Climate Change and Social Conflicts

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Abstract

This article outlines the role of globalized mass media in the perception of environmental and social threats and its reciprocal conditionality in the globalized society. It examines the reasons why the global environmental crisis will not lead to a world-wide environmental movement for change of the basic imperatives of the world economic-political system. Coherency between globalized mass media and wide-spreading of consumer lifestyle exists despite the fact that it deepens the devastation of environment and social conflicts. Globalized mass media owned by transnational corporations are not only a part of the current global economic-political system, but also the prerequisite of its creation and existence, as well as social contradictions and conflicts.

Keywords

Climate changes – social conflicts – globalization – mass media – environmental movement.

1 Introduction

This article examines the globalization and environmental consequences of industrialism and the overexploitation of resources and pollution connected with it. Some of the consequences of the massive use of fossil fuels are climatic changes that increase the risk of water and food shortage, flooding, intense

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tropical storms, heat waves, droughts, sea-level rise causing the loss of coast-lines, and an increase in the speed of extinction of animal and plant species. All these phenomena influence also the form and intensity of social conflicts because for a majority of the population they become an existential risk threatening the basic requirements for life of individuals and communities. Despite this, there is no evidence of forming a massive environmental move-ment influential enough to be able to produce sufficient pressure to change the imperatives of the global industrial civilization. One of the reasons for this situation is limited opportunities for environmental movements to present their agenda in globalized media, which, on the contrary, directly or indirectly promote the consumer lifestyle. Based on William I. Robinson's (2014) global capitalism theory this article focuses on a critical analysis of reasons why the global environmental crisis will not lead to a worldwide environmental move-ment pressuring for change in the basic imperatives of the world economic-political system on a governmental or nongovernmental level.

An analysis of the global environmental crisis and especially reflection on climatic crisis is deeply wedded with critical analyses of global capital-ism. Global capitalism theory could be a powerful explanatory framework for understanding why the global environmental crisis will not lead to a world-wide environmental movement. An analysis of the global economic crisis and its consequences in the form of social and political crises shows that many of these crises resulted in violent conflicts. A deeper study of their causes shows that manifestations of the environmental crisis play significant role in these conflicts. It can even suggest that it is the cumulation of socio-economic and environmental crises phenomena, or as Leslie Sklair (2009) points out, crises of class polarization and ecological unsustainability, manifested in the form of social and political clashes that can lead not only to armed conflicts or collapses of political regimes, but also to the collapse of global industrial civilization.

In the current complex crisis of globalized world we should regard as more important the environmental crisis, or by the words of William I. Robinson (2014) "a crisis of sustainability rooted in an ecological holocaust that has already begun, expressed in climate change, peak oil, and the impending col-lapse of centralized agricultural systems in several regions of the world..." (pg. 5). The current crisis then could be characterized as a display of con-tradictions between the imperative of growth or further accumulation and imperative of sustainability (Sťahel 2016). So, today's crisis is really "a crisis of humanity... crisis that is approaching systemic proportions, threatens the abil-ity of billions of people to survive" (Ibid.). And that is not only because of social or environmental consequences of global capitalism, but mainly because, as Robinson (2014) writes, "The system is fast reaching the ecological limits of its reproduction." (pg. 17) So, it can even suggest that one of the fundamental

contradictions of global capitalism is the between environmental sustainability of global ecosystem and further accumulation processes of global capital.

When we look at possible consequences of the crisis of a global industrial civilization for humanity, the environmental consequences of capitalistic globalization and overexploitation of natural resources and pollution connected with it seem to be more serious. Local and regional ecological problems have become global, but we understand their global character only thanks to the scientific research done in the last 50 years. Then from the perspective of the global environmental crisis the process of economic globalization can be understood as a result of an effort to support further growth of production and consumption, which was limited by resources and capacities of national markets (Sťahel 2014:150).

One of the key difficulties of current situation is that almost all environmental threats, like the devastation of the environment and climate change, are global, but prevalent institutions and also theories and explanation frameworks are still local, mainly as a part of territorial state apparatuses. It means that most of the attempts to explain the current situation and identify real threats remain at a territorial-state level, as Robinson shows in his theory of global capitalism.

