werd om te schrijven. Ik werd gevolgd en kon geen contact opnemen met mensen, want ik wilde hen niet in gevaar brengen.’

Begrafenis Pablo Neruda 1973 Foto: www.abc.es

Zat u nog in Chili toen Pablo Neruda stierf? Hij overleed twaalf dagen na de staatsgreep.
‘Ik ben op zijn begrafenis geweest. Die begrafenis was een zeer emotioneel moment omdat de begrafenis van Neruda eigenlijk ook de begrafenis van Allende was. Niemand wist waar het lichaam van Allende was, omdat het was weggewerkt door de militairen. Neruda’s lichaam werd opgebaard. Zijn huis werd ’s nachts geplunderd. Al zijn boeken waren op de vloer gesmeten. De gordijnen fladderden uit de ramen, de waterleidingen waren kapotgeslagen. Het leek alsof het huis gebombardeerd was. Heel luguber. Daar vandaan werd het lijk naar het kerkhof gebracht. In de stoet liepen duizenden mensen die zelfs op dat moment de Internationale durfden te zingen. Het was de eerste keer dat de mensen weer de straat op durfden. De eerste gelegenheid dat ze hun woede kwijt konden. Het was een hele macabere gebeurtenis. Het kerkhof zat vol soldaten, die overal op de hekken en de kapelletjes zaten, maar toch durfde men begrafenisredes te houden.’

U bent in uw artikelen zeer kritisch over de rol van de Verenigde Staten in Latijns – Amerika. Bent u ooit wel eens in aanvaring gekomen met uw Amerikaanse opdrachtgevers?
‘Toen ik in 1973 in Chili zat heb ik moeilijkheden gehad met de Washington Post. In die tijd was het al duidelijk dat de CIA achter het destabilisatieplan zat. Er

stroomde zoveel geld binnen om de stakingen te financieren dat er genoeg feitenmateriaal was om te bewijzen dat de CIA er achter zat, ondanks het feit dat je geen smoking gun kon laten zien. Maar dat kon niet door de beugel, want de CIA was toen nog een onaantastbaar instituut. Alles is pas in de openbaarheid gekomen na de hearings in het Congres. Bij de krant voelde men zich niet op zijn gemak. Ze schrapten alles over de CIA. En het stuk waarin ik het mechanisme en de voorbereiding van de staatsgreep beschreef hielden ze zes weken vast. Uiteindelijk is het wel geplaatst. Alleen een beetje gesaneerd. Ik had eromheen geschreven, maar wel laten zien dat er een patroon zat in die staatsgreep. Het was hetzelfde patroon dat in 1954 in Guatemala en in 1964 in Brazilië was toegepast. Er zat een filosofie achter de oplossingen die gekozen werden en die kwamen niet zomaar uit de lucht vallen.'

Kwamen er ook reacties van het Amerikaanse publiek?

'Ik heb heel veel reacties gehad. Kissinger noemde mij een rood, onbetrouwbaar element en deed zijn beklag bij de krant. Leden van de Democratische Partij in het Congres kwamen naar me toe om vragen te stellen. Ze wilden de zaak verder onderzoeken. Ik was natuurlijk maar een kleine schakel, een spoortje waar ze naar op zoek waren. Veel mensen in de Verenigde Staten waren ontzettend verontwaardigd over de rol van hun eigen regering en schreven dat ze meer informatie wilden. Toen de zaak eenmaal in het Congres terechtkwam en door die hearings uitlekte, heb ik als een pleister op de wonde, want de krant was ook kwaad op mij, een prijs gekregen van een Latijns–Amerikaans studieverbond. Overigens komt het in de Amerikaanse pers niet vaak voor dat er in artikelen wordt geschrapt. Dit was duidelijk zo'n gevoelig thema dat ze er geen raad mee wisten.'

Zijn er grote verschillen tussen de schrijvende pers in de Verenigde Staten en die in Nederland?

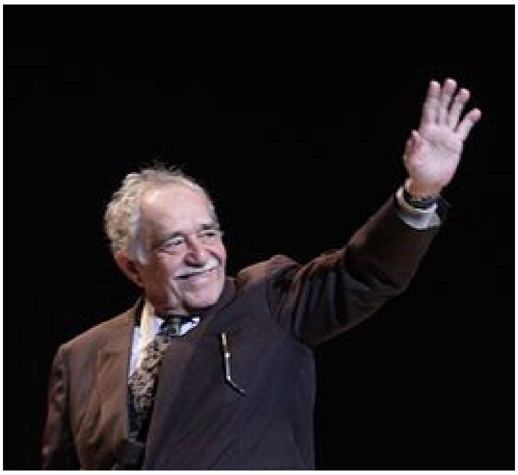
'Ik moet eerlijk zeggen dat ik de Nederlandse pers niet volg. Ik lees de NRC maar ik weet niet wat er verder gebeurt in de Europese pers. Destijds was het zo dat er in Europa meer opiniërend geschreven werd, dat er meer waarde gehecht werd aan de stijl van het schrijven en aan de entertainment value. De journalist mocht preken als hij dat wilde en moraliseren. In de States worden hogere eisen gesteld aan het feitenmateriaal en de research. Je moet meer rapporteren, meer graven en er is een grotere druk om zo objectief mogelijk te zijn. Nu heb ik het vooral over de New York Times. De Amerikaanse reactie is: don't tell me, show me, laat het zien met feiten en citaten en mensen. Je moet proberen om zoveel mogelijk kanten van een zaak te belichten. Misschien wordt het door al die feiten en stemmen erin saaier om te lezen, maar het wel een meer rigoureuze en een meer gedisciplineerde vorm van journalistiek. De stem van de schrijver is minder belangrijk.'

*Marquez*

Naast reisreportages en politieke verslagen publiceerde Simons ook vraaggesprekken met Latijns–Amerikaanse schrijvers. Zo ontmoette ze mensen als Jorge Amado en Gabriel Garcia Márquez. Met deze laatste onderhoudt ze vriendschappelijke contacten. 'Schrijvers in Latijns–Amerika zijn niet moeilijk te benaderen en zeker niet als je voor een Amerikaanse krant werkt. De meeste schrijvers zijn gewend om hun mening te geven over verschillende aspecten van de maatschappij en dat doen ze graag. Als je hun vraagt naar het waarom van hun politieke opinies, dan antwoorden ze in verschillende bewoordingen allemaal hetzelfde, namelijk dat ze het zich niet kunnen permitteren om zich alleen in de ijle sfeer van de pure ideeën te bewegen. Ze leven in landen die voortdurend in opschudding zijn, waar de issues die van leven en dood zijn, en waar de helft van de bevolking honger lijdt.'

U zei zoëven dat de stem van de schrijver in de Amerikaanse pers minder belangrijk was. In Latijns – Amerika lijkt aan de meningen van literaire schrijvers veel waarde toegekend te worden.

'De rol van de intellectuelen is eigenlijk al zo'n oud fenomeen. In Athene en Rome en in de Renaissance in Europa hadden de intellectuelen belangrijke posten en intensieve contacten met de machthebbers. In de Amerikaanse revolutie, de Franse revolutie en de Russische revolutie waren de leidende figuren intellectuelen. Hier hebben we te maken met een continent dat voortdurend zoekt naar politieke oplossingen, naar politieke modellen, die het niet gevonden heeft, althans geen bevredigende modellen. Omdat er bovendien zo weinig geloof bestaat in de politieke leiders, de organisatie van de politieke partijen, de vakbonden, het congres en het parlement worden de intellectuelen en de schrijvers beschouwd als een soort geweten. Er wordt bij hen gezocht naar een definitie van morele waarden en van begrippen als mensenrechten, onafhankelijkheid en eerlijkheid. Maar hoever hun invloed reikt? Ik weet het niet. Aan Garcia Márquez vroeg ik onlangs: "Jij hebt zeer sterke politieke overtuigingen. Waarom gebruik je je boeken niet om die te verkondigen en te verspreiden?" Hij antwoordde toen: "Dat is niet helemaal waar, want politiek is niet alleen maar wat regeringen en politici doen. Politiek bedrijven is ook het bepalen van een culturele waarde en identiteit van een volk. Ik geloof dat ik met mijn schrijven de identiteit van het volk help vormen, omdat ik spreek over de opvattingen die het volk over zichzelf heeft.”



