

Applying for a New Paradigm. Not Anti-globalization, but Alter-globalization?



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*“Two excesses: to exclude reason,
to accept nothing but reason“*

Pascal

Abstract. *the alter-globalization opposed not only to the present globalization but also to anti-globalization.*

Why? Which are the essential arguments in this direction, what does the alter-globalization rely on, as well as its criticism in the field of present day globalization? Why is it often stated that alter globalization can constitute a component in the building of a new paradigm that our world however needs so much?

These are the questions our article is trying to answer underlining a Romanian point of view as well.

Key words: alter-globalization; development; discrepancy; prices; market; globalization.



“The international capitalism is however individualist...it is not a success. It is deprived of intelligence, beauty, virtue and doesn't keep its promises. In short, we dislike it and we begin despising it.

But when we ask ourselves how to replace it, we feel puzzled. With what can we possibly?” Gilles Dostaller, a well-known economist and French politician analyst, quotes the great John Maynard Keynes, in his book:” Keynes and his fights”, Albin Michel, Publishing House, Paris, 2005. Indeed, very realistic and non-communist, the master from Cambridge, the one who will be ennobled by the British Crown, and will lay the foundations of the monetary system from Bretton-Woods, which” saw” and examined the most of the real evils of capitalism-unemployment, inflation, huge differences between incomes, poverty. Keynes didn't intend to replace it, but to improve it with the view of keeping it socially effective on a long term. Such statements and upheavals were specific of the 4th decade of the last century and were maintained

in a vivid confrontation of ideas up to the present moment. According to all clues they will maintain like this further on.

1. We have, however, to deal now with a new period of changes, changes produced through the centuries, stirring the “depths” and released at the surface, opened no doubt in the year' 980, last century. It's about mondialism, the process we often referred to.

Briefly, it's about the unbelievable proportion of the external exchanges between the countries, about a large and overall traffic of the capitals, in searching for the highest advantages, a traffic that surpasses steadily that of the goods. It's about a spectacular increase of the multinational companies and their interconnections, among these ones economies, too, activities developed under specific rules however.

It's about a huge increase, through all these, of the profits, of several desirable individual or group advantages.

The faults that Keynes invoked for capitalism in '930: that it is an individualist capitalism, unjust, that doesn't

respect its promises remained valid but from another angle nowadays as well. Or such well exploited, well turned to account elements have done and are still causing the genesis of a current opposed to globalization: the anti-globalization. In our opinion, to be anti-globalist and only, without other aspects and necessary specifications, without stating considerations which can open another road for the research, means only the opposition to a phenomenon, which through its universality, its substance, regarding the movement of the 21st century and the next, proves to be unavoidable.

Who will stay away from the globalization process will eventually suffer or will have to suffer important negative effects, sometimes much bigger than the ones provoked by a certain globalist integration.

The humanity is confronted with terrible global problems – the environment, the climate, the pollution, the global warming, poverty, violence, terrorism – where necessary reactions are needed, global answers, as the national or communal, local answers do not suffice.

We certainly encounter and face globalization. But what kind of globalization, that globalization that sometimes deepened and still deepens the differences in the development of the world, strengthened and still strengthens, consolidated and consolidates the borders between the rich and the poor, keeping active the conflict areas in the world, influenced and still influences the environment till endangers the survival of the humanity or the human being?

I don't think it's about this thing. There are not a few economists of very many European states and from the world, too, that share the opinion that we do not need an anti-globalization but an "alter-mondialism", that is more individual profitable, more socially profitable. But what kinds of reasons are, therefore, launched?

2. It's obvious that the present economic system of the world proves nevertheless international. Since the XVth century and even earlier, the "long distance" merchants acted surpassing the borders between states. The Hanseatic League, the Venetian and Florentine bankers and merchants, the Fuggerii, the Rotschild's later on, the great American enterprisers show it very clear. Actually, till it led to the multinationals there weren't needed many steps, even if it took centuries.

However, as Fernand Braudel writes, it was and it is about an international capitalism, but less about a global capitalism.

