

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

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SO THAT THEY SERVE THE INDICATORS?

A contradictory phenomenon is marking in the last years the information of some rich and poor countries: the maintenance or retaking of the economic growth, accompanied of crescents index of social exclusion. This statement contradicts the political economic that disentailed of the social debate have the capacity of, simultaneously, to foment the growth of the macroeconomical indexes and to reduce the access opportunities to goods and services for great part of the population.

It seems that it was of no help the critics over the built-in traps at the so called indexes of conjuncture that in general are based on production, commercialization and investments data. The evaluation of the economical growth, that it takes for base RNB - Rude National Product and of GDP - Gross domestic product, they have the pretension of they be self-sufficient to just attest the "good health" of the national savings.

The perverse results of the social costs, built-in in the economic politics, are left out of these measurements. Based purely on quantitative variables these results don't take into account the employment level, housing quality, instruction level, social mobility, services of health and transport, degree of depredation of the natural resources no-renewed, pollution of the air and of the water, among other data. Once economical indicators are not crossed with social indicators, the performance results are always positive and they end giving credit to the new growth models.

The economic policies, without paying attention to social and political negotiation, more and more disentailed from pressure groups demands - political parties, unions, class associations and public opinion - seek above all the adaptation of the national economies to the rules of the new cycle of accumulation of the capitalism. From executive power competence, these policies interfere now in a new and perverse legitimacy dimension: the economic performance, in other words, the capacity to answer to demands, not those dictated by democratic ideas of equality, justness and representativeness; but the one of presenting results demanded by the banks and international financial institutions. Placed at a distance with the needs and the reality of the society, the macroeconomical measurements of conjuncture are predisposed to this end.

The results of GDP - joined value of all of the goods and services produced inside an economical territory - correspond to the amount of the liquid values of the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy, more the indirect taxes, more the depreciation of the capital, less the government subsidies. The positive results they finish for indicating that we would be living in the best of the worlds. But the general growth doesn't correspond to the growth of the parts. When joining values, they are not taken in consideration facts as the alienation of the public patrimony provoked by the privatizations, the directions of the agrarian politics, the bankruptcy of traditional branches of the industry and the crescents index of social exclusion.

The current damages of the new ideas that it guiding the economic policies are much wider than those that have just mentioned. What interests us here it is to point out the positive values results at the macroeconomic measurements don't count the resulting tragedies of these same politics and, nor either place the small number of the privileged people and the great mass of those excluded.

When marginal (no mainstream) evaluations are accomplished, disentailed of the measurements of RNB and of GDP, the indexes always indicate extremely unequal results between the production and services sections, gigantic increases of the assets of few companies, resultants of the incorporation for coalition and absorption of new markets, increase of income concentration and of the patrimony of a small portion of the population. Bottom line, what counts is the data that portrays the economical growth recovery, legitimating governments and the respective economic policies.

"Balance of the bills" is the keyword that prevails. There are interests on stake of course, some sectors benefiting more than others, above all when accredited and backed up by good results. At the national

level these indexes end up justifying authoritarian and recessive economic policies, which success fails to take into account excluded sectors. At the international level, the positive results accredit States and economies to continue being part of the club of the rich ones that control the financial and commercial institutions and, in the case of the poor countries, the indexes of good performance accredit them as minority partners capable to attract new investments of the capital, since they continue paying their foreign debts, although at the expense of the enormous sacrifices imposed to the great part of the population.

THE ROLE OF THE STATE IN THE ECONOMIC POLICIES

The role carried out by the government action in the planning and operation of the economic policies, is still complemented by other policies. In the case of the monetary policy stand out the measures that seek to adapt the capacity to pay for debts to the needs of the economic policies. The economic regulation happens, for instance, through the control of currency flow, the political system of credit and the control of foreign exchange. The effectiveness of these policies is due, above all, to the flexibility that can be applied to the whole measures at the monetary authorities disposal, exempting them of submitting their decisions to the legislative and the social groups.

The fiscal policies, that also feels under the direct action of the central government, when related to the orientation of the economic policies and to the performance indexes, deals in one side with the reduction of the government expenses and, in the other, with the increase of new taxes that increase the public receipts. Depending on the orientation of the fiscal policies, it is possible to stimulate or to repress certain productive sectors, to guide the level of the consumption and of the job and to influence directly in the distribution of the income.

In the Brazilian case, both the monetary and the fiscal policy have been manipulated in order to obtain performance indexes that "build the ground" to include the country at the international flows of trade and recognition on the part of the financial institutions. The easiness with that the government manipulates these policies happens, among other ways, through the authoritarian way. Taking advantage of the so called "Temporary Measures", the central government usurps the participation of the Congress in the edition of legislation, starting to "legislate" on almost everything: credit, wages, taxes, work, social welfare and other subjects, without any democratic negotiation or representation of the interests of the society. Gathering advantages so diversified the economic policies could not present good performance indexes.

It was long ago that the economic performance indexes were closely related and reflected simultaneously, the situation of the basic sectors of the economy, that carted the improvement in the situation of the job, income distribution, readiness of basic services and of infrastructure and, finally, improvement at the quality of life of the population. Right now these indexes represent the success of the economic policies, overall the production of the goods designed to the external market or to the small percentile of the better positioned portion of the population. Progressively, we are little by little becoming a more fragmented society, which superior extracts include only the people with real capacity of consumption. The emergence of the poverty in the rich countries or its increase at the poor countries is not contemplated in the great macroeconomic measurements.

