

CONTEMPORARY GLOBALIZATION - CONFRONTATIONS OF IDEAS

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In the last years the humanity assists to the fundamental changes in economy no matter the level from which is regarded. These changes are so fast and intensive that many times the humanity is confronting also with adaptation difficulties and also with the collapses of some value systems which have proved themselves incompatible with new realities to the world level. So, we've become the witnesses of a world in which the commercial bounds and the capital fluxes between countries have grown so much that the globalization of the world economy is a reality. The globalization is a term used to describe a multi-causative process which has as result the fact that the events which takes place in some part of the globe have more and more wide repercussive on the societies and on the problems from other parts of the globe. There isn't any definition of the globalization in a universal accepted form and, probably, not even final. The reason consists in the fact that the globalization sub-cludes a multitude of complex processes with a variable dynamic, touching diverse domains of one society. This can be a phenomena, an ideology, a strategy or all together.

Keywords: globalization, antiglobalization, mondialization, internationalization

JEL Clasification: E20, F23

1. Introduction

In the economical theory, the globalization concept is highly approached in the national and international debates, and the authors of these debates have tried and are trying to find a definition as adequate as possible, generating in this way a real dispute. In this work I will try to pass in review a few of the definitions given to the globalization concept, considering the fact that any dispute involves the two parts: the globalization adepts and the globalization opponents. The globalization term was entered for the first time in the Webster dictionary in the year 1951. Starting with the half of the 1989 year, the globalization concept is utilized more and more frequently, being joined to some terms like: market, institutions, ecology, finances, life stiles, communications, migration, laws, factories, wars, conferences, civil society, events, risks etc. (Scholt, 1998)

2. Modern approaches of the globalization

Trying to define the concept, the authors take into consideration a part of the characteristics of this phenomenon, but few of them succeed to agree. Further, I will present few of these approaches and I will also try to present an own approach.

An answer to the question “what is globalization” we find to Friedman, a passionate supporter of the globalization, whom state that “the globalization isn't a simple inclination or a fantasy, but is rather an international system. Is the system which now took the place of the Cold War system and, as same as this one, the globalization has its own laws and its own logic, in kind to influence today, directly or indirectly, the politics, the environment, the geopolitics and the economy of each country from the globe.” (Friedman, 2000)

On the other side, reporting on the international manifestation of the globalization process, Korten (1995) – known as being a vehement critic of this process – state that “The forces of a globalize financial system had transformed the corporations and the financial institutions,

someday suitable, in instruments of a market autocracy which is propagate an all the planet as a cancer, colonizing more and more vital spaces of Terra, destroying life stiles, dislocating human beings, making powerless democratic institutions and swallowing life in the insatiable search for money” (Korten, 1995).

Regarding the used terminology, I specify that the Anglo-Saxon school utilizes, usually, the globalization term, while in the French literature we often meet the mundialization concept.

The Canadian A. Ayoub uses instead of the globalization term the mundialization notion: “mundialization is far away of being a novelty or a new phenomenon. On the layout of the concepts, the mundialization isn’t, as a matter of fact, but a new name of an old concept which, simply and solely, is the free-exchange” (Ayoub, 2001). Therefore, he thinks that the mundialization represents the free-exchange extended on the planetary scale: “the propagation process of the free circulation of the goods, services, capital, persons and ideas in all countries, leaving aside the political border which apart them.

The author states that at moment the evolution of the globalization phenomenon is much faster as succession of the technological progress, of the apparition of a new economy, of the knowledge and informatics. On the score of the analysis which realize it in a sociological and economical way, Ayoub figures that some analysts combine the thesis of F. Braudel on the “monde-economy” with the Marxist analysis on the evolution of the capitalism and I see in the actual mundialization another systematic cycle of accumulation of the capital that couldn’t be concluded but with a black crisis. It is, without doubt, a critique to the ones with apocalyptic vision on the contemporaneous mundialization. In opposition with them, other analysts find “the term of mundialization clearly exaggerated and premature compared with the economical realities of our days. They think that is rather to talk about the economical international integration, being content to see in mundialization rather an ideal to touch someday than a phenomenon already existent” (Ayoub, 2001). If we analyze these statements from the perspective of the events and the present realities, we can affirm the fact that we’ve entered in that “black crisis” foresighted by the author.

