

THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF ECONOMIC CONFLICTS

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Abstract: *Secession and economic crisis are a real "epidemic" in the economic and social life today. Basically, even if in different ways, sooner or later, everyone is affected (Mitrofan, September 2010). But who manages to overcome the danger of epidemiology? First, are those who follow the experts' advice, secondly, those who trust in personal abilities to cope with aggression, those with good "immune systems". It takes a psychological and relational immunization. The same happens also in case of recession and economic crisis. Of course, the economic recession primarily affect the business, but basically, the effects are felt in all sectors of socio-economic system.*

Keywords: economic crisis, social life, socio economic system

The place of military conflicts has been currently taken by the economic ones. It is a well-known fact that, from ancient times, the purpose of all wars has been economic; yet, today, the fight is not carried only between state players, but especially between non-state ones.

These new types of conflicts do not trigger the direct loss of the lives of a considerable number of combatants, yet, “collateral victims” and material losses are more and more numerous and bigger.

The experience of the most recent conflicts worldwide shows that, after the failure of diplomacy and coercive diplomacy, states frequently resort to the other instruments of power, the information, economic and military ones¹.

Current conflicts, whatever their nature may be, even if of small proportions, have not ceased; confrontations, irrespective of the degree of violence and the number of states involved, take place all over the planet.

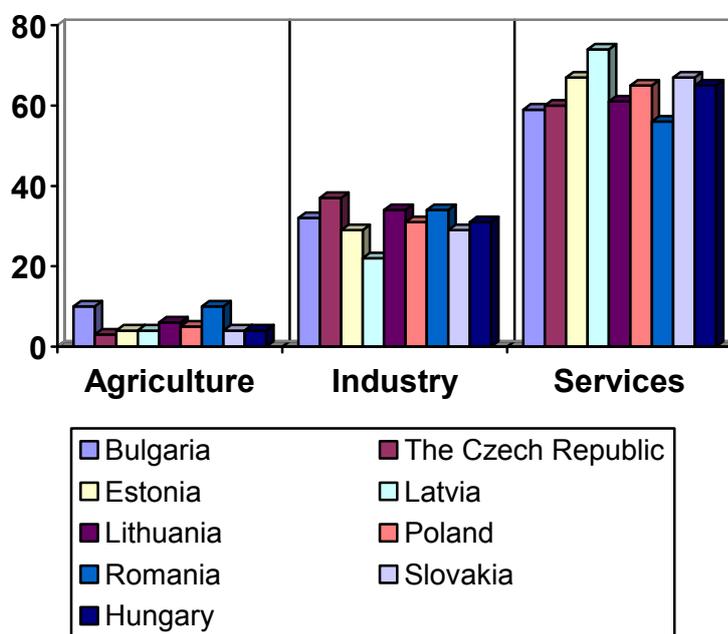
¹ Teodor Frunzeti, *Geostrategie*, Editura CTEA, București, 2009, pp. 51-53.

One cannot yet establish what the dominant type of conflict in the current millennium will be, yet, it is certain that conventional wars are not so spread anymore; their place is more and more taken by “modern wars”. The place of “conventional” weapons from the 20th century is taken now, at the beginning of a century and of a millennium, by “intelligent weapons”. In this respect, an important weapon for action of the economic conflicts, preponderantly used in contemporary market economy, is the psychological one, aimed at national psychology elements: changing mentalities, aspirations, ideals, ideas, theories, behaviours, morals. For this purpose, manipulation methods are used that are very difficult to identify, based on the exploitation of basic instincts (food, defence, reproduction necessity) and primitive inclinations of the human being.

Those interested – institutions, organisations or persons – in manipulating people take different courses of action with a view to reaching the set objectives in the short, middle and long term. Thus, one of the courses of action is the *inoculation and development of the consumerist spirit* to as many people as possible, to the prejudice of the spirit of economy and moderation. To this end, the manipulating source resorts to: manipulating commercials; awakening predatory instincts; exploiting vanity, shallowness, naivety and other negative personality traits. It is known that, in order to lead a normal life, every human being has a complex of needs. The economic aggressor aims to develop artificial needs and requirements into the target-human being and the target-nation, to take their last penny from their pocket or from their banks, to make them go broke, dependent on loans that are given by the manipulator itself. Therefore, if the target-individual and/or the target-nation do not resist the carefully shaped temptations, they will become economic slaves. This phenomenon can also be noticed in Romania. Currently, we consume more and more products, luxury ones included, from import, and banks have outdone themselves in offering many apparently advantageous loans. This has led to an explosive increase in prices, especially in the real estate sector, in which things got out of proportions. Moreover, the increase in the consumerist trends has made many people to run into significant debts, some of them even for life, and that is why the dependence of the individual or even the entire nation on the banking system has increased significantly.

Another course of action is *diverting the attraction and interest of citizens from the economic, material sector, which produces goods and values*, to unproductive or harmful directions. In our country, one can currently notice an inflation of overcrowded supermarkets, which sell important products every day, provide jobs but, practically, do not produce material goods in order to somehow compensate for the imports. That is why one can say that their contribution to the enduring development of the country is not significant.