Gabriel García Márquez (1927 – 2014)
nl.wikipedia.org

Maar draagt het werk van Márquez of andere schrijvers bij aan veranderingen?
‘Het zal zeker een rol spelen, maar ik geloof niet dat in Latijns–Amerika de drijfveren voor verandering ooit uit de literatuur zijn voortgekomen, maar altijd uit de godsdienst. En daarvoor kun je teruggaan tot de priesterregeringen van de Indiaanse volken, of het katholieke dogma van de Europese middeleeuwen en de inquisitie, en de enorme repressie die daarmee gepaard ging. Daarna volgde een zeer korte periode van het Europese liberalisme. En vervolgens kreeg je het dogma van het marxisme, dat hier gepredikt werd als een theologie, en dat bedoel ik niet negatief. Dat werd geponeerd als een nieuwe doctrine, een nieuwe godsdienst. En je ziet nu dat de intellectuelen die het voortouw nemen vaak priesters zijn. Daarna of tegelijkertijd ontstond de bevrijdingstheologie die een enorme drijfveer is en heel veel invloed heeft gehad en nog steeds heeft in alle landen van Latijns – Amerika. Als conservatieve tegenhanger daarvan zijn er de evangelische bewegingen, die uit de Verenigde Staten zijn overgewaaid en vaak onder de persoonlijke leiding staan van Amerikanen. In dit continent, waar de romantiek en het idealisme de mensen zo sterk aanspreken, is men veel minder rationeel dan in Europa. Hier zijn het de religieuze stromingen die de drijfveren zijn en niet het intellectuele debat.’
Maar zo’n debat tussen Vargas Llosa en Márquez raakt zeer wezenlijke punten. Márquez zegt dat het westerse democratische model niet toepasbaar is op Latijns

– Amerika en volgens Vargas Llosa is de parlementaire democratie overal hetzelfde.
‘Dat debat wordt alleen in tijdschriften en in intellectuele kringen gevoerd. Politici bemoeien zich er nauwelijks mee. Het wordt voornamelijk via interviews uitgevochten. Misschien dat we binnenkort de kans krijgen of de ideeën van Vargas Llosa in de praktijk te brengen zijn, want hij wordt zo verleid door de macht dat hij met de gedachte speelt zich kandidaat te stellen voor het presidentschap van Peru. Dan krijgt hij de gelegenheid om zijn woorden in daden om te zetten. Een van de tragische dingen van Latijns–Amerika is juist dat importeren van al die buitenlandse, democratische modellen. Je kunt die Europese democratieën heel moeilijk zo maar overzetten naar dit continent. Daarom vind ik ook dat Castro gelijk heeft als hij zegt dat je geen revolutie kunt importeren. Maar dat debat tussen García Márquez en Vargas Llosa, dat door derden is overgenomen, is inderdaad heel interessant omdat het alle essentiële punten raakt. En er is tenminste een debat, want er is een groot tekort aan ideeën. De schrijvers waren vroeger zeer goed bevriend, maar hebben ruzie gekregen. Vargas Llosa heeft Márquez een keer met zijn blote vuist een klap in het gezicht gegeven. They are not on speaking terms so to say.
Maakt Vargas Llosa enige kans als hij zich kandidaat stelt?
‘Politiek in Latijns–Amerika heeft meer te maken met persoonlijkheden dan met ideeën. Het draait om de figuren. Daarom is het ook mogelijk dat er stemmen opgaan om een man als Pelé kandidaat te stellen voor het presidentschap. Hij wordt ondanks zijn zwarte huidskleur geaccepteerd omdat hij succes heeft en rijk is geworden, en naar zulke mensen wordt geluisterd. Pelé is nu ambassadeur van Brazilië voor de bevordering van het toerisme. Hij zou zeker een groot aantal stemmen krijgen als hij zou meedoen. Het gaat om figuren en daarom zou Vargas Llosa ook veel stemmen kunnen krijgen. Als je maar beroemd bent dan betekent dat ook dat je een bekwaam en onderlegd figuur bent die capabel is voor taken die niets te maken hebben met je eigen specialiteit. Schrijvers en sportsterren nemen een zeer bevoorrechte positie in omdat ze veel mogen zeggen. Dat wordt prominent gereproduceerd, maar ze hebben geen enkele verantwoordelijkheid. Ze hoeven nooit mee te doen aan het oplossen van problemen.’

In *De rokende spiegel* staan enkele artikelen over Cuba, waarin u schrijft hoe de revolutie inwerkt op het leven van de enkeling. Vooral het verhaal van Armando is een bijna karikaturale aaneenschakeling van teleurstellingen. Hij heeft zijn hele leven opgeofferd aan het heil van de revolutie. Wordt in Cuba de discussie gevolgd die op dit moment in de Sovjetunie gaande ‘Ik ben een tijd niet in Cuba geweest, maar ik geloof niet dat er veel veranderd is. Wel heb ik begrepen dat het perestrojka-debat in Cuba nog steeds niet in het openbaar gevoerd wordt, hoewel achter de schermen wel degelijk wordt gepraat over aanpassingen en modernisering. De grote tragiek van Cuba is dat het in zijn tijd belangrijk is geweest, maar dat het nu een ouderwets, moralistisch land is dat eigenlijk vastzit, en niet mee is gegroeid met zijn eigen idealen. De literatuur, de journalistiek en de kunst staan nog steeds in dienst van de revolutie. Zo’n vier of vijf jaar geleden zijn er al pogingen ondernomen om de persvrijheid te verruimen en meer plaats te geven aan dissidente opinies. Maar het probleem was dat er eigenlijk geen mensen waren die wisten hoe ze dat aan moesten pakken. Iedereen is natuurlijk in een soort kader opgevoed en heeft oogkleppen voor. De Granma is niet meer dan een regeringsbulletin over productiecijfers en de ideale werker en geeft zeer geselecteerd buitenlands nieuws. Je kunt niet zomaar tegen journalisten zeggen: “Nu mogen jullie anders gaan schrijven.” Dat is een proces dat je niet ineens van bovenaf op kunt leggen. Dat is een van de redenen waarom de Cubanen niet zo enthousiast zijn over wat er nu in Rusland gebeurt. Want de Cubanen hebben dat zelf al geprobeerd.’

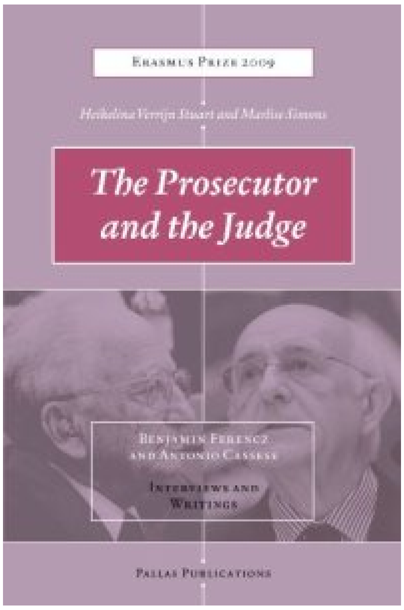
*Geestelijke ruimte*

Bestaat er in Latijns–Amerika nog de illusie dat er ooit iets zal veranderen?

‘In Latijns–Amerika wordt gezocht naar een nieuwe manier van leven, in tegenstelling tot Europa waar het gevoel heerst dat men “klaar” is. In Europa is weinig lichamelijke ruimte, weinig geestelijke ruimte, er wordt gemakkelijker uitgelegd waarom iets niet kan dan waarom het wel kan. In dit continent is het juist het omgekeerde, zowel in Amerika als in Latijns–Amerika zijn er altijd mensen die klaar staan met nieuwe ideeën, die nieuwe dingen proberen.’

En daaruit putten mensen hoop?

‘De veranderingen mogen dan wel langzamer gaan dan wij moreel verantwoord vinden, maar als je bijvoorbeeld praat met de krottenbewoners in Mexico–Stad die iedere dag twee uur in de bus zitten om naar de fabriek te gaan en nauwelijks genoeg verdienen om een beetje rijst en bonen op tafel te zetten, en aan hen vraagt: “waarom zijn jullie hier? In jullie dorp hadden jullie land en vrienden en had je dorpsfeesten,” dan antwoorden ze dat ze hier meer kansen hebben, dat hun kinderen naar school gaan en zich kunnen ontplooien zodat ze later werk kunnen krijgen. Maar het is ook niet zo dat deze maatschappijen muurvast zitten. Er is nog zeker wel geld te verdienen. In Brazilië bijvoorbeeld zijn naar schatting vijfhonderdduizend mensen bezig met goudzoeken. Minstens de helft van die goudzoekers verdient daar meer dan ze ooit op een andere manier zouden kunnen verdienen. Sommigen worden daar ontzettend rijk van, anderen kunnen er net van eten of houden er juist genoeg aan over om een boerderijtje of een auto of een winkeltje te kopen. Het is geen recept voor sociale ontwikkelingen, maar we hebben het over de illusie van veranderingen.'




Is uw visie op de rol van de journalistiek in de loop der jaren veranderd?

