

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

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*Sustainable development opens new horizons of research through taking into consideration of externalities (positive or negative) generated by human activities. Acknowledging the fact that the outputs of economic activities do not limit at outcomes strictly accounting aimed at by the present system of national accounts, the economic theory and practice are challenged to accomplish and to rethink the actual mechanisms.*

*Therefore, sustainability means a different matter than the simple preservation of the stock of capital, regarded as a simple and mechanic question. Introducing the future in the equation suppose, before anything else a certain anticipation and a planning of it.*

*And for the same reasons, nobody can conceive a sustainable development without the elements of the stock of capital and their structure not to register important qualitative leaps (and also qualitative).*

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The concept of lasting development, sustainable and viable has its origins in innumerable theoretical attempts to clarify the mechanisms of spreading the development and progress in economy, of understanding and bringing into accord the man and his nature, with society and with himself.

In a first stage, before the appearance of the term of sustainable development as such, the scientific community is alert regarding a whole range of new or unknown problems till then connected mainly by the natural environment of the Earth. The increasing destroying effects upon environment are criticized and the accelerated waste of natural resources is signaled together with traditional patterns of extensive economic increase.

The first Report of the club in Rome appears – known as Meadows Report – and a variant of *zero increase* is advanced in which the absolute economic results and the total population are rising in the same rhythm so that the level of results per capita remains unchanged.

The implications of such a conception upon the possibility of overcoming the differences, which separate the less developed countries of the developed ones economically speaking, bring about heated discussions. Not even the rich countries are willing to limit their increasing possibilities. The hypothesis of zero increase is in contradiction with one of the fundamental premise of economic science in conformity with which the aim of the economic action lies in maximization of the outcomes - paralleled with the minimization of efforts – and especially with axiom that maximization of profit represents the motivation of each enterpriser.

The second report of the club in Rome – Mesarovič, *humankind in a turning point*, is the beneficiary of more important means. In the point of view of the report, not the economic increase represents the cause of the crisis of resources, but the analytical feature of this crisis, which if it goes on, even at a rate of 5% a year it will lead rapidly at wasting of many natural resources. The authors propose a new kind of *organic augmentation* within whose context as well as in the alive organisms the cells are specialized in conformity with the rules of harmonious development of organisms. The international studies are multiplied and many proposes are advanced, but the world seems too hasty to take them into account.

The recognition of the importance of the natural capital and the link which exists between it and the economic development have determined the appearance of different conceptions of ecodevelopment, which though they coexist today, they tend to be regarded as evolutionary in a continuous process of understanding and defining a real sustainable development.

Initially the geocentric theory is given rise, which blames totally human intervention upon nature making the protection of the environment an end in itself.

Criticized for its lack of realism, this conception was replaced with the biocentric one which acknowledges as main the ecological concern, the preservation of all lively forms on the planet and this

theory is accused of being highly conservative, as protecting the biosphere is above all the interests social and economic and most of the times satisfying the most stringent human wants cannot be ensured without a minimum transaction. Unlikely the anthropocentric conception tends to deviate towards the other extreme taking into consideration that nothing else matters than satisfying the increasing and all the more diverse demands of the man; the man cannot be imposed limits of intervention upon nature, which may be sacrificed on behalf of the increase of consumption. Lately different preoccupations to improve these conceptions have been observed, the vision of reconciliation of the man with nature and with himself coming into prominence.

More often than not, in order to define the concept of lasting or sustainable development they use the formula of Brundland Report in 1987, being understood through this *That development which succeeds in satisfying those needs for the present generations without affecting the capacity of the future generations of satisfying their own needs.*

The lasting development is conceived in the vision of reconciliation between the environment and the economy as a new way of development able to satisfy the human progress not only in some places and for a few years, for the whole planet and for a longer future.

In other words the concept of sustainability takes advantage of an opening wider enough. The needs are regarded in a wider sense, not only economically speaking, but also speaking of the need to live in a social community, the need of security and also many needs of employment. As well satisfying them implies a bivalent criterion of equity both between generations and within the same generation.

Thus the lasting development hangs in the balance first the satisfying of present human needs and the future generations ones, which represents the central objective to follow. This claim cannot be accomplished by exploiting the natural capital however and no matter how much, being necessary to be satisfied a number of conditions referring to balance (statically or dynamic):

- between different components of land ecosystem;
- between environment and economy;
- among the size of population, the capacity of tolerability of the environment and the level of economic activity;
- between the working conditions and life conditions of different categories of population (social equity and justice);
- between the level of consumption and environment quality;
- between the degree of satisfying the needs of present generations and those future ones, as well as a number of evolution conditions;
- increasing the standards of living;
- diminishing the differences and increasing the social equity;
- increasing the volume and quality of usable natural resources;
- increasing the capacity of tolerability of the environment;
- the increase of efficiency of using the natural capital; diminishing the waste;
- diminishing the technological impact upon the environment.

