

REGIONAL SCALE DEVELOPMENT AS A PATHWAY FOR ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND RESTORATION IN THE GLOBALIZATION CONTEXT

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Abstract

The intensification of the globalization, parallel with the amplification of the environment, climate change, circular economy, social economy have led to several debates in order to find the right solutions for increasing the cohesion at the mezzo and microeconomic level in each country. This paper sustains the need to transfer the idea of "globalization" to the regional / local policies and strategies level regarding environmental preservation and climate change mitigation, which will lead to: a new economic geography; to let the regions' capacity to build legislative and institutional infrastructures to protect and restore the environment in the context of climate change; reevaluation of the place and role of local / regional biodiversity; identifying opportunities for developing community-specific horizontal activities, etc. This paper proposes a shift to changing the role of the "engines" supporting the globalization process as well as the transposition of the world's sustainable development policies and strategies to the regional requirements of each country according to the priorities and the level of community development for increasing social cohesion at the level of each state, in line with the UN's vision of 17-th SDGs defined at the UN General Assembly regarding Sustainable Development, on September 2015.

Keywords: globalization, regional markets, ecological restoration.

Introduction

The evolution of globalization induced not only to the damages of territorial cohesion in developing countries but also to the capitalization of certain resource categories preferred by the major international investors without taking seriously into account the state of the environmental equilibrium in the supplying countries. In this context, a new concept of regional development is needed, aiming restoring of the environment and mitigating climate change in order to reduce local development gaps and the cohesion increase.

1. Globalization today - status and trends

Today, from a historical perspective, globalization has made changes difficult to predict at the beginning of the 20th century, both at global and national/ regional/ local scales affecting all the components of the socio-economic system and world culture - from the increase of trade (by generalizing liberalization to many products) until the investment increase, labour, capital and information circulation, removing and/ or reducing of the borders importance amongst states, interdependencies increase between countries/ regions and by increasing the speed of knowledge dissemination and technologies, etc.

Slowly, globalization has become an ideology that has generated mainly political strategies and, to a lesser extent, economic ones, which has also led to a decrease of cohesion between

states, regions, areas. The laws underlying of the main actors involved in this process - monopolies, multinational corporations, international financial markets, knowledge markets, global/ regional non-governmental organizations, or even criminal organizations and international terrorist networks - are based on formal agreements between partners/ states, mainly since the beginning of the twentieth century.

Box 1. Brief history of globalization

Between 1910 and 1950, several political and economic changes dramatically influenced the volume, importance, structure and direction of international trade, investment and knowledge flows. Slowly, the world was divided into two different socio-economic and cultural systems (capitalism and socialism) which absorbed differently the effects of globalization.

The first institutions which acted as global mediators in various fields emerged from the First World War (1914/1918) and then continuing after the Second World War (1939/1945).

The institutionalization of the globalization process was gradually achieved by the emergence of:

- International Monetary Fund (IMF) - the most important financial body;
- Free Trade Agreement (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade / General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), signed in 1945 at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, USA;
- The World Trade Organization (WTO) founded on 1 January 1995 to replace the GATT, which included a series of trade agreements concluded at the end of the Second World War requiring updates; their aim was to facilitate free trade;
- World Bank (WB) - for financing development projects, organization set-up in 1944;
- The International Bank for Reconstruction (IBR) was created in 1945;
- The Economic Organization for Trade and Development (OECD) was established on 30 September 1961.

The most important effects of generalization and institutionalization of the globalization process were:

- The emergence of "global mediators" in different fields of activity;
- Intensifying the general trends of development;
- Record sudden increases in international trade volume, etc.

These effects show that globalization is related to the free market economy, private ownership, economic and profit concepts. At the same time, globalization contrasts strongly with economic nationalism and protectionism, on the one hand, and on the other with the strong inequalities in the local development of several countries especially the developing countries.