'Na al die jaren als journalist gewerkt te hebben vraag ik me af hoe je de ene cultuur over kunt brengen naar de andere. Op welke manier kun je iets overbrengen naar de lezers in Nederland. De televisie vertoont overal ter wereld dezelfde beelden van schietpartijen in El Salvador, maar wat begrijpt men daar nou eigenlijk van? Kunnen wij journalisten dat uitleggen of is het alleen achtergrondmuziek en appelleert het aan het instinct om afgrijselijke beelden mooi of fascinerend te vinden? Hoe kun je uitleggen wat armoede is en pijn? Als je het niet beleeft weet je niet wat het betekent. Hoe moet je uitleggen wat ziekte op dit continent betekent? Ziek zijn betekent dat het hele familiebudget opgaat. Zonder geld komen de mensen niet eens voorbij de poort van het ziekenhuis. Ik wil die mensen zelf aan het woord laten. Ik wil ze laten zien. Ik denk soms wel eens dat wij journalisten eigenlijk nieuws en berichtgeving zouden moeten herdefiniëren. Dat riekt naar inmenging in vrijheid van meningsuiting, maar zo bedoel ik het niet. Nieuws bestaat niet alleen maar uit abstracte lichtbeelden op een televisiescherm. Ik wil afblijven van wat nou de definitie is van journalistiek, maar er zijn zeker methoden waarmee je mensen kunt bereiken.

Ik zat laatst een boek te lezen van John Gardner die zich afvroeg wie nu een goede kunstenaar is. Dat is iemand die met zijn werk andere mensen inspireert en een bijdrage levert aan hun eigen leven. Een slechte kunstenaar zeurt en klaagt. Nu wil ik natuurlijk niet een journalist met een kunstenaar vergelijken, wij fungeren meer als spiegel en doorgeefluik. Nogmaals, ik weet dat ik me op glad ijs begeef en dat dit neigt naar moralistische journalistiek en dat wil ik absoluut niet. Maar al die eindeloze uitspraken van middelmatige politici die wij prestige verlenen door ze af te drukken…. Wij laten mensen aan het woord die liegen. Wij plaatsen mensen op voetstukken die ze niet verdienen en natuurlijk kun je alleen maar over gewone mensen schrijven, maar vaak is dat beter en veelzeggender dan constant politici en partijleiders te citeren die eigenlijk alleen maar aan een vorm van zelfbevrediging doen.'

*Noot:*
* Indertijd heb ik er met hulp van Enno van der Eerden een publicabel stuk van gemaakt. Dit interview verscheen eerder in *Vrij Nederland, jaargang 49 – 14 mei 1988*

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# David in Ethiopia

David van Reen (1969 – 2015)

Boeken:
*Anbessa's dochter* (Uitgeverij In de Knipscheer – 2016 – ISBN 9789062659302)
*Het land van de verbrande gezichten* (De Geus -2008 – ISBN 9789071794056)
*Engelen der wrake* (De Geus – 2009 – ISBN 9789044512977)

Zie ook: [http://stichtinglalibela.nl/](http://stichtinglalibela.nl/)

"Op een van mijn reizen kwam ik in Woldia. Ik besloot om een wandeling te maken naar de Maryamkerk, een eind buiten het stadje. De heenweg bergop was ongeveer zes kilometer. Halverwege kwam ik een meisje tegen dat Netsannet heette. Haar naam betekent 'vrijheid'. Gezien de blik in haar ogen zou ze geen passender naam kunnen hebben. Ze had een blikje bij zich met daarin een beetje stro en een paar eieren. Op mijn vraag wat ze met die eieren ging doen, zei ze dat ze naar de markt in Woldia ging. Ik vroeg haar waar ze woonde. Dat bleek dicht bij de Maryamkerk te zijn. Ik was verbaasd. Ze liep twaalf kilometer om twee eieren te verkopen! Haar optimisme en de levensvreugde die ze uitstraalde, maakten indruk op me. Toen ik later de foto's die ik van Netsannet had gemaakt, afdrukte en weer zag hoe levensblij ze was, begon ik me pas af te vragen waarom wij hier op aarde zijn en of het jachtige leven dat wij westerlingen leiden, ons wel gelukkiger maakt dan Ethiopiërs. Zo ben ik met andere ogen naar deze mensen

gaan kijken. Eerder al had het land me verrast door zijn schoonheid en zijn vriendelijke mensen.”
Uit: *Het land van de verbrande gezichten. Leven in Ethiopië*, foto’s en tekst van David van Reen, Uitg. De Geus

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# Imperialism Is Alive And Kicking: A Marxist Analysis Of Neoliberal Capitalism

Prabhat Patnaik – Photo: wikipedia

The concept of imperialism has fallen out of the political lexicon of many leftists in the West, with some deeming the concept irrelevant for understanding the dynamics of contemporary capitalism.
Marxist economist Prabhat Patnaik has been one of the leading voices countering this trend. In *A Theory of Imperialism*, a book he co-authored with Utsa Patnaik, Patnaik explores how a new form of imperialism is at work in the unfolding of the capitalist system.
In this exclusive interview for Truthout, Patnaik states the case for the continuing relevance of imperialism as an analytical construct for understanding and challenging effectively the logic and dynamics of contemporary capitalism.

*C.J. Polychroniou:* How do you define imperialism and what imperialist tendencies do you detect as inherent in the brutal expansion of the logic of capitalism in the neoliberal global era?

*Prabhat Patnaik:* The capitalist sector of the world, which began by being located, and continues largely to be located, in the temperate region, requires as its raw materials and means of consumption a whole range of primary commodities which are not available or producible, either at all or in adequate quantities, within its own borders. These commodities have to be obtained from the tropical and sub-tropical region within which almost the whole of the Third World is located; and the bulk of them (leaving aside minerals) are produced by a set of petty producers (peasants). What is more, they are subject to "increasing supply price," in the sense that as demand for them increases in the capitalist sector, larger quantities of them can be obtained, if at all, only at higher prices, thanks to the fixed size of the tropical land mass.

This means an *ex ante* tendency toward accelerating inflation as capital accumulation proceeds, undermining the value of money under capitalism and hence the viability of the system as a whole. To prevent this, the system requires that with an increase in demand from the capitalist sector, as capital accumulation proceeds, there must be a compression of demand elsewhere for these commodities, so that the net demand does not increase, and increasing supply price does not get a chance to manifest itself at all.

Such demand-compression occurs above all through the imposition of an income deflation on the petty producers, and on the working population in general, in the Third World. This was done in the colonial period through two means: one, "deindustrialization" or the displacement of local craft production by imports of manufactures from the capitalist sector; and two, the "drain of surplus" where a part of the taxes extracted from petty producers was simply taken away in the form of exported goods without any *quid pro quo*. The income of the working population of the Third World, and hence its demand, was thus kept down; and metropolitan capitalism's demand for such commodities was met without any inflationary threat to the value of money. Exactly a similar process of income deflation is imposed now upon the working population of the Third World by the neoliberal policies of globalization.

I mean by the term "imperialism" the arrangement that the capitalist system sets up for imposing income deflation on the working population of the Third World for countering the threat of inflation that would otherwise erode the value of money in the metropolis and make the system unviable. "Imperialism" in this sense characterizes both the colonial and the contemporary periods.

We recognize the need for a reserve army of labor to ward off the threat to the value of money arising from wage demands of workers. Ironically, however, we do not recognize the parallel and even more pressing need of the system (owing to increasing supply price) for the imposition of income deflation on the working population of the Third World for warding off a similar threat.

The fact that the diffusion of capitalism to the Third World has proceeded by leaps and bounds of late, with its domestic corporate-financial oligarchy getting integrated into globalized finance capital, and the fact that workers in the metropolis have also been facing an income squeeze under globalization, are important new developments; but they do not negate the basic tendency of the system to impose income deflation upon the working population of the Third World, a tendency that remains at the very core of the system.

*Those who argue that imperialism is no longer a relevant analytic construct point to the multifaceted aspects of today's global economic exchanges and to a highly complex process involved in the distribution of value which, simply put, cannot be reduced to imperialism. How do you respond to this line of thinking?*

Capitalism today is of course much more complex, with an enormous financial superstructure. But that paradoxically makes inflation even more threatening. The value of this vast array of financial assets would collapse in the event of inflation, bringing down this superstructure, which incidentally is the reason for the current policy obsession with "inflation targeting." This makes the imperialist arrangement even more essential. The more complex capitalism becomes, the more it needs its basic simple props.

