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State, Democracy,
Society and Economy
in the 21st century:
challenges and prospects

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Topic 1

Democratization and State in Transition: New Challenges and Perspectives

Democracy at the Beginning of the New Era: Changes and Opportunities[1]

Konstantinos Zafeiris[2], Vasiliki Zafeiri[3], Aikaterini Lioudaki[4]

Abstract

From the classical Athens of Pericles in antiquity, as this emerged in an impressive way in the 'Epitaph' of this prominent Athenian citizen, general and politician, until today, hu-manity has changed dramatically. All changes were focused on human and the forms of political organization that would ensure his survival. The implementation of the principles of democracy was a requirement of the times and a demand of the people. As far as the application and guarding of the principles of democracy is concerned, there have been pe-riods of their harmonization with social life, but also periods of their degradation, under-functioning, and even circumvention. The perspective of the whole world belongs to democracy and this requires the effort and mobilization of all, for the implementation of the fundamental democratic principles inherited from our ancestors and which we must pre-serve and pass on to next generations. This article analyzes the new challenges created by the coordinated and intense change of important sectors of our social everyday life, in democracy, demonstrating the attacks on its pillars and highlighting the opportunities that appear for its perfection.

Key Words: Democracy; Health; Immigration; Economy; Religion.

Introduction

Democracy came from the mixture of primitive feminism with the patriarchy that succeeded it. Under different circumstances, this mixture took place only among the Hellenes, while in other people and cultures, similar circumstances did not occur (Kontos, 2004: 142). All the innovations that occurred in the statutes of the city-states, changed the written and unwritten juristic codes that until then were passed down from generation to generation and so, through a process of successive changes that continued for many generations, we have the appearance of the first "Democratic" states with their own peculiarities. The most important factor in configuring this first type of democracy is considered to be the circumstance of the appearance of an economically and militarily independent class of

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citizens, in relatively small communities, who cultivated a democratic way of life (Held, 2003: 25-26). The moral, political, economic and urban planning principles of democracy, such as the one that determines the whole of citizens, the Popular Sovereignty, that the general principle is the Deme, the mob, which is the highest and most independent state body, in which the total income of the city comes from the taxation of wealthy citizens and is distributed in the poorest classes and concepts, such as freedom, equality, meekness, brotherhood, egalitarianism, equation and self-sufficiency, we meet them in Aristotle's "State" and "Rhetoric", as well as the oath of the Athenian citizens (Kontos, 2004: 143-146).

The centuries that followed the expansion and fall of the Roman Empire from 476 AD to the modern era is a historical period sealed by new systems of governance in Europe and worldwide. The reaction and participation of the people, in different ways each time, to a greater or lesser extent, signaled universal changes. Thus, we have the birth of feudal states during the dark period of the Middle Ages (5th-15th century), with the Church as the supreme power and the guilds as a decisive key element (Reble, 1996: 80). During the Renaissance, which lasted from the 13th century until the 16th century, we have a turn to antiquity, in the fields of science, art and education, with decisive political and economic changes marked by great social struggles (Reble, 1996: 97-98). The Baroque century (16th - 17th century) that follows, as Reble indicates, "is the century of fanaticism and dogmatism, with the strengthening of the authority in both the ecclesiastical and state sectors, as well as changes particularly noticeable in political, economic and social life" (Reble, 1996: 156).

So, we come to the point where, according to the French philosopher Alain de Benoist, *"the greatest problem of democracy is not the degree of freedom or the degree of equality, but rather the degree of participation"*. Democracy is oscillated by five emerging contradictions, intensely at the same time, demonstrating the necessity for changes.

Democracy vs Democracy

When threatened, the first thing democracy abandons is democracy [5]

From Aristotle's "Athenian State" until today, the basic principles of democracy are broadly the same for all models applied in all times and countries. Democracy is examined over time through two parameters: its statutory framework and its practical application in everyday life. There have been periods of harmonization of its principles with social life, but also periods of degradation, under-functioning, and even circumvention. The reasons for this can be sought in objective conditions, such

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[5] Mignon McLaughlin, 1913-1983, American columnist.

as the chronological and social circumstances of each era and each country where it was applied, but also in subjective reasons, such as the human factor, which often operated on the basis of the individual and not the collective interest.

Today, perhaps more than ever, the principles of democracy are being violated in the name of democracy itself. From Latin America, which is still the region with the highest social and economic inequalities, the USA with the repeated racist manifestations but also the distrust in the electoral system, to the congenital democratic deficit (Stefanou, 1996: 130) of the EU, with the lack of discrimination of the functions and the inadequate legitimacy of the institutions which are its characteristic elements, we observe that *"the rule of the majority applies only if you take into account the individual rights. Because you can't put five wolves and a sheep to vote on what to eat for dinner"*[6].

However, the opportunity presented in our time, due to data processing and communication technologies and of course the internet, is called e-Government, which is the channel through which e-Democracy is achieved. This is the case when technological applications are implemented by governments for the benefit of citizens, and vice versa when citizens use similar tools to communicate with the management and decision-making centers (Karadima, 2010). It is important to mention that some surveys have tried unsuccessfully to separate democracy from e-Government. However, according to the Abu-Shanab study, e-Government is closely linked to democracy and social inclusion (Abu-Shanab, 2015). After all, as the Council of Europe stated in its recommendations on e-Democracy: e-Democracy is nothing else but Democracy (STOA, 2018).

Health vs Democracy

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused worldwide a frightening death toll, forcing governments to take emergency measures, such as curfews and quarantines, to curb the spread and pressure to the health system (Tzagkarakis et al., 2020). In the fight against survival and the conservation of basic functions of regularity (feeding, supply of medicines and other necessary items, assistance, physical activity, etc.) states have the help of the use of digital services. However, the need to protect health cannot justify the carte blanche to monitoring people's lives.

In Russia, for example, the government has resorted to using face recognition cameras without sufficient guarantees that such intrusive technology would not be generalized for other purposes. In Azerbaijan citizens are obliged to report their movements to an electronic system via SMS, while in

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[6] Larry Flynt, 1942-, American publisher.

Montenegro the government posted on its website a list of the names and addresses of those who was given the mandate to stay in home isolation. In Poland, the state provides a mobile phone application to the citizens and obliges quarantined people to use it and take selfies several times a day with a timeline and coordinates. In the UK, technology companies process patients' confidential personal data without transparency or accountability. These are the most worrying examples of a wider monitoring trend observed (Allen et al., 2020; Wigley et al. 2020).

The design, development and use of digital technologies have ethical and legal implications that should not be ignored[7]. If governments do not respect these legal limits, they risk losing the trust and support of citizens, a necessary element in state efforts to protect human life and health. Governments can and should ensure that technology is used to the advantage and not to the detriment of human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

Also, social companies, public and private, their responsibility and participation in a joint project to deal with a crisis can be crucial. The Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), as a concept, has been and is a positive response to the crisis, as seen in Greece, noting, of course, that it is necessary to take a step forward in understanding CSR as a charitable action, in order to turn it into an organized, continuous policy that can lead to a more sustainable and equitable society (Kritas et al., 2020).

Immigration vs Democracy

Global population asymmetry, on the one hand, due to overpopulation, mainly in poor Latin America, Africa and Asia, in relation to the aging in the economically developed North America and Europe, and on the other hand the climate change, create conditions of civil wars, under the pretext of racial - religious - ethnic differences, which in turn lead to huge population movements. This volume of movement, today, in most host countries, is unmanageable, as it causes a sense of threat to indigenous society, xenophobia, and ultimately, the adoption of policies against the post-war democratic culture of the last 75 years. Thus, we end up with the deterioration of democracy, which is increasingly emerging as an essential factor in legitimizing social inequalities and social exclusion (Sakis Karagiorgas Foundation, 1998: 46-50).

It should be highlighted, therefore, that the immigration policy pursued by each country makes multi-layered, long-term and difficult to predict consequences, in addition to those that are evident in the short term. As far as the EU is concerned, what needs to be understood is that it must vigorously

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[7] The retention of telecommunications data is also strictly regulated by the Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to the processing of personal information and by EU law.

protect its borders, by rewarding the Mediterranean countries with staff, resources and, of course, political support. Especially in the age of challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, this need has become urgent (Papadakis & Zafeiris, 2020).

However, a joint action plan, after ongoing discussions begins and is based on universal values, in a common asylum and immigration policy based on the principles of non-discrimination, against undeclared work, trafficking, illegal immigration and international crime, in a genuine integration policy to promote a united society, greater assistance to migrant areas and an active and cohesive development policy for poor countries (Kotroyannos et al, 2019).

Economy vs Democracy

Every day, we become spectators of negative news regarding the financial difficulties of international companies, seeking state aid. Most states are facing deficit government balance sheets. Everything that we took for granted and contributed to the prosperity of the humanity is being re-examined. Until recently, unemployment and low wages were largely equated with a lack of skilled workers. All these movements, which contributed to the improvement of the way of life of the people, will no longer have an impact on our today's society, which is called to be reborn from its ashes and ultimately democracy is affected in all its economic, social and other sectors. Social inequalities that have always existed will widen and the notion of solidarity provided by the welfare state policies is being contested (Kotroyannos et al., 2013). Hence, the globalization of financial markets also affects the quality of democracy that each country will implement (Geissel et al., 2016: 572-573).

"The neo-liberal state, as it evolves bureaucratically, becomes even stronger, and as powerful as it becomes, it empties the citizen of its basic power. This experience of misery in Marxist criticism ultimately makes those who are deprived of goods and exploited tend towards a certain solidarity which essentially makes oppression an educational process" (Skoulas, 2013: 58). Solidarity is the word that prevails everywhere and especially nowadays due to the coronavirus pandemic. We are leading a revision plan of labor relations both internationally and locally, and more specifically of democratic, constitutional collective agreements in all sectors of the economy. The main pillars of each country's economy, such as tourism, may be revised. Unemployment in Greece is declining (Greek Statistical Authority, 2020) but at the same time employers in the tourism sector, for example[8], are already claiming wage cuts.

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[8]For further details see: https://money-tourism.gr/poeet-anoichti-epistoli-ston-prothypoyrgo-zitontas-stirixi-stoys-ergazomenoys/ (In Greek).

However, as it has already been proven, the business sector will rise to the occasion, guided by the fundamental rights of employees[9]. Democracy stems from the balance of power between capital and the state (Mazageri & Monroe, 2018). Finding the middle ground is more imperative than ever, sitting at the table of dialogue wounded but realized.

Religion vs Democracy

Religion has played an important role not only in the foundation of civilizations throughout history, but also in modern international relations and in numerous important events on the world stage. In Europe, the transition from 18th century Piousnessism[10] to the spiritual movement of the Enlightenment[11] marks a new era in which the autonomy - freedom and dignity of the individual is confronted with the totalitarianism and authoritarianism of the church, thus transforming the individual's relationship to society and state. The centralized state of the Baroque era is gradually changing into a state of prosperity and law in the Enlightenment, and through a series of reforms in the internal administration of the state Europe passes from totalitarianism, and through enlightened domination, to the French Revolution. The theoretical approaches in the sociology of religion can be divided into those that see the roots of religion in the needs and predispositions of individuals and those that believe that its roots lie in social procedures and "grow" in the characteristics of society and social groups (Hamilton, 2001)[12].

In the effort for religious liberalization, the acceptance of modernity and secularism created fundamentalism as a response to the imposition of the new thought with the basic feature the idea of the infallibility of the sacred texts and the sacred tradition of the faith. The economic crisis has led to the dangerous collapse of social complexity and the symbolic prevalence of Manichaean or polarized oversimplifications of reality, creating suitable conditions for the development of all kinds of stereotypes, prejudices and extreme ideologies and beliefs (Tsekeris, 2018: 44). By separating the process of secularization from that of sanctification, religion moves away from its purely religious character, taking a more secular dimension (Woodhead et al., 2009). It is a fact that we are living in a time of general uncertainty (Tsekeris, 2018: 229-236) that challenges and delegitimizes democratic institutions and values and leads to "a deep conservative and dangerous for democracy immersion in

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[9] For further details see: https://www.hhf.gr/2020/11/26/%ce%b4%ce%b5%ce%bb%cf%84%ce%af%ce%bf-%cf%84%cf%8d%cf%80%ce%bf%cf%85-26-11-2020/ (In Greek).

[10] A mutiny within Lutheranism that was active from the late 17th to the mid-18th century and advocates a return to religious thought and is deeply wary of human nature.

[11] An 18th century mutiny that sets a more optimistic attitude towards the world and man.

[12] The former is further divided into those who emphasize cognitive processes (intellectualism) and those who emphasize emotions (sentimentality).

introversion, conspiracy theories and hostility" setting religion to function as a dynamic platform for ideological, social and cultural conflicts. At its entrance, in a postmodern course, religious mobility will have the opportunity through more reflectivity, individuality and autonomy to follow a democratic path in favor of structural changes and reforms with fewer contradictions, contradictions and exclusions.

In entering this postmodern course, religious mobility will have the opportunity through more reflection, individuality and autonomy to follow a democratic path in favor of structural change and reform with fewer contradictions, contrasts and exclusions.

Conclusion

"Never before has the task of philosophical reflection been as heavy and difficult as nowadays. This is probably the reason why our era is in a hurry to declare the end of philosophy, the impasse of metaphysics or the need for us all to submit to the Law revealed by an inaccessible Other" *(Kastoriadis,1992: 2)*

Democracy refers to a complex mixture of higher levels of morality, religion, education, technology, philosophy, art and possibly other sectors. So, living the beginning of the new era, we observe the changes and look for opportunities. Many times, we can understand very well the pieces of an image, but we find it difficult to see the whole. We walk confidently from tree to tree, but are surprised when we discover that we are lost in the forest.

Summarizing, therefore, the joint action on the one hand, public, private, religious and transnational bodies, which is based on universal values and stems from the balance between capital and state but also structural religious changes and reforms with fewer contradictions, contrasts and exclusions and the new electronic means, on the other hand, which can achieve what the traditional structures of modern democracy cannot, namely the direct participation of citizens in the commons, are the ones that will promote the perfection of democracy. *"Oh Democracy, where will you lead us?"* [13].

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[13] Aristophanes, 445-386 BC, Ancient Greek comedian (Ornithes): «δημοκρατία, ποι προβιβάς ημάς ποτε;»

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Big Data and Democracy[1]

Theoharris-William Efthymiou–Egleton[2], Symeon Sidiropoulos[3], Evangelos Spanos[4], Elli Stougiannou[5]

Abstract

One of the biggest questions in the digital age pertains to the relevance of democracy in the era of big data. Unquestioningly, the digital revolution is growing at a rapid pace and many are being caught unaware by its impact in various avenues. The amount of data available has been doubling year on year, and the conditions of usage have been evolving at a pace faster than the policies are being provided to ensure proper usage. Many have started looking for ways of turning big data into big money, an aspect that is coming at the expense of the democratic values countries have upheld for generations. Instead, it is becoming a huge problem as the history of humankind is becoming more documented now and messages are easier to send compared to a century ago. Understanding the impact of big data on democracy can help accentuate the best way of improving democratic institutions and their ability to overcome the pressure coming from evolving technology.

Keywords: Big Data; Democracy; Artificial Intelligence; Politics; Governments; Institutions; Social Media.

Introduction to Big Data and its Importance

Big data is a discipline that provides analytical programs that extract information with data sets that could be considered complex for traditional data processing software. In many instances, the use of big data is a reference to the user behavior analytics, predictive analytics, or specific methods of analysis that utilize personal information to project the various ways people view their surroundings. The amount of information that is released is currently increasing at a fast rate and the majority of this is personal (Mavriki & Karyda, 2020). Thus, companies have managed to capitalize on this as a way of targeting various groups through messaging attached to what they would consider appropriate to them. However, this happens albeit using underhand deals such as buying data from companies or infiltrating databases and using software to capture the information sought (Mavriki & Karyda, 2020). Big data is mainly associated with three main concepts of variety, velocity, and volume. The internet

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provides the most essential link between the sought user and the party seeking to take advantage of the attained information.

The use of big data has grown in the past decade as more people are finding the internet as an essential marketing platform for ideas, products, and policies. The advancement of data analytics has made it easier to provide correlations to the prevention of diseases, spot business trends, deal with crimes, and influence ideas on various products among other things (Mavriki & Karyda, 2020). Governments, business, and healthcare practitioners can gain from the data because it will provide different demographic pointers that will be useful in shaping the outcomes of the way one views the issue in the discussion (Mavriki & Karyda, 2020). Big Data and artificial intelligence are one of the main technologies contributing to a real step forward in the administration and management of health care and services (Efthymiou, 2020), and (Efthymiou, 2016). Additionally, it also provides a better way of improving on the targeted marketing procedures that work in that environment.

Big data is an assemblage of data that is increasing exponentially over time. It does not seem to stop as people have become more invested in the way they meet their daily conditions. Big data is providing information assets that demand innovative yet cost-effective forms of information process that will enhance decision-making and insight as a means of making sense of the collected data (Macnish & Galliott, 2020). The source of data has increased as more people discovered ways of taking advantage of the information they have and the accessibility of the internet. Data sources are from wireless sensors, RFID's (radio frequency identification), web servers, and traditional applications (O'Neil, 2017). Non-traditional data types like system logs, texts, blogs, videos and images, and chats are now an important source as well (Macnish & Galliott, 2020). Technologies have increasingly become scalable as they accommodate different hardware, allowing more innovations that provide room for the provision of data. The economies now require optimisation of business analytics as the solutions hope to meet company demands.

Big data is becoming important as part of developing different levels of engagement in augmenting the need to sustain such information flowing to the entities and people that need it. Data has become a political and social issue because of its capability to reconfigure relationships and determine how people interact (Macnish & Galliott, 2020). The acquired data is now very sensitive, yet policies do not seem to match these demands as people continue to shape the critical interventions needed to address common practices and theories needed to establish and shape the changes in everyday life. Politics has become one of the biggest gainers in the use of this big data, as they continue to benefit from the laxities in the implementation of tight protection against big data misuse (Macnish, & Galliott, 2020). The governance programs today reflect the high level of engagement needed to

explore the capacities needed to build critical interventions that could be useful in shaping the algorithms in place.

Digital Politics

For billions of people across the globe, the digital transformation has brought with its numerous benefits and anadromous convenience. However, policymakers and market stakeholders seem to be more aware of the significance of the data as they examine the political and economic implications (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). The hindsight they have in this case became more endearing when discussing the influence that Cambridge Analytica and Facebook had in various global events such as the 2016 American elections and the 2014 Brexit campaign (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). With the new ability to skew information to fit a specific narrative, it has become quite easy to define the measures intent on defining democratic societies (Bigo et al., 2019). Reviewing some of the attributes that link the use of big data in politics can be influential in determining the essence of growth in the utility of services across the globe.

The current excitement of big data in political science is palpable despite the obvious effects of using it in providing an undue advantage on one side of the political divide. Gorham (2017) notes that the use of social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook has seen an increase in better mobilizations and political actions towards certain avenues that present important algorithmic inferences to suit a person's feed. The information collected plays a role in this case because it embodies the changes needed to define the way people use the internet as a medium of engagement. For instance, Gorham (2017) notes that negative attitudes expressed towards countries like Iran or those in the Middle East highlight the dangers of having a single view of interactions and the power of expressing such sentiments on a whole generation of people miles away. The creation of such attitudes helps in capitalizing on the various foreign policies while defeating the importance of globalization. Such sentiments can be dangerous since they can endanger the lives of innocent people who suffer from the rising vitriol against them despite their noninvolvement in such activities.

The complication arises when the big data boom is used for political attributes. Although it is not wrong for one to capitalize on such information, the obvious challenges are evidenced by the elements of such utilization. The majority of the information is gleaned from content generated by users through corporate services (Helbing et al., 2017). Social media platforms are quite useful in this instance, implying that the illustration of such insufficiency remains an essential attribute in determining what standards to employ (Gorham, 2017). The current regulatory regime is weak, and

the political environment is thriving from this ambiguity, an attribute that continually prevents a better understanding of the influence that such data can have on decision-making processes.

Issues of privacy have become a major source of discontent from various activists who believe that a need for restrictions is necessary to prevent misuse of data. Dawson and Abuhamad (2019) argue that the Cambridge Analytica scandal led to a great privacy awakening for many policymakers and experts. Public outcry over the misuse of data by politicians was evident as the current state of the governance of big data and artificial intelligence systems become a source of concern. The basis of the data collection process has remained critical in examining what works in the search for better outcomes. Close to 87 million Facebook users had their data used to manipulate the 2016 United States election using targeted political advertisements (Dawson & Abuhamad, 2019). The data transfer occurred without any consent of the users or even, arguably, that of Facebook itself. Such information becomes more damning when affirmed as true because it is a violation of people's rights. It is an evident circumvention of the policies expected from such groups yet remains an important way of examining how governments can sustain the integrity of their democratic institutions. We also must consider the effect of AI, big data on gender especially women, a critical component of society that has a profound impact on social, political, and psychological life globally (Efthymiou, 2020).

The noticeable lack of accountability and transparency in the approach towards data governance provides an important way of understanding why an evaluation of this topic is relevant when seeking a democratic understanding of the way the internet has changed the mode of operation across the globe. Data collection in and of itself has become a major concern in determining the control protocols that remain eventful in sustaining such global attributes as part of ensuring information shared is within the specified element of growth. De Zwart et al. (2014) note that the collection of this information is not based on transparency, bringing into question the right to use the information in different environments. The collection of data according to De Zwart et al. (2014) is albeit ubiquitous as it is carried out in both private and public space, with or without consent. Some people or corporations gain access to private information using organizations that require one to fill online forms to provide more attention towards sustaining this protocol, an aspect that only creates a bigger challenge in sustaining such growth as part of sharing the information with the relevant groups. Nonetheless, volunteering does not necessarily mean giving consent to its usage for any particular activity. In fact, some companies use algorithms to target marketing emails towards the user's email or profile on social media (De Zwart et al., 2014). Some even go to the extent of asking one to link their social media accounts with the hope of gaining access to more private information. For those

who are not aware of this, they give more control to their data without knowing who will use it and for what reason.

Democracy seeks to be a system of governance that represents their agenda while sustaining the growth process intent on building a better control of the measures in place. Establishing such programs will enable them to build measures intent on providing better governance. Körner (2019) notes that the use of technology can be both useful in liberal and authoritarian societies. It can strengthen both accountabilities in governance while also creating repressive capabilities in the process. It has led to an unprecedented exchange of and access to information, amplifying the spread of many incidences of misinformation. Protection of democracy is based on the ability to understand that this could echo the propaganda that suits a particular group and could incite groups against each other (Körner, 2019). The rising polarization and populism in democratic societies remain a core concern. Big data has cast a lot of concern on the issue of data ownership and the unprecedented wealth of such platforms and their founders. The question is whether they will agree to make changes and alterations as a means of determining key factors and enhancing performance as part of intensifying competition in various avenues.

Using the applications to determine the value and essence of the political formations creates a renewed attention to the various discussions arising from the use of the internet as a way of eroding democratic governments and communities abroad. For instance, increased political microtargeting in 2016 led to hostilities directed to certain groups (Van Gils et al., 2020). On a platform like Twitter, computer bots were created to create a notion that interactions were happening online, yet they were being used to contribute to certain bits of information considered crucial in the election. The created bots played a huge role in skewing the information and creating the political division that arose and has continued since then. Outsiders can use these tactics to wage a war against a given country. As Cukier (2018) noted, attacking democracy is attacking the citizens of that nation, which is quite true and should be treated with greater tenacity to thwart such considerations in the future. Therefore, more needs to be done as a means of safeguarding the needs of the community as a whole.

Democracy hopes to hold power accountable while strengthening the various virtues that enhance respect for individual rights. Information is presented with the hope that people can utilize it with a better outlook that enhances and evaluates the different programs that stand out in the community (Van Gils et al., 2020). Information is necessary for people to form opinions and utilize this as a pedestal towards formulating their decisions on voting. Attacking this option means that the leaders are not keen on protecting individual rights but seeking to sustain continued attacks on the representation of democracies, which is the election (Van Gils et al., 2020). The level of credibility

of the information sent has become a source of concern as more people seek different ways of building the information protocols intent on improving the way communities view their present options. Microtargeting creates a deeper political and systemic concern because it distorts information to suit a particular ideology.

One of the easiest ways of subverting democracy is by providing misleading information. The problem with the current level of the electoral process is the notable data-driven voter research that helps in increasing political microtargeting. To achieve the expected goals, it becomes imperative to discuss some of the development processes that only increase the chances of consuming the growing numbers of information sources that do not seem to be clear on the need for originality (Van Gils et al., 2020). The amount of fake news has increased because social media platforms have allowed people to provide information without any way of determining the right aggregation of news and information. Fake information spreading in any democratic institution creates distortions that only lead to doubting the legitimacy of the democratic process across the country. It is important to discuss these items and determine the conventionalism of the election process (Van Gils et al., 2020). As noted earlier, big data provides information that asserts the need to sustain a specific level of relevance and accountability. The data also creates important means of determining the selection, sharing, and storage of important information, whether legitimate or not (Brayne, 2017). Conspiracy theories tend to dominate many political forums online as they attempt to discredit the other team regardless of the truth in such information. Social media platforms also make it easier for people to conceal their identities and continue posting information regardless of how untrue it is (Van Gils et al., 2020). It becomes more challenging as the common beliefs remain integral in sustaining such provisions as intended to ensure better outcomes. The continued utility of algorithm-driven platforms such as search engines, social media applications, and news aggregators have made it important to conduct in-depth research to understand what political issues are within a specific region. The aim is to spam users in that region with information that suits the needs of the sender, and ensure they remain confused to even notice whether the sender is legitimate or not (Van Gils et al., 2020). It serves the intended purpose of flocking information with the intention of subverting the role of democracy in a given country.

The falsification of information only hurts the chances of sustaining democracy. The aftermath of the United States election in 2016 showed how flawed systems could easily affect the measures intent on derailing the preferences of the electorate based on the need to define how to trust in democracy (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). Furthermore, being the largest democracy in the world means it has to set the right sentiments on this, but also provides room to understand who such disinformation can

lead to the contestation of the legitimacy of democracy as a way of seeking representation. Nonetheless, it also shows the importance of the digital revolution in the world and in line with the need to understand how to push towards securing the essence of such information (Allcott, & Gentzkow, 2017). News stories remain a façade that only satisfies a few people, and the involved firms seem only to respond when pressed to make better responses.

The concentration of decision-making power to a few digital firms is a major concern. Dawson and Abuhamad (2019) consider this a major challenge because the public does not share in the value of the data governance process. Allowing a few people to control the outcomes makes them more susceptible to pressure, making it easier to discourage oversight while protecting a few groups while abusing the rights of others, mainly the minorities. The problem is that these firms now become the custodians of the provided information while seeking different ways of sustaining the presented information. As Gaon and Stedman (2019) posit, any policy created must border on oversight and accountability. The growing uncertainty of the big data provisions highlights an important question on the need for bettering services offered across the globe. All governments need to protect democracies within their institutions as a means of safeguarding the rights of all involved parties.

Conclusion

Clearly, democracy is in danger because of unchecked big data management or lack thereof. In sustaining, the democratic virtues that countries need to ensure are essential in such a program. It helps in sustaining better election legitimacy as part of ensuring that the rights of all citizens remain in tandem with what is expected. Governments have to be keen on ensuring that they retain the level of focus that ensures the procedures on the safeguarding of the presented programs run within the expected protocols. Elections have to be safeguarded to improve democracy or else the social media craze coupled with misuse of big data will remain a key part of destabilizing nations. Taking time to build relevant policies creates an essential platform intent on safeguarding the key analyzed issues that will empower the various groups to fight for their democratic rights rather than watch helplessly as they are destroyed. Additionally, policymakers need to empower oversight authorities as a means of ensuring accountability in sustaining growth in the way the democracies run their various activities. It empowers them to remain in charge and control the dissemination of information at a time when everyone has assumed the role of a journalist despite lacing the credentials and know-how needed to ensure better service provision.

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Using AI Changes the Paradigm of Women's Participation in Politics[1]

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Abstract

The effect of AI on how people are viewed and handled in society is important and profound. However, a vicious cycle is maintained with AI's algorithms design and implementation. Among others, predictive models, machine learning and AI algorithms train and test themselves using datasets, as a result, they "learn" mainly based on the data input in a model. Nowadays and in this context, it seems that there is a growing scientific dialogue concerning bias in training AI (Falco, 2019; Lu, 2019; Straw, 2020) as well as whether datasets, on which decisions are made, only represent fractions of reality (Günther et al., 2017). The technology often captures and reproduces regulated and restrictive beliefs regarding gender and race, which are then repetitively strengthened: Gender relations be materialized by inventions and, through their enrolment and incorporation of machinery, masculinity, and femininity gain of turn their importance and character. When robots progress in certain cognitive functions, their comparatively weak abilities will definitely get better. This list incorporates the innovative approach to the dilemma, empathy, negotiation, and belief. Automation and AI will also replace many of today's workers at the same time creating new opportunities for specialized personnel– so that is why women need to get into this emerging sector and ensure that they can secure new jobs when their jobs are squeezed. In addition, AI may provide the ability to alter male and female epistemological assumptions. The narration of "hard" and "soft" intelligence, for instance, is often described as male and female. The rise and development of AI is also seen as pushing economic growth and strengthening political influence. In politics, UK politics still dominates the ambition of economic development by technical advancement. Jude Browne states (Clementine Collett & Sarah Dillon) that a national AI agency equivalent to Human Fertilization and Embryology (HFEA) has yet to be set up by the government of the UK that will fill the divide between national, experts and government, for example. Browne claims that it includes the dominance, primarily guided by the goals of economic wealth, of private interest over the public interest. There is a possibility that economic growth and political influence play an important part in influencing AI laws and policies at the cost of other motivations, which are more morally equal. Consequently, a dual-purpose must be incorporated into an equitable AI policy. Firstly, to ensure there is no rise in social and economic disparity due to the advancement of AI technology. Secondly, to call AI to cut this down. AI must first and foremost enable us to promote our democratic liberties, enhance social harmony, and enhance unity, rather than jeopardise our individual trajectories and networks of solidarity.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence; women; gender equality; social and economic development; politics

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Introduction

Background

The dawn of information that derives from AI as a quality improvement tool is an incredible potential for enhancing the efficiency of the patients and healthcare teams, lowering costs, and reducing the community's health impact. It offers a broad overview of the legal and regulatory structure of the AI tools developed to enforce healthcare; stresses the need to promote equity, accessibility, and addresses critical reasons for further change (Efthymiou et al., 2020). The study is used to advise realistic policy initiatives aimed at raising the number of women in data and AI technologies. A growing number of industries are shaping the emergence of artificial intelligence. AI for instance is projected to have a short-term or long-term effect on global productivity (Acemoglu and Restrepo, 2018), equity and inclusion (Bolukbasi et al., 2016), environmental outcomes, and many other areas (Norouzzadeh et al., 2018). The future impacts identified on the sustainable development of AI suggest both positive and negative. There is no published report, however, which systemically assesses the degree to which AI can affect all facets of sustainable development — the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and the 169 globally adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the 2030 Agenda are described as this report. This is a crucial research gap since AI can impact the ability to fulfill all of the SDGs (Vinuesa et al, 2020). Artificial intelligence – the ability of computers and other devices to simulate human intelligence and subsequently operate intelligently without human interference – would undoubtedly fundamentally change the environment. It is difficult to predict when and where its impact is felt. One thing for sure: AI would interrupt patterns of work. In the next few decades, it will remove and generate tens of millions of workers. And AI will affect us in countless ways, as decision-making and other job processes penetrate. The IMF estimates 11% of jobs currently occupied by women (more than those currently held by men) are affected by AI and other emerging technologies. In talent management tools, there have been reports of AI algorithms that produce results that slanted women, since the data on which algorithms are trained were cumulative (Gallego et al., 2019).

