

## Integrative economics – the economics of coordinated and socially oriented development

*The article proposes a new vision of modern economics, which is called integrative economics. It is regarded as the economics of coordinated and socially oriented development. The article substantiates the concept of “integrity” as the compromise participation of various structures in the creation of a coordinated product. The principles and structural elements of integrative economics are disclosed here. The article proves that integrative economics is aimed at ensuring promising future, oriented toward the development of a human personality.*

*Integrative economics, coordinated and socially oriented development, development of a human personality.*



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### Integrity as a scientific concept

In order to reveal the content of integrative economics, it is necessary first of all to focus on the concept of “integrity” (“integrative”). It derives from a close term of “integration”, which is defined in dictionaries as “the unification of any parts, elements into the whole” [1, p. 216], but these concepts are not equal. It is a new semantic content, and not only an unusual phonetic sounding, that attracted the scientists’ attention to this concept and became the reason for its inclusion in the naming of new sciences.

Thus, in 1997 biologists of the Lomonosov Moscow State University proposed to introduce the notion of “*integrative biology*” at the International conference “Biology, Humanities and Education”. They defined it as follows: “Integrative biology is a system of knowledge in the field of biology, integrated along with

other natural sciences and humanities into the sphere of people’s values for the formation of biological literacy and worldview, based on a humane attitude towards every living thing” [2, p. 35]. American lawyer John Berman created the concept of “*integrative jurisprudence*” as a philosophy that unites three classical schools of law: legal positivism, the theory of natural law and the historical school of law (mainly German). V.N. Panfyorov’s school of thought “*Integrative approach in psychology*” (Herzen State Pedagogical University) was established in psychology of the 1990s [3]. *Culturology* has been named an *integrative science* since it is a field of knowledge formed at the intersection of philosophy, history, psychology, linguistics, ethnography, religion, sociology of culture, art studies, and it deals with the essence, functioning and development of the culture as a whole [4, p. 24–28]. The notions of “integration” and

“integrity” have considerable differences in their meaning. *Integration* implies, on the one hand, the process of movement of parts and elements toward their unification into a *single whole*, and on the other hand, the formation of the outcome of this process into a *single product* of some kind. *Integrity*, in its turn, is based on other premises, i.e. not the achievement of an object’s unity, but *ensuring the coordination of actions* of the process participants, not the disclosure of the real or imaginary wholeness of an object, but *the search for uniting forces* for the subjects of activities.

The above stated differences do not allow equating the concept of “integrity” with other similar concepts, as they have their own specific meaning. For example, although the concept “integrated” means the multilateral depiction of phenomena (processes), taking into account the interactions between the given elements, it underlines the intention to unite them into a single whole. The connection of elements under integrated development can take place either through establishing the relations between equal elements, or on the basis of some central element. The concept “systemic” also differs from “integrated”. The systemic approach *initially* considers an object as a system, i.e. as a set of interconnected elements forming a certain unity. The concept “integrative” does not coincide with the concept “synergistic” either.

They both deal with the systems consisting of many subsystems (multicomponent systems) *of a various nature* and reveal how the interaction of such subsystems leads to the *emergence of new structures*. In addition, both the synergistic and integrative approaches focus primarily on the dynamics of the processes, and not the statics. In this regard, they are interested not in equilibrium systems, but in those where the equilibrium is absent or disturbed, and the control actions can change at random.

At the same time, the difference lies in the fact that *synergistic systems* can be governed from without, and the *integrative development of territories* – only from within.

The distinction of the concept “integrity” from other close or similar concepts allows characterizing it as an independent scientific tool possessing its own categorical status. Integrity, revealing the new properties and characteristics of interactions between people, *is a target-oriented compromise participation of various structures (parts, elements) in the creation of a coordinated product*. At that, it does not include the intention to complete the uniting processes, it is oriented toward their movement to unity.

The main stage in the phenomenon of “integrity” is *a coordinated product created by compromise, it is regarded as a material or non-material result of human labour, economic activities, compatible with the wishes and expectations of all the participants of united actions*. Each person taking part in the creation of such product treats it as the manifestation of his/her own activities.