I should clarify here that if "land-augmenting" measures [such as irrigation, high-yielding seeds and better production practices] could be introduced in the Third World, then, notwithstanding the physical fixity of the tropical land mass, the threat of increasing supply price — and with it, [the threat] of inflation — could be warded off without any income deflation. Indeed, on the contrary, the working population of the Third World would be better off through such measures. But these measures … require state support and state expenditure, a fact that Marx had recognized long ago. But any state activism, other than for promoting its own exclusive and direct interest, is anathema for finance capital, which is why, not surprisingly, "sound finance" and "fiscal responsibility" are back in vogue today, when finance capital, now globalized, is in ascendancy. Imperialism is thus a specifically capitalist way of obtaining the commodities it requires for itself, but which are produced outside its own domain.

The post-decolonization *dirigiste regimes* [regimes directed by a central authority] in the Third World had actually undertaken land-augmentation measures. Because of this, even as exports of commodities to the metropolis had risen to sustain the biggest boom ever witnessed in the history of capitalism, per capita food grain availability had also increased in those countries. But I see that period as a period of retreat of metropolitan capitalism, enforced by the wound inflicted upon it by the Second World War. With the reassertion of the dominance of finance, in the guise now of an *international* finance capital, the Third World states have withdrawn from supporting petty producers, a process of income deflation is in full swing, and the imperialist arrangement is back in place, because of which we can see once more a tendency toward a secular decline in per capita food grain availability in the Third World as in the colonial period.

There is a third way — apart from a greater obsession with inflation aversion and a yoking of Third World states to promoting the interests of globalized finance rather than defending domestic petty producers — in which contemporary capitalism strengthens the imperialist arrangement. It may be thought that the value of imports of Third World commodities into the capitalist metropolis is so small that we are exaggerating the inflation threat from that source to metropolitan currencies. This smallness itself, of course, is an expression of an acutely exploitative relationship. In addition, however, the threat to the Third World currencies themselves from a rise in the prices of these commodities becomes acute in a regime of free cross-border financial flows as now, which threatens the entire world trade and payments system and hence makes income deflation particularly urgent. Hence the need for the imperialist arrangement becomes even more acute.

*Not long ago, even liberals like Thomas Friedman of the New York Times were arguing that "McDonald's cannot flourish without McDonnell Douglas" (that is, the US Air Force). Surely, this is a crude version of imperialism, but what about* *today's US imperialism? Isn't it still alive and kicking?*

The world that Lenin had written about consisted of nation-based, nation-state-supported financial oligarchies engaged in intense inter-imperialist rivalry for repartitioning the world through wars. When [Marxist theorist] Karl Kautsky had suggested the possibility of a truce among rival powers for a peaceful division of the world, Lenin had pointed to the fact that the phenomenon of uneven development under capitalism would necessarily subvert any such specific truce. The world we have today is characterized by the hegemony of *international* finance capital which is interested in *preventing* any partitioning of the world, so that it can move around freely across the globe.

Contemporary imperialism therefore is the imperialism of international finance capital which is served by nation-states (for any nation-state that defies the will of international finance capital runs the risk of capital flight from, and hence the insolvency of, its economy). The US, being the leading capitalist state, plays the leading role in promoting and protecting the interests of international finance capital. But talking about a specific US imperialism, or a German or British or French imperialism obscures this basic fact.

Indeed, a good deal of discussion about whether the world is heading toward multi-polarity or the persistence of US dominance misses the point that the chief actor in today's world is international or globalized finance capital, and not US or German or British finance capital. So, the concept of imperialism that [Utsa Patnaik and I] are talking about belongs to a different terrain of discourse from the concept of US imperialism *per se*. The latter, though it is, of course, empirically visible because of US military intervention all over the world, in order to acquire a proper meaning has to be located within the broader setting of the imperialism of international finance capital.

Some incidentally have seen the muting of inter-imperialist rivalry in today's world as a vindication of Kautsky's position over that of Lenin. This, however, is incorrect, since both of them were talking about a world of national finance capitals which contemporary capitalism has gone beyond.

*The concept of imperialism originates with Hobson (who was not a Marxist), but it was Lenin, indeed, that put it at the center stage of Marxian international political economy. Marx himself did not use the term "imperialism," but there is plenty in* *his analysis that anticipates imperialism and globalization. How do you think Marx would interpret today's dynamics and contradictions of the global capitalist economy? Would he be using the term "imperialism"?*

There are, in fact, two Marxes. In *Capital* (I refer here to Volume I which Marx completed), the focus is on the sphere of production in a capitalist economy, which means an abstraction from its international setting. But in his numerous pieces on colonialism, many of which were written almost at the same time that he was writing *Capital*, and in his notes, Marx showed an acute awareness of the mechanics of colonial exploitation. He even talks about the "drain" of surplus from India. These writings of Marx, however, are less known; and since colonial exploitation did not get incorporated into the discussion of *Capital*, there is a general underestimation of the role of imperialism in the dynamics of capitalism even among Marxists, especially in the advanced countries.

It is also true that Marx had to rely on the material available at that time, which was not much and which came largely from colonial administrators with an axe to grind. He also, until quite late in his life, tended to over-emphasize the revolutionary role of capitalism vis-à-vis the earlier modes of production, and the sheer impact of its greater productiveness. For instance, in the *Manifesto*, he and Engels talk about the cheap prices of capitalist goods being the artillery through which all Chinese walls against their entry are battered down. As a matter of fact, in China itself there was very little demand for the cheap British textiles, even when Marx and Engels were writing this. To balance its trade, therefore (it imported much from China), Britain forced Indian peasants to grow opium and the Chinese to consume it. The Opium Wars were fought on this very issue. Marx's insights into colonial exploitation are particularly remarkable in the light of the paucity of information he had.

Given his absolute scientific honesty and openness to fresh evidence, I have no doubt that Marx would have given imperialism its proper role in the dynamics of capitalism (as distinct from simply recognizing capitalism's general annexationist drive, as in the *Manifesto*). And once this was done, perceiving an imperialist arrangement within the setting of contemporary globalization would have become merely the next inevitable step.

But it is not just fresh historical evidence that Marx would have taken note of. I believe that Marx's *theory* itself is incomplete without imperialism. Once we recognize the obvious fact that capitalism is not a vertically integrated system that produces all its required inputs (even if not within the same period) but depends on imports from "outside," some arrangement for preserving the value of money through an imperialist relationship becomes essential; and Marx would certainly have taken note of this fact.

*One final question: How should radical movements and organizations, in both the core and the periphery of the world capitalist economy, be organizing to combat today's imperialism?*

Obviously, the issue of imperialism is important not for scholastic reasons, but because of the praxis that a recognition of its role engenders. From what I have been arguing, it is clear that since globalization involves income deflation for the peasantry and petty producers, and since their absorption into the ranks of the active army of labor under capitalism does not occur because of the paucity of jobs that are created even when rates of output growth are high, there is a tendency toward an *absolute immiserization* of the working population. For the petty producers, this tendency operates directly; and for others, it operates through the driving down of the "reservation wage" owing to the impoverishment of petty producers.

Such immiserization is manifest above all in the decline in per capita food grain absorption, both directly and indirectly (the latter via processed foods and feed grains). An improvement in the conditions of living of the working population of the Third World then requires a *delinking* from globalization (mainly through capital controls, and also trade controls to the requisite extent) by an alternative state, based on a worker-peasant alliance, that pursues a different trajectory of development. Such a trajectory would emphasize peasant-agriculture-led growth, land redistribution (so as to limit the extent of differentiation within the peasantry) and the formation of voluntary cooperatives and collectives for carrying forward land-augmentation measures, and even undertaking value-addition activities, including industrialization.

Small Third World countries would no doubt find it difficult to adopt such a program because of their limited resource base and narrow home market. But they will have to come together with other small countries to constitute larger, more viable units. But the basic point is that the question of "making globalization work" or "having globalization with a human face" simply does not arise.

The problem with this praxis is that it is not only the bourgeoisie in the Third World countries, but even sections of the middle-class professionals who have been beneficiaries of globalization, who would oppose any such delinking. But the world capitalist crisis, which is a consequence of this finance-capital-led globalization itself, is causing disaffection among these middle-class beneficiaries. They, too, would now be more willing to support an alternative trajectory of development that breaks out of the straitjacket imposed by imperialism.



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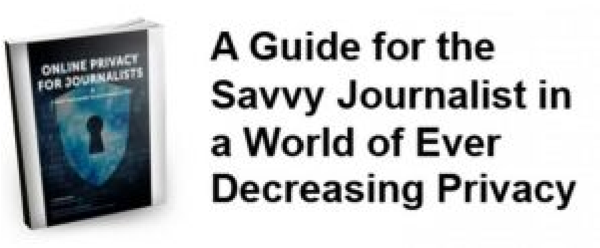
# Michael Dagan ~ Online Privacy Guide For Journalists 2017




Many veteran journalists, but not only these, surely noticed that we are all of a sudden bombarded again from all-over with mentions of Watergate. Books like George Orwell's 1984 are on display at bookstores and an air of danger to freedom of speech and freedom of the press is spreading slowly like a dark cloud over the Western Hemisphere, raising old fears.