Because, as the renown researcher stresses, it a lot of persons and territories lived and still live "out of time." As Christian Chavagneux shows, too, there neither did exist and nor does exist a capitalism with a capital "C", there exist capitalist systems which were invented and reinvented by most nations according to their history and the political and local social compromises. In the dynamic and geographical extension of the capitalism, «the national

fact» was and is well uttered. In this respect the politholog François Bayart writes "The internationalism of capitalism itself created and developed the national states: starting with the XIXth century the globalization went along and goes along with the universality of the state as a way of political organization and creation of a global system of hierarchical states". In fact Bayart points out that the states and the capitalism haven't listened and don't listen to contradictory logics, but are submitted to the "dynamics of the couple." Thus it is said significantly.

Further on. Our partly globalised world is however an "individualist world". Everyone for "himself" remains a past, present and surely a future motto. An "everyone for himself", that doesn't refer only to the individual level. Those specific words glow and shine at the states level, institutions that not once were involved in confrontations with each other – often not so widely spread, reduced to stormy negotiations, it is true. It is not an absolute rule but it starts to become an almost characteristic phenomenon. And all this in spite of the fine polishing of some asperities at the level of the unions, communities, the groups of different states. Other asperities persist and are found in the most violently way sometimes, though not confessed revengeful, precisely within the frame of the relations among the groups we mentioned.

Anyway the realities didn't fail to point out that the "competition of everybody against everybody" fed and still feeds the injustice of the capitalism as such. From a practical point of view the inequalities between the most developed states and the most poor haven't ceased to progress, for 40 years. And the inequalities and social discordances within the rich states as well.

What does the statistics show? For instance the USA, the true champion of contemporary capitalism of present civilization with a democratic system that everyone could envy, reveal the highest level of inequalities among the rich states of the world. It is only 1% of the richest population that sees a progress in its position, thus the gape being deepened not only for the "hopeless" but also for the middle classes, whereas the budget for the food payment for poor children is decreasing. In France, with a social system alike in essence but different in details from the USA, poverty persists and is far from being limited only to the outlaws of the society. "The poor of today are working", an analyst of Jacques Rigaudiat's rank stated, the rise of the poverty among the employees proves to be the new fact of this period, there is a deep degradation of the wages candidature, too". Christian Chavagneux is writing the same, too:" for the new capitalist powers, as well: the inequalities between the incomes and the regions are strong; they often increase. Eventually, go to Southern Italy, to Naples where you will see what poverty means in a country that is a founder member of the UE. What can we say about Russia that is globalizing itself, but globalizes with a lot of harmful elements, as well...

These are realities, elements, processes which not only are unpleasant but can generate, through successive accumulations, in time, real fractures or even earthquakes. Let's think of what is happening in detail to the less developed countries, states strongly disadvantaged without real chances to progress, can we think of what conflict centres these conditions can generate? These kinds of states that the globalization didn't provoke "at nuce", but has amplified them, amplifying the cultural and civilization fractures, among the different societies and within them, themselves? But the change of the earth climate, it's global warming, caused by the exploitation of the forests, the irrational exploitation of the resources, the pollution and the nixes? These processes are generated by the running after profit at any price, not taking into account the man-environment relationship. We also have in mind the overuse of the hydrocarbons only, with all the terrible consequences that this fact provoked, and still provokes, powerful pressures of all kinds, among which conflicts and wars, etc. Taking into account the interpretation of the human condition, of a certain human condition, connected to the material elite, from an economic view only, of the individual profit, of the "homo oeconomicus", when it has to manifest itself, as well as, eventually we can not exist, otherwise – and "homo socialis" and "homo culturalis".

Let's think of all these but also about the necessity of some changes, the changes in progress, the fact that the Anglo-Saxon type of capitalism, brutally dominated by finances, money, punctual profit, a lot of inequalities, even if it is used and respected it doesn't represent – It is often stated – the exclusive horizon, strictly indispensable for the old continent. In fact we have to deal with not only one but 6 types of market economy: Anglo Saxon, West-European, North-European, paternalist, social market economy, and the market economy oriented exclusively towards – and dependant strictly and integrally on – the exterior. It is basically about a *genus proxima* and a *differentiae specifica*. There is and will be a convergent movement towards a globalized economy, a "world economy" as such. But how can this be achieved?