The Contribution of Main Activities to Achieving Gross Added Value in 2009



In 2009, the main contribution to the Gross Domestic Product of the Eastern European countries was made in the services sector (mostly from trade). This is further proof of the victory of multinational companies, whose purpose has been to monopolise the markets worldwide and to eliminate small national companies.

At the same time, a priority course of action of manipulators is the creation and inoculation in the collective consciousness (and unconsciousness) of the target-nation *of certain human and technical values that are false or are not proper to the national values validated by the social practice*, with the purpose of replacing traditional values.

Moreover, an important course of action on the part of manipulators consists in *destroying the image of certain leaders of politicians* who fight for the economic development of their nation, on the one hand, and their *intoxication with false information* regarding a domain they must lead, especially the economic one, on the other hand.

The factors that provide economic security both at the micro and at the macro social levels are: housing safety; job safety; minimum income safety; economic competitiveness; sovereignty and food security (on the one hand, the need for providing the access of every individual to food, eventually the self-sufficiency of agricultural production and, on the other hand, the quality of food); universal social protection (first, for the most disadvantaged ones),

which requires state aid, safety of pensions; access to education and medical services².

In the opinion of experts in security studies (Barry Buzan, Ole Weaver, Jaap de Wilde), the modern concept of security includes five cumulating factors. The security of a state entity is provided if each of the following five security components is taken into account: the political, military, economic, social and ecological ones.

Economic security refers to access to resources, funding and markets that are necessary in support of the acceptable levels of the development and power of the state. When speaking of social security, we think of maintaining, within the framework of certain conditions that are acceptable to make possible the evolution process, the collective national identity, the traditional models of the language, culture, religion and other customs proper to a people. Looking at how things evolve, some of the biggest problems for European security will be posed by the social component, because of the situations in Bosnia Herzegovina, Transnistria, Macedonia, Kosovo, Belarus, Montenegro. The security of the environment is related to maintaining the planetary biosphere at the local level, as an essential support of the system on which all the other human activities depend³.

Other risks with major impact on economic security are social risks: increasing unemployment, “under the table” jobs and legislative risks: instability and ambiguity of certain legal regulations, regulation of crimes and contraventions without a clear delineation between them.

The consequences of business crime, visible at the social, political and juridical level, represent real social bombs (ex. FNI – the National Investment Fund), as they are embodied in a state of modern social-economic dependency with demoralising effects for the population and of deterioration of the trust in state institutions.

At the same time with the integration in the European common market, with the development of the freedom of movement of goods, persons, services, favourable conditions are created for frauds at the European level, characterised by a sophisticated, occult *modus operandi*⁴.

Conflicts affect more and more the civil population. Even if the number of armed conflicts has decreased, current wars are much more brutal, lasting, difficult to settle and, most importantly, they involve more and more civilians. However, the changes occurred in the nature of security threats and, implicitly, on the concept of security have had an effect on the relation

² *Ibid*, pag 35.

³ Barry Buzan, Ole Weaver, Jaap de Wilde, *Security. A New Framework for Analysis*, Lynne Reiner Publishers Inc., London, 1998, pp. 7-8.

⁴ Gheorghe Văduva ș.a., *Securitatea sistemelor și acțiunilor militare și civil-militare în gestionarea crizelor și conflictelor armate*, Proiectul CEEX-M1-4044-Gestionare CF-16/2006, NDU Library.

between the military and the civilian sector in crisis and international conflicts management, the latter one gaining a more and more important role⁵.

Children are the most innocent victims of conflicts. It is estimated that, only during the last decade, armed conflicts cost the life of over two million children and mutilated other six million. Conflicts made children orphans, deprived them of care, basic social services, medical assistance and education. There are approximately twenty million displaced or refugee children, while others are taken hostage or made victims of trafficking. The systems regarding birth registration and justice for minors do not work. It is estimated that, at any moment, there are at least 300 000 child soldiers who participate in conflicts⁶.

To have control of resources, markets, high technologies, even of “brains”, both states and large companies use any means, often irrespective of the consequences of this fight. In this context, the possession, availability and effective use of natural resources, especially energy ones, is a source of tensions, crises or even conflicts. For these reasons, natural resources have represented the subject of extensive international debates, about both their existence and distribution. However, the implications produced by the “rush for profit” have disastrous environment consequences. All these have repercussions on social and international security, starting from the security of the individual, of the nation to the global one. Disasters that occur in certain areas cause crises/conflicts, which, because of the lack of vital resources, can transform into regional and beyond conflicts

If nature could provide unlimited material, energy and food resources and turn them into economic goods, then the relation human being – nature, as well as the inter-human relations in any country would have a different content. Reality shows that, in the context of the limitation of these resources, a real strategy is needed for approaching the satisfaction of the need for such goods, the human and social factor fundamentally adding to the natural factor.

Crime activities can turn into the most dangerous activities generating illicit incomes, namely: drug trafficking, human trafficking, major frauds, business crimes, which are genuine *sources of social and economic insecurity*⁷.