A coordinated product created by compromise should comply with certain requirements. Firstly, every part of it should occupy a specific place, so that all the other parts were coordinated and they facilitated the development of what was originally planned. Secondly, particulars should not prevail over the main ideas. Thirdly, the product under creation should not be detrimental to the phenomenon, for which purpose it is developed.

#### **The problem of coordinated and socially-oriented economic development**

Modern industrial-technological level and interpersonal relations developing on its basis objectively cause the gradual formation of integrity in human cooperation as a compromise participation in production activities.

Coordinated and socially-oriented economic development is a form of displaying integrity. It is expressed in actions aimed at the *integration* of separate structures and processes (production companies, technologies, markets, territories) in a more or less united phenomenon.

Strengthening *connection processes* are unfolding both on *the world level* in the form of relationships globalization and on *the national territories* through the promotion of cultural, educational and information exchange, as well as the increase of personality socialization. Expanding connection processes allow to make the territories' development a target-oriented process aimed at the reproduction of individuals as the main value of the territory, i.e. the process, not restricted to meeting only material demands of people, and extended to the scale of civil society formation.

The enhancement of present-day activities aimed at space transformation is based on *people's knowledge* about social, cultural, economic and other facts, that is used in economic activities. At that, the new stage in their development is marked by the transition from the discrete knowledge of individuals to the coordination of knowledge on the scale of a society. Academician N.N. Moiseyev, having in mind such kinds of knowledge transformation processes, wrote about the passing of knowledge from the individual mind to the Collective Mind (Intellect) that provides a single vision of what is happening [5, p. 86 – 90]. *Coordinated knowledge* is the basis of foresight and implementation of socio-economic prospects through their fixation in *the territories' development strategies*.

At the same time, developing connection processes remain constantly volatile due to the individual (personal and corporate) freedom of their participants. Moreover, the instability of the relations inevitably increases in the absence of appropriate institutions (legal

or moral and ethical), securing the norms and rules of coordinated behaviour. Though sociologists' interest in global and local economic transformations is increasing, penetration into their essence is impeded, on the one hand, by the *immaturity* of the new territorial development phenomena, which makes it difficult to observe the content of the cause-effect relationships; on the other hand, it is impeded by the imperfection of existing research tools and often by their absence. Therefore, researchers face a dual objective, which consists in the necessity not only to *conduct an in-depth study of the new phenomena*, including connection processes and their corresponding institutions, but also the necessity *to create reliable tools* for the study and explanation of emerging innovations.

Such research will naturally result in the emergence of new scientific tools, as well as the establishment of new fields in economics. One of them will be the development (disclosure) of the foundations and mechanisms of mutually beneficial agreement (consensus) of the set of people's actions aimed at organizing their life, we call this set of actions "*integrative economics*".

### **Integrative economics as a result of interaction between all the components of socio-economic life**

Historical experience shows that in order to shift to a new stage of economic and social development, countries usually applied a target-oriented set of interrelated measures including *the increase of population's education level, the strengthening of moral principles in economic activity, the development of respect for productive work, etc.*

At the time, economist and chemist D.I. Mendeleev (1834 – 1907) in his work "To the knowledge of Russia" (1906) analyzed the reasons for poverty in the country and wrote the following: "Laws, even the most liberal

ones, would do nothing for the country if the necessity, example and growth of consciousness didn't inspire the need for and love of work". He stated further, that "only truth and goodness, education and unanimous consent can conquer the evil" [6, p. 495].

In methodological respect, the adoption and implementation of coordinated and long-term development should be based on *the principle of interconnection* between everything.

Its essence proceeds from the fact that economic relations are effected under the shortage of resources, and it is not mechanical tools, but people with different psychological, moral and cultural features that are involved here. When making a decision, an individual is guided by his/her lifestyle, habits, attitudes, desire to gain profit, hopes for good luck, etc. At the same time, his/her decisions are not isolated from external circumstances, including the legal basis, market conditions, behavior of partners, confrontation of interests, completeness of the information on goods and services.