Could it be accomplished solely by extrapolating a single type or through the spinning movements, through the harmonious fusion and the sublimation of all the economy types that were mentioned?

As Chavagneux showed "North Europe proves that it can liberalize in economy, being innovative but protecting the workers. How much protection is there for the workers? This depends on a certain amount of civilization of that kind of economy, on a certain philosophy and a culture of it. At the same time he writes "the newly emerged capitalist powers, like China and India as leaders, prove that the economic rise can meet for along time with the hope, framing strongly the movements of the international capitalism".

A conclusion could be drawn in this sense, that "each society should organize its capitalism, integrating the

actions promoted at regional and global level". On the other hand the substantial, long term truth could be on "the middle way". Here there are some examples of the interest's core, of the foundation core, at present in trend, of an "alter-globalization" of another „globalization".

3. A first victory against the "plundering elements" of the capitalism is not to forget that life means not only the contribution of each person to the economic system. This latter one is necessary of course but not exclusive in the desired and necessary evolution of the individual, as Christian Chavagneux writes. Alain Caille, the sociologist, states as well that it is important not to favor the economic, not to consume it solely, but to place it on the right place. Which will this place be? Among the priorities of his political programme "The poverty within the richness", proposed in 1925, by lord Keynes, placed the economic on the 5th place after those occupied in order by peace, governmental organization, sexual issues, and the fight against drugs, eventually on the 4th. On the fifth as we said was the "economic".

...And we find ourselves merely in 1925. It was then, when the peace, though frail, seemed to have a pretty longer time expectation. It was then, when the governments except Germany and some of other countries seemed to have undoubtedly a real authority. It was then, when the sexual issues, despite "Les annes folles", didn't cause by far the reaction they have today. It was then, when the drugs, usually "soft", were taken especially within the frame of the high society, in intimate, bored, "affected" relatively close circles, more like a fashion than like a remedy against a lost battle with life by the youth, especially, nowadays. It was then when we could hardly talk about the big industry of the drugs, which manifests at present with an intense noxiousness, on large areas, and with a huge social cost for the humanity, too...

Was Keynes rambling in his speech by his mentioned classification? Even if we do not approve of classifications, but of the ones that appreciate the development as a systemic process where all the things are equally important, some priorities existing of course, we are tempted to consider valid his statements. A researcher sees in them not only a hierarchy as such, but also a superior understanding of the complexity of life.

A complexity in whose frame the economy constitutes naturally a fundamental dimension.

In a world – a system – in which money constitutes the "immanent water" which irrigates the system, as Alan Smith showed, it is obvious you can not do anything without money, "emerged not from the costs, from the expenses but from the profit", from performance, from the capacity and the speed of movement to respond to the market operatively, to value and detect the performance areas, all these representing "resources" that can be covered by costs.

Therefore a fundamental component is the economy, but not the only one.

The more so as in the present days world from a planetary perspective – a perspective that doesn't abolish the competition, but assumes its correctly developed – there can not be, there are not allowed any wastes of the resources – waste that brought us to the present state of affairs – with purposes that are not justifiable from a social-human angle or so. Here is the humanity, humanism regaining as a matter of speaking a first level of significance. We do not turn our face to the past but we take into account the traditions, its wisdom. In such a social and economic frame we notice more concrete the alter-globalization approach, the one rational and temperate, an approach beyond other ideologies, alter-globalist themselves, that propose nice but utopic targets, without indicating the resources that can be used in order for these targets to be achieved.

4. In fact what does the alter-globalization represent and what does this movement refer to? The encyclopedic article "Alter-globalisation" is amply studied by Wikipedia the free encyclopedia with lots of considerations some with a didactic connotation, some more literally.

