

GLOBALISATION AND NEW RURAL TRANSFORMATIONS

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Abstract

Globalisation as world process is not neutral process. It is globalism too. In relations globalisation-globalism are result great problems all the world, especially in rural areas. Generally, globalisation is transition in all spheres of individual and social life. People, peasants especially, severely accept change. But, "tomorrow is always late" (F. Major, 1991). Globalisation suppose democratisation and participation (in "globo" and in "loco"), new independent, diversification, de-traditionalisation, education for change (and) rural populations, democratic initiatives and opinions, rural innovations, principle of flexibility and new rural economy; re - interpretation of peasantry, rural works, rural morality, sense, rural perspectives, etc. Although this is seemingly an evolutionary process, it is realistically a developmental revolution that is in question, implying the achieved level of the material well - being and focusing on developing of the man, as a psycho - social being inside and outside the work - rural environment, on the humanisation of all the relations in the society up to the inter - human ones.

Globalisation conditioning new research agenda, re - define ideas, conceptions, methods, contents and new admissions for rural sociologists and rural sociology. In one word, the concept of rural development in the age of globalisation has opened multitude of complex issues to which for the benefit of society, man and the spirit of time, good quality, appropriate answers should be given. "Hypothesis non fungo" (I. Newton). They are in rural realities.

1. Introduction

We live in the time of globalisation, dizzying changes, insatiable technological growth at any price, humanization of man and his work, concentration and centralisation of power, but we also live in the time of apathy, lost moral compasses, decadency of social norms, institutions and ecological systems. General requirement is scientific, moral, institutional regeneration, change of behaviour and conscience.

We can only feel the premonition of the intensity and of the scope of scientific-technological changes. The future of informatics in the world of business has already been perceived. We can claim for sure: at the center of attention of social institutions and organization there must and will be a man, his needs, the development of free, creative and healthy personality of democratic determinations. Moral health of citizens and peasants in civil society and a healthy living environment as a result of maintained and stable development will be among priorities. Globalisation as a result of intensive development of scientific-technological powers leads inexorably towards such directions of development. Being excluded out of the global processes *a priori* means being retarded in development.

However, the obstacles in reaching globalisation are globalism, inflexibility and non-transparency of the inherited institutions, existing consciousness. Even now «the hybridization» and «repair» of institutions are necessary, and building of new institutions and a new axiology are also required. Redefining of Francis Bacon's "New Organon" and the

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mechanic–cartesian paradigm in the context of a new role and position of man and *homo ruralis* in society and the world of work is also necessary. Since, as it was stated by Wright Mills in his book “Sociological Imagination”, rapid and intensive development of material-technical and technological production forces is indicated as the factor which contributes the levelling of social opposites and stabilization, and thus the historical permanence of the predominant system grounded on the private ownership.

Systematic approach of structuralistic and functionalistic provenance, integrated with holistic-ecological approach is imposed as *conditio sine qua non* of our thinking and understanding of the spirit of time in which we live, the man, the new position and role of science and knowledge in general, the transparency of organization, our perception of rural society, its thorough regeneration of mission and the new role in global processes.

Progress must have a human face, technical, ideological, humanistic sciences must explain more clearly the humanistic provenance contrary to vulgar economism which emphasises only and above all the rational growth aiming at creation as much as possible (also additional) consumer goods. Since, in undeveloped countries, it is possible to realize economical growth without social justice, but the realization of social justice is not possible without economical growth and positive individual perception. A peasant and his dignity in his work and his place of living should become the basic values of the society, and the goals of social development, social function of state, civilization and cultural roles must be realized through democratic relations, democratic organization of institutions and in democratic way.

2. Rural reality and transformations

Globalisation encompassed all countries. They enter that process with with different historical economic, cultural inheritance and with different degree of modernisation of agricultural production, education, achieved level of the standard of living, style and the way of living. The new rural problems, both in the political and social-economic sphere and in everyday living, occur. The relations of countries, institutions and individuals towards the politics of rural development are very different; likewise is different the process of globalisation toward the influence in the agrarian sector-from the individual and institutional affirmative perception of rural development up to strong resistances which are characteristics (also) of poor societies.

The process of reorganisation of work in agriculture and economic organization is present, especially in the phase of operationing of state politics and transition from political into rural sphere, as the integral part of rural development and its interrelation and understanding in local rural groups.

