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Response of Day Care Centers for Children and Youth with Disabilities in Republic of Srpska to Work Challenges During Covid-19 Pandemic

Andrea Rakanović Radonjić

University of Banja Luka, Faculty of political Science

Mira Ćuk

University of Banja Luka, Faculty of political Science

Abstract

In accordance with the Law of Social Protection of the Republic of Srpska Day care Centers are institutions of social protections that enable daily care of children in local communities and providing a wide range of services: food and care providing, storage, health care, upbringing and education, psychosocial rehabilitation, work occupation and integration. The proclamation of a pandemic COVID-19, Day care centers had to change the way of working and to provide support to children in their own homes. How the day centers worked and which activities they undertook in the new conditions is the subject of this research. The research was conducted on the entire territory of Republic of Srpska in the period from May to June 2020. The population consisted of all 18 Day care Centers for children and youth with disabilities. A total of 15 Day care Centers participated in the research. Methods of analysis and synthesis and test methods were used in the research, as well as Content analysis method. The technique that was used during the research was specially created survey. Day care Centers for children and youth with disabilities during the corona virus pandemic did not have a operational work plan. Most Day care Centers operated without instructions and guidelines. There was no systemic solution related to the organization of work in changed conditions. Communication with service users mostly took place in the online space, with all the limitations due to the modest technical conditions in Day care Centers, as well as the limited technical capacities of the users. Communication with service users maintained through home visits. During the pandemic, users needed help in a significant number of cases. Day care Centers were engaged in other activities related to the needs of users and the population of local communities during the pandemic. In some cases, they changed or supplemented their activities and developed new project.

Keywords: Day care Centers, activities, services, Republic of Srpska, COVID-19 pandemic.

Introduction

In each population of children in addition to the needs common to all of them, there is a number of those who have special educational and (re) habitation needs that need that need to be met by organizing special conditions and procedures, due to damage of some organs and/or functions, , (Hrnjica, 1997). Developmental disabilities include visual, hearing, voice and speech impairments, physical impairments, intellectual disabilities, emotional problems and adjustment problems. The frequency of children with developmental disabilities is not easy to determine and accurately estimate. A number of disorders are milder and are eliminated and reduced through certain rehabilitation procedures, while more severe cases are easier to monitor and their conditions are less variable. Most researchers agree that the number of school children who needs more permanent help due to some more pronounced disabilities is between 7-10% (Miljković, 1982).

In primary and secondary education Republic of Srpska[1] have approximately 129,000 children. 1.7% of them have disabilities in physical and mental development determined through the assessment process of the competent expert commissions (Republic Educational and Pedagogical Institute, 2016). Annually, about 3,900 children go through the assessment process and are included in the social protection system, and use various social services (Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, 2018).

The treatment of children with disabilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been based on the medical model of disability that views disability as a medical problem that should be solved, or as a disease to be "cured". With the development of medicine, medical model consider that a person and his or hers condition ("damaged", "sick") should be "repaired" and cured by using medical interventions, therapy and rehabilitation. The key role (sometimes the only) in this process belongs to professionals and professional services. This model defines persons with disabilities according to their condition and impairment. It is focused on the individual and does not take into account physical and social barriers and attitudes that contribute to the relationship of the community towards persons with disabilities (Aleksanrović, Jorgić and Mirić, 2016). According to this model, children with disabilities were treated and rehabilitated, educated in special schools and institutions, mostly in their homes without involvement in peer groups and in community life or they were placed in specialized institutions and homes where they often spent their entire lives. In past

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[1] Republic of Srpska is one of the entities within Bosnia and Herzegovina. The other entity is the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The entities are the bearers of social policy and are independent in creating all measures in social policy field.. Population of Republic of Srpska is about 1,300,000.

few decades, the approach has changed and the social model of disability is gaining ground. Disability is seen as a consequence of the impact of physical, communication and social barriers and attitudes that prevent the participation of persons with disabilities in community life equally as others This model is aimed at removing barriers created by society or existing in the environment, that limit a person's participation in the community and the exercise of human rights as well as improving the quality of life. The social model is based on equalization of opportunities, non-discrimination and respect for diversity (Aleksanrović, Jorgić and Mirić, 2016; Mihanovic, 2011). Activities undertaken in the Republic of Srpska in the application of this model are changes in the legal framework that are moving towards respect for human rights, removal of communication and physical barriers, inclusion in education, self-advocacy and inclusion of adults and young people with disabilities, parents of children with disabilities, OCDs dealing with human rights, deinstitutionalization of social protection institutions, etc.

To meet their needs, children with disabilities need from various services and institutions. Social protection is one of the system activities that provides assistance to persons in a state of social need and take the necessary measures to prevent the occurrence and elimination of the consequences of such circumstances. Social protection in Republic of Srpska recognizes children with disabilities as priority beneficiaries. The system creates a number of measures and forms of protection measures that help children and their families to overcome barriers equalize opportunities and cover the costs caused by disability. One of the new measures created in accordance with the principles of the social model of disability is the development of daily community services that provide beneficiaries with: diagnosis, early treatment, socialization and learning different skills, integration into peer groups, work occupation, maintaining physical abilities etc. This service prevents institutionalization and enables children to grow up in their families, develop and maintain emotional and social ties with their primary social network participate in the natural environment and in peer groups, receive individual treatment as a combination of compatible programs that are current in the community.

These services are designed and delivered in day centres that are organized as public services in local communities. As such they are available to all under equal conditions, are accessible to all citizens and have the necessary quality to be monitored and evaluated by the competent authorities. The subject of this paper is research on the work of day care centres for children with disabilities in the Republic of Srpska in specific conditions - the conditions of the COVID 19 pandemic, which significantly differed from the functioning of these services in regular conditions.

Social protection of children with disabilities in the Republic of Srpska

The social protection in the Republic of Srpska is conditioned by socio-economic relations, political structure, tradition and other values that are significantly inherited

from the former country and the socialist system. The transition that has taken place in recent decades in all areas has redefined content of life and social protection, beneficiaries and conditions for exercising prescribed rights and directed measures and programs targeting vulnerable categories such as children without parental care, children with disabilities, children at risk situation, the elderly, people with disabilities, victims of violence and human trafficking, the homeless, single-parent families, children in conflict with the law, the sick, the long-term unemployed, migrants, etc. Responsibility for providing social security is delegated from the state to each individual who is obliged to take care of their own needs and to contribute to the prevention and elimination or of their own social vulnerability, as well as the social vulnerability of their family members, especially children they cannot take care of themselves (Law on Social Protection of Republic of Srpska, 2012). In this way, social protection approaches the neoliberal regime (Kornai, 2006).

International factors that have an impact on the definition and status of social protection in Serbian society are primarily international sources that regulate human rights in general, and social rights in particular. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights (ECHR), the European Social Charter (ESC), the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) are the documents that Bosnia and Herzegovina has ratified. They are part of B&H constitutional system, and there is an obligation to incorporate content from these documents into domestic legislation on social protection. The influence of international organizations on policies in this area, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which monitor changes in transition countries and often condition their arrangements on measures implemented in social protection, should also be emphasized.

The content of social protection consists of material social assistance and social care. Conditions for the realization of certain programs, such as financial social assistance, are very restrictive and enable only the poorest that are unable to work and provide the minimum allowance. Because of this, large number of people in need is left out of the protection system. Beneficiaries of social protection system, in addition to the poor, are also persons with disabilities who have a high level of disability (70 and more percent). They usually use their benefits to cover the costs caused by disability.

Children with disabilities who are beneficiaries of social protection are children with visual, hearing, speech and voice impairments, physical and/or chronic illnesses, intellectual disabilities, mental disorders and/or illnesses, multiple disabilities, or with other impairment or illness, which lead to difficulties in psychomotor and sensorimotor development, and which significantly impede functioning in the activities of everyday life (Law on Social Protection, Article 18, paragraph 2).

The contents of social protection used by children with disabilities and their families are cash benefits and social services. The most well-known cash benefits are: social (financial) assistance, allowance for assistance and care of another person, personal disability allowance, support in equalizing opportunities for children and youth with disabilities (compensation for accommodation and intercity transport costs) and various one-time and occasional cash benefits for current social needs. The most well-known social services are: accommodation in an institution, foster care, help and care at home, daily care and counselling. In addition, children with developmental disabilities are included in various other interventions that are realized in social protection by social workers, psychologists, pedagogues, lawyers, special pedagogues. These interventions include programs of education, training and empowerment, assessment of the situation and needs, individual planning of measures and forms of protection, programs of integration and social inclusion, guardianship, etc.

Significant number of children with disabilities traditionally has been placed in social care institutions. These services were provided to all those children who did not have adequate living conditions for growth and development caused by lack of parental care and parental capacities to adequately care for children, family poverty, severity of disabilities, children's behavioural disorders etc. Children were referred to homes without exploring other options such as foster care, day care, family support services and parent empowerment. The relationship of society and professionals reflects theories about the causes of disability and the expected parent's role in caring and educating of children with disabilities (Jones, 1998; Turnbull & Turnbull, 1986). The dominant medical model has directed professionals to conclude about parents abilities of taking care of their own children. Experts have taken control of the child from the parents, because they are considered to have the necessary expertise to make decisions about the best interests of child. It also implies that parents are not able to see the interests and needs of their own children. Even if the approach to child care has significantly changed, daily services in the community are improved; placement of children in institutions is still relevant. In 2020 there are 150 children in institutions in Republic of Srpska.

Children living in such institutions are at risk because even short stays can cause the emergence or deepening of existing disturbances in intellectual, cognitive, social, emotional and physical development. One illustrative example is that children living in institutions on average reach a much lower level than those living in families. They can develop the psychosocial syndrome called dwarfism (low growth as a result of emotional deprivation and extreme stress). Experts who monitored the children in the months after leaving the institution and placement in the family (biological, foster, adoptive) noticed the great progress in the growth, behaviour and general condition of the child (Browne, 2009).

Daily care of children and youth with disabilities in the Republic of Srpska

Since the 1950s, European countries have been developing alternative forms of protection, transforming large social institutions (deinstitutionalisation), and favouring non-institutional care for children and youth with disabilities.

The right to live in a community is one of the basic human rights that applies to all people regardless of the type and level of difficulty or disability. All people have a common right to live independently and to be included in the community, including the right to choose a place to live, to choose a roommate, and the right to a dignified life. This process was significantly supported by the ratification of the CRPD and the development of a social model of disability.

Deinstitutionalization is defined as the political and social process of developing a wide range of services and support within the community for people with disabilities. This process enables all citizens to live in the local community, involved in the environment and society. Deinstitutionalization provides the gradual closure of large social welfare institutions and the relocation of their beneficiaries to the community with adequate support. In addition, this process involves the development of adequate community support services to meet the specific needs of beneficiaries and to prevent new institutionalizations. Complex process of deinstitutionalization involves a whole range of participants, starting from the highest state level to the individuals with their specific needs. The basic components of the deinstitutionalization process are: referral of persons placed in social care institutions to alternative institutions in the community, redirection of potential institutionalizations to other forms of care and development of specialized services that can support users in institutionalization prevention (Pejaković and Zajić, 2014).

One of the social services that are in the function of deinstitutionalization is the day care service. In the Republic of Srpska, daily care has been associated with the catalogue of social protection rights since 2012. This has exercising rights throughout the territory of the Republic. Before 2012 daily care was provided in certain local communities, which developed services in accordance with needs and the condition of their population.[1] Daily care is usually defined as staying outside one's own family with different types of organized daily services. Services provided through day care should include nutrition, care, custody, health care, upbringing and education,

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[1] Social protection holders in the Republic of Srpska are the entity and local government units (Municipality and cities). Local governments have the opportunity to adopt a social protection program based on the analysis of the social situation of residents in their area, make decisions on extended rights and other acts prescribing conditions for exercising rights and measures determined by the decision and programs. Also, provide a fund for realization provide funds for the realization of social protection activities, establishes and takes care of the work of social protection institutions and, coordinates social protection activities in the area of the local government unit.

psychosocial rehabilitation, work occupation and other necessary services (Law on Social Protection, Article 51).

The number of daily care users is growing through years. According to the data of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, in 2018, 107 children and youth with disabilities used some sort of day care services (62 boys and 45 girls).

Daily care for children and youth with disabilities can be provided in another family, social welfare institution, separate centres or day care canters organized and provided by public institutions, OCDs, religious communities and other legal entities. Day care Centres are usually organized in local communities. Aldo there is a legal obligation for all local communities to have such services, only a third of them have established day care centers so far (18). The largest number of day care centres for children and youth with disabilities in the Republic of Srpska is organized within OCDs that, in cooperation with centres for social work, ensure the realization of day care services for beneficiaries. The most common initiatives makers for the establishment of Day care Centres are Associations of parents of children with disabilities, and they are most active in providing services. The Day care Centres provide children and youth with disabilities with specialist services in the function of preventing institutionalization, ensuring a higher quality of life, socialization, encouraging their development and inclusion in life of their community.

Daily care in emergency and emergency situations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic

In the conditions of the COVID-19 virus pandemic in the Republic of Srpska, from March to June 2020, a state of emergency and a state of emergency were declared in order to protect the health of the population and prevent the spread of the virus. A state of emergency is usually defined as a decision of state to suspend certain normal functions of government, warning citizens to change their usual ways of behaving and adapt them to new circumstances. State agencies in this circumstance act in according to prepared contingency plans. An emergency situation is legally regulated as a situation in which the risks and threats or consequences of catastrophes, emergencies and other dangers to the population, environment and material goods are of such scope and intensity that their occurrence or consequences cannot be prevented or eliminated by regular action of institutions in charge.

The purpose of declaring a state of emergency was to apply measures that deviate from certain human and minority rights that are guaranteed by the Constitution. The declaration of a state of emergency is envisaged as the only exception to the constitutional guarantee of certain rights. Following the example of the regional and European "lock down", model the Republic of Srpska introduced restrictive measures in the fight against the pandemic: prohibition of movement, gatherings prohibition, working from home instead in organizations, etc.

The largest number of social welfare institutions in the Republic of Srpska had a changed way of organizing and functioning. Beneficiaries exercised all cash benefits, while social services, including day care, were exercised to a very small extent. According to UNICEF (2017), emergencies are unwanted, unexpected, unpredictable and endanger people's lives and property, and create panic, fear and uncertainty, which is certainly the case during the COVID-19 virus pandemic. The emergency situation is legally regulated by the Law on Protection and Rescue in Emergency Situations (Official Gazette of the Republic of Srpska No. 121/12).

Research results

In the Republic of Srpska, no daily care research has been done. There are no data on the way it functions, types of specialized services, or the satisfaction of beneficiaries of daily care. The research that was conducted is the first research with published results in this filed.

The aim of the research

The research that will be presented in this paper aimed to examine the manner of operational functioning of day care canters and providing support to children and youth with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Research methodology

The research was conducted on entire the territory of the Republic Srpska in May and June 2020. At this period Republic of Srpska were in state of emergency due to a COVID-19 pandemic. Restrictive measures were in force, which reflected on the functioning of the system in general, including the social protection system, restrictions on the movement and people staying in groups.

The population consisted of all day canters for children and youth with disabilities (18 in the Republic of Srpska[1]). 15 day canters participated in the research. Three day canters working on a project basis from time to time, and during pandemic they did not have any activities. From this reason they did not participate in the research. On behalf of the day canters, the questionnaires were filled in by authorized representatives: the president of the OCD (6), the administrative worker in the day centre (4), the professional worker in the day centre (3) and the organization's management representative.

Data in the study were collected by the test method. Used instrument was questionnaire which was specially created for this purpose in accordance with the objectives of the research, and respecting of all four ethical principles of social research (Bryman, 2016). The questionnaire contained 19 questions, of which 38%

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[1] There are 61 local-government units in Republic of Srpska. Day care centers exist in 18 local communities, according to the data of the Association of Mentally Underdeveloped Persons

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were closed-ended, 53% had the possibility to expand the answers, and 29% were open-ended. Semi-open and open-ended questions were constructed so that respondents could, , describe the specifics of the organization and functioning of Day care Centres during a pandemic within their own context. After receiving the answers to the open questions, they were coded and categorized.

Research results and comments

During the processing of the research results, four research units were formed: organization of Day care Canters during the COVID 19 pandemic, organization of work with users, activities and activities performed in Day care Centres during the pandemic and expansion of Day care Centres activities. For easier monitoring, the results of the research will be presented through these units.

Organization and orderliness of Day care Canters during the COVID-19 pandemic

Day care Centres for children and youth with disabilities in the Republic of Srpska are organized within the Associations and for assistance and support to children and youth with disabilities. Operationally, the this facilities are working in the territory of the local community in which they are registered. The provision of Daily care services is realized in cooperation with the Centres for social Work. Centres for social Work are responsible for recognizing rights on Daily care for beneficiaries. The users of this services can be can be referred by the Associations. OCDs that organize daily care realize their mission and vision in close cooperation with the local community in whose territory they are registered. The coordinator of Day care Centres and Centre for social Work in most cases is a professional from Centre for social Work that works with people with disabilities. Together with the expert team of the Centre for social Work he decides to direct users to the Day care Centre, depending on the individual needs.

As an organized public service, Day care Centres were obliged to make preparations for action in crisis situations (Law on Protection and Rescue, Article 13) In case of various natural disasters, social events, financial crises, business crises, etc. they have to be able and know what their priorities are, and how they will perform their activity. In preparation for emergencies, all public services should analyse potential problems, weaknesses, vulnerabilities, define what the priorities for action are and assess potential risks that may lead to an emergency. Based on the established situation develop plans they are obligate to set the direction of their actions. Organizational planning helps the organization to be internally and externally better defined in the local environment (Locke & Latham, 2002). The obligation of Day care Centres for children with disabilities to have contingency plans is all the greater because they take care of children, and perform their activities in cooperation with several entities in the community. Every change in their work necessarily reflect the work of the Day care Centres.

The results of the research showed that these services providers did not perform any preparation and did not have contingency plans in 93.33% of cases. In a state of emergency during pandemic, they found themselves in a very difficult situation. They were not prepared for any work in the new conditions. Only one Day care Centre had an action plan and could take into account the specifics of the current situation, and direct its activities to defined priorities. These results indicate that changes are necessary in the work of these public services, which must systematically regulate their work in all conditions. According to Erickson (1950), crises are not necessarily negative life phenomena. They can also be transitional developmental points and through crises one can grow and develop in a certain direction. In order for the crisis to become developmental, the organization needs to systematically plan and regulate its response to the crisis and to use all the forces and benefits from the environment to strengthen and overcome the crisis.

In the absence of plans and in the conditions of pandemic, the change of work had to take place quickly and each of the Day care Centres adjusted its work in relation to the measures prescribed by the state authorities. Changes in the way they worked were done differently, without uniform instructions from the local communities or organizations that supervise these institutions. The largest percentage (49%) changed their way of working and established a new organization without any decision. New decisions, mostly oral, were made by the Day care Centre management independently in 33% of cases, the Day care Centre management in cooperation with the crisis headquarters of the local government unit in 22% of cases, and in one case the Centre for social Work[1] is the decision maker. In only one day Centre in the Republic, recommendations of the Institute of Public Health were considered a new acting decision and acted upon it.

New ways of working and work organization in the state of emergency are conditioned by the resources of the organizations themselves. Day care Centres that had the resources organized their work with users through various online platforms (54%). A small number of them (20%) made the decision that the staff works from home, and in the premises were a duty officer during working hours to collect information's and forwards them to all employees. Two Day care Centres (13%) suspended work and focused on the reconstruction of the space using the absence of beneficiaries, and one (6.5%) occasionally organized its work, usually twice a week only for urgent situations. One Day care Centre (6.5%) did not change anything in its work. They continued with all activities as before the pandemic, respecting the prescribed protection measures that were adopted at local community as well as at the entity level. (Table 1).

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[1] Centers for social Work are public institutions that provide social protection services, established in local communities. They perform the activities of exercising rights in social, child and family protection and social work activities in providing social protection of beneficiaries.

Table 1. Day care Centres work organisation during the state of emergency

Work organisation	%
Suspended	14
Work on duty	20
Work organized through online platforms	54
Occasional work	6,5
Normal (without change)	6,5

The data show us that in almost all cases, the beneficiaries left the Day care Centre and stayed at home. For further communication with them, it was necessary to adopt a communication plan and define new way of communication. Special communication plans in case of emergency did not exist in any case, so further communication took place in accordance with the capabilities of users and Day care Centre. It is important to note that electronic communication did not take place with one third of the users and that occasional visits were the basic means of communication. In the case of organizing work through online platforms, the main means of communication were telephones (93%), social networks (20%), e-mail (6.5%), viber (13%). The beneficiaries of the Day care Centre were mostly unable to understand the gravity of the situation, so it was important to involve family members in communication and share information with them.

"Communication is very important for any organization on all occasions, especially in times of crisis at any level. The emphasis on communication stems from the very context of an emergency situation in which fear and insecurity are at a high level. In emergencies, owning and managing information is one of the key tasks of crisis management" (UNICEF, 2017: 137). Contradictory information contributes to people feel uniformed, especially those who are not professional enough to assess the danger and its duration. Citizens depend on the information provided by those who have been trained to deal with such situations. True information will reduce the reasons that causing panic and the appearance of informal stories that contribute to fear and anxiety among people. Lack of clear communication and confusing messages increase fear and feelings of uncertainty, especially at a time of pandemic that has never been recorded in the world before (National Convention on the European Union, 2020). In addition to communication with beneficiaries, an important part of communication in Day care Centres was related to communication with the environment. Facing with unknown, it is very important to obtain appropriate guidance, instructions or similar information from the organizations responsible for making decisions on protection and operation, as well as from professional organizations that monitor and supervise the work of Day care Centres. During the pandemic caused by the COVID 19 virus Day care Centres for children with disabilities in the Republic of Srpska in 40% of cases did not receive any guidelines or instructions for work from these organizations. The

only information was the decisions of the crisis headquarters on protection measures, while professional organizations in most cases were not reacted. UNICEF for Bosnia and Herzegovina at the end of the pandemic has published the appropriate material on child protection during the pandemic, which was not available to Day care Centres[1].

All of the above points to the conclusion that there was no systematic and planned regulation of the work of Day care Centres for children and youth with disabilities during the state of emergency in Republic of Srpska. There was inequality of practice and reliance on the decisions of competent authorities, most often from the local community level. Based on the obtained results, it can be concluded that the social protection system and its competent authorities and organizations did not provide adequate organizational or professional support and assistance to Day care Centres for children and youth with disabilities. This resulted in diversity of organization and work of Day care Centres in Republic. The founders of the Day care Centres did not take the necessary actions to prepare and create conditions for these organizations to perform their activities in changed circumstances

Organization of work with beneficiaries

Professional work with beneficiaries of Day care Centres is based on the work plans of organization and on Individual plans that are made for each of them in relation to his/hers needs. An Individual plan is a document that social workers in Social work Centers are obliged to work out as a professional and legal obligation (Article 75 of the Law on Social Protection of the Republic of Srpska, Official Gazette no. 37/12, 90/16 and 94/19). An Individual plan is a plan of changes that are to be achieved in working with the beneficiaries; it operationalizes the diagnostic conclusion by determining which services should be provided to the beneficiaries, what is the content and sequence of these services, what are the goals to be achieved, when they will be achieved, who will participate in their realization, how the feasibility of the goals will be evaluated and who manages the whole process of plan implementation (Vidanović, 2009).

The large number of Day care Centres (2/3) used home visits as a way of working with beneficiaries, thus collecting information on their health status, needs, realization of social rights, problems that arise due to compliance with protection measures and inability to move. Visits to beneficiaries were also used to distribute information, instructions, material assistance and share tasks for. Visits to theirs'

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[1] Document available at
https://www.unicef.org/bih/media/5211/file/Zastita%20djece%20tokom%20pandemije%20korona%20virusa%20-%20Djeca%20smjestena%20u%20sistem%20alternativne%20brige.pdf

homes were performed by the Day care Centres staff once a month during a state of emergency in 27% of cases, and more than once in 40% of cases.

Communication with parents of children and other family members was, to most parents, a chance to get the necessary information and help for which they needed. Parents sought help more than once in 60% of cases, rarely in 27%, and not at all in 13% of cases.

The organization of work with beneficiaries through online platforms was more informative and referred to the sharing of information about working hours, on-call time, obtaining information about the health, the beneficiary's reaction to stop coming to the Day care Centres.

Activities of Day care Centres *with beneficiaries during the state of emergency*

Without new Individual plans, working with users was in the most number of cases geared to the demands of parents who expressed the needs of the children. A very small number of Day care Centres designed some activities for children. When asked what activities they carried out to inform users about the situation and protection measures (development of instructions, development of appropriate educational material, video material, etc.), 80% of respondents answered that Day care Centres did not have any organized activities. They usually provided information over the phone, and the specific educational activities carried out by 20% of the Day care Centres were solving tasks from the workbooks they use in their daily work, and they did nothing about the pandemic.

As they were unable to organize group work, on-line workshops for children and families are convenient ways to activate and occupy beneficiaries at their homes. Videos posted on social networks or delivered by e-mail enable the realization of exercises with different purposes. Only a third of the Day care Centres developed such facilities. Most often, these were exercises that serve to maintain physical fitness and mobility, various board games or individual workshops on specific topics.

Parental requirements determined most of the activities of day care centers (Table 2). Their requests for help were related to: providing material assistance for children and families (food - 33%, hygiene products and protective equipment -20%, medicines - 7%, transport to a health institution -7%), psychological counseling for children - 33%, and full information on the work of the day center (20%). The activities of employees in response to these requests were (Table 2): provision of protective and hygienic equipment (73%), food aid (27%), medicines and other medical assistance (7%), cash assistance (20%) and advisory assistance children (7%). The results of the research showed that the families of children with disabilities are burdened with the inability to meet their existential needs due to poverty and material vulnerability and that their requests during the pandemic are focused on material assistance, especially on covering the costs of the pandemic (hygiene and

protection material, money). Experts estimate that poverty during the COVID-19 pandemic will increase worldwide and that the number of people living on the poverty line will increase. According to consumption surveys in Bosnia and Herzegovina, more than 30% of the population lives on the poverty line and a large number of people with disabilities are among them. (Ćuk, 2013).

Table No. 2: Parental requests and Day care Centres responses

Parents' requests Day care Centres for help	%	Day care Center activities	%
Food aid	33	Providing food	27
Hygienic products and protective equipment	20	Provision of hygienic means and protective equipment	73
Medications	7	Provision of medicines and other medical assistance	7
Transportation to a health facility	7	Help with money	20
Psychological help for children	33	Counseling for children	7
Information on the work of Day care Centers	20	Information on the work of Day care Centers	90

The data collected in the research showed that the Day care Centres did not address the possible risks for the users due to the cessation of the provision of day care services. Lack of adequate preparation for new conditions can lead to anxiety and dissatisfaction of users with whom the family does not have the resources to cope. Very little attention has been paid to psychosocial support, as it has been sporadically provided to a small number of children at the request of parents.

3.4.4. Expansion of day center activities during the COVID-19 pandemic

Unable to carry out their daily activities in accordance with the annual work plans, one third of the Day care Centres decided to develop other temporarily activities in accordance with local needs and their resources during the pandemic. Since they had equipment for tailoring workshops, the staff of Day care Centres was oriented towards sewing face masks. They distributed their products to Associations of persons with disabilities and local communities. In that way, they also provided additional income for Day care Centres. Some Day care Centres (14%) worked on new projects for donors, as well as projects to improve working conditions by arranging space, developing staff capacity etc.

The largest number of activities was related to humanitarian, which include providing assistance to their beneficiaries. Day care Centres contacted a large number of organizations (municipalities, international organizations, embassies of individual

countries, private companies) asking for material and financial assistance. In this way, they responded to the requests of parents to meet the needs of children and families.

Conclusions

Day care is one of the basic forms of support for a family caring for a child with disabilities and a basic form of prevention of institutionalization of these children. Day care in the Republic of Srpska and throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina is in its infancy even if it is defined as a right in social welfare system Day care Centres are basic public services that work on providing day care services. In Republic of Srpska, only 30% of local communities have these institutions. Existing capacities are insufficient and include a small number of children in need of this type of social protection. Day care Centers exist in more developed local communities, and underdeveloped environments have not been established these kind of organizations. In this way, children are discriminated according to their place of residence.