AI is one of those areas where women can be immensely successful, in particular by encouraging women's participation. Women are a necessary force to be integrated by organizations to speed up the AI maturity of companies. In particular, a strong focus on female workers in artificial intelligence will serve to alleviate some of the greatest challenges facing businesses, such as selection disparities, in the eye of machine learning technology. Therefore it is important to mobilize women on a global basis and to include them in all artificial intelligence enterprises from research to production, in order to achieve the highest levels of AI maturity (Minevich, 2020). The past has been demonstrated. Now

we have to learn and grasp and use the holistic idea of the past as a framework for further developments (Efthymiou-Egleton, 2017).

A scenario in the current perspective of AI

The Current Situation

STEM, Data Science and AI are disciplines that make it very clear that women are very under-represented. Women make up just 28 percent of the population in science and technology, and as they look at the percentage of women who graduate from colleges there, they decline. Some 55% of graduates are women but just a limited sum of over one-third of those graduates is in STEM. Research from the World Economic Forum, 2019, for example, indicates that only 3% of women attend classes in information communication technology (ICT) with about 5% preferring mathematics and numbers, and a little more than 8% preferring engineering. There is also no gender in the present situation in the AI professions. Just 13.8% of women have written research papers related to artificial intelligence; less than one percent of the women are AI practitioners. In other words, numerous teams, and in particular women at the epicenter, provide for companies to take measures to develop, introduce, and accelerate the sophistication of the AI industry. Unfortunately, few companies currently understand that women are critical to enhancing AI maturity. Initiatives in the STEM and STEM-related sectors have been introduced to resolve the gender gap crisis. The primary focus of these campaigns is on the promotion of women, A.I., and special programs for schooling and training to address the issue (Courtland, 2018; Minevich, 2020). The use of artificial intelligence, the manipulation of natural language, and sentimental interpretation is necessary to change the culture, the economy, and politics, along with computers. (Efthymiou, Egleton and Sidiropoulos, 2020)

The role of AI in minimizing the gender gap

AI is a realistic and necessary approach to solve the gender gap crisis. What's keeping women out of the sciences? (McKinsey, 2018). New technologies that aim to help towards this aim have emerged. For example, the BCG GAMMA (BCG, n.d.) can reduce gender and leadership disparities by eliminating inequalities in recruiting, assessment, and promotional decisions; by helping to improve women's employee retention; and, potentially, by engaging in day-to-day contact that impacts employee inclusion. In addition, according to Ariane Hegewisch, Program Director for jobs and income at the Women's Policy Research Institute, it is crucial to remove the gender algorithms that can also lead to gender gap involvement that includes more females in STEM, AI, and data science.

Lastly, less bias can lead more women into STEM and will contribute to improved retention rates in the workplace (Microsoft, 2018; Minevich, 2020; UN General Assembly, 2015).

Many studies have demonstrated the need for different teams to reduce the skewed data and findings propagated by machine learning materials and to improve artificial intelligence capabilities for companies' overall technical performance. Moreover, the best way to incorporate this diversity is through the mass pool of women in the world and through a coordinated initiative, conducted by leading companies around the world, such as IBM, Microsoft, and others, channeling them to artificial intelligence zones. These businesses will then serve as templates for other industries to focus women on artificial intelligence and serve as a critical and substantial catalyst for a general paradigm change that transforms women into the most important source of company AI maturity (Minevich, 2020; Orduña, 2019; UN General Assembly, 2015).

Future of AI and women health

AI is going to revolutionize the practice of medicine and change the delivery of healthcare. As a platform for improved health care provides unparalleled opportunity to enhance patient and clinical team performance, minimize costs, and reduce the health effects of the community (Efthymiou et al., 2020). For pharmaceutical drugs, AI should concentrate on educating pregnant women and their doctors about the maternal and fetal effects of pharmacological taken during pregnancy, in particular in women's health. It will make it easier for the patient and the doctor to make healthier and more educated decisions. Improving drug discovery and pharmacovigilance has been done, but nothing has been done to fix the safety of the drug during breastfeeding. We consider two ways in which AI methods could be used to enhance our understanding of the pharmacological effects of the pregnancy, amongst them: a.) sound, accurate knowledge from clinical evidence, b) the design of tailored animal trials for confirmation of particular hypotheses. New AI approaches are a must in future research to clarify the maternal and fetal effects of opioid exposure. An AI for other facets of pregnancy, maternal and fetal wellbeing, including lactation, will advise the necessary research into the impact of pharmacologic on breastfeeding (Davidson and Boland, 2020).

Gender bias in artificial intelligence

Increasingly, artificial intelligence affects people's views and behaviours. The over-representation of men in the creation of these technologies could subtly reverse decades of gender equality advancement. For decades, people have established analytical theory to guide decisions and discourage them from focusing exclusively on personal knowledge. The intelligence of the machine,

however, learns mainly from the observation of data. While the ability of a computer to handle vast amounts of data will partially achieve this, the subsequent use of technology will begin with this manipulation as the data are filled with traditional gender ideas. Leading thinkers in the developing field dealing with artificial intelligence distortions are often predominantly female, indicating that those theoretically influenced by bias are more likely to see, understand, and strive and find a solution. Therefore, gender balance in machine learning datasets is important to stop perpetuating gender ideologies that negatively affect models that have gender as a parameter, and not only. It is challenging, but not insurmountable, to recognise gender distortions in training knowledge of machine learning algorithms. While it can be important for researchers to consider the prevalence in a culture that machine learning algorithms learn gender identity, it does not gain realistic implementations in deciding on people's lives. Justice in machine learning, in general, is a growing priority, and women ought to be at the forefront of who determines the idea of fairness. Advancing the career of women in the field of artificial intelligence is not just a right in itself; advancement in gender equity, backed by decades of feminist philosophy, must be avoided (Leavy, 2018).

In using AI systems, the financial industry is already mature. For example, before credit cards are issued or small loans are given, they are used to determine credit risk. It could easily lead to biases if data from rejected clients were used and connected to a variety of rules. One law like this might be: "If the consumer is a guy, do not grant his order." The LinkedIn career site, for example, has been reported to have a problem where high paying positions were not seen quite so much for women's study as for men because of the way their algorithms had been written (Dastin, 2018; Reese, 2016). The original users of the work search feature on the web were primarily men for these high-paid jobs, and so the effect was that they gave these jobs to men – thereby clearly increasing the distortion towards women. A study with Google found a similar problem (Büchel, 2020). Same with Amazon (Dastin, 2018).

We have to look back to the evidence from which the machine learns, in many respects a representation of the social prejudicial ties, in order to end the negative prejudice present in many AI systems. In 2016 a team (Bolukbasi et al., 2016) explored the use of word embedding as a dictionary of word sense and machine learning relationships. They also learned an analogue generator to create word connections with data from Google News Papers. AI machines perpetuate damaging stereotypes themselves. Digital female workers like Siri, Alexa, and Cortana have been accused of having replicated normative stereotypes about the position of women as submissive and secondary to men (Pallister, 2020).

Woman and AI

In crucial areas of our society – including planning, defense, and policy making-systems focused on artificial intelligence are rapidly influencing decision-making. That is incredibly necessary. The emergence of AI hopes to transcend human speed, processing, and thinking limits, opening up a whole host of new ways of living and functioning. That is the positive view, at least. A cynical perspective suggests that AI can simply improve our cognitive restrictions more tightly in specific – which can have consequences for gender equity, rather than abolishing our cognitive restrictions. While AI algorithms are not biased themselves, we humans can train them inadvertently.

AI algorithms are designed to learn and associate large quantities of existing data. The judgments of the algorithms are as successful as the preparation and understanding of data that they use. If a sufficient number of texts and pictures showing women doing homework and men working outside the home are supplied to an algorithm, it will improve the predictive chances of those organisations and learn to use them for their potential processing of decision-making. The computing sector has long been masculine and most computer scientists without a feminine point of view construct the AI training and testing data sets. Social media offers a convenient and inexpensive knowledge source for data sets that can be used in AI, so do open data sets and crowdsourced initiatives, especially in research into social sciences. The social trends and feelings of people, especially in the western world, are widely monitored by Twitter and Facebook. Twitter has about 330 million active monthly users, with 500 million daily tweets posted. A lot of studies has culminated in the usability and amount of these data by using tweets to learn social pattern for AI algorithms (Bano, 2018; Noriega, 2020; Prates, Avelar, and Lamb, 2020).

The consequences of gender-biased artificial intelligence

The battle against equality for men and women in cyberspace has intensified online hate speech (Frenda et al., 2019) The amount of hateful material reported in social media against women is even worse than that of their friends. This material offers a model of sexual animosity and prejudices from which AI can benefit. On 27 January 2018, research took place (Bano, 2018) to track tweets linked to the names of five men and five women leaders. In general, we learned that more hostile feelings towards the female heads were demonstrated against the men on that day. On average, men's Twitter users tweeted more than female users about politicians. On Google Image Search a related encounter is likely. When you type in the words "Chairman" or "Prime Minister," almost 95% of the photos in the results are from males. AI will derive two apparent truths from such evidence and the social media details mentioned here: first, that many female leaders are less compassionate than male leaders; and

second, that woman leaders are less likable. These online posts and tweets are not ephemeral things that ultimately fade into the ether; they are recorded and finally add to the corpus of information on social trends online. These data are used to take future decision-making and to build social reality by increasing AI dependence. Of course, one should not ignore that a debate around its applications, safety, and privacy is raging (Efthymiou, Egleton and Sidiropoulos, 2020). There is a growing concern around online privacy and incidents like the case of Cambridge Analytica and Facebook (Hinds et al., 2020) strengthen these concerns. Recent publications also explore gender and the use of social media apps (van der Schyff, Flowerday and Furnell, 2020) as well as gender differences in privacy tendencies on social network sites (Tifferet, 2019).

The victors have written literature in the past. Now it is published by people who build web material in cyberspace. Online gender prejudice is a threat to equality and will make life more difficult for women in the future if not addressed now. The World Economic Forum predicted about another hundred years before we hit fair status, but that might also be too premature if we do not fix AI's prejudices now (Bano, 2018).

Conclusion

Big data and machine learning provide exciting tools for companies and their workers. However, there is a fair risk of disappointment if we do not monitor their potential preconditions. Cognitive complexity presents one with the greatest possible market advantage for artificial intelligence. When we speak about women in technology, we all have conscious and unconscious biases. Artificial intelligence is capable of resolving but also perpetuating bias. We need more women in AI in order to be able to build AI programmes for women and the health of women. AI and other innovations provide women with the ability to restructure and reinvent their responsibilities, interests, careers, and lives. Getting a woman to reinvent artificial intelligence or redefining AI will also be impossible to determine, but, predictably, AI would have a woman in the future. AI can redefine qualifications for expertise, employment prospects, and the allocation of employees between sectors and occupations and to effectively engage in politics in developing and developed countries.

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Did Securitization Fail to Contain the Covid-19 Pandemic? The Case of Greece[1]

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Abstract

In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic many European governments responded by securitizing the pandemic and adopting a series of emergency measures in order to curb the spread of the pandemic. However, in most cases the measures were unsuccessful. Does this constitute a failure of securitization? In order to address this question, we will analyze the case of Greece. The case of Greece is particularly interesting because it was one of the first countries to adopt emergency measures and for a time it was heralded as a success story in countering the effects of the pandemic. According to the findings of this brief, the case of Greece does not constitute a failure of securitization. The Greek government did show a degree of inconsistency in its efforts of securitizing the pandemic but that was consistent with the fluctuation of the number of confirmed cases and COVID-19 related deaths and the impact of the pandemic on the Greek economy and attitude of the general population.

Keywords: COVID-19, Pandemic, Securitization Theory, Securitization, Greece

Introduction

"We are at war", French President Emmanuel Macron declared on March 16 as he implemented a nationwide lockdown in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (Mallet, 2020). A similar sentiment was echoed by President Trump when he tweeted about the virus as the "invisible enemy" (Shafer, 2020). This type of rhetoric was adopted by many world leaders and is consistent with the framework of securitization. The theory of securitization refers to the efforts on behalf of actors to frame a particular issue as a security issue in order to justify the implementation of comprehensive measures to counter the threat. In response to the pandemic, the majority of governments implemented a set of emergency measures such as quarantines, tests and lockdowns in order to curb the spread of the disease. However, despite the adoption these measures and efforts to securitize the pandemic most countries were unable to counter the spread of the pandemic. Does this constitute a failure of securitization?

In this policy brief we will attempt to assess the efficacy of securitization as a response to the pandemic by focusing on the case of Greece. The case of Greece is particularly interesting because it was one of the first countries to adopt a securitization rhetoric along with a comprehensive set of

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restrictive measures and was initially heralded as a success story in Europe. According to the COVID-19: Government Response Stringency Index, the average of the strictness of the measures adopted by Greece from the period of January 22, 2020 till October 29 was 72.22 (Hale et al. 2020). Compared to the rest of the European countries the strictness of the measures implemented by Greece ranked 16th out of the 27 European member states. However, despite the adoption of emergency measures, from the period of late August 2020 till early November 2020 Greece experienced a rapid increase in both the number of confirmed cases and COVID-19 related deaths.

Theory of Securitization

The fundamental premise of the theory of securitization is relatively straightforward. Any issue can become a security issue whenever an actor declares it as such. The theory is associated with the Copenhagen School of Security and was originally developed by Ole Weaver. The theory conceptualizes security as a speech act. Therefore, security issues need to be constructed and defined as such by political actors. The process of constructing any as a security issue is defined as *securitization*. As Buzan, Weaver and De Wild argue, "the special nature of security threats justify the use of extraordinary measures to handle them" (Buzan, Wæver, de Wilde 1998: 21). In this context, the concept of securitization means "the elevation of an issue beyond the level of everyday politics, which justifies the use of emergency measures to deal with it"(Hoffman, 2020: 10).

The issue of the securitization of the pandemic has gained significant attention from the scholarly community. Studies have engaged with different types of pandemics, like the influenza (Kamradt-Scott and McInnes 2012, Watterson and Kamradt-Scott 2016), AIDS (Elbe, 2006; Vieria, 2007; McInnes & Rushton, 2013), and most recently the SARS, Bird Flu, and H1N1 (Cook, 2010). Therefore, it stands to reason that the Covid-19 pandemic, which had a deeply upsetting effect globally would generate significant interest. Existing literature on the securitization of the Covid-19 pandemic has taken an ideological perspective (Gaudino, 2020; Nunes, 2020), a regional perspective (Hoffman, 2020) and a national perspective (Liu and Bennett 2020). Moreover, the existing literature on COVID-19 has touched upon the impact that the pandemic had on migration (Byaruhanga, 2020). Despite the bourgeoning literature on the securitization of the COVID-19 pandemic most studies have largely ignored the issue of efficacy of the process of securitization. In this policy brief, we attempt to cover this gap by focusing on the case of Greece.

Before we begin the analysis, it is imperative to analyze the conditions under which the process of securitization is considered a success. Buzan, Weave and de Wilde argue that a successful securitization consists of three steps: a) identification of existential threats, b) emergency action, c)

effects on inter-unit relations by breaking free of rules (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998, 6). According to this argument the first necessary step for the successful securitization of an issue is the securitizing move, which refers to the process of one actor persuading an audience of the necessity to adopt comprehensive measures against a potential threat (Taureck, 2006). However, in practice, the process of securitization is not open to all units and is largely dependent upon power and capability. Therefore, it is customary that only actors who possess the means and ability to socially and politically construct a threat to be successful. Recent studies suggest that there are three conditions under which securitization is successful: only when "(1) the identification of a threat that justifies a response (securitizing move) is followed by (2) a change of behavior (action) by a relevant agent (that is, the securitizing actor or someone instructed by the same), and also (3) the action taken is justified by the securitizing actor with reference to the threat in the securitizing move" (Floyd, 2016: 1). According to this argument, the efficacy of securitization does not depend on the idea of a sanctioning audience and on the insistence on existential threats (Floyd, 2016).

The securitization of the Pandemic in the case of Greece

According to the World Health Organization the first documented case of COVID-19 was on February 27th, 2020 (World Health Organization, 2020). The government adopted an act of legislative content on February 24th, issuing standard guidelines intended to caution the population (Hellenic Ministry of Health, 2020). Progressively, the measures adopted by the Greek government became more restrictive. On March 10, the operation of daycares, primary and secondary schools as well as universities ceased. At the same time, the government announced a nationwide "Stay at home" media campaign informing the public of the necessity to limit transportation as much as possible. Soon after, on March 14, the Greek government shut down shopping malls, restaurants, bars and cafes as well as movie theaters. On March 23, the government announced a country-wide lockdown prohibiting the movement of citizens which was initially intended to last until April 27 but was extended until May 4. During the lockdown the movement of all citizens was restricted apart from those commuting to work, the members of the government and the health sector and the members of the security forces. Moreover, the Greek government adopted an SMS text message system which enabled limited transportation on behalf of the general population. Violators would be issued a fine of 150 euro. However, one issue which created a great deal of controversy during the period of the first lockdown regarded the operation of churches. The Holy Synod of the Greek church proposed that religious services will stop during the weekday but that Sunday services will continue. They also recommended

that vulnerable populations do not attend church. On March 16, the Greek Prime-minister tweeted that the operation of all religious sites will be ceased, and only individual prayer will be allowed.

The efforts of the government to securitize the pandemic begun earlier than the imposition of the lockdown. On March 13, the Greek Prime-Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis issued a statement declaring that Greece was in a state of war because of the pandemic (Mitsotakis, 2020).The Greek Prime-minister echoed the sentiment expressed by other European leaders like France's Emanuel Macron. Similar rhetoric was adopted by other members of the administration. For example, the Undersecretary of Civil Protection, who was spearheading the effort of combating the pandemic frequently characterized the struggle against the pandemic as war. Consistent with the findings of the studies by Gaudino (2020) and Nunes (2020) the debate regarding the securitization of COVID-19 took an ideological perspective in the case of Greece. More specifically, media outlets and newspapers that were supportive of the government's efforts adopted the securitization rhetoric (Mandravelis, 2020), whereas those that were aligned with the opposition adopted a critical stance (Kwstopoulos, 2020).

Initially, the measures adopted by the Greek government and the efforts of securitization the COVID-19 pandemic were successful. According to data from the World Health Organization the number of average daily new cases of COVID-19 in Greece between the period from January 2020 till May 1st were 21.59. Comparatively, the average daily number of new COVID cases for the country of Italy were 1712.2. The number of average daily COVID-19 related deaths is even more revealing. For the same period, Greece had an average of 1.05 deaths daily whereas, at the same time, Italy had 190.3 daily deaths. During this period Greece was heralded as a success story by many European and global media outlets (Perrigo and Hincks 2020).Moreover, a medical article published in August 2020, argued that the combination of timely applied preventive measures and strict compliance to guidelines were the most significant factors for limiting the spread of COVID-19 (Bamias et al. 2020).

When the lockdown ended on May 4th, the Greek government progressively relaxed the emergency measures. Some were maintained, like the obligatory use of mask in indoor places, and travelling outside the boundaries of municipalities, and others were modified, like the quarantine period for every Greek citizen returning from abroad, which was reduced from 14 to 7 days. During the summer period, one of the major concerns of the Greek government was tourism. On June 13, the Greek prime minister announced from the island of Santorini the official opening of the tourist season in Greece, and argued that Greece "is a safe destination for tourists" (TA NEA, 2020). On September, the government announced that universities could resume operation under the condition that classes would include less than 50 participants and that all safety measures would be upheld. Two factors

contributed to the decision on behalf of the Greek government. Firstly, the number of confirmed cases and COVID-19 related deaths was relatively low and secondly, the shock the Greek economy experienced as a result of the lockdown.

Alongside the emergency measures, the government progressively relaxed its rhetoric. Between the period from May 4th till early August both the prime minister and members of the government stopped making references to the "war against the pandemic" however, they did continue their warnings that the general population should adhere to the recommended safety regulations. Moreover, they did warn for the appearance of a second wave of during the months of October and November 2020. In early August, the rhetoric of the government chanced once again. The sudden increase in the number of confirmed cases confirmed the suspicions of the medical community that the second wave of the pandemic was coming earlier than anticipated.

Despite the comprehensive measures adopted by the Greek government the number of confirmed cases and deaths started to increase. According to data from the Our World in Data program of Oxford University we calculated the growth ratio of the number of confirmed cases and COVID-19 related deaths in Greece from the period of August 1st till November 22nd. The average growth ratio for the total number of confirmed cases was 3% and the average growth ratio of the total number of COVID-19 related deaths was 2% on a daily basis. At the same time, the average daily growth rate of the total confirmed cases and COVID-19 related deaths in Italy was 1.5% and 0.3% respectively. Therefore, despite the vast numerical difference between the cases of Greece and Italy, the former had a higher daily growth rate between the period August 1st till November 22nd, 2020.

Conclusions

Our analysis suggests that the case of Greece does not constitute a failure of securitization. The Greek government clearly communicated its message regarding the severity of the threat of the pandemic. This was evidenced by the attitude of both the Prime minister and key officials within the government. In addition, the same message was relayed by the group of medical experts that participated in the advisory team that the government formed to help with the necessary measures to counter the spread of the pandemic. Moreover, the Greek government adopted a comprehensive set of emergency measures specifically designed to counter the spread of the pandemic. The adoption of the 1st lockdown did prove successful in keeping the number of confirmed cases and COVID-19 related deaths in decline. However, immediately after the end of the lockdown on May 4th, the Greek government did show a degree of inconsistency in its securitizing moves. The government toned down its rhetoric and the emergency measures taken were steadily revoked despite the arguments on

behalf of medical experts that the second wave of the pandemic was approaching. Perhaps, the most significant mistake on behalf of the Greek government, which also communicated a message of relaxation to the general population, was the opening of the tourist season. Studies have shown that there is a significant statistical significance between the number of inbound and outbound tourism and the number of COVID-19 related deaths (Farzanegan et al. 2020). However, the degree of inconsistency on behalf of the Greek government is partially understandable for two reasons. Firstly, the immensely negative impact of the emergency measures to the Greek economy, and secondly, the impact on the attitude of the general population. Particularly, regarding the tourist sector studies suggest that the impact of the pandemic "would lead to a decrease in GDP about 2.0% to 6.0%, a decrease in employment of about 2.1% to 6.4% and an increase in the trade balance deficit of about 2.4 to 7.1 billion euros, respectively"(Mariolis, Rodousakis, and Soklis, 2020: 1). This policy brief does not argue that we should willingly jeopardize the health and safety of the population in order to decrease the negative impact on the economy. However, in the context of Greece, the combined effect of the lasting economic crisis and the negative impact of the pandemic does provide a level of justification for the behavior of the Greek government particularly during the period from May till August 2020 where the number of confirmed cases and COVID-19 related deaths was low.

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Internal Security vs. Democratic Freedoms: The Problematic in Dealing with the Case of Religious Terrorism in European States[1]

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Abstract

Undoubtedly, the last decades have been marked by the growing effort of nations to reduce the effects of terrorism, a consequence of the rise of religious fundamentalism. To this end, it is observed that many European countries have been taking measures to ensure their national security, endangering certain democratic rights. By reviewing the policies of some European states against terrorism, the present brief attempts to determine the relation between the level of security of a state and the degree of restriction of democratic freedoms, within the political context of the state in question.

Keywords: democratic freedoms; European states; internal security policies; religious fundamentalism; terrorism.

Introduction

The 21st century is marked by an increase of security incidents within states, which are associated with asymmetric threats. The escalation of terrorist assaults is characterized as a primary concern for the international community, especially in the wake of the 9/11 attacks in New York. At the same time, over the last decade, there has been a significant rise in terrorist attacks in Europe, which usually target large cities and civilians, and, for which, religious fundamentalism has been incriminated. In an effort to curb these internal security crises, many European states have implemented drastic measures to protect society and the polity as a whole, thus having been repeatedly accused of unduly restricting the democratic rights and liberties of their citizens (Vasilopoulou-Athanasopoulou, 2017: 56).

This research, revisits both the existing literature and reports, as well as the empirical reviews on the phenomenon of restriction of democratic freedoms, for the sake of national security. Thereafter, it

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tries to shed new light on the issues of proportionality and effectiveness of said measures. It should be noted that, due to the remarkably clear extent of the aspects of terrorism in the EU, the phenomenon of religious fundamentalism, as a substantial cause for the latter, was chosen for further analysis.

This paper is divided into three parts. In order to answer the main research questions, section 1 gives a brief overview of the terms presented, namely terrorism and religious radicalism, as well as the political and sociological interaction between those terms in Europe. The second section examines the anti-terrorism policies of some European countries (France, Germany and Belgium), in order to highlight the adopted security measures and their potential influence on the democratic freedoms of their citizens. In the third section, said measures' effectiveness is analyzed, in order to determine the relation between measures, which limit democratic liberties, and the citizens' safety level.

Terrorism and religious fundamentalism in the European security environment

In international politics, there is no clear definition for the phenomenon of terrorism. For the needs of this research, terrorism is defined as the use, or threat of use, of violence, usually against civilian targets, in order to coerce an institution or society, with the intention of achieving political, religious or ideological objectives (Kiras, 2013: 502). In the European Union, jihadism, national socialism, anarchist left movements, and far-right separatist movements are blamed for the majority of terrorist attacks (Vasilopoulou-Athanasopoulou, 2017: 42). Consequently, this text will approach the issue of jihadism in Europe.

Before delving into the nature of jihadism in Europe over the past two decades, the quality characteristics of Islamic religious fundamentalism need to be examined. The key reasons for the rise of Islamic fundamentalism are based on a variety of economic, sociological and political factors. B. O. Chang (2005: 60-2) assumes that, since Islam expresses social equality and justice, it persuades people with increased belief in inequality. In addition, Chang emphasizes that, the flourishing of extremism, is not only a consequence of the continuous defeat of the Islamic states in Middle East and Asia, during the post-colonial period, but also of the intervention of Western or other arabic, "western-friendly" countries in the affairs of those nations, as seen for example in the case of the Gulf War (1990-1). Enhancing the above position, the disconnection of the church institution from the state, in the majority of European countries, causes a gap of spiritual choices, which Islam could potentially fill.

Modern studies declare that there is additionally a connection between the concept of Islamic fundamentalism and the emergence of jihadism. The broadly accepted use of the term "jihadism" refers to the manipulation of the socially excluded members of Islamic communities, convincing them

of the right to unleash civil violence, at international, as well as intrastate level, as the sole means to construct a global society, where the core elements of political and religious justice will coexist at an excellent manner (Chaliand & Blin, 2007: 255-6).

In Europe, the nature of terrorist attacks has changed in recent years, in terms of the nature and methods of execution. Given that fact, M. Humenberger (2018: 6-8) claims that, independent actors, whom he discerns into homegrown terrorists, self-radicalised persons or lone wolves, have gradually taken the place of collectively organized attacks; hence, transnational terrorist organizations exploit these acts. S. M. Mushred and S. Pavan (2009: 4-5) argue that various influences, such as identity differences, historical prejudices, social inequalities towards Muslims, the foreign policies of European states towards Islamic countries, and the negative exploitation of Islam by political groups, have contributed significantly to the radicalisation of individuals in the European area. Moreover, according to some theoretical approaches, it is believed among policymakers, that there is a possibility of interface between terrorism and immigration, attributing to the latter, a destabilizing security factor, which should not be overlooked (Doty, 1998). On the contrary, through the quantification of a variety of factors and effects in a statistical model, V. Bove and T. Böhmelt (2016) concluded that a linkage, between immigration and terrorist attacks, is not habitually the rule.

Counter-terrorism policies review

This section includes a summarized review of the measures taken by three major European countries, which have experienced a significant number of terrorist attacks in the past years.

France

France is perhaps the country most targeted by jihadist terrorism in comparison to other European states. According to S. D'Amato (2019: 340-2), French policymakers understand the importance of religion and, consequently, religious radicalism, as a factor that can lead to the organization and execution of a terrorist attack. On that basis, "it appears that religion for French policy-makers constitutes a facilitator for criminals to turn into terrorists" (D' Amato, 2019: 341).

The French legal system assumes that the intention to commit a crime is equivalent to the commission itself and therefore it allows preventive investigations and inquiries (Rault, 2010: 24-25). After examining a series of legislative acts, V. Bartolucci (2017: 443-5) states that, from 2001 to 2015, France has adopted a series of provisions that, indicatively, allow research by private security officers, the creation of a genetic material database, the increase of border control (photography and electronic monitoring), the increase of the pre-trial detention of suspects, the collection of personal data from

electronic devices without prior court approval, travel ban and website blocking; at the same time it introduced measures to prevent radicalism and to promote secular rule of law.

