

Sustainable Strategies in Times of Crisis

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Abstract

Currently, states worldwide are facing new environmental challenges due to climate change and potential increased security threats from terrorism or war.

The negative events of recent years have had increasingly strong boomerang effects. Thus, the Covid 19 pandemic, the invasion of Ukraine by Russia are events that generated and are generating profound political and economic effects throughout the world. We are witnessing a multitude of changes in the challenges facing the world's governments in identifying strategies to ensure global well-being and prosperity.

Also, there are and will continue to be great differences between developed and developing countries, stemming from their performance and economic power, but globally citizens are pressed by the same concerns, the same needs, to which they increasingly difficult.

Sustainable strategies are a true key to success in mitigating the crises humanity may face in the future.

Key words: strategies, prosperity, pandemic, war

J.E.L. classification: E10, M10

1. Introduction

The present paper aims to present some strategies to reduce the negative effects of disasters caused by crises that humanity has faced on a global scale.

The selection of an appropriate strategy to mitigate the effects of the global crises of recent years (the 2008 recession, the world-changing Covid 19 pandemic and currently the invasion of Ukraine by Russia) must be guided by the evaluation and consideration of costs and benefits (in terms of lives saved in the future) of a wide range of possible measures.

In this sense, in order to obtain the consensus of all the decision-makers involved, a strategy to reduce the negative effects caused by the disasters to which humanity has been subjected in recent years must include a mixture of immediately visible improvements and some less visible but with benefits sustainable in the long term.

We are in a new era, which we are only beginning to understand. What are the trends in the evolution of society on a global level? Can we predict future events? Finding adequate answers to these questions, through an in-depth analysis of the global economic context, can lead to the identification of optimal strategies that could prevent world crises. In this sense, the great challenge faced by the states of the world is how to reform the governments in such a way as to keep up with the pace of new events without being overtaken by them.

2. Theoretical background

The theoretical context of the paper captures two important aspects. The first point is that the current technological revolution is a huge factor in tipping the balance in favor of the individual and allowing those left behind by previous revolutions to leap forward. The changes that favor individual emancipation are so powerful that they generate profound transformations. In this process the growth of prosperity has an important factor. (Burrows, 2016, p.50) The second aspect tries to capture how

recent events (Covid 19 pandemic, the invasion of Ukraine by Russia) have influenced and influence the growth of global prosperity. Therefore, the impact of the unfolding of the events that defined the crisis period in the past (the 2008 recession, the Covid 19 pandemic) and the present (the invasion of Ukraine by Russia) on the evolution of society worldwide are extremely relevant. Against the background of these events, it is essential that the strategies considered identify complex solutions to protect individual rights and well-being, while ensuring adequate levels of security globally.

The scientific literature on the topic highlights certified opinions regarding the understanding of factors or variables that could determine future events.

3. Research methodology

The research method is based on the analysis of the impact of global crises and on the elements that define the process of change that are the basis for identifying the optimal strategies, which once implemented could help to know the future.

The descriptive elements in this paper that are the basis of the research aim to review some events that humanity has faced over time, as well as the changes that could cause a substantial reform at the world level.

4. Findings

4.1. The impact of the global economic crisis

Examining today's world starting from the imperative need for development as a global strategic goal foreshadows new perspectives for understanding what is happening or what may happen in the coming period. (Dobrescu, 2016, p. 25). Economic competition facilitates a reallocation of affluence and chances of affirmation in the medium and long term.

Over time, the world economy has gone through various stages of crisis. In order to understand the nature of economic crises, it is necessary to take into account the economic contexts that have generated crises over time. For example, financial crises have had a devastating long-term effect because (Dobrescu, 2016, p. 32):

- presuppose the financial indebtedness of communities and states, which means a much greater subsequent effort to pay the contracted debts;
- are followed by a longer period of recovery, a period marked by modest growth rates.

We live in confusing times where the emotional has taken the place of the rational with unwanted effects and consequences on the environment, on businesses, on citizens, who are no longer seen as people but as a compact mass of individuals, a resource of financial profit. The current state of political instability affects all fields of activity.