One of the preconditions of globalization is fast growth of communication technologies and media. Globalized mass-media enabled on the one hand a broader awareness of a global character of the majority of the environmental and social threats, but on the other hand it also enabled an effective trivialization, questioning, and marginalization in the public discourse; this all by globally spread media products that directly or indirectly manipulate people's consciousness. Worldwide promoting and spreading of the culture-ideology of consumerism and transnational culture-ideological practices (Sklair 1995) could not be possible without globalized mass-media, which are in the last few decades owned or controlled mostly by transnational corporations. Reflection on the current crisis of the global industrial civilization therefore must take into account the influence of globalized media on spreading the consumerist lifestyle and on creating artificial needs, which in turn contributes to devastation of environment and to the increase of production of greenhouse gases.

2   Territorial or Transnational State

From a socio-political and also environmental point of view the key phenomenon seems to be the phenomenon of a global market or global economy that is organized according to the imperatives of the global capitalism

(see Robinson 2004 and Jung et al. 2015). Together with the global mass-media they de facto prevent the institute of the territorial[1] (national) state to effectively perform most of its traditional activities, which leads to the legitimacy crisis of institution of territorial state as such. As Robinson (2004) shows in his theory of global capitalism, institution of national state faces two processes—forced transformation and the rise of supranational institutions (pp. 99-100), which in the end create a transnational state or transnational constellation. But among the general public and also in the theoretic discourse the dominant concept is a nation or a territorial state paradigm, and political and public discourse is still focused on nation-state problems, possibilities, and interests. The ability to reflect and understand one's own situation from a transnational perspective is very rare. In short, reflections and reactions on the current crisis and related phenomena such as social and environmental devastation are still locked in a state-centrism approach, but most of today's problems and threats have a global character. Hence, we can agree with Robinson, that the analysis of a state cannot remain at a national or territorial state level, but there are still lot of situations in which the existing state apparatuses are the only ones at the disposal. For instance, the talks underway about an agreement that would replace the Kyoto Protocol consider the current territorial states as subjects endowed with the responsibility and capacity to regulate the production of pollution, i.e. subjects that can commit to lower emissions of greenhouse gases on their territory (Moellendorf 2009). The documents concerning the problem of climatic change work with the amount of emissions produced by individual states even though these states have—in consequence of globalization and liberalization of the world trade—less and less possibilities to influence or regulate economic activities on their territories. But these activities are exactly the source of greenhouse gas emissions. Nevertheless, there is a lot of evidence that two-thirds of global anthropogenic carbon dioxide and methane emissions that occurred between 1854 and 2010, were caused by only 90 corporations (Heede 2014). It shows that the approach concentrating on the corporation responsibility for the amount of greenhouse gas emissions is much more eligible than the state-centered approach[2] (Goldenberg 2013).

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1   The term national state caused conflicts in many ethnically diverse countries that in many cases developed into bloody ethnic cleansings. Therefore, I prefer to use the term territorial state as an opposite to the term transnational state.

2   It is questionable whether the idea to replace this approach focused on monitoring greenhouse gas emissions by corporations could be successful. Regardless of the question to what extent we consider data given by corporation reliable. On one hand here is a possibility to monitor the amount of emissions produced by individual corporations, just as we can

But at the end of 2015 according to the agreement adopted at the Paris climate change summit, the nation-state or interstate framework is still used (UN 2015). The states are to be responsible for decreasing greenhouse gas emissions, but at the same time, their means to restrict economic activities producing greenhouse gas emissions by legislation and its state apparatuses are limited.

This approach is an example of one of the contradictions of the current economic-political system. On the one hand there are globalized phenomena of trade and media and globalized social and environmental threats, and on the other hand the enforcement of any legislative regulation is largely possible only through the institutions and apparatuses of a territorial state. It doesn't seem possible that in the foreseeable future this state would be replaced by a new institution that would be at least just as effective as the status quo. Moreover, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions will not be possible without the state enforcement apparatus that could prevent the catastrophic climate change in time.