After the multiple terrorist attacks of November 14, 2015 in Paris, the French government implemented a series of measures in order to address the terrorist threat. These measures established a new policing system, by providing special freedoms to the french security forces and also including the involvement of military forces in the battle against terrorism (French Ministry of European and International Affairs, 2015). Nevertheless, according to the Amnesty International (2018: 29):

"The state of emergency might be over, but for the people Amnesty International interviewed, the negative impacts of the measures remain. Measures imposed during the state of emergency have had long-term consequences for the targeted individuals and their family members. People have reported fear, stress and other health-related issues that have continued far beyond the period of 2015-2017."

Germany

Germany's current security policy understands the importance of extremism in the country, especially this stemming from religious, ideological and political criteria. The "Federal Strategy for the Prevention of Extremism and the Promotion of Democracy" highlights the significance of multilevel cooperation (between the central government and the German Lander, as well as other actors in the political system) and the need to promote a democratic framework, in places where an emergence of radical phenomena is observed; the feedback of this whole process, is eventually subjected to further evaluation by the policymakers (German Federal Ministry for Families, Seniors, Women and Youth 2016: 9-11).

According to the report of the Committee of Experts of the Council of Europe against Terrorism (2016b: 4-5), the German Penal Code already contains provisions for the prevention of criminal acts, such as remand detention, planned and undercover surveillance and investigation, and DNA-based analysis. The Committee (2016b: 6-7) also mentions, that Germany adopted further preventive legislation in 2001/2 (Packages I and II), with no major changes having been presented since then, and which intend to "improve measures to secure identities during visa procedures; identify extremists who have already entered the country", or even to "create the legal basis for incorporating biometric features in passports and identity cards; reserve the right to use weapons in civil aircraft to police officers".

In her essay about the impact of the German legislation upon human rights, V. Zöller (2014: 493-4) concludes that, although there is a vast number of regulatory provisions regarding the treatment of

terrorism issues, a clear restriction of the right to privacy and a significant targeting of people entering the country, no other degree of restriction of freedoms and rights is observed in German law.

Belgium

Belgium was affected significantly by the phenomenon of religious terrorism, as seen in Brussels attacks, on March 22, 2016. The current Belgian security plan places radicalization, violent extremism and terrorism, among the top ten internal security issues for the country, which may endanger the citizens, the economic system and the social cohesion of the state (Belgian Federal Framework Memorandum on Integral Security, 2016: 43).

The Belgian security policy emphasizes the prevention of these types of violence, in order to reduce their impact. Therefore, it is based, amongst others, on the following axes (Belgian Federal Framework Memorandum on Integral Security, 2016: 44-50):

The repression, through a single action plan against radicalization "Plan R". This plan further defines the operational functions of Belgian security policy. Specifically, it aims to depict such threats and take balanced measures, in terms of prevention, repression and mitigation (Action Plan against Radicalism "Plan R", 2019: 7,10).

The restructuring of the criminal, procedural and penitentiary system of the country, with the aim of the judicial expansion of the concepts and the punishments. According to the Committee of Experts of the Council of Europe against Terrorism (2016a), Belgium has already tightened the preventive measures ("special survey methods") against terrorist crimes since 2003. The Committee lists among these measures, the following:

"telephone tapping, proactive investigations, seepage, observations made using technical means in order to have a view in the dwelling, hearings under cover of complete anonymity, discrete visual checks and the granting by the Witness Protection Commission of special protection measures to a threatened witness".

On the report upon Belgium's counter-terrorism policy, the United Nations Committee for Human Rights (2018), expresses, however, its concerns on the proportionality of the measures taken relating to the fundamental right to privacy; therefore, it calls on Belgium to comply with the necessary legal framework.

Comparative analysis of the effectiveness: proportionality vs. safety level

Detecting the factors

In order to examine the relation between the measures taken against terrorism and the public safety of each country, and the proportionality in terms of restricting democratic freedoms, it is necessary to define the factors of the comparison presented. There are three main factors contributing to this:

- The level of public safety; regarding the low number of successful terrorist attacks.
- The security policy; regarding the measures implemented, that restrict some form of democratic freedom.
- The threat level; regarding both the understanding of the religious fundamentalism as a security threat and the ability of jihadist terrorists to organize and conduct attacks.

From the aforementioned factors, the threat level and the security policy could be considered relatively equal for the three states under examination, since all three countries understand the issue of religious radicalism and extremism as a distabilizing aspect for their internal security. Therefore, they will be taken into consideration, as constant values, when comparing the effectiveness of each country's measures.

The first factor (level of public safety) could be determined by the total amount of successful, failed and foiled attacks made by jihadist radicals. The above information can be seen in the following chart:
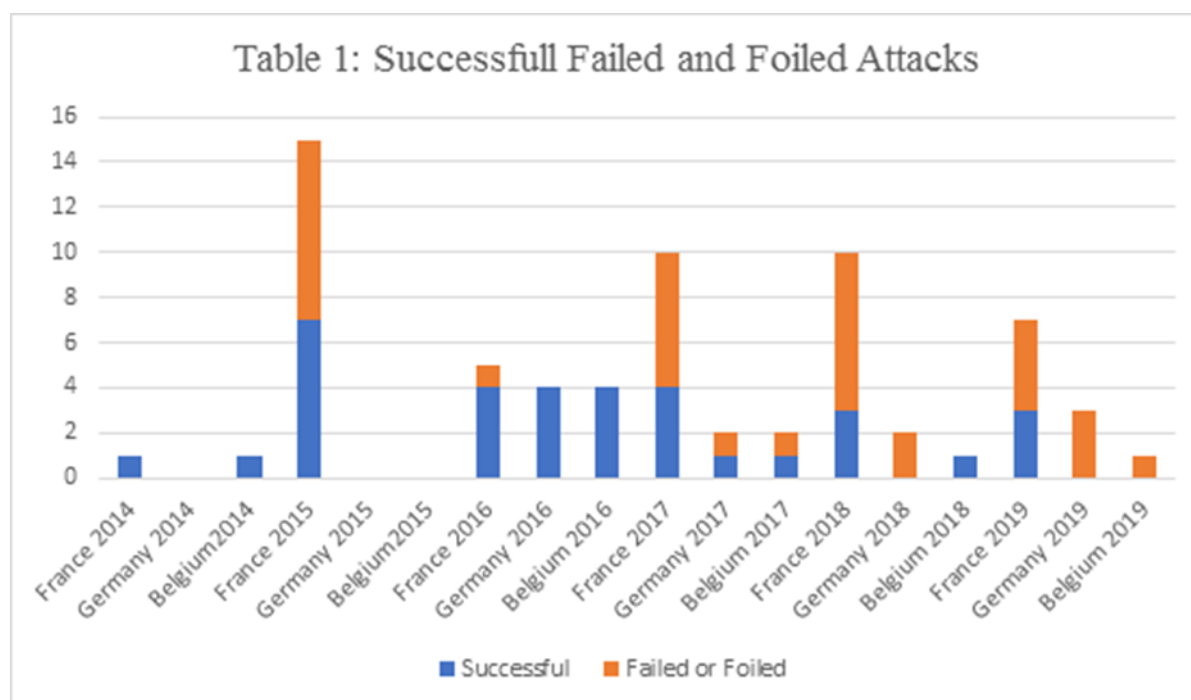
Source: EU terrorism situation and trend report (TE-SAT)

From the data above, it is possible to calculate the success rate of the taken measures for each country, by dividing the number of failed and foiled to the number of total attacks. By calculating the success rate, the following chart occurs:
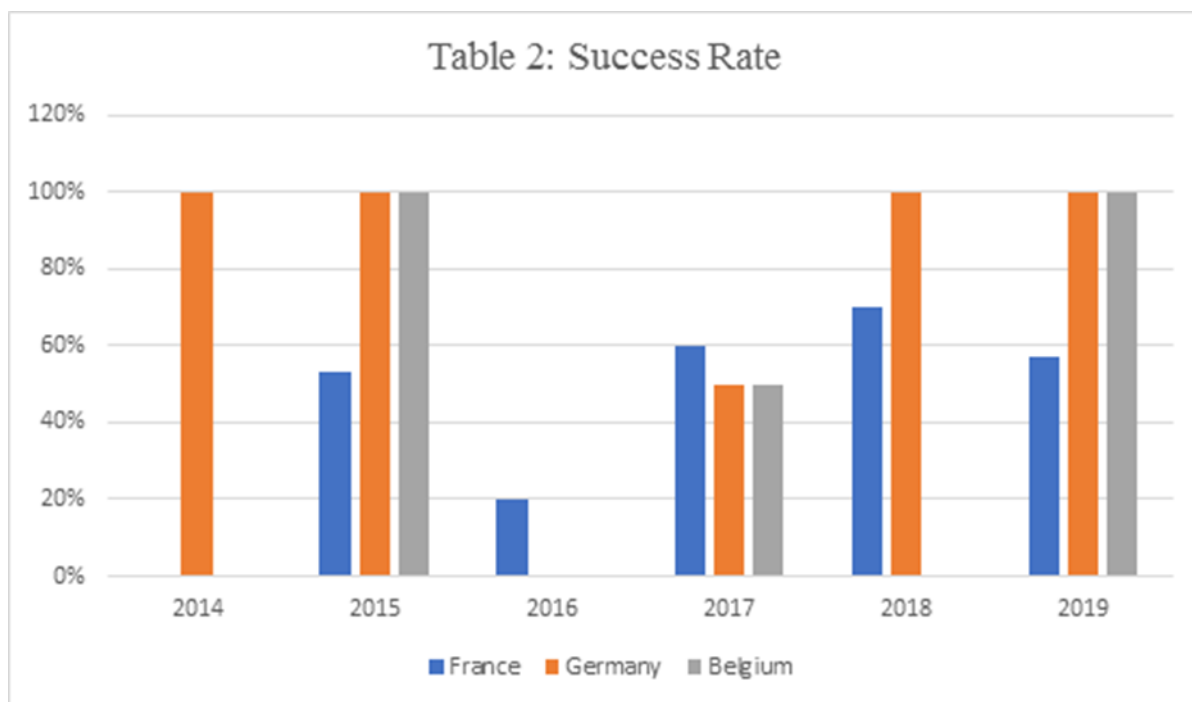
Source: EU terrorism situation and trend report (TE-SAT)

Evaluation

From the above charts, it is safe to conclude that there are insufficient data regarding Belgium and Germany, since the number of jihadist fundamentalist attacks is relatively low. It is however possible to conclude that, in the cases of Germany and Belgium the success rate is high and relatively stable, as a result of a consistent policy. Both Belgium and Germany follow a relatively stable security policy since the beginning of the century, thus having a clear preventive strategy as explained in the previous section.

In the case of France, the frequent introduction of new and stricter measures seems not to provide a higher level of citizen security, as shown on the above charts; the success rate remains low. Specifically, the measures introduced after the Paris attack in 2015 remained in effect and have been integrated in the french security system, while new measures were introduced additionally in the following years.

Overall, these results indicate that the adoption of new and stricter measures does not necessarily imply a higher level of public safety. Therefore, adopting measures that limit democratic rights does not necessarily guarantee a higher level of public safety. It is also made clear that whenever a change

is introduced in terms of policy, the system requires some time adjusting to the new functions. That being the case, following a relatively stable security policy could potentially increase public safety level, rather than constantly introducing new and stricter measures.

Conclusions

The analysis leads to the following conclusions:

Religious fundamentalism is a major destabilizing factor for the internal security environment of European countries, as evidenced by the numbers of terrorist attacks linked to Islamist extremism.

The countries selected, as case studies, for the purpose of drawing conclusions, have instituted the necessary precautionary measures, which may in some cases restrict, or oppose, basic human rights and democratic freedoms, in order to ensure their internal security.

The statistical analysis of the degree of success in preventing terrorist attacks, related to Islamist radicalism, seems to confirm that taking such measures does not necessarily imply the effectiveness of the measures.

Future research should further develop and confirm these initial findings, by analyzing the cases of other European countries for the entirety of terrorist threats posed to them, including anarchist, right-winged and nationalist-separatist terrorism.

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Measuring Democratization and Detecting State Transitions[1]

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Abstract

In the proposed research, an in-depth analysis of the features presented in six representative international organizations measuring democracy worldwide revealed a sizeable set of significant and complementary indicators that provided the basis for the construction of a common conceptual framework for democratization. The size and variety of the examined datasets overcomes any possible skepticism for data biasing. We also propose a method of combining such complementary or competing indicators using Multi-objective Optimization, in order to increase objectivity. The periodic monitoring of the proposed indicators allows for the detection of State Transitions, especially under alarming conditions. Our aim is to propose an objective tool for policy makers that would eliminate selective interpretation of democracy and its transitions, by allowing political change to be meaningfully understood in its proper perspective using facts and data.

Keywords: Democratization; State Transition; Multi-objective Optimization.

Introduction

Democracy is based on a set of independent and functioning institutions that, in order to ensure the legitimacy and efficiency of democratic operation should inspire confidence to the people (Sarris, 2015) and advocate respect for human freedom, social and individual autonomy. Key elements such as: *trust in the institutions*, *the participation of all 'citizens' in public and electoral processes*, *protecting the secrecy of the vote* and the *protection of freedom of expression and personal freedoms*, the *clear distinction between legislative, judiciary and executive bodies* and the *efficiency of public administration* (Coppedge et al., 2020; Skaaning, 2018) are critical characteristics that contribute to

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the objective determination of what is meant by a democratic constitution of a society, something that is independent of the varying social practices.

Based on these theoretical concepts of democracy, it is feasible to measure a country's quality of democratization for a given point in time (Campbell, 2019), especially by using big data, algorithms and artificial intelligence [e.g. in *computational sociology* (Redden, 2018)]. This provides a new approach to conceptualizing and measuring democratization. Multidimensional and disaggregated datasets that reflect the complexity of democracy as a system of rule that goes beyond the simple presence of elections, are available. And they span all high-level principles of democracy such as the electoral, liberal, participatory, deliberative, and egalitarian. In this sense, large datasets may capture diverse experiences of democracy worldwide, allowing us to assess their potential relevance across countries and to incorporate them into an expanding body of comparative knowledge on democracy (Blackwell et al. 2018). On the other hand, they allow us to explore the challenges to democratization by conducting research in areas that are highly relevant for policymaking or reform processes (e.g. *'State Transitions'*).

However, one should be careful in choosing the sources of the data since a certain degree of criticism has been exerted to possibly biased datasets concerning social phenomena [e.g. discrimination, civil rights (Shorey et al., 2016)]. Attempting to combine information from multiple datasets can overcome this skepticism, as indeed is the novelty in the proposed research work.

International specialized organizations have as their main objective the systematic creation and support of specialized, time-spanning databases using variables, indices and indicators and composing global reports that record and highlight the quality characteristics of democracy, both locally and globally, thus, constructing its regulatory conceptual framework. In this way, they contribute to the establishment of the objective and true essence of the concept of *'Democracy'* as this is constituted by facts and data. Thus, the difficulties arising by the possible subjective ways of perceiving and interpreting it by the citizens are overcome, while at the same time, the diversity, variety and pluralism of these databases eliminate the risk of selective interpretation of data, a criticism often exercised on them (Bush, 2017).

Organizations measuring Democracy

Varieties for Democracy (V-Dem)

This database defines five fundamental types of Democracy, which are also the main variables measuring its quality: *Electoral, Liberal, Participatory, Deliberative and Equalitarian Democracy*.

Data from 202 countries in the world were collected and studied for the period from 1879 to 2019 (Coppedge et al., 2020). It uses more than 250 indicators measuring Democracy, as well as its additional institutional features. Data comes from official national documents as well as from social scientists' evaluations, regarding formal political practices and *de jure* compliance to rules.

V-Dem is distinct in several regards in addition to its unique level of disaggregation, by the combination of: historical data extending back to 1900; use of multiple, independent coders for each evaluative question; multiple indices reflecting varying theories of democracy; fully transparent aggregation procedures; and that all data are made freely available.

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA)

This is a transnational organization involving 158 countries. Published reports, called the *'Global State of Democracy Indices'*, portray the democratic tendencies of a country both at regional and global level, covering a wide range of different qualitative characteristics of Democracy, over the period from 1975 to 2018, for 158 countries. The data underlying the indices is based on 97 indicators developed by various scholars and organizations (Skaaning, 2018).

The fundamental features of Democracy studied by this organization are five: *Representative Government, Fundamental Rights, Checks on Government, Impartial Administration and Participatory Engagement*.

Center for Systemic Peace

The research center 'Center for Systemic Peace' has been recording elements of political behavior in countries with a population of more than 500,000, since 1997. In the context of the *'Polity'* program a database of codified information was created, based on scientific research with respect to the collection and quantitative analysis of data, in many thematic areas related to the fundamental issues of *Political Violence*, the *Fragility of Governance* and their impact on the social development of these countries.

The uniqueness of its conceptual framework lies in the fact that it examines, concurrently, multiple qualitative features of Democracy, focusing mainly on formal governmental institutions rather than on informal expressions of government (Center for systemic peace, n.d.).

Freedom House

The non-governmental organization Freedom House publishes an annual survey entitled *'Freedom in the world',* since 1973 (Bradley, 2015). In this report an evaluation on the state of freedom, as it is being experienced by people in different countries is attempted (195 countries and 14 territories are included in the 2019 report). Freedom House criteria for an electoral democracy include: *a multiparty political system, universal suffrage, regularly contested elections in the absence of voter fraud, public access of political parties to the electorate*.

Two main numerical ratings about political rights and civil liberties are used to determine whether the country or the territory has an overall status of *Free, Partly Free* or *not Free* and, thus, the level of its Democracy. The political rights questions are grouped into three subcategories: *Electoral Process, Political Pluralism and Participation,* and *Functioning of Government*. The civil liberties questions are grouped into four subcategories: *Freedom of Expression and Belief, Associational and Organizational Rights, Rule of Law and Personal Autonomy* and *Individual Rights*.

Democracy Barometer

It has developed a theoretical framework for this assessment of Democracy Quality, in 52 countries with democratic government, measuring and recording the subtle differences that exist between them. It allows comparative assessment and provides a critical follow-up of the democratic evolution of these countries over time (Engler et al., 2020). The Democracy Barometer embraces liberal as well as participatory ideas of democracy, illuminating the phenomenon from different perspectives. In order to guarantee the quality of democracy, nine democratic functions need to be fulfilled. Every function is further disaggregated into two components each, which finally, are measured by several sub-components and indicators. The fundamental principles of Democracy explored by the barometer focus on the central concepts of *Freedom, Equality* and *Control*.

Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)

The Economist Intelligence Unit's index advocates that measures of democracy that reflect the state of political freedoms and civil liberties are not thick enough. In existing measures, the elements of political participation and functioning of government are taken into account only in a marginal way.

It has compiled since 2006 an index called *The Democracy index* (Kekic, 2007), with updates for 2008, 2010 and the following years since then. The latest edition is called: *'Democracy Index 2019. A year of democratic setbacks and popular protest'*. The report states that the index of Democracy on

a 0 to 10 scale is based on the ratings for 60 indicators, grouped into five categories: *electoral process and pluralism; civil liberties; the functioning of government; political participation;* and *political culture*. Each category has a rating on a 0 to 10 scale, and the overall Index is the simple average of the five category indices.

Combining Indicators and Detecting Transitions

The basic conceptual characteristic features of democracy presented in all databases systems are shown on Table 1, providing a theoretical framework, constructed in the context of this paper, that allows for direct comparisons**.** Each system provides a unique road map with a distinctive conceptual range at a global level and a large time span, the core of which is the understanding, interpretation and measurement of Democracy. Moreover, in all six systems, crucial concepts are: the *political identity of the individual* with respect to the *participation in the public sphere*, the *protection of the fundamental freedoms of individuals*, the *exercise of control* over the forms of governance and the effective *exercise of power in the interest of the citizens*. The *participatory component* is also fundamental in all databases, with only subtle differences in quality among them. The size and variety of the examined datasets overcomes any possible skepticism for data biasing.

More than 500 indicators are shared among the databases, covering almost any measurable aspect of democracy. Some indicators from different databases can be complementary to each other (e.g. measuring *Civil Liberties* in different but complementary manner in *Freedom House* and in *Democracy Barometer,* Table 1) whereas, other indicators may measure competing notions of democracy (e.g. indicators from *Functioning of Government* in the *EIU* versus *Checks on Government* in *IDEA*, where one feature may be increased at the expense of the other, e.g. leading to an unconstrained Presidency in USA by limiting such checks). The following methodology based on *Multi-objective Optimization Theory* (Emmerich et. al., 2018), is proposed for decision-making based on multiple indicators:

i) Weighted Sum Model of complementary indicators between Transition States

Assuming complementary indicators from different datasets (indicators increasing or decreasing in the same direction), a *Weighted Sum Model* could be used. In general, for a given problem defined on *m* alternatives (different *Democracy States* in our case) and *n* decision criteria (*Indicators*, evaluated through the different *Transition States*):

Suppose that w_j denotes the relative weight of importance of the criterion (*Indicator*) C_j and a_{ij} is the performance value of alternative A_i (the *State of Democracy*) when it is evaluated in terms of criterion

C_j. Then, the total (i.e., when all the criteria are considered simultaneously) importance of alternative *State of Democracy* A_i, denoted as $A_i^{\text{WSM-score}}$, is defined as follows:

$$A_i^{\text{WSM-score}} = \sum_{j=1}^{n} w_j a_{ij}, \text{ for } i = 1, 2, 3, \ldots, m.$$

For the maximization case, the best Democracy State out of the possible Transition States is the one that yields the maximum total performance value.

ii) Pareto Optimization of competing indicators

If the final Democracy State cannot be improved in any of the indicators without degrading at least one of the other indicators (competing indicators), a Pareto Optimal Solution should be sought for decision-making (Emmerich et. al., 2018).

In mathematical terms, such a multi-objective optimization problem can be formulated as where the integer $k \geq 2$ is the number of objectives (Indicators in our case) and the set X is the feasible set of decision vectors (States of Democracy in the present work).

$$\min(f_1(x), f_2(x), \ldots, f_k(x))$$
$$\text{s.t. } x \in X,$$

The feasible set is typically defined by some constraint functions. In addition, the vector-valued objective function (the set of *Indices values* for the specific state in our case) is often defined as $f:X \rightarrow \mathbb{R}k$, $f(x)=(f_1(x),\ldots,f_k(x))^T$. An element $x^* \in X$ is a feasible solution; a feasible solution $x^1 \in X$ is said to (Pareto) dominate another solution $x^2 \in X$, if

- $f_i(x^1) \leq f_i(x^2)$ for all indices $i \in \{1, 2, \ldots, k\}$ and
- $f_j(x^1) < f_j(x^2)$ for at least one index $j \in \{1, 2, \ldots, k\}$.

iii) State Transition detection

Finally, the periodic monitoring of the proposed indicators $f(x)=(f1(x),\ldots,fk(x))T$ would provide clear alarming signals for State Transitions in X (feasible States of Democracy). By combining the power of multiple indicators policy makers can obtain a clear view on the actual state of democracy, based on facts and data.

Conclusion

The size and variety of the examined datasets on Democracy overcomes any possible skepticism for data biasing and selective interpretation. Additionally, the proposed approach for combining

complementary and competing indicators from different data sets avoids subjectivity, filtering, generalization and distortion of concepts. Constant monitoring and updating of the values of the proposed indicators provides an efficient way to detect possible State Transitions and to produce strong alarm signals to the influential policy makers.

Table 1: Principles components of the distinctive Perspectives on Democratization

Databases measuring Democracy	Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem)	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance	Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)	Freedom House	Democracy Barometer	Center for Systemic Peace
Principle components of each database	Electoral component	Representative Government	Electoral process and pluralism	Political Rights 1. Electoral Process 2. Political Pluralism and Participation 3. Functioning of Government	Equality 1. Transparency 2. Participation 3. Representation	Fragility Index is measured by:
	Deliberative component	Impartial Administration	Political Culture			A. Effectiveness 1. Security 2. Political 3. Economic 4. Social
	Liberal component	Fundamental Rights	Civil liberties	Civil Liberties 1. Freedom of Expression and Belief 2. Associational and Organizational Rights 3. Rule of Law 4. Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights	Freedom 1. Individual liberties 2. Rule of Law 3. Public sphere	B. Legitimacy 1. Security 2. Political 3. Economic 4. Social
	Participatory component	Participatory engagement	Political Participation			
	Egalitarian component	Checks on Government	Functioning of Government		Control 1. Completion 2. Governmental capability 3. Mutual Constraints	

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Empowering Democracy through Internetization[1]

Constantine E. Passaris[2]

Abstract

This policy brief explores the challenges and opportunities congruent with the advent of internetization on the democratic landscape. Internetization is a new word that I have coined to describe our contemporary empowerment through global outreach and electronic connectivity. There is no denying that the 21st century has precipitated profound structural change and empowered democracy through digital capacity and electronic connectivity. This paper analyzes the impact of internetization on e-democracy, social media, civics education, non-governmental organizations and global outreach. It also addresses the consequences of internetization on cybersecurity threats, election tampering and the contemporary challenges associated with electronic voting. This policy brief concludes with a set of recommendations embracing a new governance architecture, adapting the machinery of governance to electronic capacity and a strategic list of public policy initiatives directed to enhance the role of internetization on the democratic landscape.

Keywords: democracy; internetization; public policy; electronic democracy; cybersecurity; civics education

Introduction

This policy brief will analyze the confluence between internetization and democracy. Internetization is a new word and concept that I have coined to describe the digital capacity and electronic empowerment of the 21st century (Passaris, 2014). The impact of internetization on democracy has been asymmetrical. It has empowered democracy in a positive way by facilitating democratic connectivity, enhancing global outreach, and digitalizing information. It has also impacted democracy in a negative manner by exposing its digital vulnerabilities such as electronic espionage and election tampering. This brief will conclude with a set of public policy recommendations for empowering democracy in the 21st century.

The 21st century has empowered democracy through digital capacity and electronic connectivity. Internetization and digital democracy have emerged as game changers for the 21st century. Electronic democracy is carving a large legacy footprint and leading transformational change for democratic engagement. Internetzation has empowered the democratic process towards enhanced citizen participation, government transparency, and public policy accountability. In short, internetization has

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created a new public policy agenda that requires supporting its benefits and curtailing its adverse effects.

Empowering Democracy

Democracy has a long pedigree and a distinguished provenance. It was born in Ancient Greece with Plato and Aristotle as its intellectual fathers. They nurtured democracy in its formative years and guided its development. Indeed, the word democracy has Greek roots which proclaim the power of the people and convey the principle of governance by the people. Throughout time, democracy has responded to civil society's evolving values, aspirations, and directives. Many centuries later and up to the present time, democracy remains a work in progress.

The success of democracy is based on the full and equal participation of the people. In effect, democracy is a public good that is owned by its citizens. A foundational cornerstone of democracy's evolution has been to make it more inclusive. A necessary precedent for an effective democracy is an informed public dialogue among its citizens.

Internetization

My operational definition of internetization consists of two interactive forces which are global outreach and electronic connectivity. In essence, internetization refers to how civil society, the economy and government have increased their capacity to interact on multiple levels through revolutionary advances in digital technology. I coined the new word internetization in order to elongate the conceptual reach of the term digitalization. Digitalization refers to the conversion of text, images or sound into a digital form that can be processed by a computer. Internetization extends the process of digitalization to include electronic connectivity and global outreach. There is no denying that internetization has enhanced the quality of our lives and made our daily tasks easier and quicker. The electronic prefix that is appearing before an increasing number of our daily interactions such as e-commerce, e-mail, e-learning, e-shopping, e-banking, e-democracy and e-government is a tangible expression of our contemporary digital capacity. In consequence, internetization is the process that is empowered by technological innovations in a borderless world with a tremendous capacity for virtual connectivity (Passaris, 2019).

Democracy's digital footprint is in its infancy. Already, it has made profound and indelible contributions on the contemporary democratic landscape. The digitalization of individual discourse, public information, and mass communication have profoundly altered the interface between civil society and democratic institutions. Internetization has also redefined the scope and substance of

democratic engagement. A direct beneficiary of these digital realignments has been the democratic ecosystem and the exercise of democracy.

More precisely, internetization has impacted democratic governance by facilitating public scrutiny of government policy and promoting the electronic connectivity between civil society and the machinery of governance. In short, the spectacular advances in computer technology and the development of new electronic software have generated a powerful empowerment for the scope and mission of democracy.

Electronic Democracy

Electronic democracy, also known as e-democracy refers to the digital empowerment of democracy. Electronic democracy is serving as a catalyst for the dissemination of information, fostering the protection of democratic rights and enhancing democratic development. In effect, internetization has advanced the democratic process by creating electronic communities, news groups, e-networks, chat rooms, electronic forums, and blogs. All of this has transgressed the limitations of the more traditional mass communication boundaries such as newspapers, radio, and television.

The enhanced nature of democratic engagement facilitated by internetization can take several forms. First, the electronic dissemination of information increases awareness and informs the public on the contemporary issues of government policy. Second, the efficacy of electronic communication between citizens and government has created a new channel of communication for democratic engagement. Third, the enhanced transparency and accountability which has been made possible through the electronic posting of government reports, legislation, and policies. In short, e-democracy has been empowered by internetization for the purpose of reinforcing democracy and enhancing democratic engagement.

Global Context

The word global has taken on a new meaning since the emergence of the Internet more than three decades ago. The most recent and vivid confirmation that we live in a globalized world was the devastating worldwide consequences of the COVID-19 global pandemic. Internetization has eliminated physical restrictions and national boundaries with respect to communication and citizen interaction. In effect, internetization has triggered an age of individual and collective empowerment that is unprecedented in the history of civilization. Internetization provides individuals, institutions, civil society, businesses and governments with a tremendous global influence and outreach.

Democracy has been subjected to global forces unlike any precedent time in human history. It has become clear that democracy cannot be contained or confined within national borders. The domestic insularity of democracy is no longer practical in the 21st century. In consequence, the internationalization of democracy has redefined a country's democratic institutions. In consequence, the global context has become a foundational pivot for the conduct of democracy and public policy.

On the contemporary governance landscape, the dividing line between the national context and the international linkages is blurred at best and fluid on most public policy issues. This does not negate the need for domestic governance institutions but simply recognizes that their efficacy in responding to international issues can be constrained. COVID-19 has revealed the extent to which contemporary national borders are no match for globalization. The modern border is porous, malleable, and surmountable. Today's borders are purely symbolic and only serve as a geographical marker. Global interdependence is a fact of life in the 21st century and our democratic institutions need to adapt and embrace it rather than ignore its existence. An integrated and porous global environment exposes a country's democratic governance architecture to new vulnerabilities and external shocks.