The political personalities of the world discuss also about the globalization process and is remarkable the opinion of the ex-president of Russia Mihai Gorbaciov: [...] we assist to the globalization of the economy and to the admission of the fact that the problems like environment can be solved only if we unify the efforts on all the meridians. We must understand that, even if the world is contradictory, it is still an integrated world, which disturbs the nations. These are afraid not to lose the culture, the language, the life stile. It is good or bad? I say that is noble. In the same time, we need global security and economy for the future. But the globalization mustn’t be seen as a roller which to create total uniformity in the world without defer of the culture diversity.” (Gardels, 2000) Here is therefore an opinion for globalization, but which sustain the conserving of the culture and national customs to avoid uniformity, or I could continue to avoid monotony.

The owner of the Nobel prize for economy in 2001, Joseph E. Stiglitz, being also a remarkable personality of the American academically environment and with international recognition, looks the globalization within the angle of an ex-employee of the two international organisms of the globalization of the International Monetary Fund and of the World Bank and outlines “the devastating effect which globalization has on the countries under way for development and especially on the poor population from these countries” (Stiglitz, 2003), aspects which should be a question mark in approaching the phenomenon of globalization. We mustn’t think that the author is against globalization, but he don’t agree how is developing this process, considering that is necessary the radical rethinking of the international commercial accords, which plays an essential role in eliminating the barriers assessed to the countries under way of development. Moreover, Stiglitz states: “the globalization had contributed to the improvement of the health state of the people, and also to the intensification of the fight taken by the civil society for

democracy and social justice. Not the globalization is the problem, but the way that she is developed until present.” (Stiglitz, 2003)

Zygmunt Bauman analysis the globalization from the perspective of the social effects, stating that „[...] the globalization represents the implacable destiny to which the world is pointing, an irreversible process that affects all of us in the same measure and in the same way.” (Bauman, 2002). I don't think that this statement is exactly realistic. I sustain that starting from the statement made by Koolhaas that says that “the globalization involves also the apparition of the differences”. We come to complete this statement with Michael Manley's explanation regarding the international economical system “each of us must find the place in the global economy and to pull us upper [...]”.

But, the most eloquent affirmation which came to sustain my opinion, that the globalization is understood as being an advantage of the elite, is the one made by Martin and Schumann (1996), whom assisted to the debates regarding evolution of the economy from the XXI century, which took place to San Francisco in September 1995 and to which participated “the world elite of the power formed by 500 politics, concern chiefs, science people, all of them being personalities of the fore-ground”: “20% from the population able for work would be enough in the next century to assure the liveliness of the world economy. There is no need for more work force”, is the opinion of the magnate which leads the Washington SyCip. A fifth from those whom are searching for work will be enough to produce all the goods and to provide high quality services which can afford the world society.” (Martin, Schumann, 1999)

In this new age of the globalization we have to reckon with an unquestionable reality: a wrongly international economical order which must be eliminated. Therefore, the countries of the third world don't have the possibility to compete with the countries which already have the monopole on the most advanced technologies and unlimited financial resources, which already mastered the majority of the markets. They will be gradually reduced to the simple zones producer of rough material and goods competitive from the point of view of the price, having the worst paid work hand.

Therefore, the globalization should be the only way that could take to the world reintegration, to the “equalization” of the “two worlds”, we could say. But, maybe the globalization passes this test? If we consider the society of only one fifth: 20% versus 80% (Martin, Schumann, 1999), according which only 20% from the population able to work is enough to assure the world economical liveliness, we can't be enough optimistic. The pores will remain poor and the reaches will be richer, and the precipice between the two worlds will be larger. By rights, the winner of the Nobel prize, Henry Kendyll, was affirming that “if we don't stabilize the population with justice, kindness and mercy, then the nature will do it for us”, this stabilization representing the biggest challenge of the globalization.

Into an interesting and controversial work published in 1995 in USA: : “When Corporations Rule the World”, its author, David C. Korten, analyzing a wide documentary material, arrives to the conclusion that “economical globalization is partly a modern vision of the imperialist phenomenon and it has approximately the same effects” (Korten, 1995). In the acceptance of the author, the globalization represents a modern imperialism, distinguishing by the classical concept of imperialism with the replacement of the world colonial states.