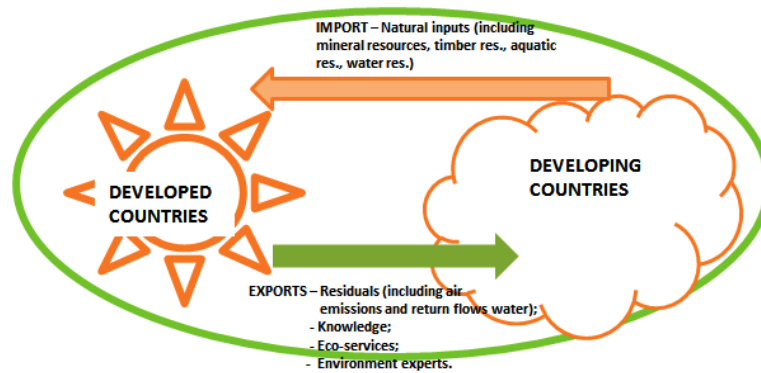


Figure 1. Globalization and sustainable development

With all the advantages of globalization, on are now the need to redefine this concept - the most evident consequence being the phenomenon of unequal concentration of socio-economic development of the partners involved (in globalization process). This phenomenon - namely the redefinition of globalization - is generated by: (i) the developed countries' policy of ensuring their macroeconomic balances by expanding their markets to the least developed countries and attracting cheap resources from these; (ii) the UN's steady policy, together with their Member States, of generalizing and enhancing environmental concerns, preserving biodiversity, restoring damaged areas, by the need to mitigate the effects of climate change; (iii) the need for an active involvement of civil society actors in increasing the role and importance of the social economy sector; (iv) capitalizing on the potential of contracts, especially partnerships, to manage the complex issues and the great diversity faced by communities today.

The American economist Joseph Eugene Stiglitz, winner of the Nobel Prize in 2001 for his analyses regarding the markets with asymmetric information, came to the conclusion that "... *intemperate globalization has generated more intense disasters than on expected. The economic crises from the late 1990s to the present - in Argentina (1998-2002), in Russia (2014-2017), in East Asia (1997), the global financial crisis (2007-2009), the euro crisis (2010- 2012) - all of this illustrate that no country, region or bloc was spared by the instability inherent in the current world ...* ". In this context, the J.E. Stiglitz pleads for defining new rules concerning the governance of globalization. The idea is that "globalization should bring benefits to many more people in the world (not only in developed countries – our note) if on is organized and managed in a different way ...".³⁴.

³⁴ J.E. Stiglitz argues that "... *the rules imposed by the Washington global system have written the neo-liberal principles for the entire world economy ...*" Initially it was called "free trade," but it was "... *managed ... for corporate and financial interests.*" Regarding the current state of the globalization process, J.E. Stiglitz say that "... *developing countries - accounting for 85% of the world's population and accounting for only 39% of world revenue - and them did not have a choice whether or not to be part of the globalized system:*" ... *they lose in any way ...* ". Also, losers include low and middle earners in the most advanced industrial countries in the world. "... *Those who have the most benefit are in the top 1%, or even in the top 0.1% of the employees ... and they are several hundred thousand US super-employees - millionaires and billionaires ...*" In America today, there is a discrepancy between the expectations of many people on globalization and its disappointing reality, which also

These ideas have crystallized over the last 25 years, at all levels, *the public debates have raised concerns about globalization, environment, climate change, cohesion policies, etc. in order to find solutions*. All these issues have become objectives, priorities of development policies and strategies at the level of specialized international bodies, in the world, but also, at the level of local communities ... In the latter case, the effects of globalization are solved in accordance with the general level of socio- economic and cultural, the perceptions of each region, of each local community. Perhaps, therefore, it is not an accident that the UN has decided that all its member states should develop their own National Sustainable Development Strategies at the 2030 Horizon (Resolution 70/1 from 2015 of the United Nations General Assembly: "Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"), with the obligation that each entity to adopt and to include the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). On mention that these issues were renew in the Agenda 2030 of the European Union, also.

