

THE INTEGRATION OF ECONOMY AND ECOLOGY FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE MODERN SOCIETY

Lidia Kabanova, Tatyana Kabanova

Day by day the world we live in is becoming more and interrelated. Everything is connected with almost everything else. Goods, people, money and information are sent around the Globe with an ever-increasing rapidity. The overall intensity is continuously increasing due to a growing level of consumption and the growing size of the population.

When the speed of communication increases, time and place will lose some of their previous importance. Communication within a local community or within a country has no advantage compared to communication between countries or continents, if it takes place with equal ease.

One effect of technological development is therefore the initiation of the local communities' dissolution. Liberated from local constraints, some of the things that shape a local community will be translocated to other larger more centrally located places. The increasing loss of local closeness and clearness that is consequence of the process of globalization, has in the Sumy region as in many other areas, lead to examples of increasing local dissatisfaction. This happens even though the same local population takes advantage of the benefits and comfort that also is a part of the process. Thereby they contribute to the further globalization.

The results can either be a stand of the local people against the market, which is seen as a threat to human relations and nearness. On the result can be a stand against the central authorities, which with command and control seems to make everything troublesome, bureaucratic, and far too complicated.

It is possible to see the broad context, which nature protection increasingly is a part of, as a question of sustainable development. And this is a discussion that necessarily has to look at the present in the light of far future, and at the same time adopt a global point of view. It was the World Commission on Environment and Development that in 1987 brought the concept of sustainability high onto the agenda. It defines S. as a development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The fundamental concern is whether current economic growth is achieved at the expense of the well being of future generations. Sustainable development is often said to rest on three equally important pillars: the ecological, the economic and social sustainability.

Ecological sustainability has a clear reference to nature and its carrying capacity. Its limits are in principle not changeable. Our impacts can be irreversible and thus finite, or they can be reversible, in which case the level of impact may be object for political discussion. Economic and political sustainability, on their side, has primarily societal relations. They are, therefore, in principle both manageable and reversible. But in the public discussion they often threaten to exclude ecological sustainability, so this ends up being considered as an economic or social concept. This is both inconsistent and confusing. During the 1980 it became obvious in the management of environment that the methods like command and control and technological means that have dominated so far, now had to be supplied with other tools. Firstly, the costs of steel more new technical means were soaring. Secondly, it became obvious that the means used so far could not cope with multi-source disturbances such as diffuse pollution, the green house effect, marine pollution, and loss of biodiversity. It became clear that the problems for nature and environment had a more fundamental dependence of the economy and the economical behavior. Sustainable development is, generally speaking, a vision of the good life. The introduction of a holistic and cross-sectorial thinking that emphasize recycling of matter and the participation of stakeholders and citizens can hopefully, pursue it. The more these ways of thinking are arising, as a result of either insight or necessity, the more will a common denominator – a convertible measure of value, be needed. Economy can offer a solution but it requires that nature can be valued in monetary terms.

For many non-economists, it is highly controversial viewpoint that the three forms of capital are convertible i. e. the one can substitute the other. One of the reasons for the dissatisfaction is that not all capital can be converted. Everybody, including the economists, is aware of the existence of critical limits – so called critical capital. Without this capital coming generations can't survive. Examples of critical capital could be many of so-called ecological services e.g. the global recycling of oxygen.

A principal field of disagreement, or perhaps better formulated "difference in faith", between economists and ecologists, has to do with the practicality.- Is it at all realistic to believe that all natural and human capital can be measured, counted, and paid for on monetary terms? first of all is it clear to everybody that it will be an enormous estimate the economical value of all types of natural and human capital. For many forms of natural capital a market does not exist. This makes complicated investigations necessary concerning people's hypothetical willingness to pay for things they otherwise have taken for granted. Another more technical complication is that the ordinary everyday market-economy and accounting have difficulties in handling far-sighted aims where the annual interest rate is very low. This is because they have to compete with investments in much more shortsighted and profitable engagements, which can bring higher returns.

But perhaps the main cause of disagreement between ecologists and economists is that ecologists, and many other people, operates with a lot of values they won't give up and won't price, although they can't be classified either as critical capital or as convertible capital. They can be called unique values. They are species, landscapes and other entities we want to maintain and hand over to the next generation. Not because they are critically needed, but because we like them and want our descendants to care for them as we do. These values might be called "genuine heritage". Much of what nature- and landscape management is dealing with is in fact protection of unique values, a good example

of unique values could be the cultural landscapes with their content of natural and cultural heritage. Finally it should be mentioned that many people and many cultures in the world find that nature has intrinsic values that cannot be paid for in monetary terms e.g. when they are given a religious meaning. To sum up: The economy has its constraints especially when it comes to longer run considerations, complex and locally bound values are claimed. But in a market society economy is indispensable when it comes to proposing means with which to manage nature and the landscape and ensure that political aims are achieved efficiently. But the aims have to be set in a political process based on also other values than what the economy can handle.

But whatever the political will to protect is strong or weak it has to be implemented in an increasingly complex world. In this world the management of nature and the environment are not a separate but an integral part of what else goes on. In the competition with other parts of the society nature conservation and environmental protection has therefore to improve its ability to express its aims, needs, and progress in quantitative terms. We should be better to present a comprehensive and consistent description of the state of the nature, the environment and the impact of human activities. And to do this we need both traditional natural scientific data and indicators, and we may even need shadow prices that citizen's assign to different ecological services.