

Specific aspects of globalization

Specifické aspekty globalizace

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Abstract: The decisive role of globalization processes and development tendencies has many positive and negative effects in economic (foreign-trade), environmental, and (bio) technological areas. From the evolution point of view still very successful human adaptation strategy hit the basic limit given by the capacity of the Earth biosphere. The evolution determinants of human society and their economic or technological activities manifesting themselves by global problems can find way out of sustainable development. The application of the so-called preventive principle represents a great dilemma.

Key words: globalization, sustainable development, WTO, evolution

Abstrakt: Rozhodující role globalizačních procesů a vývojových tendencí má řadu pozitivních i negativních efektů v oblasti hospodářské (zahraničně-obchodní), environmentální, (bio) technologické aj. Z evolučního hlediska dosud velmi úspěšná lidská adaptační strategie narazila na zásadní hranici danou kapacitou zemské biosféry. Evoluční determinanty lidské společnosti a jejich ekonomických či technologických aktivit projevující se globálními problémy mohou nalézt východisko nastoupením cesty (trvale) udržitelného rozvoje. Velké dilema představuje uplatnění tzv. preventivního principu.

Klíčová slova: globalizace, udržitelný rozvoj, WTO, evoluce

One of the most important presumptions of prosperity and progress towards the sustainable development is the improvement of care of the world ecosystems. However, the present trends do not correspond with this presumption. Human activity leads to degradation of many ecosystems, while the requirements for “ecosystem services” (for example food, drinking water, environment and so on) grow significantly.

Dependency of the mankind on biosphere and services of its ecosystems have existed since the beginning of its existence. It holds true for the present and the future despite the fact that the mankind puts culture and technology between itself and the environment. That enables to “reform” and “control” the nature, nevertheless, in the definitive form the mankind is and will be absolutely dependent on the state of biosphere and the corresponding supply of ecosystem service (Ekosystémy ... 2003).

The growing negative working of the degraded ecosystems represents a fundamental limitation for economic growth and prosperity. Essential interventions in political sphere and management can effec-

tively prevent the degradation of ecosystems and on the contrary to increase their share in the prosperity and quality of life of the society.

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AIM AND METHODOLOGY

Characteristics of globalization processes and trends in its correlation with economic foreign-trade, environmental and evolution-technological processes including relevant implications represent the target direction of the paper.

The methodological approach stems from the selection of some basic factors and processes which enable to fulfill the aims of sustainable development.

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RESULTS

Evolutional factor of globalization

The process of globalization represents creation of all-planetary structures in particular spheres of social activities, increase of their complexity (system complication), a gradual connection of the partial global structures and growth of their mutual dependency.

There is a different level of globalization in the particular areas of human activities. The primary and the most dynamic development has run in the technology area (ICT) and subsequently in economic area. It is essential to emphasize that many social activities (law, education, institution) have not been globalized yet and operate in the frame of national or particular integration wholes (Mezřický et al. 2003).

With regard to the fundamental questions and looking for correct answers connected with the globalization process, the structure and dynamics of which are considerably differentiated from matter-of fact, local, and time point of view, determining (historical) mechanisms and presumptions have to be respected forming today's course of globalization. It is essential to respect and to stem from that today's course of globalization in all its complexity has its roots and connection:

- (1) with evolution of the human species (present success of cultural-adaptation strategy)
- (2) with the process of neolithic revolution (the invention of agricultural technology – a genesis of civilization)
- (3) with the development of modern science and its technological use at the beginning of the European modern period (industrial revolution)

Fast development in last centuries connected with the transition of local civilizations into the global civilization has caused many critical phenomena (global problems) which represent a subsistence jeopardy of the mankind and its culture. Till this time very successful human adaptation strategy hits in a fundamental border given by the capacity of Earth biosphere. Endangering of the ecological balance of the Earth by technological and economic globalization represents partly a key problem and partly

an area where it is necessary to look for a solution (Lehmanová et al. 2003).

A hypothesis can be mentioned that the mankind cannot change fundamentally its successful cultural-adaptation strategy. However, the existence condition of human civilization is undoubtedly connected with a need of this change of adaptation strategy. A conception of (sustainable) development represents surely a way in the right direction.

Process of liberalization in global environment

The current foreign trade is deformed by a large amount of state interventions. Many important persons involved suppose that a radical limitation of these interventions will support the development of trade and subsequently also development of economy of developed and developing countries of the WTO. The main target of the so-called ministerial conferences of the WTO is further deepening the liberalization of the world trade. This intention is successfully enforced with considerable difficulties (Singapore – 1996, Geneva – 1998, Seattle – 1999, Doha – 2001, Cancún – 2003, Hong Kong – 2005), Qatar round, i.e. the development program from Doha for agrarian trade, focused on reaching a substantial improvement in access on market, to decrease all forms of subsidies with a perspective of their complete removal, and to decrease fundamentally domestic supports connected to production. On base of these full powers, the EU approached in advance to the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy to preconceive and meet the reform needs (Tvrdon' et al. 2004).