Civics Education

Electronic connectivity has evolved into a convenient tool for disseminating knowledge and mass education. It has created an effective platform for communicating democratic values and citizenship education. The dissemination of information and public communication play a pivotal role in democratic engagement. More specifically, internetization is an important catalyst for educating citizens about democracy. Furthermore, digital communication has become a powerful tool for a more informed and inclusive democracy.

Internetization has removed the barriers of distance, geography, and time and has provided a unique empowerment for democracy. *A foundational axiom for a successful democracy is civics education. Its benefits include* increasing the general public's understanding of the role of citizens in the democratic process and increasing voter participation. Civics education and public awareness campaigns require a commitment to work in partnership with non-profit organizations, community associations and likeminded stakeholders to communicate democratic principles and assist voters in understanding their rights and responsibilities in the electoral process. At the end of the day, civics education is an effective mechanism for preparing citizens for their electoral and democratic responsibilities through the empowering features of internetization.

Internetization has had a profound and empowering impact on non-governmental organizations whose mission is to promote democratic values and democracy. Digital capacity has enabled non-

governmental organizations to mobilize mass gatherings on short notice and enhance their democratic advocacy, outreach, and networking. They have also used their electronic outreach for the purpose of fund raising, recruiting new supporters, and communicating their message to the public on a global scale. For many countries, the coupling of non-governmental organizations and internetization has served as a catalyst for the "democratic spring" and has hastened the democratization process.

Social Media

Internetization has facilitated the emergence of social media as a game changer on the democratic landscape. The ascent of social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin, WordPress and Blogspot have redefined the outreach for mass communication. They have facilitated the dissemination of information and opinion for the purpose of enhancing democratic dialogue.

The role of internetization through social media has also provided an effective medium for different views and perspectives on democratic issues and public policy concerns. It has amplified public discourse and democratic engagement. All of this with the objective of enabling public engagement, broader democratic dialogue, and freedom of expression. Indeed, it has facilitated the cacophony of voices, ideas, and perspectives for the purpose of enriching and diversifying the democratic conversation.

The downside of social media is that it has the capacity to promote "fake news" and cause a disruptive and disingenuous impact on democratic dialogue. However, it has also enhanced the engagement of a younger generation of voters with democracy. This reflects the digital comfort zone of the millennial generation with democratic interfacing on social media.

Electronic Voting

A foundational axiom for the exercise of democracy is ensuring a trustworthy and verifiable electoral process that provides voter privacy and anonymity. With the advent of internetization, electronic voting has become a topic of intense public debate. The principal reasons in favour of online voting are speed, convenience, and accessibility. Internet voting is viewed as a tool that can remove physical barriers and make the voting process more accessible for certain groups. Foremost among those are voters with mobility challenges or visual impairments. It is also argued that online voting would entice younger generations of citizens to cast their ballot and increase voter turnout.

At the present time the implementation of electronic voting is stalled because it does not respect privacy or anonymity when casting a ballot. Those two constraints are deleterious to democracy and

the democratic rights of citizens. Some additional challenges associated with online voting include vote manipulation, ensuring that an individual only votes once, enforcing the safety and security of the devices used to cast and receive ballots. Another drawback for e-voting is the generational divide with respect to internet accessibility and technological competence which will disadvantage voters who do not have Internet access, have limited access to a computer or are unfamiliar with its use.

Cybersecurity experts at the present time are overwhelmingly against embracing online voting because it does not respect the principles of voting secretly and securely. Security breaches could jeopardize the integrity of the voting process and lead to compromised election results. The experts emphasize that security, privacy, and confidentiality cannot be guaranteed with the current electronic infrastructure (New Brunswick Commission on Electoral Reform, 2017).

Cybersecurity Faultlines

The advent of internetization, has exposed distinctive vulnerabilities to our contemporary digital ecosystem and democratic landscape. Technological innovations are moving faster than the adoption of security protocols to control and protect digital integrity. These take the form of hacking, malware infection, identity theft, electronic espionage, cyber-terrorism, and financial misappropriation. It is becoming increasingly clear that the contemporary digital safeguards, virtual firewalls, and electronic locks do not offer a high level of personal privacy and cyber protection. Indeed, in the contemporary digital network the vulnerability of electronic devices has become systemic and lapses in cybersecurity have exposed the inherent systemic risk of internetization.

The frequency of cyberespionage between countries has increased recently because of the availability of spy software and cyber espionage products. Modern cyber espionage products have the capacity to infect their targets' computers and phones, copy electronic messages, record conversations, and activate webcams. In consequence, there is an urgent need for a more effective partnership between government and manufacturers of electronic devices to enhance the security features of their devices in order to prevent the sophisticated hacking and the remote high jacking of those devices.

The next generation of cybersecurity will require an elevated level of personal identification, safer digital locks, and the creation of impenetrable electronic fire walls. It will probably take the form of codified electronic locks, voice identification, fingerprint matching and eye retina protocols. All of this for the purpose of adopting fail safe cybersecurity systems that will protect individual identity, national security, and democratic protocols in the digital age.

Public Policy

Public policy has a multipurpose and multilayered role in empowering democracy during the Age of Internetization. The overarching premise for public policy in supporting the mission of democracy is to harness the empowerment of digital capacity, advance democratic rights and embrace a proactive approach in the formulation of public policy.

At the outset, the conceptual framework for developing contemporary public policy regarding democracy requires retooling through the prism of intenetization. It must recognize the global context and the capabilities of the new digital ecosystem. Internetization has redefined the parameters for the conduct of public policy and has revealed the fault lines in the efficacy of contemporary public policy. The speed with which events unfold require a proactive approach towards public policy. A proactive public policy demands developing a playbook for dealing with future crises with the luxury of time on our side. Furthermore, it prescribes an anticipatory role for reacting to crises, developing different options and a less hurried context in the evaluation of different policy options.

Public policy has a central, strategic, and purposeful role to play in empowering the contemporary mission of democracy. At the micro level public policy should be enacted to ensure access by government and its citizens to electronic empowerment such as computer hardware and the Internet. Furthermore, public policy should be focused on accelerating investments by the public and private sectors in digital infrastructure and enhancing electronic connectivity for governments and citizens.

At the macro level public policy should use internetization for positioning digital government to achieve transparency and accountability. It should also foster the strategic deployment of internetization for the purpose of enhancing mass communication and civics education. Public policy has an important role in protecting the integrity of democratic institutions and electoral outcomes as well as pursuing the efficacy of electronic voting. Finally, public policy must confront the fault lines in cybersecurity and encourage the development of a fail-safe cybersecurity system that will protect the scope and mission of democracy in the digital age.

Conclusion

This policy brief has charted a pathway for the strategic deployment of internetization in order to empower democracy to achieve new heights, break glass ceilings and discover new frontiers. In this journey, it has spotlighted the efficacy of internetization in advancing the frontiers of democracy on many levels and in new directions. More specifically, internetization has enabled a positive impact

on electronic democracy, civics education, social media, non-governmental organizations and the interface between civil society and governance institutions.

While internetization has revealed the potential for electronic voting, it remains an elusive ambition because of the risk of security breaches and the inadequacy of safeguarding anonymity. In effect, cybersecurity fault lines have exposed electronic vulnerabilities that detract from the many positive contributions of internetization on the democratic landscape.

The overarching purpose of public policy in the mission of this paper is to harness the empowerment of internetization for the purpose of enhancing the democratic process. At the outset, public policy should recognize the scope and substance of the digital ecosystem as well as its global context. Furthermore, the speed of structural change requires embracing a proactive approach to public policy.

This paper concludes that public policy has a central, strategic, and purposeful role to play in empowering the contemporary mission of democracy. The efficacy of public policy at the micro level should be directed towards ensuring access by government and its citizens to electronic capacity. In addition, public policy should be focused on accelerating investments by the public and private sectors in digital infrastructure and enhancing electronic connectivity between citizens and their governance institutions.

At the macro level, public policy should resort to internetization as an ally in achieving transparency and accountability in governance. It should also foster the strategic deployment of internetization for the purpose of enhancing mass communication and civics education. In effect, public policy has an important role to play in protecting the integrity of democratic institutions and electoral outcomes. Finally, public policy must confront the fault lines in cybersecurity and encourage the development of a fail-safe cybersecurity system that will protect the scope and mission of democracy in the digital age.

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The Banning of Extremist Political Parties as a Measures of Neo-Militant Democracy: The Experience of Post-Communist States[1,2]

Maciej Skrzypek[3]

Abstract

The paper aims to determine which political parties in post-communist countries were considered hostile to the system and evaluate the systems' capacity to eliminate their enemies with political party banning. The analysis overs Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Hungary. The study covers the period from their democratization to 2020.

Keywords: banning of extremist political parties; neo-militant democracy; democratization in post-communist states.

Introduction

The outlawing of political parties is one of the critical elements of the contemporary dilemma of democracy. On the one hand, restricting the exercise of fundamental rights and freedoms, including the right to be politically represented and participate in the decision-making process, is a sign of a shift from the democratic system towards authoritarianism. On the other hand, it is an indispensable tool of democracy in practical terms, which seeks to exclude from public life groups considered to be enemies of the system (Bourne, 2012: 2). Due to the lack of recognized definitions of the system's enemy, political elites intentionally create the image of enemies threatening democracy. The elimination of extremist parties and their activity limitation is a necessary element in transition, leading the authoritarian system towards consolidated democracy. According to Andreas Sajó, this results from political uncertainty and fears of repeated abuses by the ruling elite (Sajó, 2004: 214). The delegalization of political parties is most often presented as one of the keys and widely used measures of militant democracy (Capoccia, 2013). This research contributes empirically to the studies on militant democracy by determining the level of effectiveness of this measure in the context of reducing the possibilities of anti-democratic forces.

The paper aims to determine which political parties in post-communist countries were considered hostile to the system and evaluate the systems' capacity to eliminate their enemies with political party

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banning. The following research hypothesis will be verified: the greater the level of limitation of extremist parties' scope of activities, the greater the state's capacity to eliminate the system's enemies, which undermine democracy. The ban on political parties in the analyzed countries may become a useful tool for militant democracy. The analysis covers the EU Member States that started the systemic transition at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Hungary. The study's initial point is the start of democratization in each of these states, while the final point is 2020. The latest Freedom House report will be used to assess the level of defense capability against extremists (Freedom House, 2020).

Conceptualizing the Banning of Political Parties in Militant Democracy

Militant democracy is a theoretical category created by Karl Loewenstein, who in the 1930s called for the introduction, through legislative measures, of tools capable of countering fascism by democracies (Loewnstein, 1937). Nowadays, militant democracy is understood as a form of the democratic system's ability to eliminate undemocratic forces (Cappocia, 2013), using, among others, bans of extremist parties. The category of militant democracy in banning extremist parties was used by Gur Bligh, making it the basis of the Weimar paradigm. In this perspective, the justification for banning the selected grouping draws on the fear a destruction of democracy and implementation of an undemocratic program. Bligh considered Nazi, fascist, communist, and Islamist groups to be such parties (Bligh, 2013: 1335-1336).

The presented research draws upon Bourne's and Fernando Casal Bértoa's theoretical framework. These researchers formulated the contemporary premises for banning extremist parties: anti-democratic ideologies, undemocratic internal organization, the name of the party, the party's orientation towards violence, issues of protecting the current order, and technical requirements regulating access to the democratic process. Finally, income 'incomplete democracies' are more likely to ban political parties than 'established democracies', and probably due to the former's underdeveloped commitments to constitutional liberalism and other 'defective' aspects of democratic practice (Bourne & Casal Bértoa, 2017: 17-21).

The Practice of the Banning of Political Parties in Post-Communist States

Freedom House report's data (Freedom House, 2020), which examines the systems' capacity to defend itself against anti-democratic extremist groups' threats, will be used to determine the level of effectiveness of the ban on political parties in the context of eliminating the enemies of the system. The results of the study are presented below.

Figure 1: Civil Society's scores
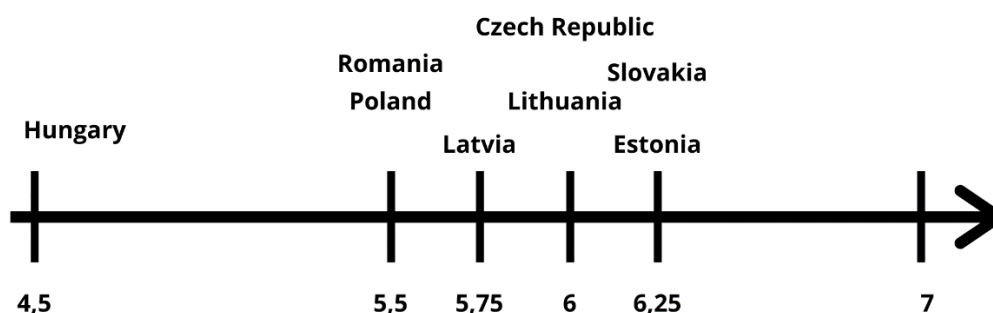
In **Bulgaria**, the Constitution prohibits the existence of parties that promote or incite any form of discrimination (Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria). It was confirmed by the relevant act, which indicated that political groups use democratic methods to achieve political goals. They must not violate universal values (Political Parties Act. 2005). In 1990, the Bulgarian Communist Party renamed itself into the Bulgarian Socialist Party, and, under that name, it is still one of the strongest parties on the Bulgarian political scene. On the other hand, in 2000, the United Macedonian Organization Ilinden-Pirin was banned, recognized by a court decision as a separatist organization. In 2006, this party was again refused registration.

In **Czech Republic**, the operation of political parties is governed by an Act of 1991. Czech legislation prohibits the existence of parties, which violate the Constitution and other laws, seek to overthrow the democratic foundations of the state, promote an anti-democratic agenda, threaten morality, public order, or the rights and freedoms of citizens (Zákon č. 424/1991, Art. 4). An example of extremist grouping is the Workers' Party, which was banned in February 2010. In the justification of the judgment, the Supreme Administrative Court indicated that it used Nazi symbols, proclaimed xenophobic, chauvinistic, homophobic slogans, and was also associated with illegal far-right organizations (Soud zrušil..., 2010). After its dissolution, representatives of this party founded the Workers' Party of Social Justice but did not change their program, making it possible to assess the party's banning as an ineffective tool. The Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia is not classified as an enemy of democracy. This party openly associates with the values of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (Naše strana), which does not affect the recognition of its legality.

In **Estonia**, parties that act to change the constitutional order or Estonia's territorial integrity are forbidden. Paramilitary organizations are not allowed to support political parties (Political Parties

Act). Estonian Communist Party, after being registered in 1991, later on, became part of the United Left Party of Estonia and still exists. An extremist party is the Estonian Conservative People's Party (Freedom House, 2020).

According to Freedom House, **Hungary** has the lowest level of ability to defend itself against extremist parties. Criteria for banning political parties are not clearly defined there. The introduction to the relevant law states that the party's social goal is to provide an organizational framework for the formation and expression of the will of the people and citizens' participation in political life (1989. évi XXXIII. Törvény). In 2009, the Hungarian Guard, a paramilitary organization established in 2007 by the leadership of the Jobbik party, was banned. In 2008, a court in Budapest dissolved the Hungarian Guard, finding its activities contrary to the Hungarian Constitution's provisions. The judgment was upheld by a higher court (Jogerős ítélet mondja…). Following this court decision, former members established the New Hungarian Guard Movement without changing their program. An example of an attempt to undermine the party's legality was adopting an amendment to the Constitution in 2011. At the initiative of the ruling party Fidesz, the National Assembly added to the Constitution a provision that the Hungarian Socialist Party is recognized as the legal successor of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party and is also responsible for crimes and offenses, made during the communist period (Magyarország Alaptörvénye, art. 4). Ultimately, no steps were taken to ban this party, but this solution should be classified as a political struggle tool to eliminate the system's enemies.

In **Latvia**, parties that organize their paramilitaries and put the constitutional and public order at risk are banned (Politisko partiju likums). In 1991, the Communist Party of Latvia was banned due to the alleged acting against the state's interests. Its former members founded the Socialist Party of Latvia which refers to the heritage of local communists.

In **Lithuania**, it is forbidden to create and run political parties that promote or practice any forms of national, racial, religious, or social inequity and hatred methods of authoritarian or totalitarian rule, use violence as a tool of political struggle, violate human rights and freedoms, and threaten public order (Republic of Lithuania Law on Political Parties). In 1991, the Communist Party of Lithuania was banned, as its existence was considered contrary to the Lithuanian raison d'état.

In **Poland**, political parties shape their structures and principles of operation in accordance with democracy (Dz.U. 1997 nr 98 poz. 604, art. 8). The Constitution of the Republic of Poland regulates banning political parties that refer in their programs totalitarian methods and practices of Nazism, fascism and communism, those whose program or activity presupposes or permits racial and national

hatred, the use of violence in order to obtain power or influence on state policy or provides for the confidentiality of structures or membership (The Constitution of the Republic of Poland). Since the beginning of the systemic transition in 1989, no party has been banned. However, in January 1990, the Polish United Workers' Party was disbanded. In 2002, the Communist Party of Poland was established. Nevertheless, it distances itself from totalitarian methods and practices in its programming documents (Statute of the Communist Party of Poland). In the past, there have been attempts to ban it (Poseł PiS doniósł...), but in 2020, all court proceedings against its members were discontinued. In the last Freedom House report, the Confederation, which currently has 11 members of parliament, was recognized as an extremist party (Freedom House, 2020). This view is not shared by other parliamentary parties and the public, which recognize its legality.

In **Romania**, it is forbidden to operate political parties that violate the constitutional order, threaten public order and territorial integrity (Law no. 14/2003 on political parties). In 2013, the registration of the New Romanian Communist Party, which directly referred to the Communist Party of Romania's tradition, was refused. In the justification of the judgment, the court referred directly to the provisions of the Act on National Security of 1991, which expressly prohibits the existence of communist parties.

In **Slovakia**, there are no direct regulations regarding the grounds for banning political parties. In general, political rights, including the right to form political parties, regulated in the Constitution, are respected. However, the exceptions are actions contrary to the constitutional order, public order, and raison d'etat (Ústava Slovenskej Republiky). In 2006, the Slovak Community-National Party, which was found to be contrary to the Constitution, was banned. In 2010, its former leader, Martin Kotleba, established the Our Slovakia People's Party. The reason for dissolution was the request by the Prosecutor General's Office in 2017, arguing its motion with extremist views of its members and violating the constitutional order. In 2019, the application was rejected due to the lack of relevant evidence in the case (Najvyšší súd rozhodol…). Similar accusations were made against the Slovak National Party members, but no such measures were taken against this group (Ingyen nevezte fasisztának...). The Communist Party of Slovakia is still active.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Freedom House reports define the ability to defend against extremists in the analyzed countries on a similar level. The examples of the Czech Workers' Party and the Slovak Community-National Party suggest a low level of effectiveness in eliminating enemies of democracy. The example of the Hungarian social democracy confirms that large groups are not banned, despite the accusations made

against them. No country has defined an extremist party model, but all of them adopt similar criteria at the declarative level - a threat to the constitutional and public order, and the use of violence to achieve political goals. The provisions of the Constitution and national laws constituted the basis for the ban. Based on this analysis, the models for banning of extremist parties are the following: (1) the exclusion of groups that directly originated and referred to the traditions of the ruling communist parties after the end of World War II, (2) the banning of parties considered to be extreme right, (3) exclusion of extreme left-wing and right-wing parties, (4) no party is banned. In the context of post-communist parties, it is worth pointing to three approaches, which are as follows: evolution towards social democracy, illegalization, and legalization. Thus, countries with similar experiences of the oppressive system started the process of systemic transition almost simultaneously, used different outlawing models, and showed different attitudes towards post-communist parties. However, it is impossible to determine which model carries a higher level of effectiveness at this stage. A more significant role than the adopted strategy is played by the values that guide the political community. However, this is an issue that needs to be discussed separately. The model (3), which does not distinguish between the ideological profiles, can be considered as an effective means of a new militant democracy at the declarative level. The example of Estonia proves the low level of effectiveness of the model (4). The Cases of the Workers' Party and the Slovak Community-National Party suggest the need to monitor former members of these groups' activities in the formation of new parties. In all these countries, especially in Hungary, it is necessary to increase the effectiveness of the implementation of the means promoted in the legal solutions.

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General Election Debates – Problems and Solutions[1]

Trina Vella[2]

Abstract

Pre-election debates are one of the most important steps in the electoral process – indeed, they serve an important public interest as they inform the American public about the issues of the day and offer a forum by which candidate proposed solutions may be heard. However, pre-election debates are led by moderators who generally do not have expertise in many of their key topic areas, such as law or judicial studies; and because of this, the propositions and arguments made by candidates in the pre-election time may be de-contextualized during debates such that the voting public may be misled in terms of the practicality of candidate positions. It is not unusual for individuals to unwittingly make propositions which insufficiently account for the confines of governmental structures, norms, and institutions in important ways. Likewise, it is not expectable for candidate to have absolute expertise in all areas of the debate, such as from health care to international law. This presents a real and pressing problem or issue for the quality of debates and democracy. It would be useful for pre-election debates to have additional facilitators present to provide basic factual and scientific information, as well to define key terms and principles relevant to American government and political life. Thus, given the current format of pre-election debates, this policy brief offers proposals to increase voter awareness and thus strengthen American democracy through amendments to the pre-election debate format for general elections.

Keywords: Democratization; General Elections; Pre-Election Debates; International Economics; Experts; Voter Awareness; Policy Proposals; Public Interest; Checks and Balances.

Introduction and Policy Problem

Pre-election debates reveal characteristics such as one's demeanor, vocabulary, and perspectives, and, because debates inform the American public about candidates' policy proposals (Fridkin and Gershon, 2020). This point is particularly sharp when considering the fact that numerous campaign promises were taken-up by the Trump administration via executive actions which ultimately collided with the system of checks and balances only to be overturned and therefore limited as a strategic policy tool. This is because the ability for presidents to displace Congress is evidently often influenced by the composition of Congress, the power of courts, and the interests of other stakeholders. However, such structural arrangements are at best backdrop factors in the context of pre-election debates, which means that any drawbacks of a relatively unapprised audience can only be compounded; in other words, the terms of the debate are not as accurate as they could be because the institutional features of American democracy are only insufficiently brought to the forefront

through the current structure of debates and via the guidance of moderators. Yet at the same time, the importance and imprint of debates is well established (Benoit, 2013, Peifer & Holbert, 2013) Accordingly, I propose amending the format of pre-election debates through the addition of four types of actors, each which serve a particular function in terms of guiding the debate so to draw forth tough questions about the system of checks and balances and American democracy vis-à-vis proposals made. After that, this policy brief further suggests two technical amendments.

Solutions and Policy Proposals

The first modification involves bringing in a judicial actor to moderate questions, specific, for instance, to proposed executive action. Consider, for instance, the key presidential debates from the 2016 federal election cycle in which now President Trump articulated sweeping promises to the American public without regard for how such promises may occur once in office. President Trump claimed: "But if I win, I am going to instruct my attorney general to get a special prosecutor to look into your situation, because there has never been so many lies, so much deception. There has never been anything like it, and we're going to have a special prosecutor" (Krieg and Diaz, 2016). While it is clear that President Trump like others have tested the boundaries of the American political system, it was also clear then to legal scholars and other experts that there exists jurisprudence, democratic norms, and checks and balances generally which projectably could frustrate statements and ideas passed in debates. In this way, it is clear how the level of accuracy of debates is undermined, again leaving the voting public potentially, to some extent, misinformed. This means that despite promises made, the judiciary for one occupies an indispensable role which should be underscored during debates so that they are not taken out of context, that is out of the American political system.

While executive orders are a long-standing practice and at times serve as a highly controversial method for change, such executive action is also known to be stricken down by courts such as the case with President Trump's attempt to maintain the basics of his order via a declaration of "national emergency." This speaks to the second role for justices as moderators – that is to provide commentary and critical questions about the legality of candidate's policy proposals. While a full-blown legal analysis would of course be beyond the scope of a debate, it is possible for preliminary remarks, constitutional rights, and general principles of law, to be verbalized during debates. This will enable critical thought on the part of voters, increase the threshold for comments made by candidates, and increase knowledge generally about law in the USA. It will become more difficult for candidates to make promises which are highly unrealistic or at least projected as legally problematic. Another function could be to explain how the appointment process of judges works, since future judicial

appoints are important voting issues. This is a feasible and low-cost endeavor; the justice(s) should be selected from the Supreme Court of the United States or at least an appeals court and the appointment made by a simple draw based off bipartisan recommendations.

The next actor should serve as a discussant and should have scholarly expertise, ideally in the field of political science. The purpose of this actor is to offer the lens of democratic theory by framing issues and asking questions in ways attentive to fundamental democratic percepts – that is American democracy. This serves at least three functions; first, it is useful for shedding light on how candidates themselves conceptualize and understand democratic governance and democratic society; second, it will enable the audience to learn about how their democracy may be influenced per candidate; and third, it pushes valuable civic dialogue to the forefront. Including academic individuals is important because the scholarly literature and existing bodies of knowledge relevant to American political life will be inserted in the candidate's conversation. The idea is not to challenge candidates on their knowledge of such topics per se, but rather on the framing of question, and the ways in which key words and aspects of questions are defined.

The third individual suggested here includes a diplomat, such as the Secretary of State, and/or legal counsel from the field of international law. This should be someone frequented with international economics and global economy trends and directions. International relations and affairs are an indispensable aspect to the presidency and typically occupies a segment of debates. While Article II of the constitution does provide the presidency with executive powers for international matters, international law and relations can be something particularly abstract to the "average voter," meaning something of which voters have little experience with. To remedy this, we can utilize the insight of counsel and/or other diplomatic actors trained and experienced in the realm of international law, relations, and affairs. This is useful because such actors can "fill in the blanks," specifically as regards the role of international institutions, normative commitments, treaties, and accords.

The final facilitator is "any other relevant expert". By relevant I mean individuals with specialized knowledge in subjects related to a most pressing issues of the day. For the current situation 2020 pandemic, for instance, it makes sense to have a medical facilitator trained in epidemiology/virology to assist in the debate. Debates would be significantly improved by leveraging and inserting insights from leading medical experts. As Lavazza and Farina (2020) explain, "In the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic, medical experts (virologists, epidemiologists, public health scholars, and statisticians alike) have become instrumental in suggesting policies to counteract the spread of coronavirus." So, for instance, when moderators ask questions pertaining to rates of infection, it could be useful to have

a scientific professional who is prepared to explain why rates of infections matter and how we as humans effect it.

It is important to note that the classic moderator, typically an accomplished Journalist, will of course continue to play an important an indispensable role in pre-election debates; in fact, their role will be enhanced as is the debate itself. The moderator will need to moderate a more multi-faceted, inter-disciplinary, layered debate by seeking and applying the guidance of other facilitators. As such, the moderator will continue to provide for successful progression of the dialogue, utilize time constrains, and structure the deliberation. An informed electorate of course strengthens the democratic process, meaning the greater awareness the voting public has about the structure and rules of governments increases one's ability to critically assess claims of electorally grounded representatives (potential or current), and enables placing them more accurately on the ideological spectrum and to weigh their options accordingly. Including these actors is also a highly feasible task. The economic cost is not one of height and doing so requires relatively minimal planning. Congress will, through a simple majority, establish a limited number of experts for candidates for this role, as with the others, and their list with be followed by a public blind draw of those congressional-appointment experts. This individual can then facilitate in the presidential pre-election debate.

In addition, there are two technical changes that should be made to improve the quality of debates. The first involves muting candidates; while this practice was applied in recent debates, it is not a standard practice. Muting candidates is an effective and passive way to control time limits and maintain focus and fairness; this tactic however, may not always be necessary and it is likely that the facilitators will reduce the need for this function altogether. The second technical change needed comes from the necessity of sign-language professionals for the assistance of the hearing impaired. The importance of providing for sign language is well established and therefore the absence of it presents a clear policy issue (Stokoe, 2014; Lucas et al., 2002; Baynton, 1996). While this is not something which has necessarily always been absent, recent debates have occurred without a present sign-language professional. Although some viewers will have their own resources to remedy this, it is, as matter of equity, something which should be accessible for notwithstanding ones' television provider, television package, or geographical location, for instance.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this policy brief has suggested improving pre-election debates at the federal level by enhancing the quality and form of them. Not only will strengthen vital public function, but it will also hold candidates to a more sophisticated account and enrich public discussions. Debates would benefit

from expanding the dialogue to increase actors with special knowledge and training; importantly, the idea is not for these actors to supersede or supplant "usual" moderators or the candidates, but rather to participle in and facilitate the debate with clear reference to their demonstrated knowledge base. These are highly feasible suggestions which positively give way to bi-partisan engagement through the appointment of such moderators, discussants, and facilitators. Debates would benefit from these additions and the amendments will further contribute to our knowledge about voter awareness in future studies.

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Greek Government's Communication Approach during the Covid-19 First Wave[1]

Charalambos Tsekeris[2] & George Efthymiou[3]

Abstract

The present policy brief draws from an empirical dissertation research, which took place during the outburst of the Covid-19 pandemic, in Athens, Greece. The main assumption of this interdisciplinary work is that Greek government's Covid-19 emergency communication and crisis management approach (during the first wave of the pandemic) can be described by the Pragmatic Complexity Communication Model (PCOM), according to which communication involves an emergent complexity of reciprocal relationships and levels of interaction. This assumption is examined and validated through a qualitative research process, using an online open-ended questionnaire and focusing on a group of government officials and a group of correspondent journalists. The subsequent analysis also highlights the intimate links between government's emergency communication (and crisis management) approach and the so-called "reformist culture", that is, an extrovert, pluralist and anti-populist way of government, emphasising preparedness, collaboration, consistency, coordination, trust and community. This results in specific policy considerations and recommendations regarding governmental Covid-19 response in general.

Keywords: Pragmatic Complexity Communication Model; emergency communication and crisis management; Covid-19 pandemic effects; complex government; trust; resilience; strategic foresight; Greece.

Introduction

Growing systemic complexity and interdependence have made a large variety of systems (economic, public health, cyber, etc.) susceptible to irreversible and cascading failure. The Covid-19 pandemic can be perceived as the widespread result of systemic properties, such as *emergence*, that is, a dynamical process whereby a situation arises through the local interaction of a number of actors and influences, without any intention to create that situation (Hynes, 2020).