Complex technologies, dependence on suppliers, marketing techniques of products release create overall interdependence. Acting on one's own under such conditions is impossible, besides, it is damaging for the society. The price for wrong decisions made by separate economic entities can be a company's bankruptcy. Life of an individual becomes completely dependent on the behavior of the local and national community. In the economic aspect, it (life) is determined by the laws of the market, but actually, it is regulated by the single whole, which is a technologically, industrially and mentally united community. People can console themselves with the fact that they are separate and independent individuals, let them think so, because "blessed is he who believes".

Authorities, public organizations, business, science, and individuals are not just interrelated, they are doomed to cooperation, because they

form a society as a single socio-economic, cultural, ethical, moral and legal body. Each of its separate components can exist only by ensuring the existence of the other. The role of such components in the life of a single organism is revealed through their functional predestination, the main feature of which is self-preservation of the organism for a maximum duration, up to infinity. Therefore, the functional setting for each of the components is the long-term existence of the organism as a whole. This functional setting is substantial: a function exists for the preservation of an organism, and not vice versa.

The unity of all the components of a public organism may be weaker or stronger. It depends first of all on the development level of productive forces (people and the means of production used by them), generating a certain degree of technological interdependence between people's actions. As the technological dependence of people becomes more profound, they have to cooperate with each other not only in the exchange of finished products, but also in the coordination of their actions concerning the production of the components of goods and services necessary to achieve the final, functionally suitable product.

Such changes in the technological and social development lead to the emergence of a new content in the economy. Atomistic subjects of economic activities are replaced firstly by the group subjects (joint stock companies, partnerships, pools, inter-sectoral associations), and then there comes the period when a new phenomenon – *integrative economics* – emerges. The transition to integrative economics leads to the *phase resolution of contradiction* between the increased economic strength of a society and its low social orientation, which does not ensure the reproduction of individuals. Integrative economics shows that further economic growth is limited not by resource factors, but by social factors. Under the *phase resolution of contradictions*

we mean their resolution at the time (phase) of the transition (phase transition) of a phenomenon into a different state that is characterized by different features. In this period, old structures collapse and a new order emerges.

*Integrative economics is a system of economic and socio-cultural relations aimed at the compromise socially-oriented and coordinated combination of material and spiritual preferences of territorial activities (individuals, structures, civil society institutions) in the process of creation and satisfaction of individual needs.*

Integrative economics explains the reason for economic and social growth not by summing up the contributing factors, but through collective conscious interaction between educated people. With regard to Russia, integrative economics is the basis for the emergence of a new type of civilization – a society of intellectually and morally developed people, possessing the economy with dominating socially oriented and coordinated actions [7, p. 95].

From a scientific viewpoint, *the object of integrative economics* is a socio-economic activity of people who are equally guided by economic preferences and moral and cultural norms.

*The subject of integrative economics* is not the relations concerning goods and services, but preferences (interests, wishes) of the people, members of the society (subjects of economic activity, producers and consumers), including various psychological and social factors when *choosing the objects of production and consumption* (use). People choose not only goods and services. They also choose the lifestyle, the features of goods and services production organization (e.g. environmentally friendly or unfriendly), the range and quality of services, peculiarities of everyday life and leisure organization. The choice is made on the basis of preferences, formed in the family, at school, when communicating with other people. This leads to the formation of attitudes

and habits. And all of this is the result of socio-cultural development of a society, the reflection of knowledge and consciousness, or the combination of spiritual values. So, integrative economics links its transformations in the first place to the changes in the people's mentality concerning the image and style of behavior and activity.

Integrative economics is not reduced to the description of the procedures ensuring equilibrium in the economic activity, it does not set the framework for its study by the categories of wealth, exploitation, poverty.

It involves in its theoretical study all the human activities, including problems of an economic choice, moral, ethical and psychological norms of people's behavior, it seeks to understand and describe the economic understanding of human happiness and on its basis – to explain the preferences and expectations of individuals.