Globalization, or its consequence in the form of a transnational state or transnational situation, activates also its opposite—a wave of isolationism, or as Ulrich Beck calls it "renationalization". According to Beck (2010a), the ongoing climate changes have highlighted even more the connection of deepening social inequality with social and environmental risks (pg. 258), but on the other hand despite the global character of environmental risks and threats the efforts to manage them remain on the state and international level. Beck (2010b) criticizes this as "methodological nationalism" (pp. 168-170). Currently, instead of efforts to search for a common solution to the risks of modernization, we see efforts to formulate and enforce rather individual solutions—so, the classic national sovereignty bases its strategies of protection against risks by shifting them onto others (Beck 2015). According to Beck, there is a great chance of deepening the existing social and political conflicts because of a threat that the states, in order to avert their own collapse, resign their international commitments, for instance in the area of human rights or climate change

monitor their profit or sales, on the other hand corporations show us how effective they can be in getting around any legislation. A classic example is the Volkswagen emissions scandal from 2015. This global automaker fitted defeat devices in their cars, which allowed them to underreport the real amount of emissions produced during emissions tests. This showed that the real amount of emissions was higher than expected in climatic models, but it also showed that corporations have no problem getting around legislation even in countries with a complex environmental legislation. The whole system of emission controls of cars was introduced in an effort to lower negative impacts of motoring on the environment, more precisely to regulate environmental risks produced by cars by legislation and technology, which proved to be ineffective.

mitigation, and try a new form of isolationism. One of the consequences of globalization pressures and environmental threats are also different types of religious fundamentalisms, which succeed in spreading their influence by using the most up-to-date communication technologies and mass-media.

3   Environmental and Social Consequences

One of the consequences of capitalist globalization connected with the massive use of the fossil fuels are climatic changes that increase the risk of water and food shortage, of flooding and intense tropical storms, heat waves, droughts, sea-level rise causing loss of coastlines (IPCC 2013), and they also increase the speed of extinction of animal (McLellan et al. 2014) and plant species.[3] But the phenomenon of climate change is not only one form of degradation of the environment. Just as dangerous are processes such as biosphere integrity loss (biodiversity loss), novel entities (chemical pollution), stratospheric ozone depletion, ocean acidification, biogeochemical flows (linkage between phosphorus and nitrogen cycles), land-system change (deforestation, forest degradation and agricultural practices), freshwater use (overexploitation of water resources), and atmospheric aerosol loading (Steffen et al. 2015). All these phenomena influence also the form and intensity of social conflicts because for the majority of the population they become an existential risk threatening the basic requirements for life of individuals and communities. This is happening mainly in developing countries of the tropical regions where the climate changes have affected the rhythm of periods of rain and drought to which the inhabitants of these countries have been used to for hundreds of years. Traditional agriculture using knowledge gathered for generations cannot support them anymore. Moreover, large climatic impacts are expected to be experienced in tropical regions where there are a great many poor people "and, the poor will have fewer resources to cope with droughts, inundation by oceans, river flooding, tropical storms, and disease" (Moellendorf 2014:17). Therefore adding to the traditional social conflict between poverty and wealth is another dimension—environmental. Unequal distribution of social risks is connected with unequal distribution of environmental risks.

   In developed industrial countries the social conflicts are still mainly perceived as conflicts leading to a better, or at least a stable, social status, or an achieved level of social rights. In countries of the global south these conflicts have become existential because the loss of social status often means the

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3   Vertebrates now disappear 114 times faster than only a short time ago. See Ceballos et al. 2015.

loss of access to the basic requirements of life—to water, food, or housing. Social conflicts are thus reduced to a struggle for survival, which would mean that all the social relationships and regulations will be reduced to the right of the strongest, or the Hobbes' natural condition. The struggle for survival of the socially excluded often means environmental degradation—e.g. deforestation, intensified pumping of water from a local well or spring—or an escape to a more developed part of the world where they are often refused as economic migrants.[4] Requests of environmental or climatic refugees for asylum are rejected because they are not politically persecuted, only their environment has changed to such an extent it doesn't allow simple physical reproduction of all members of the local community.[5] However, international agreements or national legislations do not regard these as reasons to grant asylum.[6] Even though the number of conflicts caused or deepened by climate changes or by consequences of environment devastation is growing every year.