Conservative and innovative behaviour of different actors within rural civil society leads to either social conflicts or to cooperation (from conflict to harmony, from functionality to disfunctionality, from creative energy to destructive energy or even to synergy). Economic, social and cultural context and process are incorporated into the new multidimensional concept of rural development and behaviour, alongwith the permanent presence of rural and developing agrarian controversies as the integral part of the new rural reality. And the new, transformed reality is the research area of rural sociology which deserves appropriate attention. Especially, in the context of globalisation: the process of reinterpretation of rural appearance, the process of redivision of territories, the process of detraditionalism, that is the reexploration, finding and interpreting of rural traditions, that is, in context of rural development, the principles of multidimensionality, transformation, flexibility, transparency,

diversification of needs, morality, understanding of specific conditions, and new shapes (forms) of cooperation.

Rural reality is exposed to the wind of tumultuous processes and changes, the scope and the content of which are without precedent. Rural sufferings of rural sociology however remain in hands of rural sociologists. Moving from villages into towns, mechanisation and chemisation of agricultural production, abandonment of villages are still current problems. New institutions which are necessary for a modern village are being created more slowly in comparison to the destruction of the old ones. Quantitative changes occur more quickly than the qualitative ones. The plans of changes are mainly urban and not rural. Resembling the king Mida's finger, the town makes urban everything it lays its finger on, although we often forget that there is no urban development without rural development. Perhaps the most adequate terms for description of rural reality would be changes, (natural) element, confusion. By pointing out only a few of the most prominent problems of rural reality in the context of globalisation and its influence on the rural transformations, we want emphasise the urgent need of sociological systematisation and valorization of rural processes and to indicate the objective backwardness of (rural) sociological thought in relation to the social needs and potentials.

3. Globalisation and globalism

The question of globalisation was made by time. Globalisation was caused by a rapid technical, technological, that is, scientific development, especially the development and productive use of informatics and communication technologies. Globalisation may also take place in the context of changes which occur in the rural environment as well as in the context of problems of rural development which are open for new sociological explorations and thinking. Internationalisation, integration, the creation of «world society», «the society of knowledge» (maybe also the new world rural system) are not adequately and in a sufficient amount followed by sociological explorations and theoretical thinkings. We are still late.

Globalisation is the element of the productional usage of scientific – technological knowledge and human powers. Is it in accordance with the law regarding the process of development of the society? Does it lead toward the destruction or affirmation of the particularities of the societies? Does globalisation, from the standpoint of durable development and the position of *homo ruralis* in the society, contribute the humanisation of social relations and the humanist (man as a creative and dignified human being) relations *in loco, in globo*? It is early to give the answer. In dealing with problem of the influence of globalisation on the rural transformations, rural sociology is still in the phase of making questions – the formulation of problem.

Is globalism the hybrid which grows abundantly in the field of globalisation? Are those processes parallel or the globalism is only the result of ideological narrow-mindedness of pragmatic and non-critical (in service of daily-political interests) let us call it scientific understanding of reality – the time and our experience will answer that question and above all the creative, critical approach and real scientific explorations in the context of determination of aim and methodological directioning of rural sociology.

GLOBALISATION, CREATED ON THE BASIS OF RAPID SCIENTIFIC-TECHNOLOGICAL AND ESPECIALLY INFORMATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, IS A COMPLEX OF PHENOMENON AND PROCESS OF ECONOMIC, POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL INTEGRATION OF SOCIETIES, INSTITUTIONS AND INDIVIDUALS INTO THE UNIQUE WORLD SOCIETY.

Globalism is the tendency of some countries to establish economic, political, and cultural dominations. From the standpoint of humanistic values and reached civilization development, globalism is misuse of globalisation.

Globalisation incorporates many problems as well. Although it itself is a very complex phenomenon because it supposes CHANGES, it is not wise *a priori* to reject it. We must try to understand changes and after that to evaluate them. In order to achieve that, the problem must be explored from the standpoint of general, social humanistic progress and historical changes in the society and in rural societies in general. From the point of globalisation and rural development it is necessary to modernize and redefine the object and method of rural sociology. The answers regarding the causes of globalisation and its essence character, consequences for the development of society and man, rural development and *homo ruralis* must be given, from the aspect of accomplished and possible humanistic and civilization values.