The pandemic came unexpectedly in the West as a superspreader-driven "black swan", an extreme fat-tailed process (Taleb, 2020) owing to an increased global connectivity. It seems that all national and supranational governments were unprepared for it, although governing in principle pertains to strategic reflection and anticipation (Tufekci, 2020). Anticipation scenarios assume futures thinking

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and specific structures for the implementation of emergency measures, based on clear responsibilities and experts' participation (Kiel, 2020).[4]

Governments worldwide now have the opportunity to develop and adopt a *systemic, anticipatory approach* to reinforcing resilience, as a response to the massive interconnected challenges facing contemporary societies, in contrast to "conventional" or "traditional" approaches of risk assessment and management focusing primarily upon hardening systems so that they are able to absorb threats before breaking. These approaches are inappropriate, prohibitively expensive or both for many of the issues national and supranational governments will have to deal with (Hynes, 2020). In parallel, strategic communication processes are required to embrace the emergent complexity of reciprocal relationships and levels of interaction (Güler, 2012).

In general, only limited research has been conducted so far to investigate and understand the actual perceptions of organisational key agents within a national government, especially concerning the effectiveness of a governmental emergency communication model. The overall methodological perspective addressed by the present study is to generate and promote such understanding, as well as to ascertain if any disparity exists between these key agents and use that knowledge to act in more informed and effective ways for performing emergency communication models, also finding links to current issues of social dynamics and political culture.

This policy brief draws from an empirical dissertation research, which took place during the outburst of the Covid-19 pandemic, in Athens, Greece. Our particular research objective is to carefully examine and purposefully discern how central agents (or high-degree centrality agents) within and around the Greek government (decision-making officials and journalists), deemed as an *organisational complex system* (Cairney, 2015), actually perceive the effectiveness and value of the applied communication emergency alert model, under the catastrophic threat of Covid-19 pandemic in its first wave (February-May 2020). The study concisely elaborates on the populism debate and consistently follows a theoretical framework based on qualitative complexity and complex networks, nonlinear dynamical systems, learning behaviours and organisational culture, ultimately aiming to offer practical recommendations.

Methodological considerations

A main assumption of the present study involves the use of complexity theory (Stacey, 2007) and "complex government" approach (Cairney, 2015) as a frame of reference to describe the Greek

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[4] See also the relevant work of Tsekeris and Zeri (2020a, 2020b).

government's Covid-19 response. In this analytic setting, outcomes are studied and understood in terms of the "whole" policymaking system, *greater than the sum of its parts* (Cairney, 2012; Geyer & Rihani, 2010). In particular, the Greek government's crisis management and emergency communication model, applied during the outburst of the Covid-19 pandemic, is assumed to be described in terms of the Pragmatic Complexity Communication Model (PCOM) (Corman et al., 2007; Tatham, 2008).

According to PCOM (Corman et al., 2007; Tatham, 2008), as shown in Graph 1, communication is an emergent feature of a self-organised complex system (constantly interacting with its external environment) wherein the participants (or agents) mutually and reciprocally interpret and evaluate each other's opinions, attitudes, behaviours, intentions, expectations, thoughts and motivations. This dynamical model heavily draws from Niklas Luhmann's (1995) communication theory, which overtly breaks with the oversimplistic notion of communication as an activity of sending a message from one mind to another.

Figure 1: Pragmatic Complexity Communication Model (PCOM)
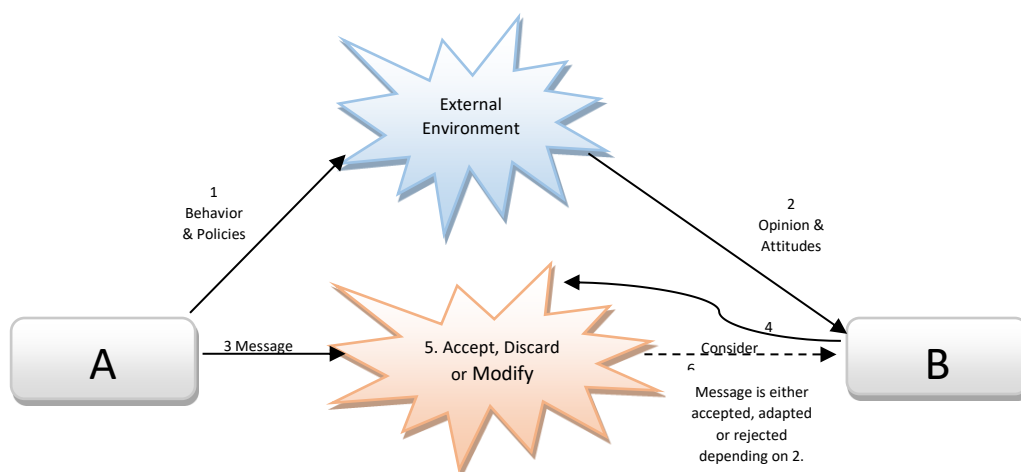
Source: Corman et al. (2007)

Following purposive/non-probability sampling, a qualitative method is utilised in order to study the involved population. More specifically, to gather data and find evidence for the topic under investigation, it has been followed a qualitative questionnaire method. Two similar online open-ended questionnaires were administered (through the WhatsApp application) to a group of ten government officials and a group of ten correspondent journalists. The procedure was launched on July 7th and closed on July 13th 2020. According to the various ethical codes, the research was conducted on the understanding that the information provided was anonymous and confidential. The total responses collected have been 20 (10 from each group).

The qualitative method (online open-ended questionnaire) adopted to explore the Greek government's communication model has been qualified as appropriate given the research aim focusing on 1) deeply understanding current phenomena and the uniqueness of a situation rather than testing hypotheses, 2) assessing complex social dynamics and relations embedded in the case under investigation, and 3) suggesting some practical lessons and theoretical implications based on findings from an in-depth analysis of the exemplary case of Covid-19 response practices in Greece from February to May 2020.

The analytic findings pertain to the emergence, identification and reconstruction of categories and subcategories and, eventually, of recurrent themes and subthemes, after carefully reading the material several times. In summary, the major themes that appear in the final phase of the analysis involve (a) the exploitation of uncertainty and futures literacy, (b) multilayer communication and the importance of collaboration, (c) the prioritisation of scientific expertise and human values. In order to reach conclusions, the coding of these themes was compared to the themes drawn from the literature of the theoretical background. By this comparison, the insights on Covid-19 crisis administration model as a version of PCOM were revealed.

The qualitative analysis showed only a few differences and disparities in perceived value and impact between groups of governmental agents and nongovernmental agents (i.e. correspondent journalists), as well as many similarities, something that signifies the dynamics of complex reciprocal relationships and interdependencies, including a collective (or community) coproduction of Covid-19 response. This can arguably be thought as key part of the satisfactory policy reaction to the pandemic in Greece.

Discussion and elaborations

The results therefore cast light on the full picture behind the (widely acknowledged[5]) Greek government's effective response to Covid-19 first wave. This effectiveness can be mainly theorised as the process and outcome of a rapid "collective coproduction" (in autopoietic systems theoretical terms), that is, a collective contribution to the delivery of achieving desired common goals. In addition, a significant role in Greece's successful management of the crisis has arguably been played by specific qualities, clearly shown in respondents' accounts, such as:

- **scientific literacy** within government, including the adequate understanding of scientific evidence and its nature;

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[5] See for instance: https://www.oecd.org/economy/greeces-response-to-covid-19-has-been-swift-and-effective-but-tackling-long-standing-challenges-also-key.htm

- **statistical literacy** and proper perception and identification of substantive risk factors;

- **foresight literacy**, in the sense of exploiting weaknesses to build positive future narratives and an adaptive resilient recovery process.

The latter signifies another major finding resulting from the thematic (qualitative) analysis, which pertains to the energetic adoption of a kind of strategic foresight and futures thinking, particularly on behalf of the decision-making government officials. This profoundly relates to flexibility, dynamic openness and the outward-looking, anti-populist "reformist culture" (Diamandouros, 1994), which is much needed to cultivate trust and better the response to new pandemic waves. In such context, effective and agile coordination goes hand in hand with pluralism and *cognitive diversity* (Syed, 2020).

Diversity makes fundamental contributions to system performance and underpins system level robustness. It therefore allows for multiple responses to external shocks and internal adaptations, but also drives novelty and innovation (Page, 2010). In other words, while the Covid-19 pandemic represents a significant threat, the rationale that every crisis also bears opportunities for sustained innovation and learning did work.[6] A practical demonstration of this crisis-as-opportunity rationale is the ongoing digitisation of the public services, which has already been remarkably accelerated with the launch of the governmental portal Gov.gr, providing more than 650 e-services. The Greek Ministry of Digital Governance has also helped teleworking of critical public services to more than 10,000 employees and provided a platform for all public bodies to conduct secure and high-quality teleconferences (Tsekeris, 2020).

In policymaking terms, the dimension of trust needs special analytic attention. Trust in government and trust in others plays a significant role in generating inconsistent policy compliance by citizens (Goldstein & Wiedemann, 2020), while belief in conspiracy theories is related to distrust in government (Kim & Cao 2016). Evidently, trust-building and public health messages are better amplified by local voices, in combination with reliable information from national leaders and central health officials. In particular, messages offering in-group models for norms (e.g. members of your community) may be most effective. Also, enlisting trusted voices has been shown to make public health messages much more effective in changing behaviour during epidemics (Bavel et al., 2020).

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[6] In the empirical research setting, the majority of both government officials and correspondent journalists argued for *"crisis as an opportunity"*.

A good example of such a trusted voice is the internationally reputed Yale Professor Nicholas Christakis.[7]

In some sense, the strategic communication model applied by the Greek government (Mitsotakis administration), during the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, could arguably offer best practice evidence on crisis management. Evidently, such best practice evidence pertains to practical orientations, useful lessons (at this point in time) and general mechanisms that public leaders need in order to steer through the crisis in the months ahead. First, effective communication is a key pillar of crisis governance. Second, adopting a whole-of-society approach is of particular importance in this massive health crisis. Finally, implementing evidence-based strategies grounded on historical as well as current scientific data is paramount, rather than acting based on what is politically expedient (i.e. fearing the political cost) (El-Taliawi & Van Der Wal, 2020).

How successfully this acute crisis is managed in the last instance will mostly depend on how well each government is able to face it head-on and bring society on board, while communicating and coordinating effectively with stakeholders. Social systems are by nature responsive and adaptive, and this crisis presents a unique future-oriented learning opportunity. This is a strong test for our governance systems, including the digital ones, and today's collective response will shape the future for years to come (El-Taliawi & Van Der Wal, 2020).[8]

Conclusions and policy recommendations

The aforementioned "complex government" nonlinear approach can possibly provide adequate pragmatic lessons of crisis management and teach policymakers and political reformers about diversity and complexity so that they are less surprised when things go wrong (Geyer, 2012; Cairney, 2015).[9] Another important dimension of this approach involves embracing uncertainty and combining coordination with novelty and innovation, as shown in the case of the ongoing digitalisation of the Greek public sector services.

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[7] Prime Minister Mitsotakis tweeted: "Had a very interesting conversation with @NAChristakis about our action plan for COVID-19 and our health system. We're basing our strategies on sound scientific advice, and Greece is very privileged to have such eminent scientists to call upon, wherever they may be." (Prime Minister GR, 10:05 PM · Mar 23, 2020).
[8] Furthermore, coordinated efforts across individuals, communities, stakeholders and governments to fight the spread of disease can send strong signals of cooperation and shared values, facilitating reorganisation of previously considered out-groups and in-groups into a single community with a common destiny (Bavel et al., 2020).
[9] See also the Armenian President Armen Sarkissian's substantial and complexity-friendly argument on *quantum politics*, that is, how quantum physics inspired him in the difficult fight against Covid-19 (Sarkissian, 2020). In the same sense, a *quantum strategic communication* approach could arguably play a key role in countering different kinds of unexpected threats (including hybrid threats).

Of course, during the Covid-19 pandemic, the emergency communication emphasis on both personal responsibility and public adherence to simple hygienic rules is irreducible. In parallel, Greek government's foresight policy framework signifies links between crisis management and the so-called "reformist culture", that is, an extrovert and pluralist way of government, emphasising preparedness, collaboration, consistency, trust and community. These qualities are the opposite of today's dominant form of politics: populism (see Painter, 2020). Moreover, a number of policy recommendations can be further investigated.

On the one hand, policy makers must evolve and adapt their strategy to help produce the wide dissemination of evidence throughout a messy policy process, such as by working with local governments, public bodies and stakeholders to "co-produce" meaningful measures of effective interventions in particular areas. On the other hand, they must recognise that policy-relevant knowledge is not just about the "evidence" of a problem; it also requires specific knowledge of how the policy process works and how any solution will fare (Cairney, 2015).

Policy recommendations should additionally include concerns about *resilience*, regarding the anticipatory containment of systemic threats (Hynes, 2020):

1. Ensure that systems are designed to be resilient, i.e. recoverable and adaptable.

2. Develop methods for quantifying resilience so that trade-offs between a system's efficiency and resilience can be made explicit.

3. Control system complexity to minimise cascading failures resulting from unexpected disruption by making necessary connections controllable and visible.

4. Manage system topology by designing appropriate connections and communications across interconnected infrastructure.

5. Add resources in system-crucial components to ensure functionality.

6. Develop real-time decision support tools integrating data and automating selection of management alternatives based on explicit policy trade-offs in real time.

For the time being, governments also need to embrace the following practical considerations to effectively manage the so-called Covid-19 transition (Habersaat, 2020):

1) implement a phased approach to a "new normal";

2) balance individual rights with the social good;

3) prioritise people at highest risk of negative consequences;

4) provide special support for healthcare workers and care staff;

5) build, strengthen and maintain trust;

6) enlist existing social norms and foster healthy new norms;

7) increase self-efficacy;

8) use clear and positive language;

9) anticipate and manage misinformation;

10) engage with media outlets.

Last but not least, national and supranational governments should proactively appreciate and manage the dynamical characteristics of complex global systems and problems. The consequences of failing to do this can be immense (Helbing, 2013). Overall, it is required more interdisciplinary empirical research on both structural transformations and agents' behaviours, perceptions and attitudes, which could arguably contribute to improving and optimising emergency communication and strategic foresight models and plans for governmental reorganisation and institutional redesign.

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Rethinking the Concept of Politics and Politicians in a Transit State: Features of "the Political Labor Market" in Georgia[1]

Beka Chedia[2]

Abstract

The article examines the specificities of political activity in post-Soviet Georgia. It draws attention to how the profession of a politician is perceived in this country. What are the features of the recruitment process to the political elite? Why is the profession of a politician so attractive in Georgia and what contributes to the rapid growth in the number of political parties and political leaders?

This article discusses criteria, conditions, and procedures for establishing political parties, as well as, the techniques that are used by politicians and parties in order to gain the attention of the country's population.

Keywords: Georgia; Post-Soviet; Politics; Political Parties; Elections; Politicians; leaders; Ideology; Transition; Values.

Introduction

A small post-Soviet country – Georgia - the more experience it acquires in the conditions of an independent state, the more the perception of politics deviates from its traditional understanding. During the Soviet Union and the communist regime in Georgia, politics was associated with a "dirty and dangerous" game. During the first stage of transition and at the roots of independence in the 1990s (when the Soviet Union collapsed), despite the fact that there was no experience of political life in the country, there was not enough knowledge about politics, about the state, about governance, and so on. Politics in Georgia was perceived in a positive understanding, as something connected with the state, with high values, with independence and freedom.

But 30 years later the perception of politics is more and more contrary to its classical understanding. If, according to the theoretical approach, politics is perceived by several parameters, as something related to the governance of the state, as the sphere of public life, as a tool for reaching compromises and resolving conflicts or as a category of competition for power (Heywood, 2015), then in post-Soviet Georgia politics has clearly acquired a new definition; Politics as a workplace.

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The formation of a new understanding of politics is more related to effective employment and making money. Of course, the negative attitude to politics is typical for many countries, including developed democracies. But the example of Georgia indicates that, in the process of transition, and with a high level of poverty, politics, as a sphere of activity, can acquire a non-political form and turn into an ordinary place of work, although with a decent income.

A Profitable and Prestigious Job

Georgia is a small post-Soviet country, which is gripped by poverty and unemployment, there are not enough job vacances, people have limited prospects for self-realization, there is no real economy, according to official statistics unemployment rate is 17% (National Statistics Office of Georgia, 2020a), and in such conditions, politics has become a prosperous and most profitable sector of "business". During the pre-election periods, according to the political tradition of Georgia, the number of politicians and political parties grows significantly, because politics and running for parliament are the fastest way to make money. The fact is that in Georgia there is a very strange system of party financing: in a country where 19.5% of population is under the absolute poverty line (National Statistics Office of Georgia, 2019), substantial funds are spent from the state budget to support political parties. Even some parties that do not have representatives in parliament, receive regular funding from the budget thanks to legislative manipulations. According to the law, parties that, as a result of the 2016 parliamentary elections, were unable to overcome the then existing 5% barrier and could not receive parliamentary mandates, but gained 3% of the vote, still received funding for 4 years from the state budget. Moreover, in addition to state funding, parties receive party contributions from their members, and substantial donations from individuals and the campaign. In 2019, the total revenue of only the main 19 parties was GEL 20,739,364 (Transparency International Georgia, 2020). By the standards of a poor country, this is a substantial amount that parties (or rather their leaders) are at their discretion. This is one of the reasons that makes politics in Georgia attractive and profitable for some "political leaders". The logic of financing political parties from the state budget is that in this way the state tries to maintain and strengthen the multi-party political system. However, in reality, the party's funding system pushes people seeking a profitable and prestigious job to create more and more new parties.

Self-proclaimed Political leaders and Boom in Political Parties

Political class in Georgia is extensive: There are so many so-called political leaders that such a small country is no longer able to provide job places for such a number of politicians. Gradually, political

competition turns into competition for job places. When a member of parliament loses his parliamentary mandate as a result of regular elections, this, as usual, is perceived by him as not a political failure, a lost opportunity to serve the state or values, but as a loss of job and salary. New actors appear on the political arena, they create their own parties or unite into existing political organizations. Georgians are an artistic and emotional nation, and in the last 30 years they have mastered the dramaturgy of politics very well. Entering the sphere of politics is pompous: Famous and unknown people (actors, writers, journalists, athletes, businessmen, students, doctors, experts, etc.) announce at an "emergency briefing" that they can no longer tolerate the country's failures and are forced to devote themselves to the sphere of politics. Mandatory properties for such briefings are: status of briefing (emergency) and multi-colored decorations, the flags of Georgia, the EU, NATO, the USA, some European countries, etc. The dramaturgy of the creation of each new party personifies the birth of a new hero against the backdrop of the apocalypse. For Georgian politicians, every election is not just a democratic process of power change, but "a decisive battle to save the homeland".

The number of political leaders, however, as well as political parties, is growing rapidly from year to year. During the 2016 parliamentary elections, 220 parties were registered in the country. Already on the eve of the 2020 elections, the number of parties increased by 43 and amounted to 263 parties (National Agency of Public Registry of Ministry of Justice of Georgia, 2020), and according to the forecast, their number will soon reach 300. Although, as usual, not all parties participate in the elections, many parties that were created over the past 30 years exist fictitiously or play the role of technical assistant for stronger parties during elections (for instance, they help with their representation at the Central Election Commission, their observers, etc.). For example, during the parliamentary elections in October 2020, out of the existing 263 parties, only 73 parties of blocs expressed their desire to participate in the elections and 23 parties could not meet the corresponding requirements and could not register to participate in the elections while 50 political entities (48 parties and 2 political blocs) took part in these elections (Central Election Commission of Georgia, 2020).

Such a number of parties in the country with a population of only 3,716, 900 (National Statistics Office of Georgia, 2020b) demonstrate the shortcomings of the country's political system. The state itself encourages the emergence of new political parties and this contributes to chaos in the "political labor market". This was facilitated by new amendments to the constitution and electoral legislation, approved by the country's parliament in June 2020, specifically for the 2020 elections. Amendment that lowered the electoral threshold from 5 to 1 percent (Constitution of Georgia, Constitutional Law of Georgia, 2020) provoked the emergence of new political organizations and new politicians. For small and weak parties (both newly created and existing ones), a new window of opportunity has

opened up for comparative success in the parliamentary elections. During the parliamentary elections in 2016, only 2 large parties received deputy mandates but in the conditions of a low electoral threshold, in 2020 parliamentary elections, 9 parties received parliamentary mandates. The results of this election showed how government and law are contributing to the emergence of new parties and politicians. It turns out that many new parties emerged after the constitutional amendments.

Criteria, Conditions, and Procedures for Establishing Political Parties

What is needed to create a political party in Georgia? This requires bringing together only 300 people to participate in the work of the founding congress of the party (Organic Law of Georgia On Political Associations of Citizens, 1997). In such a traditional country as Georgia, where family ties, neighbors, friends or classmates are very strong and they are always ready to help, there is no problem to gather 300 founders of new political party. The party itself should have at least 1,000 members (Organic Law of Georgia On Political Associations of Citizens, 1997) and this is not a problem. Every citizen of Georgia who has reached the age of 18 and has political ambitions or wants to find a good job has the opportunity to create his own party without difficulty. The most difficult component for creating a political party ιn Georgia is creating a party name. The names with combinations such as national, democratic, right, left, centrist, and other traditional designations of the party have long been taken by other political parties. In Georgia, there is an abundance of exotic names for political parties.

To create a political party in Georgia, there is no need to have a political ideology, political views or programs. Having a political ideology for many Georgian parties sounds offensive ("a patriot should serve the people and should not limit himself to ideology", they argue), and many politicians in Georgia do not understand political ideologies, and it is easier for them to argue that their ideology is "saving the country".

In Georgia, it is impossible to distinguish parties from each other and parties are forced to resort to marketing methods: memorable logo, loud slogans, or the color of the party. Some parties (for example, the ruling party, "Georgian Dream") choose blue, some - yellow, or green. This is very similar to the branding style of the banking sector, when each bank is associated with a specific color. Instead of the competition of doctrines or ideas, parties try to promote their color: activists everywhere in the country waving balloons of their own color, politicians speaking on television emphasize the colors of their party with the help of clothes, accessories and if the color of their party dominates in public places it is considered the key to political success.

In the absence of ideologies, politicians are forced to take the model role of historical figures. Some consider themselves adherents of the course of the medieval kings of Georgia, others identify

themselves with public figures of the country that made a significant contribution in different epochs of the country's rich history.

Politicians consider such communication with society to be more effective. It is easier for them to tell the people (who know and adore their history well) that "I will carry out such a policy as Queen Tamara or King David", rather than explaining ideological values, programs, doctrines. Many politicians simply do not know how leftist views differ from rightist ones and prefer to position themselves on the political market not as carriers of some kind of ideology, but simply as folk heroes and messiahs.

Non-traditional Forms of Recruiting into Politics: Latest Trends

In Georgia, the process of recruiting into politics, entering the sphere of politics is very different from the paradigm of Western democracy. Since 2012, a completely new procedure for entering politics has appeared in Georgia, which has not been practiced by more than one country before. Especially, during the October 2020 parliamentary elections, the ruling party organized a competition for future members of parliament. Potential parliamentary candidates from the ruling party had to take tests and go through the interview process. Such recruitment was more like hiring employees for a corporation or government agency rather than future members of parliament. Moreover, after such a careful selection, an exam was arranged for future politicians in real conditions: they were given the task to participate in the body of debates with political opponents of the authorities and thus prove their skills as politicians. Another new trend in political recruitment was identified in Georgia during the 2020 parliamentary elections: If politics has already turned into a good business, into such an area of activity where there is no need to have knowledge, experience, political values, etc., politicians, leaders of political parties, are increasingly involving their own children in politics. During the parliamentary elections of 2020 there was such a tendency for a significant influx of politicians' children into the political parties. According to this new trend, the children of politicians do not take secondary positions in party structures but automatically receive the status of a "political leader" and run with their parents for parliament.

Concluding Remarks

On the one hand, in contrast with many other post-Soviet countries (where the state strictly controls the sphere of politics, for example, in Russia and Central Asian countries), political activity in Georgia is not subject to state control, which is definitely a good precondition in the process of democratization of a post-Soviet country. On the other hand, the absence of a tradition of political

life, the presence of a low political culture and a mercantile understanding of politics, contributes to the creation of an unprofessional political class that has very little to do with the values of higher politics.

This situation harms not only the political process, but can also hinders the democratization process. Thus, the political class formed, undermines confidence in the sphere of politics, which is no longer seen as a mechanism for the distribution of power and values but as employment opportunity for ambitious people. On the one hand, without the economic development of Georgia, politics will always be the most attractive sphere of activity in Georgia. Only the real economy can become an alternative to the overloaded political labor market. On the other hand, for a correct understanding of the profession of a politician and political activity, it is necessary to increase the level of political culture and political education not only among the political class but also in the general population.

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Conducting Elections during COVID-19: New Policy Guidelines Issued by the Election Commission of India[3]

Bipin Kumar Thakur[4]

Abstract

The Election Commission of India (ECI) as per Article 324(1) of the Constitution of India has been vested with the power of superintendence, direction and conduct of all elections for the Parliament; State Legislatures and elections for the offices of the President and Vice-President. It had recently issued the Broad Guidelines for Conduct of General/Bye Elections during COVID-19. These Guidelines looked impressive to read but to implement them remained a difficult task; a lot depended on how the Election Commission, State administration including the police and health personnel conducted and fulfilled their due responsibilities. Their co-operation in a synchronized way has resulted in a successful exercise of conducting election in a difficult time and fulfilling a necessary prerequisite for a democratic government enshrined in our Constitution.

Keywords: Election Commission of India; Political Parties; COVID-19; Electoral Campaigning; Duty of Voters and Contestants during Election; Role of local administration during election; Electoral Behaviour; Free, Fair and Safe Election; Continuity of Democracy; Election as a Constitutional Right

Introduction

The Election Commission of India (ECI) as per Article 324(1) of the Constitution of India has been vested with the power of superintendence, direction and conduct of all elections for the Parliament; State Legislatures and elections for the offices of the President and Vice-President. It had recently issued *Broad Guidelines for Conduct of General/Bye Elections during COVID-19*. According to the ECI, the Commission on 17th July, 2020 had sought views/suggestions of National/State Political Parties till 31st July 2020 and had further extended the period till 11th August, 2020 on request of the Political Parties. The Commission had considered the views/suggestions received from various Political Parties and Chief Electoral Officers of States/Union Territories on election campaign and public meetings (ECI, 2020a).

1. Main Guidelines

Some important *Guidelines* in brief are as given below:

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1.1 General Guidelines to be followed during entire Election Process for all persons

Among the 'General Guidelines', five essential directions were proposed: i. every person should wear face mask during every election related activity; ii. at the entry of hall/room/premises used for election purposes, thermal scanning of all persons should be carried out a sanitizer, soap and water should be made available; iii. social distancing shall be maintained as per the extant *COVID-19 Guidelines* of the State Government and Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India; iv. as far as practicable, large halls should be identified and utilized to ensure social distancing norms; v. adequate number of vehicles shall be mobilized for movement of polling personnel, security of personnel to ensure compliance of *COVID-19 Guidelines* (ECI, 2020b).

1.2 Nomination Process

Regarding the nomination process, the ECI has revised the norms of persons accompanying the candidates and number of vehicles at the time of nomination. It has also created optional facility to fill the nomination form and affidavit online and submission of the same, after taking print outs, before the Returning Officer (RO) concerned. For the first time, the candidates will have the option to deposit security amount for contesting the elections online (ECI, 2020c).

Furthermore, the Election Commission has directed that the candidate may have the option to seek his/her elector certification for the purpose of nomination online. In supersession of the existing guidelines mentioned in Para 5.8.1 of *Returning Officer's Handbook, 2019*, the Commission has directed that number of persons to accompany candidate for submission of nomination is restricted to two and the number of vehicles for the purpose of nomination is restricted to two.

Among others, *Guidelines* to be followed at the time of nomination are: returning officer's chamber should have sufficient space to perform the functions of nomination, scrutiny and symbol allocation following the norms of social distancing; prospective candidates to get the staggered time schedule; large space for waiting for candidates etc. It is worth mentioning here that all steps required to be taken for the submission of nomination form and affidavit shall continue to operate as per the provisions contained in the '*Representation of the People Act, 1951*' (ECI, 2020c).

1.3 Campaign by the Political Parties/Contesting Candidates

Under this, three types of activities have been addressed: Firstly, 'door-to-door campaign' in which a group of five persons including candidates and excluding security personnel, if any, is allowed to do the campaigning; Secondly, 'road shows' in which the new *Guidelines* replacing the para 5.8.1 of

Returning Officer's Handbook 2019, provides that the convoy of vehicles should be broken after every five vehicles instead of ten vehicles (excluding the security vehicles, if any). The interval between two sets of convoys of vehicles should be half an hour instead of gap of hundred meters (ECI, 2020b).

Thirdly, Public gatherings/rallies may be conducted subject to adherence to extant COVID-19 guidelines. The *Guidelines* provide further that the District Election Officer (DEO) will identify dedicated grounds for public gathering with clear 'entry' & 'exit' points and put marks to ensure social distancing norms by the attendees. It will be the duty of the Nodal District Health Officer to ensure the adherence by all to COVID-19 related guidelines in the district. Further, the DEO and the district Superintendence of Police (SP) should ensure that the number of attendees does not exceed the limit prescribed by the State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) for public gatherings.

Moreover, the political parties and candidates concerned should ensure that all COVID-19 related requirements like face masks, sanitizers, thermal scanning etc. are fulfilled during each of these activities, stipulates *the Guidelines.* Those violating instructions on COVID-19 measures will be liable to be punished under relevant sections of the '*Disaster Management Act, 2005'; 'Indian Penal Code'* (IPC) and other legal provisions as specified in order No. 40-3/2020-DM-1(A) dated 29th July, 2020 of the Ministry of Home Affairs. It will be the duty of DEO to bring this to the notice of all concerned.

