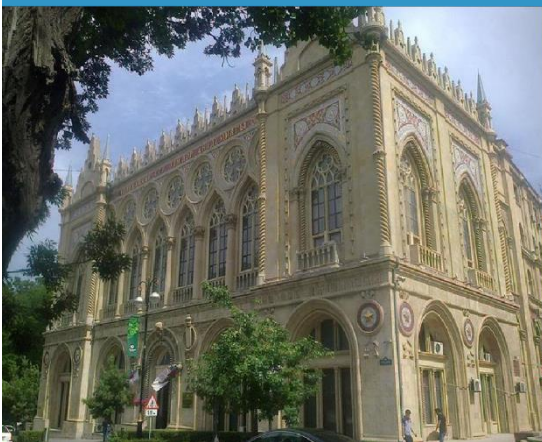


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主办单位：
湖州师范学院

地址：
湖州师范学院跨文化
研究中心（浙江省湖州
市二环东路 759 号）

邮箱：
02546@zjhu.edu.cn

电话：
0572-2321033

邮政编码：
313000

主编：
李姬花
教育学博士，副教授

湖州师范学院
（中国）

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UDC: 3/33+1

Ruzanna Arutyunyan,

PhD; SAIT

CEO WAVE Digital marketing

(Canada)

Oksana Petinova,

Doctor of Sciences, Professor;

The South Ukrainian National Pedagogical University

named after K. D. Ushinskiy,

(Ukraine)

pob@pnpu.edu.ua

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1871-1201>

SOCIO-ECONOMIC IDENTIFICATION OF THE UKRAINIAN ECONOMY AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE PANDEMIC CRISIS

The article analyzes the main participants in the book by K. Schwab and T. Malleret «COVID-19: a big reset» in order to assess the current processes and the possible prospects for the post-COVID development of the global and Ukrainian economy. The macroeconomic signs of economic development and the structural phenomena of the national economy that developed in the pre-COVID period and intensified by the pandemic crisis are analyzed. Critical assessments of the «window of opportunity» for the restoration of the economic development model (according to K. Schwab) and the transition to the «new normal». Certain prerequisites for the transition of the digital economy, its stages of development and possible consequences.

Keywords: pandemic crisis; «great reboot»; COVID-19, reindustrialization; new reality; post-COVID development; digitalization; digital revolution.

Introduction. The coronavirus pandemic has radically changed the socio-economic space at all levels – individual, national and global, and has given rise to many forecasts of the post-COVID development of mankind, including in the form of a «great reset» according to K. Schwab. And we raised the question of whether the pandemic would open a «window of opportunity» for Ukraine. For answers, in our opinion, it is necessary to analyze how Ukraine approached 2020, what are the main indicators of its economic and social development, what are the chances of it entering the IV industrial revolution, what does the structure of the Ukrainian economy look like in terms of technological patterns, etc. That is, let's turn to the definition of the technological and socio-economic identity of the Ukrainian economy.

It is already completely clear that the rapid development of digital technologies, the digitalization of business processes and all other aspects of life indicates the onset of

a new stage of the industrial revolution and the transition to a new type of economy. This is happening in highly developed countries that demonstrate high sustainable growth and in which a national reproductive industrial system has been formed, the main engine of growth and modernization of this system is scientific and technological progress. Most of the so-called peripheral catching-up countries, including Ukraine, have not formed an industrial economy, especially with a high proportion of high-tech industries of the V and VI modes. The Ukrainian economy is dominated by technological modes III and IV, and this is best evidenced by the commodity structure of exports in 2019: raw materials, unprocessed agricultural products, food products – 48% of exports, mineral products – 10%, timber exports – 4%, black and non-ferrous metals – 22%, products of the chemical industry (and related ones) – 5%. Industrial products, machinery, equipment occupy only 8% of Ukraine's exports [3, p. 32].