Hence, the alter-globalization is an ensemble of conceptions formulated and defended by the partisans of the alter-globalisation. It is in fact "a movement of the civil society, of a part of this society that fights against the new liberal pattern of globalization, pretending a better and more careful way towards the human being and environment. All these themes and ideas are found in the texts of different organizations and institutions of the alter-globalization movements, manifests or reports elaborated by mondial social organizations, some texts of UNO regarding the human rights, taken over by alter-globalist reformers, within the frame of which they advance reforms, projects, actions, etc. The Alter-globalization, more exactly the alter-globalist movement, proves to be a "heterogenous general approach requesting that the total of the humanist values obtains and takes over certain preponderance and prevail with regard to the economic logics of the neoliberal globalism."

It refers especially to the "economic justice", understood sometimes, as it is stated in a confusing way, without the clarifying and shading of the necessary aspects. What is in fact the economic justice, whose justice is this and what are we talking about? Referring is made to the autonomy of the peoples, especially in the case of federative and preponderously multinational states asking for some economic requests to be respected. It refers to the protection of the environment, too, especially to the firm obeisance of the imperative of the Kyoto protocol, the firm obeisance of the imperative of the fundamental human rights. In this last meaning they militate, especially, for equality in work and what concerns its reward, between men and women, for decent work conditions, etc.

It is also taken into account the request of accomplishment of some democratic demands according to different political orientations.

A certain democratization of the international courts, the integration of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund within Outré building of a political organization of the world, with a right for decision equal to the rich or poor countries, and with a real presence of the women is being aimed at.

The prefix "alter", as it is shown in Wikipedia and some other works, too, was initially introduced in Belgium with the purpose to make the difference to the anti-globalization, and to the anti-globalists, a largely and firmly contestant vision and that only.

There is some confusion sometimes for many relatively more ignorant people, the term representing they say a francophone term for anti-globalization. Not by far. But let's return to our point. Politically, the alter-globalization movement oscillates between a Western reformism and the" image of a real fracture "the two components "being reunited around the motto: another world is possible" or very recently around the slogan "some other worlds are possible". In fact it's about a criticism to the internal organization of the status and the politics of the global organizations like OMC, IMF, G8, World Bank and the exploring and emphasis of the alternatives, global and systemic to the international order especially in the field of finance and commerce.

Reaching to the next level, the movement caught some roots, little by little during the entire XX-th century. The really larger impact was in fact in the beginning of the '90s last century especially in the Southern states along with the fight for the diminishing of the 3rd world debts, with the fight against some precautions of the Organization of the Commerce, against the precautions taken by IMF. But it was rather a feeble movement, especially for this reason less perceptive than in the Western world. A Western world which through his force and example will bring the communist system to an end, the former communist states advancing with more or less determination, but advancing towards the market economy.

But after 1994, however the alter-globalization, aiming at the "common Denominator" of the present capitalism with its qualities and flaws, started to manifest as a stronger, less and less neglectable force in Europe, USA, and in Coreea within the frames of the critics many times real, aimed towards the dimensions of the unemployment and the questioning of the social protection's at a level, considered by the most specialists as necessary. The manifestations in Seattle, USA, 1999, will represent the first broadcast alter-globalist movements, according to official sources.

They were followed by a first Social World Forum, an alternative to the Economic Forum from Davos, but also by a great Meeting in Italy, in Genoa, against the G8 summit.

There were then the social forums that took place almost every year: Either Porto Alegre (2001, 2003), Mumbai 2004, or other cities on the globe. In November 2002 the Social European Forum from Florence unfurled, concerned with

the identifying and promotion of European interests of specifically alter-globalist type. Here, in the famous Italian city, a valuable cradle of art and European humanism, 450 Thousand-1 Mil. persons gathered to fight for another world, to protest against the Irakian war. Being more than mere occasions of exchange, the social forums as mentioned above sometimes –accompanied by violent reactions from the demonstrators and from the authorities, too, with dead and injured, many injured policemen, etc. – became favorite areas and moments for the manifestation of the altermondialism.

They are more and more frequent lately, becoming respectively global, continental and local.

But which are the forces of this movement, as such, which are its orientations, more or less just, presented like “another globalisation”, which is the critical perception of the movement?