When an American serving president accuses a former president of surveillance; when he prevents central US media outlets access – so far always granted, and taken for granted – to press conferences he holds; and when he incessantly knocks and accuses the media of being the country's enemy number one, it isn't surprising that memories of President Nixon surface up more with every self-pitying tweet about SNL, and that even Republican Senators such as John McCain express fear for the future of democracy.

And McCain is not alone. Many journalists whom I have spoken with recently, expressed concern for whatever lays ahead for the freedom of the press. At a time when it's possible to express the following statement – "Donald Trump controls the NSA" – and not be held a liar, anything's possible. Add that to the fact that recent news on CIA taught us that almost all encryption systems can be compromised, if someone has the perseverance to crack them – and you are en route to envisioning an utterly Dystopian world, where you cannot even get too comfortable laying on your sofa, in front of your own smart TV.

The good news is that it is nevertheless possible to make it difficult for anyone to try and intercept your emails, the text messages you're sending or your phone calls. You can take measures to make the lives of those who want to uncover your sources and the information being revealed to you, much harder. Of course, the degree of effort you're prepared to take to protect your privacy, your sources' anonymity and your data's safety, should be commensurate to the likelihood of a real threat, be that hacking or spying.

Read more: https://www.vpnmentor.com/blog/online-privacy-journalists/

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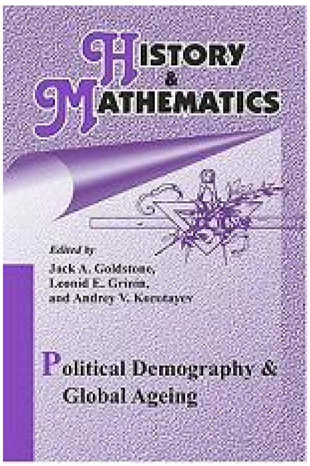
# Global Population Ageing, The Sixth Kondratieff Wave, And The Global Financial System




*Abstract*
Concerns about population ageing apply to both developed and many developing countries and it has turned into a global issue. In the forthcoming decades the population ageing is likely to become one of the most important processes determining the future society characteristics and the direction of technological development. The present paper analyzes some aspects of the population ageing and its important consequences for particular societies and the whole world. Basing on this analysis, we can draw a conclusion that the future

technological breakthrough is likely to take place in the 2030s (which we define as the final phase of the Cybernetic Revolution). In the 2020s – 2030s we will expect the upswing of the forthcoming sixth Kondratieff wave, which will introduce the sixth technological paradigm (system). All those revolutionary technological changes will be connected, first of all, with breakthroughs in medicine and related technologies. We also present our ideas about the financial instruments that can help to solve the problem of pension provision for an increasing elderly population in the developed countries. We think that a more purposeful use of pension funds' assets together with an allocation (with necessary guarantees) of the latter into education and upgrading skills of young people in developing countries, perhaps, can partially solve the indicated problem in the developed states.

*Keywords:* the sixth Kondratieff wave, the sixth technological paradigm, Cybernetic Revolution, population ageing, world finance, pension funds, human capital, developed countries, developing countries.

Human capital is one of the most important drivers of economic development whose contribution to the growth of production and innovations is constantly increasing. According to the OECD definition, human capital is 'the knowledge, skills, competencies and attributes embodied in individuals that facilitate the creation of personal, social and economic well-being' (OECD 2001: 18; see also Kapelyushnikov 2012: 6–7). Human capital is central to debates about welfare, education, health care, and retirement. However, we think that the latter (i.e., retirement) is less frequently debated than it should be. Meanwhile, in the West the rapid population ageing actually devaluates the national human capital in every developed country. There are certain grounds to expect that if the ageing generation is not substituted by a more numerous generation of young specialists, the share of the elderly population will increase and the human capital is likely to decline.

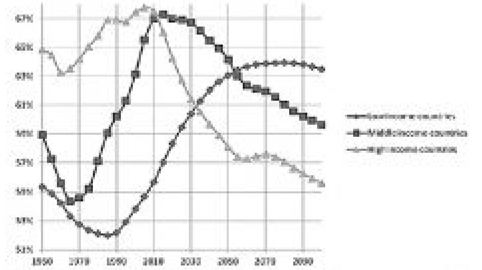


**Fig. 1.** The dynamics of the working age population percentage in the total population, 1950–2015, according to the UN medium forecast to 2100

*Source:* UN Population Division 2015.

Thus, while the human capital as well as its contribution to the economic development is significantly larger in the developed countries than in the developing ones, the situation with demographic structure of human capital is different. The developing countries' situation is significantly better at this point, and this can increasingly contribute to the economic competition between the First and Third worlds. We should also take into consideration the fact that the generation of highly educated pensioners in the developed states has increased the demands on society and they play a more active political role than the generation of uneducated 'old men' in the developing countries. While the West has apparently depleted its demographic dividend, many developing countries, in fact, are only in the process of its accumulation. And consequently, in this context they can get the most important advantage in the coming decades (see Fig. 1).

This also confirms the idea of growing convergence between the developed and developing countries that we adhere to, as the current differences in the demographic structure and potentialities of the demographic dividend will contribute to the fact that at least in the next two decades the developing countries' growth rates will be on average higher than those of the developed countries, although this process can proceed with certain interruptions (see Grinin 2013a, 2013b, 2013c, 2014, 2015; Korotayev and Khaltourina 2009; Khaltourina and Korotayev 2010; Korotayev, Khaltourina, Malkov et al. 2010; Korotayev and Bozhevol'nov 2010; Korotayev, Malkov et al. 2010; Malkov, Korotayev and Bozhevol'nov 2010; Malkov et al. 2010; Korotayev, Zinkina et al. 2011a; 2011b, 2012; Korotayev and de Munck 2013, 2014; Zinkina et al. 2014; Korotayev and Zinkina 2014; Korotayev, Goldstone, and Zinkina 2015; Grinin and Korotayev 2014a, 2014b, 2015a).

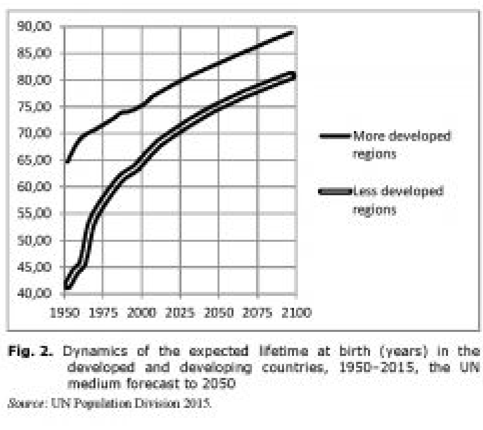


**Fig. 2.** Dynamics of the expected lifetime at birth (years) in the developed and developing countries, 1950–2015, the UN medium forecast to 2050
*Source:* UN Population Division 2015.

*Problems of Population Ageing and Their Possible Solutions*

The population ageing (and an increasing number of disabled people) as well as the change in the population age structure (see Figs 2–5) alongside with forthcoming progress in medicine, innovation technologies, and increasing life expectancy in the developed countries will also bring great problems associated with a) the scarcity of labor resources; and b) problems of pension support for the older population.

In some countries they are rather acute already today, but they are to become much more pressing.

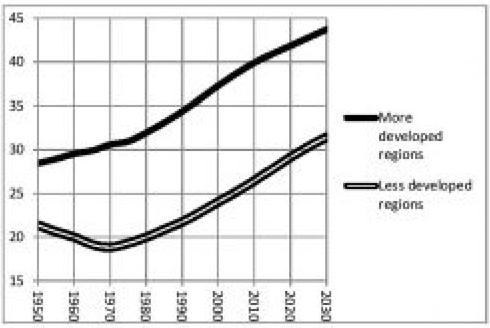



**Fig. 3.** Dynamics of the median age of population (years) in the developed and developing countries, 1950–2015, with the medium forecast of the UN till 2030
*Source*: UN Population Division 2015.

We would like to remind that if the median age of population of a given country equals, for example, 40 years, it means that half of the population of this country is younger than 40 years, and the other one is older.

As is shown in Figure 4, a rapid global increase in the number of retirement-age persons is expected just in the next 20 years when their number will actually double within a small historical period, thus it will increase almost by 600 million and the total number will considerably exceed a billion.

