

## HUMAN FACTOR AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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*Everything starts from the dual condition of the human being: creator (of goods, technologies, values, behaviour, ideas, beauty and even amazing things, etc) and destroyer (of goods, technologies, values, behaviour, ideas, beauty and even himself). In this paper, the authors debate the opportunity and possibility of designing and implementing a sustainable development, taking in consideration the intrinsic way of being of human factor.*

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### **Introduction**

Our world is changing, everybody knows it. Our economical world is changing, too. Lately, we all have been discussing about a globalized world and about the collapse of time and space, meaning that geographical boundaries and distances are no longer as relevant or important as inhibitors of trade and communication. More commonly, the phrase *the world is getting smaller* is used to describe the tendency towards globalization (Heery and Noon, 2001). This globalization determines a small chaos helpful for some, not so advantageous for others.

### **Demographical issue**

We all are more than 6.7 billions of habitants of this World, if we take into consideration the study made by German Foundation for World Population (DSW) in 2007. It was shown there that the world population had to surpass that edge until the end of 2007, being also noticed the fact that the demographical grow for the same year was supposed to be around 80 millions of people. And again, it was also emphasized one more time that the phenomenon is more visible in the poorer countries ([www.scienceline.ro](http://www.scienceline.ro) și [www.agenda.ro](http://www.agenda.ro) ).

Generally speaking, it can be said that the obvious fast grow of the population after 1800 was practically a normal result of the qualitative evolution from the agriculture, health and hygiene system. On the other hand, there were also some economic and social changes that substantially increased life level, especially in Europe and North America.

But even if the evident qualitative jump cannot be denied at a global escale, analyzing the way that this wealth is spread reveals the fact that only 2% of the World population owns more than half of the world fortunes. That statement is part of the last study regarding the wealth spread and made by World Institute for Development Economics Research of the United Nations University (UNU-WIDER)<sup>90</sup> ([www.wider.unu.edu](http://www.wider.unu.edu) ) in 2000 and being the first one of this kind. It took into consideration both annual revenues and all kind of goods possessed, starting with stocks and finishing with lands and all other kind of goods.

The same investigation emphasized also an even bigger gape between the goods possessed by people from highly economic developed countries and those from poor countries. It was not given any political advise; it was only stated that a developed banking system able to financially

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<sup>90</sup> World Institute for Development Economics Research of the United Nations University (UNU-WIDER) is the first research and training centre of the United Nations University (UNU), established in Helsinki, Finland in 1984. It undertakes applied research and policy analysis on global development and poverty issues

sustain business environment could be an important factor for incomes and goods grow. The difference became huge when the analysis was made on the level of annual income obtained. The suggestion was made even if the analysis revealed consistent differences between incomes and goods possessed and level of debts. Thus, it became obvious that many countries having a low level of revenues achieve a higher level of fortune (due to the low level of indebtedness). By contrast, countries having a considerable level of consumption bring into discussion fortunes that are even smaller (due to the taken loans). ([www.wall-street.ro](http://www.wall-street.ro)).

As a first conclusion, world population seems to grow extremely fast, each second bringing with it three more lives. In an optimistic scenario, ONU estimates that by the end of year 2050 our world will count not less than 9,2 billions of human beings, meaning 2,5 billions more than during the current period. Facing such of foresight, on the 11 of July, 2008, celebrating the World Population Day, ONU asked for an increase of investment in family planning. At this time, discussing only about the necessities of the developing countries, the annual cost is around USD 1,2 billions and only half of this amount is spent on the main goal.

Further more, taking in consideration the new demographical values to which our population goes, it becomes very demanding the assurance of certain level of life conditions for no less than 9 billions of people for the next decades (an increasing need of food, water, fuel and so on). United Nations considers that this kind of growing rhythm is difficult to be sustained, especially within the current situation faced with a continuous destruction of the plough land and also a decrease of water resources ([www.romanalibera.ro](http://www.romanalibera.ro)). Studies made by some specialists<sup>91</sup> show that if every green plant growing on this planet would be used as food for human beings, everything sustained only 15 billions of inhabitants. It can be discussed here about the concept of carrying capacity, defining the entire number of citizens living together in the same time on Terra. Its maximum value assumes that all the Earth resources should be used with the unique goal of assuring population existence (as a result, it cannot be anymore about having parks or natural reservations and, also, it implies the consumption of every possible food resource only for human beings need - which is an unrealistic approach). ([www.yuppy.ro](http://www.yuppy.ro)).

