

HORIZONS AND CHANGES IN THE NEW SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

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Abstract. *It is said that the society we are moving towards is, or will be the Informational Society - Knowledge Society (IS-KS). The collocation used to name the new society discloses especially the tools this one will stand on as well as their progress, which, at first sight, makes the impression of a technical, one-sided name. The collocations used to name the societies so far contain a key-word (slave system, feudalism, capitalism) which synthesizes a gamut of possible social statuses where the people, individually and/or in group are inevitably situated on, function on certain circumstances, thus constituting a characteristic economical-social structure. Obviously, the key-word able to disclose what is or will be economically and socially fundamental for the new society has not been yet found. IS-KS is a collocation which poses the name to some other fields.*

Keywords: sustainable economy, society, informational society, knowledge society, humanity, nature.

1. Introduction

This developing society will have its own economical activity or, straightly said, an economy much changed compared to the old and actual ones, named *the new economy*, a collocation which draws our attention to the fact that what is new will be of such importance and signification, that the respective name in itself will be justified.

Neither the "new economy" collocation is the best choice but, it obviously points out the message of the profound changes that will occur. Besides, the term has been used before in time and, it can generate confusions.

Each society has had its economy and it was a economy new compared to the ones belonging to the old society. Also, it must be taken into account that the advances in economic science have generated substantial changes and, from a certain point onwards, it has been talked about a new economy which, in reality, means a new step, another theoretical explanation provided by the economic science for the factual economy. For instance, it moved from classical economy to neo-classical and classical one. In the same direction, it is worth mentioning that during the last two-three decades the New School in Cambridge that put the bases of the New Economy has been talked about. A group of famous economists - J. Robinson, P. Sraffa, L. Pasinetti and some

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others, who, during their career had been with Cambridge University and had come to the same conclusions, are considered the founders of the New Economy. Deliberately or spontaneously, these scientists studied to what extent the neo-classical and classical explanations from economic science are still relevant and are in keeping with the today reality. Obviously, they provided many new explanations or formulated conclusions which, on the whole were named "New Economy".

For the present scientific approach, the collocation "New Economy" must be considered temporary (until an adequate one based on the successful results from economical research is formulated). Also, its double relevance must be accepted:

- The collocation of a new economic reality which has started taking shape in the most developed countries but which, virtually can be accessible to the others;
- A new step in the economical theory progress.

2. Traits characterizing the historical context of Informational Society – Knowledge Society

The historical context which imposes IS-KS is the same for the new economy and is characterized by some major traits:

- Humanity is the result of the evolution during which the long term wastes of all existence models have been accumulated and which, taken as a whole make a barrier in the way of the progress looked for, awaited and deserved by the actual generations. It is unconceivable to defeat this evolution without a fast and profound progress of knowledge and its promoting within society but especially within economy;
- The population has increased in number to such extent that, according to realistic opinions, it has exceeded the degree of sustainability of the natural ecosystem. At the present moment, there are about 6 billion inhabitants on the Earth but, it is estimated that in 2050 there will be about 11 billion and, the 27 persons borne at every 10 seconds only with a little luck "will have enough food, water and decent shelters"(Allen W.L., 1998);
- People have evolved even after having acquired the necessary knowledge, as if they had had no idea about living in a closed circle, thus exceeding the capacity of auto-regeneration of the planet.
- We are facing an enormous waste of resources used for military purposes, which by far exceeds the exigencies of the defense and poses a threat for life

on the Earth; to these, the wastes specific to consumer society, the more efficient and available techniques and technologies that should be applied and generalized are added. "Waste seems to be an inherent product of the social, economical and cultural traits of our epoch... Numerous methods of preserving energy and more efficient technologies to use the raw materials are already available..." (Gabor D., Colombo V., King A., Galli R., 1983).

Thus, the new economy characteristic to IS-KS must be based on own tools – new or older, but at a different knowledge stage. The tools – new techniques and technologies – are a matter of informatization and knowledge and, will result, undoubtedly, in a new economical configuration. But the economic science and all kind of engineering sciences must underlie the new economy, taking into account:

- the existence of nature with and without the man – at least from what is known today – has not determined crisis situations similar to those previously mentioned;
- man detachment from nature along with his actions touched what had already existed and man did not know how to maintain or replace the action of recovery and purification achieved naturally by nature at no cost;
- the entire human existence must be conceived under conditions proper to closed economic circuits, out of which the resources to be recovered at no cost and the wastes to be somehow used;
- new resources to be found and used in order to complete the demand of resources only, at the level of normal circuits;
- the "civilizing" mission of man upon nature must be given up and it must be acted on the idea that man and mankind must accept the behavioral changes necessary to its existence integration in real potential parameters of the planet;
- It is necessary to assure a coherence of man's actions at planetary level in order to stop the increase of negative effects followed by a decrease.
- Of course, the new economy assumes a sustainable development but it induces another approach of the sustainable development itself, different from what has been done before.

3. The principles of IS-KS economy

The new economy, inevitably, must start from the principles resulted from numerous studies achieved individually or in group, from own initiative or practical reasons of the international organisms which reflect the existent situation and the requirements, immediate and long term wishes, where from it has never missed the counteraction of the negative effects accumulated in the existence process so far.

1) The principle of human existence in closed circle.

The nature itself exists within some closed circles or circuits which we must get to know better so that we could learn to live differently. From here, it results the conclusion that we cannot use the resources from other planets, we cannot move elsewhere and we cannot get rid of the "derivate products" of our existence, meaning we cannot get rid of the negative effects we have upon the environment and which later turn back against us.

2) The principle of man reintegrating into nature.