With such a structure of the economy and the level of technology, the lack of innovation, it would be a big mistake to hope for a transition to an industrial-digital society. Such a transition requires huge investments in research and development, inclusion in global production networks, industrial and commercial agglomerations on an equal footing, high competitiveness of goods, and more. However, in the modern world, where there are developed countries (the center) and the periphery (developing or stagnating countries), the first restructure the economy, and secondly, reducing it to several export-oriented industries that are necessary and adapted to the needs of the center, and using the cheap labor market of the periphery [3; 6].

In developed countries, transnational corporations and their production and commercial agglomerations concentrate science-based, capital-intensive types of industries that require highly skilled «gold» and «white collars», with high added value and high technology, while labor-intensive operations are transferred to the periphery. Under such conditions, the expansion of digital technologies beyond the borders of TNCs becomes limited. We should agree with the opinion of scientists who believe that the expansion of digital technologies in the periphery becomes possible with an increase in the demand of national business for innovative projects that ensure the growth of value-added products and income growth based on productivity growth [6, p. 7].

In the meantime, Ukrainian business, captured in the environment of the III and IV technological modes (or even II), is focused on obtaining rental income, the level of use of digital technologies is declining, and the deindustrialization of production is widespread [6, p. 7], the growing technological lag, that of scientific leadership (Ukraine is space, aviation is shipbuilding in the early 1990s), long-term stagnation, a catastrophic decline in income and other losses are destructive phenomena. And, as emphasized in scientific publications, only V and VI ways and their development ensure the transition to a digital economy with such technical and technological changes that indicate a post-industrial era.

Thus, in Ukraine, the «proclamation of the IV industrial revolution» (K. Schwab), which should lead to the merging of a person's physical identity with his digital and biological identity, is being postponed, as is the development of artificial intelligence. The use of NBIC (which was discussed in Part I of our reflections) and the transition to transhumanism.

The transformation crisis that began in the early 1990, the structural crisis of the 1990–2000, and the socio-political crisis of 2014–2016 led to a significant destruction of the industrial basis of the economy, to deindustrialization, to the degradation of science, education, medicine, a lack of innovation and, in fact, to a stop STP and technical dependence on PR countries.

Over the course of 30 years of independence, the economy was characterized by a permanent decline in GDP, the formation of an irrational structure of the national economy, technological backwardness, dependence on world market conditions, that is, an open economy of the classical colonial type [3, p. 31]. In this state of the real sector of the economy, we have approached the COVID-19 pandemic.

But there is another sector – the financial one, perhaps its condition inspires hope for income growth, smoothing out the contradictions between the Ukrainian oligarchy and the bulk of the population, allows us to hope for funding for science, large innovative projects in various fields, including the development of digital technologies? Is it possible in our Ukraine, given its financial situation, to introduce a universal basic income, as K. Schwab is talking about?

We will consider financial opportunities at the level of the state financial system and at the level of individual business structures. The source of financing of capital investments in the economy, in the first turn, are internal savings, or the savings of society. However, the extremely low income level of the able-bodied part of the population makes savings impossible. Even if this happens and part of the savings is entrusted to the banking system, the latter does not lend to the real sector of the economy. Alternative directions of investment by banks of their financial resources give rise to the effect of crowding out (effect of crowding out).

We are talking about certificates of deposit with their attractive rates of return and the absence of risks, and domestic government bonds – today it is the banking sector (NBU and banks) that holds 80% or UAH 700 billion of OGVZ issued into circulation. This means that the banking system practically does not lend to the real sector of the economy, does not contribute to the implementation of large innovative projects, and ultimately the reindustrialization of the Ukrainian economy (loan dynamics – minus 13.9% in 2019 and minus 5.7 % in 2020).

Another source of investment in the economy, foreign direct investment, has sharply declined. If in 2008 they amounted to approximately \$11 billion, then in 2015–2019 they exceeded \$ 3 billion [6, p. 35].

In general, the state of the financial system is such that the country is constantly dependent on external borrowing, which, in the context of a chronic decline in national production, an irrational structure of the economy, increases the already significant domestic debt, servicing which is a heavy burden on the budget and threatens to undermine macroeconomic stability. The 2020 pandemic has made things worse. For 2016–2020, the average amount of debt (gross external debt) was at the level of \$ 120 billion, and its share in GDP ranged from 120 % to 80 % [6, p. 37].