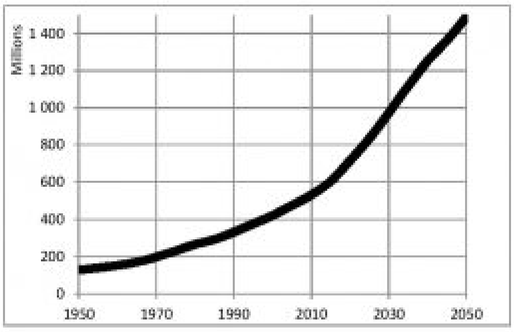



**Fig. 4.** Increasing number of persons of retirement age (over 65), 1950–2015, with the UN medium forecast till 2050
*Source*: UN Population Division 2015.

However, a rapid acceleration will be observed in particular as regards the population of people aged 80 years or more. While by 2050 the number of persons of retirement age will approximately double, the number of elderly people aged 80 years or more will practically quadruple, and in comparison with 1950 their number by 2075 will increase almost by 50 times (see Fig. 5).

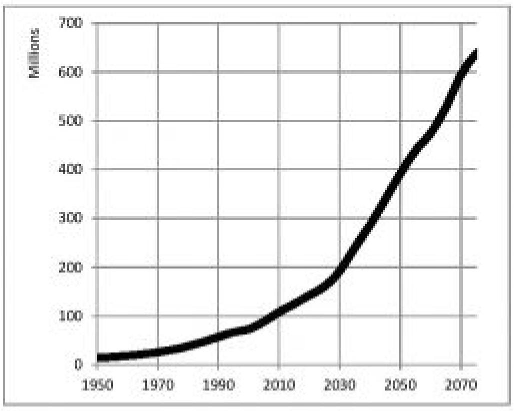



**Fig. 5.** Increase of global number of elderly people (aged 80 years), 1950–2015, with the UN average forecast till 2075
*Source*: UN Population Division 2015.

The First World countries will face particular difficulties in the next 20–30 years due to a rapid increase in the number of retirement-age people accompanied with an accelerated reduction of the active working age population, and in 20 years the number of the former will exceed the number of the latter (see Fig. 6).

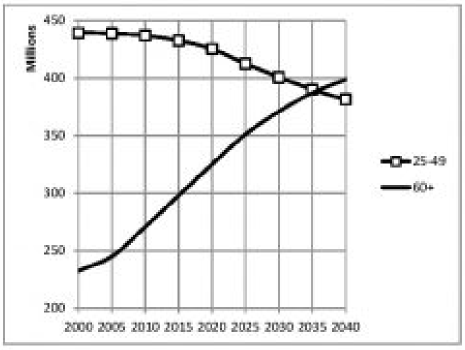



**Fig. 6**. Dynamics of active working-age (25–49 years) population and number of persons of retirement age (aged over 60) in the more developed countries of the world,[1] in millions, 2000–2015, with the medium forecast of the UN for the period till 2040

*Source*: UN Population Division 2015.

*Incl. note i*

*As one can notice, the number of older people per a working age adult will increase. This is very likely to lead to the decline in living standards and to the increasing tension between generations.*

*One should keep in* mind that the older population will form a major part of voters, thus making the politicians to follow their will. Besides, the highly educated generation of pensioners in the advanced countries has certain demanding social requirements and they are more politically active than the generation of uneducated old people in the developing states. The transition to such a sort of gerontocracy also poses many other threats to a society and to its homogeneity because older people are more apt to conservatism and are less inclined to purchase expensive products, novelties and property, as well as to saving and this may reduce the focus on innovation and lead to considerable change of the contemporary economic model based on the expansion of consumerism. In particular, the population ageing in Japan is one of the reasons of the current deflationary trend (for more details see Grinin and Korotayev 2014c, 2015b).

In theoretical terms, it is possible to distinguish the following possible solutions for the specified problems (here we suppose that all those solutions will be applied, whereas none of them can solve the problem comprehensively):

1. To increase the number of immigrants in the developed countries. Still the opportunities of this pattern are to a large extent depleted and besides, it leads to the erosion of the society's major ethno-cultural basis (today we face serious challenges in this direction).

2. To raise the retirement age (together with active rehabilitation of the disabled people). Against the background of the forthcoming revolution in

medical and rehabilitating technologies this looks like an important (although insufficient) resource.

3. The development of labor-saving technologies, in particular robot techniques for nursing, as well as elder and disabled people care (for more details see Grinin L. E. and Grinin A. L. 2015a, 2015b; Grinin A. L. and Grinin L. E. 2015b). This will allow a partial reduction of expenses for care and different services,but it can hardly bring a complete solution of the problem of scarce resources.

4. Finally, the development of the financial system opens another path to the solution of problems with the pension system. The population ageing is directly related to the financial system not only within national systems, but within the global financial system as well. Due to the increasing number of retirees the pension savings have become not simply important, but essential to a certain extent.

Besides, we should note that, on the one hand, today pension and other social funds are not isolated only within a framework of national system, but make an important component of the world finance in the long run. On the other hand, stable pension system substantially depends on the stable and efficient global financial system, even to a greater extent than on the national one.

In the present article we will consider the second and the third directions in the solution of the problem of global population ageing which are closely interconnected, and then we will pass to consideration of the fourth (financial) one.

*Global Population Ageing and the Sixth Technological Paradigm*

The Cybernetic Revolution is a great breakthrough from industrial production to production and services based on the operation of self-regulating systems.

Its *initial* phase dates back to the 1950–1990s. The breakthroughs occurred in the spheres of automation, energy production, synthetic materials, space technologies, exploration of space and sea, agriculture, and especially in the development of electronic control facilities, communication and information. We assume that the *final* phase will begin in the nearest decades, that is in the 2030s or a bit later, and will last until the 2070s.

We denote the initial phase of the Cybernetic Revolution as a *scientific-information* one, and the final – as a phase of *self-regulating systems*. So now we are in its modernization phase which will probably last until the 2030s.

This intermediate phase is a period of rapid diffusion and improvement of the innovations made at the previous phase (e.g., computers, internet, cell phones, etc.). The technological and social conditions are also prepared for the future breakthrough. We suppose that the final phase of the Cybernetic Revolution will lead to the emergence of many various self-regulating systems (for more detail see Grinin 2006, 2009, 2012, 2013d; Grinin A. L. and Grinin L. E. 2013, 2015a, 2015c; Grinin L. E. and Grinin A. L. 2015a, 2015c).

So we expect the beginning of the final phase of the Cybernetic revolution in the 2030s and 2040s. We assume that this technological breakthrough at first will be connected with a breakthrough in the field of new medical (and related to them) technologies. Thus, the increasing process of population ageing (as we will show further) will become one of the most important reasons of development of the final phase of Cybernetic Revolution.

This phase, according to our forecasts, will be imposed on the sixth Kondratieff wave (which will probably last from the 2020s to the 2060s). Therefore, the sixth technological paradigm (known also as technological system or style)**[ii]** will be connected with major transformations of the Cybernetic Revolution. We consider the widespread ideas that the basis of the sixth technological paradigm will be formed by the NBIC technologies (or NBIC-convergence), which are nano-bio-information and cognitive technologies (see Lynch 2004; Dator 2006;Pride and Korotayev 2008; Akaev 2010, 2011; see also Fukuyama 2002)**[iii]** to be only partially true.

We believe that the basis of the sixth technological paradigm will be significantly wider. In general medicine, bio- and nanotechnologies, robotics, information and cognitive technologies will become the leading technological trends. They will create a complex system of self-regulated production.

We could define this complex as MBNRIC-technologies, by the first letters of the listed technological directions. Thus, it makes sense to speak about medicine as the central element of the new technological system (see also Nefiodow 1996; Nefiodow L. and Nefiodow S. 2014). Medicine more than any other field has unique opportunities for merging all these new technologies into a single system. Besides, a number of demographic and economic reasons explain why this is precisely medicine that should start the transition to the new technological paradigm.

This will be supported by particularly advantageous situation developing by 2030 in economy, demography, culture, a standard of living, etc. that will define a huge need for scientific and technological breakthrough. By advantageous situation, we do not mean that everything will be perfectly good in economy; just on the contrary, everything will be not as good as it could be. Advantageous conditions will be created because reserves and resources for continuation of previous trends will be exhausted, and at the same time the requirements of currently developed and developing societies will increase. Consequently, one will search for new developmental patterns.

Let us describe the background.

– By this time the problem of population ageing will show up to the full (for more detail see the previous section). Moreover, this issue can turn simply fatal for democracies in developed countries (because the main electorate will be represented by elderly cohorts, and also the generation gap will increase [see also Fukuyama 2002]). In addition, the problem of population ageing will become more acute in a number of developing countries, for example, in China and even in India to a certain extent (about ageing in Asia see contributions of Park and Shin to this volume).