1.4 Polling Station Arrangements

The Commission has issued detailed instructions for 'assured minimum facilities' at each polling station. The ECI norms prescribe mandatory sanitization of polling stations, preferably a day before the poll. All voters will be subject to thermal scanning at entry points of polling stations. If they show high temperature, their reading will be taken again and if it is still high, they shall be provided a token / certificate to come back for voting in the last hour of polling. Similarly, quarantined COVID-19 patients can vote in the last hour of voting. The Commission has asked for gloves to be provided to every voter for signing the voter register and pressing the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) button. In addition, soap, water and sanitizer will be arranged adequately and social distancing will be followed strictly. Separate guidelines will be applicable for those voters living in the specified containment zones. Adequate number of polling officials/staff/ personnel are to be arranged. The number of electors in polling station has been fixed at one thousand instead of one thousand five hundred as per Commission's Instruction No. 23/SEC/2020-ERS, dated 23rd July, 2020.

1.5 Postal Ballot

As a welcome step *the Guidelines* stipulate that Covid-positive patients and suspected cases under home or institutional quarantine will also have the option of voting via postal ballot. As of now, postal ballots can be used by disabled voters, senior citizens above eighty years and those engaged in essential services.

1.6 Counting of Votes

In supersession of the earlier ECI instruction dated 30th April, 2014 the new *Guidelines* provide that the counting of votes of a constituency may be considered at three-four halls by appointing additional Returning Officers (RO) and not more than seven counting tables will be allowed in a counting hall. The counting centres will be disinfected before, during and after the counting. Postal ballots may also be counted in a separate hall. Display of result from the control units may be displayed on a large screen to avoid accommodation of large number of counting agents.

1.7 Miscellaneous provisions

The Commission has also provided for various other guidelines e.g. provision of a Nodal Health Officer; EVMs/VVPATs specifications; Training and Capacity Building; Distribution and Collection of Election Material; Timing of third Randomization of Polling Staff to avoid the rush; Kit for Polling Officers containing mask, sanitizer, face shield and gloves etc. *The Guidelines* has broadly speculated every aspect related with the conduct of polling and has come with the possible solution for its smooth operation.

2. Policy Recommendations

ECI *Guidelines* on Elections looked impressive to read but to implement them remained a difficult task. It is believed that these *Guidelines* had been issued for the *Bihar* Assembly election (which was held in three phases during October-November, 2020) and other bye-elections (in *Gujarat*, *Madhya Pradesh* and *Uttar Pradesh)*. In the *Bihar* Assembly election, approximately forty million voters participated with an impressive overall voter turnout of 57.05 percent out of which male and female voter turnout remained at 54.60 percent and 59.70 percent respectively (ECI, 2020a).

The new *Guidelines* restricting the number of people and vehicles accompanying the candidates; provision of online facility for nomination and deposition of security money and certification etc. are welcoming steps and should be become a permanent feature of the electoral process. These are going

to strengthen the constitutional and political set up of our country. In the words of *Rajni Kothari,* "in a country where politicization is given a free course and becomes the principal medium of modernization, it tends to break the autonomy of economic and social institutions and to subject the latter to intense pressurizing from both within and without. Its capacity to render its established supremacy over these institutions functional and efficient would, however, depend upon the degree to which the performance of a particular political system has itself shown competence in meeting the needs and aspirations of individuals and groups" (Kothari, 2014).

The ECI has provided the guidelines for public rallies and crowd management, its effective implementation rests with the State administration and police. It is a known fact that our police does not have the required proper skills for the effective and peaceful crowd handling and management. It becomes a testing time for the police to do so during election, when the situation remains highly charged politically and it is recommended that the police plays its role effectively.

The *Guidelines* did not mention anything on virtual rallies and digital campaigns for the upcoming assembly elections. Furthermore, it was provided that political parties and candidates concerned should ensure all COVID-19 related requirements such as face masks, sanitizers, thermal scanning etc. during political activities and those violating instructions on COVID-19 measures will be liable to be punished under relevant sections of the '*Disaster Management Act, 2005'; 'Indian Penal Code'* (IPC) and other legal provisions as specified in order No. 40-3/2020-DM-1(A) dated 29th July, 2020 of the Ministry of Home Affairs (ECI, 2020b).

Given the nature and way of functioning of political parties in the country, the above mentioned responsibilities regarding maintenance of COVID related guidelines given to them and their candidates are very difficult to implement. No political parties would be strict to their own supporters and they will ignore violations on their part. As per a report in *The Times of India,* though COVID-19 situation in *Bihar* has so far remained under control, despite large-scale campaign and public events in in the state in the run-up to the polls, a visiting central government team found that adherence to COVID-19 norms such as wearing masks, maintaining physical distance and hand hygiene was less than satisfactory outside the urban centres (Dey, 2020). At the same time, citing the smooth conduct of the *Bihar* Assembly polls, the Karnataka High Court, Bengaluru has directed the State Election Commission to finalize the schedule for *gram panchayat* (units of local self-government in the rural areas) election within three weeks and asked the State Government to provide funds for the polls (Indian Express, 2020a,b).

Thus, it may be noted that the *ECI Guidelines 2020* are well formulated keeping the Indian conditions in mind, but a lot has to be achieved in the field of the technique of digital interface to make elections, free, fair and full of ease for the stakeholders involved. Definitely, a change in the habits and behaviour of electorates regarding strict compliance of COVID-19 related rules during the elections is the foremost requirement. This may be achieved through massive public awareness in advance at one hand and equally important by increasing the required human and material resources at the local levels in a sustained manner.

Conclusion

Due credit may be given to the Election Commission of India for framing the Guidelines for conducting election during COVID-19 and the same was thoroughly tested during the recently concluded *Bihar* Assembly Elections and other by-polls. We may agree with S.Y. Quraishi, the former Chief Election Commissioner of India who maintained that the ECI after initial doubts, was inspired by the successful experiences of many countries (approximately thirty four countries have conducted elections to their national assembly or presidential post while being engaged in the battle against the novel coronavirus), especially South Korea, which conducted its national elections in the midst of the pandemic with great success and highest- ever turnout. At a time when all countries are looking at each other for lessons, *Bihar* could be a leading example of how to successfully conduct elections in difficult times (Quraishi, 2020). Time and again, ECI has silently proved its success and worth as an election conducting agency by formulating necessary emerging guidelines and by taking appropriate steps to organize free, fair and safe elections in one of the states of India, the largest democracy in the world.

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Topic 2

Welfare State, Social Policies and Social Inclusion

The Importance of Sport for Development (SfD) for the Social Recovery of the 2020 Pandemic. Directions for Policy Makers[1]

Ioanna Maria Kantartzi[2] & Eric MacIntosh[3]

Abstract

In 2010, Kofi Annan supported that sports power must be used as an agent for social change (Kofi Annan Foundation, 2010). Sports are a great dynamic not only for social change to be realized, but also for development within high performance sport systems, as they can be a conduit to peace. Furthermore, sports contribute to personal, but also to community development as it can teach people the importance of team and co-existing. During the 21st century, many important initiatives have been taken place aiming to boost the field called Sport for Development (SfD); nevertheless, different types of crisis such as financial (Földesi, 2014), and COVID-19 crisis (Wong et al., 2020) globally have complicated the development work that uses sport as a tool for various desired outcomes. The 2020 pandemic agitated the international community and made it difficult for sport activities to be operated. The quarantine periods and the various enforcement, laws, policies and recommendations have anecdotally caused more serious harms to groups of people (demographics like women, children, adolescents) (Bullinger et al., 2020). Individuals, especially women and kids were trapped during the quarantine with their abusers, having limited access to help and social activities; activities that aim to empower people, develop their skills and critical thinking. The current paper examines the SfD field and its importance for social development; briefly describes the effects of the lock down on the maximization of abuse, racism and discrimination and finally, proposes directions to be taken into consideration by policy makers so as to minimize the aforementioned phenomena and at the same time strengthen the SfD field.

Keywords: Sport for Development; COVID-19; development; policy directions; sports.

Introduction

In our daily life, the word sport is connected with thoughts of play, physical activity or even with activities concerning the support of teams to which we are involved. However, sport has received a deeper attention over the past years through the movement of Sport for Development (SfD), which promotes sports as a useful tool for personal and collective development (Kay& Dudfield, 2013, Lyras & Peachey, 2011).

SfD has been described as the purposeful use of sports to promote development objectives and increase individuals access not only to education, but also, to assist with unemployment issues and raise awareness about health matters such as HIV and AIDS (Commonwealth Youth Sport for

Development and Peace Working Group, 2015). Also, it has been supported that " the use of sport to exert a positive influence on public health, the socialization of children, youths and adults, the social inclusion of the disadvantaged, the economic development of regions and states, and on fostering intercultural exchange and conflict resolution" (Lyras & Peachey, 2011:311).

In a recent article published by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) it has been supported that sports promote healthy lifestyle, as they help prevent chronic diseases and contribute to the promotion of physical and mental well-being (IPC, 2020). Furthermore, sports can be used as a tool for social development, as they promote sex equality, contribute to the empowerment of female and battles gender stereotypes (IPC, 2020). Additionally, in accordance to skill development and employment, sports are social exclusionary as they allow individuals from different sociopolitical background to participate in activities and develop their personal skills. (International Paralympic Committee, 2020). Significantly important is the fact that sports promote world peace as they bring people and nations together especially in international sport event and competitions, helps them to develop tolerance and strength and become more culturally sensitive (International Paralympic Committee, 2020). Also, sports promote environmental and ecological awareness through the promotion of a sustainable lifestyles (International Paralympic Committee, 2020). Consequently, is can be supported that sport have the power to change the world, to empower, inspire, understand individual and nation's need as well as break down racial barriers (Bescsik & Doczi, 2019).

Sports, plenty of times, have been recognised as tool for social control and nation building (Commonwealth Youth Sport for Development and Peace Working Group, 2015; Forsyth, 2007; Howell, 2001, cited in MacIntosh, 2016); however, sports importance for development and peace is not a new trend. SfD has been in the centre of discussion since many years ago and it is often accepted as a universal human right. More specifically, sport has been acknowledged by the UNICEF as the forgotten right. According to the UNICEF's Convention on the Rights of the Child Implementation manual "children's right to play is sometimes referred to as the 'forgotten right.'(UNICEF, 2007) For this reason, UNICEF, in 2014 at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, did an athlete fund raising event for the first time where benefits went to sport projects for youth aiming to save and change the lives of millions of children across the Commonwealth (UNICEF, 2014).

According to this action it can be said that there are signs that the international aid community, governmental organizations, and civil society are looking for ways to obtain recognition for this forgotten right. They are interested in sports as a tool for addressing some of the challenges that arise from humanitarian crisis and in conflicts and post-conflict settings (Gaffney, 2018:3).

There have been many attempts during years to promote sports as a tool for development and many initiatives promoting the importance of sport has been taken through years. During 1992, the United Nations (UN), the International Labour Organization and the International Olympic Committee, signed a partnership agreement that promotes sports and recognizes it as important element on the sociopolitical arena (Bescsik & Doczi, 2019). In 1993, the UN General Assembly accepted the 48/11 Resolution about the Olympic Truce and a year later, one of the biggest SfD organizations named Right to Play, was established by Johann Koss, a three times gold medalist during the Winter Olympic Games in Lillehammer of Norway (Bescsik & Doczi, 2019).

In 2000, the UN officially acknowledged the contribution that sports can have in the Millennium Development Goal Agenda, and this acknowledge has as a result the establishment of hundrends of NGO's in SfD (Bescsik & Doczi, 2019, Burnett, 2015). One of the most important initiatives that will stay in history, was the establishment of the United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace in 2001, a significant agent in the SfD field (Beutler, 2008). Two years later, the Magglingen Declaration was published, and the first International Conference on Sport and Development takes place and addresses the significance of sport in conflict prevention and peace promotion (Bescsik & Doczi, 2019). The year 2005 was acknowledged the United Nation's International Year of Sport and Physical Education, and the Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group was established the same year.

As it can been seen, many initiatives in promoting SfD have been achieved; however, the 21st century has not been helpful enough for further development of the field, not only because of the global financial crises in 2008 and the humanitarian crisis in 2011, but most importantly due to the biggest health crisis in the century, called COVID-19.

COVID-19 and social crisis

After the first case of COVID-19 in the Republic of China during 2019, the Director General of the World Health Organization announced the outbreak of the virus (WHO, 2020), and countries all over the globe adopted restrictive measure to be protected by the new crisis (Kantartzi & Karlis 2020). These measures not only made people to self-isolate for months, but also follow social distancing measures, which were aiming to protect individuals from exposing to the virus. Sport facilities all over the globe suspended their operations and people left without access to hobbies concerning physical and mental health activities. On the top of this crisis, it has been observed that violence rates become higher, as many victims were trapped with their abusers. In the United Kingdom (UK), the first weeks of the lockdown, 14 women and 2 children were murdered (The Department of Global

Communication, 2020). The UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres supported that during the pandemic "plenty of women have trapped with abusive partners" (The Department of Global Communication, 2020).

On the top of this social crisis, the 2020 movement #black_lives_matter, reminded the world that problematic phenomena like racial discrimination, not only still exist and exacerbated during the pandemic, but also have the power to cause new disturbances in societies.

Suggestion for policy makers

As it can be seen, today more than ever people need to feel strong, be further educated, and create a character that can help them stand for their needs and believes. Today, more than ever there is a need for more SfD practices. Policy makers should take into consideration that SfD is about social outcomes of interest (e.g. educating about HIV, Corona virus, fundraising for Corona efforts etc.). The main impetus is that SfD is about achieving the millennium development goals, do good for communities that use sports as a toll to bring people in for educational purposes and learning opportunities. Thus, policies that will allow people have access to sport activities, safely socialize and promote body and mental health should be made. For these reasons, the following directions for policy makers should be taken into consideration:

1) *Access to social distancing sports*

There are many types of sports that can help people maintain a healthy lifestyle and at the same time escape from the pressure cause by the pandemic. Tennis, cycling, golf and swimming are some types of sports that can be safe for individuals during the pandemic. In these games people have plenty of space between them, hence they can play safely. In a domestic level, tournaments on the abovementioned sports in open-air stadiums not only will help people maintain mental health, but also keep them active and productive, help young kids to socialize and develop social skills during these devastating times.

2) *Financial investment to social distancing sport activities*

It is about time for government to re-act and create more facilities that can host the aforementioned social distancing sports. People these days need their governments to take care of them and their children. Parents need their children to socialize, be educated, and surrounded by people and activities that can help kids develop their skills. By investing more money is SfD activities, countries will not only show that they care about their people, but also, they will feel national pride if kids will be in a position to develop skills during this difficult heath crisis.

3) Boost e-Learning sport activities by Sport Organizations

Technology these days is dominating our lives evermore so now, during the pandemic of 2020. International Sport Organizations should take advantage of the use of internet to create e-sport activities that can encourage youth to stay active. Younger generations raised with the many advantages that technology offers, could become more educated and develop personal skills such as problem solving, coping strategy and other skill developments of interest to enable self-confidence whilst connecting with other individuals.

4) Boost role models programs

Adults and especially well-known athletes can play an important role in adolescents' development. Role models have the ability to positively influence young adults, virtually engage with them and create discussions on social topics like poverty, racism, abuse etc, aiming to raise awareness. IOC has already young role model program in the Youth Olympic Games (MacIntosh et al.,2019) and their actions can be an example for further development of similar programs. These programs can mobilize the young generation to critically think about problems that keep societies away from positive progress. The programs can contribute to the development of healthy ideas and respectful actions as young athletes compete and give back to their sport and local community (MacIntosh et al., 2019). According to social cognitive theory, humans learn by observing the behaviour of other individuals (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1996); hence, young adults can still learn by role models and develop skills during these devastating times.

Conclusion

The current paper while focusing on the SfD and its importance, provided an overview of its challenges by the restricted measures after the expansion of COVID-19 pandemic. Four directions have been suggested to be taken under consideration, aiming to help and further support individuals who are trapped in their homes and do not have access to sport activities; hence, these people do not have the chance to develop their personal and professional skills. Universally, it should be understood that sports can help people stay active, but also can be used by organizations, institutions and governments as a tool for development.

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Addressing Unpaid Work in Cambodia[4]

Sotheary You[5]

Abstract

This paper presents an overview of development challenges related to promoting gender equality in Cambodia based on the available published evidence. To achieve gender equality objectives, Cambodia needs policy initiatives that address unpaid work and facilitate women's equal participation in labor and social development. This paper offers policy recommendations to address Cambodia's unpaid work issues, including the provisions of elderly care, enhancement of early childhood education coverage, promoting accessible and affordable childcare programs, pushing for parental leave, and increasing pension scheme coverage. The success of policy design and implementation requires political will to deliver the policies, accompanying efficient and effective public service delivery.

Keywords: Unpaid work; Unpaid care; Domestic chores; Unpaid work in Cambodia; Women's empowerment; Gender Equality; Gender justice; Gender policy; Gender and development; Cambodia.

Introduction: Cambodia's Gender at a Glance

Cambodia's gender equality outcomes remain challenging for Cambodia in reaching Sustainable Development Goals. According to the Human Development Index 2019, Cambodia was positioned at 114th out of 162 countries in 2019, the lowest in the ASEAN region. Cambodian women still earn less than men. The average GNI per capita of women in Cambodia was about USD 3,129, while male GNI was about USD 4,089 (UNDP, 2019). By 2018, only about 15% of the female population had at least some secondary education, compared to 28% of the male population (UNDP, 2019).

Women's labor participation rate was approximately 75% in 2018 and 30% of those are in the agricultural sector, 45.4% in the services sector, and 24.55% in the industry sector (World Bank, n.d.). Textile manufacturing employs about one million workers; around 85% are women (Onishi, T., 2020). The tourism sector employs about 620,000 workers, at least 50% are women, according to the Asian Development Bank. According to the ILO, approximately 4.3 million people are in the formal sector, such as street vendors, domestic workers, entertainment workers, and construction workers.

The high numbers of women participation in the economy do not imply that women can fully utilize the opportunities and benefits, comparing to men (IFC, 2019). Women face challenges such as culture, inadequate social protection provision, gender-based violence, and vulnerability to economic

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shocks. The low skilled and unskilled women workers have limited access to social protection such as labor and social security protection, minimum wage guarantee, overtime compensation, and maternity leave (CEDAW, 2019). Women are concentrated in the low-wages and unskilled jobs such as footwear and garment industry and construction sector where mostly they are contracted as a short-term or fixed duration contract (CEDAW, 2019).

Access to health services is one of the biggest challenges for Cambodia's women. For every 100,000 live births, 161 die from pregnancy-related causes (UNDP, 2019). Teen pregnancy remains a severe concern to Cambodia. The adolescent birth rate is 50.2 births per 1,000 women aged between 15 and 19 (UNDP, 2019). According to the World Health Organization, more than five million women over age 12 are at risk for cervical cancer (Serrano, 2017).

Gender-based violence against women is alarming. Women, especially women in marginalized conditions such as entertainment workers, sex workers, and bear promoters, face high harassment and abuse risks. The CEDAW Committee noted in the concluding observation on the sixth periodic report that social norms remain the challenge to address the gender-based violence against women in Cambodia. The written and unwritten norms serve as the means to blame the victims, mostly women, rather than the perpetrators of gender-based violence (CEDAW, 2019).

Even though Cambodia has made progress on education targets in the education sector, girls have fewer education opportunities than boys. According to OHCHR, 45% of Cambodian women believe it is more important to educate a son than a daughter (OHCHR, 2015). Moreover, the number of girls in STEM subjects remains low. According to the Kampuchea Action to Promote Education (KAPE), there are about 14% of girls enrolled in the STEM disciplines in Cambodia, comparing to 86% boys (Kampuchean Action for Education, n.d.). This gender gap in STEM is one of the greatest in Southeast Asia, compared with 52% of women in Thailand and 48% in Malaysia (Kampuchean Action for Education, n.d.).

In the public sector, women are underrepresented at the national, provincial, sub-national, and local levels. At the national level, women represented about 14% of senate members and about 18% of parliament members. There are only three female ministers amongst 26 ministries at the ministerial level, while only one female provincial governor exists amongst 25 provinces and the municipality. According to the data in 2014 of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, female district governor represented about 1% of total district governors. Further than that, women from ethnic minorities and indigenous communities are not represented at the national and provincial levels (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2014).

Why Unpaid Work Matters for Cambodia?

Unpaid work is a pressing issue to promote women's empowerment and gender equality in Cambodia. Unpaid work is driven by macro-economic, demographic, and social institution factors (Alonso et al., 2019; Ferrant et al., 2014; Mathew, 2019). Mathew highlighted that the invisibility and exclusion of unpaid work from national accounts' systems renders its visibility for policymaking (Mathew, 2019). This argument can be reflected in Cambodia's context. Cambodia's macro-economic policy has made unpaid work invisible. Unpaid work in Cambodia, like other countries, is not included in the national account due to non-monetary flow. Thus, the policymakers have not addressed unpaid work issues through national policies, such as National Action Plan to Prevent Violence against Women and Cambodia's Gender Strategic Plan (Neary Rattanak), and Cambodia's macroeconomic policy.

To date, there is limited data on unpaid work and its effect on Cambodia's social and economic development. However, growing evidence in the region suggests that unpaid work impacts women in many ways, including educational attainment and vocational training, labor force participation, income, political participation, and health. The data from the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) shows that 52.64% of 770 million inactive women in the ESCAP region, in which Cambodia is included, stay out of the labor market due to unpaid care responsibilities (Mathew, 2019). The data also suggested that fathers with young children in the region are likely to be employed than mothers. Roughly 51% of women with children are employed, compared to 87.5% of men with children (Mathew, 2019). Moreover, 64% of women workers in the region work in the informal sector due to the need for flexible arrangements between home and work (Mathew, 2019). In Vietnam, women choose less benefited jobs that allow them to balance paid jobs and unpaid responsibilities due to the unequal distribution of unpaid work (Chowdhury et al., 2018). Like Vietnam, Indonesian women tend to work in less benefited employments due to childcare constraints (Halim et al., 2017). In Indonesia, low female labor force participation is suggested to link with unpaid care work (Halim et al., 2017). Without access to formal childcare, Indonesian mothers are likely to switch to unpaid family work (Halim et al., 2017).

In the wake of COVID-19 and EBA, Cambodia announced to cut the 2021 national budget to USD 4 billion, dropping from USD 8.2 billion in 2020 (Hutt, 2020; NNA Business News, 2020). The national budget for social affairs, against the 2020 budget allocation, is expected to decrease by 11.3% in 2021 (Hutt, 2020; NNA Business News, 2020). Mathew noted that austerity measures had been associated with worsening development outcomes for women (Mathew, 2019:17). For instance, the fiscal consolidation after the Global Financial Crisis intensified women's unpaid care burdens to a point

which cannot be absorbed without experiencing strain and ill-effects (Mathew, 2019:17). Thus, with the current inadequate public infrastructure and a lack of policy priority to tackle unpaid work, women are not advantaged from this austerity measure.

Moreover, the demographic trend would demonstrate a likelihood of increasing women's' unpaid work for children and the elderly and reducing women's opportunity to participate in social, economic, and political affairs. As of 2019, Cambodia has more than 16.5 million population, of which 1.24 million were working abroad (National Institute of Statistic, n.d.). Women make up more than half of the total population, approximately 51% (National Institute of Statistic, 2019). Roughly 65.3% of the total population is under 30 years old (UNDP, n.d.). Of the total population, 5.9 million, approximately 37% of the total population, are children aged between zero and 17 years old (UNICEF, 2018). The children population comprises 1.8 million aged between zero and four, 1.7 million aged between five and nine, and 2.5 million aged between ten and seventeen (UNICEF, 2018). More than 1.2 million people are aged over 60, which is 7.6% of the total population, as of 2019 (Help Age, n.d.). Cambodia's population is projected to increase to around 18 million in 2030, in which women make up more than 50% of the projected population (Statistics Bureau of Japan, n.d.). The proportion of older people is expected to increase nearly triple in the coming decades. This data also suggested that Cambodia needs a policy that addresses elderly care and childcare to facilitate women's participation in economic and social activities.

Social institutions, such as traditional gender roles, beliefs, and practices, influence Cambodia's unpaid work. One of Cambodia's social institutions' most critical is Cambodia's Women Code of Conduct or Chbap Srey, which codified women's status in the home. According to the code, Cambodia's women are expected to perform domestic duties within the household, while men are expected to go out of home and earn a living for their families (Anderson & Grace, 2018). The Ministry of Women's Affairs (2014) highlighted that social norms on gender relations prevent women and girls from accessing education and training opportunities instead of expecting women to take care of the household. The International Finance Corporation (IFC) highlighted that women's subordination to men under the Chbab Srey limits women's economic independence and opportunities (IFC, 2019). Unpaid work responsibilities, fueled by the conventionally social practices, prevent women business owners from accessing the markets due to a lack of time or no-time access to networking and building business partnerships (IFC, 2019).

These challenges unequivocally suggest that Cambodia needs more responsive policies in order to tackle unpaid work and promote gender equality. The following sections will discuss some policy recommendations to address unpaid work.

Policy Recommendations

Cambodia needs to set clear policy initiatives to achieve its national gender equality targets. The effective policy design and implementation require political will and good governance that bridge policy gaps and reach desired development outcomes. This paper offers policy recommendations below. The policy initiatives need to go hand in hand with efficient fiscal and functional decentralization as well as effective and efficient public service delivery.

Provide the elderly care program: Elderly Care is essential to reduce old-age poverty and promote the working-age population's labor force participation rate. The public elderly care program is recommended for Cambodia to build a comprehensive and integrated social protection policy and ensure equitable development outcomes. There are a few options for designing the elderly care program, including community-based care that is purely funded by the state for the rural population, voluntary elderly care with state's subsidy for workers in the informal sector, and contributory elderly care with workers and employees in the formal and public sectors. Cambodia can roll out the elderly care program by enhancing tax revenue mobilization and administration.

Promote accessible and affordable childcare program: Childcare Program is essential to integrate women into productive labor forces and keep children safe and healthy. Policies and programs that provide public childcare facilities and good quality of caregivers are recommended for Cambodia. Childcare benefit packages can be integrated into the parental leave packages that enable mothers to return to the labor market.

Enhance the accessibility of early childhood education: Good quality of preschool is needed for Cambodia to prepare its human capital in the wake of Industrial Revolution 4.0 and globalization. Cambodia needs to rethink its existing early childhood education's structure and curriculum, especially preschool and community preschool. Cambodia's children under six years old in all segments of the population should access early childhood education, either under the form of preschool or community preschool.

Expand coverage of pension schemes to the informal sector: Pension schemes are essential to reduce old-age poverty. Pension schemes should also cover workers in the informal sector that are employed in marginalized and vulnerable conditions. The voluntary pension schemes with the state subsidy should be introduced to the workers in the informal sector. Introducing voluntary pension schemes with the state subsidy would incentivize workers in the informal sector to participate in the pension schemes and reduce the socio-economic burden for family members of the elderly.

Push for parental leave: Parental leave is crucial to promote inclusive and equitable economic and social development. Providing only maternity leave, with exclusion or less provision of parental benefits, makes the female labor force more expensive and discourages employers from hiring the female workforce. Providing only maternity leave, without other public support such as childcare and skill upgrading opportunities, may discourage women from re-entering the labor market after the maternity period. Several studies cited by You. S (2020) suggest that parental leave contributes to sustain a household income, reduce gender earning gaps, reduce the likelihood of post-partum depression, increase an infant's healthy development and reduce gender-based violence (You. S, 2020).

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Topic 3

Public Administration and Management: Theory, Reforms and
Adjustments in the New Era

The "Onset" of Flexible Forms of Employment in the Greek Public Sector: A Multidimensional Reform in the New Era[1]

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Abstract

Flexible forms of employment are used more and more in the Greek public sector in the recent years. They apply to a wide range of public sector activities with many different types. The causes for this increase are due to the rapid changes in the economic, social and technological environment, as well as to the "core" of the European employment policies, the promotion of social policy and the coverage of needs of the public sector that cannot be met by the existing civil servants. The institutionalization of flexible forms of employment in the largest employer of the country, with its special role on the overall economic and social development, has significant implications for the economy, the society, the labor market, the function of public services and the public employees, especially as far as the employment status and employment relations in the public sector are concerned. However, the analysis of their implementation so far highlights the multifaceted effects of the flexible forms of employment in the public sector and therefore a thorough further investigation is required in order to make these forms useful for the economy, the society and the employees.

Keywords: Flexible forms of employment; public sector; reform.

Introduction

The public sector is the largest employer in Greece and employs thousands of employees. The largest percentage of the employees consists of civil servants under public law. The major difference between the civil servants and the other employees is that the civil servants are governed by a special legal relationship where the main feature is the tenure, protected by constitutional and legislative provisions (Aspridis & Petrelli, 2011; Karakioulafis, 2008). In recent decades, however, an increasing number of employees are employed in the public sector with flexible employment relations, i.e., with an employment status that differs from the status of the public law that is applied to the civil servants, and there exists a relevant national and European community institutional framework that regulates several issues regarding their employment. The main flexible forms of employment applied in the public sector are the following: contracts governed by private law of indefinite duration, fixed-term contracts governed by private law, part time job, project lease contracts, outsourcing, independent service provision contracts, non-permanent (occasional) staff, appointments and salaried mandate.

The above forms apply to a wide range of policy areas (social services, construction, defense, security, cleaning, catering) and concern several specializations (Compulsory Education, University Education, Special Scientific Staff etc.), that is they relate to low as well as high skilled tasks. A historical overview of the institutional framework and the statistics that are available demonstrates us an increase of the number of employees with flexible forms of employment in the public sector as compared to the number of civil servants and an increase of the forms of flexible employment applied in the public sector. Moreover, the period of the employment varies from one day to more than ten years, while in some cases the period cannot be predicted (Nasios, 2020).

The increase in the application of flexible forms of employment in the public sector results from the monthly census statistics of the Greek public sector. More specifically, according to the latest data of the Register of Human Resources of the Greek State of September 2020, ordinary staff totals 569,080 (excluding legal entities of private law) and not ordinary staff totals 175,771. It is noted, however, that the ordinary staff includes employees under private law contracts of indefinite duration, employees with a salaried mandate and employees appointed for a term in office who become permanent after the expiry of the term (teaching and research staff-DEP, doctors of the NHS, special guards). The staff of the aforementioned forms numbers many thousand people (Ministry of Interior, n.d.). It is understandable therefore that the civil servants make up the majority, although at the same time many different "working speeds" are created within the public sector and the percentage of the employees that are not civil servants, in relation to the civil servants, increases over time (Koinoniko Polykentro of ADEDY, 2016). In addition, a review of the legislative framework concerning flexible forms of employment in the public sector demonstrates us an increase of the rules of law that concern these forms at Community and national level (Constitution, Laws, Presidential Decrees, Ministerial Decisions) on all kinds of issues, as well as an increase of the forms that are applied.