5. The alter-globalists in their sometimes confused and contradictory manner of expressing themselves reunite persons with very different horizons: for instance peasantry-farmers, popular fractions, the bourgeoisie from the south, the unemployed, the poor, the workers with small and humble incomes from the industrial states.

Eventually, the work trade unions and trade unionists from the education system, associations of, several famous researchers, from both hemispheres, this time, a lot of young people, ecologist movements, anti-militarist movements, some Marxist or Keynian movements, sometimes anarchic currents, etc. Precisely of this reason, of the ideological dispersion is the alter-globalization also called the “Movement of movements?” It is not organized on a concentrated level, that specific movement reflecting more a horizontal functioning, refusing any vertical hierarchies. However, it follows the development of international networks.

But who are the alter-globalists and how do they legitimate, generally? According to Wikipedia, there are some specific orientations. There are the anti-liberals and anti-neoliberals, rising against the pattern of the “free exchange” and wishing to reform profoundly the principles of the economic logics, on the basis of some traditional social and moral criteria.

The Marxists and the anti-capitalists defending strongly a certain way of capitalism, but faithful to their traditional opposition against the economic capitalistic globalism, the bourgeoisie’s orientation, as he states, promoting the globalization of the people’s action, of the action of the proletariat, according to a social and solidier pattern. We have then the “sovereignists”, the nationalists that wish to protect the nation from the neoliberalism of the markets that destroys the borders leading to social insecurity, social dumping, and unemployment, especially, etc. they supporting thus protective measures of national and regional interest in economic matters. The exegetes and also the critics of the alter-globalization reveal 2 elements in this respect: a) the alter-globalists mentioned above, must not be taken for the right extreme, their message

being completely different; b) they prove to be pretty soon anti-globalists. Eventually the pacifists with rational, judicious ideas fight against nuclear weapons, for the applying of the pacifist treaties, to stop the global warming. There are hence the ecologists that fight for the protection of the environment and its natural resources with regard to the great dangers produced by the industrial society. Then, last but not of a less importance, the libertines, that disconnect themselves from the rules, sometimes more than necessary. But many reformers, generally of a moderate tendency, some of them even partisans of free exchange, but promoting the thesis according to which the market should be regulated, in the first place according to the social and environmental imperatives – for instance, the ‘‘principle of the nutritive sovereignty’’, etc.

Certainly, there is an obvious absence of theoretic and practical homogeneity. Thus, some kind of an ideated “Babel Tower”. In other words, great difficulties in the building of a political, complex, general, coherent, complex and unique programme and in the orientating of the specific partisans towards a single way, common for everybody. Sometimes the alter-globalization movement with its speeches, messages, idealistic approaches regards itself as a “motor of the social fight “, assigning as a main adversary the ideology of the neoliberalism, the actions and the facts of the latter evolving in the light of the neo-liberal movement. These are pretty complicated matters, basically exploiting more of those specific failures of reality. The criticism of the alter-globalists are aiming at –we have referred, now we extrapolate – especially “the finding of an «ecart» of poverty and domination among the states of the North, especially the South-Saharan region, many countries of Asia, from South America, the almost complete «dephasation» of these last in relation to the first. Such kind of criticism is preoccupied with the huge gap between the richest and the poorest” well presented in the whole world.

Those specific pieces of criticism are preoccupied with the “ecological insecurity”, with various effects accumulated in time, strongly negative in what concerns the survival of man, consequences caused by the industrial pollution, the green house effect, chemical and nuclear weapons, “the OGMs”, etc. There are unmediated, accused big transcontinental companies of “favorizing, directly or indirectly, the private interests in relation to the general interests”, aiming at substantial profits at the disadvantage of the social and ecological factors, of the human being as such, for instance, the negative externalities, the difficulties of appliance of the protocol from Kyoto. In such a frame there are critical approaches, especially in what concerns the politics of delocalization. Politics – according to the thinking of many alter globalists – negative for the developed states of the world, especially – threatening here the stability and the degree of occupation, the social security and the wage minimum. Therefore, even more negative for the Southern countries, as such delocalization

encourage the social dumping and even quicker the exploitation of the South by the North instead of the local development of the countries in the South.”