A similar but more radical position is sustained by Eric Pianka<sup>92</sup>. He recommends an American and European version of the Chinese low limiting at one the number of existent children within a family (simple reproduction). He also states that, in order to really preserve the environment, there is a need for trimming the Earth population by 90%; his suggestion was the use of a simple mutation of Ebola virus, thinking that the world itself is a huge biomass sustaining the perfect sublayer for killer bacteria.

In these conditions, there is still a hope in the confirmation of the demographical evolution theory<sup>93</sup> that has the following stages:

- at the beginning, both mortality rate and birth rate were high comparing them with the lower level of population increase (closed to zero);
- the second phase of the evolution brought in the same time a high birth rate and a low mortality rate (due to the public health system development, the technological advance and so on). The result was a considerable increase of the population;
- during the third phase, birth rate goes towards a decrease – following the social changes led by women emancipation (choosing the career instead of a family) -, it is reduced as much as possible the mortality rate (discouraging also numerous families, in an indirect manner), and it is increased the number of families using family planning etc. Thus, hopefully the population increasing rate will be decreasing again towards zero. There is still a main problem: this

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91 Lotka-Volterra, Donella Meadows, Richard Dawkins, Paul R. Ehrlich

92 Eric R. Pianka is an American, best known for his contributions to herpetology and evolutionary ecology. He is nicknamed "The Lizard Man".

93 Bolovan, S., Bolovan, I., Stefan Pascu și demografia istorică în România", Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai, Cluj, 2003

judgement does not take care about the each region taken apart, not being relevant even at a global level (due to the great economic gapes).

After all, we all are several billions of habitants; we all are different as look **as well as attitudes, values and believes. We have different cultural backgrounds, lives different presents and go towards different futures. Still none of us miss, one way or another, the fighting spirit, power and wealth desire, as well as creative and innovative spirit. It has been mentioned that these are confirmed at the individual level. Fire, knife, wheel, roman engineering, than bulb, telephone, gramophone, peniciline, flying machines, computer, the Internet and so on, everything had as a ground the individual geniality and the pleasure of compeating with himself. A problem arise only when it is realized that a positive collective result (similar with the collective intelligence situation), does not consist in a sum of positive individual results.**

### **Sustainable development**

**Everything previously mentioned imposed an interesting concept called:** "sustainable development", meaning nothing else than that kind of development *following current needs satisfaction without compromising future generations possibility of satisfaying their own needs*". This is the most used definition included also in "Our common future" report (so called Brundtland report), by the World Commision for Environment and Development (WCED) in 1986. Other words, on the one hand, it has to be not forgotten the collective needs satisfaction of contemporanne generations as well as the followings', on the other hand, it has not to be given to one of them an extrem importance in the other's detriment.

Leaving apart that if a development is thought on the long run it has to be sustainable, the concept brings into discussion a human reality more and more obvious and pressing: our environment destroiment due to the own activities, fact that can destroy even the world future.

Even if at its early stage sustainable development was thought as a solution to the ecological crisis established by the intensive industrial use of the rressources and to the continuu shading of the environment, setting as main objective the deffend of environment quality, nowadays its content expanded on the life quality in its complexity (economic and social aspects). Thus, another strategic goal of the sustainable development is justice maintaining between states and, nevertheless, between generations.

At a certain point, it became obvious that society oppinion is an important factor in partnership promotion and sustainable development implementation. But the development of a certain attitude and behavior based on respect for nature, people, resistant values and so on, became obviously a great challenge as well.