An interesting conception on the globalization we find also to the known North-American economist John Kenneth Galbraith. The globalization is approached by the author in its lasts works and is researched, especially, in his work “The Good Society. The Human Agenda” (Galbraith, 1996). It must be kept in mind the fact that Galbraith categorically pushes back the globalization term, and in an interview in which is discussing about the defiance of the new millennium, he says: “I am consultant to *The dictionary of the American inheritance* regarding the usage of the language and I won't allow the word globalization. It is an ugly term.” He prefers instead of the term of globalization a series of other equivalent terms like: “international

relations tighten in these areas like: economy, culture, art, traveling and communication”; “the internationalization of the economical life, the associations between the states and its institutions”; “the partnership between states and nations”; “the external economical opening of the countries”. In other circumstances, he prefers the term of internationalism instead globalization: “The international action within conferences and within institutions like IMF, World Bank and WTO is an essential part of the internationalism to which I guide. Note that I use the word internationalism and not globalization” (Galbraith, 1996).

The French economist Jacques Percebois, is part of the camp of those whom prefer the mundialization term instead of the globalization term. Into a study that is noticeable with the logic of the argumentation and the statistical documentation about the defective evolution of the economical gaps between North and South and the faith of the nation-state, the author conceives its analysis with the conceptual definition of the mundialization. In its work *La mondialisation des activités énergétiques: quelles enjeux?* (Percebois, 2001) the author brings up and underlie with statistical data the gaps between North and South, evidencing the faith of the nation state in the context of the globalization process or actual mundialization.

Percebois, defines the mundialization as being “the process which in an context of growing internationalization of the activities, takes to the starting up of transnational networks for decision in the engine domains of the growth, like: information, research-development, finances, high technologies” (Percebois, 2001).

In the analysis of the mundialization/globalization, the author outlines the relation between the national state and the international financial organizations (IMF, World Bank), as being an destructive relation for a nation that is at a dead end: “The dictatorship of the international financial markets is in the way that any state, which takes measures considered inadequate by the internationals financiers, is punished with a decrease of its national currency value and with bigger difficulties of access to the capital markets”. We consider that the role of the international financial organism must be of sustaining of the economies situated in difficulty and not of degradation and exaggerate indebt of these. But, the reality demonstrates us the opposite.

The critical analysis of the author regarding the mundialization/globalization distinguishes the difficulties of the market and of the economical liberalism manifested also in the domain of coordinating the economical activities in the social domain, and also in the one of the international economical inequalities, and consider opportune “the necessity of a regulatory state” and even “the emergence of a state administrator of new risks”. Therefore, the author conceives the contemporary mundialization like a cooperation process between states, and the leadership of the mundialization processes represents the step that can be realized through intergovernmental bodies coordinators and not through creating bodies representative with functions over-states and over-national, which put to the issue the sovereignty and the borders of the nation-states.

The responsible with the elaboration of the “World development report 1999-2000: The entry in the first century” from the World Bank, Shahid Yusuf defines and analysis the globalization in direct relation with the localization, offering in this way an element of novelty in the big contemporary dialogue about globalization.

In its analysis, the author starts from the premise that “the scenery of the development from the beginning of the XXI century will be shaped by globalization and localization”, two phenomenon which unroll in the same time, but in opposite directions. Therefore, the globalization is approached by the author as being “the integration of the countries with the rest of the world”, which is manifested as unifying force on the world level, while the localization represents the tendency of “the local groups to more autonomy”, suggesting in this way an internal action of the countries to decentralize.

Shahid Yusuf appreciates that, thanks to the evolution which tend the two processes, the globalization and the localization, had become two strong forces that “offers to the poor countries unprecedented opportunities for growth, but which can prove and un-stabilizer political and

economical, when the institutional frame isn't strengthen. [...] the answer of the nation-states to these two forces will determine if the incomes of the poor countries converge with the ones from the industrial countries and if the efforts for eliminating the poorness are successful (Yusuf, 1999).

In fact, appreciating that by the reaction of the nation-states to these two processes depends the disposal of the poorness, he blames the international gaps and the difficulty of their disposal on the poor countries, as like the developed capitalist countries, a lot of them big colonial powers until 1960, wouldn't have any blame for the existence of these gaps and their deepness into the post-war period and, so, not even any moral and material responsibility for contributing to their elimination. The globalization and the localization are two forces which shape the development in the new millennium, but each of them has a distinct content and distinct influence on the development.