Box 2. The 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development Goals adopted by United Nations General Assembly Resolution A / RES / 70/1 at the Summit on Sustainable Development, in September 2015

The 17 Sustainable Development Objectives (SDGs) are:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 No poverty | 10 Reduced inequalities |
| 2 Zero hungry | 11 Sustainable cities and communities |
| 3 Good health and well-being | 12 Responsible consumption and production |
| 4 Quality education | 13 Climate action |
| 5 Gender equality | 14 Life below water |
| 6 Clean water and sanitation | 15 Life on land |
| 7 Affordable and clean energy | 16 Peace, justice and institutions |
| 8 Decent work and economic growth | 17 Partnerships for the goals |
| 9 Industry, innovation and infrastructure | |

It should be noted that each of the 194 UN member states have pledged to develop their own sustainable development strategies, including the current state of play and the prospects regarding the adoption of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In line with the UN initiative, the European Council Conclusions of 20 June 2017 - "A Sustainable Future of Europe: the EU's Response to Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development" - which defines the main directions of action of the EU Member States on the implementation of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

On note that these strategies are expressions of "*political engagements*" and them must be soon transformed into "*economic strategies*" with developments regarding (i) the evaluation

explains the reactions to the Donald Trump phenomenon, but also the attitudes of European national populists. Processing by: "*Globalization and its Discontents Revisited: Anti-Globalization in the Era of Trump*" published by W.W. Norton (2018), <https://www.ips-journal.eu/book-reviews/article/show/globalization-and-its-discontents-revisited-2708/>.

of the needed resources and with (ii) the assessment of impact expected by the reference communities - which can be nations or regions - including the necessary regulatory framework to adopt/ change, the related legislative and institutional changes.

UN and EU concerns for identifying ways to address sustainable development according to the specificities of each state in the context of the globalization process are also found at the level of major international firms that have generated the phenomenon of "glocalization". *This concept is reflected in the adaptation to the requirements of local markets of standardized products and services and marketed and recognized them as such globally / internationally*³⁵. Experts believe that in the future, although this process is still incipient, it will induce, at the level of the big international firms, through the diversification adopted, significant costs and implicitly unitary profit mitigation, but which will be recovered by increasing of the volume.

If the "glocalization" phenomenon will to be transferring at the level of regional/ local policies and strategies concerning the environmental conservation and mitigation of climate change, on estimate that it will lead to:

- i. *The transition from the "classic globalization concept" arised after the Second World War - as a result of the establishment and functioning of international institutions, especially in the commercial and financial domains, as well as the need to solve the problems of maintaining the equilibrium of markets (unfortunately due to the economic expansion of the developed countries to developing territories³⁶) - to the construction and development of socio-economic structures based on the bottom - up principle in order to encouragement a new type of globalization in which the local / regional element is the dominant one.*
- ii. *A new economic geography based on the peculiarity and state of biodiversity of regional/ zonally/ local systems;*
- iii. *Activating, by supporting the idea of specificity of regional biodiversity, the capacity of regions to create legal and institutional infrastructures, based on: inventorying, preserving and restoring biodiversity; protecting the environment; restoration - in entire or partly, or substitution - of some natural areas, where it is necessary; developing the local economy based on the ability of regions / communities to absorb knowledge and capitalize specific traditions by creating / re-creating infrastructures designed to solve local environmental problems, on the one hand, and to ensure the socio - economic and cultural life, on the other part;*
- iv. *The extension of ecosystem services in view to influence the general socio-economic and cultural sustainable development of states, regions, local communities.*
- v. *Reconsidering the place and role of local / regional biodiversity. Thus, local / regional biodiversity can be directed and developed on the axes defined and developed by the 1992 Rio Declaration on the Protection of the Environment and Biodiversity.*

³⁵ For the expression "glocalization" in the literature, there are proposed different analogous descriptions, such as the "octopus with its tentacles" or the "node of a social network", etc. The most commonly used example of glocalization is the adaptation of McDonald's Company to the requirements of Chinese consumers. (Source: Herod, Andrew. 2009. "Scale: local and global" in "Key Concepts in Geography").