The situation is aggravated by the lack of a full-fledged stock market in the country, which, in the context of COVID-19 and the outflow of capital from the country, further exacerbates the problem of investing. The predominance of export-oriented production and the dominance of imports in domestic consumption determine the dependence of both macroeconomic and macrofinancial stability on external borrowings, first of all, on international financial organizations.

What are the areas of cooperation between Ukraine and the IMF during the period of challenges and threats of COVID-19? The IMF sets before Ukraine more and more structural beacons and key tasks, mandatory conditions for granting loans. These are requirements for structural, monetary, exchange rate, budgetary policy, reform policy, including in the energy sector, etc. In 2020, a new memorandum was signed with the IMF on economic and financial policy, which provides for a Stand-by loan (for 18 months) in the amount of USD 5 billion (or SDR 3.6 billion). The first tranche amounted to 2.1 billion US dollars, the subsequent ones provided for 4 revisions of the program until June 2021 [8, p. 109].

Unfortunately for Ukraine, the visits of IMF representatives in accordance with the tranche revision schedule and the analysis of the effectiveness criteria of the planned conditions for the provision did not make it possible to obtain these resources. True, we will receive EU financial assistance in the amount of 500 million euros (although we should have received another 1.2 billion euros from the EU and expected \$ 1 billion from the World Bank). These borrowing programs are tied to agreements with the IMF.

Assuming, apparently, that the quantitative criteria and indicative goals fixed in the Memorandum will not be achieved. The Ministry of Finance proposed an alternative option: the end of work with the IMF. A draft Graduate from JMF strategy for 2021–2023 was proposed in June 2020, which sets out the following main directions and goals:

- prudent financial and debt policy;
- tax incentives for economic development;
- deshading;
- upgrading Ukraine’s rating to investment grade;
- new personnel policy and digitalization in the system of fiscal authorities, etc. [9].

But, in our opinion, these program goals will remain slogans and appeals, and Ukraine will continue to appeal to the IMF and hope for its possible (or not possible) injections under various cooperation programs. These include Stand-by, Flexible Credit line (FCL), Extended Fund Facility (EFF), Extended Credit Facility (ECF). Ukraine cooperated with the IMF under the Stand-by and EFF programs. Neither program contributed to solving the problems of structural restructuring of the economy, nor improved investment attractiveness, nor unleashed the financial problems of balance of payments and state budget deficits, but formed a long-term debt dependence for many years to come.

Pandemic – 2020 required huge financial resources both to fight COVID-19 and to support business entities, in the first turn of small and medium-sized businesses (76 billion – the fund to fight the pandemic!). And the economic situation in Ukraine, according to the IMF, looks much more difficult than in neighboring countries and according to its forecasts (in mid-2020 proposed) Ukraine could lose 8.2 % of its economy (although according to the State Statistics Committee, GDP in 2020 fell by 4.2 %, about the same as the global economy).

IMF Representative in Ukraine J. Ljungman named two factors negatively affecting GDP growth: 1) households' lack of financial savings involved in the financial market as possible buffers and sources of investment resources; 2) very limited fiscal support for the economy due to the pathological situation in the tax and customs sphere [8, p. 105-110].

It should be noted that Ukraine received humanitarian assistance to combat the pandemic and immediate measures in the healthcare system – \$ 165 million from the UN in accordance with the UN Humanitarian Regulation Plan for the Pandemic, the World Bank financed a number of measures to combat COVID-19 in Ukraine as part of emergency financing mechanisms for countries with transforming economies and low incomes (approximately \$ 50 billion – the size of such a Program) with a virtually zero interest rate and accelerated lending.

The financial resources of the IMF (organizations) were directed not only to fight the pandemic, but also to support business structures that become insolvent due to a sharp decline in revenue due to quarantines, lockdowns, and other bans. Developed countries are allocating trillions of dollars for this, realizing that otherwise the exit from the pandemic crisis will be long and painful and will jeopardize further technological, scientific, economic development and growth.