Everybody agrees the idea that each individual, conscious or not, can help the sustainable development implementation. Still, in fact, even if it does not take much to sort plastic and glass wastes, to recycle paper or to wisely use garbage, it takes longer to transform all these actions into unconditioned reflexes. *Sustainable development* is a *young* concept and beyond a well-organized frame, the decision of keeping the environment wealthy or not belongs to everyone. This is also one of the reasons explaining the tendency of depletion of natural rressources, row materials and food, of the regenerable rressources consumption much faster than their potential of regeneration, next to the water, air and land pollution. (Lester, R.B, 2006). "A sustainable society", says Lester R.Brown, "is that who is able to model its economic and social system in a such manner that natural rressources and supporting systems to be maintained ". On the other hand, it has to be not forggoten that collective interest is not given by the sum of individuals interesstes; the human himself cannot handle larger temporal dimension (this leads to his lack of worry regarding something appearing eternal to him); an individual can difficultly step outside his limited temporal perception due to his irrelevant period of his consciousness faced to the universal existence.

Leaving apart the difficulty of developing a certain behavior and attitude of the population, it can be also said that either the politic environment does not do bigger steps (more meetings less practical actions). Thus, even European Union set sustainable development as being the comprehensive principle of every European politics (Lisbone strategy), the reality prove that economic competitiveness lead political agenda. And even if previously everybody agreed with an extension of the sustainable development concept to the care for nature, resources, different nationalities and individuals apart under the current and future aspects, now it seems to restrain everything again only to the respect for nature. The explanation brings into discussion the need for economical grow in order to be able to implement any kind of strategies and politics for environment and social protection (shows the impossibility of thinking on the long run)

An observation can be made: there are too many different problems under the sustainable development concept umbrella. In this way, with or without intention, the attention can be taken away; this can be also a reason for the a circular and not climbing spiral? way of acting within this field. One thing is still sure: the stated goal of the sustainable development (continuous improvement of the life quality of the present and future generations), cannot be achieved but only within communities able to use resources rationally and efficiently and to discover the ecological potential of the economy. In this way, the final result will be not only prosperity, but also environment protection and social cohesion.

In the absence of this base, sustainable development is only an emergency doctrine that shows, contradicting with its own stated mission, that the care for environment and humans, on the one hand, and economic development, on the other, are nothing else but opposite processes. More than that, facing the current financial crisis, the concept seems to not be taken anymore into consideration when it is about running a business (or the public life) and it is in danger of being label as *fads*<sup>94</sup> (Skyrme, D.J, 1997).

A more insight look brings an even more contradictory association: sustainable development and globalisation. Globalisation, could it be a closed road unable to offer a continuous development possibility? Paradoxally, no matter the answer is, the importance of the "return at roots" , at the simplest, even fundamental, things, is obvious; it can assure the human and his activity pereniality and that means, basically, a real sustainable development process:

„One of the life truisms is that crisis periods could happen. Still, a crisis is basic things left and the most certain way of dealing with it is the appropriate return at fundamental things” (Zig Zaglar, 2002).

„All we need is a major crisis and all nations will accept the New World Order”, was saying David Rockefeller at the beginning of the last century. This remark has a very well-known scientific explanation: every edge situation breaks the resistance at change<sup>95</sup> in the same way that a crisis or a war are followed by a new beginning, a new economical starting-up. Can it be here about the human creativity (strategies and economical distraction creation) and power desire, too? Again, no matter the answer is, everybody agrees that a financial crisis is almost more moral than a war or, at least, harder to be blamed. Speaking about sustainable development, it is also interesting the way that calling nations to solidarity become a vital subject at the very that moment when some make the snowball and orient it towards others; these *others* have to understand and help at „recovery”.

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94 Every several years, business strategies analysers develop new concepts of informational technologies and/or management philosophy. It can be mentioned here Total Quality Management, Business Process Reengineering, Knowledge Management, e-Business.

95 Kurt Zadek Lewin (September 9, 1890 - February 12, 1947), a German-born psychologist, is one of the modern pioneers of social, organizational and applied psychology. He developed an early model of change describing change as a three-stage process: unfreeze, change and refreeze again.