Connections between climatic fluctuations and interpersonal and intergroup conflicts are well known from the past. "If future populations respond

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4   It is strange, especially in the European Union, which declared freedom of movement as one of its basic values, but in reality, as Robinson (2014) emphasizes, "Yet workers do not enjoy the transnational mobility that capital and capitalists have achieved" (pg. 51). Contradiction of free movement of capital and restricted freedom for relocation for a work force is increasingly manifested in the growing stream of people trying to get from developing to developed countries or regions at any price. This internal contradiction of global capitalist system is even more deepened by the widely used rhetoric of equality as the basic thesis of human rights concept, which is in strong opposition in everyday experience of majority of humanity.

5   Significant is the case of Ioane Teitiota's family from Kiribati which has "fought numerous legal battles to stay in New Zealand as climate change refugees rather than return to the island nation, which is threatened by rising sea levels," (Dastgheib 2015) but finally, all his efforts to persuade New Zealand's authorities to mark him and his family status as climate change refugee failed and Teitota was deported from New Zealand.

6   The Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, also known as the 1951 Refugee Convention, doesn't define the term "climatic refugee". International Organization for Migration estimates that the number of so-called environmental migrants or climatic refugees will increase to 200 million by 2050. Other estimates say that approximately a billion people will be affected by the climatic changes. But fast melting of alpine glaciers only in the Himalayas threatens almost 2 billion people living in river basins of rivers fed by these glaciers. The threat lies in the lack of drinking water and the inability to produce food because growing basic food depends mostly on the river water. If this threat should become real it would very likely lead to a mass migration. This could lead to violence that would destabilize the whole region. Large areas with a big population at the foothills of the South American Andes are also dependent on the water from alpine glaciers, but of course, there are other similar areas. See also (Morrissey 2012).

similarly to past populations, then anthropogenic climate change has the potential to substantially increase conflicts around the world, relative to a world without climate change" (Hsiang 2013). This is confirmed by events from the past few years, when, for example in northern Africa and Middle East a combination of growing population and increasing food prices[7] on the one hand, and a decreasing ability to grow or import enough food or to supply people with water (de Châtel 2014) on the other hand, escalated social conflicts into civil, ethnic, and religious wars (Pallazo 2014). These conflicts strengthened the flow of refugees from Africa and the Middle East to Europe and their number, along with their need for accommodation, fresh water, and food caused more conflicts in countries such as Greece, Italy, and Spain. Southern European countries have their own serious social, economic, and environmental[8] problems as well that refugees deepen. An effort for these countries to transfer at least some of the refugees to other European Union countries caused in the summer and fall of 2015 a series of political conflicts among the member states of the EU, but in many of these countries they intensified the already existing internal political conflicts between defenders and opponents of immigration.[9] The pressure of the population growth, along with the growth of consumption expectations,[10] will tone up existing contradictions and conflicts in societies (Sťahel 2016) and between societies.

4 Unused Technological Possibilities and Role of Media

Technologies using renewable sources of energy could probably significantly contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and they could also

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7 The global food crisis, which started in 2007, is caused by a combination of climate change and its consequences in long-term droughts and, as Robinson (2014) points out, "the frantic speculation in global commodities markets, especially energy and food markets, that provoked a spike in world prices in 2007 and 2008 (and again in 2012 and 2013) and sparked 'food riots' around the world" (pg. 147).

8 As O'Hagan (2015) pointed out "the Mediterranean countries currently trying to cope with migrants from other parts of the world may eventually have a migrant crisis of their own. One day there could conceivably be Italians and Greeks in camps in Calais, as their own countries become even hotter and more arid."

9 To the Rich North among other things return not only products such as pesticides in food, but also social problems caused by the commercial and energetic policy of the industrialized countries of the North.

10 "The supply of all resources is finite. Yet, the expectation of governments, and their citizens, is that growth is required and desirable. Growth is the norm" (Pallazo 2014).

contribute to mitigation, not only climate change and devastation of environment, but also of the problem of a shortage of source, more precisely the energy poverty, which significantly affects mainly inhabitants of developing countries. The use of renewable energy sources doesn't reach its capacities and capacity possibilities of producers of these technologies. Besides the reasons pointed out by Jerry Harris,[11] one of the other reasons can be a limited opportunity of environmentalists to present their findings and proposals of overcoming the environmental crisis in media.