Such growth and a return to normal life may happen at the end of 2022 – at the beginning of 2023, according to B. Gates (although the Bloomberg agency believes that it will take 7 years to return to normal life!). And what sources and mechanisms for financing business in the context of epidemiological risks and the introduction of quarantines and lockdowns are practiced in today's world and Ukrainian practice (maybe

for Ukraine in theory)? Today's business problems require significant resources to quickly respond to a changing external environment, support staff, attract and retain customers, partners, and so on. The pandemic does not allow the implementation of start-up projects and is characterized by a start-up depression due to lack of financial resources, the crisis requires the restructuring of business processes to organize online work for both the company and personnel and the corresponding infrastructure to transfer key business processes to a remote format.

The disappointing trends of the covid-19 crisis, according to the estimates of the Union of Ukrainian Entrepreneurs, only 60 % of business structures continued their activities – this is a large and medium-sized business with long-term contracts with a level of technology. Most of the small and medium-sized businesses that do not have the ability to reorient business processes to a remote format have gone bankrupt. These enterprises did not survive the 1st lockdown, II and III – exacerbated the situation.

Part of the domestic business used loans to finance operating activities, but this is only 21 % of enterprises estimated by the Cabinet of Ministers. Which exit? As world experience shows, this is an increase in the technologization of business (including to attract financial resources!) The use of the Internet of things (Internet of things – JoF), which allows you to turn ordinary things into online devices with the possibility of their remote use. (Recall that the emergence of the Internet in the early nineties marked the beginning of business process reengineering). Such new technologies make it possible to manage information, production and operational, commercial activities, and communication remotely.

What opportunities for business financial support do these technologies open up? Recall that the classical sources that ensure the formation and further functioning of a business are own, borrowed and borrowed funds. What new mechanisms and forms of attracting financial resources have been proposed in recent years and are widely used by small and medium-sized businesses, start-ups to implement new innovative projects?

New concepts have appeared: bootstrapping (boot strapping), proud finding, grant financing, fundraising (the process of attracting external, third-party resources for the company necessary for the implementation of a task, the implementation of a project or for the purpose of the activity as a whole), although they retain their importance among alternative sources and classical concepts of investment (through the issue of shares and other securities), venture capital investment, business angels, business incubators.

Can we assume that our business is aware of such alternative sources of unopened opportunities? As Ukrainian practice shows, far from everyone or the majority does not know! (And here we can pose another problem discussed in our economic literature – financial inclusion, the premise of which is financial literacy, financial culture, and business and the population, and allows you to create effective financial behavior that

contribute to increasing incomes, reducing the vulnerability of both business and citizens to financial crises!) [5, p. 106-111].

So, let us turn to a brief description of these sources. With the penetration and further expansion of new technologies in all areas of the economy, crowdfunding is used as a source of funding, the basis of which is the creation of a virtual community that, by combining the efforts and resources of a significant number of participants, achieves its goals. This collection of funds by a large number of «mini-investors» is carried out on the Internet.

According to international analytical agencies, this global market is still small, in 2018 – \$ 10.2 billion, it is expected that by the end of 2025 it will increase to 29 billion, the number of crowdfunding campaigns and popular platforms is also growing (Kickstarter, Crow Cube, whose main tasks are to support creative start-ups (I) and finance the expansion and modernization of businesses (II). The platforms exist as an alternative to bank or venture financing.

Grants have become popular in developed (and partly in developing transition) economies as a way of financing. Since the 1990s, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) provided mentoring support to business, in particular, within the framework of the Competitive Economy of Ukraine program, it implemented the Business Incubators investment project, the purpose of which was to support technology start-ups, technologization of the economy and increase competitiveness. A special place in the program is occupied by IT-technologies, engineering and medicine.

Grant financing is of great importance for business, in the first place for its technological development and has become widespread in Europe in recent years. The purpose of the grants is to support innovation in all areas based on the use of digital technologies. In Ukraine, a number of grants were used to support business during the covid-19 period, including those from House of Europe for technologization and adaptation to digital reality, for the development of remote communication.