4. Rural development

Rural development is a new concept of approaching the village and rurality which is initiated by the conscience of the problems which were created by (up to pathology) a rapid development due to production and informatic application of scientific knowledge and radical changes in technical –technological basis of work. And than successively and completely, changes encompassed all the segments of society: economic, political , social, cultural,-up to the moral one. Searching of the new concepts of rural development in contrast to the unsatiated growth at any price, first began in the technologically developed countries in which the rapid technical-technological growth first of all and in the strictest form showed Janus' other face.

Although it seems that it is the question of evolutionary process, it is essentially a question of DEVELOPING REVOLUTION which implies the reached level of material wellbeing and putting into center the development of a man-peasant as a bio-psycho-social being in the rural (working) environment and outside it: humanization of all the relations in the rural society and in the society in general – up to the interhuman relations.

Ecological problems in the context of rural development, gains a very prominent place of striving towards humanization of nature and naturalization of man. Not in the sense of romantic sensibility of the return to the “untouched nature” but in the sense of real action, compatibility of life in nature and with nature , with the full respect of the laws of nature and the traditional, humane relation of a peasant towards nature-organic wisdom.

Rural development and transformations *explicite* mean the revision of understanding of rurality, before all the restructuring of the rural areas, especially the work in agriculture which, again, must be “the highest activity” (A. AUGUSTIN), and which is, we claim, a part of our genetics (ten thousand years from the agriculture revolution and only about three centuries of experience of industrial work are arguments satisfactory enough).

The concept of rural development “opened” many complex questions of rural transformations to which answers must be given, and those answers must be of high-quality and appropriate to a society, man and the “spirit of time”. We shall mention only some structural questions:

- First, is the economic or the cultural development primary in rural areas?
- Second, which economic, social and cultural consequences are urban «colonizations» in rural areas?
- Third, is the multidimensional rural development neutral towards population (poverty) or toward richness (exclusivity) of rural population post-modern world? Is a new middle class, for example organic plowman, created in the agrarian system? What is the role of state politics, the politics of interventionism in agriculture?
- Fourth, what do the content and character of changes in the production of food look like, as well as in the production condition and products, and in producer-consumer relations? Does the rural development create the paradigms of villager, the innovative and inventive undertaker organic plowman or even a bit of peasant? In which measure the rural development influences (dis)functionality of relation between big food production companies (agrobusiness), mini-production of food on the family farms, special farms (organic production) and traditional (extractive) agricultural production
- Fifth, is the production of organic (healthy) food the protest and the resistance to the production of the genetically modified food? Is it an experiment? Is it our new reality or is it the future of the moral interrelation of the natural environment and man? How does the production healthy food influence the creation of local economy, the forms and contents of economic units and family farms? How should the alternative networks in the production of healthy food be created? Can the rural economy be revitalised by the networks also from the moral point of view?
- Sixth, how does new concept of rural development influence the social-economic integrations, local identity and local authorities? How does it influence the cooperation in the rural world («rural bridges»)? How does it influence the national intellectual traditions and material culture? The rural (un)employment and migrations? The position of a woman?
- Seventh, what are the relations and influences of informatic society on the rural society and *vice versa*? Is the rural society in that context, the society “by itself”, the society “for itself” or the equal and integral part of the whole society? What is the role of government and non-government organizations, associations of citizens (peasants)?

The mentioned questions are only some of the problems which are opened with the transition from the concept of growth into the concept of rural development in context of globalisation. These are all the problems which must be explored in the new, object redefined rural sociology. The concept of rural development supposes the new understanding of a family farm and production, changing the position of agriculture, forms of ownership, our axiology. Contemporary (and redefined) rural sociology (together with the sociology of rural development) must anew explore traditional peasantry and historical inheritance in context of modernisation of rural economy, everyday life in villages through the prism of context of redefined rurality. Besides that the phenomenon of particularism which is characteristic for peasantry all around the world, and its connections with populism, extremism, localism—from the aspect of individual adoption and evaluation (individualisation) of rural development and from the aspect of the process of world integration (globalisation).

5. Redefining of rural sociology

Rural sociology, apart from the local orientation, must be oriented towards the world, not recognizing the national and state boundaries. In the future, rural sociologists will have to pay the due attention to the process of globalisation the whole rural development and rural transformations; to the role of state politics, the politics of interventionism in agriculture; to the strategy of the survival of peasantry, peasant farms.

An individual rural society, in context of globalisation, is going to be less and less within the process of object direction of rural sociology (and it means also the changes of using of the dominant methodological approaches and instrumentarium) and it is going to be more and more the world rural society.