Please note that this policy was also developed in Romania including McDonald's, KFC, Pizza Hut, also.

³⁶ And not by designing their own tools for the markets operating.

- vi. *Assimilation, suitability and spreading of existing knowledge on the biodiversity and environment reconstruction in a way which can sustain this issues through regional diversity, namely by identifying priorities and developing horizontal activities, the proper techniques for each zone / community.*
- vii. *Adopting of the new way of protecting the environment or preserving biodiversity must be in accordance with: regional knowledge capacities; the level of development of science and technology; the existing of economic base (general level of development); the legislative and institutional capacity to absorb the knowledge of the processes and phenomena imposed by the protection of biodiversity, the environment, in general, and of the region / local, in particular;*
- viii. *The new concept regarding geographic globalization based on the protection and reconstruction of the environment and regional systems will have to be the subject, on the one hand, to the rules of international and national institutions and, on the other, of the socio-economic order (as property rights, post-industrialism, market and individual interest); on state that in the absence or neglect of these latter vectors there is the risk of removing the new idea from the liberal doctrine, in fact, the reality in which the reconstruction of the environment and the regional systems will have to function.*

The fact that there are problems in addressing a "design" in line with the directions of sustainable development in the 1992 RIO Declaration after over 26 years, certify to it: (i) there is a current unsatisfactory state of progress in assessing the advance made in meeting the 1992 RIO targets, although at that time all the representatives of the states - at the highest levels - have recognized the importance for the entire planet the preserving of biodiversity, protecting it and improving climate change; (ii) poor socio-economic and cultural cohesion both between states and regions, which is explained by the attraction of big investors in the large international circuits only for particular categories of resources, which is reflected in the contradictory development levels at which globalization could not be removed during over 70 years of presence.

2. Setting-up of the regional markets dedicated to protect and restore the environment and mitigate the climate change

The generalization and increase in the importance of the goals agreed at the 1992 UN RIO Conference have been delayed as on considers that the events of the moment have concentrated the full attention of international institutions and decision-makers: (i) ample system changes in the Central and Eastern Europe since the beginning the 1990s, which distract decision makers' attention from the UN RIO 1992 commitments; (ii) the retire from the US Presidential election of Albert Arnold Gore Jr. (born in March 31, 1948 and with Romanian origins) - an well known as an American Environmentalist Politician, who received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007 - and who fight during 1990-1991 for the legalization of the Internet expansion and not for the domain that it has consecrated (environment protection) and in which he continued its activity. These facts affected the favorable moment of an active mobilization at the planetar level for generalizing and starting the implementation of the objectives agreed at the UN RIO Conference from 1992. The favourable framework was missed for meany years (!)

The rethinking of the level and structure of public resources allocated to support regional markets for protection, environmental and biodiversity restoring and climate change is based on the change in the importance of the "motors" supporting the new institutional structures / actors and vectors transmission of links between entities involved to support new regional markets specific to environmental protection and reconstruction as well as biodiversity. Thus,

in support of the globalization of regional markets for protection and restoring of the environment, as well as of biodiversity on, must be involved the R & D activities, information and communication technology, (ICT) as well as the digitization of current economic and trade activities and of the management ones, also (Table 1).

Table 1. Engines of globalization in classic acceptance and the ones concerning the regional markets dedicated to the protection and restoration of the environment as well as of the biodiversity

Engines which support the globalization of international classic markets	Engines to support the regional markets for the protection and restoration of the environment as well as biodiversity
1. Economic activity with emphasis on commercial activity	1. Research-development-innovation (RDI)
2. Management of interest resources for the big investors	2. Technology and later technology and communication (ICT) and digitization
3. Public and private finance	3. Public and private finance
4. Technology and later technology and communication - ICT	4. Managing local resources, especially those that are not in the hands of major investors, who can develop local brands and can help to rebuild the environment.
5. Research-development-innovation (RDI)	5. Economic activity with emphasis on commercial activity

Supporting the regional markets for environmental protection and restoration as well as biodiversity will require, also:

- *Redefining all categories of relationships within the material and virtual world, in general, and, in particular, those issues related to environmental protection, biodiversity, respectively, structure, functionality, complexity, etc .*
- *Formation of new institutional structures / actors and transmission vectors for regional markets in view to protect and restoration the environment and biodiversity, as well as to mitigate climate change, which will not rely only on new human-nature relationships but on will have to either multiplied and diversified, especially for future generations for which environmentally sustainable practices will no longer be an exception.*

On can mention that the European Union adopted a series of Directives, strategies and programmes (Waste Framework Directive (1), Water Framework Directive (2), EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 (3), Clean Air Policy Package, etc.) designed to move Member States of Europe towards a sustainable growth, based in particular on environmental protection activities, *but these issues do not include yet issues about the role and the implication of local/ regional economies and actors. By generalizing regional markets for the protection and restoration of the environment as well as for biodiversity - compared to the globalization of the international classical markets - the following effects are estimated:*

- Increase the number of actors involved in view to respond adequately and to increase the speed of the challenges induced by: new research and digitization results; the need to*

integrate them into the social and cultural life, in the current productive activity, and transforming them into elements which can generate added value; attracting local environmental resources into the economic activities and not under the influence of major investors.

- ii. The gradual involvement of the large masses of entrepreneurs / producers - especially small and very small ones - in a situation of underdevelopment, poverty. They are, in a large part, the "losers" of the classic globalization process, from capital free markets and set-up on the most brutal liberal market principles.
- iii. Increasing the possibilities of expanding the knowledge and digitization market both at the level of the big players on the market (for the big companies the access to the knowledge market is not a problem, because their economic situation permit them to conduct own research or to get direct results from the research) as well as for the large masses of small and very small entrepreneurs/ producers that will also drive this last category to the increase of the local / regional social cohesion.
- iv. Changing the relations among producers and consumers regarding (a) the new and generating the added value information, as well as (b) ones for ecological, organic, traditional issues.
- v. Stimulating the expansion of technical progress through the knowledge factor will generate new regional and national challenges regarding environmental protection and mitigating climate change.
- vi. Transferring the globalization principles to regional markets for the protection and of the environment restoring, of biodiversity and mitigating of the climate change will be facilitated the development of partnerships and the expansion of associative and cooperative entities, especially those from the rural area, which will have a particular role to play in the new regional/ local market of knowledge, because these institutional structures can get the role of "transmission belt"/ vectors among producers and consumers of public goods, especially of those regarding the environment.
- vii. Policies which support the globalization of regional markets for the protection and restoring of the environment and biodiversity as well as for combating the climate change will be: (a) differentiated by regions/ local communities and these will be oriented towards the use and adjustment to the concrete conditions of "good practice models/ best practice models" of available local technologies and of cultural traditions; (b) enhancing public-private partnerships; (c) reevaluate on local resources, including the natural ones.
- viii. Generally speaking, in practice, there is no a generic "ideal" model for policies to support the globalization of regional markets for the protection and restoring of the environment and biodiversity as well as for mitigate the climate change, as there are differences in the level of economic- social and cultural background of each country, region. As such, the new development concept based on rethinking the process of globalization and its adjust to the specificities of regional environmental protection could lead to an acceleration of planetary stabilization as a whole by a better resource and energy management starting with the local / regional level.
- ix. Addressing the policies and strategies for sustainable development of the regions / communities in each country will imply: (a) the implementation of the 17 SDGs set will be made fully and/ or partly according to local priorities and the level of community development (available resources); (b) ensuring, on the one hand, the need to conserve,

rebuild the environment and biodiversity and, on the other hand, the activating of innovative processes and generating synergies for as many citizens as possible. It is estimated that SDGs developed at the regional / local level of each country will contribute to increasing of social cohesion, in a balanced and integrated way, in line with the UN's global vision.