In Ukraine, small and medium-sized businesses are used to relying on their own resources. In developed countries, it is customary to talk about the so-called bootstrapping. when the enterprise does not have sufficient attractiveness for the investor or is not innovative. Then not external, but internal sources of financing are attracted (resources of the startup, his team, other interested internal stakeholders) [4, p. 105-116].

Financing with the help of venture funds, business incubators and business angels remains relevant. These mechanisms and forms of financing can be combined, creating a kind of mix! For example, the crowdfunding platform «Our Crowd», created by J. Medved, is a «place» where investors meet (more than 30 thousand from 183 countries) and those who create and implement progressive, high-tech startups. The COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated the creation of a Pandemic Innovation Fund on the platform

that supports solving business problems during this difficult period. Thus, Ukrainian business should be aware that various sources of business financing exist and are available, even in the face of epidemiological challenges and risks. You need to learn how to use them!

What challenges are facing the Ukrainian economy both today and in the post-COVID period? Which of the things that K. Schwab and T. Malleret write about can happen in Ukraine, under what conditions, institutions, with the help of what tools? Is it possible for us to have a «brave new world»? Undoubtedly, both the global and Ukrainian economies are on the verge of fundamental changes, and states will have to use urgent and costly measures aimed at mitigating and overcoming not only the current, but also the long-term negative consequences of the pandemic, namely: recessions in all sectors of the economy in the coming years; rising unemployment and loss of income for both households and businesses; massive bankruptcies of companies (especially in the service sector – tourism, entertainment, catering, transport services and others); growing budget deficits, increasing external debt and the risk of possible defaults; threats of rising inflation; supply chain disruptions and breaches of contracts. The threat, according to many analysts, is the deglobalization of the world economy and the strengthening of protectionism to protect their markets.

The pandemic is throwing our economy far back, once again postponing vital tasks in the real sector of the economy – reinforcing, restructuring, increasing technologization, and innovating the production system. And the milestones that we have to achieve in the future are our past achievements – in the 2000 we set the task of restoring GDP production to the level of 1990) after the financial crisis of 2008–2009, to return to the indicators of the pre-crisis years after the socio-political crisis of 2013–2014, to return to the level of the supposedly «prosperous» years of 2011–2013, now let's think about pre-pandemic indicators?

Of course, we agree that any crisis brings not only negative, but also positive changes, and we should agree with K. Schwab and K. Lagarde (the head of the IMF until recently, and now the European Central Bank), who claim that the transition to digitalization will accelerate and automation and to new economic models. Will Ukraine, having survived the coronavirus crisis, be able to provide a breakthrough to digital technologies? We have very ambitious forecasts, goals and objectives set out in the concept of the development of the digital economy and the so-called «Digital Agenda of Ukraine», presented by the Ukrainian Institute of the Future. They emphasize that digitalization is becoming one of the main growth factors for both the international and national economies in the next 5-10 years and a tool for achieving strategic goals.

According to the scenario of the Ukrainian Institute of the Future, digitalization will ensure GDP growth by 8 times up to 1 trillion US dollars by 2030, and the proportion of the digital economy of GDP will reach 65%! (so far > 90% essentially out of the

digital economy, 10-year lag in mobile digital infrastructure, weak digital transformation of the economy (Industry-4.0), business, government tools for their services, social sphere). What obstacles stand in the way of digitalization?

First and foremost, in our opinion, is the lack of interest of large companies in innovative projects, as long as they can receive short-term rental income from the monopoly use of certain resources, and not due to the introduction of new elements of the productive forces caused by scientific and technical progress, and labor productivity growth.

Second: institutional factors – low involvement of state institutions in the implementation of the Concept for the Development of Digital Technologies; non-compliance of legislation with national, sectoral, regional strategies and programs for the development of digital opportunities.

Third: infrastructural obstacles: low level of coverage of the country with digital infrastructure (broadband Internet, lack of the Internet of things, inability to access the Internet in many areas of the country at all).