So it is about a balance of increasing, concerning both each component – economic, technologic, ecological, social and human – and the relationships among these components.

All these aspects impose a re-evaluation and a rethinking of economic knowledge. Lately, more and more authors identify and add new dimensions to the concept of lasting durability, so that we may say that the realm of comprising the term is in a full process of enlargement and completion.

It deals with a process of knowledge and research, from which new significations derive, the progress of the man and the environment he lives in being emphasized.

Such a vision cannot leave unmodified the classic theories of political economy. In many aspects, these problems constitute an arguable question concerning the traditional scientific bases in conformity with which efficiency is the only and the most powerful regulator of economic life, which finally dictates what, how much, how, who and for whom to produce.

In this point of view, we may say that the promoters of lasting development are rallied to those who consider that the modality of solving the law of rarity cannot be done only through efficiency (positive approach of economy), essential being the optimum degree of satisfying the needs (normative approach).

What today appears in a certain context as being efficient, may be totally inefficient if we take into consideration a number of conditions which are not kept in an account:

- the degree and speed of waste of the consumed natural capital;
- destroying – remediable or not - of the land balance ecosystems, whether through irrational exploitation or through polluting emissions - which can take place during the whole cycle of existence of the product;
- the extent in which the goods efficiently produced satisfy the real social needs; it is well known that any economic activity implies at the same time a cost for producing this good and a cost of non producing other goods; this cost of opportunity is supported most of the times by the society through limiting the possibilities of choice;
- an efficient activity for nowadays generation may be counter-productive for tomorrow's generation.
- national economy may register an economic increase without the standard of life for most of the citizens to be improved, in this sense they talk about a productive efficiency and allocative efficiency.

In order to decipher all the problems incumbent from sustainable development, the most recent studies start with analyzing the three kinds of capital: the natural capital, which includes the natural resources of interest economically speaking, as well as the other characteristics of the land environment, which are indispensable to life, the anthropic capital, created by man, understanding through this both the physical capital and the financial one and the human capital comprising the entire area of phenomena supposed by this. There is also the opinion that the social capital may be added, which allows integrating justice, rules and social values within this assembly.

From this point of view concerning the relationship among generations, through sustainability may be understood the necessity of preserving the forms of capital, at least at the level and quality they register today, so that the future generations to benefit from the same possibilities as the present ones. Referring to the natural capital, more specific to the usable resources in economy, a diminish of those is admitted – in the extent that humanity cannot survive today without consuming a part from non regenerating resources – but it is emphasized promoting the telluric progress, as a solution for diminishing the specific consumption, discovery of new reserves, creating new possibilities for satisfying the same needs by using alternative resources.

From the point of view concerning the relationship among generations, sustainability means a greater equity in the distribution of the three forms of capital among the individuals in nowadays society, among regions, states and continents offering them equal chances to benefit of all the forms of capital, to use them for their own interests, for heirs and society and participate actively at quantitative and qualitative increase.

As well for the reason that the development be characterized as sustainable, it is necessary to assure a fundamental equilibrium both within each form of capital and especially among them.

The complex links realized among the economic, social and environmental dimensions lead to the conclusion that among different objectives of the national politics there will be a need for priority-choices, which suppose, in other words, to renounce to some of them in favour for others.

The interactions among the three dimensions implies synergies and convergences, flows inter-propulsion and self-maintenance, as well as divergences, narrow sites, discrepancies more or less irreconcilable, which demands to be negotiated and cannot be solved without giving up to some of them favouring others.

Most of the authors' opinions are that different components of the wealth are not changeable among them or they show a diminished changeability. Therefore preserving the stock of capital cannot be regarded as a global matter, being necessary to respect this condition for each and every type of capital. Thus we may speak about low sustainability when consuming the natural capital takes place from the point of view of development and maintaining the capital created by the man, social or human, so that on the whole the stock of capital should be kept. On the contrary, a high sustainability takes place when none of the possible types of capital is endangered.

The lasting development suppose also the knowledge and anticipation of the future generations' wishes. As any analysis, which approaches the problem of sustainability is compelled to make anticipations upon the future, it inevitably stirs up uncertain elements. Most often they start with the assumption that the future generations will need the same goods as the present ones, yet nothing can guarantee that their preferences will be the same.

Therefore, sustainability means a different matter than the simple preservation of the stock of capital, regarded as a simple and mechanic question. Introducing the future in the equation suppose, before anything else a certain anticipation and a planning of it.

And for the same reasons, nobody can conceive a sustainable development without the elements of the stock of capital and their structure not to register important qualitative leaps (and also qualitative).

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