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Globalisation, Where?

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MOTTO:

“The dynamics of globalisation is controlled by economical forces, but its most important consequences are in the domain of politics.” (Klaus Müller).

Abstract:

Over the years, globalisation was given different conceptions, which reached the point of the introduction of the verb “to globalise”- first time appeared in 1944, in Merriam Webster Dictionary. Previous to that it only existed the concepts of “global” and “globalisation”. Through global it is understood an extension of the different connections between cities, giving birth to a new phenomenon, but also a special attribute. The “global space” or “global geography” concepts appear and they eliminate the bad influences of distances between cities and connecting them to each other, drawing new maps on which the lines will mark ways of travels, migrations, movements, communications, exchanges, etc. The application of global in the geographic field, leading to the physical expansion of that, has generated the globalisation, which meant an increase of the number and volume of global fluxes, but also an increase of the impact of global forces upon local life. The main moments and forces of the expansion mark the turning and the reference points in the history of globalisation.

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1. Introduction

“Globalisation” is the word of the moment, the most discussed and probably the least understood concept of this millennium; very “young”, it could be only an “accident”, a passing moment on the scale of the future history. The ecologists, the protectors of the human rights, the groups of farmers and people of the third world shout this at the meetings of the world elite power in Seattle, Washington, Prague or Venice. At the same time the economists and journalists specialized in the world of business fill up shelves and volumes naming globalisation “a historic inevitability”.

That is why we will not use statistics, we will not prove tendencies, we will not analyse macro or micro, we will not use learned treaties. We suppose that the concept of globalisation and its way of manifestation are known. [1]

The word “globalisation”, a bauble which has become a slogan very quickly, a magical incantation, a passepartout, is capable of opening the doors to all present and future mysteries. In the opinion of some people, globalisation is something that has to be understood immediately if we want to be happy; others believe that the source of our unhappiness resides in this globalisation. It is sure that globalisation represents the implacable destiny towards which the world is heading, an irreversible process which affects us all equally and in the same way. The more we research the social causes and the results of the time and space compression, the more clear it becomes that the globalisation processes are void of the presumed unity of effects. The globalisation unites and divides at the same time: the causes of the division are identical to those which promote the unity of the globe. Parallel to the rising of the global business level, of the commerce and information, the process of localisation, of space settlement, has started functioning. What is globalisation for some, it is localisation for others [2].

The globalisation is a phenomenon of the contemporary economy. It does not consist of the entire economy, but only of certain fields and geographical areas, the majority of the Earth’s territory. It appears under different forms which we are naming right now as “global capitals”. The global capital is a status quo, a form of existence, a manifestation of an economic phenomenon. It does not have principles. It has only conditions of existence: the maximum profit at any price, anywhere, all the time. We have two elements in the global phenomena: the subject (global capital) and the object (population), either from the areas of origin of the global capital, or from its revaluation area. Some global problems, like the warming of the atmosphere, the hole in the ozone layer or the cutting of the rainforests, show in the most impressive way the globalisation phenomenon, because it is about the global problems which need a global approach [3].

Of course in the field of the environment there are regional and local problems, even if these have a feature which exceeds the borders, like the pollution of the rivers.

In time, globalisation has had different definitions, managing to introduce a new verb in use – to globalise – for the first time in 1944, in the Merriam Webster Dictionary. Before that, there were only the concepts of global and globalisation. By

global people understood an extension of the connections to various types of localities, creating a new phenomenon, but also a special attribute. There appear the concepts of global space and global geography which remove the bad influences of the distances between localities and connect them to each other, making up new maps on which the lines will mark new ways of travelling, migration, movement, communication, trading etc. The appliance of the global into the geographical field, leading to its physical expansion, has generated the globalisation, which means a growth in number and volume of the global fluxes, but also a growth of the impact of the global forces on the local life. The main moments and main forces of the expansion mark the turning points and the landmarks in the history of globalisation [4].

