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values, identities, and politics



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INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
BELGRADE

RELIGION AND CAPITALISM IN A GLOBAL SOCIETY: VALUES, IDENTITIES, AND POLITICS

(ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL
SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE)

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



Silver Lake, Veliko Gradište, 4–5 September 2026

Dejan Masliković

Institute of Social Sciences
Belgrade, Serbia

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Museum of Vojvodina

SOCIAL JUSTICE BETWEEN THE MARKET AND HUMAN DIGNITY

Contemporary capitalism shapes social relations through the logic of market productivity, competitiveness, and individual responsibility, which particularly affects social groups that do not fit into the dominant economic models of “efficiency” and “self-sufficiency.” Among them, persons with disabilities occupy a specific position, as their social status is often determined at the intersection of economic inequality, symbolic marginalization, and insufficient institutional protection. In this context, the question of social justice transcends the framework of formal equality and opens the need for a deeper analysis of the relationship between capitalism, religion, and social responsibility.

This paper is based on the assumption that the capitalist system, especially in its neoliberal form, tends to measure human value through work capacity, market profitability, and consumer potential. Such a logic often leads to the exclusion of persons with disabilities, who continue to face barriers in education, employment, access to public services, and full social participation. At the same time, contemporary discourses on social justice emphasize the redistribution of resources, recognition of diversity, and the removal of structural barriers that produce inequality.

The paper examines whether religious and ethical traditions can serve as a corrective to dominant market rationality. Special attention is given to the concepts of dignity, solidarity, compassion, equality, and care for the vulnerable, which are present in various religious teachings and may contribute to the critique of social relations based exclusively on profit. The aim is not to idealize religion, but to explore its potential, in dialogue with contemporary theories of social justice, to offer a value framework for more inclusive social policies.

Methodologically, the paper relies on a theoretical-critical analysis of relevant literature in the fields of sociology of religion, disability studies, and the critique of neoliberalism. The focus is on how the concept of social justice can be redefined so that persons with disabilities are not perceived as a “burden on the system,” but as equal holders of rights, dignity, and social contribution. In conclusion, the paper argues that a truly just society cannot be built solely on market principles, but requires a synthesis of economic redistribution, cultural recognition, and ethical responsibility toward the most vulnerable members of society.

Keywords: social justice, capitalism, persons with disabilities, religion, inclusion