– The pension payments will become an urgent problem (as the number of retirees per an employee will increase) and at the same time the scarcity of labor resources will increase, which is already felt rather strongly in a number of countries including Russia (for more detail see Grinin and Korotayev 2015c, 2010; Korotayev and Bozhevolnov 2012; Korotayev, Khaltourina, and Bozhevol'nov 2011; Arkhangelsky et al. 2014; Korotayev et al. 2015). Thus, the problem of scarce labor and pension contributions will have to be solved in such a way that people physically could work for ten, fifteen and even more years (certainly here we can also face a number of social problems). This also implies the disabled people's adaptation for their fuller involvement into labor process due to new technical means and achievements in medicine (for more detail see Grinin L. E. and Grinin A. L. 2015b).**[iv]**

– Simultaneously, by this time, the birth rate in many developing countries will significantly drop (for example, such developing countries as China, Iran, or Thailand already experience below-replacement fertility). Therefore, the respective governments will begin (and some of them have already started) worrying generally not about the problem of restriction of population growth, but about promotion of population growth and population health.

– A huge volume of medical services in the world makes about 10 % of the GDP (and in a number of developed countries it makes more than 10 %, as, for example, in the USA – 17 % [calculated on the basis of World Bank 2015 data]).

The population ageing will make these volumes grow rather significantly.**[v]**
– The development in the Third World countries leads to the growth of a vast stratum of middle class, while poverty and illiteracy are reduced. As a result, the emphasis of these countries' efforts will shift from the elimination of unbearable living conditions to improvement of the quality of life, health care, etc. Thus, large opportunities open up for the development of medicine which will get additional funds.

So by the 2030s, the number of middle-aged and elderly people will increase; economy will desperately need additional labor resources while the state will be interested in increasing the working ability of elderly people, whereas the population of wealthy and educated people will grow in a rather significant way. In other words, the unique conditions for the stimulation of business, science and the state to make a breakthrough in the field of medicine will emerge, and just these unique conditions are necessary to start the innovative phase of revolution!
It is extremely important to note that enormous financial resources will be accumulated for the technological breakthrough, such as: the pension money whose volume will increase at high rates; spending of governments on medical and social needs; growing expenses of the ageing population on supporting health, and also on health of growing world middle-class. All this can provide initial large investments,high investment appeal of respective venture projects and long-term high demand for innovative products, that is, a full set of favorable conditions for a powerful technological breakthrough will become available.
In the context of population ageing problem we will consider some characteristics of the global financial system.

*The Crisis and the Characteristics of the Financial System*
The 2008 crisis and subsequent years aggravated both financial and economic,as well as some global social problems. One of the most important problems among them is the problem of secure social guarantees for rapid ageing population of the World System core. In each country the security of these guarantees is connected with stability of the world financial system.
Let us recollect some important reasons of the global financial economic crisis:
– Random and extremely rapid development of new financial centers and financial flows;
– Non-transparency of many financial instruments, which led to the actual

concealment of risks and their global underestimation;
– An excessive level of public debt in many developed and developing countries combined with ineffective use of credits.

They often also say that modern financial technologies are fundamentally deleterious and only bring the world economy into various troubles and that they are only beneficial to the financiers and speculators. Thus, it would hardly be an exaggeration to maintain that the global crisis, as well as other events, has demonstrated, in an especially salient way, the necessity for major changes in the regulation of international economic activities and movements of world financial flows.

Nevertheless, we believe that it is reasonable to speak not only about the negative role of the world financial flows. On the whole, new financial technologies decrease the risks in a rather effective way and expand opportunities to attract and accumulate enormous capitals, involve actors, and penetrate markets.

The positive effects of the new financial technologies consist in the following:

1. A powerful expansion of the range of financial instruments and products, which leads to the expanding opportunities to choose the most convenient financial instrument.
2. The standardization of financial instruments and products provides a considerable time-saving for those who use financial instruments; it makes it possible to purchase financial securities without a detailed analysis of particular stocks; this leads to an increase in the number of participants by an order of magnitude.
3. The institutionalization of the ways to minimize individual risks. Some financial innovations and new regulations help to minimize both the individual risks of unfulfilled deals and also of bankruptcies in the framework of certain stock markets.
4. The increase in the number of participants and centers for the trade of financial instruments. Modern financial instruments have made it possible to include a great number of people via various special programs, mediators, and structures.

We also suppose that new financial technologies and modern financial sector have also got such important positive functions as the ‘insurance’ of social guaranties at the global scale. The matter is that the rejection of the gold standard resulted in the movement of the function of the protection of savings from an ‘independent’ guarantor (i.e., precious metals) to the state. However, there was no state left for the capital owners to entirely rely on as on a perfectly secure guarantor.

The absence of secure guarantees *is especially important in terms of the ways to preserve pension and other social funds*.

The sharp increase in the quantity of capitals, the necessity to preserve them from inflation and to find their profitable application objectively pushed the financial market actors to look for new forms of financial activities. Generally, the faster are the movements and transformations of financial objects, the better is the preservation of capitals.

Another important point is the distribution of risks at the global scale. We observe growing opportunities to distribute risks among a larger number of participants and countries, to transform a relatively small number of initial financial objects into a very large number of financial products. This makes it possible to achieve the maximum diversification by allowing people to choose convenient forms of financial products and to change them whenever necessary.

The next point is the growth of financial specialization (including various forms of deposit insurance) that supports diversification and the possibilities for expansion.

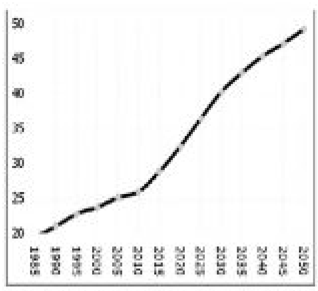



**Fig. 7.** Dynamics of number of pensioners aged 65 and older, per 100 working age adults aged 25–64 years in developed countries, 1985–2050 with medium forecast of UN for the period till 2050

*Source*: UN Population Division 2015.

In 2010, there was one pensioner per four working-age adults, whereas in 2025, according to the forecasts of the UN Population Division there will be less than three working-age adults per a pensioner in the developed countries, and there exist even more pessimistic forecasts (see Fig. 7). Who will fill the pension funds in the future? Who will fulfill the social obligations with respect to hundreds of millions of elderly voters?

Here one should take into account that most pension funds are concentrated not in the state pension funds, but in thousands of private (non-state) pension funds (OECD 2014b) that rather actively search for the most secure and profitable investments. The amounts of money concentrated in pension and other funds are enormous: dozens trillion US dollars (see, e.g., Shtefan 2008; OECD 2014a; 2014b, 2015; see also Fig. 8).

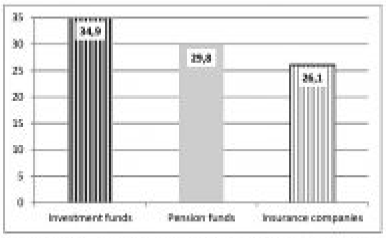



**Fig. 8.** Amounts of capital accumulated in the countries of OECD by 2013 by the main types of institutional investors (in trillions US Dollars)

*Source:* OECD 2014b: 7.

In 2012, the accumulations in pension funds of the OECD countries amounted 77.1 % of their GDP, but in 2013 this indicator grew to 84.2 % (OECD 2014b: 7).

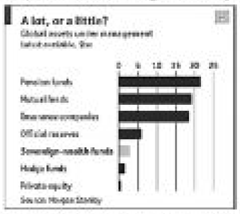



**Fig. 9.** Assets under management of various types of funds

*Source:* Economist 2008.

In 2012, the accumulations in pension funds of the OECD countries amounted 77.1 % of their GDP, but in 2013 this indicator grew to 84.2 % (OECD 2014b: 7).

Meanwhile, in the developing countries we observe a huge number of young adults; and it is extremely difficult to provide all of them with jobs and education (see Fig. 10).

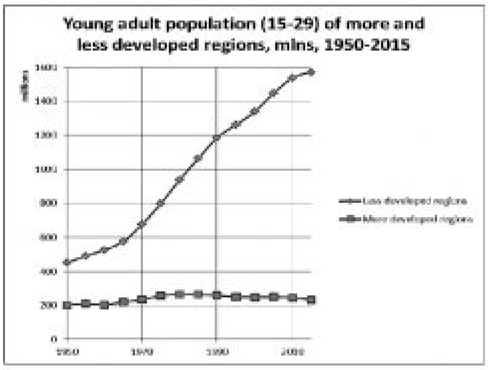



**Fig. 10.** Young population (aged 15–24 years old) of more and less developed regions, mlns, 1950–2015

*Source:* UN Population Division 2015.