Fourth: systemic factors – weak state policy on stimulating the innovative economy, a weak market for investment capital; outdated education system (lack of focus on Stem-education, soft skills) shortage of highly qualified personnel for digitalization. (although the President understands the need for a «state in a smartphone»).

They talk about two possible options or two scenarios of digitalization – inertial (evolutionary) and forced (target). According to the first, we remain on the sidelines of the world perestroika (or even in a ditch!). Until 2030, GDP growth will be 2.5 – 3 % per year and the volume of GDP will be approximately \$290 billion. According to the second scenario, a digital «jump» is needed, analog systems should be replaced by digital versions and this will ensure the creation of new jobs, increased productivity, economic development and quality of life.

According to the calculations of the Ukrainian Institute of the Future, about 70 billion dollars of investment in digitalization and \$ 15-17 billion in digital infrastructure will be needed. This will allow Ukraine to become a European leader in the field of digitalization and become an intellectual hub. This requires: 99.9 % of households must have access to the Internet; 100% coverage of the territory of the country 46 and 56; 99 % of auto and railway lines and 95% of agricultural areas need to be covered with mobile Internet; 100 % of citizens must have digital identification (citizen-card).

The state should become a digital revolutionary as a leader and experimenter, regulator and protector, promoter and driver. Both the state, and business, and households must have incentives, demand and needs for digital technologies, and then, perhaps, these ambitious (and a little utopian!) goals will be achieved. And, of course, we should not forget about the need to simultaneously overcome technical

backwardness, modernize many industries and, in general, re-industrialize the national economy.

And, perhaps, it is digitalization that will become that link in the chain, grabbing onto which we can pull the entire economy. It is these priorities that should underlie economic policy in the post-COVID period. For the revival of industrial capital, money capital is needed and, therefore, the monetary and fiscal policies pursued by the state are no less important, which should have their own specific ideology of reforms, institutions, legislation, without relying on the experience of developed countries or «catching up» countries.

What do rich countries not advise us? (represented, for example, by international financial organizations). That's what made them rich! We are not advised to reduce taxes, use emissions for productive purposes, increase public investment in social capital (science, education, medicine), reduce the cost of loans for businesses, protect our domestic market and wage labor, nationalize infrastructure sectors, stimulate the production of products with a high level of added cost and much more.

What are we advised? Everything that turns us into a «colonial», resource power: the maximum opening of external access to national resources, including land (disputes about this do not stop and do not become less heated since the adoption of the law on land!), mass privatization, including strategically important enterprises, tight budget policy, elimination of the simplified taxation system, desocialization of the state in the form of pension, medical and educational «reforms».

Is there a global «conspiracy» of elites in relation to Ukraine, directed by the EU? Most likely, there is rationalism and own egoism, which Ukraine clearly lacks! A. Kushch (an economist and futurist) is right when he states that the vacuum of goals and ambitions of Ukraine is being filled by rational and selfish actions of neighboring countries and other EU countries. After all, no one wants to have a dynamically developing economy at their borders, with high GDP growth rates, high per capita income, clear national goals, understandable and achievable plans and programs, ambitions of the elites and the President (for example, Turkey).

And Ukraine, as a «poor relative», is on the threshold of the EU: a constantly decreasing population (from 52 million to 40 million), huge migration, a low average per capita income of \$ 3.5 thousand, a shadow economy and gigantic corruption, political elites thinking about their income, but not about the country, without ambition and great goals. «The state is at the stage of homeostasis, when even small shocks and shocks cause systemic destruction» (A. Kushch, FB). A pandemic crisis already!

Conclusions. We have already left the solution of our problems to small groups of experts, and not only in medicine. And in this K. Schwab is right. And yet: what are the prospects for Ukraine in the post-COVID period? I would like to believe and hope that if we manage to overcome the deformed macroeconomic structure of our economy

and the unreserved technological backwardness by creating high-tech industries associated with digitalization and innovative renewal, a «window» of opportunities will open for us and we will be able to carry out the «great reset». We need to break the raw material «colonial» model of economic development and form a new one with a balanced macrostructure and competitive products. And the digital revolution led by the state-revolutionary should become the driver of these changes!

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