The results of the research showed that the work of Day care Centres during the pandemic caused by the COVID-19 virus took place spontaneously, according to their own capabilities and without the necessary support from all stakeholders. State bodies, as well as civil society organizations, have not achieved the necessary strength in support to families and these institutions in order to provide professional assistance to children and their families to cope with the completely new situation in the changed working conditions. In the new conditions, Day care Centres with their modest capacities adapted themselves and realized activities using electronic means of communication and working mostly according to the requirements of parents. Without contingency plans, new organizational work plans and Individual plans for beneficiaries in their work, they denied them the necessary information on protection, access to resources for children, mental health care, psychosocial support, positive discipline and organization of children's lives and a house filled with customized activities.

In the emergencies responsibility of the Day care Centres, as well as other social and child protection services is to prepare contingency plans, to define clear childcare policies, to make them accessible to all service providers, families, local organizations and to develop procedures for addressing children's needs. This is a path that will significantly improve the quality of work in a pandemic and allow for a longer period to clearly define the manner and organization of work in Day care Centres during the pandemic, which certainly did not end in May 2020.

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Possibilities for Modernization of Conciliation Board Procedures in the Countries of Central and Eastern Europe - Online Dispute Resolution and Electronic Communication

Balázs Hohmann J.D.

Assistant Lecturer, University of Pécs (Hungary), Faculty of Law, President, Association of Hungarian PhD and DLA Students, Department of Jurisprudence (Budapest, Hungary), Board Member, Conciliation Board of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Baranya County (Pécs, Hungary)

Abstract

Conciliation bodies are the main European forums for alternative dispute resolution for consumer disputes, providing an institutionalized opportunity to remedy consumer infringement cases quickly, cheaply and efficiently. The institution has excellent dispute resolution efficiency not only in Hungary, but also at the international level, which greatly contributes to the enforcement of the consumer protection legislation of the countries concerned. The scientific examination of the work of the bodies and the legislation related to them, the number of domestic and international scientific works resulting from them are modest, while the efficient operation of the bodies depends not only on practical and legal factors, but also on the theoretical basis. Although legislative reforms in this area have led to a number of innovations and modernizations, they have left untouched a number of theoretical and practical issues that also pose significant problems in law enforcement, such as the satisfactory settlement of cross-border disputes, electronic communication and even communication, that it is possible to involve artificial intelligence, other software solutions in decision-making or online dispute resolution within the framework of the procedure. Applied research on the operation of conciliation bodies covered bodies and bodies in Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. Due to the large number of consumer legal relations, the significance of these research results in the national economy cannot be considered negligible either. The research supported by the ÚNKP-20-3 New National Excellence Program of the Ministry for Innovation and Technology from the source of the National Research, Development and Innovation Fund.

Keywords: consumer disputes, alternative dispute resolution, conciliation bodies, ODR, artificial intelligence.

Introduction

How can we capture the importance of conciliation bodies in consumer disputes? These are bodies which, in an ad hoc manner or in an institutionalized form, serve the purpose of settling disputes arising out of small, pity consumer disputes outside the judicial and administrative enforcement proceedings by agreement between the parties (Smith, 1977, pp. 205-207). Accordingly, given their cross-border consumer disputes and regulatory difficulties (Hill, 2008, pp. 43-68), their activities are extremely important, non-negligible and economically incidental to the overall consumer protection system (Bates, 2003), especially in times such as the current coronavirus epidemic and the associated epidemiological situation (COVID-19-Consumer Law Research Group, 2020).

The operation of these bodies (Plevri, 2020, pp. 367-392), the applied alternative dispute resolution methods and the economic, business scientific analysis of the bodies (Jespersen, 2018, pp. 21-32; Kirillova et. al., 2016) have been of great interest in scientific forums and publications for many years. Related to this, the issues of electronization, digitization, and automation in organizations have already been addressed in international scientific research, but a number of issues remain that are undeservedly overlooked by scientific attention and fundamentally define the practices of these bodies. This is especially true if we consider the institutionalized bodies of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which carry out their activities with a certain territorial competence, according to state regulation (Hodges et. al., 2012, p. 167).

In these countries, especially in Hungary, state regulation basically creates the conditions for their operation, but in many cases dictates rigid operating conditions and legal requirements for conciliation bodies, which hinder or even make it impossible to use modern infocommunication technologies and tools in their proceedings. However, the untapped use of these techniques and modern infocommunication opportunities can mean a loss of efficiency of their procedures, a lack of response to legal cases in the modern environment, and problems with cooperation with the European Union or other online dispute resolution platforms.

In this context, this article seeks to examine the processes of state-established, institutionalized conciliation bodies and procedures, and the possibilities for applying the modern solutions mentioned in the title, to highlight areas for improvement and to identify risks and obstacles . To this end, it examines the role of electronic communication in corporate dispute resolution processes, the compatibility of traditional procedures with online dispute resolution solutions in the European Union, and, finally, the applicability of algorithmic decision-making solutions in these procedures. The article essentially seeks to answer the legal and technical requirements that must be met in order for them to be applicable in institutionalized conciliation panel proceedings. The research is based on the hypothesis that these conditions are not yet fully available in the studied systems

today. Applied research on the operation of conciliation bodies covered bodies and bodies in Hungary, Romania and Slovakia.

Electronic communication - one step forward, two backwards?

Given the mass of consumer relations and contracts (Marques, 2017, pp. 211-220), the Internet, which created the possibility of electronic communication, and its appearance in the world, soon developed the possibilities of electronic communication for settling disputes related to consumer relations. This applies primarily to contracts concluded between the consumer and the business between distant parties (Dumitru, & Tomescu, 2020, pp. 226-230). These online dispute resolution options - not only instant messaging with e-mail exchange - have led to a major improvement in the enforceability of consumer rights (Scott, 2019), as online consumer transactions typically involve cross-border contracting (Stewart & Matthews, 2001, p. 1111). In the case of these transactions, it is characteristic that the value of the consumer product or service in the event of a fault is disproportionate to the elimination of the infringement and the costs of enforcing consumer rights on the consumer's side (Brownsword, 2017, pp. 165-204). That is why a lot of attention has been paid to the possibility of so-called *direct dispute resolution*, ie. to the consumer to look for the trader instead of official or court enforcement, and in this process all factors should work in the direction of reaching an agreement (Magoń, 2017, pp. 91-106), according to Distance Selling Directive (97/7/EC) and Directive on Consumer Rights (2011/83/EU) requirements.

On the other hand, account must be taken of the fact that, typically for Central and Eastern European countries, the procedure of traditional, institutionalized conciliation bodies has remained a conservative process in many respects similar to official, administrative consumer protection procedures (Malik, 2016, pp. 103-110). An excellent example of this is the Act CLV of 1997, which regulates the subject in relation to Hungary (Fejős, 2018, pp. 116-120). The mentioned Act on Consumer Protection and related implementing regulations and ministerial instructions, which in many respects regulate the communication between the conciliation body and the complaining consumer or between the consumer and the trader during the proceedings. All this, of course, also helped to settle the disputes in some respects, as clarified communication conditions are one of the most important preconditions for mediation and conciliation processes. However, it should also be noted that for several countries, these rules were designed for traditional procedures with the personal appearance of the parties. An important element in these proceedings is the joint personal hearing, which is the most intensive stage of conciliation in the proceedings. This is difficult or impossible at all to resolve cross-border disputes, disputes arising from online consumer transactions, because the consumer and the trader are located or operating in different countries. Thus, they cannot be expected to incur costs in excess of the value of the product or service due to the claim.

The situation, which is already regular and difficult to resolve due to established procedural rules, has been exacerbated by the emergence and spread of the coronavirus epidemic in Europe . The parties to the dispute were no longer able to participate personally in individual conciliation proceedings not only because they had originally resided or operated in other countries, but also because the role of social distance had increased in order to prevent the epidemic from spreading further (Riefa, 2020, pp. 451-461). Institutional conciliation bodies, which would have waited for the parties to a personal hearing, have no choice but to discontinue these hearings and switch to written procedures. This in itself would not have resulted in a deterioration in the effectiveness of their activities. However, for most of the conciliation bodies examined, there was a legal requirement to contact the parties by post during the written procedure. Strictly speaking, in the realities of the field, this would have meant that the parties and the bodies would have had to wait weeks for each other's response and counter-response to the other party's position. This would obviously have made effective conciliation impossible due to the procedural deadlines, which were also fixed and otherwise short. Examining the case law of the conciliation bodies, it was found that instead of the above solution, they switched to e-mail and electronic administrative notification systems for communication with the parties. This clearly violated the legal requirements applicable to them, but they remained fit to conduct an effective procedure and achieve conciliation even in the face of a critical epidemiological situation. On the other hand, this may also result in the near future that one or the other party in a civil court may even effectively challenge the validity of the decisions and agreements reached by the bodies. This may be the case if the party succeeds in proving that the case has been adversely affected by the failure to comply with the notification rules and that damage has ultimately resulted.

Legitimately raised as a matter for the parties and the conciliation boards not have been more appropriate parallel ordering of the written proceedings to temporarily repeal or amend the provisions of the notification by the legislature? And looking ahead - it would not be important to take steps to allow for rapid, electronic communication between the parties in the future if, for any reason, a face-to-face meeting between them cannot be established? The lack of this calls into question in many respects the real effectiveness of the procedure in terms of the effectiveness of conciliation between the parties. Another aspect that may be of interest may be the emergence of the above practice: for decades, there has been a serious scientific debate among some authors in the literature about how to reach a more effective, faster agreement between the parties in dispute, either in writing or at a hearing (Agustin et al., 2018, pp. 179-196). Professional opinions differ, but based on the author's observations in his own conciliation proceedings and the case law of the conciliation bodies examined, it appears that although the settlement rate did not fall during the epidemic period, it was difficult to clarify became time-consuming, which made it difficult to carry out the procedures successfully.

The relationship between traditional conciliation board procedures and EU online dispute resolution system

In the light of recent experience, another very topical issue has arisen in relation to the relationship between the procedures of the institutionalized conciliation bodies and the online dispute resolution platform operated by the European Commission. The Commission operates this particular, OVR platform in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 524/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on online dispute resolution for consumer disputes. It is important to note that in cases initiated on the online platform, conciliation bodies are an important forum for reaching an agreement between the parties, which can act on the disputed consumer transaction at the discretion of the parties. The two procedures (the traditional conciliation body procedure and procedure via the online platform) should seem to work best together under the rules of the Regulation. However, based on practical experience, a number of problematic issues (van Gelder, 2019, pp. 219-226) have emerged in the recent period, which have been further exacerbated by the phenomenon of the coronavirus epidemic due to the social distance, the breakthrough of ODR solutions.

Let's take a closer look at these problems.

Among the first: in some countries, especially Hungary and Romania (Chereji & Pop, 2014, pp. 185-204) , the consumer protection legislation does not necessarily make it clear that the use of the ODR interface is mandatory or optional for the parties in the case of online consumer contracts or cross-border disputes. Examining the Hungarian case law, it can be stated in this issue that in such cases some bodies terminate or do not initiate the procedure and direct the applicant consumer to the online platform, while other bodies also conduct their proceedings in these cases. Through the online interface, the consumer can finally get a joint decision with a business to have their dispute resolved by a traditional conciliation body.

In the issues of the case on the online dispute resolution portal, the question of whether the company should appear at the personal hearing could also have become problematic. In the case of the legislation of some of the States (especially Slovakia and Hungary) examined, this could not be established and, in the end, the situation could only be resolved on the basis of Article 10 of the Regulation. Under Article 10 (b) of the Regulation, an undertaking is required to appear only if "(b) if the rules of procedure of the [dispute settlement body] so provide and the parties agree". Since, pursuant to Section 29 (11) of the Hungarian Act, the undertaking removes from the cooperation obligations the provision of the participation of the person authorized to enter into the settlement in this procedure, therefore the Hungarian conciliation proceedings did not oblige the undertaking to provide it in online dispute resolution. Nevertheless, it should be noted that Member States' regulations may even require a personal appearance, which, in terms of its final meaning, may run counter to the original purpose of the Regulation and the benefits of the online procedure.

The question also arises in cases initiated directly on the online dispute resolution portal that conciliation bodies must conduct a written procedure, as the parties are not obliged to appear in person? Although one requirement would follow from the other, in several of the conciliation bodies examined, a traditional case was initiated instead of a written procedure to deal with cases from the platform, which could lead to incorrect application of the law.

Examining the scope of each Member State's legislation, is it also vague to regulate how the conciliation body is to communicate with the parties in the context of online dispute resolution? It does not matter that the parties and the bodies may communicate during the proceedings only and exclusively on the interface or may lawfully communicate outside it if there is a need to do so. And related to this: how should the decisions and orders in the proceedings be communicated to the parties - is it possible on the interface or on their traditional contact details? And if it is only possible to make these notifications on the interface, how do the rules and presumptions related to delivery change? These issues are usually not subject to requirements in either the Member States' rules or the Regulation, so in our view they should be dealt with in accordance with the Conciliation Body's own rules, which should be extended to the online platform.

In connection with the online procedure, due to the nature of legal transactions, language issues also arise legally. In which language should the procedure or conciliation be conducted between a consumer or business domiciled in a different Member State? The Decree only stipulates that in one of the official languages of the Union - however, in Hungary, for example, the language of conciliation proceedings is, as a general rule, Hungarian (Section 20 (6) of Act CLV of 1997). Can the Parties agree to choose another language? If they do not agree, but the company has its registered office or establishment in a different Member State, how should the information and decisions related to the procedure be communicated to it? What should be done if the conciliation body does not have a suitable linguistically competent person in relation to this agreement?

Based on the Regulation and the information materials on the online interface, in this case the Parties may communicate in the official language of their country and the European Commission is obliged to provide translation services. This is to enable all parties, including the Board, to understand all parts of the procedure and to communicate their views and decisions in their own language.

Summary

Conciliation bodies in the European Union and Central and Eastern Europe are unquestionably important parts and forums of the consumer protection system of a given Member State. These bodies provide free, fast and efficient procedures for consumer disputes that have become a dispute, which can provide an appropriate solution for both the consumer and the business in the final settlement of their

dispute. However, how institutionalized, permanent conciliation bodies can adapt to change will become a key issue in this priority. It is also crucial how they can deal with the characteristics of e-consumer transactions, which are becoming massive in the 21st century, and how they can put their own operations in a modern framework. The coronavirus epidemic, and with it the outstanding increase in the number of electronic purchases and the resulting consumer complaints, have highlighted in recent times the critical points at which almost immediate changes in regulation and practice are needed to maintain effective and legitimate corporate decision-making.

In this case, too, differences in the application of the law between and within states can increase the distrust of market participants, divert them from these alternative dispute resolution solutions and turn them back to the traditional means of redress. This should be avoided at all costs, as they could involve significant costs and difficulties for both the consumer and the business in the context of a possible dispute. This, in turn, could mean harmonization expectations and obligations for Member States' legislators so that the European single market can truly function as a common market - not only in terms of the free movement of goods and services, but also in terms of enforceability of legal claims.

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Democracy and Its Rollback: Addressing Some Challenges of the Flawed Democratic Countries

Sri Nuryanti

Center for Political Studies, Indonesian Institute of Sciences

Abstract

In 2015, the Economist Intelligent Unit based in UK had released the Democratic Index covering the report of 167 countries among others are Indonesia and Thailand. Indonesia has 7, 75 total score while Thailand has 5, 09 total score have categorized the two countries into flawed democratic countries. They measured democracy from the following categories namely electoral process and pluralism, functioning of government, political participation, political culture and civil liberties. This paper is aimed at discussing the above five challenges of the so called flawed democratic countries from qualitative perspective employing some literature reviews, analyzing some secondary data and some thoughts of prominent politicians and scholars. Without trying to review the real parameters that have been used by the economist Intelligent Unit during their research, this study will discuss more on the challenges faced by Indonesian and Thailand government in addressing the related issue above. This study will analyze the post 2014 election, by having a look at the dynamics and process of election and its aftermath, some related issues on voting behavior that affecting the political participation (In Indonesia 2014 elections resulted at 75,11% for its legislative election, 69,58% for its Presidential election and Thailand 2 February 2014 election resulted at 47,72% due to boycotting election in 69 constituencies), the development of political culture as well as the issue addressing the implementation of political rights. Some findings suggest furthering the discussion by taking into account the emergence money politics and internal political situation that affecting on people participations in politics. From the preliminary study it is found that both two countries have significant challenges in the future in developing their culture of democracy. The provision of political laws in those two countries will also be examined in order to see the possible improvement for their democratic life performances. [1]

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[1] Paper is presented at International Conference on International Relation and Development (ICIRD), Bangkok, Thailand, 23-24 June 2017

Keywords: Flawed Democracy, Its Rollback, Indonesia, Thailand

Introduction

Political Background of Thailand and Indonesia

Analyzing the development of democracy in practice is very much interesting these days. In many part of the world, democracy has chosen as the country political orientation. Some countries in MENA region (Middle East and North Africa) as for example, these current years they have learnt how to implement democracy as the politics of the country. Some of them are quite successful but some of them experiencing the mass rally in the street and demanding their political rights.

On the other hand, in many part of the world also shows a trend of declining democracy. This trend could be caused by some reasons: Firstly, there is leveling off of in the extent of democracy. Secondly, there has been a rise in incidence of democratic breakdown in the world. Thirdly many of these democratic breakdowns have happened in places that can be considered big, strategically important states, powers in their regions.[1]

By considering the above declining trend, we can have a look at the Freedom House category on Political Right and Civil Liberties. Indonesia from 2006 to 2013, Freedom House ranked Indonesia in the category of "Free" but move back to " Partly Free" in 2014-2017. Thailand is also experiencing a decline in term of Political Right and Civil Liberties. According to Freedom House, Thailand has been categorized as "partly free" up to 2014, but categorized as " Not Free" from 2015-2017. [2]

Herewith, the table below is another trend shown by Democracy Index 2014-2016 of Thailand and Indonesia. This is to draw attention on how both country need to response to the challenged existed in the flawed democracy.

Comparative Democracy Index 2014, 2015 and 2015[3]

	Thailand			Indonesia		
	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016
Score	5,39	5,09	4,92	6,95	7,03	6,97
Electoral Process and Pluralism	5,33	4,50	4,50	7,33	7,75	7,75

[1] See Larry Diamond, How is Indonesia's Democracy Doing?, East Asia Forum, 29 October 2009 at http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2009/10/26/how-is-indonesias-democracy-doing/ accessed May 25th, 2017 at 14,45

[2] See Freedom in The world at https://freedomhouse.org/report-types/freedom-world, accessed May 26th,2017, at 16.44

[3] Table is a comparative Democracy Index from 2014, 2015 and 2016 Democracy Index of Economist Intelligent Unit, UK.

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Functioning of Government	4,29	3,93	3,93	7,14	7,14	7,14
Political Participation	5,56	5,56	5,00	6,67	6,67	6,67
Political Culture	5,00	5,00	5,00	6,25	6,25	6,25
Civil Liberties	6,76	6,47	6,18	7,35	7,35	7,06
Rank	93	98	100	49	49	48

Source: Compared from Democracy Index

From the above table, it shows that in both Thailand and Indonesia, we have some challenges in term of becoming a full democratic country.

Regarding with the development of democracy in Southeast Asia, Joshua Kurlantzick once argued that democracy in Southeast Asia was in retreat and indicated three factors that caused it: Most first-generation democracy leaders used their electoral victories to consolidate power against their rivals; the failure of governments to provide effective governance and communication technology has been used by some governments to conduct surveillance on citizens, instead of being used for enhancing democracy. [1]

Democracy is not about how international institution gives rank, but it is purely on how we appreciate many aspect of democracy as stipulated above as guaranteeing Political Rights and Civil Liberties. Therefore, any response towards the dynamics development of democracy in two countries is appreciated. Indonesia as for example, has so much to offer to the region in terms of promoting democracy and human rights. However, it does not mean that the rest will follow what has been done in Indonesia and Indonesia leadership.

Indonesia since what the so called Reform Era, is actually has experience a continuous exercises towards the consolidation of democracy. However, challenges are always been there and Indonesia politically has been doing great in trying to response to the above challenges showed by the restlessness discussion and some legal changes in order to accommodate the call for better democracy. However, this institutional effort is not in line with the development of internal political dynamics. It is started during the 2014 Presidential election in which only contested by two pair or president and vice president candidates namely Joko Widodo-Jusuf Kalla and Prabowo Subianto-Hatta Rajasa. It was a head to head competition and resulted at two big coalition group namely KMP (Merah Putih Coalition which consist of Partai Gerindra, Golkar, PAN, PKS, PPP, PBB, Democrat with its 352 seats of 560 seat at parliament) and KIH (Indonesia Hebat Coalition which consist of PDIP, PKB, Nasdem, Hanura, PKPI with its 208 seats of 560 seats at parliament). However, after the casting a ballot take place on July 9th, 2014, the election result shows that Joko Widodo-Jusuf Kalla won the

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[1] See Joshua Kurlantzick, *Regression From Democracy and Its Implications*, at *Southeast Asia Report, May 2014*

election. The 2014 Presidential election has assumed to left mark of the dynamics-latent- prolonged contestation up to nowadays. If this symptom is maintained up to nowadays, Indonesia is facing democracy rollback where democratic practice is no longer determined by reasonable democratic progressive reason, but based on sentiment towards ethnic, religious, race and inter-group differences.

Thailand after the election in 2014 has marked a declining democratic practice by the voter turnout of 47, 72% as boycotting was on during Election Day. The history of Thai democracy itself is actually started in 1932 when absolute monarchy is replaced by Constitutional Monarchy. So, the year 1932 witnessed the abolition of the absolute monarchy in Thailand. A group of military officers and civilians who called themselves the Khana Ratsadon, literally meaning the "People's Party," seized power from the king and put an end to centuries of royal absolutism. In the Constitutional Monarch, the King Bhumipol Adulyadec functioned as symbolic head of state while the head of Government is led by Prime Minister. The political development after 1932 uprising was quite dynamics by several coup. In 2006, after the ousting of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra due to financial allegation case, there were two big opponent groups namely Red Shirt and Yellow Shirts. After Thailand experience political crises in 2008, Thailand is actually felt into a quite un stable condition by many protests. Again, Thailand was experiencing political crises in 2013, and it goes on and off up to 2014. With the 2014 election that resulted at half of eligible voters did not cast the ballot, therefore, there is NCPO (National Council for Peace and Order) taking over the situation. Then, Thai began its political history under junta. Thailand has introduced temporary charter as to replace the constitution 2007 that has been abolished by the junta.

Later on NCPO has mainly used article 44 to address the current condition of Thai politics until the formulation of new Constitution. Article 44 is widely known as the tool that the NCPO has invoked to swiftly enforce legislative, administrative, and jurisdictional powers led by Prime Minister General Prayut Chan-o-cha. If the situation is extended, democracy in Thailand will face its rollback by having difficulties in exercising political right and civil liberties due to some restrictions.

Thailand is going to finds itself in the strange political fever with it's up and down of the eagerness to implement democracy on one hand and to respect to the monarchy. With its current situation Thailand has 149 Article 44 orders that have been enacted to deal with a range of topics from reshuffling government officers, establishing special bodies, putting Dhammakaya Temple in a controlled area, granting policing power to military officers, and many other things. Article 44 is part of temporary charter and it will effective until the installation of new government.

Some may say that article 44 was actually used to be part of the charter in 1959 charter. There are some key issues under article 44 which are in education (15 orders), economy (21 orders), bureaucracy (69 orders), security (13 orders), social

order (25 orders), Media (3 orders), transportation (2 orders), public healthcare (2 orders) and other issue especially in sport reform (1 order). On bureaucracy, this article mentions the establishment of super committee on administrative reform, reconciliation and national strategy, suspension, appointment and reshuffle of civil servants, including appointment Mayor of Pattaya and Bangkok governor who are usually elected, and selection of the constitutionally independent committee of the National Anti-Corruption Commission. From the stipulations of the article above, it can be seen that this article is very powerful in shaping the future of Thai politics. Since this charter is under the junta, therefore it needs to be seen the influence in making the new constitution. From positive thoughts, the formulation of the new Constitution supposedly consists of rehabilitation of democratic political life, so that the future of Thai democracy is part of the good hope to be resulted by Constitution 2017.

Desirability of democracy

Before going into further detail, actually the implementation of democracy in any country can be measured from the desirability of democracy. Theoretical overview will address that desirability of democracy can be based on the argument that every people has their own political right, and their civil liberties should be protected.

Schattschneider's argument to consider democracy is timeless because he describes a widespread belief in the power of democracy. However, he also realizes that in implementing democracy sometimes people have unrealistic expectations about the power of 'the people'. This is very likely with what Civil Republican thought that people, although they have to exercise their political right, but they cannot do it by themselves.[1] In this account, Scattschneider beliefs that the more realistic vehicle for democracy should be led by government, although in the government it is contained undemocratic elements too. So, he provides a series of warnings against the assumption that there is a simple way to encourage popular democracy.[2]

In one study conducted on the desirability of Democracy it found the fact that in Thailand and Indonesia are both expecting to implement democracy as shown by figure below:[3]

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[1] See Vontz, Thomas. 2000. *We Project Citizens*. Washington: USAID, p. 38
[2] See Schattschneider's *The Semi-Sovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy* (in America – first published 1960
[3] See Larry Diamond, *ibid*

Perceived Extent and Desire for Democracy
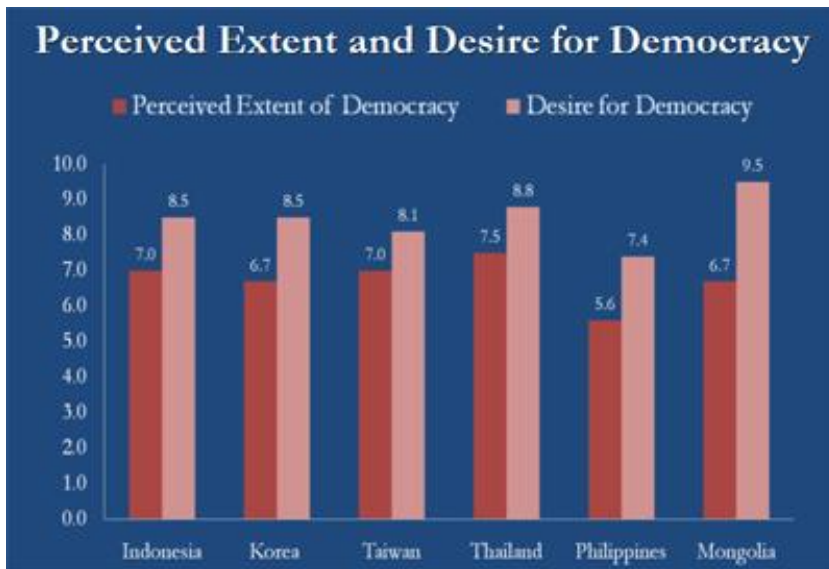
From the study above it shows that in each country they have high expectation to the implementation of democracy in their country. However, in reality, some expectations were not manifested. According to the study, it is caused by internal dynamics of the country. In order to secure the desire towards the implementation of democracy in the country, in the country needs to have a political reform that can be started by having a legal norm as a baseline for bringing up electoral governance. As in the case of Thailand nowadays, after the enactment of new Constitution, it is better to be followed by formulating the political laws that usually includes the law on the electoral commission, the law on the political party, and the law on the electoral management. The law on electoral commission will give legal foundation on the institutionalization of electoral process. It is usually contains of the model of the electoral commission whether the electoral commission is having one of three models of electoral management body (EMB) as can be seen below:[1]

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[1] See International IDEA, Handbook of Electoral Management Design, 2014,p.6

THREE MODELS OF ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT

INDEPENDENT MODEL	MIXED MODEL		GOVERMENT MODEL
Independent EMB	Independent EMB	Govermental EMB	Govermental EMB
Such as:	Such as:		Such as:
Electoral Tribunal Or Central Electoral Commission	Ad hoc CEC + Ministry of Justice	Electoral Council + Ministry of Interior	Local Authorities Ministry of Interior
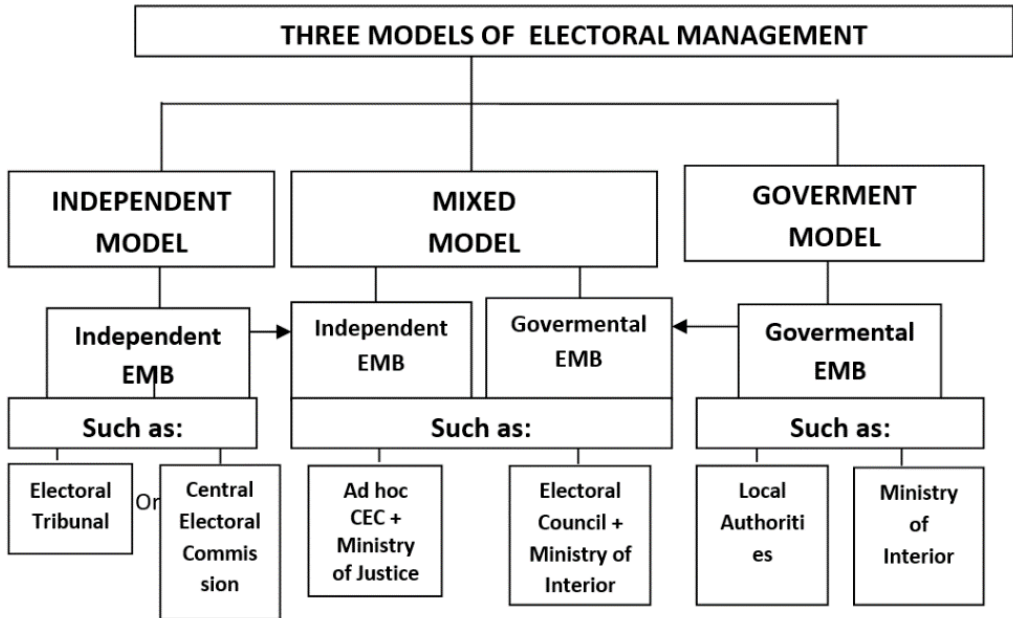
From the law of electoral commission as above mention, it is not only concern on the model of Electoral Management Body taken in the country with each consequence in term of its relationship to other stakeholder of election, but also it will explained the principle of the EMB, the power function of the EMB, composition, role, financial resources of the EMB and last but not least, the nature of the organization. The second law that is considerably important is the law on political party. The law on political party will regulate the installment of political party, the registration and the administration of political party to become electoral contestant. The third law needed to conduct election is the law on electoral management of election itself. It can be in detailed version like what has been implemented in Indonesian election 2014, or just on principal matters of managing electoral cycle. The above three electoral related laws are very important to ensure the running of electoral cycle in the country.