Rural sociology, in its object direction, must have more and more rural themes in context of the late modernization (chemization and mechanization) of agricultural production and the evolution of (rural) society from particularization up to unification. It should especially focus the new interrelations and understandings regarding the following relations: man (peasant), rurality, work, technology, society, nature.

Even the new young work force is necessary and they will empirically explore and theoretically think about the problems of globalisation and its influence on the rural development, education for changes, and in that context, the problems of the place and the role of *homo ruralis*.

The theory and practice of rural development, its (re) defining of rural transformations should be more and more the exploration area of rural sociology. The sociologists of work, the sociologists exploring and developing other special sociological disciplines, economists, agronomists, historians, anthropologists, politicologists, lawyers, doctors, engineers and other explorers who are implementing or practising scientific (theoretical or practical) exploration thinking about some of the segments of rural development in the rural society and the society in general, are generally good collocutors to a rural sociologist. Exactly with the help of cooperation and complementing of knowledge from other scientific disciplines our knowledge of the rural society can be enlarged, and on the basis of that the social action for the transformation of rural (and agrarian) practice is possible, in order to obtain better life for people in rural areas for healthier food and living environment.

Besides transparency, the diversification of needs, monitoring, evaluation which are only some of the fundamental principles and tasks of rural sociology, the principle of flexibility is especially emphasized. Under the principle of flexibility in rural sociology we shall understand a broad methodological and methodical basis for understanding, exploration explaining and practice of the contemporary global changes in rural society. It supposes multidisciplinary and interdisciplinarity in exploration. The principle of flexibility must be the basis of systematic approach in order to understand the balance as sensible aim of every system, that is the bringing of the system in the state of balance. The principle of flexibility must be the basis of the holistic approach and its humanistic-ecological dimension and perspective.

The principle of flexibility is seen through the prism of systematic-holistic, ecological-cognitive methodological approach in contrast to the mechanic-cartesian approach by emphasising the following fundamental principles:

- Ecologization versus deecologization;
- Internal growth and consistent integral durable and stable development, in contrast the endless economic and technological growth;
- “Light ” and “clean” technologies versus difficult and dirty technologies;
- Cooperation and development of the talents of citizens (peasants) versus separate action , competition and self-confirmation;
- Organic-ecological understanding versus reductionism;
- The improvement of the spirit of rationalism and the spirit of intuitionism (perception of both the unclear and the unrecongnisable) versus improvement *a priori* of rationalism (clear and recongnisable);
- Methodological flexibility and coexistence versus methodological resistance and rigid schemes;
- Ecological ethics (harmony with the spirit of nature and the spirit of man) versus the ecological amorality (conquering and subjugating of nature);
- Balancing versus unbalancing;
- Parts and a whole as a dynamic system versus “*pars pro toto*” and “*vice versa*”;
- Non-linear opinion versus linear opinion.

Rural sociologists must anew think, be inspired by ideas, apply methodology and emphasise, in the new social conditions, the capital works of R. REDFIELD, H. MENDRAS, T. FEY..AND OF THE OTHER important persons in the field of rural sociology.

Only some strategic directions of redifining of rural sociology are stated here, in the context of globalisation and the new rural transformation. No matter how much the mentioned tasks suppose the interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinary, material, professional, and even the moral motivation and our additional efforts , they are the imperative of the time in which we live. In order not to miss the future .

Sometimes it is more difficult to make a question than to answer it. Because of that «we never must forget (the science of history proves it) - this was written by LUI DE BROIL– that each success of our recognition creates more problems than it solves”.

“The pluralism of ideas, tolarance and cooperation among rivals (and not enemies), freedom of expressing of theses and antitheses, responsible argumentation-all of them are necessary, lawful and fruitful suppositions of the personal and group determinations, understood in all their diversity and contrast. (F. MAJOR, 1991)”.

We need wisdom in order to have that kind of approach, and we do not have to make it up. It is a good thing to try hard in order to have it. Will the global processes, the new rural changes be truly brought into conformity with economic, social and moral perspective of peasants all around the world- it depends, in a considerable measure, on us (rural sociologists), on our behaviour, our beliefs, our perception of globalisation and rural transformations, the reached level of conscience, on our skillfulness, moral axology and good intentions. It is a good thing to try hard to get it, too.

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