The reasons for the "spread" of flexible forms of employment in the Greek public sector

Flexible forms of employment in the public sector are used for many years, as relevant rules of law have been recorded even since the 1920s, such as Law 2112/1920 regarding mandatory termination of employment contract under private law in the public sector (Anonymous, 2005). However, from the 1980s there has been an increase in their implementation, while in the 2000s and especially in the 2010s there has been a surge in the number of non-permanent employees in the public sector and in the types of the flexible forms of employment applied, changing radically the status quo of public sector employment relations and de facto disputing public law relations, almost a century after the tenure of the civil servants was institutionalized.

This spectacular spread of flexible forms of employment in the public sector in recent years is largely due to the components of the wider environment in Greece during the period of the economic crisis and the memoranda. During this period, public sector employment was at the heart of macroeconomic adjustment policies, implemented in the country with a view to reaching fiscal stabilization and greater efficiency and effectiveness of public expenditure (European Commission, 2013). This has led governments to step up privatization and outsourcing and radically reform public sector employment relations towards the degradation of the employment status of the civil servants and the penetration of temporary forms of employment through the relevant favorable legislation and the mild reaction of the trade unions of civil servants (Bach & Bordogna, 2016; INE GSEE, 2015).

Certainly, it is worth noting that the legislative framework that contributed to the spread of flexible forms of employment in the public sector had already been established in recent decades, due to the adoption of EU directives and policies, of which the strengthening of flexibility in employment relations in the public sector is part. For this reason, several Community programs allocate considerable resources to enhance flexible employment in the public sector (Feronas, 2007). In so doing, it was crucial to incorporate the philosophy of the New Public Management in the public sector, where the adaptation of human resource management of the private sector is in the foreground and the flexibility in employment plays an important role (Bossaert, 2005).

Moreover, flexible forms of employment in the public sector have been favored by governments in recent years as part of their employment policy, in order to bear down on unemployment. It is widely believed that the application of these flexible forms results in access to jobs for vulnerable groups of the population, upgrading the qualification of employees, easier reintegration into the labor market and reduction of long-term unemployment. At the same time, it is considered that flexible employment programs in the public sector support social cohesion, improve the daily lives of citizens, do not devalue human resources and help to avoid migration of young people abroad, meet the immediate needs of societies and achieve social and economic benefits (OAED, 2017). However, in some cases the employment of flexible staff in the public sector is necessary, as in the case of shortages of permanent staff, the requirement to access specialized services and know-how of experts, the obligation to respond rapidly to changes in the wider context, as well as budget constraints (Rodgers & Rodgers, 1989; Spanou, 2008).

The effects of the adoption of flexible forms of employment in the public sector

Adopting flexible forms of employment in the public sector has significant effects for the economy, the society, the labor market and all the employees of the public sector. However, the observed

consequences have not led to solid conclusions regarding the direction and magnitude of the effects, as different views are expressed.

It is widely believed that the adoption of flexible forms of employment in the public sector contributes to achieve fiscal benefit, especially during the economic crisis, as this can be identified by examining the relevant codes in the budgets of public sector bodies and the primary data in general (KEDE, 2013). But in another view, the benefit and usefulness of flexible forms of employment for the public sector bodies, the economy and the society cannot be substantiated by examining only budgetary costs, as other critical variables must be taken into account, which in many cases cannot be measured. That is, the research should include variables such as the added value for the economy and the society, the economic growth, the increase in public investment and the government and fund revenues (Demmke & Moilanen, 2012; Spyridakis, 2003).

Similar conclusions emerge for the society and the labor market, as on the one hand it is argued that flexible forms of employment in the public sector are a restraining factor in increasing unemployment (as jobs are created) and enable employees to access vocational training and have income and insurance coverage (OAED, 2017). On the contrary, they are considered to lead to the degradation of the public sector, the deregulation of the labor market, the increase of unemployment, the degradation of public goods and social functions of the state, the redistribution of public expenditure in the private sector and the increase of legal problems with an impact on the political and social life (Keller & Seifert, 2015; Koinoniko Polykentro of ADEDY, 2013).

In addition, effects have been recorded on permanent and non-permanent employees in the public sector. It is widely argued that the adoption of flexible forms of employment in the public sector results in the deregulation of employment relations in the public sector and the gradual establishment of a common and unified employment model for the public and private sector. This model is characterized by the existence of a context of insecurity and the review of the employment status of the civil servants and the tenure, in order to converge with those applied in the private sector (Koinoniko Polykentro of ADEDY, 2013; Kouzis, 2008). As a result, there is an inability of the public sector to retain competent employees as well as a lack of institutional memory and an erosion of public sector infrastructure, while the majority of the employees experience increased stress, insecurity and decreased job satisfaction that both have a significant impact on critical variables of job behavior (Humphreys et al., 2008). Especially for the non-permanent employees, a restriction of access to rights and social protection as well as, phenomena of violations of labor and insurance legislation and inequalities in relation to permanent employees, are observed (INE GSEE/ADEDY, 2009). On the other hand, it should not be overlooked that in some cases flexible forms of employment

have positive effects on employees, such as access to vocational training and job experience in a context of respect for employment rights and favorable employment conditions (OAED, 2017).

Furthermore, flexible forms of employment are used as a tool to increase the efficiency of public services and provide better services to citizens, especially in local communities, mainly through tackling understaffing in the public sector (Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, n,d,; OAED, 2017). In addition, in cases of cooperation of the public sector with the private sector, the management of skills and know-how of the private sector can be utilized for the benefit of the society and the economy, such as the emphasis on the quality of services provided (Eurofound, 2015). On the contrary, it is argued that the implementation of flexible forms of employment in the public sector contributes to the degradation of basic public social goods and the poorer quality of services provided to citizens, due to the limited capacity and productivity of flexible workers. Limited capacity results from the complexity of the public sector, the lack of institutional memory and job experience and the poor management of flexible employees (Humphreys et al., 2008; Koinoniko Polykentro of ADEDY, 2013). Also, the experience from the expansion of flexible forms of employment in the public sector has shown us that it is accompanied by many problems and reactions from employees (Nasios, 2020).

Conclusions

It follows from the summary of the above that the flexible forms of employment have an important and well-established role in the public sector and are an integral part of the institutional framework governing employment relations in the public sector. Regardless of the governments of recent years, the country's participation in the European and monetary union has forged and shaped a policy framework that promotes flexible forms of employment in the public sector that meet the challenges of the wider context and serve more specific policy objectives (mainly in the field of social policy). Furthermore, flexible forms of employment were an integral part of the reforms during the memoranda period. However, the observed effects of the adoption of flexible forms of employment have so far shown contradictory results. In recent years, new methods have been developed to assess the impact of flexible forms of employment, but it is too early to draw solid conclusions due to the complexity that accompanies flexible forms of employment in the public sector. For this reason, it is necessary to further and in-depth investigate the effects of flexible forms of employment in the public sector in a broader and multifaceted perspective, in order to make these forms useful and beneficial to the employees, the society and the economy.

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REBRAIN GREECE: The Greek Case of Collective Intelligence Ecosystem for Governmental Decision Making[1]

Dimitris I. Panopoulos[2]

Abstract

REBRAIN GREECE (RBG), a multidisciplinary and inter-ministerial working group, formulated in April 2019, is perhaps the first Greek governmental collective intelligence ecosystem, reaching out to efficiently handle issues of utmost importance, such as brain drain and digital transformation of the existing human resources to the new digital working society. As an ecosystem, it consists of several, thematic, inter-connected working groups, composed of different ministries' teams of field experts, dealing with concrete but inter-correlated issues, interoperating in a constant way. RBG constitutes a three pillar- interoperability -collective intelligence- ecosystem, encompassed in its functional architecture constant and open source, interoperability synergies between governmental agencies, different field's experts and ministerial executives, between machine learning schemes and data bases and integrated information systems info exchange modules. It uses the data analytics power of the Labour Market Diagnosis Mechanism (LMDM) and already produced data driven policy proposals. Big data applications of LMDM are interpreting and visualising different types of big data bases through cross-checking raw data and thus formulating approaches towards public policies. Through visualization softwares used for interpreting the data into policy perspectives and proposals, that policy makers examine and elaborate on the most suitable choices and activities for challenge-responsive market digital policies.

Keywords: REBRAIN GREECE; collective intelligence ecosystem; decision making.

Introduction, Background and Aim of Rebrain Greece

One of the major drawbacks of Greek public administration is the lack of coherent, horizontal and holistic, measurable through a Key Performance Indicator Matrix (KPI's), inter-governmental cooperation of the various public agencies when trying to deal, through measures, with crucial issues of our economy and society. If the wide consequences of the brain drain and the digital transformation phenomena are taken into account, one concrete conclusion springs to mind: Not a single public organization, either a ministry or an agency could on its own detect, handle and resolve these large scale challenges, due to, among others, their large scale of effect and broad range those affected.

It is crystal-clear that a human synergy framework is now much more valuable so as to encompass all human knowledge and creativity towards the two above-mentioned issues in a quantifiable way.

But neither this human-based synergy is enough, because of the lack of broad-range systematic computing power on the one hand, and the capability of visualizing and explaining big data analytics in an interpretable way on the other.

Thus, a governmental collective intelligence decision making ecosystem in the sense of creative notional architecture of governmental decision making mechanism is now being developed so as to provide fully data driven and customized employment policy proposals. This knowledge ecosystem of policy decision-making, is affected by the work of the leading universities of the world (e.g. M.I.T.), in the field of the human and machine "superminds ecosystem". M.I.T. University has put forward the importance of the collective intelligence ecosystems for concrete policy design. Princeton University has elaborated on the new digital change management systems.

Hans Jochen Scholl, Herbert Kubicek and Ralf Cimander (2011) through their globally acknowledged academic work of the "Interoperability, Enterprise Architectures, and IT Governance in Government" have given us new exponential dynamic for expansion of the idea. Enterprise interoperability equates to loosely-coupled enterprise integration as defined previously. According to the new European Interoperability (Kouroubali & Katehakis, 2019), four layers of interoperability can be defined: (1) Technical Interoperability, or syntactic interoperability, at the lowest level, (2) Semantic Interoperability, which ensures that the precise format and meaning of exchanged data and information (3) Organizational Interoperability, which refers to the way in which public administrations align their business processes, responsibilities and expectations, (4) Legal Interoperability is about ensuring that organizations operate under different legal frameworks, policies and strategies are able to work together.

Both Legal and Organizational Interoperability, are deployed within the RBG Project, consisting of an inter-ministerial network of knowledge experts in direct cooperation with research organizations, universities, private sector's representatives and non-governmental agencies. Its utmost strategic goal is to provide national and integrated, intelligent and accurate, policy proposals for the labour market's digital transformation utilization and the reverse of the long-time brain drain effect.

Crucial pillar of the data analysing, elaborating and policy designing aspect of the project is the exploitation of the Labour Market Diagnosis Mechanism's unleashing and extending power. Labour Market Diagnosis Mechanism combines five national and three European data bases, together with real labour market flows, thus constituting a multi-parametrical tool of labour market analysis.

 RBG moved forward to obtain a broad digital architecture, through the creation of a large scale portal, a contest web platform for ideas, and the remote brainstorming rooms of experts (at the first level).

Through the under expansion of visual dashboards of the Mechanism we can reach a multi-criteria statistical and actual regression of the most important parameters, when formulating an intrusive active policy for the unemployed for example. We can choose among the types and the categories of the data, prioritize them in correlation with the profiling of the focus group, or the field of training we desire for the selected category of employed or unemployed or implement other selected families of information.

What is crucial to mention is that LMDM provides the option to change and adapt the existing visual dashboards with more or less data cells to this relevant data, when referring to the under examination, concrete issue.

Rebrain Greece Project: Approach and Results

RBG since its launch, structured upon an inter-ministerial multi-knowledge base of collective intelligence and synergy. All stakeholders and experts are equal and all participate in equivalent tasks inside the project. They are also evenly distributed among important multi-task projects, such as the creation, formulation, documentation and support of content for policy proposals, various types of publicity activities, horizontal organization activities, e-project management applications and many more. RBG has a core of some people who act as an advisory board, supporting and guiding its thematic projects and its functional activities. At the same time, an operational network has been introduced for the overall monitoring of the project's working cycle. RBG already produced specific results. On average, there is a plenary session being hold every month.

The total workload of the initiative has been distributed its total work to five (5) thematic project groups of experts. The first one tries to handle the connection of Greek young unemployed researchers of various types, with the demand side of the labour market. It also attempts to find new channels of bridging the gap between the unemployed human resources and the real needs for R&D of the market.

The second manages the impacts of the labour market's digital transformation. New types of occupations, new digital sectors, new types of employment, new specific digital skills, new digital fields of knowledge, and thus new opportunities and challenges have risen. Apart from that, radical changes in the existing occupations take place, due to the exponential enhancement of technologies, thus highlighting the need for reskilling schemes for the people already working. Fintech is such an example, concerning thousands of bank employees. The reasons for being named as disruptive new technology are briefly ecplained in the following:

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Advanced cities being shaped into digitized and smart cities have already adopted Fintech texhniques for their development. This requires in its order a vast array of proactive personnel and citizen reskilling in these new tools. It is well known that innovation in Fintech is a must for any city to become a smart city. It enables easy national as well as international business. For the residents, it makes life more convenient by encouraging contactless, economical, sustainable and efficient payment-related operations. One important aspect that smart city development and Fintech innovation has in common is their determination to cut bureaucracy. A city that manages to enable speedy and inexpensive international transfers will also enable its citizens with greater access to the global market.

The third refers to the creation of an integrated motivation framework for entrepreneurship. Self-employment working status, together with the expansion of the start-ups notion and the clear entrepreneurship activity are analysed here. Special focus has been put into special categories of these people.

The next thematic group, the fourth one, is related to discovering new ways of enhancing brain circulation, the broad dissemination of extensive knowledge from all around the planet, from Greeks or others distinctive scientists. At the same time, this group works decisively on how to eliminate brain waste, the situation where a young researcher, employee, or unemployed, pre and post graduate student uses on his everyday occupation activity far less knowledge and skills than acquired or obtained.

The fifth thematic project of RBG is a horizontal one, supporting all the above groups on their activity, through specific publicity actions. Nevertheless, this group also frames all the publicity strategy of the whole initiative. It has already moved to shaping a roadmap, with specific activities involved, publicity synergies, social media well thought out activation plan and many more. This group, in cooperation with the advisory board, is held responsible for the strategic management of the project. The participation in the 84th TIF is an example of this above strategy. The designing and implementation of a Nation bottom-up Action Plan is another one. The decision for the constructing of an omni-channel portal for the RBG was assumed as a proper action.

Together, since June 2019, thematic groups of the project have created the Roadmap Plan for collective intelligence governance decision making. Roadmap first described the formulation of active employment policy proposals among which the five more promising would gain publicity consultation with the Social Partners (as a second landmark).

Recently, the first five, solid, data-driven policy proposals were put publicly in discussion, and presented in the 84th Thessaloniki International Fair, in an open consultation procedure with the Social

Partners. These proposals, namely a) Advanced Skills 4 Women b) Dig_Circular (Circular Economy Actions for the Environment) c) Agrodigital Entrepreneurship d) Interoperability Governance and e) Publicity Strategy, deal directly with different important issues of the Greek economy and society.

Some of them are highly sophisticated, and thus are candidates for the best European practices in designing solid policy measures. For instance, the "Advanced skills 4 women" pays special focus on ICT software deriving from unemployed women (until 11 months) in the Municipality of Athens, seeking for relevant software mechanics occupations. A 22 cross check criteria have been used as to define a cherry-pick procedure. A great number of innovations have been integrated in this policy proposal, such as the portable lifelong learning and training account, connected with digital certificates, the rotation project route, a national integrated assessment data basis and some more.

The portable lifelong learning and training account, allows workers to acquire relevant skills throughout their careers in order to stay relevant in rapidly transforming, digital labour markets. The accounts would belong to the worker and would be portable from job to job and from status to status. Details such as contributions, number of hours per year, top ups, eligible expenses, withdrawal processes and taxing schemes will be determined later.

All these five data driven policy proposals were analysed and explained in the 84th International Thessaloniki Fair, in 2019, a broad range of stakeholders. Several technical and content questions were discussed, several relevant answers were provided and many beneficial recommendations were created.

The second one, the "Dig_Circular" proposal streamlines with the National Development Strategy, enacts the environmental activation, raises general awareness and simultaneously engages relevant unemployed people of relevant technical fields.

The existing roadmap of the Initiative now predicts the completion of these five first bottom-up and evidence-based policy proposals within the National Action Plan in late October2020. Apart from that, some of its proposals will be submitted in the EU DG CONNECT's call for proposals of the Commission with the aim to gain pilot European new type funding, as the very first fully data documented policy proposals of data intelligence.

Conclusions, Results and Further Work

It is firm conclusion, described by a serious list of assessors, that the project has been conceived as successful up to now. It has less than six months of life, began its operation on April 2019, skimmed over the governmental change of July 2019, but already reached to five (5) data driven and

sophisticated active employment policies, implementable in two months from now under a new culture of policy formulating. RBG has already designed and documented nine (9) very dense and scientific measures for the digital transformation's beneficial exploitation.

It succeeded in encompassing almost 25 agencies and above forty (40) experts of different fields as members, disseminating a modern growth mindset of equal participation and equivalent contribution towards sustainable solutions for Greece. Another crystal-clear inference is the members' high level of commitment of the project beyond typical working hours. Basic qualitative parameter of the initiative is that every single member has full view of all the aspects and the modules of the thematic projects and their activities. A third one is correlated to the real adoption of the notion of collective and policy designing intelligence, deriving from the use of integrated BI systems in one hand, and the enhanced velocity of activities of the group on the other.

Additionally, the project is characterised by increased openness, as its members seek for and already enclosed wide synergies with universities, private sector companies, research institutions, non-governmental agencies, municipalities (like Athens) blogs, digital forums and many more. Nevertheless, vast space of development for the project is disposable. Further work has to be done towards establishing RBG under an institutional but fully agile structure. Together with this, a RBG's wide platform, combing site functionalities together with portal services is under construction. This refers to a simple but integrated digital structure-portal/web spiral. RBG Executives currently work on the exact organisational context of this spiral web portal. They are setting up a list of functionalities, modules, dashboards of information, its general scope and purpose and the overall benefit for the labour market and specific parts of it.

Towards this goal, a documentary action plan is introduced predicting exactly the technical and content steps that need to be done. There is a series of options under examination. For example, the advisory board's selection of people that will be engaged, the existence or not of the supporting committee, the introduction of modules and functionalities within the new structure, its digital footprint on the web, the establishment of an issue-contest web in its digital framework, its cyber security settings, the examination of the option of classified users, and many more relevant issues.

A second field of the oncoming proposed activity is strongly correlated with the national coordination of the project as many different governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders from various levels of hierarchy participate in the project. Public consultation for the five proposals of RBG during 84th International Thessaloniki Fair, in 2019 (TIF) with an academic core of five universities were incorporated in the project.

Specific relationship describes the interconnected 'trends': digitalisation, globalisation, the rising diversity of work arrangements and aging workforce. These trends have 'implications' for labour markets and this is a further field work for RBG. They include rising inequality, changing business models, job displacement, workers' skill depreciation and rising skill gaps. There are 'challenges' for policymakers from these implications.

At the level of workers and human resource policies, RBG will focus on these challenges mainly related to workers' skills to keep people employable in the future. At the level of businesses and labour relations, the challenge is to provide decent work by creating high-quality jobs and safeguarding worker well-being and a healthy work-life balance.

As a new innovative answer to these rising issues RBG is the attest innovation towards new agile institutional structure. Much work has to be done towards public, national, and European networking and synergies. The project has also various functionalities to integrate to its oncoming digital footprint. This digital environment of the project will need to be interlinked with all the project's social media presence.

Further work is anticipated to take place towards the inclusion of the on-line courses and the interactive synchronised and non-synchronised training lessons for well targeted segments of our society. Based on this aspect of the pillar, synergies for the creation of such training programmes have just started.

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The Decline of Populism and the Prevalence of the (Neo)Liberal Modernization Paradigm in Greece[1]

Emmanouil Mavrozacharakis[2]

Abstract

The prevalence of the right-wing party of Nea Dimokratia (ND) in the Greek political landscape reflects an enormous change in the political behavior. Citizens have not chosen a simple switch on the power but contributed with their votes to a strategic defeat of populism and at the same time, they paved the way for the search for a new type of leadership, which is close to realism in handling with the social problems that cannnot be implemented merely with calculated financial costs. The dominance of conservative ND is not an ideological choice. It is a choice that runs counter to the logic of falsely or hypocritical negotiating austerity measures opposed to Greece by his lenders (due to memoranda) and the consequent tax-tornado as a result of negotiating failure with the partners in the EEC and the IMF. The positive choice for ND also reflects the contradiction with the misguided manipulations of public opinion regarding the strategy of micro-concessions and micro-alliances as a means of concluding a "political-social alliance".

Keywords: Left Populism; SYRIZA; Nea Dimokratia; power shift; pragmatism; realism; ideological dominance; government and state power; power shift

Introduction

It is clear that strategic electoral defeats do not refer to percentages, but to structural transformations and shifts in the electorate. In this sense, the last elections in Greece reflect an enormous change in the political stance of the electorate. The citizens have not chosen a simple switch on the power but contributed with their votes to a strategic defeat of populism and at the same time, they paved the way for a new type of leadership, which is close to pragmatism and rationalism in handling with social problems. In a specific way, the Greek public was disgusted against the over-promising rhetoric and the under-delivery politics experienced under SYRIZA's rule. In these terms "Greece already has a first-hand experience of economic populism and rejected it after a long time of hope, making a turn towards pragmatism", as Pagoulatos states (Lana-Guggenheim, 2019). The vote in 2015 was one of hope, of desperation. Then, idealism collapsed. According to Kazamias (2019), "the painful truth about SYRIZA is that it has ruled Greece for four years as a party suffering from identity loss and diminishing credibility. Its record in government has been so full of compromises and retreats that it

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now hovers across the political spectrum like an amorphous haze–a phantom of its old self, without much shape or substance. Tsipras's cabinet included ministers who have defected from almost every other party in parliament, even several hard-right populists from the Independent Greeks". This view is not without truth, but it does not take into account that the populism of the Greek SYRIZA, in a political and symbolic way, is typically participatory and inclusive by attempting to promote political programs that improve the quality of life of some weak and poor social groups and migrants (Font, Graziano, Tsakatika, 2019). In a sense, the left-wing populism of SYRIZA follows the Latin American model of populism that deals with societies that do not have the level of equality and prosperity of Western Europe (Mavrozacharakis, 2018). This does not mean that there are no acute socio-economic differences in Western Europe as well. However, the weakest social groups still rely on more or less extensive social services and aids and enjoy full political rights. Like the populists in Latin America, who are struggling for better living conditions for the population (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2013: 159), the left-wing populism of SYRIZA also focuses more explicitly on the excluded, the marginalized and the underprivileged (Mavrozacharakis, 2018: 30). However, the political and economic reality in Greece left no room for the realization of populism as it was anticipated by the ruling left. The voting for conservative ND was not an ideological choice. It was a choice that runs counter to the logic of falsely or hypocritical negotiating austerity measures as opposed to Greece buy his lenders (due to memoranda) and the consequent tax-tornado as a result of negotiating failure with the partners in the EEC and the IMF. Unable to beat the creditors of Greece, the SYRIZA-Government joined them by implementing all the cuts, privatizations and VAT increases it had been elected to oppose (Younge, 2019). Alexis Tsipras agreed with the Eurozone partners and lenders to implement one of the harshest austerity programs. At the same time though, and with a strong populist manner, Tsipras government attempted to distance itself from the verbal content of the austerity measures it has negotiated and voted (Mavrozacharakis, Kotroyannos, Tzagkarakis, 2017: 41).

Main Considerations

The SYRIZA government relieved communicatively that it has the ability to move flexibly within a tight framework. In reality though, SYRIZA not only failed to fulfill its campaign promises but also to implement even a part of its core ideological principles (Mavrozacharakis, Kotroyannos, Tzagkarakis, 2017: 41). Moreover, the left unwittingly turned to realism as its anti-memorandum negotiating strategies were totally failed. However, electorally, the leading group of SYRIZA was still able to extract the majority of social acceptance, despite the implementation of the new

memorandum. This fact just proves the effectiveness of populism that Tsipras government used. The road that led to the final compromise of SYRIZA government with lenders was marked by the symbolic production of politics in the sense that a continuous hard negotiation scenario with the partners was raised, as a "race-till-you-drop" to avoid the memorandum. Similarly, the left government after signing the memorandum tried to cultivate the impression that it will do everything to normalize its social effects.

The radical fury with which SYRIZA demonized the memorandum and everyone who was involved in its management in Greece and abroad, while the party was in opposition (Petras, 2015), was followed during its first governmental period by a managerial modesty of subordination to the partners. It turns out that since 2016 the income taxes were especially harsh on people earning more than 35,000 Euros per year, as they pay an average of 40% more than they did before. This is likely to lead to even more people being unable to pay taxes and social security contributions. In addition to the income tax, the amount that people will have to pay for the ENFIA property ownership tax was about 3.4 billion Euros yearly.

As a result of all these, in the meantime, the evaluation of the causes of the crisis has shifted the voters' opinion. People no longer believe in the hostile image of Europe as the left projected it before the 2015 elections. Brussels — and Berlin —are no longer so much blamed for the crisis, but the fight for the best economic model for Greece in the coming years has come more into focus (Löhe, 2019). Some want higher pensions and higher social spending. Others, lower taxes and lower free market limits. These are quite domestic reasons, and they have led to Tsipras' defeat.

Nevertheless, the election victory of the Conservatives gives a hint for the whole of Europe. The large-scale narrative of the populists that they are the traditional parties that had destroyed the prosperity of the country no longer works. With the example of Greece, arrogance becomes clear: In negotiations with the EU, not everything can be achieved -except a compromise (Löhe, 2019). The power shift in Greece also reflects the contradiction with the misguided manipulations of public opinion and finally the strategy of micro-concessions and micro-alliances as a means of concluding to a "political-social alliance".

The overall strategy chosen by SYRIZA for the governance of the country was therefore defeated. At the same time, the power shift acted as an outlet or emotional release for people's political anger, underlining, in a sense, the demand for a shift towards more social policies and less taxation (Stevis-Gridneff, 2019). As a result, in the political map of Greece, there have been strategic changes. First, citizens did not give a vote of confidence to the SYRIZA government and the "financial relief

measures" it received (Karitsis, 2016). These measures constituted a strategic choice of SYRIZA that was defeated. In particular, SYRIZA preferred political extortion of the economically weaker voters, arguing, that in the event of ND victory the crumbs preemptively distributed by SYRIZA would be in jeopardiesed. Also, the mobilization of the anti-right-wing syndrome of the left and centrist voters, failed. Above all, however, the catch-all ability of Syriza to penetrate into different social strata, numerous civil-society organizations and especially the middle strata, has been diminished (Adler, 2019). The strategic political tool of populism based on enemy-friend shapes (Mavrozacharakis, Tzagkarakis, Kamekis, 2015: 2) was canceled and his position got a more realistic approach of a center-right modernization strategy expressed by the Nea Dimokratia of Mitsotakis. For that reason, some commentators pointed out that the election of ND to power was the end of left-wing populism in the sense that it was a vote of protest against a government that promised too much while it did very little (Labropoulou, 2019).

Despite the fact that the new government of ND appears to have plans for reforms, Mitsotakis comes from the same political establishment that plunged Greece into the crisis and which the voters rejected in 2015. The positive vote for the market-friendly old guard is a vote of protest against a government that has given many promises, which it has failed to implement, a message to the populists worldwide that things can change and then change again. At the same time, voters turned their back on SYRIZA after adopting tough fiscal measures (BBC, 2019). While in 2015 Tsipras was the personification of change, he has given many promises, and under the pressure of the EU, he was forced to make a turning of 180 degrees. Alexis Tsipras tried to entice the voters with clumsy last-minute pre-election prizes, benefits and promised increases in pensions. However, the outcome of the elections in Greece is above all a clear rejection of populism. This is their essential importance not only for Greece but also for the whole of Europe. The clear prevalence of Nea Demokratia shows that many people would like to leave behind the years of the crisis and that they want again a sense of regularity (Schlötzer, 2019).

It turns out that all SYRIZA's strategic political choices have been defeated, which is overshadowed by many electoral polls that deliberately cultivated the impression that the difference between Nea Dimokratia and SYRIZA will exceed 12%. This gave the SYRIZA leadership the opportunity to mitigate the big defeat it suffered after just 4 years in government.

Conclusions

With a government of Nea Dimokratia of 40% of the total votes and an 8% distance from SYRIZA, the latter suffered a strategic defeat. Surely, based on the low expectation logic that remains embedded

in the left, the percentage of 32% is impressive. However, since all the state power and its corresponding resources have been used to achieve this percentage, its future preservation is not relevant. In this sense, this logic is beyond the limits of power, and this is indeed a long-term strategic defeat of the left. This development is possible due to the constant shifting of the right to the center, especially to the modernization faction of the old PASOK of Konstantinos Simitis, without encountering resistance from the hard right core of the Nea Dimokratia.

Government and state power may be Mitsotakis' advantage in attracting centrist, moderate politicians and statesmen, but the impression that is formed in the public is that he governs on the basis of their abilities and pragmatism. With Mitsotakis and his Nea Dimokratia, Greece is going to a phase of a revitalization of the perception of modernization as expressed by a group of intellectuals and Individuals who pursued the market and economic neoliberalism with a dogmatic persistence akin to former apologists for state socialism (Iordanidis, 2003). This bet, however, can only succeed if the new power of the right manages to correct and restore the consequences of the distorted modernization introduced in Greece by the Simitis government legacy.