The globalisation, together with the advantages and the positive transformations which brings to the level of nations, has aspects which point most of the times to problems and reasons to worry. – see fig. 1

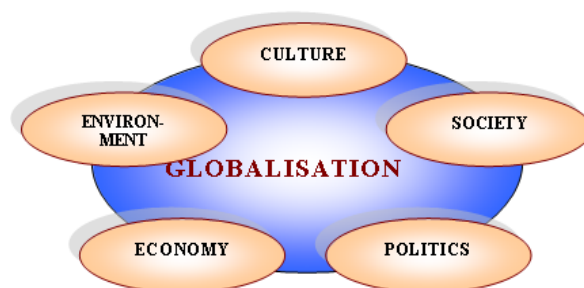


FIGURE 1: The dimensions of Globalization

Some global problems, like the warming of the atmosphere, the hole in the ozone layer or the cutting of the rainforests, show in the most impressive way the globalisation phenomenon, because it is about the global problems which need a global approach. Of course in the field of the environment there are regional and local problems, even if these have a feature which exceeds the borders, like the pollution of the rivers.

There are other situations, which are not connected to the time and space elements. For example, the survival of very small island states, which have formed the organization AOSIS and which are seriously threatened by the continuous growth of the level of the sea, depends on the behaviour of all the people in the world, and especially of those from the developed industrialised countries.

Regarding the social dimension of the globalisation, the world has become a “global village”, innovating networks of communication to great distance (chat, e-mail) adding to the traditional communities like family or neighbourhood. Still they cannot replace these traditional spheres of communication, in order to name only

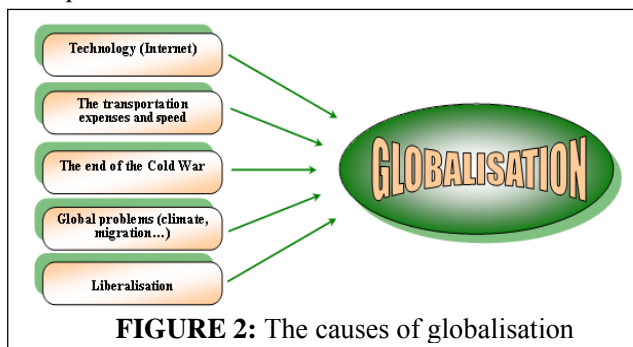
one example within the social dimension.

The political dimension is facing major problems. The globalisation and the competition at a local level limits the space of action of the national politics, a lot of problems could not be solved properly but at an international level, respectively global level. Thus there must be found new forms and new political arenas. The European integration is seen as a successful answer to all the challenges of globalisation [5].

The politics at a regional and national level has had and still has to suffer from the unlimited and dematerialized economy practised more and more at an international level, respectively global. Capitalism, a factor of the social status, is threatened as well by this fundamental unbalance. However, not all the things which are connected to the globalisation are true. Many times, the politicians use the globalisation as a kind of scapegoat and as a justifying weapon with various uses. This thing is obvious especially if we think about some examples from the political field which do not cross at any point with globalisation.

2. The causes of globalisation

The complex phenomena cannot be explained unless we take into account several causes. This is the only point that everybody agrees on concerning globalisation. The rest of the facts still remain contested. According to the approach related to globalisation is used as a starting point, other causes and motive powers appear in the limelight. The most invoked causes are presented in the picture below, but the list is incomplete.



Without a doubt, the technical innovations – and especially those from the computers field and those of the communication field – have been playing a central role. The internet is, from many points of view, the emblem of globalisation. The financial markets globalisation, the transfer of unimaginable sums in just a few seconds around the globe would no be possible without this technology, nor the organization of the integrated production at the transportation level etc.

The incredible advance which the trade has known, another defining element of economic globalisation, is due to the rapid reduction of the transport

expenses, the merchandise being transported much faster. This can be noticed especially when talking about the services domain: for example the software type products or the data bases can be transmitted in a few seconds to the other corner of the world [6].

The end of the Cold War was many times indicated as being one of the causes of globalisation. If within the conflict between east and west, the world was divided between two sides which had very few relationships; this delimitation – the Iron Curtain – fell in 1989 / 1990.

