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New Challenges to Economy Security: the Convergence of Energy and Covid-19 Risks – The Demand for Cosmopolitan Politics

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ABSTRACT

The article analyzes the new challenges to economy security expressed in the complication of risks, conditioned by the becoming complex socio-techno-natural realities and the nonlinearity. It is shown that nowadays the most significant risks to economy security are connected with the rise of 'neo catastrophes', the causes of which lie with the systematic and often perverse effects of human activities; the current confrontational vector of the development of the world energy system that has deep roots in the contradiction between the global consumption of energy while its production is practically implemented at the national level. All these factors facilitated the convergence of the energy risks with the ones from other spheres – so, the convergence of energy and COVID-19 risks has been born. The author argues that the effective managing of the hybrid of the energy-pandemic risks lies in passing over from national to the cosmopolitan politics – in order to defend the national interests the nation-states need to act in a cosmopolitan way. The functional cosmopolitan politics could only be of a humanistic type – the preconditions of overcoming the existing confrontations in the development of the world energy system presuppose equal, codependent relations among the nations, friendly existence among humans and non-humans. There have appeared some grounds for it – humanely oriented economic practices based on the passage from the formal rationalism and pragmatism to the substantive rationality and values of inter-connection of all nations.

INTRODUCTION

It is necessary to look at the new challenges to economy and national security from three codependent angles: firstly, through the prism of the complex risks caused by the becoming socio-techno-natural realities that develop in a nonlinear way; secondly, there have been born the convergence of energy and COVID-19 risks that expresses the complication of the risk's nature; thirdly, these complicated risks manifest themselves in the both *global and local context*. In these conditions there has appeared the contradiction between the national-centric functionality of the economic institutions (V. Draskovic and M. Draskovic, 2013) and the demand to pass over to the cosmopolitan politics to answer adequately to the needs of the world economy. In order to be accepted by nations, the cosmopolitan politics should be based on principles of substantive rationality and humanistic values.

Due to the effect of the 'arrow of time' there takes place the accelerated and increasingly complex development of nature and society (Prigogine and Stengers, 2018). This effect also concerns the energy system that acquires a complex character: its traditional and new components develop *increasingly quicker* in a *nonlinear way* often taking the forms of gaps, cascades of technological and organizational innovations. A vivid example of it is the functioning of the oil pipeline transport. If all relatively simple traditional modes of transporting oil products (rail, river and sea tankers) deliver the cargo from the starting point A to the final point B or to a series of such points, the main oil pipeline transport supplies simultaneously the energy to its numerous consumers, forming an *extensive network*, sometimes located in different countries and even on different continents.

Whereas the traditional modes of transport function within the national borders and in the time of the clock, the main oil pipeline transport works, as a rule, in different space-time coordinates – in "space of contiguity" (interactions, such as the delivery of energy, are made "*regardless of the location of actors engaged in the communication process*") and in "timeless time" (the kind of time that occurs when in a given context "*there is systemic perturbation in the sequential order of the social practices performed in this context*") (Castells, 2010, pp. xxxi-xxxii; xl-xli], or in "network time as connected asynchrony" (Hassan and Purser, 2007, p. 51).

This is manifested in the rise of the network energy realities, the functioning of which have ambivalent consequences. On the one hand, the complexity of the energy system, the increasing mobility of energy products is an important factor of economic and political stability in the world and the welfare of mankind, ensuring international economy (and national) security at both global and regional levels. In spite of all the risks, the effective functioning of the energy system on the whole makes a significant contribution to stabilizing the system of modern international economic and political relations (Vo, 2020). But on the other hand, the Greenpeace initiates protests against the oil industry and carbon emission. There are claims that the oil age is "*winding down*" (Rifkin, 2002, p. 174) and it is necessary to pass over to low carbon economy, based on a qualitatively different eco-energy system.

What is more important – the consumers of oil energy resources are increasingly diversifying geopolitically, demonstrating that they, as actors of the global energy network field, have specific interests. The Gulf war and hybrid 'oil wars' express the aim of some actors to extend their access to the carbon resources. This produces the growing contradiction: most institutions dealing either with the production or consumption of the energy resources are based in the nation-states, but have to handle both global and local problems. This contradiction is accompanied by the appearance of the convergence of energy and covid-19 risks that might be regulated by cosmopolitan institutions.

1. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

There used the modern reflexive theories studying the effects of the global complexity (globalization) and nonlinear transformations. The accelerated and increasingly complex development of nature and society has led to the recognition of the dominance of nonlinear development expressed through instabilities at all levels, gaps in socio-cultural continuity, sharp increase in points of bifurcation, turbulences,

and metamorphoses. These factors forced the appearance of the convergence of the energy and COVID-19 risks that manifest themselves in the glocalized contest, defined as “*the refraction of globalization through the local*” (Roudemetof, 2016, p. 79).

The convergent risks are analyzed through the prism of “*neocatastrophism*” (Urry, 2016), the theory of ‘*world risk society*’ (Beck, 2010) and the theory of “*the metamorphosis of the world*” that “*goes beyond theory of world risk society*” (Beck, 2016, p. 4) The new investigations of cosmopolitan humanism and bioethics facilitating the cosmopolitan responsibility and cross-border cooperation are also used (Bauman, 2017; Braidotti, 2013).

2. CONDUCTING RESEARCH AND RESULTS

There can be highlighted three groups of the most significant risks to the economy and national security conditioned by the becoming complex socio-techno-natural realities. Some risks are caused by the *fast change* in the external dangers (‘warming’ and turbulent climate) that forces the energy actors to make decisions from a number of management and/or socio-technological alternatives. Among them – to rely on the traditional technical solutions related to the quantitative enhancement of the high carbon production and consumption; to carry out additional means of oil-based modernization knowing that these approaches are connected with climate change, the consequences of which will be evidently seen in the future; or to use the energy innovations aiming at governing climate catastrophes and moving towards ecological modernization within the principles of bioethics that may contradict pragmatic approaches to economy and energy politics (Beistegui et al., 2015);

A. Giddens interprets these risks in the context of what he names “*Giddens’s paradox*”: “*People find it hard to give the same level of reality to the future as they do to the present*”. The essence of it is that the accelerating dynamics of nature and society, not supported by adequate moral and ethic standards, generates the *delayed risks* as to climate as well as to the economy and bio systems: “*there are other risks that have to be faced up to, which intersect with those created by climate change – for example, pandemics*”. For dealing with the risks to climate change and energy security the author stresses the necessity of codependence of political and economic convergence: “*the most important area of political and economic convergence is the overlap between climate change and energy security*” (Giddens, 2010, pp. 2, 7, 9; Vasylieva, 2019; Streimikiene, 2020).

Highly likely, the energy actors are aware of the many immoral components of their activities, but do not make the necessary efforts to change them – the negative consequences will come sooner or later. The delayed risks posed by the economic egoism of transnational corporations involved in the production of global energy resources are particularly great. However, these risks are not fatal. They might be opposed by the transition to the *cosmopolitan politics* aimed at finding the optimal balance between the profit derived from the pragmatic usage of the energy resources and the wider criteria of wealth that are more adequate to the human nature.

The next group of risks to the energy security is the choice of the effective system for monitoring of the conditions of delivering energy, the technical state of the production and transportation of oil, taking into consideration the close connection of these processes to bio and water resources. There is a rise of *neocatastrophism* – a new trend in thinking about the future of societies and nature that is in the increase of a potential catastrophe within *complex systems*, subjected to the risks of unexpected events. “*The ‘causes’ of catastrophe lie with the systematic and often perverse effects of human activities as these cascade across financial, climate, religious, food, water, security and energy systems*”.

The operation of a complex system generates “multiple unintended effects, different from those that had been sought. One reason for this is the importance of small but potentially major changes often described as “*black swans*” – rare, unexpected and highly improbable events, but which have huge impacts” (Urry, 2016, pp. 34, 45-46).

That means that minor actions within a complex energy system are capable of causing *avalanche-like consequences*. Thus, there may be shifts of tectonic plates or earthquakes (Marriner, Morhange and Skrimshire, 2010, pp. 43–48) or the so-called ‘extreme weather events’ (floods, droughts, storms, tropi-

cal cyclones, tornadoes, devastating fires, strong snowfalls). A good example is hurricane Katrina, which struck New Orleans and other US coastal settlements in 2005, when the dams protecting the city, 70% of which is below sea level, were destroyed. But it didn't get along with simply "traditional" flooding: the water carried oil and other pollutants. In this regard, a whole group of scientists initiated a "*perspective on a modern catastrophe*" (Brunsma, Overfelt and Picou, 2010).

"New catastrophes" permanently change the essence of the economy and national security, that presupposes the necessity of the 'liquid surveillance', which, in fact, is "the world of monitoring, tracking, tracing, sorting, checking and systematic watching" (Bauman and Lyon, 2013, p. 8). Nowadays this type of surveillance is mainly used for a systematic watching of customers, their purchase interests. But the newest digital technology might be as well applied for humane societal purposes – preserving the proper functioning of the energy system and eco recourses in the conditions when 'highly improbable events' are becoming a 'norm' of functioning of the complex socio-techno-natural realities.