The economic legislation necessary for the modernization of society does not follow, in the elaboration process, the logic of a clear, multisectoral strategy. Modern states have to solve a complex equation that includes components and valences ignored so far: the man, the community, the territory (over which the prerogatives related to sovereignty are exercised), the rights that are recognized to the man and the community in the territory where they live. (Costea et al, 2010, p. 27)

How decision makers define their security interests derives from collective cultural, historical and social experiences and viewpoints. Russia's war of aggression is causing terrible suffering to Ukraine: to its people, whether civilians or soldiers, who die or are forced to take refuge; on identity and culture; on cities; on the infrastructure and its material existence.

The attempt to strengthen the security of European states, undertaken over several decades, was overturned with the aggression against Ukraine. A security strategy suitable for today also includes the development of defense capabilities against the modern attack methods that, for many years, Russia has been carrying out in cyberspace, with hacker attacks and disinformation campaigns, aimed at creating divisions in society and between countries. (Rudiger von Fritsch, 2022, p. 52)

The unity of the West was on full display when the horrific images of the massacre in Ukraine went around the world. As a result, voices were heard demanding a stop to the import of gas from Russia; constant help was provided in the refugee problem; sanctions were applied to Russia. (Rudiger von Fritsch, 2022, p. 57)

The effects of the Ukraine-Russia war on the world economy have become very visible for all European states. By 2021, Russia and Ukraine exported about 30% of the world's wheat, 18% of gas and 11% of oil. Some countries in the Near East imported 75% of their wheat needs from Russia and Ukraine. (Rudiger von Fritsch, 2022, p. 60)

Global supply chains depended on exports of specialty metals from the two countries. Therefore, after the outbreak of the war the prices of these metals reached record levels. There was also a significant increase in the prices of wheat, oil and gas. (Rudiger von Fritsch, 2022, p. 62)

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) predicts, as a result of the effects of the pandemic, for the year 2022 an increase in the global economy by 4.5% and for the year 2023 an increase in the global economy by 3.2%. (Rudiger von Fritsch, 2022, p. 65). But the effects of this war changed these forecasts and led to the fundamental violation of international rules, a considerable increase in inflation, starvation and poverty for many people.

4.2. The process of change

At the level of the European Union, a series of actions aimed at a substantial reform of the electricity market have been initiated. Therefore, following the negotiations carried out at the level of the European Union, a series of mandatory objectives for combating climate change were identified, respectively: (Volitiru et al, 2019, p. 42)

- reducing domestic greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40% by 2030;
- energy consumption from renewable sources of 32% in 2030;
- improving energy efficiency by 32.5% in 2030;
- the continuation of the process of physical interconnection of the energy systems of the member states of the European Union, with the fulfillment of the current objective of interconnection of electricity networks of 15% by 2030.

The Integrated National Plan on Energy and Climate Change 2021-2030 (PNIESC) must cover a period of 10 years and provide an overview of the current situation in the field of energy and climate change of policies and measures in force and set national objectives for each of the five dimensions of the UE (energy security and solidarity; internal market; decarbonisation; energy efficiency; research-development-innovation) as well as appropriate policies and measures to achieve these objectives.

Table no. 1 Overview of the main PNIESC 2021-2030 objectives at the level of 2030

Share of SRE-E (SRE=renewable energy sources; E=electricity)	39,6%
Share of SRE-T (SRE=renewable energy sources; T= transport)	17,6 %
Share of SRE-H&R (SRE=renewable energy sources; H&R= heating & cooling)	31,3 %
Energy efficiency (% compared to PRIMES 2007 projection at the level of 2030)	-37,5 %

Source: Deloitte's analysis, based on the official documents drawn up by the authorities involved in the development of the PNIESC

Currently, our country cannot ignore the climate context that affects the daily life of citizens, nor the European legislation that promotes sustainable development, in harmony with nature and that takes into account the needs to mitigate the impact of climate change, but also the need to prepare and adapting to these changes. (Volitiru et al, 2019, p.3 5)

Sustainable sources of renewable energy. Climate change as well as those generated by the Russian-Ukrainian conflict represent a major challenge for humanity and require concerted and urgent actions. These include phasing out fossil fuels and switching to an efficient and 100% renewable energy system. as well as increasing greenhouse gas storage capacity using ecologically sustainable approaches such as maintaining natural ecosystems that generate environmental services and restoring degraded ones. To encourage a large-scale transition to the use of sustainable energy sources, government support is needed to create a structure that allows the development of variable renewable energy sources and the future storage of an increasing amount of renewable energy. (Volitiru et al, p. 30). One solution would be the installation and expansion of large-scale photovoltaic parks in urban and industrial areas.