The states that belonged to the eastern block, opened towards the world market. It is very clear that the process of globalisation has a positive impact, as well as a negative one. The positive part of this process is that it will increase the interaction between the countries, which at its turn will open new possibilities for the development of the human civilization, especially within the economic sphere. The intensification of the commercial, investments and technological trading between different regions, the facilitation of the inter-human contacts, and the familiarization with the cultures of different peoples are, certainly, beneficial for the human kind. Along with this, the globalisation faces new challenges. Many dangers have a regional character or even planetary, the ecologic and technological calamities, the cross-nations crime rate, the international terrorism etc. The uncontrolled expansion of some cultural models of a doubtful quality brings a prejudice to the national and cultural traditions of the peoples, threatening their originality. The intensification of the globalization process presents some dangers to the national economies. At the same time, because of the uneven distribution of the globalization's advantages, the negative aspects of this process will negatively scatter on the developing countries, so that these could remain far from progress or even outside the progress. The interdependence growth in the international relationships generated by globalisation brings new aspects of the notion of national and international security. The number of external factors which influence the stable function of the society is increasing. The status of the international security influences more and more the possibility of guaranteeing the national security. That is why, the maintaining of the stability at a global level, the granting of assistance in the creation of such international mechanisms which would ensure the sustainable and balanced development, will become a priority and one of the main problems for the regional communities. There are opinions according to which the phenomenon of globalisation is not a new and unknown one, prior to humanity [7].

The bases of the global economic system have been set along with the geographical discoveries, the development of transportation and communication, the entire world economy. Something similar to what we call today globalisation took place before the First World War, when the world was divided between the great powers, becoming more homogenous and easier to rule. The first and the second world wars, the revolutions that followed, as well as the process of decolonization have delayed a little the process of globalization of the world economy. Nowadays this problem is a priority of the politicians and analysts.

First of all, the globalization is a geo-economic process and then a geo-

political one and a geo-cultural one. This process is not only closeness, an integration of the economies of many countries. The quality features of these economies are changing; these economies are becoming some enclosed systems into the elements of a world system. The notion of national economy is changing as well. The basic economic institution becomes the cross-nations corporation, which places its factories and is trading its products where it is more convenient without taking into account the existence of borders. Because of this, the process of international division of the work is studied thoroughly, and within one state, even developed, there is a double economy, there are flourishing enclaves, donating regions, and creditable regions. Entire regions are transformed into raw material suppliers and markets for the cross-nations corporations, without developing their own productions. The process of research of the work division triggers severe social and political problems. During the talks about globalisation the concept of losers appears more and more often – these are some social strata or even entire nations which have found themselves outside the economic development, without a chance to get out of the global circuit by themselves.

Where does the conflict come from? First, from the point of view of the economic and social perspective with the ecologic exigencies. Often, there is a confrontation between a territorial minority and a dominating centre from an economic point of view (industry versus agriculture), as well as a values point of view (modernization tendencies vs. conservatory, agriculture) or ecologic (the protection of the environment vs. globalization). A series of cleavages have become visible starting with the 60s-70s especially within the industrialized world. One of the results was the appearance of the Greens. The most consistent have been the critics towards the economic growth at any price (the savage capitalism), accompanied by the wish to reevaluate the local specific. We can add as well a series of ideological factors with a symbolic value, like the need for administrative autonomy from the peripheral areas or conflicts like “David and Goliath” between the small ecologic organizations and the great corporations [8].

The conflict is vital for the ecologic movement. It means a radical change of the process of elaboration of the policies, especially because of the distrust of the communities into the public institutions and in the technical control structures. The ecologic movement and the politicians must take into account the local social, cultural and economic exigencies, otherwise risking the loss of the consensus of the population. Thus, the unilateral decisions from the authorities’ part are regarded with distrust and can be considered illegitimate.

A very important aspect of the environmental conflict refers to the setting issues, where there is a strong opposition from the local people. This phenomenon carries the name of Nimby syndrome (Not in my back yard). In general, the conflict is between the general interests vs. the particular interest (local). Many times the utility of a building is not taken into account, but the placement in a certain location. A relevant case is the process of decision of the best location for a waste incinerator in the region of Torino, Italy. Even if nobody contested the idea itself, no community agreed to have a supposed source of pollution or discomfort in their

back yard. Finally, the authorities decided to launch a public debate under the title *Non Rifiutate di Scegliere*.

The locals were offered the possibility to identify the most viable places based on an analysis, taking into account several criteria. Instead of the question “Why here?” the question “Why not here?” was used. Finally, they chose the best localities from the surrounding localities of the city of Torino, but along the process of consultations, the City Hall of Torino changed its positions radically and decided to host the incinerator on its territory, marking this way the passing from the Nimby type of attitude to a Pimby type of attitude (Please in my back yard).

