

According to the results of different studies conducted both local and regional about climate change, biodiversity loss and other environmental problems that reflect global consequences; we can conclude that the basis of global environmental problems, in economic terms, is excess of demand for the services that our planet provide. Human beings need the soil support for our vital functions, resources, and raw materials for production of goods and services and a place for landfill waste; but we ignore for a long time that our ecosystems have limited offer capabilities. From the economic point of view, and unlike any other good, in which an increased demand generates increased supply; in the case of environmental resources, it is known that they can reach their exhaustion because their services are totally inelastic and there is not enough money to satisfy the supply increases.

Human population growth over the past 100 years has been almost exponential, coupled with the development pattern adopted by many countries based on the principle of economic growth to meet their needs; it has produced an environmental degradation whose consequences we are facing right now. This principle adopted as a paradigm to determine the nations development, has brought a paradox, for have better living conditions of the population we should increase consumption of goods and services. Even those that are not needed and do not contribute significantly to improving the quality life index, but that within this pattern should be consumed to generate more jobs and better living conditions for those involved in production process. The result has been a vicious circle that has climbed with a tendency to become spiral and has not been redirected to learn widespread behaviors that ensure rational use of resources we can use.

Another value that goes against respectful behavior for the environment is the “symmetrical beauty” criterion, the urgency to achieve homogeneity criteria, zero defects, reach to average prototypes that do not reflect the reality of anyone or anything, leads to obtain even food, flowers, animals, etc., under any method to reach the ideal prototype, pressing the productive and reproductive processes by fertilizers, genetic modifications, pesticides, etc., required to obtain “homogeneous” and “beautiful” species that are most sold. Regardless the real value: nutrition, use, among others.

Although agriculture and animal breeding are already quite aggressive with ecosystems diversity, to claim for larger products, in perfect conditions, with beautiful colors, with higher productivity in terms of quantity, etc.; leads to production practices that exceed the environmental services limits, of landfill, regulation and supply of ecosystems where they occur. It also tragic that these benefits do not reach the people who suffer from hunger or unmet needs, but those who already have enough, and can pay for these additional features that do not add actual value to the products.

This type of values, that are not distinctive of all cultures of the world, whether they have come to be appropriate globally by all countries, because they are rooted in the collective imagination, and are considered “successful” in the sense of generating welfare cultures. Although the problems and

the consequences it brings, this uncontrolled consumption pattern is already evident; the tendency to deepen its implementation has been maintained. So, if this growth model based on consumption growth persists; looming scenarios do not result to be optimistic about the viability of our species on our own planet.

Although most of the population is already aware about mankind collapse if they continue in this model, at least in the basic characteristics of growth as known now, it has not been able to generate other values that allow that community welfare depends on other factors. It seems unrealistic for now, develop technologies that enable sustainable development; and even less than current technology could stop the deterioration of the environment, because what they have achieved at best case scenario is delay the process, but not fast enough to make self-sustaining planet. Scientific and technological development has focused to streamline production processes from the point of view of economic performance without impacting achieves large blocks of interaction between man and nature.

I personally think that trying to stop environment deterioration, preserving our current pattern of development and consumption, is unreal. That is why the actions that have been taken do not really have a significant impact. I believe that the values of “success” should be reassessed to ensure that the different communities to achieve a decent standard of living but not reach superfluous “comfort” levels that far from giving meaning to the lives of people, give them frustration. While people think that what we have is what defines us; really it is very difficult to take fundamental decisions such as recycling, saving, optimization of resources we use and to adopt patterns of “austerity” that our culture does not accept willingly and on the other hand, prefer environments abundance and which are tremendously predators. It is consumed more and discarded more. This does not serve anyone and represents only the value of a single transaction.

The growth that comes at the expense of the environment favoring those who already enjoy high standards of living; it is becoming our sword of Damocles. The society and culture itself must also be oriented to inculcate values and reward savings to consume the least to reach everyone. The value to search, should be the welfare, stability and economic growth not as defined today, because ¿as far as we grow? ¿More than my neighbor? ¿the other is a rival?, ¿or rather it is a collaborator? Focus our creativity and our knowledge to these values today is not only a challenge but the only way to redirect the evolution of our species. That although it has made great strides, it seems inevitably is going to decline.

Cesar Augusto García-Ubaque 

DIRECTOR

cagarciau@udistrital.edu.co