By the second half of the 20th century the majority of countries, especially industrialized states, began to realize, that not only a country as a whole, but also its separate regions cannot develop without the mechanisms of the state support for the economy. In this connection, increased attention to the socio-economic situation of territories became a relatively new phenomenon. It turned out that a productive life should exist not only in capital cities or industrialized areas, but also on the entire territory of a state, regardless of the remoteness from the capital or industrial centres. The value of human life was all the more understood by a developed society as a value in general, and not with regard to certain areas. People living far from the "centres of civilization", have the same right for a decent life, as those in wealthy urban settlements. This change of values was related, on the one hand, with the growth of labor productivity, which allowed meeting the diverse needs of population to the fullest, and on the other hand, with the formation of the basic elements of a civil society.

### **Principles of coordinated and socially-oriented economic development**

Coordinated and socially-oriented economic development, which forms the basis of integrative economics, is based on a number of initial principles. The first is **the principle of the unity of economic and moral-cultural approaches**, it consists in the necessity of taking into consideration public values, rules, regulations, customs and mentality of population in making economic decisions. The existence of this principle is determined by the fact, that people's social behavior is determined not only by economic, but also by psycho-physical motives, which are based on the hierarchy (pyramid) of demands – from physiological needs to personality self-realization. Therefore, in integrative economics moral-cultural and economic relations are equally important.

Application of the principle of the unity of economic and moral-cultural approaches relies not on the enforcement of social justice requirements, or on the substitution of the motive of gaining profit for the motive of conscience, but on the voluntary activities of agents, who, while regarding their personal interests, do not violate the interests of other society members. In essence it is the realization of the Pareto efficiency principle, when none of the agents can improve his welfare, without infringing upon that of at least one other person.

Naturally, the full observance of morality in economic relations is possible only in the society of intellectually developed and tolerant people with new civilizational values. Culture, economy, law, ethics in such a society become the components of a civilization, as well as the person with his/her internal and external values. Integrative economics is aimed at the practical improvement of an individual by making him/her an important participant of economic activities and transforming the economy into the means of personality development.

It should be mentioned, that under the conditions of poverty, destitution, extremely large gap between the rich and the poor, one should not expect absolute compliance with ethical norms and rules. Only a prosperous society, in which labour is valued and people are rewarded according to their contribution to the general welfare, is capable of combining moral and ethical values with market principles.

Generally speaking, scientists got interested in the issue of combining economic, social and moral approaches long ago, one can say, since they had started analyzing society and man.

This issue was touched upon in “Nicomachean Ethics” by Aristotle (4th century BC), “Theory of Moral Sentiments” by Adam Smith (1759), “Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals” by Immanuel Kant (1785), “An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation” by Jeremy Bentham, (1779), “Book on Poverty and Wealth” by Ivan T. Pososhkov (1724).

S.N. Bulgakov in his work “Philosophy of Economy” (1912) shows that economic activities are not just one of the elements of human life, but they represent this life, they become the replication of people as a part of nature with the only difference that nature is guided by blind intelligence, and in human activities this intelligence manifests itself as a conscious action, resulting in “humanization of nature” [8, p. 99, 41, 110, 187].

Similar views were expressed by O. Spengler in his work “The Decline of the West” (1918 – 1922). He writes that “every kind of economic life is the expression of spiritual life” [9, p. 501], that those who pursue only economic benefits, are not capable of proper actions and will inevitably turn out a pawn in someone else's game and will be deceived.

And yet these were mostly theoretical arguments. The goal of combining economic, social and moral approaches can be achieved

only in the conditions of high material and intellectual maturity of a society as a whole, as well as the majority of its citizens. It is a new technological and intellectual step in the development of a society that brings the problem of integrative economy to the forefront.

Another principle of *coordinated and socially-oriented economic development* is **the principle of cumulativeness and synergism** reflecting the combined actions of different factors, which leads to the emergence of self-organizing systems that switch to their new status under the influence of the strengthening of some factors and weakening of the others.

The very concept of *synergism in integrative economics* receives a new content. It reflects not just a higher efficiency (aggregated effect), resulting from the interaction (merging, combination) of systems, but also *a voluntary, mutually beneficial and coordinated overall cooperation that brings well-being to everyone*. Such a synergism turns into a socio-institutional system and creates new elements of a civil society. These characteristics of synergism were highlighted by A. Maslow who considered it as a culture, in the framework of which the things beneficial to an individual are beneficial to a society as well. He argued that cultures with a high level of synergism were distinguished by safety, benevolence and high morals. Cultures with a low level of synergism are insecure, aggressive, they are characterized by the low level of morality [10, p. 57-58].