NEW DIMENSIONS OF THE SOCIAL EXCLUSION

In the rich countries we can watch a social fragmentation resulting from the increase of the inequality of income, individualization of the wages more and more differentiated and the progressive enlargement of the distance between the elites, that accessing a differentiated way in the professional formation, without passing for the public schools, almost always in crisis, end up getting better remunerated positions, occupying positions of decision not accessible to the great majority of the population. The increase of the inequalities is not something transitory. The new situation creates new dynamics, until then absentees or of little significance in those countries.

The first of them is pointed by the differentiated access among the population layers to goods and services, that are part of the options supplied by the State. For the "new poor" or layers of the population that resent the purchasing power loss, there is no other option than the services provided by the Welfare State, that is decreasing the public budget on traditional basic sectors investments - like education and health, for instance -, modifying his profile in new allocations of resources to face situations of emergency. For the richest ones, there is always the chance to access private services of better quality, such as education and health, and that could even be private retirement plans.

Jean Pierre FITOUSSI, when analyzing the French situation, indicates that the new social segregation is formatting sceneries that resemble the Indian breeds society model. In France the segregation comes if entrusting of "transforming the productive system so that it adapts to a new demand resulting from this social transformation, in other words, in one side, there is a mass and homogeneous production of goods with low prices to assist the needs of the inferior breeds. On the other, there is a production very differentiated, very sophisticated, where the demand is guided more by the quality than for the prices. But above all a formidable increase of the services sector, with a demand that rests in the differentiation and in the quality". (Le Monde, 30/03/2001).

New phenomenon to the rich countries and old for the poor ones. But the reference of good performance based on macroeconomic indexes, omitting situations of social inequality, is common to both. In the absence of debate over the impossibility of social mobilization and a fairer income distribution, statistics and official speeches boast the good performance of the indexes and, seemingly paradoxical, the increase of the social expenses focused in the most lacking populations.

In the search of good performance indexes, poor countries governments concentrate resources at the part of the territory or in specific social areas, in the search for results that try to hide the absence of priorities and the reduction of investments in the social sectors. The reduction of the illiteracy indexes and of infant mortality are emblematic examples.

Throughout Brazil, the infant mortality tax felt 20% - of 43 smaller children 1 years old for 1.000 been born alive, in 1992, for 34,6 for 1.000 current - approaching the goal of 33/1.0000 stipulated by UN for the year 2000. The country also moved forward enough in the reduction of the illiteracy. In 1992, the illiterates were 17,2% of the 15 year-old population or more. Now they are 13,3% what still means 15 million citizens that neither know how to read nor to write.

It is fair to question policies that answer or bring results for specific problems, but lack ability to answer to structural situations, that don't have, on the other hand, the capacity to revert the tendency. What is on stake is not the validity of the reduction of the indexes but, above all, the maintenance of economic policies that take charge in the maintenance and sometimes increase the inequalities. The proof of that is that in the decade 1991-2000, the 40% poorest population of the Brazilian still won on average, less than a monthly minimum wage against the 18,4 minimum wages of the richer 10%.

While the regional disparities increase, government implement social programs destined to hundreds of more needed municipalities, focusing on populations that live below any poverty classification, in pauperism and hunger. These intervention forms propagate a populist and authoritarian political culture. The central government's search for fame tries to mark his mandate with intervention forms that, obtaining success in the vehicles of the great media, can become electoral success in the future elections. The authoritarian side corresponds to a centralized form of decision making, without consulting the Congress, the population and the institutions from civil society that have expertise in social areas. In the search of indexes of good performance, governments end up republishing traditional forms of intervention, a type of clientelism "déjà vu".

In spite of good indexes sometimes achieved, these intervention forms are predestined to transitoriness and to the waste of the resources. Education and health cannot be divested of other measured anti-recessive, such as the increase of the job offer and of the income. The focalization based above all on the search for governments' good performance indexes, ends up reducing the government intervention to the assistance side. The social politics become "tragic choices" where resources are invested in a section to the detriment of other, as necessary as or, most of the time, that complement each other. While the indexes of basic education increase, most of the times based in a purely quantitative criteria, the government reduces the amount of the public budget for the educational sector.

Once the economic policies are not related to the social welfare of the population, it is meaningless to try to appease the effects without combating the causes. Ignoring and not taking into account the difference between growth and development, economy and society take now opposed directions. The national economies, strongly controlled, indicate growth attested by indexes of the situation with their percentile growth that legitimate the economic policies. Parallel, the indexes of social exclusion rise and expose the frivolous side of these statistics.

Points of Reflection and Current Proposals

- Elaboration of a methodology for realistic evaluation of the results of the economic policies, crossing, in the same period, the economic and social indicators.
- Establishment of democratic ways for the elaboration of the economic policies, that take into account the characteristics of the reality of the countries and include democratic mechanisms of discussion and participation.
- Creation of democratic spaces between the society and the legislative power, looking forward to decentralize the decision making process now concentrated in the federal executive power.