Electoral Process and Pluralism

Following is the discussion of five categories of the democracy index. The first category is on electoral process and Pluralism. To understand the complexity of electoral process, in the following feature, it shows the electoral cycle as formulated by Ace Electoral Knowledge Networks. Basically, the electoral cycle is divided into three stages namely: pre electoral period, electoral period and post electoral period. This cycle ideally is implemented fully in running one election. The Electoral Management Body in turn has its role to formulate the detail of each step within each electoral period.

Electoral Cycle[1]
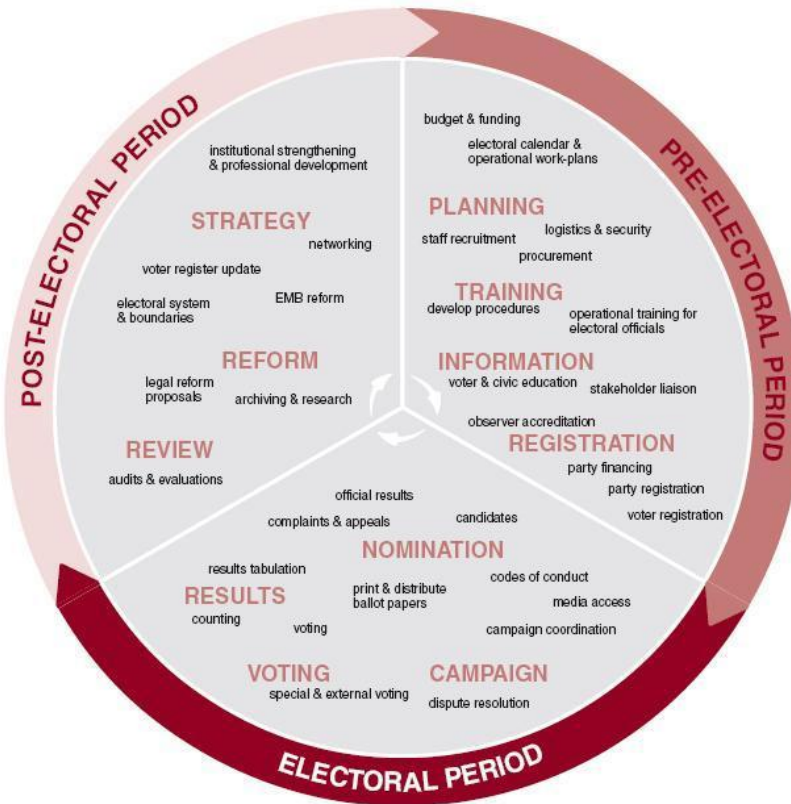
The above cycle is easy to follow especially by newly democratic country. It also gives a hint on what the sequential activities that may be taken following the implementation of particular steps. It gives guidance for any model of electoral management body to implement election in the country. By having this knowledge, an electoral institution can execute single complete election with clear parameter. Therefore, it is hoped that the election run in any country can fulfill all of step and resulted at smooth process and successful result.

Other categories embedded in the electoral process, according to the parameter given by Democracy Index, it will touch upon the implementation of pluralism principle. Pluralism is the recognition and affirmation of diversity within a political body, which permits the peaceful coexistence of different interests, convictions and lifestyles. Therefore, it can be said that election should uplifting the idea of respecting the pluralism principle in the country. It is believe that every country has its own

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[1] See Electoral Cycle formulated by Ace Electoral Knowledge Networks at aceproject.org

diversity. Therefore, the rank of democracy index is touch upon this value in everyday political life.

The existence of plurality in any country and the successful rate of democracy index are somehow related to the implementation of liberal value in the country. In the category of free country, it is seen that the support of liberal value is higher. Indonesia as for example, from the index it shows that support for liberal values is surprisingly high in Indonesia. It is at 47 per cent. This vastly outstrips Thailand and the Philippines. Since this is usually highly correlated with education and economic development, and given limited years of experience with democracy, Indonesia is way ahead of other country studied. They are much closer to Korea and Taiwan as in the following table.[1]
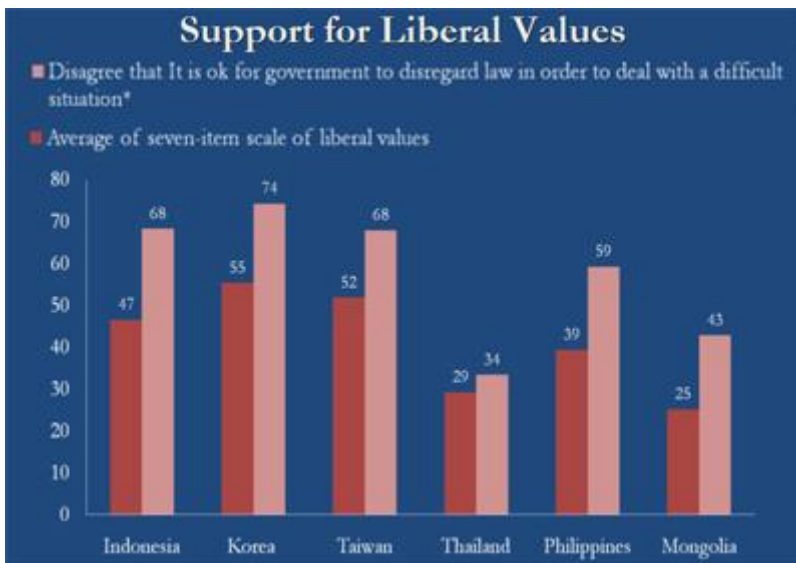
Functioning of Government

The second parameter that has been analyzed by the democracy index is on functioning of Government. Although in earlier mention, Indonesia is facing a harsh competition during 2014 Presidential election and the sentiment is somehow extended up to nowadays, the government under president elect is function properly. It grows respect to the new government resulted from 2014 election. It is quite different with what has been experienced by Thailand, where nowadays is still under Junta.

The function of government is needed. This is according to Schattsneider that the people are 'semi-sovereign' – only able to exercise their power in a few areas.

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[1] See Larry Diamond, *ibid*

Therefore, Schattschneider (1975: 12; 119) highlights the need for *government* to intervene:

Democratic government is the greatest single instrument for the socialization of conflict … big business has to be matched by … big democracy. Jones and Baumgartner were actually optimistic about the links between public opinion and government action. [1]

The above mechanism is important because there are systematic imbalances in social systems that may require systematic attention. For example, the pressure group system is not pluralistic due to they are representing a small proportion of the population or group of people. The pressure system is largely the preserve of the business class seeking to minimize attention to their activities or from the owner of capital. Within the general knowledge that elected officials within the government can only pay attention to a small number of issues, they cannot bring up all issue. Usually they have to promote a few to the top of their agenda and ignore the rest. This is where one kind of power becomes important. They are functioned to leveling up the issue and to attract government attention. The structures of government, such as legislative procedures controlling debate, reinforce this process by determining which conflicts receive attention and which are left un-discussed.

To attract government intention is another problem. Some issues may get more attention such as education, economic issues, poverty alleviation, increasing productivity of farming, etc. rather than sensitive issues such as politics and security. Therefore it can be said that policymaker will pay more attention on the relatively 'safe' issues. But if the existing political life, there are some restriction, interest group and pressure group will likely force on the issue that draw public attention first rather than the sensitive issues that was not gain popular support. In this framework, although the government is functioning, they are functioning in limited area.

Looking in historical terms, and in comparative terms, what Indonesia has achieved after the reformation era is intake (in terms of the development and improvement of democratic institutions, a critical and substantial base of public support for democracy, of trust in public institutions, and, surprisingly perhaps, robust support for liberal values relative to elsewhere in the region) is quite remarkable and is deserving of admiration. This is due to the ability to maintain peace throughout the country and keep trying to increase welfare of the nation. Although, there are always pro and contra in implementation such policy, but frankly it can be said that the government function well, and checks and balances among executive, legislative and judicative powers are also achieved. In this situation, the elite will try to remain at their most power balance in order to retain democracy rollback to happen.

In the current issues in Thailand, the article 44 is an important power according to the temporary constitution of 2014. It gives the power to the head of the NCPO to

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[1] Schattsneider, 1975, ibid, p.119

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order, restrain, and suppress or do anything even if these become effective on the legislation, the administration, or the judiciary. In this kind of power, there will be two possible trends which are either NCPO is helping in the succession of elite therefore there will be elite circulation where later on civilian is in power or they will remain in power for some time and only handed to civilian when they think the civilian is ready to hold power. This power is not new because during the whole period of the revolution, there will be always this special kind of power; even if there is election. Therefore, it is necessary need that there will be succession and ensuring circulation of elite within the prepared timeframe. If this can be done, Thailand can refrain from democracy rollback.

Political participation

Political participation in each election is very important in determining the degree of democracy and the result of election. Voting behavior of the people in the country, will significant in reshaping political life, because they will determine who win the seat. In country where they are already mature in democracy, the voting behavior will be significantly influence by the degree of political knowledge of the society towards politics. In contrast, the country where they are still under parochial political culture, the voting behavior will be influenced by parochial aspect such as ethnicity, religion and other socio-cultural attachments. Therefore voting behavior will affect political participation.

In the beginning, it is already quoted that in Indonesia 2014 elections resulted at 75, 11% for its legislative election, 69, 58% for its Presidential election. From the percentage of election result, it is still in modest to high result. During New Order, Indonesia's political participation during election were very high, due to mobilized participation. After the step down of President Soeharto who was in power for 32 years, Indonesia was facing a total reform started in 1998 and in 1999 election was conducted in order to select parliament members and to installing new set of government. The process is achieved with some notes for example: the final result of election cannot be announced by election commission due to internal conflict within election commissioners who consist of 48 persons of political party representatives and 5 (five) persons representing Government. Theoretically this is a mixed model of electoral management body where the members consist of two different sections combining section of government and non-government.[1] After the announcement of parliament member which was then be done by President Habibie, the parliament is starting functioning. Later on, the election in 2004 was done by different model of electoral management body where the members of electoral commission are coming from independent. Therefore, Indonesia is experiencing the use of having government model of EMB during New Order political regime; having a mixed model EMB during

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[1] See International IDEA, ibid, p.8

transitional period (1999) and after that, having the independent model of EMB started in 2004 election.

Aside from Indonesia, Thailand on 2 February 2014 election resulted at 47, 72% due to boycotting election in 69 constituencies. This was an alarm of having urgent evaluation towards electoral politics of the country. Yet, the development is hoped to get better and transitional period from this situation to better democratic political life is achieved soon by conducting election and respecting the result.

Political Culture

As has been a little bit explained in earlier mentioned, there is political culture embedded in political life of the nation. Gabriel Almond and Sydney Verba have formulated a theory that political culture or civic culture can be divided into three categories namely parochial, subjective and participant. Those divisions refer to the attitude towards political dynamics in the country. At the very least contribution to the development of politics, civic culture is defined as parochial where their attitude towards political life is driven mainly by traditional values in a conservative way. It breeds an attitude in very least participative towards politics. The second category is the subjective culture where people is less likely participate in political life and usually their participation is driven by certain subjective value and or ordered as top-down relations. The third dimension of political culture is participant culture where people actively involved in politics.[1] Hence, from the above overview, it can be seen that in every country, political culture is truly determinant in expecting the development of democracy.

Political culture in the country is not a sole aspect in determining the democracy. The history of the nation is also giving a great impact in the direction of democracy implementation in the country. Country like Indonesia which used to have experienced under authoritative rule during New Order Political format, and later on has been followed by reformation in all sectors, enjoying significant development now and it is hoped to harvest a more consolidated democracy. However, challenges are there. With the evidence of the last local election in Jakarta Governor, is shows tremendous challenges towards retracting democracy from its rollback. The last local election in Jakarta shows that there were mushrooming reasons use religious sentiment and pejoratives-assumption towards Chinese ethnicity on one hand and growing unimaginable political solidarity on the other hand. It is clear evidence of the retracting from mature participation in politics.

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[1] See Gabriel Almond and Sydney Verba, *The Civic Culture, Political Attitude and Democracy in Five Nations*, Sage Publication, Inc, 1963

Civil Liberties

Civil liberties are always underpinning democracy in practice. There are some issues addressing the implementation of political rights. Challenges those are exist in different country maybe different substantially. In Indonesia, although according to Democracy Index, Indonesia is having higher degree of Civil Liberty compare to Thailand as in the example, it does not mean that there is no such challenge in term of securing Civil Liberties. The very current issue fades is on the provision of electronic id during election. The case of fraud in providing electronic id is brought up to the surface and now is still ongoing process in the courtroom. Other fact says that there was such bureaucratic process in obtaining the electronic id. Therefore, to facilitate the implementation of Civil Liberties is an example of challenge exists in Indonesia nowadays.

Current Challenges: Indonesia Perspective

Currently, the challenges for retaining democracy and its rollback to happen in Indonesia are at least closely related to the use of money politics in election and political situation especially triggered by post Jakarta Gubernatorial Election. The emergence of money politics is actually has its long history. We are not sure when it was started, but it said that since there is competition for power, there will be the use of other power to influence the result. This is including the use of money.

In many elections, there were cases involving money politics that were sanctioned if evidence found. From the terminological approach, it is well-known lately the use of money to buy votes and or to smoothening the process of obtaining power. This practice is actually against the idea of appreciating political right of the people. Therefore, this practice should be prohibited by considerable sanctions towards the doers.

Other thing that challenges the political dynamics of implementing democracy is the internal political situation itself. In the country like Indonesia, where we have direct election for executive body as well includes local elections to be conducted in due time in each level of local government, therefore challenges are mainly related to the dynamics of the regions that differ from region to region and how to maintain the process of election remain democratic, with upholding a principle of LUBER JURDIL (Direct, public, free, maintaining secrecy, honest and justice).

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"Fortnite" and New Kids' Sociabilities

Dalvacir Andrade

University of Minho, Portugal

António Ferreira

Polytechnic Institute of Cávado and Ave

Abstract

In this paper, we'll be researching the influence of digital games on contemporary kids' sociabilities, based on the assumption that the online universe allows exchanges and social ties in a digital context, with potential evidence on the dynamics of face-to-face interaction. In this perspective, Fortnite videogame will be our case study, which since 2017 has been dominating the entertainment industry and has become a social phenomenon, attracting millions of players using several types of digital devices. Fortnite presents elements that infer a paradigm shift in the videogame industry, directly interfering in the playful world of kids and, consequently, in the way this audience socializes. The interactive and fictional narrative, the expression of freedom and multiplatform creativity, as well as the monetization model by microtransactions are some of the additional factors we will analyse, which reflection also starts from conceptualizations about sociability and a brief literature's review on the aimed subject.

Keywords: Childhood; Adolescence; Sociabilities; Digital Games; Fortnite.

Introduction

The advance of new communication, information and entertainment technologies has led to emerging digital activities of new generations, whose daily routines have been radically transformed. Even before literacy, children learn to use technological devices with ease, allowing easy access to a previously unknown and unexplored world by this audience. One of the factors refers to the change on the scenario in which kids are exposed to mass media, that is, the contextual spectrum has expanded from the living room of their homes to everywhere:

Unlike any other point in time, young children are exposed to media content via multiple devices in multiple locations and in multiple formats, potentially leading to a new blooming, buzzing confusion. This technology explosion is shifting the use of

screen media from a centrally located television set in the family's living room to anywhere and everywhere a child might be (Barr & Linebarger, 2017, p.xii).

Young kids keep preferring toys of digital nature, so there is a progressive decrease of traditional recreational activities (Fantin, 2006) and sociability, understood as a process of interaction and social relationship between individuals (Férreol, 2007), is ruled by the virtuality of online digital communication devices. Lauricella et al. (cit. in Barr & Linebarger eds, 2017, p. 9) mention that we are starting to understand the effect, use and learning that children get from this new universe of apps:

We are beginning to understand the content available to young children via this new media platform, but the effects - both positive and negative - of exposure to and engagement with app content are far from known. Much more research is needed to understand how children use these apps, what they learn from them, and how the opportunity to create and design their own content influences development, learning, and creativity (Lauricella et al. Cit. In Barr & Linebarger eds, 2017, p. 9).

Huston (cit. In Barr & Linebarger eds, 2017, p. Viii) says that we are currently starting to get some interesting answers about that. According to research on psychology and social sciences' fields, for instance, several issues have been occurring, especially when there is excessive exposure to technologies. Concerns regarding sedentary lifestyle, technology dependence and learning difficulties in the school environment are some indicative factors of those issues. There are also the dangers of exposing privacy, the absence of direct physical contact, difficulties surrounding personal relationships and the development of experiences with the real world (Postman, 1999; Buckingham, 2006; Zanolla, 2007).

Until the 1990s, studies about relationships between media and the universe of kids and teenagers, predominantly focused on TV content and audiences. It included the influence on behaviors and a special focus on children protection, considering they are susceptible to media manipulation. In this perspective, Postman (1999) warned of the risks of television, due to an increasingly accelerated childhood towards the adult world and pointed to a "death of childhood".

These concerns, currently directed at online digital media infrastructures, present polarized views. On one hand, a pessimistic notion of the influence of technologies and, on the other hand, the enthusiastic idea of the "communications' revolution", which conceives new electronic media as liberating and empowering.

Tapscott (1998) says that the technological expertise of the internet generation, made kids master several mediums and devices over adults, for the first time in history. This would then be a more creative, critical, globally oriented and even smarter generation than parents or compared to baby-boomers, who boosted culture, social life and the consumer goods' markets of their time.

Thus, there is an idea of a radical change in childhood activities, which, due to the interactivity and active control of their environment, favors their social, motor, cognitive and linguistic fast development than previous generations; configuring it, according to Tapscott (1998), not in the "end of childhood", but in a new world to play. Buckingham (2006), in turn, does not present such an optimistic point of view about the technological presence in kids' lives. But he also avoids exaggerated negativism about media influences. He states that "such debates in general do not allow more than a limited choice between great despair and hurried optimism" (p. 9).

From this perspective, considering that childhood is a "stage of life that has an important dimension of social construction" (Pinto, 1997, p. 33) and that "culture and representations - also in the form of electronic media - are the main arenas in which this construction is developed and sustained "(Buckingham, 2006, p. 10), we propose in this work a reflection on the role of electronic games in contemporary kids' sociability. For that purpose, Fortnite video game is our case study, which has been revealing significant success since 2017 and becoming part of the playful universe of millions of kids in different countries.

2. Video Games in the Sociocultural Context

Video games, directly linked to the entertainment industry, have become a spotlighted cultural media object in contemporary society. Like cinema, the games' industry consolidates itself as art and pop culture. A story that began in the 1960s, today has an important impact on culture, revealing itself to be a fruitful and promising sector for several related areas to communication, computer engineering, audiovisuals, among others. As presented by Cabral (1996), video games "offer those who manipulate them, the possibility of inserting themselves into a 'reality' that is richer in emotion than that which they will certainly find in their own experience, particularly when it does not correspond to your creative potential "(p. 93). Thus, electronic devices and games, increasingly improved to meet the objectives of this market, have dominated kids' attention, teenagers and even adults, also due to the everywhere factor, specifically the omnipresence of mobile devices. Additionally, as an artifact, electronic games have a communicative, operative, informative, appealing and persuasive dimension (Vasco Branco cit. In Zagalo, 2009, p. 11), therefore, allied to the omnipresence factor, it proves to be a powerful and influential instrument widely used by the mass media.

Zagalo (2015) highlights the transformations that occurred in the art of video games, which left the place of digital substitute for analog games and expanded their action from linearity and repetition to abstraction and generalization, by including narrative and stimulating creativity.

Video games depend on narrative for the simple reason that they want to convey ideas, moral values. The video game creator, unlike the analog game creator, does not dedicate himself to the creation of systems of rules to manipulate player's attention,

but rather seeks to convey ideas, express feelings, confer meanings (Zagalo, 2015, p. 66).

In this way, the narrative's meaning fulfills actions with sense in video games, which, due to the game characters and own experiences, stimulate not only the mastery of the game, but also develop a mental construction of the players' own world. Adicionaly, there is the broadening of the concept of playing, by including the idea of having fun, which comes up freely, spontaneously and without rigid predeterminations.

As mentioned by Planells de la Maza (2019), the expansion of the technical and creative possibilities of video games has allowed a wide playful conformation, which admits different variables defined, to a certain extent, by the players themselves.

In this respect, the wide open video game's nature makes it possible to bring the richness of analog games to the digital universe, however, while still presenting serious internal tensions to adapt the narrative in this context, needing to simulate changes in the fictional world so that the actions can make sense to the players.

Unlike cinema or literature, in which it is possible to mentally organize the role of all narrative elements and the space in which the facts develop, as Garcia (2018) recalls, the video game narrative is composed of living beings in constant change and adaptation and therefore obey the needs of the players. In this way, the "transmedial worlds" change according to the activities of the players and are, therefore, made for and by the user.

Unos jugadores que como comunidad alimentan su mundo narrativo para hacer más y más grande. Pero este mundo no podría ser transmedial si no utilizara diferentes medios para desarrollar ya no solo su narración, también para hacer crecer su universo narrativo. (Garcia, 2018, p. 10).

In this sense, that is also a scenario of convergence and participation in which consumers become "prosumers" - "followers who not only consume a certain story, but who also create their own content, from the original, to grow the narrative world that they love so much "(Garcia, 2018, p. 13). Therefore, communication via digital social networks and streaming channels have become a space for communicative fusion and proliferation of the strategies of video game developers. The necessary engagement for advertising and loyalty of the video games' audience is guaranteed by strategies of the producers and developers, based on transmedial actions, which involve the most varied means and personalities. Influencers, youtubers, instagramers, among others, have become references for this industry.

It is also important to highlight the business model of the video game sector called free-to-play (f2p), which consists of allowing free access to the game and later propose the purchase of special items, characters or properties, sometimes to enhance player's performance, with an attractive cost to encourage purchase and

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guarantee profits. This billing model with microtransactions, driven by digital social networks and mobile technologies has become an example of success in the gaming consumer market.

Planells de la Maza (2013) points out that f2p breaks with certain previous consumption logic, encouraging free access to the game, but limiting the complete experience to the fictional playful world by paying for the various elements of the video game. This system, which differs according to the modality, has a huge commercial and playful impact, since it allows a theoretically free game, but supported by the product's fans, who choose which games will survive and which ones won't. Considering this new commercial model, "true digital literacy focused on video games, emotions and honest consumption models" is essential (Planells de la Maza, 2013, p. 727).

3. Sociabilities in the Fortnite Play World

Baechler (1995, p. 65-66) defines sociability as a modality of the social universe that is defined by the "human capacity to establish networks, through which the units of activities, individual or collective, circulate the information that express their interests, tastes, passions, opinions". According to the french sociologist, the occurrence of sociability in social life, as well as their sociological objects, have great diversity and can be identified in established relationships between individuals. These relationships can be born due to generated networks, by more or less solid and exclusive ties (kinship, neighborhood, class, etc.) and through deliberate networks, that is, networks in which social agents find themselves by choice, pleasure, common interests (salons, circles, clubs, etc.).

From this perspective, the concept of sociability is directly linked to the various forms of social interaction, from the most elementary "face to face" (Gofman, 1992), shared in the same space-time context, to "mediated interaction" (Thompson, 1995), in which agents can be located in different contexts of space and time, whose interactions are being developed through communication's technological devices.

The expression of sociability occurs according to the social group, the intensity of the relationships, the type of structure or concrete conjunctures. As Thompson (1995) points out, due to media's development, interactive situations have been multiplied and becoming more complex, in many cases, defined by the hybridity of their elements.

This context created new forms of interaction and allowed new action forms with different properties and consequences. The development of the internet, in turn, "not only constitutes a new mean of communication, but it is also a new mean of production and interaction, valid for both public and private activity" (Sotomayor, 2006, p. 2).

In this virtual world spectrum, in which video games move comfortably, a true phenomenon in the entertainment industry has stood out since 2017. It is called Fortnite - an online electronic game that has become a worldwide fever among kids, has gained more than 125 million players in less than a year and was the main responsible for the historical revenue of Epic Games (North-American developer of electronic games and software), which ended the year 2018 with three billion dollars of net profit (Silva , 2018). In 2019, Fortnite stood out as one of the most popular video games, consolidating itself in the competitive landscape through several marketing strategies and partnerships with world renowned brands and companies.

Created in 2011, Fortnite redefined the video games' scene because it pioneered the creation of real multiplatform experiences. In 2017, it was released "Save the World'' mode (available for Microsoft Windows, macOS, PlayStation 4 and Xbox One) and "Battle Royale" mode (available on the same platforms in addition to the Nintendo Switch, iOS and Android devices). This second mode of the game is pointed out as the reason for the resonant success. "Battle Royale Multiplayer Fortnite is the most popular game in the world, with more than 250 million players'' (Marr, 2019, p. 1). In 2020, Epic Games revealed the surpassing of 350 million players.

The fact is that Fortnite has entered the kid's universe in an impactful way. There are those who say that it is not just a game, but "it is a way of being and asserting oneself" (Vasconcelos, 2018). It is possible to play in teams, with conversation between players and sharing sounds and images, which provides interaction and fun between friends without the need to leave the space of their own homes. It is also possible to play with strangers who are connected all over the world, which can be a facilitator for expanding relationships and learning other languages. However, this type of interaction is not absent from certain risks like cyber-bullying and violation of moral principles, which parents must be aware of.

Serrano (2018) highlights the game's aesthetics and design as one of the main keys to its success, as Fortnite combines the colorful and naive style of the cartoon with the fast pace of the survival game (one against a hundred), also with the possibility to build protective structures, that encourage creativity and quick thinking while in battle.