Bioenergy. It is crucial that the Romanian government supports the transition of the traditional wood fuel sector towards green technologies and more efficient uses of wood. An environmentally friendly production process could also increase access to cleaner energy, reduce health risks associated with the use of rudimentary stoves, and generate substantial income for people in rural areas. The promotion of the production of high-risk biofuels (such as fuels made from vegetable oils or other edible foods) that do not provide or provide limited reductions in carbon emissions, but which seriously affect the environment in general and food prices, must also be avoided.

There is more than enough evidence, given that we are the actors of everyday life, that the changes are increasing, making the future seem more unpredictable. The Great Recession of 2008, the current Russian-Ukrainian war attest to the fact that from time to time, globally, humanity goes through more difficult times. We can consider shocks and surprises as the new normal for a number of reasons: globalization, greater interdependence, new extreme weather patterns, and dynamic new technologies reaching tipping points. (Burrows, 2016, p. 62)

Currently, many questions are emerging, the answer to which is difficult to anticipate in the future: What is the direction towards which Europe is heading? Will we live in a world where nuclear weapons will proliferate? What are the most important threats to Romania?

The growth of education. The education sector will be a growing social and political battleground. The economic status of individuals and countries will likely depend even more on their level of education. Overall there is a strong convergence between advanced and developing countries. The quality of education is not something that can be easily measured, constituting, over time, the subject of many discussions. (Burrows, 2016, p. 65)

Countries that promote education so much compete to build up their educational institutions, which means attracting as many foreign students as possible, both as a sign of prestige and to help fund new study programs superiors they want to establish.

Competition can have lasting psychological and social consequences. Sometimes rising and growing prosperity do not produce more security, but actually have the opposite tendency to create more insecurity. Personal stories perhaps best illustrate the internal tensions that a sudden burst of new opportunities creates. (Burrows, 2016, p. 45)

East Asian economies have prospered thanks to sustained efforts by governments to rapidly improve the quality of the workforce through education and the development of export-oriented industries. In the Middle East, education systems need to produce a more technically skilled workforce and encourage citizens accustomed to public sector jobs to accept the demands and volatility of the private sector. (Burrows, 2016, p. 50)

Information technology has proven a great democratizing force. Thus, new data storage and processing solutions could help decision-makers solve difficult economic and governance problems, allowing a more intuitive and closer interaction with the computer, increasing the accessibility and usefulness of knowledge, and greatly improving the accuracy of predictive models.

Connectivity technologies will give governments—both authoritarian and democratic—an unprecedented ability to monitor their citizens. IT can become a powerful tool in the hands of dictators if used skillfully. For example, China maintains the largest and most sophisticated Internet censorship system in the world, employing tens of thousands of people to monitor and censor material the regime deems a threat. (Burrows, 2016, p. 55)

5. Conclusions

The world that is being built today is no longer like the one of the past and is governed by complex scientific endeavors that encompass several sciences, such as political and military science, international economic relations, cultural studies and regional civilization. An appropriate answer to the contemporary problems of communication and development is interculturality, because dialogue between cultures, still insufficient and ineffective, ignorance and misunderstanding, often strong, remain generators of crises and conflict.

Globally, the prospects for progress in the fight against global challenges will not be uniform. Experts talk about a "culture of awakening and awareness" that must promote the healthy interests and values of a state regarding the road to the future, harmony and economic fulfillment, stability and peace. The assumption through culture can have an important role in overcoming the crisis

(caused by the invasion of Ukraine by Russia) that the states of the world are currently facing; this economic and social crisis could be alleviated through policies implemented in intercultural dialogue both at the level of the representatives of the world states and at the level of ordinary citizens.

The economic, financial and especially the social-political reality demonstrates that one of the most significant features of the time with deep implications in the process of transforming the existing patterns of social life, resides in the extent and intensity of contacts between people, between peoples and cultures, the development international collaboration, the deepening of various forms of collaboration between states. (Costea et.al, 2010, p. 25)

The global challenge generated by these circumstances entails the need to harmonize the existing attitudes in society with the new realities, and implicitly, a determined definition of the direction, goals and ways of approaching international issues, in the context of which a special place belongs to the understanding of the communication crisis phenomenon intercultural and the implementation of strategies to mitigate conflicts between states (Ukraine-Russia conflict).

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