Globalized corporate media, more precisely, the global infotainment industry or wider "cultural industries" owned by transnational corporations are a part of and, at the same time, a prerequisite to creation and existence of the current global economic-political system. "Ownership and control of television, including satellite and cable systems, and associated media like newspaper, magazine and book publishing, film video records, tapes, compact discs, and a wide variety of other marketing media, are concentrated in relatively few very large TNCs" (Sklair 1999:148). Thus, globalized corporate media are part of transnational capital conglomerates, and as such are organized in accordance with imperatives of transnational capitalist system and have a key influence on its legitimization. Mass-media are one of the most influential apparatuses for ideological campaigns necessary to ideological reproduction of transnational capitalist class, apparatuses which are allowed "to dehumanize the victims of global capitalism as dangerous, depraved, and culturally degenerate Others, as criminal elements posing a threat to society" (Robinson 2014:95). Furthermore, as Robinson (2014) adds, "At the same time the culture of global capitalism attempts to seduce the excluded and abandoned into petty consumption and fantasy as an alternative to placing social or political demands on the system through mobilization" (pp. 95-96). All this is possible only because of the power and influence of global mass-media networks, which can spread these kinds of messages in almost all the countries in the world and can lead global ideological campaigns. According to Robinson: "These ideological campaigns deflect

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11   Increased investments to these technologies caused a decrease of their price and their profitability. The global economic crisis after 2008 led to a decreased demand and at the same time to the decrease of subsidies for building and using renewable energy sources, which led to a crisis from overproduction in this industry. Since this segment follows the imperative of growth too, investors reduced the production capacities and dismissed employees in a time when the more and more serious consequences of climatic changes would require an expedited transformation to a carbonless economy. Moreover, the lobbying of the classic power engineering based on fossil fuels is much more successful, so the subsidies for the extraction of fossil fuels are higher than subsidies for renewable sources of energy (see Harris 2011, 2014, 2016).

attention from the sources of social deprivation and channel the insecurities associated with capitalist globalization onto the marginalized groups" (pg. 96). In other words, mass-media allows the presenting and promoting interests of opinions and pictures of a world that are in accordance with the interests of transnational corporations. These interest and interpretation frameworks are often in contradiction with the public interest or interests and needs of the majority. Especially from the perspective of global environmental crisis by the constant presentation of a consumer lifestyle as a natural attitude and a desired condition, mass-media in fact negate all the efforts to create a broad environmental movement on which political initiatives reflecting global environmental threats could lean on. Furthermore, media by direct and indirect marketing and advertisements promote not only products and services, but also a lifestyle which deepens the dependence of individuals on the current economic-political system and oligopoly or monopoly transnational corporations. In the words of Leslie Sklair, they are spreading the culture-ideology of consumerism. The inhabitants of developed and developing countries are from early childhood pushed to the highest consumption by advertisements and also by entertainment programs. In addition, the inhabitants of developing countries adopt consumer bad habits and consumer expectations of developed countries through imported media products, instead of avoiding their mistakes. The most watched media don't promote and often don't even inform that there is a possibility to reduce the greenhouse gas production and to gain a greater extent of independence from monopolistic providers of energy by installing small decentralized devices that produce energy from renewable sources as the sun, wind, or biomass—which is technically possible on an individual as well as local level.[12] Media often even lead campaigns against these technologies, because spreading of these technologies is against the interests of giant energy companies, which are mainly owned by transnational corporations. Public service media, if they exist at all, are not able to balance the stream of advertisement and consumerism spread by commercial transnational media corporations; they often take an active part by trying to get the biggest share on the home advertising market.

Alternative information sources about solutions and goals of environmental movements, about possibilities of reducing emissions and dependence on energetic monopoly that produce energy mostly from fossil fuels or nuclear energy (so by burdening the environment) turn out to be ineffective. Moreover, they cause contradictions in people's convictions because they in

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12   This would enable cities and small towns to gain an energetic self-sufficiency, which most of the towns still had in the middle of the last century.

fact offer different, many times even a totally opposite picture of the world and the threats it faces than the mainstream media form. The most influential mass-media are dealing more with the economic, social, and political crisis phenomena than the environmental. The fear of unemployment, devaluation of savings or social/health security then pushes out most of the problems connected with the ongoing devastation of the environment and climatic changes from the public and political discourse. Even in a discussion about a growing number of refugees are rarely arguments pointing out that among the main reasons of this growing number are such phenomena as a decrease of arable land, disappearing or pollution of water sources, expansion of deserts, rising of the sea level, or decimation of population of sea animals by an excess of fishing industry.