The narrative of Fortnite's "Battle Royale" is another key factor, as it is often unpredictable and surprising. Epic Games uses environmental narrative, which tells stories based on visual and sound details, equivalent to the staging of cinema and theater, in which the context speaks for itself. There is no clear story, no narrator or definite characters, however, with each new season different items are added in a logical sequence, with a new theme, shrouded in mysteries and with connections to the real world. For instance, the actual season is based on **Marvel superheroes characters.**

The change from one season to the next one is always marked by impactful events, which makes millions of players enter the game, with a set date and time, to witness together the great event that changes the game's world in real time. Fortnite is part of the free-to-play model (also called GaaS - game as a service), but what differs it from other free video games is the complete access to the fictional playing world without the need for payment and "none of the elements that are included in purchases brings competitive advantage over other players" (Serrano, 2018, p. 10).

However, Fortnite was designed to provide users a virtual adventure experience that involves several aspects of real life, such as clothing and objects' possession, actions such as dances that, in addition to acting in a playful sense, confer status, because they are only conquered by the "winners" or by those who paid to have such elements.

In this sense, dancing rare moves, having the coolest accessories of the season, having many "kills" and "wins", using epic and legendary "skins", etc., are prominent elements in this game in which self-affirmation is, indeed, part of the "rules". These codes reach the physical world through verbal and non-verbal language, rising to new forms of sociability, inclusion (or exclusion), and to the definition of identities among kids.

Epic Games also knew how to keep the attention of a new generation that has grown up with the Internet and is used to boasting on social media networks like Facebook and Instagram. Skins and emotes may be purely cosmetic and optional items, but they are the foundation of Fortnite's success. Epic Games was able to keep up with the trends, launching funny dance emotes and creating "noise" around the game with each new Season. (Loureiro, 2018, n/p).

Repercussions promoted by influencers, youtubers and streamers are fundamental to the success of Fortnite, which is also spread by famous athletes and artists. Ordinary players themselves carry out free advertising by creating, for instance, channels on the YouTube or Twitch video platforms, exclusively to share their plays. The content creation, coupled with frequent updates of paid items, build expectations of what will come next and assures the maintenance of the players' interest.

A carried out study by the National Research Group (NRG) of United States of America in March 2019, refers that Fortnite goes far beyond the profile of a video game, configuring itself in a new social media for the teen audience (10 to 17 years old), from which the video game fulfills an average of 25% of free time. With a sample of 1500 consumers, that research revealed that Fortnite has become more than an electronic game, being often referred to as a "third place" for making new friends and creating social bonds.

Although the Battle Royale mode is highly competitive in nature, many young Fortnite players use the game as a place to socialize with others and to express their authentic selves, purchasing "skins" to customize the look of their in-game avatars, performing

dance modes and engaging in an increasingly immersive virtual world. (NRG, 2019, p. 5).

The survey also shows that Fortnite "steals" time from all leisure activities, significantly changing the way consumers spend their free time (21% of total free time among weekly players of all ages). Aiming for an exclusive combination of benefits from games, social media and streaming platforms, Fortnite is seen as the video game that offers consumers a different experience: "Consumers say its the best place 'to be my authentic self and to connect to what everyone is talking about, making me feel like I'm not alone '"(NRG, 2019, p. 9).

Fortnite is thus identified by users as having a positive impact on their lives, because unlike traditional social platforms, indicated as causing isolation and loneliness, the video game offers interactivity capable of creating a sense of community, feeling of action and control, in a virtual experience that contributes to forgetting real life problems.

It is important to mention that Fortnite is part of a group of phenomena defined and provided by the globalization of the economy and culture, but its uses are inserted in specific cultural contexts, with variables according to the age group, gender, social capital among other factors that define unequal access to technologies. However, this scenario has revealed the emergence of new ways of integration of childhood in socio-cultural life all over the world, notably marked by the distance from public spaces and traditional ways of participating in culture, as discussed by Fantin (2006).

Permeated by the products of the media industries, the world builds an arena of very important meanings for the formation processes. This arena escapes the spatiotemporal limits of face-to-face interaction and creates new forms of interaction between people and, consequently, people with culture, nature and the world. This also changes children's play, which is increasingly linked to the media (Fantin, 2006, p. 14).

Therefore, we consider it necessary to understand the context in which childhood and adolescence are inserted to reflect on the new forms of emerging sociability. When mediated by new technologies or online electronic games, to which this communication specifically refers, there are individualization and socialization movements confined to relationships without physical contact. On the other hand, a context of action, communication, experience and learning is perceived through the interaction with technologies, but also through the playful relationship with other children in virtual spaces. Thus, as presented by Cabral (1996), we are focused "to reject the idea that technology stimulates non-social or antisocial behaviors, we understand that it is another type of relationship and sociability, from a distance, what lies ahead" (p.93).

5. Final Considerations

The communicational and media context that we are living today leaves no question about the development of new forms of sociability, guided by living together in cyberspace. From this perspective, Sotomayor (2006) points to a social model that is organized around elective communities of interest or "specialized communities", better known as "sociability networks with a variable geometry and composition, according to the interests of social agents and according to the size of the network" (p.5).

When we focus on the universe of online electronic games in general and on Fotnite in particular, we perceive an environment whose reality is rich in emotions and creative potentialities, setting up an attractive playful context, especially for kids. In this way, it is an alternative place of new and free spaces for adventure and virtual sharing, which acts in the creation of new forms of sociability and the construction of identities.

Fortnite is certainly not the only video game to feature today with an important integration among its audience. But, as we already mentioned, this video game provided a redefinition of the scenario of its industry, through the creation and fusion of several elements (complex construction and strategy mechanisms), acting on several fronts to attract, engage and keep players. In this sense, we infer that the observation of the elements that make up Fortnite, its integration in the audience and especially its use by the players, is important to understand the new sociability model that is being built, especially by kids.

It is relevant to note that this other type of sociability that occurs outside the geographical limits of traditional communities does not exclude, but coexists with, face-to-face interactions. In this sense, despite the technical mediation, the ephemerality and the anonymity possibility in communications, it is likely to establish affinity bonds that can result in solid relationships, which can go from online to offline (Silva, 2007).

These social networks are flexible, because their models of social interaction are built and reconstructed by the individuals themselves, through technologies. On the other hand, ways of social support in this configuration have a greater tendency to fragility, considering the low demanding level regarding the commitment of its members (Sotomayor, 2006).

When reflecting on the virtual as a new imaginary territory for kids, Pasín (2009, p. 5) argues that "cyberspace is also a magnificent receptacle from which youth can develop interactions based on common affinities, tastes or passions". Thus, the spatial distance is not an obstacle to the building of more solid bonds, nor to the development of new communities.

Plus, the current context offers several creative and democratic opportunities and has the potential for kids' protagonism, since through access to the means of communication and cultural expression they can reflect their views and perspectives (Buckingham, 2006).

However, we are also in agreement when Buckingham (2006) emphasizes that interventions in terms of social, educational and cultural policies are necessary in order to include kids themselves in the process of social and cultural change, giving them a more independent agency, taking them not just as passive recipients and not denying their active role in creating their own culture.

More than presenting answers, the present reflection tried to ask about what kind of kids' sociability is favored by online electronic games, with emphasis on Fortnite. In this sense, we exposed diferent perspectives for new analytical developments or empirical research, aiming to understand the meaning of the actions of the inserted agents in the referred social context. Such an undertaking is, indeed, a challenge that requires the use of methods that include observations in different environments (online and offline) of sociability related to video games. However, research in this area is necessary and fundamental for the understanding of our culture so strongly impacted by digital technologies.

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The Urban Dimension of the Albanian Cities of Transition Was Damaged as a Result of the 'Big Government' and Not Its Absence: An Assessment in Relation to the Construction Permit!

Gentian Kaprata

European University of Tirana

Abstract

The main Albanian cities and inhabited centers have suffered great damage of urban and environmental dimension in the years of transition. These implications of rapid and intensive development have produced cities that offer a very low quality of urban life to their citizens. What requires immediate political and legal intervention is to create the preconditions for Albanian cities to change by improving their potential in relation to the quality of urban life they offer to their citizens. One of the basic aspects, where this political goal can be achieved, is the function of controlling the construction development in these cities, in other words the function of building permits. Formal construction, or construction that has been subject to political-administrative decision-making, has faced increased pressure from the government to obtain a building permit. The performance of the government, regarding the function of construction permitting, is presented as very bureaucratic and corrupt. The technical, administrative and legal rules through which the administration exercises in the construction permit process have been very difficult for private entrepreneurs to implement. This has produced, firstly, the phenomenon of informal construction, and secondly, the change in the focus of entrepreneurs in the formal construction sector. In great administrative difficulties and obstacles, private entrepreneurs have shifted their focus from the aim of offering high quality products and low price in the market, to the goal of obtaining a building permit while ignoring the quality of the buildings they have developed. In this sense, what is required is the facilitation of technical, administrative and legal procedures and rules for obtaining a construction permit, which would ensure the reduction of the informal sector and refocus of the formal sector on quality and competitive

price in a free market. This is a basic precondition for the situation of cities not to deteriorate further, and that paves the way for the improvement of their situation in the future.

Keyword: big government, small government, classical liberalism, modern liberals, the left, the right, development control, construction permitting.

Introduction

During the years of transition, the demographics of Albania have undergone strong internal migratory movements, in two main directions: from the countries of the northern and southern regions to the central region; and from rural areas to urban areas of the same country (INSTAT, 2004, 2014; King and Vullnetari, 2003; King, 2010; Vullnetari, 2007, 2010, 2012). This phenomenon has produced strong changes in the spatial structure of the country, especially in relation to the demographic distribution across the cities and inhabited centers of the country (Faja, 2008; Aliaj, 2008).

The cities and inhabited centers that have experienced a large and immediate increase in the resident population as a result of these movements, are mainly the major cities of the country, and especially the city of Tirana, Durres and their surroundings (INSTAT, 2004, 2014; King and Vullnetari, 2003; King, 2010; Vullnetari, 2007, 2010, 2012; Fuga, 2012). These cities have been multiplied, in these years of transition, in terms of indicators of total resident population, housing density and construction intensity (HIS Alumni et al., 1998; Faja, 2008; Aliaj, 2008). Rapid and intensive construction development, as a result of demographic changes, have produced urban and environmental damage in the main cities of the country (Fuga, 2012; Aliaj, 2008).

There have been two ways of accommodating this increased demand for new construction. First through the informal market, where 350-400 thousand families have addressed their needs by building their apartments and buildings without the permission of legal authorities (WB, 2012). The second way is through the formal market, where families or enterprises in the housing and building construction sector have addressed their request for construction development through the institutions charged by law for this governing function (Aliaj, 2008; Imami et al., 2008).

In this paper we will focus on the second type of development (formal construction) because it is in his interest to assess how transition governments have performed in this sector. In this sense, we will not address the informal market and the demand for new housing and buildings addressed through it. However, as we will see later, there is a link between the ease or difficulty of obtaining a formal building permit, and the size of the informal market.

First in this article we will make a brief theoretical presentation on the characteristics and distinguishing features between the 'big government' propagated by leftist approaches such as 'proper governance' and the 'small government' which according to classical liberals is more productive for a rapid and sustainable economic development. We will further address the connection between formal construction in transition Albania and two other aspects of sustainable development: environmental development and the quality of citizens' urban life: and overall economic development. As we will see, this rapid construction development has produced urban and environmental damage in Albanian cities and inhabited centers, while contributing significantly to the national economy.

Recognizing that the urban and environmental dimension is more important and in turn can produce even higher economic costs, we have attempted to understand what was the cause of the damage it produced, focusing on the ease or difficulty of equipping a building permits. As we will see in this article, the "boom" of new construction and their negative impact on cities and residential areas has not come as a result of the ease of obtaining a building permit from the authorities charged by law for this governing function. So we cannot blame the government for acting like a Smithian 'small government' inspired by the 'laisser faire' concept. On the contrary, long bureaucratic procedures, costly in time and money 'will be the real reasons that produced this unacceptable urban reality.

The 'big government' vs. the 'small government', presented in theoretical context!

There are two tools used by 'big governments' to reduce individual freedoms. They must be kept in check, because their enlargement makes the government bigger and its damage to society even bigger. The first, to use a Spencer concept, is "hyper-legislation" (Spencer, 2005, pp. 104-157). Speaking of the futility of redundant regulations and laws, Spencer would argue that "Although it no longer occurs to us to impose coercion on people for their own spiritual good [matters of religion], we continue to think that it's our duty to impose it on them for their material good: we do not see that one is as useless and as impermissible as the other. Countless failures have not yet been enough to draw this lesson" (Spencer, 2005, p. 106).

So, although every day companies face countless failures, the same companies believe that an act of Parliament and an institution with a certain staff of officials, set up specially or enlarging an existing institution, is enough to implement or tighten the society to implement this law, and whatever set goal it has to achieve (Spencer, 2005). According to Spencer, it makes no logical sense that on the one hand we acknowledge that the state is performing poorly, the need for legislative changes proves that the government has failed, and on the other hand we give it more power, through new laws and increased administration.

In contrast, for the classics of liberalism, according to Friedman's argument, there are two pillars of the functioning of a free society, which must be understood as separate, "[1] the daily activities of the people and [2] the usual general structure within which they develop" (Friedman, 2005, p. 28). In Friedman's argument, people's daily activities are like the actions of participants in a game or competition, and like any good game or fair competition, it requires its members to know and accept the rules of the game in advance, and it also requires even a referee to interpret and enforce the rules of the game. Referring to Friedman in the same way, a good society requires its members to know in advance and agree to all the general conditions under which the government will govern the actions and relations between them (Friedman, 2005). Whereas, the structure in which daily human activities and activities take place, is the legislation.

And in this sense, it is basic, for a free society, for individuals to know in advance and agree with the laws through which, the government as an arbitrator will arbitrate their daily activity (Friedman, 2005, p. 28). But for Friedman, this is not enough, the laws should not change, or "Most of us [libertarians] consider only making minimal modifications to them, although the cumulative effect of a series of minimal modifications can lead to a dramatic change in the character of play in society" (Friedman, 2005, p. 28). So even Friedman, although acknowledging that the government, in the role of an arbiter in the game of individuals, can make changes to legislation, they should be small and not repetitive because individuals and society are harmed.

Beyond "hyper-legislation", another instrument of 'big government' is 'hyper-administration', which is also harmful and costly to society and taxpayers (Spencer, 2005; Friedman, 2005). Spencer considers hyper-administration as an integral part of his concept of "hyper-legislation", and it makes sense, because the expansion of the scope of governance starts with the drafting of a new law, but that the "set goal to be achieved" there must also be an institution or agency to enforce that law (Spencer, 2005, p. 106).

For Spencer, the transfer of political power from the sovereign to the representative deputies, from the deputies to the executive, from the executive to the responsible ministry, from the responsible ministry to the institutions, agencies and inspectorates, from these to the employee in charge of this issue, is a very long operation, which by operating, through many successive levers and gears, consumes through friction and inertia a part of the driving force (Spencer, 2005). This process due to its complexity is so bad in itself, that it is a good system due to its simplicity, according to which society directly employs individuals, private companies or spontaneously created institutions (Spencer, 2005, p. 121).

In this argument, Spencer would list some shortcomings of the state administration, which prevent it from performing the same functions that the private sector would

perform faster. According to Spencer "Bureaucracy is slow" and this harms the individual and the enterprise (Spencer, 2005, p. 121). When a private agency drags things, people solve the problem by no longer using that agency and contracting another. As for procrastination by government departments, the solution is not simple because you cannot leave the government (Spencer, 2005). Also, "Bureaucracy is mindless" (Spencer, 2005, p. 122). According to Spencer, in the natural way of ordering things, the individual tends to move towards the function that best suits him, those who succeed in the work given to him are held accountable in relation to the skills they show or carry, and the man who fails is fired and forced to move towards something simpler, but that suits his abilities.

But, it happens completely differently in state bodies because there the selection does not go according to meritocracy, but according to the affiliation of background, age, intrigue, behind the scenes and servility, as Spencer would say "A family idiot, I will always find a church post, if the family has strong ties" (Spencer, 2005, p. 122). If we refer to Spencer again, "Another characteristic of bureaucracy is that it consists of excessive spending" (Spencer, 2005, p. 122), in relation to the high salaries of incompetent officials, or to overcrowded structures occupied them. As he would underline "These public agencies are not subject to any influence like the one that forces the private enterprise to be economical, businesses and commercial entities are successful by serving society at low cost" (Spencer, 2005, p. 123).

In the same context, Spencer would add, "Another shortcoming of the bureaucracy is its inability to adapt. Unlike the private enterprise, which, in order to respond to urgent needs, rapidly changes its activities: unlike the shopkeeper, who for a request that comes out suddenly, immediately finds a way to fulfill it" (Spencer, 2005, pp. 123-124). But also the state administration, in general, is presented with a high level of corruption, because they are not exposed to competition through meritocracy to keep the job and at the same time, there can be no creative spirit, and this is another damage that the great state brings with hyper-administration. While private groups have initiative and bring innovation in the sectors they develop, state institutions are static and moreover become an obstacle to development (Spencer, 2005, pp. 125-126).

Formal construction as a cause of the condition of inhabited centers and its impact on the national economy

The argument in defense of the thesis that it was the leftist "big state", the hyper-legislation and hyper-administration that shape it together with the corrupt bureaucracy that characterizes it, (Spencer, 2005; Friendman, 2005), that brought this unacceptable reality of other cities and territories of the country, in this article is related to the process of obtaining a construction permit in the main municipalities of the country. It must first be acknowledged that the main cities of the country have experienced a population densification and an intensification of buildings, especially

in their central areas (IHS Alumni et al., 1998; Imami et al., 2008; Fuga, 2004, 2012; WB, 2007, 2018).

Fuga, while scanning the way cities develop, would point out that "in our urban micro-environments [structural units of the city], especially in the main areas [large cities] of the country, we have a narrower and more populated area denser than before" (Fuga, 2012, p. 13).

All of the demographic shifts presented earlier met their housing needs, either through the informal market or through the formal housing construction market (IHS Alumni et al., 1998; Imami et al., 2008; WB, 2007). In this article we are interested in building permits and in this sense we will focus on buildings created by the formal market. Because, it is generally the formal housing construction market that is related to the construction permit, and the buildings offered by this market are also the problem we are talking about.

The intensification of buildings in the main Albanian cities, a phenomenon that is inevitably associated with population densification, has damaged the structural units of the city (IHS Alumni et al., 1998; Aliaj, 2008). In the case when these construction developments have come through the formal market, ie as a result of construction permits by public authorities, these urban damages blame the governing performance (Imami et al., 2008; Fuga, 2004, 2012).

The damages of construction dynamics, in the urban dimension of cities and the quality of urban life of citizens, are numerous and extend from the deformed spatial structure of the country to the damage to the infrastructural structure (engineering and social) of inhabited centers (WB, 2007; Aliaj, 2008). The impacts of this demographic densification and construction intensification are also felt in the environmental aspects of the urban quality of life in major cities (Fuga, 2004, 2012; Imami et al., 2008), and issues related to the social structure and level of democracy in the country. (Thomson, 2007; Imami et al., 2008).

The issue we need to analyze here is: it was the 'small government' inspired by classical liberalization that granted building permits easily and without strict and austerity rules; or the "big state" bureaucratic, slow and corrupt (Spencer, 2005; Friedman, 2005), which produced this damaging urban and territorial reality? As we will present below, the process of obtaining a building permit for individuals or entrepreneurs has been very difficult and very costly, and has gone through very long and costly processes in the first place '.

First, I would like to point out that there is a strong link between building permits and the economy in general and the ease of doing business in particular, which is the primary catalyst for economic growth rates (WB, 2015, 2018, 2019). Building permits enable construction, which is a very important business worldwide, especially in

developing countries like Albania, where according to INSTAT the construction industry occupies 17% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (INSTAT 2019).

This contribution of the construction industry started in the first years of the transition, where in the first five years alone it almost doubled, as IHS Alumni, et al. would point out, "construction would rise from 6,6% to 11% of GDP in 1996" (IHS Alumni, et al., 1998, p. 55). Even in developed western countries, construction is a strong contributor to GDP, in the EU it gives 10%, and it is also a strong employment accelerator, where in the EU in 2018 it manages to employ about 5 million people (Schmid, 2018).

Fuga, while talking about the construction sector would underline that "in these past years, a series of conjunctural circumstances make the residential construction sector one of the most developed sectors of the Albanian economy, and perhaps it still continues to remain this way. This sector, for better or worse, has provided a very significant part of the Gross Domestic Product of the country, guaranteeing a satisfactory economic growth in its quantitative indicators" (Fuga, 2012, p. 195).

In fact, this contribution of the construction industry would be noticeable in the first years of the transition, which IHS Alumni et al. would present in 1998 "Construction from 6.6% of GDP in 1991, has increased to 11.6% of GDP in 1996" (IHS Alumni et al., 1998, p. 55). This growing expansion of this industry would continue in the coming years and as the World Bank would underline in 2007 "Services and construction are the two largest private employment sectors" (WB, 2007, p. 15).

In 2018, the three largest sectors of the Albanian economy are agriculture with 20% of GDP, construction with 14% and trade with 13.5% (Reiter, Schwarzhappel and Stehrer, 2020, p. 12). These latest statistics for the Albanian economy showed that the construction sector in Albania also surpassed the trade sector. Moreover, the construction industry is a locomotive for many other economic sectors, such as other businesses that supply it with raw materials, technology and machinery, but also for the fact that it is the construction industry that produces buildings with economic functions and for other entrepreneurial activities.

Thus, the construction industry is an important contributor to the national economy (IHS Alumni, et al., 1998; Fuga, 2012), and as such it should be treated with care by state institutions; on the one hand, it is precisely this construction boom that has negatively impacted the condition of Albanian cities (Aliaj, 2008; Fuga, 2004, 2012). In this context, this does not mean that since there is such a contribution to the economy, we must accept "construction as an economic goal in itself", because the damage it produces in the urban and territorial dimension of the country, are often morecostly than the benefits from it.

The difficulty of obtaining a building permit as an expression of the left 'big government' and its characteristics

We have tried to clarify two issues so far: first, that it was construction (including formal construction) that contributed positively to the Albanian economy on the one hand, and very negatively to the condition of Albanian cities; and second, it was the governing performance, in the manner of exercising the construction permitting function, that bears responsibility for both of these formal construction contributions. What we are interested in further understanding is the question of how governance was introduced in the performance of this governing function. Did they perform, as right-wing 'small governments' inspired by the Smithian 'laisser faire' concept within a minimalist legislation and administration; or as left-wing 'big governments' influenced by the hyper-legislation and hyper-administration that characterize this type of government (Smith, 2005; Spencer, 2005; Friedman, 2005)?

To answer this essential question in the most argumentative way possible, we will turn to the World Bank, which compiles and publishes the annual 'Doing Business' report. This report assesses 10 aspects of doing business in 189/190 countries of the world and is a very important document for the economies of developing countries, which need foreign investment, such as Albania (AIDA, 2019). International entrepreneurs and investors refer to that report before creating interest in investing their money and knowledge in a particular country. If we consult with it, Albania is always in the last places, and generally due to the difficulties and high costs that an individual or an entrepreneur needs to be provided by the authority with a construction permit (WB, 2015, 2018, 2019).

Regarding the indicator of construction permits, Albania in the 2015 assessment dropped 35 places from a year ago. In the evaluation of that year's report, Albania was ranked 97th from 62nd a year earlier (WB, 2015). This negative ranking continues in the following years, and in 2018 Albania was ranked 63rd out of 190 countries for doing business easily (WB, 2018). Compared to a year ago, the country improved by two positions, while remaining the penultimate in the region. The first in the region remains Northern Macedonia, which is ranked 10th in the world and has been a strong competitor in recent years for Albania, attracting not only foreign investors (WB, 2018) but also attracting Albanian private investors. The indicator where Albania performs worse is obtaining a construction permit, in which it ranks 151st (WB, 2018), with a decrease of 54 countries from 2016.

This report, in addition to helping countries understand what needs to change to improve the business climate in the country, indirectly gives us an idea of what the level of legislation and bureaucracy is. For 2020, Albania accompanied by Bosnia and Malta were ranked last in Europe for the business climate, deteriorating 9 out of 10 indicators measured by this report. Albania was ranked 82nd globally, down 19 places compared to 2019 (WB, 2019). In addition to these negative records, Albania

is also ranked in the countries with the highest deterioration from a year ago, especially the indicator 'construction permits' has deteriorated further, dropping from 151st a year ago (WB, 2018) to the 166th country this year (WB, 2019).

The World Bank's annual 'Doing Business' reports, and their assessment of Albania in the 'building permits' indicator, prove that it is not the 'small government' inspired by the Smithian 'laisser faire' concept in the context of a minimalist legislation and administration. It was not the lack of rules or the ease of obtaining a building permit that accompanied a 'small government' that brought about the devastating construction boom we are talking about. In contrast, it was exhausting bureaucracy, high financial costs, and corrupt decision-making as characteristics of 'big government' and centralized socialism (Spencer, 2005; Friedman, 2005). As the specialized reports of the World Bank show us, the numerous regulatory barriers and high costs in time and money to obtain a construction permit have made it difficult for entrepreneurship in Albania in recent years. The World Bank's annual 'Doing Business' reports, and their assessment of Albania in the 'building permits' indicator, prove that it is not the 'small government' inspired by the smith-jan 'laisser faire' concept in the context of a minimalist legislation and administration. It was not the lack of rules or the ease of obtaining a building permit that accompanied a 'small government' that brought about the devastating construction boom we are talking about. In contrast, it was exhausting bureaucracy, high financial costs, and corrupt decision-making as characteristics of 'big government' and centralized socialism (Spencer, 2005; Friedman, 2005). As the specialized reports of the World Bank show us, the numerous regulatory barriers and high costs in time and money to obtain a construction permit have made it difficult for entrepreneurship in Albania in recent years.

The rules, technical, procedural and legal conditions that a development enterprise must face have remained in the conservative meanings of experts and public bureaucrats, who find it difficult to understand the new reality in the field of construction and urbanistic development (Aliaj, 2008). Administration and governance as a whole have not understood the new role they have to play in the reality created after the fall of the socialist system that relied on centralized planning (HIS Alumni et al., 1998). Derraj in 2008 would underline that "Regarding the construction or transformation of the territory [development enterprises], this process still continues to be based on the criteria and technical norms for the construction and transformation of territories defined in the urban literature of the '70s" (Imami et al., 2008, p. 55).

There were two causes that produced this difficulty in obtaining a building permit: the inability of officials to change their meanings and approaches and to adapt to new realities; and secondly, the preferential decision-making for construction permits, trafficking in influence, and even bribery (Aliaj, 2008; BB, 2007). In this context, the

World Bank would underline "Corruption appears as a problem especially of large cities, and especially in the construction sector" (WB, 2007). Because the 'big governments' that the leftists consider to be the "right governments" have another characteristic; the larger they are, the greater the level of corruption in them (Spencer, 2005).

As will be stated Aliaj preferential decision-making of government officials during the transition period "if the architect / urbanist planner [architects of state administration], or decision-makers themselves want to favor a particular property, it is enough for them to determine that parcel as a construction area; maximize the utilization coefficient; to increase the number of floors "(Aliaj, 2008, p. 181), and further" Otherwise, to devalue a certain property / land it is enough to define it as a garden, school or something else with a public / social function "(Aliaj, 2008, p. 185).

Conclusions and recommendations

Although the role of government in the construction permitting function is mandatory (HIS Alumni, et al., 1998; Aliaj, 2008; Faja, 2008; Imami et al., 2008), referring to the World Bank, Albanian governments have much to do about by facilitating the technical, procedural and legal rules through which an enterprise is provided with a construction permit (WB, 2015, 2018, 2019). It was the difficulty that made the left 'big government', through its bureaucratic and corrupt characteristics, the process of obtaining a building permit, which produced about 350-400 thousand informal buildings in these years of transition in Albania (BB, 2012). If the technical, procedural and legal rules were more 'liberal', individuals and enterprises would not turn to informal construction.

But, also, formal construction would not be under the pressure of bureaucracy and corruption. Found in this pressure created by the 'big government' and its many rules and high costs, formal construction was not in competition for the best quality and price in the market, but in competition to obtain a permit. building. The difficulty of equipping one changed the target of entrepreneurs in the construction sector, and this produced major urban and environmental damage to Albanian cities during the transition.