The globalization is appreciated by the author as being the process of integration of the countries at a world level, which has also positive and negative effects. The positive effects refers to the fact that "integrates the markets of the goods and of the production factors, and the main negative effect is the fact that affects, in the direction of degradation, the environment expose the countries to the external shocks which can precipitate the financial and economical crisis.

Using rarely the globalization term, Alvin Töffler refers often to this process, using terms with equivalent value: „global system“, „globally“, „global network“, „a new global order“, „world globalize system“, „international hyper-connected interdependences“, „the mundialization of the production“ etc. He refers to the globalization with different aspects, but appreciates as being a phenomenon generated by the shock of the future and induced by the “third wave”, in other words, by the present informational revolution. Even if they have a fragmentary character in its works, these references have a high rate of relevance for understanding the globalization.

The first idea which brings up the globalization concept is the phrase: “the global system of the XXI century”. Therefore, the author states that: “fewer words are thrown today with bigger easiness than the globalization term. There doesn't exist any politics, UN official or press editorial, which isn't prepared to speak about the globalization system. But this principle isn't what imagines the big majority of the people. To understand it how it was yesterday, not the way he transforms with rapidity, even the best strategies can start the opposite. That's why, the strategically thinking of the XXI century has to start with a map of the global system of tomorrow” (Töffler, 1995).

Alvin Töffler critics the idea of the apparition of the new global system which coincides with the end of the Cold War: “The end of the cold war continues to matter on the global system. But, the changes generated by the decomposing of the Soviet Union are secondary and, actually, the global system would have been actually sized with revolutionary rummages even if the wall of the Berlin wouldn't have been fall down and the Soviet Union would have been further existed” (Töffler, 1995). The author considers that the forces which impose “the global system of the XXI century” have made felt the presence because of the informational revolution and as succession of the new system of creating the richness involved by this revolution, namely the third wave of change in the history of the humanity.

Into one correctly expression, using directly the globalization term, Alvin Töffler appreciates that this is facilitated by the informational revolution and asked by the new creating system of the richness: “once what the spreading means of the information circle the Earth facilitating the globalization asked by the new system of creating the richness, become more and more difficult to keep the concrete information in the limit of the national borders (Töffler, 1995).

If we make an analysis of the approach of the concept of globalization in the opinion of Alvin Töffler, we can consider that:

- the globalization is an objective process generated by the third wave, which has unequal the countries, the one developed being favored by this process;

- the globalization supposes the mundialization of the production and a new system of creating the richness;
- the globalization involves the deterioration of the national sovereignty, the permeability of the national borders and the dislocation of the nation, as succession of the competence transfer: one of them from the national to the international organisms and other from the national centre down, to the national sub-units: regional and local.

3. Conclusions

The economical and social transformations which have rapidly succeeded in the last 20 years have been so profound, that an economist or sociologist, who would have proposed himself the realization of a study about globalization, would have been forced to overtake the considerable obstacles. At present, this subject has the tendency to occupy the first place on the work agenda of the economist researchers, without saying that had become a commune fear. Interesting is the fact that, as same as post-modernism or post-industrialization represented the concepts that were in fashion in the 70's, the globalization seems to became the key concept of the 90's and of the beginning of the XXI century, which permits us to understand better the evolution and the coordinates of the humanity in the new millennium. Indeed, the controversies shown on this concept of globalization proved that, in this case, there isn't the problem of the adaptation of the old functionalist theories to the realities of the contemporary world, but it must be found reasons in the favor of this phenomenon find out in full development.

In my opinion, the globalization is an integrator process which manifests especially in economy, spreading then also in the other domains. The growing trend unprecedented of the modern technologies and of the communications permits to this process to manifest, with a different proportion, in all the corners of the world.

I consider that the globalization represents the present flow of economical thinking which, as the previous flows, has supporters and opponents. The transnational corporations, the fluxes of direct foreign investments, capital fluxes, commercial fluxes, and also the human capital mobility represents the ways of manifesting the globalization.

What upsets me the most regarding the present age of the globalization is the fact that this process generated, on short period of times, numerous crises, and these crises are manifesting with more and more profound intensity and affects all of us equally.

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