5   Environmental Movements and Information Struggle

The huge influence of mass-media and commercial film and TV production (culture industries) has formed ideas about the world, consumer expectations, and the whole lifestyle of generations born since 1970s. This significantly contributed to the fact that after the boom of the environmental movement in 1960s and 1970s, which together with the peace movement and the human rights movement clearly influenced the public and political discourse (Drengson, Devall, and Schroll 2011), so these movements slowly declined. Moreover, the tools for overcoming the third big economic crisis that broke out in 1970s were liberalization, privatization, and globalization. Neoliberal reforms, extensive privatization and financialization of the world economy led in 2008 to yet another big economic and, subsequently, to a social and political crises that gradually affected the whole world (Sťahel 2013). Public support for these politics or in other words legitimization of these kinds of dehumanization, desocialization, financialization, and oligarchization of public space would not be possible without massive involvement of mass-media corporations. So, it is true that territorial or national state is important when it is needed "to undertake the type of internal strategic debate, the consensus-building processes, the consensual mechanisms" (Robinson 2014:122), but all these processes or at least their results have to be presented to the public as the only ones that are rational or necessary. Mass-media are one of the most expedient apparatus for this task.

From the environmental point of view these events and processes even more contributed to a diversion of the public interest from the problems presented by the environmental movement. However, without a broad environmental

movement on national and transnational levels will be all agreements (if any are made) on protection of endangered species, biotopes, or on reduction of greenhouse gas emissions[13] only hardly realized, or enforceable.

For example in Slovakia is the environmental movement still more protectionist than political, despite the fact that after 1989 the Green Party[14] was established. Environmental movement in Slovakia is fragmented into local civic activities that are created mainly as a reaction to an investment plan—an effort to build a water or heat power plant, a road, build a dump site, incineration plant, etc. If it engages as a whole, the movement only raises demands to a partial adjustment of energy, waste, transport, agricultural, and water management policy and therefore it also fails. The complex concept of environmentally sustainable society, or at least carbonless economy, is missing, as well as the opportunity to present it to the general public in media.[15] Efforts to improve the situation by solving partial problems within existing economic

13   At the same time it becomes apparent that even by limiting the 2°C increase of the global temperature, there is no guarantee to protect people from extreme weather events and sea-level rise by several meters and the need to leave most of the coastal cities. "The economic and social cost of losing functionality of all coastal cities is practically incalculable" (Hansen et al. 2015).

14   Another complication is that Green Party in Slovakia was from its beginning mostly right-wing. The Green Party was related to environmental movement, which formated during previous regime and because of the fact that it was also a part of anti-communist opposition, right-wing party was dominant. The party got into parliament last time in elections in 1998 when within neoliberal reforms, which preferred market fundamentalistic approach, the party had internal conflicts. Mainly because it was a part of right-wing government, which willingly supported the following industrialization of country and privatization of public services despite of its social and environmental consequences. Slovakian environmental movements are in a similar conflict, because their members are often right-wing voters who support neoliberal reforms and market fundamental discourse—activities and lifestyle which realization have often negative affects to the environment.

15   In the last 25 years the Slovak media went through similar development as other countries from the previous Eastern Bloc. After cancellation of state monopoly a lot of commercial media were established and their owners were mostly transnational media corporations. Many of them recently sold their shares to home oligarchs and financial groups who admit that their goal is to control their possible critics. These critics are often environmental activists who criticize e.g. megalomaniac ski resort centers, which are in Slovakian national parks built by financial groups who own several influential media in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Public media are exposed to long-term pressure to gain sources from commercial activities, so they are forced to race with commercial media for share on marketing and advertising. Altogether the media is constantly promoting the ideology of growth and consumerism despite of its irrationality. Alternative concepts like