Among specific requirements for the formation of new institutional structures / actors and of transmission vectors appropriate to regional-based markets for the protection and restoration of the environment, as well as for climate change alleviating, one can mention the following issues:

- *The need to know and esteem the differences between supply and demand in the case of regional protection, environmental rehabilitation and biodiversity markets; (i) The demand for new markets is shaped by the current state of the regions / communities concerning the state of biodiversity and the environment, in general, as well as the future actions included in development strategies for: biodiversity inventory (size, structure of species, their functionality); its preservation; protecting and restoring measures for the environment which were done; capacity for adapting to climate change; developing the local economy based on the capacity of regions to absorb existing knowledge by setting-up adequate infrastructures in view to solve environmental problems while ensuring local socio-economic and cultural development in which the valorisation of existing heritage and authentic traditions must be the dominant line; (ii) The supply resulting from the capacity to drive new markets for the restoration of the environment and of the regional biodiversity by: the knowledge accumulated; the public-private partnerships that will be achieved with the research-development structures and existing eco-system services; the amounts of money which will be allocated for the restoration of the environment and biodiversity at central and local level.*
- *Identification and energizing of knowledge transfer vectors within the new regional markets, which may be represented by: local / regional existing R & D institutes; national and international institutions with preoccupation in the field; NGOs with appropriate environmental and biodiversity objectives; potential eco-system services.*

Conclusions

1. In the next future, because the process of globalization is under the pressure of its determinant factors (the increasing demand for agro-food products, the effects of climate change, the need to maintain the balance of environment, biodiversity) *re-thinking of the functional regional markets formation for the environment restoration and biodiversity is a challenge* that can no longer be expected.

2. Addressing local and regional sustainable development policies and strategies in each country by implementing the set of 17 SDGs set out for the Agenda 2030 - fully and / or partially depending on local priorities and community development levels, which can provide: Conservation needs - reconstruction of the environment and biodiversity; develop innovative processes and generating synergies for as many citizens as possible; capitalizing of local resources, inclusively the natural ones, and accumulated knowledge; increasing social cohesion at the level of each country, in a balanced and integrated way, in line with the UN's global vision. In fact, the 2030 Agenda within the Paragraph 45 mentioned the need for countries to implement SDGs "... with regional and local authorities, sub-regional

institutions, international ones, academia, philanthropic organizations, volunteer groups and others".

3. *Changing the "engines" hierarchy which play a determinant role in the regionalization process can help to manage new institutional structures / actors and vectors to transfer links between entities involved in supporting new regional markets for environmental protection and reconstruction, biodiversity and combating the change of climate. In this context, it is estimated that a key role will be played by the R&D activities, information and communication technology, as well as, by the extent of digitization.*

4. *Detailed information which covers the local / regional SDGs implemented (maybe not all SDGs in each region) can be used to provide a richer understanding of the sustainable policy issues. Also, by a horizontal attitude faced to the local / regional SDGs in accordance with relevant and most important needs of regions on can design policy scenarios in view to sustain synergies in policymaking initiatives aims to demonstrate that investing in green sectors – such as energy efficient technologies, renewable energy, public transport, sustainable agriculture, environment friendly tourism, and sustainable management of natural resources including ecosystems and biodiversity – has a better chance to bring about recovery and sustainable growth, increase competitiveness, save and create jobs, improve the quality and decency of jobs, and reduce poverty, while tackling acute environmental problems. It also aims to identify the policy and institutional framework that is needed to support rather than undermine such investments and the greening of economic growth in all countries, taking into account national and regional conditions, special characteristics, capacities and needs.*

5. The process of a new understanding of globalization meaning by transferring it to regional and environmental development issues give us: the opportunity to build the necessary public-private partnerships in R & D-innovation processes; capacity to sustain the expansion of ICT and digitization in accordance with the 21st century; the improvement of socio-economic cohesion as a prerequisite issue for a balanced overall economic growth at local level.

On paraphrasing The President of US Donald Trump at the UN General Assembly, in September 2018, who said "... to reject globalism and embracing the patriotism" on can say that "patriotism is similar with the development of regional markets for the protection and regional restoration of environment and biodiversity".

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