A 'small government' driven by a liberalizing, modernizing and decentralizing approach would not have recognized so much technical incompetence and misuse of public money at this high cost in the territorial and urban dimension of the country. Construction permits must be recomposed in a simple administrative procedure, where the authority charged by law with this task, within a minimum time, responds to applicants whether their property development application is approved, conditionally approved or not approved at all. This is a very simple action if the civic demand was evaluated only in relation to the previously approved urban projects and territorial planning.

But for this to work, we would first need planning instruments, which we do not have even though we have funded them two or three times (HIS Alumni et al., 1998; Aliaj, 2008). Basically, the left 'big government' has no interest in making these plans, because then it would be much clearer to every citizen, owner, or entrepreneur what is being built and where it is being built. If this were to be clear to anyone, then the government official would not have what preference to offer, in exchange for the envelope with money. The same situation with building permits, if they are worth as much as a simple administrative procedure, as a liberal 'small government' would aim, at the same time and to the same extent the "power" of the official falls who has the "supernatural" power to give you a building permit.

Although we tried to argue that it was difficult to obtain a building permit as a presentation of 'great governance' and its characteristics, we think this is a topic that needs to be addressed in more depth. In this sense, we suggest scholars in the fields related to economic, legal, governance and public policy issues to address in the future this very important issue for the development of the country. We also recommend that public institutions charged by law with duties in this sector, make proposals and legal and sub-legal regulations to liberalize and facilitate the procedures for obtaining a building permit.

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Euroscepticism and Traditions of Nationalism

Zekeriya Alperen Bedirhan

Ugur Ozgoker

Abstract

> The European Union and its member states are in the effect of populism and its catalyzer populist parties. Most of populist parties are the right-wing parties and their politic discourses can be called nationalist. In this study, relations between tradition of nationalism within the context of its historic roots and in the current use, and Euroscepticism will be examined. European identity will be discussed as an important integration factor and populist parties of the European zone will be analyzed with internal and external factors.

Keywords: Euroscepticism, Nationalism, Populism, Populist Parties, Euroepan Union, Identity Politics

1.Introduction

The project of European integration or the European Union has been confronted with opposition ideas called Euroscepticism. According to European Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker, *"Rising Euroscepticism and domestic political point-scoring pose an existential threat to the European Union."* (Boffey, 2017). However, what are the main reasons for the Eurosceptic movement? From the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) to the EU, this sui-generis organization was transformed from economic cooperation to political union and this top to bottom evolution in the organisation has disturbed some political groups and created origins of Euroscepticism. In other words, the supra-national character of the EU is seen as a threat to the sovereignty of nation-states by this Eurosceptic movement. Within the context of this argument, radical right parties as well as left parties use this idea as propaganda against the European Integration in their negative stance. *"Radical left and right wing euroscepticism have a common denominator which is nationalism."* (Halikiopoulou, Nanou and Vasilopoulou, 2012: 504) However, can this relation between Eurosceptism and nationalism be generalized and applied in the entire European continent by political scientists? To what extent does Euroscepticism reaffirm or

challenge traditions of nationalism? The aim of this article is to answer these questions with examples of European countries, especially France and Greece.

2.Tradition of Nationalism and Euroscepticism

The European nation-state system was framed by nationalism because of the raison d'être of modern state structure since the French Revolution. Mostly, nationalism was a tool of patriotism, national unity and sovereignty in nation state borders. Unfortunately, the concept of nationalism was expanded and abused with discourses by political leaders to execute expansionist policies, conflict and war. On the other hand, *"at various times, nationalism has been progressive and reactionary, democratic and authoritarian, liberating and oppressive and left wing and right wing."* (Heywood, 2002: 115). According to Heywood (2002: 115), nationalism can be classified into four; liberal nationalism, conservative nationalism, expansionist nationalism and anti-colonial nationalism. Therefore, the definition of nationalism is relative. Moreover, nationalism is not strong in the case of ethnic, cultural and linguistic differences which occur between different ethnic origins. The United States of America and Canada are examples which show that a supra-nation identity can be constructed to promote national unity, and this approach destroys the necessity of main elements for a classic definition of nation like common language, history, tradition and ancestral blood ties. Moreover, current international politic system witnessed migrations, thanks to globalization and this movement disturbed homogeneity of population. Reactions showed that these developments were not welcomed by some radical political parties. As a result, racism, xenophobia, a fear and hatred against foreigners occurred.

In this nation-state system, the EU tried to change its structure from an economic organization to a political unit which aims to establish a federal Europe in the brand of 'The United States of Europe' which was first coined by Winston Churchill. (Packwood, 2016: 2). However, opposition ideas and criticism against the EU project and the EU policies are made by Eurosceptics who think that the EU weakens the nation-state sovereignty. Euroscepticism can be classified into two; hard Euroscepticism and soft Euroscepticism. Hard Euroscepticism is the rejection of the entire EU project which is economic and political integration and it defends the leaving of the EU. Mostly, it is articulated by right parties. (Condruz-Bacescu, 2014: 56). On the other hand, soft Euroscepticism is interested in criticism of one or more policies of the EU, like economic crisis, democracy deficit and immigration problems and it is basically reformist. (Bertoncini, Koenig, 2015: 6) However, this classification is seen as too broad and not specific. An alternative classification of the term is offered by Kopecky and Mudde (2002: 300-301) which are Europhobe/Europhile and EU-optimist/pessimist axes to analyze different types of party positions. This categorization can be expanded with; "Euroenthusiasts" who are close to pro-Europeanism; secondly, the "Eurorejects" who are against the European integration;

"thirdly, the "Eurosceptics" who support the idea of a united Europe but disagree with the general practice of integration; and finally, the "Europragmatists" who are against the idea of the EU but support the practice of European integration." (Vasilopoulou, 2009: 5).

Beyond the theoretical discussions of Euroscepticism, it is believed that Euroscepticism started with the Maastricht Treaty, because as a symbol of political unity, a single currency 'Euro' was formalized and a lot of countries did not accept it. This disagreement on single currency can be examined within the context of euroscepticism and nationalism, especially conservative nationalism as a main defender of Euroscepticism. A project of federal Europe is a threat for conservative right parties, this idea argues that European integration burdens potential destruction of nation-states. For instance, the United Kingdom possesses a special or privileged status in the EU. She did not join Eurozone and Schengen area. ''Also, she gained an opt-out from the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, and refused to sign the fiscal compact.'' (Mourlon-Druol, 2018). Not only national interests but also traditions, symbols like existence of the Royal Family played important role in the case of the isolation of the UK from the EU.

The leadership of the EU has tried to halt the Eurosceptic movement. However, since 1999, actors of anti-European parties have begun to show resistance against the changing character of the EU. For example, ''The Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe'' was rejected by some members of European Parliament (MEPs) under the new founded group called ''Independence and Democracy''. In 2005, French and Dutch European constitution referendums resulted in a win for the 'NO' campaign, but the Lisbon Treaty solved disagreements and determined the future of the EU which is based on agreements. Dissatisfaction within the Member States has become stronger in the wake of the Eurozone debt crisis and refugee crisis. Provisions of the EU increased the Eurosceptic movement and resulted in Brexit which was against hierarchy and elitism according to Michael O'Neill (O'NEILL, M., 2018). As mentioned above, British exceptionalism was a part of the integration problem in the European identity but the main reason was the EU's decision on the refugee quotas and immigration which increased euroscepticism in the UK.

Main executors of these Eurosceptic activities are radical parties in the EU. They can be classified into two; radical right and radical left parties. Features of radical right parties are nationalism, authoritarianism and populism. (Mudde, 2010) Mostly, right parties focus on immigration, national identity, domestic security and cultural or moral deterioration in the society. Radical left parties improve their party policies on the systematically critical of neo-liberal capitalism and globalization (March, 2012: 1725) and European integration is a barrier for this aim. Mostly, as a strategic maneuver to catch up all electorate, importance of nationalism in these radical parties can be seen in the elections rather than paying attention to their ideologies, values

and beliefs. Therefore, new populist parties which is connected with the radical right and new politics parties and their predecessors the old left constitute unorthodox strategies.

Main arguments of eurosceptic radical right parties defend that the EU is a source of assimilation of identities, loss of sovereignty, external threat for independence and unity. On the other hand, radical left parties defend that the EU is the executor of capitalist or free market economy to exploitation and imperialism, violator of economic and social rights against the equality and internationalism and threat to the territorial integrity. But ''these radical parties share elements of nationalist ideology leading to a common eurosceptic stance.'' (Halikiopoulou, Nanou and Vasilopoulou, 2012: 505) Fundamentally, structural and ideological background of these radical parties are incompatible for this notion but in the EU politics, to convince the society in the elections, this is the most popular and effective discourse.

3.Effects of Euroscepticism and Nationalism for European Countries

Euroscepticism is based on some negative discourses. For instance, democracy deficit in the EU decision making process leads to lack of participation of the electors in the EU elections. Public opinion mostly believe that the EU is operating in 'technocratic' mode (Bretherton and Vogler, 1999: 77). The EU cannot be deepened or widened because of its lack of societal relations and this causes legitimacy problem. Consequently, the EU is not able to become a global leader. It cannot establish a powerful political unit between its member states. In addition to this, the EU is based on mutual agreements that still protect national interests. However, in the case of undermining national sovereignty, voting behavior changes. For example, the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe that was a significant step to give more power to the EU, French and Dutch voters rejected it in the referendums, most especially the French voters who felt cheated in the 1992 Maastricht Treaty (Franck, 2005: 1073). The EU replaced it with the Treaty of Lisbon, like a soft transition, but it can be seen that for France, referendums hold significant places to show the relations between euroscepticism and nationalism.

Within the context of referendums, results of the Brexit referendum in the UK was an important sign to not only the future of Europe but also France too because worries on domino effect occurred. Across Europe, rise of euroscepticism can be shown in the poll results. ''The Pew Research Center found a majority of people were unfavorable towards the EU in Greece (71%) and France (61%).'' (BBC News, 2018) In the case of France, Frexit which is the name of French withdrawal from the EU was proposed by the Front National leader Marine Le Pen who called herself as Madame Frexit. Moreover, the refugee crisis in France helped Marine Le Pen in the 2017 presidential election. In the election promises, she defended another referendum like Brexit in France. However, in the election, Emmanuel Macron of 'En Marche!' who is a centrist

and liberal politician had been elected by a decisive margin. He aims to carry out a reform in the EU to overcome a withdrawal trend from the EU.

Nationalism in France is a very decisive factor in the political issues and French Euroscepticism mostly reaffirms nationalism but it is not able to push the voters to Frexit. First reason to the disadvantage of Euroscepticism in France is that French people became rational and gave a chance to Macron about the EU reforms and solving immigration problems in the presidential race. Another reason is that, after the Islamic terrorist attacks in France, voting behavior was expected to shift radical policies like after 9/11 attacks in the US. However, interesting point is that the 2017 French presidential election was between progressive populist Macron and nativist populist Le Pen. French voters tried to elect one of the populist leaders who follow different ideologies. Therefore, rather than radical policies of Le Pen, French voters were interested in progressive reforms of Macron in the same populist scale.

Like France, refugee crisis in the EU triggered Eurosceptic movements with populist far right ideas in European countries. There are a number of Europeans who still continue with their task to welcome and also support the influx of refugees. However, in certain places, the influx of immigrants to the country would fall as a play in the populist parties' hands and even to the right-wing movements. Austria has already made a declaration for a quota for the immigrant asylum seekers. Alternatively, Greece is struggling to cope with the refugee backlog that are restricted from crossing into Macedonia. Between Sweden and Denmark, the temporary controls are well in place, and these temporary controls are also at different other borders of the generally Schengen area which is passport-free. (Traynor, 2018) In Spain and Italy in 2015, population between 60 to 80% had reported to the pollsters about their being unhappy regarding their governments' immigration policies. The anti-migration AfD party in a few areas in Germany surpassed the mainstream Social Democrats. Migration would have been a decisive factor in the UK, regarding the in-out referendum, whereas the incumbent governments in other EU countries would be adopting a tougher stance related to migration for re-capturing voters which had been drifting towards the populist challengers. This kind of domestic pressures related to politics might, in turn, make it difficult for the governments at the EU level to have workable compromises without which there is going to be more fragmentation in the EU. Kentmen-Cin and Erisen (2016: 3) stated that there is yet a scope in Europe to turn the migration crisis into the shape of political and economic opportunity, but the window is witnessed to close very fast.

Refugee crisis in the Europe is one of the main reason which triggers tradition of nationalism and causes Euroscepticism. However, in the case of Greece, a different approach and version of Euroscepticism can be seen because of the Eurozone economic crisis. The solution for the voters who suffered from the Greek government-debt crisis in the 2015 general election was the Syriza and its leader Alexis Tsipras whose

ideology is based on left-wing populism and soft eurosceptism. Generally left-wing parties defend cross-border solidarity, however, since the 1940s there has been a rise in left-wing nationalism which uses nationalism for social cohesion against the difficulties like exploitation, anti-imperialism and foreign interventions. Syriza is not an exception to this left-wing nationalism but ''its patriotic rhetoric has ditched its Eurosceptic platform.'' (Papadogiannis, 2018) It can be seen that Syriza moderated its ideology and softened its approach towards Greek withdrawal from the EU or Grexit and this helped the popularity of Syriza. The Communist Party of Greece (KKE) and Popular Unity which split from Syriza supports leaving the euro but these parties cannot satisfy voters' expectation and received less votes in the elections. Because, for the voters, pros of Syriza was different from other parties. For them, Syriza brings back hope and defends dignity of the Greek people but in fact as a populist party, Syriza has linked with 'underdog culture' which shows a society that lives in an economically vulnerable country, fears international competition and feeds populist leaders. (Stavrakakis and Katsambekis, 2014: 120)

4.Conclusion

Is the tradition of nationalism an existential problem for the European integration? Eurosceptism claims that the EU is against the nation-state system. As a method to continue nation-state's power or status quo in the EU, Eurosceptism is an opposition idea and mostly pessimistic criticisms about the current structure and policies of the EU. In this perspective, it can be said that the tradition of nationalism is reaffirmed by Eurosceptism.

In this article, some of the challenges between Eurosceptism and traditions of nationalism are tried to be found. It can be seen that nationalism is based on identity which is basically, who you are. At this point, Eurosceptics use identity for its purposes. Eurosceptism believes that the EU project which wants to establish 'the United States of Europe' is against the nation-state system and it weakens the sovereignty of the nation-states. Especially, not only nation-state level but also supranational level, Eurosceptic right parties or ideologies use nationalism to enforce its discourses more than left parties. In the common aim which is to weaken the EU project, Eurosceptic left parties which are ideologically against the nationalism to destroy class system and to unite a society based on left ideology, compromise with Eurosceptic right parties. Like differences between hard and soft Eurosceptism, Eurosceptic left and right parties brought different approaches on nationalism while criticizing the EU.

Therefore, there is a link between nationalism and euroscepticism but the fact that to reach their political ambitions, a lot of populist parties in Europe abuse nationalism and accuse the EU for the crisis with Eurosceptic ideas. Therefore, after a while, the EU became a scapegoat for failures, debts and crisis in the nation-states. In fact,

Eurosceptism is a political tool for the populist parties in Europe to maximize their sympathizers rather that change their minds.

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Social Work and Social Protection in crisis circumstances – Organisation and activities of Centre for Social Work Banja Luka during the floods in 2014

Dragana Šćepović

University of Banjaluka, Faculty of Political Science

Andrea Rakanović Radonjić

University of Banjaluka, Faculty of Political Science

Ljubo Lepir

University of Banjaluka, Faculty of Political Science

Abstract

Modern man is at constant risk to his/her security, which threatens him/her from natural disasters. Today, these risks are much more frequent and intense than they were before. Climate change is affecting more and more extreme natural disasters that bring greater security risks. The most common risks that lead to crisis situations are related to extreme events during the escalation of natural disasters, such as: fires, floods, earthquakes, heavy rainfall, landslides, etc. These situations require adequate systemic responses, which are recognized through the actions of various institutions, mainly public institutions of public systems towards the vulnerable groups. Increased interest in the work of institutions and services in crisis situations comes from the need to seek effective responses to the existential vulnerability condition, but also to the condition of social need that is often associated with existential vulnerability. The paper presents organization and of work terms of the Centre for Social Work (CSW) in Banja Luka during the extreme floods in 2014, which hit this city twice in six months period. Conclusions and recommendations that have been defined, aimed at systematically improving the protection of the population and professionals in crisis situations at the local level are based on the results of the analysis of the activities that have been carried out and the Centre's direct actions, as well as an assessment of the achieved level of social protection and support to the population affected by the effects of the floods.

Keywords: social work, social protection, crisis, organisation, activities, social work Banja-Luka, the floods

Introduction

Republic of Srpska is one of the two entities in Bosnia and Herzegovina that has its competencies, among which are social protection and the population protection in emergency situations.

Social protection, as an activity of special interest to the Republic, provides assistance to persons when they are in a state of social need and takes the necessary measures to prevent and eliminate the consequences of such a situation. Tis part of system has a significant role in protecting persons in natural disasters and other accidents. The Law on Social Protection of the Republic of Srpska ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Srpska" No. 37/12; 90/16; 94/19 and 42/20) recognizes a natural disaster as a special circumstance that leads to a state of social need. Centers for Social Work, as bearers of social protection at the local level represent important systemic subjects of protection in such situations they must provide adequate and efficient answers to the citizen's state of social needs.

The social need can be defined as a life situation in which an individual, family or group of people finds themselves, and need the help and support of others (individuals, systems) to overcome existential and social difficulties that they have in meeteng basic life needs. The consequences of natural disasters in extreme cases bring many into a state of social need. General material deprivation, endangerment of life, loss of loved ones, loss of safe housing, but also psychosocial and emotional problems are the consequences that natural disasters leave behind and and produce a state of social need. The State and its institutions have an obligation to respond to such situations, and to provide adequate assistance and support to the endangered so that they can overcome such a situation.

The key institutions implementing social protection measures in the Republic Srpska are Centers for social work (CSW). CSW through the mechanisms of the social protection system provides immediate assistance and support to those who need it. With approach "user in the center of attention", CSW ensures that system solutions are implemented in the best way in practice, that is, in the immediate living environment of the beneficiaries. In the conditions of emergency situations caused by natural disasters, the CSW provides the necessary material, but also psycho-social support to the beneficiaries, as well as to the professional workers who participate in providing assistance.

The Law on Social Protection defines the obligation of local government units to plan, organize and implement activities to prevent and remedy the consequences of the social needs of the population caused by various causes, including emergencies resulting from sudden natural disasters. Other legislation, Law on Protection and Rescue in emergency situations ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Srpska" No.

121/12 and 46/17), defines emergency situation as a state in which the risks, threats or consequences of disasters (natural disasters), emergencies and other hazards to the population, life environment and material goods of such scope and intensity that their occurrence or consequences cannot be prevented or eliminated by regular action of competent bodies and services, due to which it is necessary to use special measures, forces and means for their mitigation and elimination "(Article 5) . In accordance with this definition of the concept of emergency, operation of CSW is recognized as primary and secondary. The primary activity of the CSW means direct activities carried out during a natural disaster, and the secondary activity means the activities of the CSW before and after a natural disaster where the existing system solutions arising from the Law on Social Protection are harmonized with possible and new situation. in which the resources of the system are additionally engaged in finding new solutions in order to respond to possible risks and the state of social need.

The CSW as one of the basic, leading institutions of the social protection system in local communities, in emergency situations has an extremely important role in protecting and rescuing the population, especially socially vulnerable groups, such as: people with disabilities, the poor, children, residents of collective accommodation, the elderly and infirm, etc. The position and role of the CSW in natural disasters arises from the general competencies defined by the Law on Social Protection, and are specifically determined by the Plan for protection against natural disasters and accidents prepared by local communities, based on the Decree on the content and manner of natural disasters and other accidents ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Srpska" No. 68/13). In order to fully understand the operation CSW during an emergency, it is necessary to keep in mind that the management of all protection and rescue resources in the Republic of Srpska is the responsibility of the Republic Emergency Headquarters, emergency headquarters at local government units and headquarters for emergency situations of companies and legal entities. This means that the operation of CSW must be under the direct authority of these institutions in order to align the overall activities with the priorities arising from the urgency imposed by the situation on the ground, and to identify CSW as a real resource of the overall rescue system. The Manual for the Centers for Social Work in Emergencies Caused by Natural Disasters (RS Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, 2015) clearly states that "protection and rescue is carried out by citizens, authorities, companies and other legal entities, rescue services, units and commissioners of civil protection, who also represent the subjects or forces of the protection and rescue system "(p. 27), whereby the focus of action is equally distributed to all actors involved in the rescue process. This empfisise the importance of the subjects of protection to a higher level, and the CWS as social institutions, were given a new dimension, initiators and creators of local programs of help and support for vulnerable categories of the population whose social sensitivity is especially pronounced in natural disasters.

In May 2014, the Republic of Srpska was hit by a natural disaster whose consequences for property and persons at the time of the event were incalculable. It is a flood that affected more than a third of the territory of the Republic and a significant part of the area in the region. Three cities were completely flooded (Doboj, Šamac and Obrenovac in Serbia), while several other cities and municipalities were partially or mostly flooded. Unfortunately, the same natural disaster, but in a lesser extent, hit Republic of Srpska in August of the same year. During this period CWS, which were subjects of protection and rescue in local government units, operated in accordance with the Law on Protection and Rescue in Emergencies and other Republic of Srpska is an entity in Bosnia and Herzegovina that has its competencies in, among which are social protection and the population in emergency situations.. They also acted in accordance with the Law on Social Protection, which recognizes natural disasters as the cause of the state of social need. The CWS Banjaluka (Capital and administrative center of Republic) participated every time in providing direct help and support to the citizens when the river flooded the wider city area and when the lives of the citizens were endangered. The long-term operation of the Centre for Social Work Banja Luka has provided valuable experience in improving the systemic response to the state in natural disasters. These experiences are subject of interest of this paper.

CWS Banjaluka organizational and material assumptions for acting in emergency situations

For the efficient operation of the institutions in the system, existence of resources and a well-established management structure are of key importance for dealing with consequences of natural disasters, (Buljubašić, et al. 2015). According to the Rulebook on Internal Organization and Systematization of Workplaces in the Public Institution, the work of the CSW Banja Luka in regular circumstances is organized into three departments. The departments that are organizational units CSW Banjaluka are: Department of General Affairs, Department for Family and Legal Protection of Children and Families and the Department for Adults and the Elderly. In the Departments for Family and Legal Protection of Children and Families and the Department for Adults and the Elderly, jobs that carry out specialist-professional work are systematized, in accordance with the needs of priority groups of users. In the General Affairs Department, managerial positions and other positions are systematized in the vay to provide supports to professional work. In this Department are systematized positions directed towards the legal and financial functioning of CSW.

At the time when the catastrophic flood hit Banja Luka, the total number of employees in CSW in 2014, was 75. 49 had the status of professional workers, while the remaining 26 workers performed general work and had the status of other workers in social protection. Social workers have the largest share in the group of professional

workers. There were no special jobs for carrying out activities related to emergency situations. Therefore, the success of acting in emergency situations depended on the same workers who performed regular activities of the institution, which indicated the need for good additional education of existing, primarily professional staff, related to content in the field of assistance, support and rescue.

At the time of the natural disaster, CSW Banja Luka, ie its employees, were burdened with a large number of beneficiaries of social protection measures and services. The number of beneficiaries immediately before the catastrophic floods was 21,070, which represented about 10.5% of the total population of Banja Luka according to the 2013 census. In just a few days, the number of those who sought help from CSW increased by 800. The management of CSW had to count on a sharp increase of the number of beneficiaries. However, from the aspect of material and technical conditions and the human resources in the institution, we arise the questions Was CSW ready for such a development?!

From the material and technical means, it should be pointed out that the CSW Banjaluka at that time had a fully equipped and safe office space that was not endangered by floods, so that assistance activities could be managed without fear that it would be endangered. The mobility of professional workers was related to the use of three cars, none of which were prepared for extreme conditions of use.

In accordance with article 23 of the Law on Protection and Rescue, in emergency situations, organizations and companies are obliged to train and prepare protection and rescue teams and to hire them to perform protection and rescue tasks independently, as well as upon request. This provides the basis for CWS Banja Luka in November 2013 to adopt a Plan for protection and rescue from natural disasters and other accidents. This Plan clearly elaborates the obligations and activities that CSW must carry out in order to prepare for action in emergency situations. This Plan was important legal document in the preparation phase of the CSW emergency response. In the preparation phase, the management of the CSW Banjaluka complied with all the required elements defined by the Decree on the content and manner of drafting a plan for protection against natural disasters and other accidents. The result of these activities was a Plan for protection and rescue from natural disasters and other accidents. The development of the Plan was preceded by activities related to the preparation of results of risk assessment and assessment of the situation. All these activities were completed in November 2013, ie some six months before the catastrophic floods, when the preparation of the Plan for protection and rescue from natural disasters and other accidents, was completed. What was noticed as a shortcoming in the process of drafting the Plan is the non-implementation of parallel education and informing the employees of the CSW. The focus was on drafting a written document that should satisfy the form, ie the obligation of CSW to have an official document, while educating and informing employees was left aside.

In contrast to the preparation, the more significant engagement of the CSW took place in the immediate action phase. The new situation has necessitated the need to seek quick answers to the growing needs of the population. Several standard and a couple of new, innovative activities have enabled consistency in activities, which has enabled the CSW to establish itself as an important entity in the process of providing support and assistance to citizens who are in a state of social need due to the consequences of catastrophic floods.

Cooperation in the emergency management process

In accordance with Mayor decision from mid May 2014 in Banja Luka, was declared a state of emergency due to the flood that hit the city. From that moment CSW Banja Luka made itself available to the Civil Protection of the City of Banja Luka. As a first step, the CSW compiled information on material and technical equipment and human potential, which could be placed in the protection and rescue service. At the same day, CSW Banja Luka passed a Decision establishing an Emergency Headquarters for responding to an emergency situation caused by a flood, and harmonizing working hours, jobs and tasks in accordance with the requirements of the emergency situation. During the emergency situation, the CSW continuously carried out activities in accordance with the orders of the City Crisis headquarters, and in cooperation with the Department of Civil Protection and the managers of checkpoints in the flooded areas. CSW Banjaluka organized work in three shifts, which provided coverage for all twenty-four hours a day. After first three days of declaring a state of emergency, when the workers of the CSW participated for twenty-four hours in rescuing and evacuating the population in the flood-affected areas, and in the distribution of basic foodstuffs, the work of the CSW was organized in two shifts. 07.00 hours was provided through "standby". This way of working was maintained until the Decision on declaring a state of emergency was repealed on May 26, 2014. During the August floods of the same year, in accordance with the City Mayor Decision, CSW adjusted its working hours in the same way, and again organized duty shifts 24 hours a day.

During the emergency situation in May and August 2014, 63 of 75 CSW employees were on duty and perform activities related to meeting the needs of the population and ensuring its safety. Twelve workers who did not participate in tih activities were on maternity leave or prevented due to age, illness or disability, which means that the organization of work is set quite broadly, covering all available staff.

Bebneficiaries registration

During the floods, and in accordance with the order of the Crisis headquarters of the City of Banja Luka, a Social Map was prepared. This included households that were endangered by the flood. A total of 2529 households whose housing units were flooded were listed, of which 1801 were completely flooded, while 289 households were partially flooded. The total number of enumerated household members was 7645, of which 6284 people were endangered by the flood. These data refer to May

2014. The same procedure in August covered 408 families. In the survey that was made participated 52 employees of CSW Banja, as well as 70 employees of the City Administration. The survey was conducted over a period of two days. For thir purpose professionals from CSW developed analytical questionnaire. The same instrument used in the following period.

This instrument was also used by Ministry of Health and Social Welfare to create a social map at the level of the entire Republic of Srpska. For data processing 80 people were engaged. Significant number of them was from CSW Banja Luka. Professionals from CSW Banja Luka also participated in the data processing managed by the Department of Informatics of the Banja Luka City Administration. The collected and processed data served for the distribution of humanitarian aid in the field. The professionals from CSW also directly participated in the distribution of humanitarian aid in the first five days after the declaration of the state of emergency, before these activities takes over Red Cross Banja Luka.