It sounds like a conspiracy theory<sup>96</sup>. John Perkins is one of the latest sustainers of it through the New York Times best-seller: „Confessions of an economic hit-man”. He focuses on the ultimate goals of those exalting globalization process (who have exalted it, at least). *How randomly are certain quakes? Is there any logic in periodically rising and falling of some nations? Behind the asserted and applauded well-intended actions, is there or not a grand cheeseboard?*<sup>97</sup>

John Perkins brings into discussion the possible global reason which, even if not avowed, it is a part of the individual belief (believing in God is a form of universal logic believe): "Economic hit men (EHMs), he says, are highly paid professionals who cheat countries around the globe out of trillions of dollars. They funnel money from the World Bank, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and other foreign "aid" organizations into the coffers of huge corporations and the pockets of a few wealthy families who control the planet's natural resources. Their tools include fraudulent financial reports, rigged elections, payoffs, extortion, sex and murder. They play a game as old as empire, but one that has taken on new and terrifying dimensions during this time of globalization."<sup>98</sup>

### Conclusion

Advoiding to set a general truth, it is still impossible to not notice the way that advertising controls our daily lives (even if everybody seems to look for a communication improvement that paradoxaly goes to a communication decrease between humans).

Only during the latest period, mass-media spread 18.038.139 ads<sup>99</sup>. As a daily mean, Romanians were fired on with no less than 7.060 ads. The biggest investors in tv advertising campaigns were multinationals (like Procter&Gamble and Unilever ordering 517.076 and respectively 398.590 tv ads (www.razboiulnevazut.com )

Aparently, the advertising storm has been intensified because of the economic grow and life level. Speculatively, advertising does not mean anything else than a mass manipulation way. We all are ads prisoners, even if we like it or not. We enter in hipermarket or drudstore and choose, as being hypnotized, just the yougurt or medicine whose ad we generally ignore. From this point of view, motivational theories, neurolingvistic programming nor subliminal messages<sup>100</sup> do

function pro individual.

According to literature by Silent Sounds, Inc., it is now possible, using supercomputers, to analyze human emotional EEG patterns and replicate them, then store these "emotion signature clusters" on another computer and, at will, "silently induce and change the emotional state in a human being". Far from necessarily being used as a weapon against a person, the system does have limitless positive applications. However, the fact that the sounds are subliminal makes them virtually undetectable and possibly dangerous to the general public<sup>101</sup>

On the other hand, if few years ago our parents did not use to have more than some aspirins at home, nowadays there are a lot of very aggressive ads emphasizing the need for drug at the same level as the need for food. Aparently, again, it is only a care for the individual health. Yet, paradoxaly, when some dreaded diseases were eradicated, we start die because of flue; when we

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96 According to Wikipedia, a conspiracy theory is a term that has come to refer to any tentative theory which explains a historical or current event as the result of a secret plot by usually powerful Machiavellian conspirators, such as a "secret team" or "shadow government"

97 Brzezinski Z., 2000, "Marea tabla de sah", Ed. Universul Enciclopedic, ISBN 973-9436-24-2

98 John Perkins, 2007, Confesiunile unui asasin economic, Editura Litera International

99 In conformity with observation of the Romanian maeket made by Alfa Cont Mediawatch during 2000 – 2007.

100 The mind-altering mechanism is based on a subliminal carrier technology: the Silent Sound Spread Spectrum (SSSS), sometimes called "S-quad" or "Squad". It was developed by Dr Oliver Lowery of Norcross, Georgia, and is described in US Patent #5,159,703, "Silent Subliminal Presentation System", dated October 27, 1992.

101 Miller, R.A., 2001, Synthetic Telepathy and the Early Mind Wars, Presented at the Consciousness Technologies Conference, July 19-21, 2001, in Sisters

speak about an increase of expectation of life level, even more young people die because of stress, exhaustion or despair; when we talk about more medical secrets revealed, we also understand that no medicine is more efficient but only more bought.

As a final conclusion, no matter if the conspiracy theory or the necessity of a sustainable development is accepted, the reality catches its creators: „If you do not help and elevate those who are less lucky than you, it will come the day when, because of the quantitative difference, the less lucky will draw you down.” (Ziglar, Z., 2002).

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