Negotiation on the world trade liberalization, the so-called "Qatar" round of negotiations ended at the end of July 2006 after 5 years with failure. Modalities for further stage of the reform of rules of foreign trade were not approved. The agreement of big trade powers, i.e. the USA, the EU, Japan, Brazil, Australia and India, regarding of reduction of agricultural subsidies in the USA and the EU was not achieved. Postponement of the negotiation on foreign trade liberalization and consequently also the delay of a better access on agrarian markets concerning both developing countries (poor countries) access on markets of rich countries, and rich countries access on prospective markets of Brazil, China and India (Svatoš 2004).

A collapse of the Qatar round of negotiation on further world trade liberalization led to decrease of trustworthiness and functionality of the WTO. Many countries, including the CR, prepare for application of a strategy of bilateral or regional agreements with the relevant trade partners. However, this situation is

complicated because e.g. bilateral or regional agreements are often in considerable extent discriminating, while agreements in the frame of the WTO are binding for all member states (regardless their economic or politic power).

Biotechnological innovation and globalization

New modern technology alternative to genetic engineering is marked as genomics for which there is used in area of agriculture the name Market Assisted Selection (Selection with Support of Markers – MAS). A basic virtue of the method MAS in comparison with the genetic engineering (transgenic plants, GM foods) is the fact that cultivation of new varieties takes place always within one species which fundamentally decreases the risks of ecological damages and the potential negative impacts of GM plants on the health of consumers. The principle of the MAS method is based on mapping and ranging of the genomes of significant plant species and identification of genes of the economically useful characters. The MAS method enables to fasten significantly the cultivation process because the determination of the demanded parameters can be traced already in the stage of gamete, eventually a seedling.

From some studies (The Union of Concerned Scientists – 2004) it results that a massive growing of GM plants leads to a “contamination” of the existing varieties of farm plants by sequences of the DNA of GM plants.

The MAS technology and development of area of all genomics is connected with a requirement of as bigger biodiversity as possible while spreading the GM plants represents a risk for biodiversity. Other important difference is connected with the fact that development of the MAS technology (genomics) is connected with “democratization”, i.e. an exchange of (sharable) information of breeders in the world. It is in contradiction to the position of many firms in the area of the GM technologies which strive for a patent protection (Svatoš 2004).

However, it is necessary to emphasize that the effect of genomics connected with use of the MAS plants has to respect environmental, economic and social factors which in total determine the sustainable development of agriculture.

Modern technologies safety risk

The negative side of the optimistic view connected with technological progress is still wider set of po-

tential disasters which can be eventually initiated not only by malice, but also negligence, default and so on. A fundamental problem are then theoretical hypotheses which, with very small but non-zero probability, admit that certain types of experiments or other, by people influenced, processes can lead to catastrophic consequences for the human civilization, life, nature and the whole planet.

This consideration and the anticipation of a possibility of catastrophic scenarios are a starting point for the use of the so-called preventive principle which appears especially in area of health, environment, sustainable development and so on (an influence of GM, of global warming, of bio-disasters, of nano-disasters etc.) (Rees 2003).

Discrepancies between the potential contributions and unacceptable risks which accompany new discoveries and technological applications are still more real and threatening. A question of size on the non-zero risk in these cases from the viewpoint of moral tenability was already solved by the mathematician Blaise Pascal long time ago. His famous argument why to be a believer (Pascal’s “safety”) is an extreme version of the above mentioned preventive principle.

CONCLUSION

Many non-governmental organizations, e.g. the group Monitor of Cooperative Europe (CEO), monitor systematically the behaviour of supranational corporations and warn against their growing and uncontrollable economic and political power with negative consequences for democracy, social justice and environment, especially in less developed countries. Promotion of interests of large supranational corporations is based on a systematic activity of the lobbyist groups and preferring of neo-liberal economic strategy which pursues deregulation and privatization practically in all areas. The growing influence of these subjects on the EU policy and on activity of the most significant international institutions (OECD, WTO, IMF, UD etc.) works upon further acceleration of the process of economic globalization.

The deregulation of global market causes still stronger competition which works usually in favour of large corporations at the expense of social conditions and environment. Systematic promotion of interests of supranational companies weakens the possibilities of local autonomies and governments to regulate the market in public interest which creates in its result disharmony with the sustainable development in particular sectors and in the world economy. A certain example of these phenomena is

the refusal of the global investment agenda (MAI) – an unsuccessful project of the OECD pursuing the economic globalization with the aim to remove restrictions for investment in the world dimension. The MAI intention was to hand over the competencies to supranational corporations so that governments would have very limited possibilities of regulation of direct foreign investment in their countries, even in cases of regulation measures protecting work places, workers, services governed by public law, domestic businesses, environment, culture and so on.

In this context, it is necessary to judge the success (failure) of the WTO negotiation on liberalization of foreign trade and the connected problems. Evolutional limitation of globalization, new possibilities in biotechnological procedures, development of other key technologies including connected risks create new environments for forming a strategy of further (sustainable) development in the situation when it is necessary in still bigger rate to respect and prefer the preventive principle and anticipation thinking.

A neo-classic economic theory enables to interpret the most efficient possibilities of using the non-renewable resources from the viewpoint of the present. However, this theory fails in solution of problems connected with global problems of the mankind, especially, with formation of the conditions and environment for sustainable development (Paulík, Valach 2006).

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