Moreover, the digital surveillance acquires a cosmopolitan character: "*drones do the dirty work of surveillance*" legitimating the appearance of a specific "*surveillance beyond borders*" (Urry, 2014, pp. 143, 150). The humanly oriented surveillance for the sake of economy and national security can minimize the consequences of the complex risks and contribute to a sustainable development.

The third group is the risks caused by the current *confrontational* vector of the development of the world energy system that has deep historical roots. In the industrial epoch the production and the consumption of energy was carried out mainly within national borders. The technical, economic and political risks were exclusively *local* in essence and were confined to the resources of the country. Nowadays the '*cosmopolitanism*' has emerged – "*the human condition has itself become cosmopolitan*" (Beck, 2007, p. 2). So, there has appeared the contradiction between the global consumption of energy and its production practically implemented at the national level. Accordingly, there have been born *global risks* to economy and national security with their influence within the glocalized contest.

U. Beck argues that "*no nation-state can cope alone with the global risk*". It presupposes that the national energy politics should be transformed into the cosmopolitan politics, "*connecting local and global governance – in competition and cooperation with national-international world politics and in cooperation with the global sub-politics of civil society movements*" (Beck, 2016, pp. 38, 167-168).

However the existing geopolitics provokes the creation of isolationistic and confrontational tendencies. I believe that this confrontational vector, which generates complex risks to economy security, cannot be a long-term trend, because in the conditions of the cosmopolitization the production and consumption of resources become the common interest in overcoming or at least minimizing the risks of systemic energy instability.

For a long time the energy system was regarded as separate from the bio system. But within the effect of the 'arrow of time' the energy risks become more complicated forming improbable *convergence with the risks from other spheres*. Recently there have been born the risks of COVID-19 that radically traumatize people's behavior and the organization of their social life on the global level. These risks have come into the interface with the energy risks. Nowadays the real situation is such that neither the energy risks nor the risks of COVID-19 exist independently – while making decisions people have to bear in mind the influence of their convergence.

According to U. Beck (2010: 52), the global risks exhibit the following three characteristic features:

- *delocalization*: their causes and consequences are not limited to one geographic location;
- *incalculability*: their consequences are in principle incalculable;
- *non-compensatability*: within the new quality of 'threats to humanity' the logic of compensation is breaking down and is being replaced by the principle of precaution through prevention.

All these features are seen in the convergence of the energy-pandemic risks, and they have even increased, becoming *more complex*. Thus, the *delocalization* concerns not only 'traditional' spreading of global risks over national borders and continents but as well over both *energy and bio spaces* with a tendency to cover even *other spaces*. Thus, the proliferation of the pandemic risks produces the risks to the energy industry that, in their turn, facilitate new risks to different economic and social fields.

The consequences of the convergence of the energy and COVID-19 risks are ambivalent: the negative effects on the economy, based on oil products are especially visible; but there may be positive ones – low-carbon practices might be given a ‘happy chance’ for even greater developing that will influence the future characteristics of the economy, bio-life, atmosphere, and other spheres. It stimulates the development of quite new energy systems.

The *incalculability* has redoubled due to the fact that there are no commonly recognized methods to estimate the consequences of the convergence of the energy-pandemic risks – the existing knowledge displays the limitations of the mono discipline-based approaches to economy, energy, epidemics and the inability to know their *multiple natures* in order to effectively deal with them.

The *non-compensatability* depends not only on the irreversible interventions in the energy and bio systems but on the incurable traumas of the network economy, bio-life, social worlds, humanness. It is next to impossible to make up for new social inequalities and broken identities. All this leads to catastrophic cascades with zero insurance.

The global risk also means “*the staging of the reality of global risk*” (Beck, 2010, p. 10). This presupposes that we have to do not only with the damage produced by the convergence of the energy and COVID-19 risks but with the ones made by their mystifications and simulacrum. Many new risks are *socially and culturally constructed* – there have appeared a lot of myths and fakes about their influence that have given birth to the pandemic of fear and anxiety.

The global screening of energy conflicts and virtual wars, images of dying people and new catastrophic futures can be observed in “timeless time”. If earlier the ‘cosmic fear’ was used in all religious systems in the form of a special control (Bahtin, 1968), nowadays the *cosmopolitan fear* as its new type is traumatizing the world public consciousness.