Professionals of CSW Banja Luka were engaged in the work of the Commission for collection, records and distribution of humanitarian aid for the City of Banja Luka. The main task of that Commission was to fairly and equally distribution of humanitarian aid to the population that was most endangered, according to the levels of priority. One of the activities of CSW Banja Luka was the networking of data and information on flooded areas and households, in cooperation with the Republic Red Cross.

Population protection in the City areas affected by the floods

In the activities of caring for the population of City that found itself in a state of social need caused by a natural disaster, the CSW directly participated in the protection and rescue of the people that was endangered by the flood. In the first days professionals from CSW were focused on taking care of people who needed accommodation. On the social anamnesis basis care was provided in the families of relatives or friends, shelters for adults and the, shelter for children and social welfare institutions in the City of Banja Luka.

After the emergency placement the professionals from CSW focused on activities related to the social protection rights for persons in a state of social need caused by natural disasters, as well as assistance in the procurement of. Some other activities, which were also in focus, were related to the distribution of basic foodstuffs to flood victims who were taken care of in the families of relatives or friends, and activities related to visiting institutions that accepted persons who lost their property. These activities included seeking an exit strategy for more permanent care of these persons. Activities related to planning further care were undertaken.

During these activities, over 3,000 field visits were made to the flooded population, more precisely, 2,529 home visits were made to flooded households, while the

remaining number of field visits were made during the distribution of humanitarian aid, visits to temporary care centres, and field visits.

A particularly important activity was helping people from other areas who found themselves in the territory of the City of Banja Luka. These activities were aimed at helping families from the area of the City of Doboj, the municipality of Šamac and Obrenovac in the Republic of Serbia, which suffered the greatest damage from the floods in May 2014. These are 9 families that found themselves in the area of the City of Banja Luka, and they were provided with support in food and medicine, material resources and psychosocial support.

One of the activities that started immediately after the flood, and lasted for the next 18 months, is active participation in the project of rehabilitation of housing units that suffered as a result of the flood, which was carried out by UNDP. The task of the professionals from CSW Banja Luka was to review the overall social situation and make an assessment, on which basis persons that applied were awarded a donation in the form of rehabilitation of a housing unit. This assessment was preceded, among other elements, by a field visit to the household. More than 300 households applied for the programme announced by the UNDP, which means that the CSW conducted over 300 home visits and many more interviews with the household members.

Organizing and providing psychosocial assistance and support after the flood

Disasters affect large numbers of people whose lives, health or safety are endangered, leading to the destruction of property and the disruption of normal activities in the community. Floods, as a form of natural disaster, are not part of everyday, ordinary human experience, are unpredictable, and as sudden, unpleasant traumatic events cause fear, helplessness and horror, and lead to suffering for most people, regardless of their psychophysical condition and coping. . Reactions to traumatic events are inevitable and universal, very similar in most people, and specific symptoms depend on age, the nature of the traumatic experience and the significance they have for the individual (Čaldarević, 1995). There is a difference in the type and intensity of reactions to trauma, as well as the time it takes for people to recover.

People are generally unprepared for floods. They represent rare traumatic events that can be triggers for crises. It is important to note that, although at the root of every crisis is event that are highly stressful or traumatic, yet stress and trauma do not necessarily lead to a crisis. In order for a crisis to develop a feeling of helplessness, loss of control and internal balance, and disorganization of behaviour must be present. Both victims and helpers may experience reactions that are a sign of the development of a psychological crisis, and which often do not receive the necessary attention. A large-scale crisis event requires the engagement of a larger number of experts and services, their fast, precise and coordinated action. According to Dejan Ajduković, when a crisis occurs, the primary goal is to mitigate its impact (saving lives, safety and health care, saving property), then to eliminate the consequences as soon

as possible and establish a normal level of functioning of individuals, groups and communities. The same author further points out that "immediately after people are rescued, injured are taken care of, and property is insured, it becomes obvious that in terms of feelings, opinions, bodily signs and overall functioning, the situation is not stabilized. People's reactions can be a sign of the development of a psychological crisis. They are recognized both by the immediate victims and by the helpers/professionas that participated in providing assistance or witnessed the events (Ajduković, D., 2000: 94). In accordance with the above, once they are placed in a safe place, it is necessary to provide psychosocial help and support to both victims and professionals. Also, Pregrad (1996) believes that it is necessary to first provide material and somewhat social care to people in order to successfully provide them with psychological assistance, and states that "Maslow's following model of personality development is clear that there is not much benefit from working on respect, acceptance, self-esteem and self-actualization if the basic biological, existential needs and the needs for security and predictability are not met "(Pregrad, 1996: 88).

It is indisputable that it is necessary to provide material, as well as social and psychological assistance during and immediately after the crisis events. Pregrad (1996: 87) proposes the division of the total area of psychosocial assistance into three sub-areas: crisis psychosocial intervention (shorter crisis intervention), psychosocial support and psychotherapy.

Crisis psychosocial intervention is applied immediately after crisis events that occur suddenly and abruptly and goes beyond the ordinary human experience, and to which individuals and groups cannot readily, effectively and psychologically respond sufficiently defensively (Pregrad, 1996: 87). These crisis events include, but are not limited to, natural disasters such as floods. Psychological crisis interventions are not psychotherapy, but are in fact preventive procedures aimed at alleviating traumatic stress, helping people to more easily endure traumatic events and to integrate them into their daily experience, which is necessary for their further normal functioning. Eranen and Liebkind (1993, according to Arambašić, 2000) define psychological crisis interventions as a set of procedures that are used to help people overcome what they have experienced after crisis events. Psychosocial crisis interventions provide support and assistance to people to regain a sense of autonomy and control over life. Vlajković (2009), as the most frequently used models of crisis interventions, states: concise psychological integration of trauma, relief and demobilization.

The goal of psychosocial support is to provide support to people, take on some of their tasks until they cope with the new situation and strengthen their own capacity to cope with stress. It is important to accept themselves as they are at the time, to accept part of their responsibility, but at the same time it is necessary to strengthen their coping capacity with stress and the new situation, and support them to take responsibility

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for meeting their own needs. This is a role of helper/professional. According to Pregrad (1996: 89), when providing psychosocial support, professionals must not insist too early on taking responsibility and to leave people enough space to process personal painful experiences, as this can create a sense of misunderstanding, rejection or injustice.

Psychotherapy is carried out with people who have symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, as well as with people whose psychopathology has been present for a long time and makes it difficult to adapt to the new situation.

Although reactions to traumatic events are universal, the way individuals react reacts to a person's level of sensitivity to stress, the dimensions of the traumatic event (natural or man-made, duration, complexity, number of people affected, the possibility of recurrence), but also from the level of support they receive from other people and the way they experience the support they receive. Given that traumatic events bring people into a state of complete helplessness and create a sense of insecurity for life, it is especially important that the traumatized feel safe when providing support and assistance after traumatic events. It should be noted that an event that causes a crisis in one person will not necessarily cause a crisis in another person and that, regardless of the fact that crises lead to mental confusion, disorganized behaviour and overwhelmed with feelings, people in crisis are open to psychological interventions (Arambašić, 2000).

In the CSW Banja Luka during and immediately after the flood, all human resources and potentials were used to provide psychosocial assistance and support to victims of natural disasters. These interventions mainly had the characteristics of short-term crisis interventions and the characteristics of psychosocial support that were realized in the field and immediately after the first intervention with persons who were endangered. Immediately after the floods in June 2014, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of Republic of Srpska, in cooperation with the Association of Psychologists of Republic of Srpska, activated the "Psychological Counselling Phone", which aimed to improve the provision of psychosocial support and assistance to the overall population.

Psychosocial help and support for professionals

Although social workers and other professionals in CSW in providing help and support to people in need are often exposed to events that disturb them, which can be threatening for them and can even cause post-traumatic stress reactions, crisis events can still be say they are not part of their daily professional experience. The fact is that the professionals in the CSW are not adequately prepared to act in emergency situations, in which the lives and health of a large number of people are endangered, but also their lives and health. They are not trained as police officers, firefighters and ambulance workers, so they can be confused or inappropriate at this kind of environment. For these reasons they are more likely to suffer from professional

burnout and psychological crises. Indirect trauma also may occur in helpers/professionals due to exposure to other people's traumatic experiences, which have a traumatic effect on helpers. Hotkinson and Stewart (Hodkinson and Stewart, 1991, according to: Arambašić, 2000) talk about the superman reaction, about the behaviour of professionals who function well while at work, and the symptoms of indirect trauma appear when they come home. Because of this, it is necessary for professionals to understand the crisis as a mental state, to know the basic principles of crisis interventions, to be able to recognize crisis situations in their work, their own crises and their impact on their way of work.

Arambašić (2000: 34-35), emphasise that good preparation for supportive work implies "mastering theoretical knowledge about crisis, crisis interventions, acquiring skills of crisis interventions, developing understanding of crisis through expanding personal knowledge about its impact on personal and professional life". Crisis intervention models are specific procedures that are primarily intended for helpers, whose goal is to prevent the deterioration of their mental state, to mitigate and reduce long-term psychological, social and physical consequences, and to speed up the recovery process. Psychological crisis interventions can successfully alleviate or prevent psychological difficulties due to exposure to a crisis event.

Certain number of the professionals from CSW Banja Luka, who were involved in the protection and rescue of the people in the areas affected by flood during the emergency situation in the City of Banja Luka, were included in the psychosocial support and assistance program. This program was designed, coordinated and implemented by the Association of Psychologists of the Republic of Srpska, with the help of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, and donors who supported its implementation.

Conclusions and recommendations

The participation of the CSW Banja Luka is an unavoidable element in the analysis of system institutional activities in rescuing and caring for the people that found themselves in a state of social need caused by the catastrophic floods during 2014. The manner of organization, implementation of activities, and coordination of actions with the crisis headquarters, communication and direct provision of services to beneficiaries are the key elements that determine the participation of CSW Banja Luka in the rescue process. CSW Banja Luka had activities that they were implemented and placed CSW Banja Luka as a significant subject in defining an adequate response to the people needs during natural disasters. In the preparatory phase, the CSW Banja Luka adopted the Plan for protection and rescue from natural disasters and other accidents, which created the preconditions for adequate action in case of an emergency situation. After the declaration of the state of emergency, CSW Banja Luka went through three phases of action during the emergency situation:, phase of activation, phase of urgent action and the phase of stabilization. CSW Banja Luka had

rehabilitation phase that in some segments lasted much longer than the phase of material rehabilitation conducted by the local government.

It should be noted that the management of the CSW Banja Luka tried to take all measures of protection and support of the population that were provided by the Law on Protection and Rescue in Emergency Situations of the Republic of Srpska, as well as the Law on Social Protection. In this regard, the CSW Banja Luka carried out the following activities:

detection and direct monitoring on the field with a special focus on the state of social needs of victims of natural disasters,

assessment of the living condition and needs of people affected by the natural disaster,

measures implementation monitoring during the action phase,

preparation of reports, analyses and other information for local government bodies,

proposing measures for situation improvement,

encouraging, organizing and coordinating professional and voluntary work with affected,

developing local projects to solve specific social problems,

cooperation with donors,

organizing and providing psychosocial assistance and support to beneficiaries and

providing psychosocial assistance and support to the employees of the CSW Banja Luka.

It is especially important to note that the CSW Banja Luka successfully responded to the organizational and professional challenges. Specifically, at the end of 2014, the CSW Banja Luka had approximately 800 more beneficiaries in the total number of beneficiaries of social protection, who were recruited from flood-affected areas in the City of Banja Luka, They came to a state of social need as consequences of the flood, and thus fulfilled the conditions for exercising certain rights from the Law on Social Protection.

The experience of the CSW Banja Luka and the direct engagement of professionals in the field indicate that it is necessary to expand the scope of activities that improve the direct practice of social work and social protection in situations of natural disasters. The following activities and tasks are necessary as desirable in the future operation of all CSW at the territory of the Republic:

Improvement of Plan for protection and rescue from natural disasters and other accidents in the CSW in the Republic of Srpska, which would include monitoring and evaluation,

Education of professionals in social protection for dealing with and implementing activities in emergency situations,

Development of a general plan of crisis interventions in the CSW, as well as special plans for different types of crisis events,

Psychosocial assistance and support procedures for victims, as regular activities in post-crisis action plans,

Provision of adequate support and assistance to the professionals who are facing crisis events or are in a state of crisis, as a part of an Action plan,

Support plans should involve all organizations and institutions in the local community in whose competence is the organization and provision of assistance,

The plan should contain all specific tasks that the CSW faces immediately after crisis event, tasks that must be completed a few days after the event (psychological assistance), as well as tasks that must be completed in a few months after the crisis (systemic provision of assistance and support to persons identified as particularly vulnerable),

Make a plan for assessing the success of the implemented crisis interventions,

Mobilization of all experts who are trained to provide psychosocial support and assistance at the local community level and coordinate their work, when drafting a Crisis intervention plan,

Plan to implement continuous psychological support and assistance to victims and professionals,

Training of CSW in professional and material sense to act in crisis situations,

Representatives of CSW need to be part of in crisis headquarters municipal

Integrate the activities of the CSW into the Law on Protection and Rescue of the Republic of Srpska.

The analysis of the activities of the CSW Banja Luka indicated the limited possibilities of the social protection system during the emergency situation caused by natural disasters. However, insufficient recognition of the importance and role of CSW by other subjects continues to be an obstacle to achieving the full acting capacity of CSW during emergencies. Therefore, in the coming period, it is necessary to intensify cooperation with all those involved in the rescue process at the local community level.

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A Discursive Examination of White Americans' Attitudes about White-Black Interracial Marriages in USA

Ilham Malki

Abstract

The primary objective of this article is to manifest by means of discourse analysis the attitudes of White Americans towards White-Black interracial marriages. The research draws on qualitative analysis of the discourse of some white Americans to find out the genuine convictions they bear about interracial unions, especially those incorporating Blacks and Whites. Regardless of the fact that White Americans have asserted their approval of White-Black marriages, the results of the study reveal that some White-Americans are still not in favour of their close relatives marrying outside their own race. As Van Dijk (1992) postulates, one of the distinctive peculiarities of contemporary racism discourse is its denial. On accounts of rigid constraints posed upon overt expression of racist perspectives, individuals bring about a set of discursive strategies that enable the deliverance of negative constructs without being trapped by racism charges. In addition to the denial of racism, the results of the research disclose various strategic choices through which white Americans legitimize their views towards white-black interracial marriages. Such choices embark on justifications, denying, excuses, positive self-presentation, negative other-presentation, and blaming the victim. (Van Dijk: 1992)

Keywords: White-Black interracial marriage, racism, denial, discourse analysis

1-Introduction

The United States of America is one of the most ethnically and racially diverse countries all over the world; it "is a nation of nations, made up of people from every land, of every race and practicing every faith." (Powell, 2001, web) America owes its culturally diverse picture to the large-scale migration of people from various ethnically and racially different countries throughout its history as well as to the heritage of the Native Americans. The diverse picture that distinguishes the social

make-up of the American society is reflected in the heterogeneous kinds of relationships that join the various individual entities of America. One of these relationships that celebrates the different racial and ethnic differences of the American nation is interracial marriage. The latter is, by definition, a phenomenon that results from the involvement of two people of different races/ethnicities who willingly opt for beginning a relationship together. In America, the interracial marriage is said to increase at a relatively rapid pace due to "the decrease in white prejudice against Blacks, and the narrowing of the racial gap in education, income, and occupation." (Honeycutt, et al: 2005)

2-Background of the study

It is worth saying that interracial marriage in America touches the different races that compose the social structure of the American society, namely the Native Americans, African Americans, Asian, and White (European) Americans. However, this paper sheds light on white and black interracial marriage. A study has been carried out by the Pew Research Center reveals that "of the 275,500 new interracial marriages in 2010, 14.9% were White-Black."[2] Tough this number is not highly significant compared to other forms of interracial marriages, more specifically White-Hispanics 43% and White-Asian 14,4% , but "it is undeniably increasing rapidly" (Qian:2014) since 1980 in which the figure did not exceed 5%

[2] Staff TNO, "Interracial Marriages in the US: Facts and Figures (and Why White People Must Have More Babies) " http://newobserveronline.com/interracial-marriages-in-the-us-(accessed 10 January. 2014)

The main objective of this paper is to examine white Americans attitudes towards White-Black interracial marriages in USA and highlight the different discursive strategies through which they justify these attitudes. In addition, this study aims at highlighting how the whites' discourse with respect to White-Black interracial marriages serve the ideologies of the dominant group. Before delving deeply into the primary topic a historical background of interracial marriage is provided along with examining some approaches that outline the motives behind integrating in such kind of relationships.

3-Historical Background of Interracial Marriages in America

Indeed, the White-Black union has historically been the most controversial issue in the history of America's interracial marriages since the 15th century. In 1660's, several American states, markedly, Maryland, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, North Carolina,

and South Carolina enacted a number of anti-miscegenation laws which totally outlawed interracial marriages as it

was leading to " abominable mixture and spurious issue," (Johnson, 2003, pp:23) which eventually would stain the 'white gene pool.' The abolition of slavery in1865 did not side away the legal restrictions over interracial marriages in America; conversely, it strived to widen the gap between the White and the so-called 'inferior' Black race through the legislation of "Black Codes" that enhanced the official interdiction of the marital combinations between the White and African Americans. However, the anti-miscegenation laws did not hamper the White race from taking advantage of Black women with whom they gave birth to many children. The anti-miscegenation laws maintained the prohibition of interracial marriages in 16 states, more specifically, in the South and the Midwest, until 1958. The cancellation of the anti-Jeter, a black woman, who went to Washington, D.C., a state which did not prohibit interracial unions, to get married. When Mildred Jeter and Richard Loving returned to their Virginia home, they were arrested and indicted for breaking Virginia's anti-miscegenation laws. Miscegenation laws, then, burst with the story of the interracial couple, Richard and Mildred Loving.

During the trial, the judge who sentenced the Lovings to one year in prison, reverberated the Johann Friedrich Blumenbach's 18th-century interpretation of race, "Almighty God created the races white, black, yellow, Malay and red, and he placed them on separate continents. And but for the interference with his arrangement there would be no cause for such marriages? The fact that he separated the races shows that he did not intend for the races to mix." (Sollors , 2000, pp.7) For nine years, The Lovings waged a campaign against the anti-miscegenation laws through the Supreme Court that eventually revoked the Lovings' accusations in 1967. The court's decision confirms "the freedom to marry, or not marry, a person of another race resides with the individual and cannot be infringed by the State;" (Botham, 2009, pp. 175) and hence the anti-miscegenation legislation was officially declared invalid.

3-1-Approaches to Interracial Marriages

According to Paul Taylor, the Pew Research official "Intermarriage in this country has evolved from being illegal to being a taboo to being merely unusual….with each passing year, it becomes less unusual." (Jordan: 2014, web) In the light of the increasing rate of interracial marriages in America, a number of theories have been developed with the objective of determining the primary factors that motivate the

White and Black race to get involved in such kind of marital relationship, namely, the Structural Theory, the Status Exchange Theory, and the Racial Motivation Theory.

Initially, the Kouri and Lasswell's Structural Theory (1993) suggests that "interracial couples marry for the same reasons that racially homogeneous couples do: they meet, they discover similar interests, they fall in love, and they decide to marry." (Ross, 2004, pp. 3) In the same manner, the Structural Theory affirms that interracial marriage is more common in a setting where different races get the opportunity to be engaged in any form of social contact, be it at workplace, neighbourhoods, or universities. Unprecedented interest given to White-Black interracial marriages in media and academic research; in addition to the close social contact among the different ethnic and racial groups have raised the public acceptance of mixed-race relationships.

In contrast with the Structural Theory, the Racial Motivation Theory (Kouri and Lasswell 1993) proposes purely racial incentives for the couple who interracially marry. The basic tenet of the Racial Motivation Theory is based on the idea that the couple is attracted by the exotic cultural differences of each other. It is the curiosity about those who belong to a heterogeneous cultural pool that heightens individuals' desire to be engaged in interracial relations. (Orbe and Harris, 2008)

The Status Exchange Theory (Merton 1941), by contrast, is based on the fact that in Black-White marriage, which most often joins between high status black men and low status white women, the objective is to exchange the so-called "higher status" of the female partner as a white for her male partner's higher socio-economic status. In this sense, the interracial marriage as a social behavior is the result of an exchange process through which each individual seeks the satisfaction of a particular psychological or economic need.

However, this approach has been the target of many critical studies for lacking enough empirical support. (Wang: 2006) Regardless of the fact that the aforementioned theories suggest some possible motivating factors that urge the white and the black race to get engaged in interracial marriage, yet no theory could be exclusively used to provide the very real factors for which Whites and Blacks are involved in interracial marriages.

3-2- Public Attitudes Towards Interracial Matrimony

Since interracial marriage falls within the realm of race issues, it is highly recommended to heed the public attitudes towards interracial marital unions. These

attitudes are meant to measure Americans' insights of race relations as well as the quality of these relations in the contemporary America. For the sake of assessing Americans' attitudes towards White-black interracial marriages, Gallup's Minority Rights and Relations poll, conducted a survey (June 13-July 5, 2013) which targeted 4,373 Americans, including 1,010 non-Hispanic blacks.

Approval of Black-White Marriage Among Whites and Blacks

Selected trend

■ Whites ^   ■ Non-Hispanic blacks
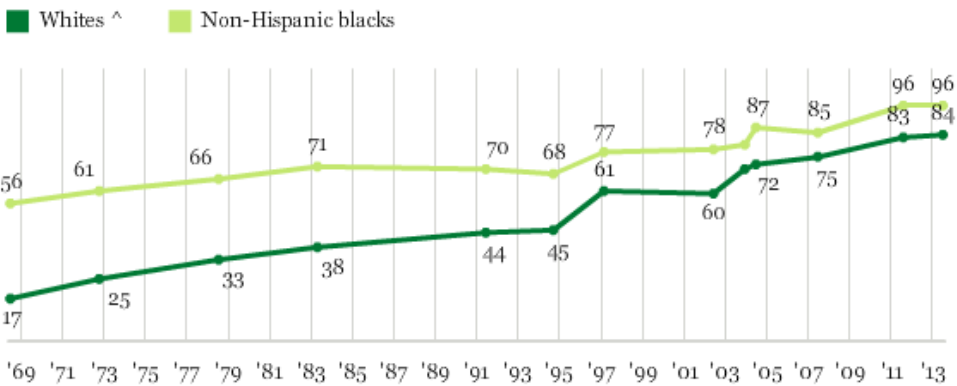
1958 wording: "... marriages between white and colored people"
1968-1978 wording: "... marriages between whites and nonwhites"
^ Trend from 1968-2003 includes Hispanics; trend from 2004-2013 is for non-Hispanic whites only

GALLUP

(Adapted from: Gallup poll: 2013)

The survey results reveal that Blacks' approval of White-Black marriage (96%) is now nearly universal, while Whites' approval is 12 percentage points lower, at 84%. Americans' attitudes towards interracial marriage have undergone dramatic changes since the 1950s when disapproval was well over 90%, to the point today when *approval* is approaching 90%. (Gallup Poll) The significant shift in the American public attitudes towards this kind of mixed-race relations reveal to what extent the American society's perception of race issues have substantially changed.

Notwithstanding the fact that the majority of the White Americans approve White-Black marriage, yet in reality the latter remains rare as they represent, according to the Census poll, "less than 1%." The low rate of White-Black interracial marriage underlines that this kind of relationship is still unfavourable for White Americans. It seems, then, race issues are still prevailing in the American society. In this regard,

Field, et al (2013) argue that "despite these changes, Black/White marriage still strikes a raw nerve in U.S. society; the colour line remains strong."(742) Before tackling the issue of white Americans' attitudes towards white-black interracial marriages, it is significant to define racism.

3-3-What is Racism

Gosfoguel (2016: 10) identifies racism as "a global hierarchy of superiority and inferiority along the line of the human that have been politically, culturally and economically produced and reproduced for centuries by the institutions of capitalist/patriarchal western centric/Christian-centric modern/colonial world system." The above definition distinguishes between two ranges of individuals. Those who establish themselves on the top of the line of the human and those who are at the top of the line of the human. The former are identified within social boundaries as human beings, and henceforth, are entitled human rights, social recognition, and material privileges. As for the second range of individuals, who are beneath the line of the human, they are recognized as 'non-human, and therefore, they are denied "the extension of rights, material resources and the recognition of their subjectivities, identities, spiritualties and epistemologies." (Gosfoguel, 2016, pp. 10)

It is worth mentioning that racism is recognizably different from racial inequality and racial discrimination. While racial inequality is typically related to asymmetric distribution of power, economic resources and social opportunities, racial discrimination highlights any discriminatory practices against people on the basis of their race. However, racism as a social practice is frequently embedded in both racial inequality and racial discrimination. Still, one cannot anticipate racial inequality and racial discrimination as inevitable outcomes of racism.

Racism does not only cover the set of beliefs an individual or ethnic group firmly holds to justify their discriminatory behaviours against others, it covers a stored system of cognitive stances that distinguishes 'the self' from 'the other' also. It is in this manner that racism affects the way in which people conduct themselves relative to their social norms.

Research within the field of racism identifies three types of racism, "personal, institutional, and social." (Blum, 2002, pp. 9) Personal racism is the set of views that regards an individual or members of a social group as inferior to another individual or social group on accounts of physical differences. Institutional racism, on the other hand, manifests through inferiorizing laws and legal practices enacted by social

institution, such as universities, hospitals, etc., and that lead racial inequality. The third type of racism that Blum (2002) refers to is social racism or sociocultural racism. The latter incorporates "racist beliefs, attitudes, and stereotypes widely shared within a given population and expressed in cultural and social modes such as religion, popular entertainment, advertisements, and other media." (Blum, 2002, pp. 9)

4-Research Question

Notwithstanding the considerable increase in White-Black matrimonial relationships in America, the disapproval of these relationships has not necessarily decreased. The desire of two individuals belonging to different races to join in matrimony cannot negatively alter the social construction of race in any country. Yet, the society's reactions towards interracial marriages, be they behavioural, discoursal, or visual, provide deep insights into the social hierarchy of race. The aim of this paper, therefore, is to unravel the attitudes of White Americans towards White-Black marriages. It also examines the discursive mechanisms through which they justify their attitudinal stances towards White-Black interracial marriages. In sum, the study answers the following questions:

What are the attitudes of White Americans towards White-Black interracial union?

What are the discoursal patterns through which White Americans justify their attitudes towards White-Black couples who enter into marriage?

What social purposes, the White Americans' prejudice discourse towards White-Black matrimony function?

5-Research Methodology and Data

The current study employs discourse analysis as a qualitative framework to examine the selected data. It, more specifically, applies Van Dijk's (1984) (1992)'s analytical theories to examine the discourses White Americans produce about White-Black interracial marriages. Considerable research studies have been conducted within the field of discourse and racism to provide deep insights into the correlation between discourse and contemporary forms of racism. When critically approached, discourse should not be regarded as merely a structural construct, text and talk; rather, it should be examined as a social process that contributes to the production and reproduction of racism. In this regard, Wodak and Reisigl (1999) postulate that "racism, as a social construct, as a social practice, and as ideology, manifests itself discursively. On the one hand, racist opinions and beliefs are produced and reproduced by means of

discourse, and through discourse, discriminatory exclusionary practices are prepared, promulgated, and legitimated." (pp: 175-176)

In order to understand how is the production and reproduction of racism established through discourse, Van Dijk (1993) argues that the analysis of discourse should be carried out across the micro and macro levels of racism as well as across the social practices, mental models, and ideologies people construe about either social members or certain situations. Based on his triangle socio-cognitive model, Van Dijk (1984) adapts a social, cognitive, and discursive analysis of the production and reproduction of racism. To illustrate the relevance of this model to the understanding of racism discourse, Van Dijk (2015) explains:

the discursive component of the theory deals with the many structures of racist text and talk, such as specific topics, negative descriptions of minorities or immigrants, disclaimers, the lexicon and other grammatical structures, topoi, argumentation or metaphors, among many other structures of ideological polarization between 'Us' and 'Them'. Secondly, such discourse structures are interpreted and explained in terms of underlying, socially shared ethnic prejudices and racist ideologies and the ways they influence the mental models of individual language users. Thirdly, such discourses and their underlying cognitions are socially and politically functional in the (re)production of ethnic domination and inequality by white dominant groups against minority groups or immigrants. They are controlled by powerful symbolic elites and organizations, e.g. those of politics, mass media and education, who have privileged access to public discourse. Each of these components of the theory and the analysis is necessary to account for racist discourse in society. We shall show below that a similar triangular approach is necessary for the study of racism and anti-racism. (64)

While examining the role of discourse in production and reproduction of racism, Van Dijk (1992) emphasizes that contemporary race discourse is distinctively identified with the denial of racism. Societal norms against perspicuous stances of racism against minority groups has fostered the inauguration of discourse that considers negative attributes about 'the other' as non-racist and justifiable. Henceforth, negative representations and judgement moves about 'the other' are typically prefaced by the use of disclaimers, justification, excuses, or reversal that simultaneously serve positive self-presentation purposes.