The main indicators through which the level of *social security* is measured, in different domains, are:

- *the social indicators of housing*: housing stock (number of residential units reported to 1 000 inhabitants, the number of rooms reported to 1 000 inhabitants, the average habitable surface reported to a person), the

⁵ ***, *Gestionarea crizelor și a conflictelor internaționale*, <http://www.scribd.com/doc/25048501/Gestionarea-Crizelor-Si-Conflictelor-Inter-Nation-Ale>

⁶ ***, *Orientările UE privind copii și conflictele armate*, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/10019.ro08.pdf>

⁷ Danusia Aurelia Boicean, *Criminalitatea și economia subterană, factori de risc pentru creșterea criminalității economice*, în *Studia Securitatis*, nr. 1/2007.

development of the real estate sector (the involvement of the public sector in housing projects, the infrastructure expenditure that falls under a person in a year in the urban environment), the housing conditions (the rate of the urban population, the rate of the population living in pollution-affected areas, the mortality caused by environment pollution, the rate of housing with potable water);

- *the social indicators of poverty*: the poverty threshold, subsistence minimum, poverty rate, poverty gap, *Sen index* (the percent of the total income of the population that should be transferred to the poor, so that their income could be brought at the level of the poverty threshold), *Fishlow index* (it expresses the poverty gap, as a percent from the incomes of the non-poor, in the idea of eliminating poverty through direct transfers of income from them), *Gini coefficient* (it measures the inequality of incomes) etc.;
- *the indicators of the health status*: the morbidity rate, morbidity by classes, access to health services, provisions of the population with doctors, pharmacists, indicator of human resource provision etc.;
- *the indicators of human freedom and development*: the indicator of human freedom, indicator of human development;
- *the indicators for the characterisation of the education system*: the enrolment rate, internal efficiency of the education system, quality of education services and use of resources etc.⁸.

The main domains that can generate social crisis situations are: social exclusion; low standard of living, perpetuation of unsolved ethnic conflicts; absence of civil society organisations; tensions related to language, religion, ethnic group; failure of decision-making mechanisms/increase in authority legitimacy⁹.

The social indicators for assessing the sources, states and dynamics of crisis situations and conflicts: labour employment (unemployment level and dynamics); social assistance; education level; training, cultural level of the population; civilisation level; social attitude; stability; normality or resurgence of social movements; trade union activity; social condition of the family. Demographic indicators can also be included: birth rate dynamics; mortality rate dynamics; age ratio dynamics; migration phenomenon; population stability or instability; abrupt changes in the ratio between urban and rural population; populations exodus¹⁰.

Security is a social phenomenon that involves two types of social determinations: general and specific to conflict/war ones.

⁸ E. Bădălan, E. Mavriș, *Dinamică și tendințe în transformarea sistemelor de securitate*, in "Anuar 2007", Academia Forțelor Terestre, vol. 1, 2007, p. 86.

⁹ I. Voievozeanu, C. Romanoschi, *Managementul crizelor din domeniul politico-militar*, in "STRATEGII XXI", 2007.

¹⁰ *Securitatea sistemelor și acțiunilor militare și civil-militare în gestionarea crizelor și conflictelor armate*, Proiectul de cercetare CEEEX-M1-4044, 2009.

General determinants are represented by social tensions that are increasing and generate crises/conflicts. At the same time, in certain conditions and social environments, interests occur, placing one part of the human community against the other, or the vindictive, warrior spirit appears or escalates within certain ethnic groups or national minorities.

Specific determinants are generated by the enlargement of the vital space of an entity, the occurrence and sustainment of the aggressive or revengeful spirit, the manifestation of certain economic interests with determinants in the social environment. All these determinants only partially explain the state of security/insecurity. The conflict/war represents, in fact, a social liberation/relief of energies and tensions, and its effect appears as a new social balance or as a social restructuring. Insecurity can also occur as a consequence of social anomie, as a product of certain group interests, as in the case of terrorist war. At the same time, the social environment also generates the anti-war-like, pacification spirit, in order to preserve the security environment.

Mention should be made that the social environment is not immutable, but it is changing, depending on the economic, political, information determinants. The acceleration of the economic growth is first aimed at providing the prosperity of citizens and supporting the internal democratic process. Increasing people's confidence in state institutions is possible only in the circumstances of the constant promotion of the principles of the rule of law and of the fundamental rights of the citizen.

Unfortunately, as long as there are wars, the military purposes will be more important than social or ecological issues. The social or surrounding environment will never be entirely protected from the military risks. Yet, considering the serious situations that may occur with time, and which have already begun to make their presence felt (to mention only global warming), one can consider at least the reduction of the devastating effects of war.

Considering the presented facts, not only the armed conflicts have an effect on the social and surrounding environment, but also the economic ones. In the rush for gaining profit and getting rich fast, as long as competition is big, the big companies will forget about environmental protection, spilling various substances in the surrounding environment and affecting it as far as space and time are concerned.

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