The third principle, forming the basis for *coordinated and socially-oriented economic development*, is **the principle of partnership agreements**. It determines the nature of institutional links between the participants of socio-economic relations in the society. The main feature of these links is voluntary and mutually beneficial economic decisions. It means that partnership relations are formed as profitable for each participant.

### **Structural elements of integrative economy**

In *methodological respect*, understanding of the structural components of integrative economy is based on a broader conception of the basic structural elements of a society, developed by sociologists, and political scientists.

One of the founders of social stratification theories is a recognized sociologist *Pitirim Sorokin*, who singled out three such basic elements. He wrote: "The structure of social and cultural interaction, if viewed from a slightly different angle, has three aspects that are inseparable from each other: 1) *an individual* as the subject of interaction; 2) *a society* as the set of interacting individuals, with its socio-cultural relationships and processes; 3) *culture* as a set of values and norms that interacting persons possess, and the set of bearers, that objectify, socialize and disclose these values" [11, p. 218].

On the basis of the named sociological structural "aspects", we define three structural elements for integrative economy that ensure the mutually beneficial combination of preferences of individuals and society and that are gradually becoming typical of a modern economy of any country or territory.

The first structural element is intellectually and culturally educated people. This implies that the given territory should develop science and new or adopted technologies. In order to promote this development, intellectually educated people should not only know the laws of nature and society development, but also be civilized, tolerant, and capable of considering the interests of a society along with their own ones. In other words, there should be the foundations of the civil society. Under the sound legislation, they provide the establishment of partnership relations between all the participants of social and economic relations on the given territory.

The second structural element of integrative economy is **the real production sector**. This

means that any business entity should, using its own resources, produce real products for satisfaction of its own needs, as well as for their exchange for other kinds of material goods. No territory in the conditions of market relations would survive without the development of the real sector. It is only an illusion that someone would produce the necessary goods somewhere and then would bring them to local residents. If all the territories, relying on the others, which is theoretically possible, ceased to produce material goods, then inevitably there would come the times of intellectually educated, but hungry sybarites. Material production was and will forever remain the basis of physical and biological survival of people.

The third structural element of integrative economy is **an advanced service sector**. In its absence, the territorial economy will develop one-sidedly, as well as in the absence of the real sector. The service sector includes not only servicing productions, i.e. connected with the maintenance of produced or supplied goods, but also all the branches that are not related to the material sector. Transport and transportation inside the territory and beyond its borders, tourism service, energy and telecommunications, legal services, accounting consultations, education and health care, public utilities, and housing services – all this is included in the service sector.

### **Integrative economics and other economic theories**

Integrative economics is closely related to the concept of socio-economics [12], but only in the part, which deals with the role of trust, ethics and human dignity in business and society. According to V.A. Sukhikh, socio-economics “is an interdisciplinary field (area of scientific knowledge), *which studies the patterns of modern economic life in time and space through the prism of moral and ethical rules (restrictions) and social justice criteria* (author’s italics. V.B.)” [13, p. 22].

At the same time, integrative economics is not guided by moral-ethical requirements (restrictions) and the principles of social justice. It is based on the social solidarity principle, when the freedom of economic action is understood as a social responsibility, i.e., not as a requirement, but as a voluntary action, and socio-economic reforms are associated with the changes in people’s mentality. The basis for strengthening confidence in integrative economics is not only the development of trust associated with moral and ethical values, but also the creation of material conditions for its strengthening.

*Integrative economics* is not reduced to praxiology, which is the study of the common logic of any rational action.