and political system are failing because the environmental movement within neoliberal discourse cannot offer at least a theoretical concept of financing these measures. It acts more against than for something. Their arguments are usually about a threat of pollution or a decreased quality of the environment. In confrontation with a neoliberal discourse of political and economic elites it cannot get a character of a broader movement, not even such as aroused as an opposition to the former communist regime. At the same time, the current elites trivialize or refuse even those partial demands of environmentalists with almost the same rhetoric as the representatives of the communist regime. The rhetoric being that these demands would lead to a slowdown of economic growth, and decrease of employment and living standards. However, if these movements fail on local and national levels—and they do fail even in informing about the real threats or existing technologies which could mitigate these threats and they also fail in offering an alternative picture of world to the corporate mass-media presentation of reality—they will not very likely succeed globally.

But without such a movement the political institutions needed for realization or enforcement of the content of agreements, like the Convention on Climate Change from Paris, will not be created or they will not have enough democratic legitimacy or real authority to enforce the necessary changes in industry, trade, and consumption as there hasn't been so far and will be not enough political will to enforce the necessary legislative changes. This kind of enforcement will primarily be necessary in developed countries, because, as Sklair (2009) emphasizes, "The crisis of ecological unsustainability dictates that this will entail reductions in consumption for those who consume the most all over the world" (pp. 87-88). The problem is that those who consume the most all over the world already have lot of apparatuses for avoiding the legislative regulations in their hands.

Only a massive environmental movement could be influential enough to be able to produce sufficient pressure on the change of imperatives of the global industrial civilization. Only this kind of environmental movement or by the words of Jerry Harris (2016) "people's movement for sustainability, democracy and social justice" will enable the imperative of growth to be replaced by the imperative of sustainability.[16] This is the only way to create a legislation that prefers the protection of the environment before the market (industry, trade, and banking). Without a legislation frame on the national, regional (EU) as

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zero growth, the right to relocation or common ownership of the Earth (See Risse 2009) did not even get space for presentation in public media in Slovakia.

16   For more about the concept of imperative of sustainability, see Sťahel 2016.

well as global (UN) levels, all the agreements in this area are doomed to the same fate as the Kyoto Protocol. Moral appeals of the environmental ethics, activities of environmentalist organizations and signed international agreements failed to stop the increase of the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, moreover, they do not stop or at least slow down extinction of different animal and plant species. Quite the opposite, in these and other indicators of the quality of environment the negative trend continues, even accelerates.

6   Conclusion

Globalization processes are mostly asserted without democratic legitimacy. Their direct and indirect, secondary, many times not intended consequences mainly in the form of environmental devastation and climatic changes, threaten the existing political system of constitutional democracy and also the basic preconditions of life of the ever-growing population. This deepens the inner conflict of the system which, on one hand, proclaims universal human rights beginning with the basic one—a right to live—but at the same time it commodities all precondition of life including the right to water, nutrition, and shelter. It contradicts not only the principles of democracy, but also the basic ideals of humanism. But, as Leslie Sklair (1999) emphasizes, "The issue of democracy is central to the advance of the forces of globalization and the practices and the prospects of social movements that oppose them, both local and global" (pg. 161). However, the more and more clear suspension of democratic processes and institutions and their replacement by transnational technocratic and financial institutions, as can be seen in the case of ignoring the 2015 election and referendum results in Greece, can lead to the fact that even a broad environmental movement with clearly formulated ecologic and social requirements (e.g. to a politics supporting decentralized production of the energy from sun and wind) will be simply ignored. In such a case an open conflict will be necessary. It would mean an intensified conflict that can be identified, for now on an ideological level. At present the environmental movements are losing this conflict due to—to a certain extent—limited access to media. Mainly in Central European countries media give less space to environmental issues than in Western European countries. Information about increasing rate of extinction of species, rising sea level and global temperatures, as well as concentration of greenhouse gases are presented like a science speculation or even curiosity. Furthermore, in comparison with range and periodicity of appearance of products, which support overconsumption

and culture-ideology of consumerism is information about environmental threats and risks as well as mitigation options for overcoming still only occasional. Without extensive and frequent informing and presentation of alternative lifestyles, as well as concepts and technology, the chance for the environmental movement to get support from the public, which will be enough for enforcement of necessary political and legislative changes in a democratic way, is very small.

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