Unfortunately, the opposition of the local community affects projects for the benefit of the environment, like the placement of different wind parks in the vicinity of some inhabited areas because of a supposed (and in general unjustified) sound discomfort and even a visual one. The perception factor must not be overlooked because to regular people, who do not have technical knowledge, it represents the main string for their opinions concerning the problem [9].

The setting does not represent a technical problem, but a problem of choice itself. More precise, it is not only an attribute of the politics, but also one of the societies. It is related to the disfavoured areas, the peripheral ones, dominated by social and territorial problems. Their pretensions did not consist of the calculation of the damages that a certain project provoked, but the environmental and social compensation. In the end, how could the huge or the unknown (risks) or the ethical limitations (the value of the human life) factors be financially quantified?

The alternative is named the Sustainability approach and it stipulates a direct ecological compensation, either through some interventions in order to reduce other sources of pollution, or through the satisfaction of other social and environmental problems, like the quality of the place reflected in its value. This trade is based on the following type of discourse: “If we allow you to build the plastic product factory in our neighbourhood, what do you offer in exchange? – Work places, modern infrastructure, organized green spaces!” We have to remember the fact that this way of solving the conflict is based on the implication of all the parties involved in the project.

2.1 The imperativeness of a new public management

Why a new perspective on the public management? Is it because the traditional model is excessively oriented towards the market solutions? It is formed of a clear distinction between the entity which orders the projects (the politics), the one which executes them (the technology) and the one which benefits from these services. In return, the democratic techniques are focusing on the interactive and involving continuous process, which take into account the political dimension (social, cultural) of the technical decisions and vice-versa. Moreover, the integration of a feedback from the part of those who implement the project is pursued, as well as from the part of those who benefit from it.

The final decision belongs most of the times to the authorities. The

problem is that the policies which follow the algorithm Decide – Announce – Defend (DAD), are facing a legitimacy crisis which can lead to a deepening of the conflict or to a lower efficiency of the policy. That is why a fair involving process is necessary to include the business sector, the local community and the authorities. If we had to use a scale of the people's involvement into the decisional process, we would have at opposing poles the informational stage (with the promise "We'll inform you about our decisions") and the empowerment one (with the promise "We'll put in practice your decisions") [10].

The first model, which supposes a very low degree of implication, is nothing else but an "imposing". The intermediate model of "manipulation" follows, according to which the people's opinions are deliberately shaped through manipulation, to the prejudice of their own interests. There also is a third model, the "consensus" one. This one manages to ensure the involvement of many individuals either through negotiation between parties, or through the deliberative process of the dialogue.

3. The setting up of a deliberative democracy in the environment policies – an alternative for the solution of the conflicts in the environment

The idea of sustainability represents a leap beyond the simple environmental perspective. It is focused on the interaction between people and the environment, but it includes more dimensions, like the participative governing. A comprehensive, systematic approach is wanted, where the involvement is essential. A very good example is recycling! The efficiency of the system depends on the contribution of the inhabitants. This is valid for other situations, like: the use of the water resources, the ecological products, the traffic or the fair trade.

Through the active implication of the citizens, the even partial renouncement at the own interest for the common good is wanted. In all these cases the fact that the market stimulants and the state regulations are not sufficient, is obvious. The dialogue construction of "the common good" reveals a force of the argument in contrast with the simple negotiation from the perspective of the own interest. On the other hand, the deliberative democracy recognizes the fact that nobody has the monopoly over the definition of "common good", not even the scientists or the politicians [11].

"To deliberate" does not mean "to decide". It is a dialogue process between free and equal individuals. This is translated by legitimacy. Three principles are at the base of the idea of deliberative democracy. Firstly, the discussion principle: "the non-coercive force of the better argument" (Habermas). Secondly, the inclusion principle: all the pertinent points of view must be taken into account. Thirdly, the advertising principle: the discussion must be made public at a certain point, for the public opinion.

So, the deliberative democracy addresses to free and equal individuals, capable to judge according to the interests and the values. The purpose is to transform the individual preferences through the rational discussion, so that it should

grant a wide consideration to the interests of others. We can depict at least three virtues of the deliberative democracy: civic virtues (more active citizens, more informed, responsible, capable to have mature opinions which take into account the “common good”), governing virtues (legitimate decisions, stable and efficient) and cognitive virtues (more efficient and effective decisions, often innovative, because it incorporates various knowledge and positions).