It is difficult or even impossible to solve this task without active integration of the peripheral economies into the World System economy as well as without diffusion of capitals and technologies from the World System core; in its turn, such integration cannot be achieved without the development of the world financial system. The situation favors this in some respects because the number of pensioners in the developing countries is still relatively small, the social obligations with respect to them are relatively few, and only after a significant period of time the problem of the pensioners' support will become acute in those countries.

Consequently, the point is to involve pension and other social funds in boosting the developing countries' economies more actively.**[vi]** It will assist the latter to provide jobs and education for the young people at present and will multiply the funds in the future. In this case under certain agreements between developed and developing countries it will be possible to achieve a situation when the rising economies will allocate some assets to support the growing layer of older people in the West, the latter will act as a rentier in this case (recently Joseph Stiglitz has expressed similar ideas [Stiglitz 2015]).

Then, there will be no need in the direct migration of millions of young people from the Third World to the First one; thus, there could emerge a sort of solidarity between different generations of the global world. Of course, such a system will demand considerable measures with respect to security and reliability of such investments. But at the same time, it would provide a certain convergence of different countries' interests.

Thus, we may say that:
– The participation of pension and insurance funds in financial operations leads to the globalization of the social sphere.
– The countries poor in capital, but with large cohorts of young population, are involved more and more in a very important (though not quite apparent) process of supporting the elderly population in the West through the unification of the world financial system, its standardization, and the search for the ways to make it more fair and socially oriented.
– Modern financial assets and flows became global and international; a considerable amount of money circulates within this system (though, of course, not all its participants make equal profits).
– At the same time, one should realize that a considerable part of the circulating sums is the money from social funds (in particular from the pension ones) and their loss can lead to disasters with such consequences that are very difficult to predict.
– Safe management of the global capital (in addition to its obvious economic and social merits) assures the safe future for the elderly and those who needs social protection.
– Therefore, the problem of institutional support of financial globalization becomes more and more important.

Let us indicate some key points which clarify the opportunities and difficulties of the suggested scheme; besides, let us outline some of the most important institutional decisions which could help this scheme to function in practice.
*First.* The pension monies play a certain role in the financial system and depend on well-being and normal functioning of the latter. Money from pension funds is still one of the major systemic components of national and world financial systems. Actually, this means that these are just pension funds that remain one of the leading traders buying government bonds, and also actively buying shares and other securities at stock markets. While the conservative investment policy of

pension funds is quite reasonable in general, at the same time it makes them as well as many other subsystems of the financial system highly dependent on the manipulations of the Central Bank, rating agencies and other actors. Particularly, the income of pension funds has considerably decreased in recent years due to deflationary tendencies and low rates on the government debt securities (as the government pays low interests rates to pension funds on the most reliable debt bonds).

*Second.* Mounting crisis phenomena in financial system are able to radically undermine the well-being of pension funds. The latter have actively invested in securities; therefore, the cost of their assets largely depends on the price of securities. On the one hand, the governmental authorities and exchange players wish to manipulate this cost and its artificial high price (e.g., the so-called buyback transaction of the securities by firms), and on the other hand, in case of crisis the assets' slump can be quite serious. For example, while in 2007 the asset value of US pension funds amounted to 78.0 % of the American GDP, during the crisis in 2008 it dropped to 59.6 % of GDP. The situation returned to pre-crisis level only in 2013 (OECD 2015: Funded Pensions Indicators: Occupational pension funds' assets as a per cent of GDP); in other words, pension contributions have become entirely dependent on the economic situation. Therefore, we need some mechanisms of preserving accumulations, including the opportunity to lean on the world financial system.

*Third.* As we have said earlier, today the secure preservation of the value of accumulated funds depends on the speed of their circulation. However, finances do not exist by themselves, they can hardly break from the production base for a long time and has to rely on real production (the increasing separation of the financial system from production is one of the main problems of the current situation which is largely supported by the monetary doctrine). Thus, we face the necessity of driving the finances (and pension money) beyond national borders. Especially at present, since the production is rather actively moved to the developing countries. Therefore, no wonder that many pension funds invest into emerging markets to increase their income (OECD 2014a: 15). Only few funds do not invest in foreign assets, while some, on the contrary, invest a large amount of their capital abroad (*Ibid.*). Certainly, the foreign investments do not always imply investments into developing countries. Nevertheless, some investments are made, and thus, the proposed scheme already functions in a certain way. But we can face several serious problems.

First, this is most often 'short', in fact, speculative money, whereas generally

these are long-term investments that can serve a real source of economic development and income.
Second, this money is almost the first to leave the emerging markets because of their volatility (not least connected with the policy of FRS and ECB) and fully justified conservatism of pension funds; and this also increases the volatility.
Third, the emerging markets certainly offer less guarantees than the developed ones, and therefore, the cautiousness of the funds is fully justified.
Fourth. For an effective functioning of the proposed scheme some highlevel agreements are necessary. Here various forms could be used, for example, investment of money of pension funds in the assets of such largest international financial institutions, as the IMF, WB, ADB, etc. These investments would be non-voting, but the money would be much securer there, and special obligations could guarantee that these funds would be allocated to increase the level of education and qualification of young people in the developing countries.

It would be quite reasonable to develop some global organizations for the sake of cooperation between pension and other funds, as well as establishing common insurance funds that will make it possible to support countries in case of a crisis. One could establish an International Pension Fund or something of the kind which would realize financial transfers so that the assets of the 'older' population of some countries could help to raise the economy in the countries with 'young' population and to accumulate funds for donor countries for the future. Some specific arrangements between countries with certain guarantees for safety of funds would seem rather appropriate. In brief, there could be many options. But the main problem is that despite the fast population ageing, the versions of global solution for the problem are poorly considered.

The Russian philosopher, Alexander Zinoviev, deported to Germany in the 1970s, quite accurately described the Western society as a society of monetary totalitarianism (Zinoviev 2003) where the mechanism, realizing and preserving it, had reached enormous scales and had become one of the most important pillars of the society. This mechanism had formed in the period of the gold standard and after its cancellation the scale of financial economy had grown tremendously, having spread all over the world. In fact, a new huge sector of financial services has emerged which in some countries amounts to 25–30 % of their GDP. But the importance of this sector will increase in almost all countries, and will also involve their most important social functions.

Hence, the issue of the institutional support of the financial globalization becomes more and more important. We can speak about an extraordinary importance of the reliability and controllability of this system. Its changes should include the increasing coordination between governments and unified international legislation which regulates financial activities and movements. Besides, one should take into account that today the developed countries generally get more benefits from this system and constantly use it to solve their national issues (thus, affecting the whole world) and also they willingly use it as a means to impact other countries' economies.

We suppose that important guarantees for the future Western pensioners will consist in the development pattern of the global economy which should transform into a single organism. Thus, the global financial system would be come strong but will be used neither to get the developing countries under control nor as a means to collapse the Third World countries' economies, nor as a means of unwarranted sanctions and suppression of societies and regimes which the West considers uneasy. There should occur some transformations in the global financial system that would take into account the growing economies' interests and thus allow the developing countries to more actively use the social funds accumulated by the West. And at the same time, this will prevent certain governments from expropriating the invested funds.

Actually, the world needs a new system of financial-economic regulation at the global scale.

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NOTES

**[i]** More developed countries/regions according to the UN classification.

**[ii]** Within this approach every Kondratieff wave is associated with a certain leading sector (or leading sectors), technological system or technological style (see Korotayev and Grinin 2012; Perez 2002, 2010). For example, the third Kondratieff wave is sometimes characterized as 'the age of steel, electricity, and heavy engineering. The fourth wave takes in the age of oil, the automobile and mass production. Finally, the current fifth wave is described as the age of information and telecommunications' (Papenhausen 2008: 789).

**[iii]** There are also researchers (Jotterand 2008) who consider GRAIN (Genomics, Robotics, Artificial Intelligence, Nanotechnology) to be the leading set of the technological directions in the future.

**[iv]** About the influence of ageing on growth rates see the papers of Goldstone and Park and Shin in this volume.

**[v]** Some studies find that health care costs of patients aged 75–84 years are almost twice as large as the costs of 65–74 years old patients; and the expenses on patients of the 85+ age group increase by more than three times in comparison with the latter (Alemayehu and Warner 2004; Fuchs 1998). The cost of home care and short-term stay in the hospital also to a large degree depends on the patients' age (Liang et al. 1996).

**[vi]** It is worth noting that they already participate in this process. Thus, in the large private retirement funds surveyed in 2014 by OECD staff, an average of 36.6 % of all capital were invested abroad (OECD 2014a: 15), whereas more than a half of the surveyed large pension funds invested a part
of their capitals in developing economies (OECD 2014a: 13, 31, 43).

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