By means of socio-cognitive approach of Van Dijk (1984) (1992), the researcher examines the discourse of White Americans to identify their attitudes towards White-

Black interracial marriage. Furthermore, the study aims at investigating the discursive mechanisms through which White Americans legitimize their attitudes about White-Black interracial unions. When people produce discourse about a particular minority group, they do not only deliver verbal utterances, but they discursively manifest their cognitive structures, shared knowledge, and ideologies as a social group as well. It is significant to indicate that a comprehensive critical study of racism discourse requires probing the social dimension under which covert ideologies occur. In other words, the socio-cognitive approach underlines the different cognitive structures that correlate with discourse at its all levels and the different possible means that both maintain power, social injustice and establish ideologies.

The data of this study has been drawn from the discourse of White Americans who have been interviewed in two TV talk shows, Jenny Jones talk show, and Trisha Goddard talk show, and a CNN news program. Accompanied by their relatives having a black spouse, the participants have been interviewed to identify their attitudes and beliefs about their close relatives marrying black partners. The third source of the data is extracted from the discourse of Keith Bardwell who represents Louisiana Justice of the Peace. The data has been drawn from YouTube processor. The analysis of the data is performed in the light of discourse analysis based on Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach (1984-1992)

6-Data Analysis and Results

6-1- It is Not that Serious

In October 2009, Keith Bardwell, a Robert, Louisiana, Justice of the Peace, refused to perform a marriage of Beth and Terence McKay based on the fact that they are interracial couple. The judge points out "I don't do interracial marriage." Having been interviewed by CNN (Nov 4, 2009) about the basis on which he refused to perform interracial marriages, Bardwell explains that "I came to the conclusion that most Black society does not readily accept offspring of such relationships, and neither does White society." He continues, "I don't want to put children in a situation they didn't bring on themselves. In my heart, I feel the children will later suffer."

Judge Bardwell strongly believes that interracial marriages pose a number of challenges not only on the couple but also on the offspring of this kind of communion. He later explained that the decision was taken only on the ground of his concern for the serious problems biracial children would experience, "I do ceremonies for black

couples right here in my house; my main concern is for the children." In this respect, Bardwell asserted that biracial children are likely to face rejection from most of black and white society as well.

Interestingly, the very early utterance judge Bardwell produces in another CNN news show (Oct 19, 2009) as a response to the TV presenter's question: "do we have the news straight that you refused to grant the marriage license based on the fact that they are an interracial couple?" displays that he is aware of the pertinence of the situation he has involved himself in; and thus, he is much more focused on saving his individual face. He initiates his speech with an evasive discourse strategy encoded in denial of responsibility through which he states, "one thing is the Justice of Peace does not issue a marriage license permit. Nobody, no Justice of the Peace does. We only, we only perform the ceremony." The production of the previous move serves as a mitigating strategy that reduces the bad effects of his racist act against the couple and makes it seem less important. Remarkably, Bardwell's pronominal choice of "exclusive we" serves to downplay his involvement in this controversial situation by anchoring himself as a judge member in the Justice of Peace while the TV presenter's question is directed to him. Bardwell does not provide his answer with the first subject pronoun "I"; instead, he uses the exclusive "we" to deflect responsibility and distance himself from the controversial event, hence, diminishing the threat to his individual face when disconcerted with a face-threatening question. Bardwell's intention of attenuating the situation is manifested once more with the discourse marker 'only' that performs depreciatory function.

A further instance of Bardwell's intention of depreciating the situation and saving his face is corroborated as he responds to the TV presenter's statement: "but, you refused to perform the ceremony. The judge produces a second pair part to the presenter's first-pair part in the form of repair utterance, "I *recuse* myself of performing the ceremony." Noticeably, Bardwell does not provide a direct answer to the presenter's question. Instead, he resorts to euphemism as an evasive discourse strategy that serves face-keeping purposes. To legitimize his behaviour against the couple, Bardwell refers to judicial recusal as a legal right granted to any judge who wants to abstain from participating in an official action: "a judge can legally recuse himself eh, here or uh, of a case or marrying people."

6-2- I Am Not Racist! It is About the Offspring

Bardwell's refusal to perform the marriage ceremony for Beth and Terence McKay reveals his personal attitudes that disapprove interracial marriages between White

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and Black Americans. As has been asked by the presenter on which basis he recuses himself of marrying the couple, the judge argues "well! you said a while ago the reason uh that are, that are, (pause) there, uh because, the, they (pause) of, had, (sigh) on account of number of people that was born on in a situation and they claim that blacks or the whites didn't accept the children and I don't want to put the children in that uh uh, in that position." Having examined Bardwell's response, the researcher underlines very interesting discursive aspects of his speech, namely hesitation and inability of articulation that turn up when interrogated about his incentive of refusing to perform the ceremony. From the beginning of his intervention, Bardwell has been confident in his discourse and thoughts, and verbalized his statements without hesitation. However, once the conversation touches upon the reason why he has refused to perform a matrimony for the interracial couple, Bardwell becomes hesitant, unable to utter complete and meaningful utterances, and makes pauses and sighs before he finally succeeds in formulating his statement.

The excuse move the judge uses for not doing the interracial wedding, namely the mixed-race children's rejection by society, grants his racism a kind of a pretty polished and a happy face that would justify his bigot perceptions against interracial marriage. Strikingly is the fact that throughout his carrier of 34 years as Louisiana justice, Bardwell refused to perform any kind of interracial marriage. By so doing, Bardwell gives supremacy to his convictions over his commitment to the law that accords any American individual the freedom to marry or not marry outside of his/ her race.

Bardwell's discourse about interracial marriage is loaded with his concern about the negative outcome of White and Black interracial marriage, more specifically, social rejection of biracial children. As a discursive construct, social rejection is cognitively interpreted as a distressing situation that highlights further underlying concepts such as estrangement from family and society, anxiety, embarrassment, juvenile delinquency, etc. Bardwell's reference to 'rejection' in his discourse, "Blacks or the Whites didn't accept the children," cognitively emphasizes the fear of social exclusion, bullying, hostility, and accordingly the fear of criminal behaviours and other painful situations that replete Bardwell's mental model, and therefore, control his discourse.

Ultimately, the use of such construct and its cognitive outcome on interlocutors is not socially innocent. If the rejection of biracial children successfully urges emotional responses such as fear of the likely negative outcomes social rejection may cause, and some of these have been listed above, this may develop anti- White and Black

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interracial marriage attitude, e.g., by generalizing mental models of other negative consequences that may generate of socially rejecting biracial children.

6-3- Blacks Are Not Pretty Sight

A white American mother, Casey, has not remised to express disgust towards her two daughters, namely Cashley and Cynthia, simply because they have engaged in interracial relationship. Having been hosted by Trisha Goddard show, Casey expresses her view that she is not happy with the choices her daughters have made with regard to their engagement to black males. When Casey has been interrogated about what that brings up in her mind once she sees a black male, she answers, "It's just not pretty sight." She continues, "I want them [daughters] to be with sexy, hot, white, professional guys." Casey's utterances reflect the cognitive content she stores about black people: blacks are not pretty sight, blacks are not sexy, blacks are not hot, blacks are not professional, and blacks are not white. Casey's discourse is a concretized representation of her beliefs and opinion about black ethnic group. The production of such beliefs do not serve information-processing; rather they provide evaluative belief framework " that "is needed to assess the (inter)subjective "position" of social members toward such episodes." (Van Dijk, 1987, pp.189)

6-4- Positive Self-Presentation

Lest she should be perceived as breaking the American societal norms of tolerance, Casey embarks on discursive mechanism that represents the self positively. During her interview with Trisha Goddard, Casey tries to speak her attitudes in such a manner that her audience construe a positive or at least neutral impression of her. Casey's positive self-presentations are articulated in the following phrases: "to me John and James are very nice guys. I have nothing bad to say about them. Uh Umm, They are just of a different culture." The white mother remains determined about avoiding the interlocutors' negative impression and evaluation about her personality that she keeps reminding her daughters and the TV presenter, Trisha, that " it's not the colour I'm talking about, it is the culture."

When Casey asserts that she has nothing bad to say about her daughters' black partners and that her dissatisfaction is not established on colour basis, she leads the audience to focus more on a permanent attitude, rather than on the specific attitudinal stance she is currently verbalizing (cultural differences.) By so doing, Casey is implicitly interrupting any inference process the interlocutor may make from her particular attitude (culture differences) to a more general impression about Blacks. It

is in such a way that Casey tries to justify her specific negative attitude about her daughters having black partners.

6-5- I Am Not Racist, I Was Taught to Stay Within My Race

Having black sons-in-law is a disgusting fact for Casey. Her dissatisfaction stems from the fact that "I was just raised in a small town and I was taught to stay within your own race and just I never thought my daughters would do this." She continues that her daughters "will be judged throughout their lives." Things have become worst when Casey has had knowledge of her Cynthia's pregnancy; she states that the piece of news "made me totally sick to my stomach." Casey is mortified that there will now be black blood mixed in her family bloodline. She has found it difficult to accept having a biracial baby within her family; she says, "It's hard to accept the culture the baby coming into. I have a very large family and there's not one black person in my family." Casey's attitude against White and Black interracial marriage is not premised on culture differences as she is trying to prove; it is based on colour accounts, and this is clearly stated in the last part of her above statement: "there's not one black person in my family."

As Casey has expressed her concern about mixing her White family bloodline with Black bloodline, Trisha asks Casey if she is racist. Casey immediately denies racism: "no, no, no, I'm not." However, what she provides as a justification of her non-racism does in fact emphasize her racist ideology against blacks: " no, I mean, I just don't want my daughters been and it's not just blacks. I don't want them with **Jamaicans**." Casey's utterance once again highlights the issue of colour as a foundation of her attitudes against White and Black interracial marriage.

Throughout the show, Casey openly admits that she will never accept the interracial relations her daughters have engaged in. Her personal attitudes are overloaded with racism not only against her daughters' partners but also against her biracial grandchild that she acknowledges she will not be there for his birth. For fear that she should be perceived as a racist, Casey draws on excuses as a discursive strategy of racism denial. She states that her convictions have been strongly shaped by that of her family: "I was just raised in a small town and I was taught to stay within your own race." Additionally, the very truth that her large family lacks a history of interracial marriages has made her reluctant to accept it within her small family. Interestingly, the white mother makes use of her family's influence on her as a form of racism denials and as a means to justify her thorough disapproval to her daughters' interracial relations which she states that it is based on her concern for her daughters

not to be judged by society. However, Casey's discourse highly dispatches racist views and prejudice about Black race.

6-6-Negative Other-Presentation

6-6-1- Blacks Cannot Be Trusted

Some white Americans show no concern about unequivocal expression of their negative attitudes against White and Black interracial marriages. Their racist perspective draws from the conviction that hierarchies exist among humans at individual, institutional and cultural levels. There is, henceforth, a polarisation classification between the superior 'self' and the inferior 'other' through processing negative portrayal of the other.

Billy, a white American, is upset that his sister is dating a black man. During his interview with Jenny Jones (2014), Billy threatens "if my sister marries this black man, she will never be invited to my house again." Billy expresses his categorical objection to have a black brother-in-law. For face concerns, he supports his objection with presenting Blacks negatively. In this regard, he points out "black people can't be trusted. Every time you try, they just betray you." He continues, "every time you try to trust black men, they're going to stab you back, that's from my experience." Based on his personal experience with some Black Americans, Billy formulates strong interpretations of generally negative truth about Black people. Seemingly, Billy has had some negative experiences with some Blacks who have been untrustworthy and betraying. As a cognitive reaction, Billy constructs a personal mental model that portrays the Black race as untrustworthy and betraying. By justifying why he holds negative attitude about his sister marrying a Black person, Billy implicitly urges his recipients not to blame his attitudes that raise from Blacks misdeeds. He, thus, presents himself free of racism and even claims being a victim of "reverse racism" (Jensen, 2005) Blacks practise against the White dominant group. Therefore, the over-generalization moves and negative stereotypical utterances Billy produces against black people may be regarded as integrally connected to the justification force of his racist ideology.

6-6-2- Interracial Couples De-Promote Whites' Greater Unity

In November 2011, Stella Harville and her fiancé, Ticha Chikuni, a native of Zimbabwe who sung once in Kentucky church, were banned from a Kentucky church for being an interracial couple. (Hallowell, 2011) The church also made it clear, via a resolution, that married interracial couples are prohibited from becoming members of the

church. WYMT, CBS-affiliated television station, obtained a copy of the resolution. It states:

That Gulnare Freewill Baptist Church does not condone interracial marriage. Parties of such marriages will not be received as members, nor will they be used in worship services and other church functions, with the exception being funerals. All are welcome to our public worship services. This recommendation is not intended to judge the salvation of anyone, but is intended to promote greater unity among the church body and the community we serve. (Hallowell: 2011, web)

The resolution was made when "members of the congregation had said they would walk out if Chikuni sang again." (Hallowell: 2011, web) The church makes an open acknowledgment that interracial couples can neither perform interracial marriages nor be members of the church. Additionally, those who are interracially married or engaged are not allowed to take part in worship services but they may attend them.

The decision of banning interracial couples from the church has been taken by virtue of personal attitudes the church body holds against this kind of relations. The church reaction reveals a large amount of overt racism and prejudice against Black race that is perceived as a threatening force to the unity of the White community. This incident outlines that the relationship between Blacks and Whites in America is still determined by factors (skin colour, religion, geographical location, etc.,) that make of 'difference' a valid and reliable variable for categorizing and marginalizing human beings. Strikingly, is the fact that this reaction was produced by a religious institution that is supposed to take an integral part in unifying all human beings regardless of their differences.

7- Social Functions of White Americans Discourse Against Interracial Marriages

During the analysis of the data, the researcher has stumbled upon some social functions of the discourse White Americans have developed about their attitudes against White-Black interracial marriages; such functions have been indicated to as positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. Obviously, the talk White Americans produce against White-Black interracial marriages does not only mediate their personal views about the target issue, it does also operate to verbalize, share, and reproduce the social cognitions of the dominant group. In other words, when the participants in the TV shows articulate their attitudes against White-Black interracial communion, they do so as social members of in-group. The set of convictions, beliefs, perspectives Bardwell, Casey, and Billy hold about black people have been accounted

on their shared societal norms, acquired values and experiences as social entities of the White race.

In discourse about Black out-group, the participants do not only disclose their shared group social cognitions, but they reveal their own experiences as well. This has been manifested in Billy's discourse. (section 6-6-1) Billy refers to his personal experience with some Black Americans to justify and explain his negative attitudes about Black Americans. These explanatory and justificatory moves serve as a self-defensive and legitimizing mechanism of his prejudiced behavioural or discursive practices.

In the same manner, legislations, commandments, and interdictions that exert power on out-groups, discourse plays a crucial role in the exercise of power and dominance. Because prejudice discourse conveys shared social cognitions, justification and explanation moves of certain negative actions, it highly likely to influence and control the cognitions and the mind of other groups.

Implication

In the light of the samples' analysis, a very significant implication is drawn out. Despite the fact that number of surveys have revealed that the rate of white-black interracial marriages has increased in America, and irrespective of the fact that all the formal restrictions on this kind of marriages have been removed out, yet in reality a number of white Americans are still reluctant to welcome this kind of communion. This truth has been realized through the very low rate white-black interracial marriage represents among other types of interracial marriages in USA, namely "less than 1%." (Census poll)

Interracial couples are still victims of family rejection, racism, and discrimination, chiefly from the part of the majority group (the whites.) These racist attitudes white Americans form about White-Black interracial unions is "reflective of the powerful historical social boundaries between blacks and whites that continue to separate these two groups," (Yancey, 2007, pp. 197) regardless of the different justification and excuses the cases under study have used to legitimate their reactions. Yancey's argument bears a significant importance as it could be exploited to get an insight of why White-Black interracial marriage is perceived as the least favourable types of interracial communions in USA.

Conclusion

To conclude, the issue of white-black interracial marriages has been always most controversial of all types of interracial marriages in America. However, this type of

interracial marriages have achieved advances in great strides since the 1950's, all of which reveal the fact that the American society have made a shift with regard to their perception of race issues as well as the quality of racial relations in USA. Nevertheless, it is of significant importance to mention that white-black interracial marriages are still confined to the historical social boundaries set between the whites and the blacks.

Discourse analysis of the data has shown that racism is an integral part among the White Americans. In micro-context, white Americans have represented themselves as non-racist; they have denied any racism attitudes. Rather, they outline certain motives that soften their negative attitudes against White-Black interracial communion, such as having concerns about interracial offspring rejection, that others will judge their relatives throughout their lives, that Whites' strong unity is negatively influenced by mixing with Blacks.

Furthermore, the analysis of the data reveals that some White Americans form negative attitudes about Black race only because few of them exert immoral behaviours towards members of the dominant group. All these form of racism denials have been articulated through such mechanism of mitigation, euphemistic lexical items, face-saving strategies, positive self-presentation, negative discourse about Black race.

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The Social Innovation Potential of the Northern Hungarian Region

Dora Szendi

Institute of World and Regional Economics, University of Miskolc, Hungary

Abstract

In the last two decades, a new direction has appeared in the study of innovation processes in the literature. Researchers are paying more and more attention to social innovation beside the classical Schumpeterian approach. Social innovation is new solutions (product, technology, organizational solution) that can effectively meet market needs that are not or hardly met on a market basis, innovation can lead to new or more advanced skills / relationships, and contribute to a more efficient use of resources. However, there is no uniform definition of the concept. The issue of social innovation is particularly important in the case of the Northern Hungary region, because it can bring hope for some peripheral areas and a new approach to solving problems. High technological innovation potential and performance do not necessarily go hand in hand with high social innovation activity, so in the case of peripheral regions there is a hope for social innovations even in the absence of technological innovations.

Keywords: social innovation, Northern Hungary, peripheries, inequalities, technological vs. social innovation

Introduction

Defining Social Innovation

One of the most complex and shortest definitions of social innovation is the definition of Mulgan et al. (2007, p. 4), who argue that social innovation is a "new idea that provides a solution to fulfil unmet social needs".

In another point of view, social innovation aims to form social practices that can respond to challenges, thereby it can result in increasing life quality and reach greater social responsibility from civil society actors than before (Lombardi et al. 2020).

Cajaiba – Santana (2014, p. 44.) examined the social innovations from a sociological perspective and concluded that these are new social practices created from collective,

intentional, and goal-oriented actions aimed at prompting social change through the reconfiguration of how social goals are accomplished.

Phills et al. (2008) also focus on social problems, according to them social innovations are novel solutions for problems that are more efficient, effective, sustainable than the existing ones, the value created through them primarily serves the well-being of the society as a whole (not just separately the individuals).

According to the definitions, not only an idea can be new or novel, but as Rehfeld et al. (2015) states it, a novel combination of ideas and a higher level of collaborations can also result in a social innovation.

To sum up, therefore, the social innovation has a number of unique characteristics that distinguish it from the traditional technical innovations. According to the OECD (2016, p. 82), social innovation differs from classical technical innovation in the following ways: "social innovation does not aim to create new forms of production or reach new markets, but provides a new opportunity to meet social needs, and their integration into production." Thus, some definitions emphasize the character of social innovations to meet social needs in a novel way that the market cannot (e.g., Mulgan et al. 2007), while others focus on increasing efficiency (Phills et al. 2008; Lombardi et al. 2020), and also others highlight that it can help to solve problems caused by market and government failures (Rehfeld et al. 2015).

According to the most definitions, the basic goal of social innovation is to improve the quality of life of people living in the area through innovative ideas and solutions and to solve critical problems to which the market cannot respond effectively. In this way, the value creation can be realized for all those involved in the innovation process. From the definitions, we can conclude, that these innovations typically emerge as bottom-up initiatives to meet a need of the society in a novel way. Social innovations, similarly to classical technological innovations, can take many forms, covering the full range of processes (product, technology, organization, marketing, service, business model, etc.). Their form of financing can range from self-financing to various forms of support (Figure 1).
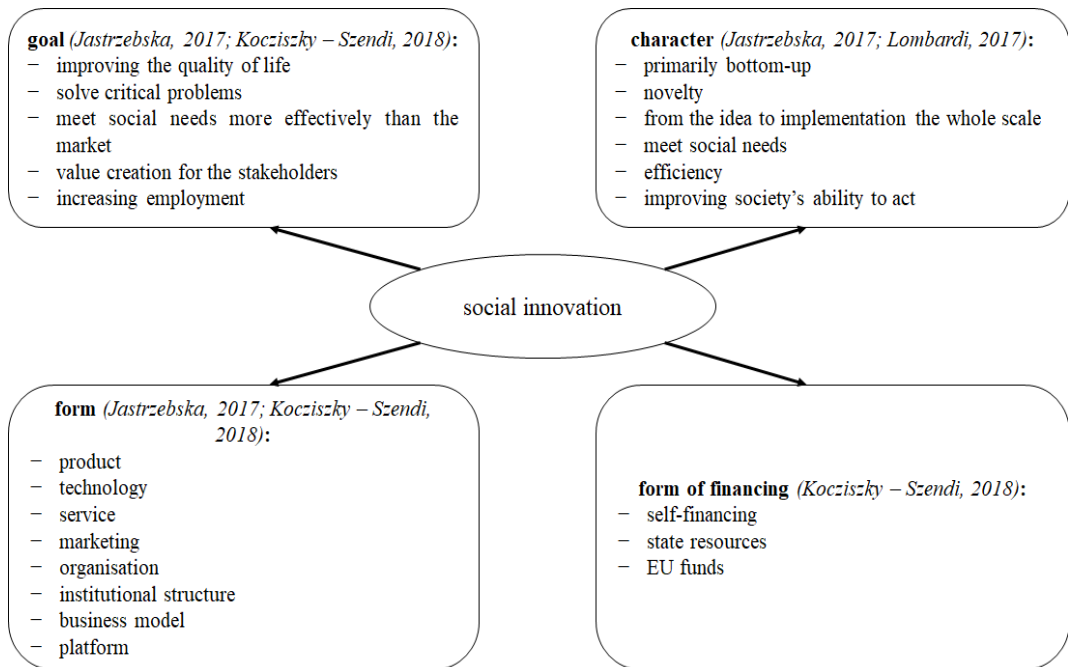
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Figure 1. The goal, character, form and financing of social innovation

Source: own compilation based on Jastrzebska (2017), Lombardi (2017) and Kocziszky-Szendi (2018)

The interpretation of social innovation may also differ from one geographical area to another. For example, in the Western Balkans or Eastern Europe, in the case of innovation the countries still focus on classical technological innovation and on R&D activities. Besides the classical challenges (demographic change and aging societies, social inclusion), factors such as political change and the need for economic reforms are the main drivers of social innovation in the Eastern European region. In Anglo-Saxon countries, the role of individual responsibility is high, so social innovations are usually as "greenfield" investments, with the cooperation of a large number of independent stakeholders, and the micro, mezzo and macro levels. In the continental countries, there is a strong dependence on social welfare systems, so the main objective is to achieve the "common good". In the Eastern European model, we encounter larger differences in quality of life. Here, social innovations are even less institutionalized, resp. in many cases, they have lower social acceptance (OECD, 2016).

Comparing social innovation potential and performance is a major challenge, as there are different measurement methods for each geographical area and even within individual countries. One of the EU's key objectives is to strengthen social innovation activity. Therefore, a huge number of projects are being supported. In the last 10

years, a number of analyzes have been carried out to measure the social innovation potential of a given region (country, regional or local level), but till now there is no agreed-on methodology and indicator structure.

One of the most complex models suitable for regional analysis was developed by the Economist Intelligence Unit in 2016, which has four basic pillars: political and institutional, financing, entrepreneurial, and social.

The Role of Social Innovations in the Catch-up of the Peripheries

One of the critical features of social innovations is the support of grassroots initiatives, so its bottom-up nature (Lombardi, 2017), which makes it suitable for meeting the needs of individual social groups more effectively than by top-down methods. As social innovation usually tries to satisfy social needs that the market cannot, it can also be a solution in the catch-up of the peripheries (Kocziszky et al. 2015; Szörényiné, 2015; Benedek et al. 2016; Kocziszky et al. 2017; Kocziszky – Szendi, 2018; Lombardi et al. 2020). Some problems of the disadvantaged, peripheral regions (e.g. low educational attainment, low activity rate, high unemployment, low human development index, poverty, etc.) cannot be solved by technological innovations due to low innovation potential (absorption capacity). Therefore, new or novel solutions are needed that provide creative answers to these problems (Moulaert et al. 2014; Benedek et al. 2016) and can serve as effective innovation through bottom-up initiatives.

From the 24 districts of the Northern Hungarian region, 10 can be classified by the 106/2015. (IV. 23.) Governmental Regulation in the category, that is called most disadvantaged area which problems can be solved by a complex program, therefore the examination of the social innovation capacity is significant in this region (Figure 2).
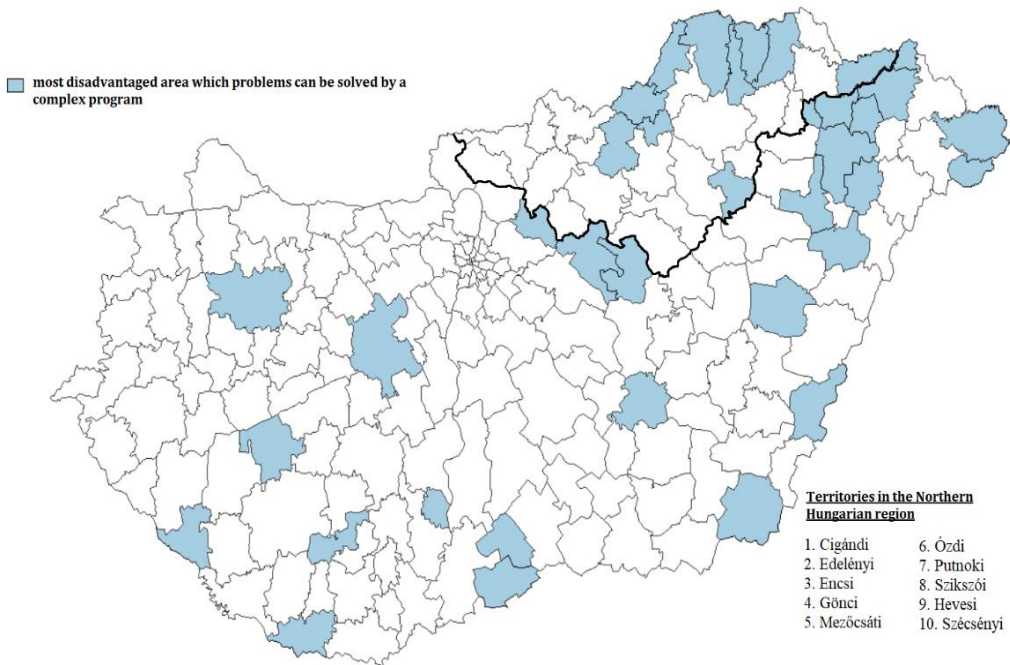
Figure 2. List of the most disadvantaged areas which problems can be solved by a complex program (2020)

Source: own compilation based on the 106/2015. (IV. 23.) Governmental Regulation

Technological innovation performance is usually examined on the basis of R&D expenditures, research and development, and the regional number of patents created. There are a number of recommendations for measuring social innovation performance in the literature (e.g. Krlev et al. 2014; Economist Intelligence Unit, 2016; Castro Spila et al. 2016). Usually, three indicators are analysed (social enterprises, non-profit organizations, self-employment rate). In this case of the social innovation potential we think on the regions' capabilities (agreeing with Kocziszky et al. (2015)) that help the generation and creation of social innovations. The choice of each indicator is justified by the following factors:

Number of social enterprises per 1000 inhabitants: As in the case of the social enterprises the main objective is not only the profit maximization, but similarly to make social innovation efforts, to address and solve social problems (e.g. labour market, equal opportunities, health, culture) (Popoli, 2016; Market & Profit, 2017). In the areas with a significant number of social enterprises, social sensitivity and responsibility are stronger, and in the long run more ideas and creative solutions can be created to address the challenges.