The most prominent representative of the praxiological science, Austrian economist *Ludwig von Mises* in his work “*Human Action: A Treatise on Economics*” (1940) noted that “economic theory became part of the...more general science – praxiology”, that its subject was “human activity as such, regardless of external, random and individual circumstances of certain actions. Its knowledge is purely formal and universal, without any regard to the substantive content and individual characteristics of a particular event. It focuses on the knowledge, valid for all cases, the terms of which exactly correspond to its assumptions and conclusions. Its statements and theorems are not derived from experience. As in logic and mathematics, they are a priori” [14, p. 7, 33-34]. Unlike praxiology, integrative economics deals, firstly, with benefits (goods and services), and secondly, it includes social, moral and ethical aspects into individual and public actions. Praxiology studies human activities, and integrative economics – the motivation of human activities, outlined by moral and ethical search.

Integrative economics should not be considered in the categories of *normative economic science*, i.e. as a justification of what should be and not what actually is.



However, integrative economics is not based only on the postulates of *positive economic science*. Theoretical strictness of the liberal theory statements is not supported by actual economic reality. Therefore, the theory of integrative economics does not regard all the statements of the liberal theory as scientifically grounded. It is built not on the requirements of morality, duty, justice, but takes them into account as components of market development, i.e. *does not subject the economy to morality, but links them as equal driving forces*, developing their actions in conditions of the real (not forced) voluntary exchange. That's why the theory of integrative economics is based on the provisions of both normative and positive economic science.

Significant place in the integrative economics belongs to the provisions of *behavioural economics*, which, on the basis of the combination of psychology and economic theory, explores the actions of different agents in the conditions of their limited cognitive ability. One of its creators – Nobel prize winner (1978) Herbert Simon argued that, in their behaviour people are guided by limited rational principles and not only economic, but also psychological motives, and that “by mid-1950s, the theory of bounded rationality has become an alternative to the classic comprehensive rationality” [15, p. 330]. H. Simon's ideas undermined the fundamentals of the general equilibrium theory and the postulates of maximization and optimization of profit and utility, on which this theory is based.

The famous representative of behavioral economic theory is George Akerlof, Nobel prize winner (2001) who stated his ideas in cooperation with Robert Shiller in the work “Animal Spirits: How Human Psychology Drives the Economy, and Why It Matters for Global Capitalism” (2009). Their essence lies in the understanding of *man as a creature that*

*in economic activity is guided by the irrational element*, i.e. in highlighting *the subjective factor* in economic behaviour. They write, “In order to understand the economy, one should learn, how it is driven by the irrational” [16, p. 17]. G Akerlof believes that such rules of economic behavior (“informal institutions”), as labour morality, justice, selflessness, money fetishism, gregariousness, etc., are not sufficiently taken into account in economics.

### **Practical results of the development of integrative economics**

Development of integrative economics ensures obtaining real practical results. Firstly, it *combines economic freedom with the social solidarity* of a territory's population, which should lead to the reduction of the gap between wealth and poverty. But it is possible to achieve such a state of a society if certain additional conditions are observed. First of all, freedom should be understood as voluntary actions of individuals who understand the responsibility and necessity to consider the interests of their fellow citizens. Freedom must not be abused, it shouldn't be confused with permissiveness, non-compliance with the rule of law, disrespect for the value of a human personality, because freedom is the social responsibility of all the citizens.

Secondly, integrative economics provides *the formation of evolutionary selection of behaviour patterns* of the subjects participating in the territory's development. This is a very important consequence, as it fixes new positive forms of socio-economic behaviour of the subjects, which are based on the willingness to cooperate and create collectively used goods.

Thirdly, integrative economics, due to its moral and ethical standards, *ensures the growth of trust within the community*. Thus, when we speak about trust within a society, we mean the existence of universal trust of everyone in everyone. This means that trust must exist

not only directly between the parties (at the conclusion of agreements or contracts), but also indirectly between all the members of a society.

Fourthly, integrative economics provides the territorial community with *internal optimism*, because it considers the territory's own resources, including moral and intellectual, to be the most important driving force.

Fifthly, *integrative economics* expands people's opportunities of improving their personal welfare, as well as public welfare

through their participation in the development and implementation of new activities and development strategies acceptable for the territory.

### Conclusion

Integrative economics in all its aspects is aimed at ensuring efficient future, oriented towards the development of a human personality. It envisages man's liberation from the dull daily routine, and the transition to economic activities as a spiritual and moral-ethical existence of a personality.

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