Acting upon nature, when he produces the goods he needs, man has got to that stage when he must reintegrate into the nature he has got familiarized with and which he has always wanted to vanquish, forgetting that he has to be in harmony with it. Because the planet shows more and more evident signs that the actual models of human existence can no longer be sustained, we have to mark their understanding and to actively take side to the nature exigencies in order to give a chance to our existence.

3) Primum non nocere (first of all, do not harm the environment).

All countries are facing the environmental pollution but at different extend. So far, the most developed countries have polluted most, and pollution, through natural and economical circuits has been generalized. The less developed countries, though contribute less to global pollution, are suffering more from it because they do not have the resources necessary to prevent pollution. Romania is one of the countries with serious problems regarding pollution. Pollution diminishes seriously the reproducible natural resources and, besides, it poses a threat for human health.

As a consequence, the costs with health sustaining are higher. According to some appreciations, more that 60% of the planet suffers from the lack of medical care.

4) Keeping and increasing the biomass, biodiversity and bioproductivity.

Biostate and bioproductivity represent indicators of natural resources quality. Starting with the protection of soil fertility and ending with preservation and development of ecological systems, there is a large spectrum of problems which need an urgent solution, especially in developing countries, but not exclusively there.

5) Permanent resources provisioning.

This principle imposes both preserving and rational use of non-renewable resources and the achievement of equilibrium between the rhythm of the other resources exploiting and the rhythm of their regeneration. The best solution here seems to be the conceiving of economical activities and of nature itself existence in closed circuit of active circular flux type. This assumes that all that is taken from nature and at the actual stage of knowledge is economical necessary to be used and the useful substance from the wastes and used materials to be recycled. "A substantial mitigation of natural resources consumption per product unit is, undeniably, possible and without a decrease of the quality of life or of standards of living... " (D. Gabor, U. Colombo, A. King, R. Galli, 1983). Numerous more efficient technologies of raw materials use are already available but they must be applied and generalized, and some others might be developed by research enhancing.

6) The principle of economical, social and ecological efficiency.

Conceived in a restrictive sense, the economical efficiency has neglected the costs the nature had to pay. It is very necessary to take into account the expenses with the nature regeneration, with the protection and development of environment assets, in order to redefine the concept of economical efficiency. It may be called economical, social and ecological efficiency, because to the economical interests are added those of the society, and society cannot evolve ignoring the environment.

7) The society's existence is interactive with the environment.

The increasing theories and, more than that, the developed activities approach the environment as the space where the man comes to the fore economically to dominate it, to take control over it, but about man "all the best"; he is the supreme value and thus, untouchable. Within the environment, man has to meet the environment exigencies just to make sure that his existence is assured.

8) The principle of social equity.

It involves a sequel of the modern sense development objective, respectively, the reduction of the gaps regarding the incomes. Besides, it is taken into account the avoidance of discrimination and the equality of chances to assert for all members of society. Sustainable development imposes a wider vision on social equity by taking into account the relation between the society and environment. Social equity needs equal access to the environment assets both from synchronic and historical perspective.

Conclusions

The enunciated principles delineate at some extend what the new economy might be. In conclusion, the following ideas result:

- *The finality of this economy will remain the man and his necessities satisfaction.* If the man is put aside economy, the economy has no longer any sense. Increased economical development is required because the planet population is increasing and, at the same time, everybody wants to have a better life. In order to increase economy, new and new resources have been used, thus the non-renewable ones are at stake and the productive ones are not regenerated at the proper level. The matter resources-needs own to each economy is now more tensioned than ever and it can no longer be solved using the existing models, because those models were not efficient enough. The model change is imposed. Man is spotlight, but not man as number but man as value.
- *The new economy can no longer be a market economy in the nowadays sense.* Despite the progresses made, the market economy is at standstill. The market is no more able to administrate the resources at the new exigencies level, it determined a world split into rich and poor people and the existence of many of them is uncertain. Anyway, the market has its limits, it generates all sort of externalizations and, besides, it cannot find solutions to the collective needs satisfaction, need becoming more and more complex and thus conditioning decisively the quality of life.
- *Without abandoning the individual interest, the new economy will shift away the interest to the public interest within the frame that is taking shape by public politics promoting.* The term "public" has, in this context, two meanings:
 - Expression of the problems regarding most part of the population;

- expression of the collective needs combination which tends to increase and condition more and more the social progress by the way their satisfaction is fulfilled.

- *The new economy is taking shape and will work taking advantage of the democratic character of IS-KS.* The determining role is, of course, that of economic politics which "settle" the general options in the field. Without professionalism nothing is possible; the knowledge society imposes professionalism in economy and technocracy as a ferment of the new economy.
- *The new economy will consecrate technocracy, but this one must be well prepared, which induces the idea of assuring a priority in the development of education and scientific research.* To this purpose, Friederich von Hayek said many years ago that "Only the direct participants to the economic processes have the necessary knowledge to allow them to make efficient decisions"(Hayek, 1991).
- *Learning becomes the general process characteristic to the new economy, because the resources saving and actions directing to the bigger and more different need satisfaction when the resources are limited, assumes knowledge, generalization and learning for all IS-KS members.* To practice an economic activity in a specific way, the necessary knowledge is required and, to be sure that this knowledge exists, it must have been acquired before enterprising the economic action. So, a priority must be granted to those processes generating new knowledge and to technical-scientific research. The general result of learning must be the obvious increase of the efficiency in general and of economical one in particular.
- *Promoting the new economy in Romania means for the present moment closeness to the developed economies standards, both through general characteristics and through long - term trends.*
- *To make the new economy successful, it is necessary for the economical politics options to be immediately concretized into medium-term strategies and then into very long-term strategies (20-25 years) in order to assure the continuity and complementarities of economic actions.* This would contribute to the efficiency increase in administrating the Romanian resources however, very limited.

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