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Number of non-profit organizations per 1000 inhabitants: In the case of social innovation, as it is supported by its different approaches, the existence of community-based bottom-up initiatives has critical importance as the starting points for innovative solutions. The non-profit sector can contribute to a more efficient use of scarce resources, thereby increasing the quality of life, which is one of the main goals of social innovation efforts (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2016; Andion et al. 2017; Krlev et al. 2019).

Proportion of self-employed as a percentage of total employment: The self-employed not only contribute positively to economic growth and the traditional innovation activity, but also play an important role in social innovations by satisfying local needs and generating ideas (Interreg, 2019; Akgüc, 2020). The role of the self-employed in social innovation can also be observed as creative actors with innovative ideas and / or venture capital to implement these new ideas and even create start-ups.

**The Social Innovation Situation in the Northern Hungarian Region**

Settlement Level Surveys

In terms of the non-profit organizations per 100 inhabitants, the largest positive changes in the national comparison took place in Inke, Ziliz and Zalaszabar in the period of 2012-2017, where the number of these organizations increased significantly. In contrast, in the case of Vásárosdombó, Zsombó, Adács, Csobánka or Zselickislak, for example, the number of non-profit organizations decreased. The majority of settlements have on average 1-2 organizations per 100 inhabitants (interesting note, that there are zero non-profit organizations in 258 settlements in Hungary).

The most non-profit organizations in the Northern Hungarian region have three small villages in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county: Teresztenye, Tornabarakony and Sima, where there are more than 10 organizations per 100 inhabitants, while in Abaújlak, Gagyapáti, Kozárd and Égerszög there are 7.5-8 non-profit organizations per hundred inhabitants.

The assumption that the social innovation may be a breakout point for peripheral areas seems to be justified in the distribution of non-profits. Specifically, the most number of non-profit organizations can be identified in the northern, north-eastern part of the region, in the areas of Cserehát and Zemplén (parts of the complex disadvantaged areas, Figure 3). In this territory, there are only few for-profit companies due to the disadvantaged socio-economic situation and accessibility conditions, so a part of the population should be engaged in non-profit activities. In the case of the county capitals, the non-profit activity is weaker, but in all cities it exceeds the regional average (Eger: 2.1; Miskolc: 1.3 and Salgótarján: 1.6 non-profit organizations per 100 inhabitants). There is no registered non-profit organization in

45 settlements of the region, including also areas that fit to the 106/2015. (IV. 23.) Government Regulation (e.g. Csenyéte, Dámóc, Felsőgagy, Gadna or Kiscsécs).
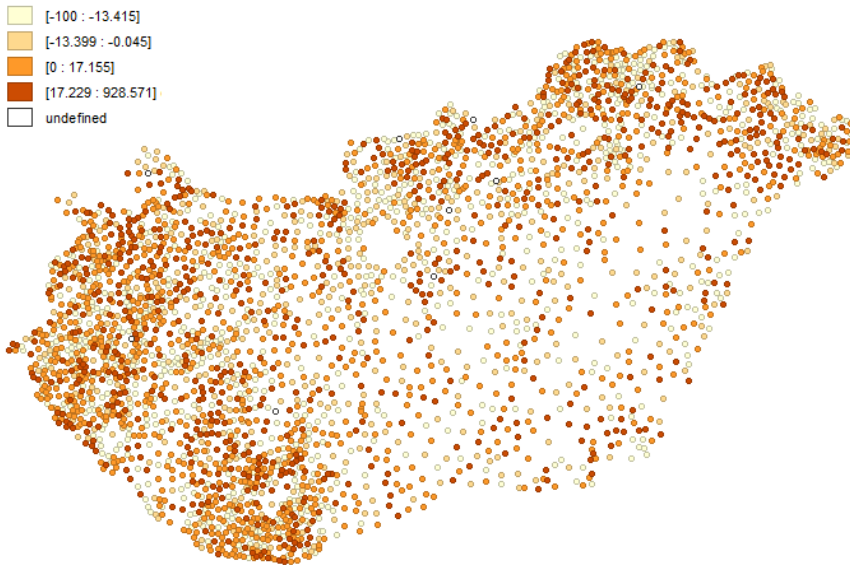
Figure 3. Number of non-profit organizations per 100 inhabitants at the settlement level (2017)

Source: own compilation based on the data of the Hungarian Central Statistics Office

Based on the number of social enterprises per 100 inhabitants, Záhony, Adács and Áporka have the biggest changes in the period of 2012-2017 (with extremely high values in some places), while the largest decline in social enterprises occurred in Zsédeny, Zók and Aka. In total, in the case of 549 settlements, all social enterprises ceased to exist in the period of 2012-2017, while in the case of 726 settlements, no social enterprises are present. Specifically, most enterprises are located in Iborfia, Kaszó and Patca, while (where there is at least one) the fewest are in Tornyospálca, Ópályi and Arló.

Regarding the Northern Hungarian region, the most social enterprises can be found in the middle path of the region, only a few can be identified in the mentioned most disadvantaged regions (with a few exceptions: Teresztenye, Galvács, Keresztéte, Varbóc and Viszló). The county capitals also perform outstandingly, Eger is 17th, Miskolc is 26th, and Salgótarján is 46th in the distribution of social enterprises (Figure 4). (Social enterprises are still relatively new economic formations, so it is not surprising that 260 settlements in the region have no one from this type.) Empirical research proves that social enterprises operating in a given field have a multiplier

effect, as they can help financial, tax and tender consulting local initiatives that enable the creation of new businesses (G. Fekete et al. 2017).
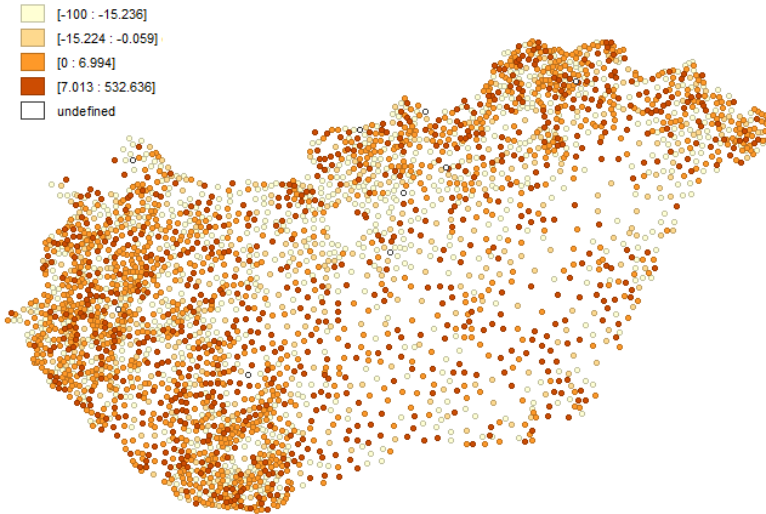

Figure 4. Number of social enterprises per 100 inhabitants at the settlement level (2017)

Source: own compilation based on the data of the Hungarian Central Statistics Office

The studies confirm that the settlements mostly affected by complex problems are the settlements of the previously mentioned Northern Hungarian region's borderline area, with mostly foreign neighbourhood (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Complex social innovation problems in the settlements (2017). Source: own compilation

The Situation of the Northern Hungarian Region and Its Counties from the Aspect of Social Innovation

Between 1996 and 2018, the number of non-profit organizations per 1,000 inhabitants showed a slight increase in the case of the Hungarian regions (except for the Central Hungarian region after 2010), which is favourable in terms of social innovation conditions. At the same time, the position of the Northern Hungarian region deteriorated throughout the analysed period, despite the fact that all three counties of the region significantly increased the number of their non-profit organizations. By 2018, the Northern Hungarian region was the penultimate among the Hungarian regions, surpassing only the Northern Great Plain region (Figure 6). The most non-profit organizations (in the proportion of all organizations) are in the Southern Transdanubia region, which can be an example to follow for the Northern Hungarian region as well, because the settlement structure (existence of small village areas, significant peripheries, spatial features) and socio-economic situation are very similar.
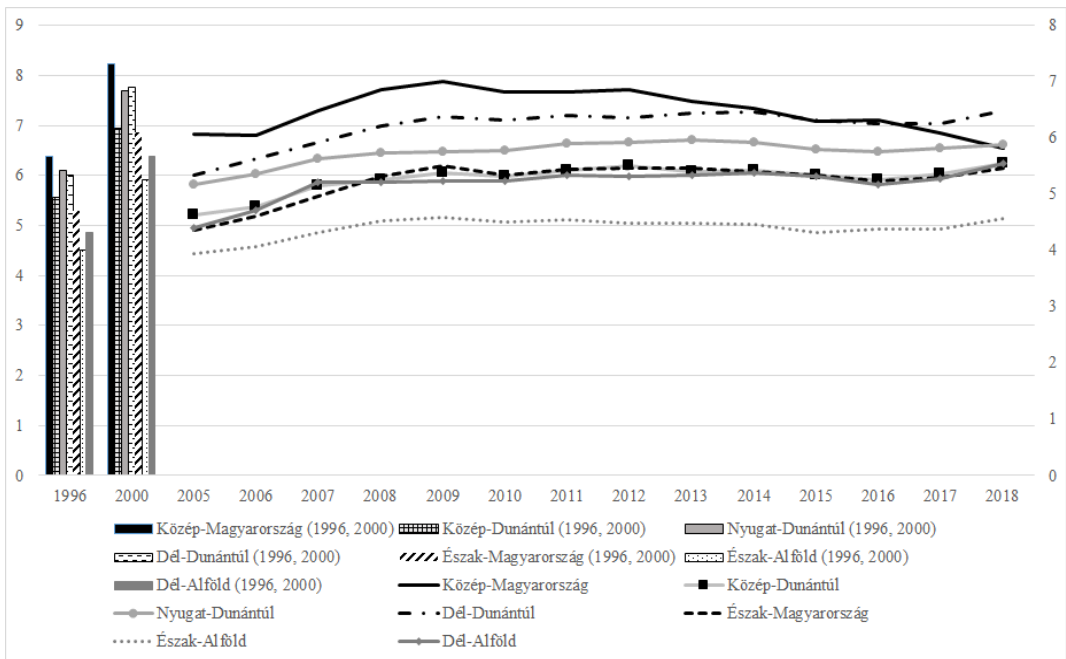

Figure 6. Change in the number of non-profit organizations per 1000 inhabitants (1996, 2000, 2005-2018). Source: own compilation

The distribution of non-profit firms by organizational form has changed only moderately over the past 20 years (Table 1). In the Northern Hungarian region, the largest proportion of non-profit organizations are associations and foundations, which have one of the highest shares after the Central Hungarian region. Similarly,

compared with other territorial units, the share of public bodies in the total non-profit structure is the lowest. There is also a small difference in the distribution of foundations and associations in the counties of the region, as the former has the highest share in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county and the latter in Nógrád county, for example. The region of Northern Hungary is in a particularly good position in terms of foundations in a national comparison as well. The 11.4% of all foundations and 17.5% of public bodies are concentrated here, which in both cases is in the third place among the regions.

Table 1. Distribution of non-profit organizations by organizational form (2018)

	Distribution of non-profit organizations by organizational form in the regions of Hungary (%)								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	summa
Central Hungary	37.3	0.8	47.9	0.2	1.4	4.8	7.3	0.2	100
Central Transdanubia	28.5	3.0	59.2	0.5	1.2	2.5	5.0	0.1	100
Western Transdanubia	26.4	2.1	64.0	0.4	1.2	2.3	3.7	0.1	100
Southern Transdanubia	25.3	2.4	63.5	0.6	0.8	2.8	4.5	0.1	100
Northern Hungary	**31.4**	**2.2**	**56.2**	**0.7**	**0.9**	**2.4**	**6.3**	**0.0**	**100**
Northern Great Plain	28.8	1.7	59.4	0.4	0.8	3.0	5.9	0.0	100
Southern Great Plain	29.2	1.6	59.2	0.6	0.9	3.1	5.4	0.0	100
Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén	34.6	2.1	52.8	0.4	1.0	1.9	7.2	0.1	100
Heves	29.6	2.2	56.7	1.4	1.0	3.7	5.3	0.1	100
Nógrád	24.8	2.5	65.0	0.3	0.5	1.7	5.2	0.0	100
Country total	1917 9	105 6	345 79	269	674	207 5	360 0	59	61491
	Share of regions in non-profit organizations by organizational form (%)								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	summa
Central Hungary	38.2	15.4	27.3	18.2	40.9	45.8	40.1	62.7	32.0
Central Transdanubia	9.8	18.9	11.3	12.6	11.6	8.0	9.1	6.8	10.7
Western Transdanubia	9.0	13.0	12.0	9.3	11.4	7.1	6.7	6.8	10.6
Southern Transdanubia	8.5	14.6	11.9	13.8	7.7	8.8	8.1	11.9	10.5
Northern Hungary	**11.4**	**14.4**	**11.3**	**17.5**	**9.2**	**8.0**	**12.1**	**5.1**	**11.3**
Northern Great Plain	11.3	12.0	12.9	10.8	8.5	10.8	12.3	3.4	12.2
Southern Great Plain	11.8	11.6	13.3	17.8	10.7	11.5	11.6	3.4	12.6
Country total	100. 0	100. 0	100. 0	100. 0	100. 0	100. 0	100. 0	100. 0	**100.0**
Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén	6.7	7.4	5.7	5.9	5.3	3.4	7.4	3.4	6.1
Heves	3.0	4.0	3.2	10.0	3.0	3.5	2.9	1.7	3.2
Nógrád	1.7	3.0	2.4	1.5	0.9	1.1	1.9	0.0	2.1

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Source: own compilation based on the data of the Hungarian Central Statistics Office

Note: 1. foundation, 2. public foundation, 3. association, 4. public body, 5. employee advocacy, 6. professional advocacy, 7. public benefit company, 8. union/merge

There is also a positive trend in the change of the number of social enterprises per 1000 inhabitants (Figure 7). The number of enterprises increased in all regions during the whole period, the largest positive shift happened in the capital region, while in the Northern Hungarian region the number of enterprises developed positively, but its value was the last in the ranking of regions except in 1996 and 2000. This is largely due to the fact that in Heves and Nógrád counties, the proportion of social enterprises (15-16 enterprises per thousand inhabitants) goes significantly behind the national values (approximately 22-23 enterprises per 1000 inhabitants).
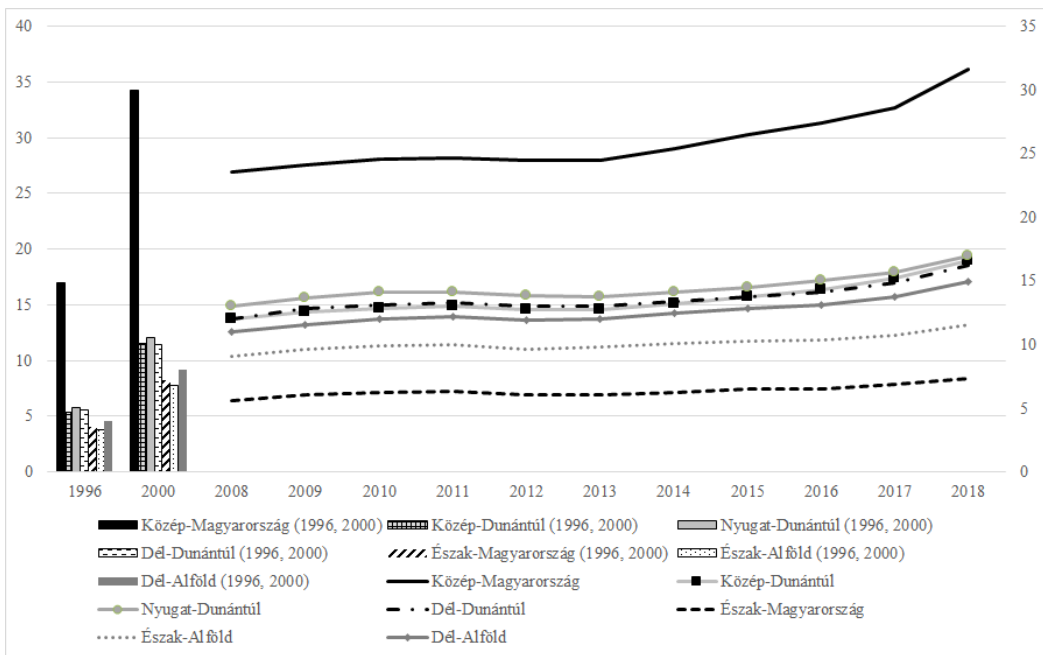

Figure 7. Change in the number of social enterprises per 1000 inhabitants (1996, 2000, 2005-2018). Source: own compilation

According to their main form of activity, the non-profit organizations can be classified into the following categories: culture, sports, leisure, education, social care, professional and economic advocacy. The proportion of non-profit organizations engaged in non-social activities was extremely low in all counties in 2018 (Figure 8), suggesting that the survey of non-profit organizations may be an appropriate measure for examining social innovation, as the vast majority deal with social problems. The proportion of non-profit organizations engaged in social activities is over 90% in all counties, and their distribution has not changed significantly since

2001, which indicates the growing social role and activities of the organizations. In the region of Northern Hungary, the total share of non-profit organizations engaged in non-social activities is 3.98%, while in its two counties (Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén 3.41% and Nógrád 2.4%) it is even lower. The scope of activities of non-profit organizations varies in the counties of the region, in the case of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén and Heves counties the main profile is culture, sports, leisure and education, while the share of social care providers is lower and the proportion of professional and economic advocacies is the lowest. In contrast, the distribution of non-profit organizations differs in Nógrád county, and the proportion of organizations engaged in educational activities is also lower. The organizations operating in the region have significant tender/EU funding resources in proportion to their total revenues (region: 14.3%, which corresponds to the national average, and only Budapest (14.5%) and the Northern Great Plain region (19.5%) overlaps it). The situation of Nógrád county is especially outstanding, where this ratio is 28.7%.
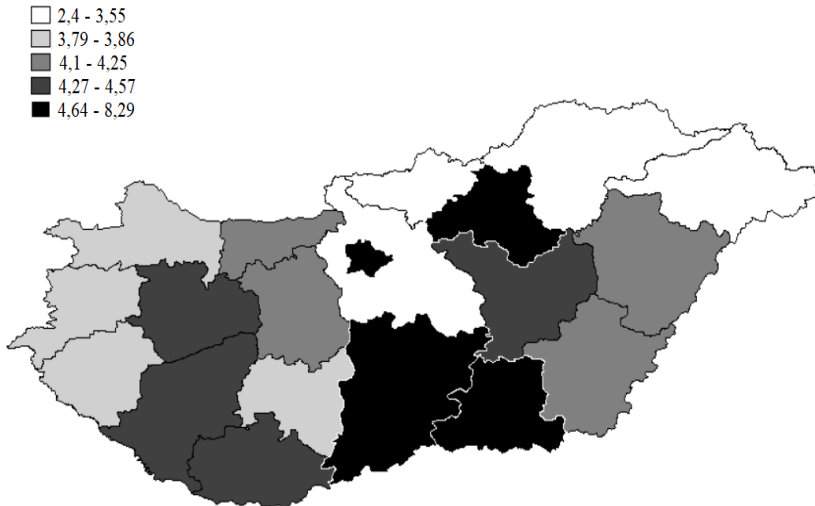

Figure 8. Proportion of non-profit organizations with non-social activities (2018)

Source: own compilation based on the data of the Hungarian Central Statistics Office

Technological and Social Innovation Performance in the Nuts3 Regions of the Visegrad Countries

Based on the complex technological innovation index, the capital regions of the Visegrad countries are the best performing territories at the beginning (2001) and the end (2015) of the analysed period, as well. The best-performing region in both years is Prague (a leader in two components, see Table 2), ahead of Budapest and Bratislava regions. By 2015, the Northern Hungarian region had deteriorated one place in its position among the regions and was only 27th in the ranking; it shows the

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best ranking in both years in the number of patents per million inhabitants (where it is 5th in a national comparison), while its performance is weaker based on the other two factors. The relatively favourable position of the patent activity among the regions can be the result of the good performance of corporate research (e.g. Bosch) and university research institutes (University of Miskolc, Eszterházi Károly University). Based on technological innovation factors, the worst performing territories are Polish regions, showing relatively poor performance in all dimensions.

Table 2. The position of the Northern Hungarian region in the ranking of the NUTS2 regions of the Visegrad countries based on the technological innovation index (2001, 2015)

No.	Region	2001				No.	Region	2015			
		1.	2.	3.	Sum			1.	2.	3.	Sum
1.	Praha	1	1	2	4	1.	Praha	1	1	2	4
2.	Central Hungary	3	3	1	7	2.	Bratislavský kraj	2	2	4	8
3.	Bratislavský kraj	5	2	3	10	3.	Central Hungary	4	4	1	9
4.	Mazowieckie	4	4	10	18	4.	Jihovýchod	3	3	9	15
5.	Jihovýchod	6	5	7	18	5.	Mazowieckie	5	5	6	16
...						...					
26.	Northern Hungary	33	28	15	76	27.	Northern Hungary	30	31	20	81
...						...					
31.	Podkarpackie	28	30	30	88	31.	Severozápad	28	33	28	89
32.	Lubuskie	34	33	24	91	32.	Kujawsko-Pomorskie	29	28	32	89
33.	Opolskie	31	31	32	94	33.	Swietokrzyskie	27	34	30	91
34.	Warminsko-Mazurskie	32	32	33	97	34.	Lubuskie	35	35	27	97
35.	Swietokrzyskie	35	34	34	103	35.	Warminsko-Mazurskie	34	30	35	99

Source: own compilation

Note: 1. R&D expenditure per capita (Euro); 2. Number of researchers and developers per 100 inhabitants; 3. Number of patent applications per million inhabitants.

Based on the components of the social innovation index, Prague is at the top of the ranking (Table 3) also in this comparison, but the dominance of the capital regions is not so significant. The first part of the list contains predominantly Czech regions, the region of Northern Hungary is one of the worst positioned regions (32nd in 2001 and last in 2015), mainly due to the low proportion of self-employed. Based on the other two indicators the region is located also in the last third of the list.

Table 3. The position of the Northern Hungarian region in the ranking of the NUTS2 regions of the Visegrad countries based on the social innovation index (2001, 2015)

| No. | Region | 2001 | | | | No. | Region | 2015 | | | |
		1.	2.	3.	Sum			1.	2.	3.	Sum
1.	Praha	12	1	3	16	1.	Praha	6	2	2	10
2.	Strední Cechy	16	4	5	25	2.	Strední Cechy	5	4	7	16
3.	Jihozápad	22	6	2	30	3.	Jihozápad	19	6	3	28
4.	Jihovýchod	19	5	7	31	4.	Severovýchod	16	7	5	28
5.	Severovýchod	21	7	4	32	5.	Jihovýchod	21	5	4	30
…						…					
31.	Northern Great Plain	27	18	31	76	31.	Východné Slovensko	13	27	34	74
32.	Northern Hungary	30	20	30	80	32.	Southern Great Plain	30	19	26	75
33.	Stredné Slovensko	33	23	32	88	33.	Západné Slovensko	26	14	35	75
34.	Západné Slovensko	34	22	34	90	34.	Northern Great Plain	34	22	28	84
35.	Východné Slovensko	35	29	33	97	35.	Northern Hungary	35	24	25	84

Source: own compilation

Note: 1. Proportion of self-employed as a percentage of the total employment; 2. Number of social enterprises per 1000 inhabitants; 3. Number of non-profit organizations per 1000 inhabitants
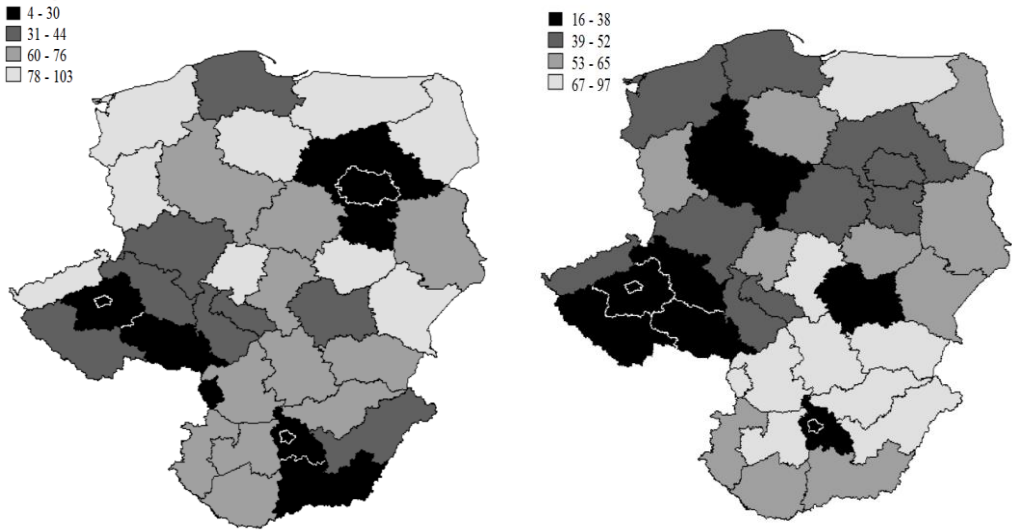
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Figure 9. Clusters of the technological (left) and social (right) innovation index among the regions of the Visegrad countries (2001)
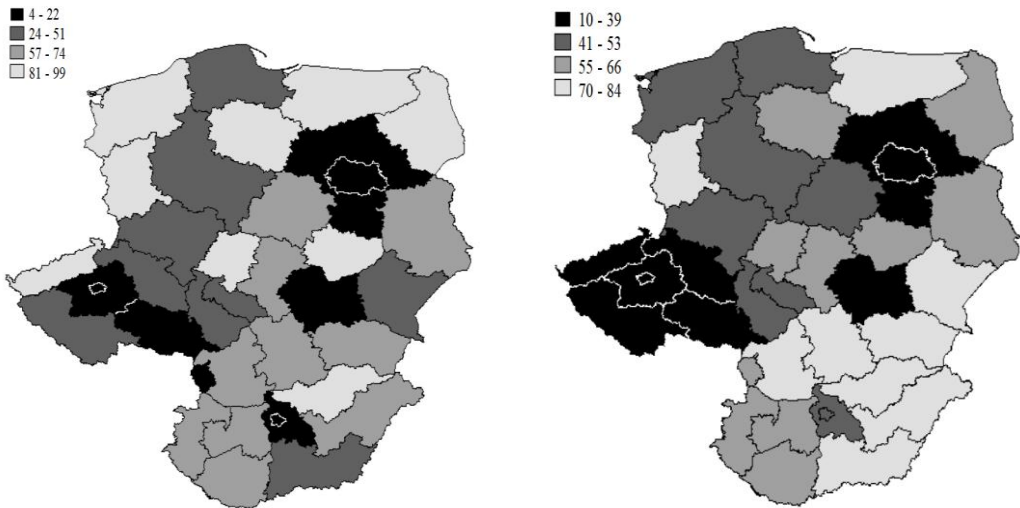
Source: own compilation

Figure 10. Clusters of the technological (left) and social (right) innovation index among the regions of the Visegrad countries (2015). Source: own compilation

Summary

Analysing the examined components together we can conclude the following. In 2001, the biggest differences among the clusters of innovation factors show the position of the capital regions indicated above, on the one hand, and on the other hand there are stronger western-eastern differences based on the social innovation index (Figure 9). The situation of the Northern Hungarian region is more unfavourable in terms of the social innovation index than its technological innovation performance. In 2015, there was a slight positive shift in all regions. The capital regions showed an improving trend in terms of social innovation, however, the examined region of Northern Hungary is still member of the most unfavourable cluster for both indicators (Figure 10). Thus, high technological innovation potential and performance are not associated with high social innovation activity, i.e. in the case of peripheral regions, there is hope for social innovation even in the absence of technological innovations.

Acknowledgments

Resources

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