6. Especially having in mind the eradication of the mentioned causes, of the consistently bleak effects “cause” especially because of the perspective of the neoliberal dogmas” the alter-globalists aim at their reforms and alternatives according to the so libertine world we live in nowadays. They want something else, too, instead of the “globalization through the market”, globalization that they do not consider similar to the human progress, the latter being, according to them, equitably profitable for all. They appreciate and state it as often as they can – that the inequality and the permanent poverty in the world represent “perverse effects of the free globalised market”. The market reduces and will reduce even more the products and activities – according to the alter-globalists – only to their commercial value, thing that is not fair. The compensation should be constituted by the – “instances that are exterior to the market as such, as well as the states, their institutions, many international organizations as well as the civil society, without many statements being made about the specific representations. On the other hand, the alter-globalists aim at, though favorable to the development of the international organizations, the attack of those world organizations that seek to privatize everything, to reduce the vastness of public services, the access to them, which have as a target the limitless liberalization of the economies”. There could be thus, built “a preliminary condition to the building of an alternative globalisation founded with the power of the peoples and a new conception regarding the lasting development”...

The alter-globalisation has been massively criticized on its turn even of many fields, by the politicians, by the favorable economists obviously to a certain exclusivism of the free market. There is reproached to the alter-globalists a weak, incomplete analysis of the economical indicators, “thin” conclusions, the prevalence of a humanist discourse without an economic covering”. The French Zaki Laidi, in his volume “the Great Perturbation”, stresses expressively: “the capacity of an alter-globalist movement to propose alternative solutions remains extremely scarce.” Further on, to the Indian economist Jagdish Bhagwati “the alter-globalist requests against the free exchange are connected to the fall of communism, the only ideological rival of capitalism. This episode created a void for the “idealists whose social conscience was feeding and still feeds from the convincement according to which the capitalism is a

source of injustices”.... The criticism of the alter-globalist focuses too much on the negative aspects of the globalisation, by neglecting the good results.” The alter-globalists underline some positive effects, too, of the globalisation but place under the sign of doubt other aspects that generate mostly positive reverberations. In the terms of the occupation, for instance “the destruction of the industrial jobs is not related to the creation of occupations in other sectors.” And, it is certain that this kind of referring can continue.....

7. What is interesting is that more of the arguments of the alter-globalists are not to be neglected at all. They must be taken into consideration in the efforts of the specialists from most of the countries of the world to build a new paradigm of the development, the current one, we discover ourselves confronting with huge problems such as pollution, the global warming of the earth, the vulnerability of the human being, etc., huge problems that lift a series of change to the rank of pronounced, imperative necessities. Anyway, it could be accepted – It is shown in not a few studies and articles – that the alter-globalist movement constitutes at least an important intellectual reflection on the today’s world. The reform that is to be accomplished but that requested for UNO, the open debate in what concerns the status and the functioning of the World Bank and the IMF, by the neo-keynians, among which the former vice-president of the World Bank, the American Joseph E. Stiglitz, the public opinion of the Southern states, especially of Latin America, manifested often very firmly, against globalisation, the pressure of the Southern states within the frame of the World Organization of Commerce, some series of real phenomena and processes in our world, as well as “poverty as malaria”, punctual interests that prevail and despise, loathe even general, popular interests, etc., are arguments that prove it. It is eventually not only about an intellectual reflection, possibly insufficient regarding the pressures and depressions on the earth, but also about actions meant to render it a practical consistency.

...In the ‘930s, the famous gangster Al Capone was saying: Capitalism is the legal racket organized by the leading class.” He had some experience in making such statements. But what could “poor” Capone state about a society that fought with him, that always aimed at destroying him and succeeded at last, hard but it did succeed? It was only the ‘930s, many things changed to the best ever since to date... Anyway, it is good not to have any kind of argument to believe a little the gangster. Let’s hope that it is possible taking into consideration the possible critical taking over of some “alterglobalist” theses....

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