Some people accept fake news as real that increases the so called “*liquid fear*” (Bauman, 2006) now acquiring a *cosmopolitan character*. It includes in itself the effect of ‘liquid evil’, the essence of which is the anonymous and constant production of fear and uncertainty (Bauman and Donskis, 2016, p. 6-7).

To a large extent the cosmopolitanization of fear is based on media performances and talk-shows about the human vulnerability to the complex risks. The cosmopolitan screen-fear is becoming a self-sufficient *virtual virus* that affects and traumatizes people's minds. As a result, the distinction between the convergent energy-pandemic risks and the cultural perception of them blurred. In order to respond adequately to these new challenges the cosmopolitan politics is needed that must be based on the principles of *substantial rationality*.

The complexity of the convergent energy-COVID-19 risks is vividly manifested in *changing knowledge* that begins to develop *nonlinearly* through gaps, traumas and points of bifurcation. This process is accompanied by *an explosion* as of *various knowledge* as well as *non-knowledge* produced in different sciences. U. Beck argues: “*What used to count as knowing is becoming non-knowing, and non-knowing is acquiring the status of knowledge*”.

Nowadays there have appeared a lot of *vague* interpretations of the convergent risks that give rise to the ‘decision paradox’: “*The greater the threat, the greater the gap in knowledge, the more urgent and more impossible is the decision*” (Beck, 2010, pp. 116, 117).

The consequences of the convergence of the mentioned risks are shifting to *all* our life, to anywhere and nowhere. The impossibility of the decision concerning these risks increases due to the fact that up to now the results of the knowledge are mainly concentrated in mono discipline-based approaches that deal only with *concrete* spheres. In conditions of the complex socio-techno-natural realities there are no energetic systems that functions independently from ecological, epidemiological or any other spheres – the inter-disciplinary is needed.

Risks to economy and energy, wealth and health are connected with the *radicalization of social inequality* both on global and local levels (Holton, 2014). There have appeared the gaps in the international division of labor which for a long time functioned rather effectively on the basis of formal rationality, pragmatism and mercantilism.

According to I. Wallerstein's world-system analysis, the "core" states of the rich North dominate in the world, increasing their growth in wealth and security due to such factors as the high carbon systems of production and consumption, the development of medical care and social insurance. The "periphery" and "semi-periphery" states of the South in their own way constructed the "successes" in life chances of the population of the "golden billion" – they deliver carbon resources to the developed countries while functioning on mainly traditional technologies based on the cheap labor and lack of insurance.

They are still infrastructurally dependent upon the North. This global inequality prompted the author to vote for the transition from the formal rationality to the substantial rationality stressing the importance of values (Wallerstein, 2013) – there is a need to overcome the existing values of pragmatism. The transcontinental inequalities were also accompanied by an unequal distribution of risks that, in fact, were 'exported'. In particular, the Southern structures were encouraged to "be rationalized" – to host rather risky bio and medical laboratories that conducted experiments with viruses. Besides, the production of medical equipment, pharmacological products, means against infections, etc. was forcedly implemented there.

The convergence of the energy-pandemic risks created the situation of *common challengers* both for the North and the 'others'. Nowadays one can see the 'boomerang effect' of these global inequalities: the North finds itself in an *existential dependence* on the growing power of the South – in the USA and European countries there was revealed a catastrophic lack of masks, gloves, gowns, disinfection means. These challengers foster both the North and the South to *symmetries* the existing international division of labor and risks. The common challengers cannot be solved nationally and within the existing glocalised context of inequalities.

The managing of the convergent energy and COVID-19 risks with the aim of minimizing their negative consequences for humanity lies in passing over from national to the *cosmopolitan politics*. There are some objective factors determined by the *nonlinearity* that force the movement in this direction. One of them is the "*metamorphosis of the world*": the theory of it "*is not about the negative side effects of goods but about the positive side effects of the bads. They produce normative horizons of common goods and propel us beyond the national frame towards a cosmopolitan outlook... From this a social catharsis may emerge*" (Beck, 2016, pp. 4, 122).

It means that 'the bads' in the form of the convergent risks could nonlinearly be transformed into the positive side effects – earlier unthinkable cosmopolitan politics within the frame of equal, codependent relations among the countries. It is very important to note that the process of metamorphization produces only possible hopes, creating alternative preconditions for substantial and responsible thinking while organizing activities and implementing mutual agreements (Kravchenko, 2017, pp. 3-14).