The 70s, in accordance with the innovations within the jurisprudence and of the human rights, bring a change of perspective on the rhetoric: the heterogeneous groups are proven capable to offer better solutions than the homogenous. Both ways consider the diversity as a resource for the consensual and legitimate decisions. Thus, an extended rationality is developed, which refuses to acknowledge the supremacy of the principle *de gustibus non est disputandum*. Argumentations, not simple preferences!

The structured process, which can take many shapes according to the object of the debate and its purpose, has the power to offer the participants an optimum frame to support one’s point of view. The discussion itself reveals a series of information, while the mutual respect brings the acceptance of the other people’s opinions [12].

According to the chosen means, each participant is encouraged to communicate under the form of a rational analysis, but also of a narration, analogies and experiences. Being about simple people, without particular interest in the debated subject, and, thus, without preformed preferences, the focus is on the inclusion. The stake is not that the group should prevail over the other. Due to the impartiality of the process, the final decision includes all the points of view. The process can be considered efficient if it is initiated in an early stage and if the public institutions take into consideration the exits.

Regarding the techniques of structuring the deliberative processes, there are different versions according to the number of participants, the selection method (case / representative sample, active / voluntary citizens), the duration (ad-hoc or permanent) etc. In general, the number of participants is limited (from a dozen to several hundreds), and the duration of the process varies between 1-5 days. In all the cases assistance is necessary from the part of some neutral professional figures.

In the majority of the cases, the participants define the problems for the debate. Creative ideas are searched (brainstorming), spontaneity is valued. The participants benefit of technical assistance from some specialists and experts, so that they should form an informed opinion and in the end to make a proper decision. Frequently, the exit takes the form of recommendation, plan or vision. The finality consists of a more informed public opinion for which the authorities make a certain choice related to policy.

There is a vast empirical base, which consists of experiences on all the continents, either if it is about the citizen juries (USA, Great Britain, Germany, Spain, India), deliberative polling (Australia, Denmark), participatory balance (Brazil), consensus conference (Denmark, USA), or 21st Agenda (local). We have enumerated only some methods of structuring the deliberative processes. It is

relevant the fact that these have a vast applicability. For example, the consensus conference has as objective an agreement on the technical and scientific problems between the specialists and, secondly, the promotion of the decision among the population. The participants balance, on the other hand, is focused on the direct implication of the citizens in the distribution of the local public funds for the priorities identified by the people.

4. Conclusion

The problem which arises is the type of society which we live in, the one that Ulrich Beck named “a society of risks”. Our actions always have unforeseen consequences. The science and the technique can offer solutions, but also give new risks. There is a vices circle from which modernity cannot escape.

The idea of civic participation at a large scale remains an ideal, if it is not a utopia. Also, democracy itself would enter the crisis if there were not large sectors of society which could manifest apathy and inaction. The conditions are more difficult in the transition countries, which have not managed to separate from the privations yet. Inglehart thought that the post-materialism attracted a transformation of preferences and of individuals’ requests. Once the basic needs are satisfied, the man feels the need of acknowledgement from the state and as an individual within a community and becomes preoccupied by superior values like the environment or art.

I believe that our mission, due to our quality as activists in the ecology field, is to mobilize a very large sector of the society. In a world more and more global, the idea of community loses its values, and this easier in the countries with a communist past. Nevertheless, the concept of “think globally, act locally!” remains valid. The deliberative democracy is based on this principle. It is not only about the process of information or of education; it is about the responsibility, about empowerment. It is a purpose and a means at the same time. We make the path by walking.

The European Committee has adopted its program for 2009. Within this program, the Committee emphasizes the realisation of the key policies of the globalisation agenda: the definition of the main strategic priorities which the Committee undertakes to adopt in 2009 and the establishment of the other fields which the Committee focuses on next year. But the globalisation does not manifest itself only in the space of the European Union, in other words the priority for the year 2009 should be at a world level, better said the solution of the most urgent problems with global manifestation: the development and the work places, the climate changes, the energy, the migrations, the environment etc.

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