The leaders of some nations have displayed such thinking and actions directed towards just symmetrization of the relations between the North and the South that may give a start for elaborating the cosmopolitan energy politics. U. Beck has worked out the "*Paradox of Metamorphosis*" according to which in order to defend the national people "*need to act – in fact, think and plan – in a cosmopolitan way*" (Beck, 2016, pp. 10-11). There are some grounds for the cosmopolitan agency that can be seen even today: the agreement on limiting of the oil production was signed by OPEC+, USA and Russia.

There is more understanding that the humanity has to deal with the complex convergent risks producing both negative and positive side effects. People used to consume natural resources *constantly changing* technologies, increasing their growth for the sake of energy security. Nowadays in the cosmopolitan frame, 'the bads' in the energy system metamorphose into the good: *the fetishism of modesty in the consumption* is being born. This phenomenon also concerns the energy – low carbon technologies, solar and 'green' energies are being effectively developed. The same happens with our attitude towards the 'other worlds'.

Scientists who work with bacteria and virus *change them* in accordance with profit-minded abuses; nowadays the reverse takes place – *they latently change us*, creating a reciprocal answer in the form of new epidemics, producing a profound impact on our diets, work, leisure time, and life-styles. In order to make the positive side effects of the complex convergent risks visible, the *cosmopolitan thinking and theorizing* is needed.

The *cosmopolitan politics* should be of a *humanistic type*. There are certain intellectual backgrounds for the *urgent rebirth of humanism*. Z. Bauman (2017, p. 167) argues: today more than ever it is necessary to realize that “*we – human inhabitants of the Earth – are in the either / or situation: we face joining either hands, or common graves*”.

The establishment of the humane oriented cosmopolitan politics cannot be a simple linear directed process. On the one hand, “*contemporary science and biotechnologies affect the very fibre and structure of the living and have altered dramatically our understanding of what counts as the basic frame of reference for the human today*”; on the other hand, – there appears “*a global sense of inter-connection among all humans, but also between the human and non-human environment*” (Braidotti, 2015, p. 40).

In these conditions much depends on scientists’ agency, their efforts to move social sciences to the interaction not only with hard sciences but with the Humanities as well the knowledge of which can preserve humanist principles in all theoretical tools (Kravchenko, 2011, p. 11-18). Some scholars argue for the development of science and technologies in the line with the “*human spirit*” (Vanderburg, 2016). All this may link peoples and countries for a more effective cooperation in economy, energy and other spheres on the basis of the cosmopolitan humanism.

The humanely oriented practices, based on the passage from the formal rationality and pragmatism to the substantive rationality and alternative values are already manifested. “*A number of economic practices appeared throughout Europe and the United States that embodied alternative values: the value of life over the value of money; the effectiveness of cooperation over cutthroat competition; the social responsibility of corporations and responsible regulation by governments over short-term financial strategies*” (Castells, 2017, p. 1).

On these grounds there have been also elaborated the post-anthropocentric technologies that presuppose friendly relations of people, energy, eco and bio entities. At the same time, ‘the bads’ of formal rationality and pragmatism that facilitate the development of profit-making energy structure may be metamorphosed into “*the goods*” of the substantive rationality. Consequently, ‘the bads’ of convergent energy and COVID-19 risks may be metamorphosed into the catharsis – quite humane attitude of people towards inanimate and bio nature appears.

CONCLUSION

The new challenges to economy security expressed in the convergence of energy and pandemic risks, caused by the trends of nonlinear development of the becoming complex socio-techno-natural realities, will remain in the foreseeable future. These realities are not just chaos, but essentially glocalised complexity which functions beyond the borders of nations and organized in a different way. The complex risks have never been before, and they cannot be effectively managed by the institutions of nation-states. In order to deal with the convergent risks the humanistic cosmopolitan politics is needed.

The principles of formal rationalism, pragmatism and materialism, even taken within the context of the state regulation, do not prevent the political elites from ignoring elementary norms of moral responsibility for their activities – transnational actors produce and consume energy without relying on the principles of humanism and bioethics. In the sphere of economy security this generates the risks both for nation-states and the human community.

The emerging metamorphization of the world is undoubtedly an objective factor that can facilitate the transformation of ‘the bads’ of the convergent risks into the positive side effects – the preconditions of establishing the cosmopolitan politics based on of equal, codependent relations among the nations. But the realization of this possibility depends much on the subjective factor. The movement towards this goal presupposes the integration of the world scientific community, the efforts of the representatives of social, natural and humanitarian knowledge are demanded.

Such an intellectual union will provide the opportunity to offer the world economic and political elites the valid knowledge of the convergent risks. This might give a start to the search and approval of a new form of the economy security in the frame of friendly existence among humans and non-humans.

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