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Topic 4

Health Policies, Economics and Management: Adapting to the New Situation

AI and Big Data: A New Paradigm for Decision Making in Healthcare[1]

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Abstract

The latest developments in artificial intelligence (AI)—a general-purpose technology impacting many industries — have been based on advancements in machine learning, which is recast as a quality-adjusted decline in forecasting ratio. The influence of Policy on AI and big data has impacted two key magnitudes which are known as diffusion and consequences. And these must be focused primarily on the context of AI and big data. First, in addition to the policies on subsidies and intellectual property (IP) that will affect the propagation of AI in ways close to their effect on other technologies, three policy categories — privacy, exchange, and liability — may have a specific impact on the diffusion of AI. The first step in the prohibition process is to identify the shortcomings of current hospital procedures, why we need acute care AI, and eventually how the direction of patient decision-making will shift with the introduction of AI-based research. The second step is to establish a plan to shift the direction of medical education in order to enable physicians to retain control of AI. Medical research would need to rely less on threshold decision-making and more on the prediction, interpretation, and pathophysiological context of contextual time cycles. This should be an early part of a medical student's education, and this is what their hospital aid (AI) ought to do. Effective contact between human and artificial intelligence includes a shared pattern of focused knowledge base. Human-to-human contact protection in hospitals should lead this professional transformation process.

Keywords: AI; decision making; Big data; healthcare; HRM; Human Resources Management.

Introduction

Big data and decision making in healthcare

In the modern and interconnected world, decision-making has turned out to be a dynamic and increasingly uncertain process, depending on reliable knowledge. This makes it impossible for

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healthcare organizations (HCOs) and Human Resources Management (HRMs) to respond effectively to the complexities of a particular situation. HCOs are seeking to revise their systems, reconsider their procedures, and enhance related market processes. Analytics are resources that can aid in the decision-making process of companies, suggests that businesses have to be successfully adopted Analytics solutions are in a position to make a better decision with more accuracy. These organizations have easier and simpler access to crucial information on operations and procedures and to ensure that the priorities are being fulfilled. Organizations identify Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and are strategic instruments for the review of key HRM objectives (Sousa et al. 2019).

The rising volume of data in the healthcare system has implemented large-scale data strategies necessary in order to increase the quality of healthcare delivery. Despite the incorporation of massive data analysis techniques and platforms into current data management architectures for healthcare systems, these architectures pose challenges in mitigating emergencies. Big data analytics allows large-scale aggregation of data sets, support for human capital decisions, and cost-effectiveness measurement of healthcare organizations. Therefore, the decision-making process focused on Big Data Analytics in Healthcare Organizations, to define key Big Data Analytics that can help decision-making by healthcare leaders and to propose several solutions to increase productivity along the Healthcare Value Chain (El Aboudi & Benhlima, 2018).

The present state of acute care decision making

A computer scientist reviewing the existing threshold-based hospital protocols to design patient management algorithms could easily infer that automation of acute care diagnostics and treatment would be easy to enforce. The explanation for this is that the latest hospital guidelines are based on 20th-century decision-making and are usually very clear. However, experienced physicians know that these basic procedures are not representative of the true degree of acute care quality; Lynn and Curry 2011). Randomized controlled trials (RCTs) that use the threshold rules implemented in-hospital procedures as universal guidelines for the whole population are subject to pronounced heterogeneous clinical effects (HTE) (Ching et al. 2018; Kent, Steyerberg, and Klaveren 2018). Such studies offer proof of the overall drug impact on the population under evaluation as a whole, but not whether the medication used in the RCT would be helpful or detrimental to the patient receiving immediate care. It follows logically, therefore, that no procedure, no matter how well endorsed by RCT, can be implemented without professional monitoring by either a person or an AI to protect patients from injury. Physicians and nurses should provide guidance consequently the procedural decision-making

process is straightforward enough that, with their own knowledge, they should adjust the diagnosis and care received in real-time (Lynn 2019).

AI and its role in medical diagnostic analysis decisions

One concern with acute care use of AI that may not be immediately evident to those with little knowledge of the medical environment is the general gap between the decision and the results of the decision. It is also not apparent if a treatment decision was incorrect with a patient's condition until several days after complications, rehabilitation delay, or deterioration happened. (Arora et al. 2005; Graham et al. 2013). In medical treatment, where the wisdom of the decision is often not readily clear, the clinician in charge of the case can not necessarily wait in confidence to see the results. However, the clinician wants to be able to see the decision-making process itself in fine contextual detail and in real-time and ensure that it corresponds to the nuances and comorbidities of the immediate patient under consideration. Here it can be clearly observed that the need for a new emphasis on medical education because bedside clarification of AI is not helpful if the practitioner is not qualified to be able to read the RTP identified by the AI (Lynn 2019).

The implementation of AI brings new communication challenges to a dynamic hospital environment that is already associated with a high error rate. This is valid as though the machine is a diagnostician and is currently providing care to a person who is about to undergo medication. Guidelines for hand-offs including AI should be prioritised to ensure that they are available as AI is introduced into patient treatment. In comparison, the probability of a possible delay between decision and outcome is likely to be more apparent when a Black Box AI-managed patient fails to recover. The clinician may like to know whether he or she has made an error in AI-based diagnostics or treatment decisions, or both (Graham et al. 2013; Lynn 2019).

Clinical dependency and Artificial intelligence

The second issue that can evolve over time in the acute care setting is intellectual reliance on AI, especially AI, which lacks comprehensive communication skills. If the perceived desire to study advanced pathophysiology diminishes, so does the expertise of the practitioner or nurse. This is the actual state of autonomous driving, where the efficiency of AI must also be measured and monitored by a human being in real-time. With the advent of AI, basic diagnosis and treatment-based threshold guidelines will be replaced by AI-based guidelines that will be even more complicated and will require RTP analysis. However, if proper action is not taken soon, the impact of AI on medical education has the potential to trigger a much deeper reduction (Lysaght et al. 2019).

AI algorithms and applications are being built to support clinical decision-making and/or public health policy development. This AI algorithms usually use computerised predictive analysis algorithms to sort, arrange, and look for trends in broad data sets from different sources, and offer a probability overview so healthcare providers can make faster, better and knowledgeable choices (Efthymiou et al., 2020). Clinical Decision Support Systems (CDSS) are equipped with rule-based systems, fuzzy logic, artificial neural networks, Bayesian networks, as well as general machine learning techniques. CDSS with learning algorithms is currently under development to support physicians in their decision-making based on previous successful diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis. Implementers can include hospitals and healthcare providers who integrate AI-assisted CDSS into the implementation of healthcare services, as well as academics who gather data feedback into the CDSS and assess the effectiveness of AI-algorithms. Organizations and/or individuals may be the developers and implementers of such systems (Lysaght et al. 2019).

AI help in decision making of emerging antibiotic resistance scenario

Antibiotic resistance is an evolving global problem. Responsible decision-making involves the incorporation of large and deep knowledge. Artificial intelligence systems may help decision-making at several levels but developing them requires a consistent co-development strategy to ensuring that they are implemented upon deployment. Optimal decision-making in healthcare is also informed by the boundaries of rationality. In specific, how does AI aid in contexts where the idea of free choice has the added difficulty of weighing long-term individual and social risk as well as potential short-term benefits? AI to maximize antibiotic treatment antibiotic therapy, whether suitable or incorrect, is a regulator of antimicrobial resistance. Antimicrobial resistance is a dynamic social and biological threat that represents many of the problems (Mercer et al. 2016). The decision to administer an antibiotic influence, not just the particular patient, but both the human microbiota and community as a whole by the introduction of drug-resistant species. Decision-making during infection control is a complex and sometimes contradictory process (Charani et al. 2011). Another difficulty in the area of infection is the need to provide decision support not only on human causes, but also on bacteria, the antibiotic used in the sense of clinical polypharmacy, the development of tolerance, the symbiotic microbiome, and the broader ecosystem. However, lessons need to be drawn from the existing challenges in encouraging the use of therapeutic decision-making methods. The development of AI systems in the area of infection is still in its infancy. There is currently little thought about how these possible adverse effects of artificial intelligence can be managed and how programmers can react to them when they are detected. Present media attention to the use of artificial intelligence has drawn

some strong views on health welfare. From the patient view, confidence in computer-driven healthcare decisions is inconsistent. In a recent study analyzing public trust in computer-driven decisions, people indicated that while computer-based decision-making had possible benefits in enhancing the precision, engagement, and supervision of medical professionals, it remained important (Rawson et al. 2018). Participants also stated that it is focused on the understanding that human behavior can not merely be based on facts but must rather consider the social and cultural context in which the decision is taken. For antibiotic prescribing, many prospective end-users are currently unsure about how decision-making support can be applied, particularly where the mechanism may move towards a more social viewpoint than that of the client, which is frequently the case where decisions are taken to treat infections. Many of these issues will be overcome by the participation of healthcare practitioners, patients, and professions in the early implementation of such resources. AI architecture promotes participatory methods since, in effect, it seeks to replicate the capabilities of human intelligence. However, although the co-design of the framework to enhance the architecture and performance dimensions is essential, this might not be enough. Co-design would also answer issues and aim to encourage more clarity in the way the decisions made by the framework have been developed and are used to improve human decision-making. Examples such as this illustrate that while AI can certainly improve our capacity to promote decision-making in healthcare, humanization of outcomes is also needed to contextualize knowledge to the user. Decades of lessons from software implementation and human and corporate behavioral studies suggest that co-designing systems can not only encourage improved acceptance of treatments but also facilitate openness in the technological framework that makes up the AI networks used in medicine. This adequately encourages AI experts to be able to clarify and involve the end-user, not only in terms of the optimum configuration of the application and functions but also in terms of the architecture and preparation of the AI system and the possible adverse effects to use in a manner that is accessible to everyone. This would also encourage the fostering of specialist participation in the creation and shaping of systems to ensure that AI is internally, geographically, and contextually important while being alert to changing global epidemiology (Rawson et al. 2019).

AI and Decision-Making Capacity

Decision-making capability consists of the ability to grasp the facts relevant to a decision, to consider its importance, to think about the risks and advantages of the various courses of action, and to express the decisions taken. While philosophers use words such as "understand," "appreciate" and "lie" in

several contexts, this concept is widely understood by the medical community (Grisso and Appelbaum 1998; Lepping, Stanly, and Turner 2015).

Incapacity is not a small problem: statistics indicate that more than one-third of elderly and mental hospital inpatients lack decision-making ability. However, in one report, health care practitioners have not been able to recognise incapacity in 42% of cases. When physicians successfully classify patients lacking decision-making capability, data indicate that they frequently struggle to meet incapacity (Janz et al. 2004).

Making life-and-death decisions for injured people takes a tremendous toll on physicians, as reports show a correlation between end-of-life decision-making and occupational health care burnout. However, including family members or patient surrogates in the decision-making process is no panacea. Surrogates interpret patients' desires poorly in about one-third of cases, usually imposing their own expectations on the patient concerned. In comparison, often surrogates undergo additional discomfort and mental health issues, with consequences that often linger for years (Marks and Arkes 2008; Wendler and Rid 2011). One solution to this issue is the Advance Directive or Advance Treatment Plan. Ethical and functional problems with these methods have been addressed elsewhere; for this purpose, it is considered that only patients who have not expressed an advance choice for their treatment. Every day, patients lacking decision-making capability are subject to examinations and procedures that they may not have agreed to. Indeed, needless audits and procedures are not only ethically questionable, but they can also put excessive economic pressure on already-stretched health care systems. Lamanna et al propose that just as AI algorithms allow online retailers to predict which goods the consumer is most likely to purchase or which films they are most likely to experience, so AI may be harnessed to predict which health care decisions the patient will make (Lamanna and Byrne 2018).

AI and its crucial link with public sector opinion

The gradual use of AI in a variety of sectors has been seen in recent years. AI currently not only focuses on robotics but also reaches beyond it, for example, artificial intelligence developments in health care and medicine. Latest examples from other sectors include those that concentrate on AI technologies in the public sector and concentrate on emerging artificial intelligence methods for deep conflict resolution and humanitarian response to conflict resolution, consultation, lobbying, mediation, peacekeeping, crisis management, and other critical humanitarian processes. In addition, Iris et al have investigated the impact of AI-mediated communication on attribution and trust, and among their key observations in the context of current responses and interactions as carried out by

Google and other firms. It is now believed that modern technological advancements, such as the Internet, social networks, and computer technology, are not only part of our everyday lives, but are also part of our governments. The author also discussed the involvement of AI in politics and related issues. And the tried to answer the very important question regarding the European Union's use of AI for optimization of power in line with sociopolitical nature and some international agreements as well ("Artificial Intelligence Ai in Politics Should Political Ai Be Controlled" 2020).

Conclusion

The implementation of artificial intelligence to the bedside has the ability to dramatically alter the conventional position of the physician and nurse. In the future, physicians will track the time cycle study and actions reached by the AI to ensure that the patients under their supervision remain protected from the new, twenty-first century hazards of statistical insignificance and heterogeneous treatment results. However, this ensures that acute care AI programmes have extensive details about the conditions affecting the decisions taken by the AI. To ensure that physicians are able to perform the role of AI supervision, policy leaders can rapidly plan by changing the emphasis of medical education from twentieth-century threshold decision making to twenty-first-century time pattern recognition. In the field of healthcare, a vast amount of data is produced from various medical sources, including, for example, biological images, laboratory test results, doctor's written notes, and health status criteria that allow for real-time patient health tracking. In addition to the enormous amount and variety, data on health care travel at a high level. As a result, big data methods provide enormous prospects for efficiency in healthcare systems. The promise of broad data methods in healthcare studies has drawn the interest of many researchers. Latest advances in big data for health informatics and their role in combating disease detection are discussed, for example, the detection of diagnostics and the treatment of multiple diseases.

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Greek Fiscal Policy in Times of Crisis: A New Proposed Framework[1]

Georgios L. Vousinas[2]

Abstract

The present article aims to shed light on the critical matter of overcoming the existing Greek sovereign debt crisis, a crisis that brought to the surface the chronic structural problems of the Greek economy and the long-standing state distortions, by highlighting the importance of a sound and efficient fiscal policy administration model. The author identifies the problematic issues in the current fiscal policy procedures and proposes a new framework so as for the Greek economy to overcome the ongoing crisis and return to positive growth rates, while achieving sustainable growth, a perquisite for socioeconomic welfare. The overall target of this paper is to set the required fiscal policy mix so as for Greek economy to overcome current and future crises and hopefully initiate a fruitful discourse on the subject among all the involved parties.

Keywords: Greek sovereign debt crisis; fiscal policy; budget deficits; tax administration; Independent Fiscal Council; debt; crisis.

Introduction

The burst of the financial crisis in 2008 gradually caused a global credit crunch and economic recession, leading to a huge increase in public debt in several advanced economies. Greece was at the center of the sovereign debt crisis in the Eurozone and in urgent need to refinance its public debt, following the exclusion of the Greek economy from international markets in 2010 (Vousinas, 2016). And this crisis brought to the surface the chronic structural problems of the Greek economy and the long-term state distortions.

More specifically, until mid-1970s, Greek governments followed the so-called "golden rule" of fiscal policy, which required balanced state budgets (Vousinas, 2018). After 1974 and until 2009 Greece showed significant growth, but simultaneously public debt started to inflate due to a number of factors. The most significant ones, as highlighted by a large amount of recent research (Kouretas and Vlamis, 2010; Arghyrou and Tsoukalas, 2011; Dellas and Tavlas, 2012; Nikiforos et al., 2015; Tsoulfidis et. al., 2016), are the structural problems of the Greek economy and the large fiscal and external imbalances, as well as the severe effects of the recent global financial turmoil of 2008 and

both the timing and the type of the measures taken by Europe in response to the Greek problem since 2010 (fiscal adjustment programs).

All the above demonstrate the importance of a sound and efficient fiscal policy administration model to address the existing defficiencies. For this purpose, a new fiscal policy framework is proposed so as for the Greek economy to overcome the ongoing crisis and return to positive growth rates, while achieving sustainable growth, a perquisite for socioeconomic welfare.

Problematic issues in the current Greek fiscal policy framework

In spite of the high growth rates the Greek economy achieved during the previous decade, fiscal imbalances were worsening and never successfully controlled by the authorities. This deficiency can be attributed to many factors, but the most significant weaknesses of the Greek fiscal framework prove to be the inefficient budgeting procedures as well as the poor tax administration system (Kaplanoglou & Rapanos, 2013).

State budget preparation procedures

The main shortcomings of the current state budget preparation framework in Greece can be summarized to the following:

- Lack of transparency.
- Lack of a medium-term budgetary framework.
- A weak top-down budgeting process and a lack of real accountability.
- Lack of budget planning system.
- Organizational weaknesses.

Tax administration system

The main insufficiencies in the design and enforcement of the tax system in Greece, which have played a key role in the exacerbation of fiscal deficits that led to the current sovereign debt crisis, are related to the structure of the Greek economy and the failures of formal institutions, and in particular to the poor functioning of the tax administration, lax tax enforcement, the lack of tax awareness, the tax burden, inefficiency of tax collection, and the lack of effective dispute resolution mechanisms (Vousinas, 2017).

A new proposed fiscal policy framework

In order to change the country's fiscal governance model and address the above mentioned critical shortcomings, a new fiscal policy framework is proposed, based on the following three main pillars (as described below):

- The procedures for setting up the state budget,

- The tax administration model and

- The functioning of the Independent Fiscal Council.

State budget preparation procedures

The main proposals for addressing the major issue of mismanagement of the state budget in Greece can be summarized as follows:

- Consolidation of budgeting procedures by merging regular and investment budgets and their placement under the auspices of the State General Accounting Office, which should have more autonomy, as well as more and better staffing with highly qualified staff. Moreover, a specific position (Head or better Deputy Minister) should be set up to lead the unit and report to the competent Minister.

- Introduction of a new, modern, and efficient internal control system and the placement of a suitably qualified, permanent, and independent Internal Auditor, which is proposed to refer to the General Inspector of Public Administration.

- Introduction of stronger top - down budgeting procedures in order to be more cost-effective.

- Reduction of bureaucracy in all structures and processes. In order for the budget execution reports to be reliable, a complete computerization of the whole trading circuit is required, while real-time, on-line interconnection of all the units involved is required.

- Establishment of national financial rules, which must provide a comprehensive picture of the entire range of government budgeting activities. This process must be fully transparent, and the rules must be clear, understandable, and accessible to all parties.

- Creation of a medium-term budgetary framework incorporating multiannual estimates (e.g. over a three-year horizon) that will reflect the strategic objectives of the government

- Introduction of an accrual-based accounting system could enhance transparency in the allocation of public resources and the impact of commitments and improve the decision-making process.

Reform of the tax administration model

Based on the international experience and the special characteristics of the Greek reality, the following measures are proposed for restructuring the country's tax administration model and improving its efficiency:

1. Rational reorganization of tax administration units by increasing the autonomy of local offices and creating new ones where it is necessary in order to facilitate the completion of the tasks and the service of taxpayers. In this direction it is considered necessary to extend the powers of the tax administration and to place them under a lead head who is solely responsible for supervising the tax mechanism. For this reason, perhaps a separate Ministry of tax policy should be created in order to better coordinate the efforts and control the functioning of the tax collection mechanism.

2. Simplifying the entire tax system, as it is not possible to address the issue of enhancing the efficiency of tax administration without taking into account the degree of complexity of the structure of the tax system. The tax provisions in force are now scattered across many legislative decrees and legislative acts, complicating the work of tax auditors and also their understanding by taxpayers. It is necessary to properly codify all tax provisions in a single, properly structured and understandable form and to post them on the website of the Ministry of Finance with constant updating of the revisions so that they are accessible to taxpayers and interested parties at all times.

3. In the direction of reducing the degree of complexity of the tax structure and achieving the required efficiency, it is crucial that there is a stable and long-term tax framework that will not change with every government change. That is why tax measures, owing to their importance in the fiscal policy and the scope of their implementation, but also in order to be able to achieve concrete results, must have a long-term horizon.

4. Radical restructuring of the tax audit mechanism by moving from the outdated current system of on-site audits, based on the judgment of the auditors concerned, to a fully centralized system. With the proper use of the existing information infrastructure, it is possible to identify those who are considered to be at high risk for tax evasion, making it easier to combat the phenomenon and avoid similar cases in the future. In this direction, a continuous monitoring of citizens' financial situation and tax declarations can contribute to reducing the phenomenon.

5. Neutrality of the tax system. The tax system should be kept as neutral as possible and should not deviate in favor of certain areas or activities except from totally justified cases (tax

exemptions and other tax incentives should be done sparingly and on the basis of comparative and historical data demonstrating their effectiveness).

6. Transparency and Updating. Tax rules should be made known by all appropriate means, with the utmost simplicity and clarity, so as to make information easier but also to be sufficient for business decisions, especially by small and medium-sized enterprises (the backbone of the Greek economy), which are in any case restricted, due to high cost, from access to highly qualified financial and tax advisers.

7. Alignment of tax auditing practices with those of other OECD member states to address new forms of tax evasion in a modern, globalized environment. The desired reform of the tax administration cannot be achieved through short-term measures and temporary solutions, but requires long-term policies that will address the problem in its roots. In essence, the change in the tax administration model requires, on one hand, a strong political will and understanding by the rulers of the criticality of the issue and, on the other, the building of a mutual circle of trust among the State and taxpayers.

Operation of the Independent Fiscal Council

The third and final pillar on which a new fiscal model for the Greek economy can rely is the proper operation of the Independent Fiscal Council (Hellenic Fiscal Council), as an appropriate instrument for institutional strengthening of the national fiscal framework. The key points that will ensure the success of this council and will contribute the most to its substantial contribution to the change of the Greek fiscal model are listed below:

- Secured and uninterrupted financing on completely transparent terms.
- Hiring highly competent human staff.
- Meritocratic recruitment system.
- At least five years term of office of its members and definitely out of the "electoral cycle".
- Independence of members.
- Unobstructed access by all to the council's publications.
- Simple and understandable writing language of the analyses in such a way that they can be understood even by non-experts.

The new proposed Greek fiscal policy framework, based on the previous main pillars is graphically depicted in the next figure:

Figure 1: A proposed Greek Fiscal Policy Framework
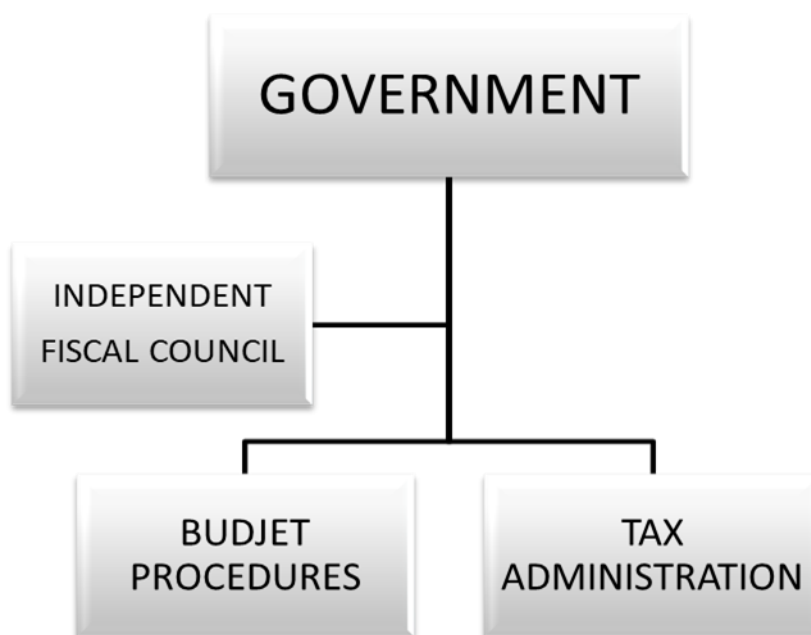
Conclusions

The serious budgetary imbalances of the Greek economy, as a result of the long-standing state distortions and its structure, along with the recent global financial crisis, suggest that the policies and mechanisms in place to ensure fiscal discipline are facing new, important challenges. Therefore, the crucial question regarding the fiscal governance of Greece is the ways in which the fiscal policy framework can be institutionally strengthened. The present study has highlighted a number of measures, based on three main pillars (state budget procedures, tax administration model and the operation of the Hellenic Fiscal Council) that, if implemented, are capable of enhancing the efficiency of the existing fiscal policy framework.

The benefits of the proposed major reforms are not only limited to simply reducing the budget deficit in numerical terms, but also extend to qualitative elements such as strengthening economic growth by addressing public finance management issues and promoting a fairer distribution of tax burdens in the society, by tackling the phenomenon of tax evasion. The need to implement drastic reforms in the country's public finance management model appears to be a one-way street to get the Greek economy out of the ongoing debt crisis and to return to sustained growth rates. And to achieve this the necessary institutional reforms must be based both on a strong political will and on their wide acceptance and support by the citizens.

The current conjuncture provides a great opportunity, as the commitments made to the country's international creditors, combined with the imposed budgetary surveillance, ensure their

implementation over their lifetime, so the bet to be won is their continuation after the end of the commitments. Regarding the issue of public acceptance and support, it is necessary to emphasize the necessity of their implementation, as well as, that the burden of the required fiscal adjustment will be fairly distributed to the citizens, while at the same time will not affect the degree of social cohesion along with the growth prospects of the Greek economy.

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What is the Role of International Law in Global Health Governance on the Period of Covid-19[1]

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Abstract

Rapid globalisation challenges many of the traditional assumptions about International law, which is linked to domestic law, especially the ways in which it is formed and the methods of its implementation. This phenomenon led governments to be more focused on international collaboration to achieve national public health purposes and succeed some audit over the cross-border powers that influence their populations. This essay will analyse the position on what is the role of international law in global health governance. Another significant result of this essay is that Global Actors should create a global health cooperation in order to implement the international law effectively on the period of Covid-19.

Keywords: International law; Global Health; Governance; Covid-19.

Introduction

Rapid globalisation challenges many of the traditional assumptions about International law, which is linked to domestic law, especially the ways in which it is formed and the methods of its implementation. This phenomenon led governments to be more focused on international collaboration in order to achieve national public health purposes and succeed some audit over the cross-border powers that influence their populations. This essay will analyse the position about the role of international law in global health governance. Another significant result of this essay is that Global Actors should create global health cooperation in order to implement the international law at an effective level. Specifically, it will be argued that the WHO should become more involved in global health governance. The necessity for a robust system of international law in global health governance has been increased since the world is being unified and one essential factor of this is microbial unification (Aginam, 2005).

Covid-19 does not have national borders and the traditional distinction between national and

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international regimes is anachronistic (Aginam, 2005). In general, interconnection through easier transport, the free movement of goods and services, tourism, and other facts may increase the spread of contagious diseases (Aginam, 2005). For this reason, international law has a specific role in relation to global strategies, their coordination through all available agencies, and their synchronization into practical group working programs. This calls for a synthesized and liberal extension of international law principles beyond their traditional confines (Aginam, 2005).

Additionally, the current challenges of International Law will be reported. Consequently, this essay clarifies the significance of rules in the process of governing societies, by elaborating the relationship between international law and global health governance. Global health governance is a complex, multifactorial concept whose outlines are being shaped by practical policy efforts (Fidler, 2002). Legal systems, consequently, provide the basic architecture for governance (Fidler, 2002).

Moreover, this evidence-based paper looks at global health governance through the analysis of international law, and presents a general idea of how international law is significant to the discussions about global health governance. Considerable and procedural rules determine and shape the meaning of governance. The definition of international law will be explained and topics such as issue linkage and institutional burden will be discussed. Global health governance is an issue that requires to be addressed by international law. The implications of impoverishment and deprivation under which the majority of the global population lives call for a broader implementation of international law if world health is to be importantly advanced (Aginam, 2005). As a result, international health law can be organized better in order to tackle the current challenges and solve the problem of global health governance.

Definition of International Law

Most of the people who are not familiar with international law usually adopt a common approach toward the role of international law in international politics: international law is not really law because it cannot be enforced. This specific theory depends on the nature of international law. More specifically, International law is the aggregate of rules generally regarded and accepted as binding in relations between states and between nations. It aids as a platform for the preparation of stable and organized global relations. International law is different from countries based legal scheme in that it is mainly relevant to states than to private citizens. National law can be international law when treaties delegate national jurisdiction to supranational tribunals such as the European Court of Human Rights or the International Criminal Court. The majority of international law is consent-based governance. This explains that a state member is not obliged to comply with this international law, instead it has

obviously agreed to specific course of conduct. This is an issue of state domination. Nevertheless, other features of international law are approval-based but are still mandatory upon state and non-state such as customary international law and peremptory norms (Slomanson, 2011; Bentham, 1789).

International law is an autonomous scheme of law presenting external legal decree of specific countries. Thus, it is different from domestic legal systems in figure of aspects. For instance, even though United Nations (UN) General assembly (Encyclopaedia Brittanica), which comprises of delegates from 190 countries, has the external form of a "legislature, it has not the force to issue obligatory laws" (Encyclopaedia Brittanica). By contrast, its resolutions work only as suggestions-except in particular instances and certain reasons within the UN system, such as deciding the UN budget, permitting new participants of the UN. There is cooperation between UN and Security Council in order to elect new judges to the international court Justice (ICJ) (Encyclopaedia Brittanica). Furthermore, an important problem is the lack of system of courts with analytical jurisdiction. The jurisdiction in argumentative cases is established upon the consent of particular countries participated (Encyclopaedia Brittanica). Also, it can be mentioned that "there is not international police force or comprehensive scheme of law enforcement, and there is also no supreme executive authority (Encyclopaedia Brittanica).

International health law: Globalization and the broadening field of international health law

Globalization is the procedure of rising economic, political and social liberation, and global integration that happens as investment, traded goods, people, concepts, ideas, and ethics drawn-out around national border 6. The growth of globalization has serious consequences for public health and global public governance (Taylor, 2002). Current globalisation includes many "interrelated risks and opportunities that affect the sustainability of health systems worldwide'' (Taylor, 2002). As a result of globalisation, governments would be more focused on international collaboration to achieve national public health purposes and succeed some audit over the cross-border powers that influence their populations. Wide spreading effect of globalisation has enlarged the need for new law frameworks of international cooperation.

Consequently, it is imperative the creation of conventional international law, to tackle the emerging threats to global health and boost the health status of poor nations that have not been helped by globalisation the so called ''losers'' of globalisation. The literature examines health and international health law as global public goods argue to the significance of the globalization (Taylor, 2002). Globalization also has a consequence on the expansion of international health law, since growing global incorporation combines rapidly the public health implication of other contemporary

developments powerfully linked to health status. For instance, the sudden world-wide spread of scientific knowledge and technology has triggered international agreement and process by providing the data and instruments needed for efficacy national and international action through a wide range of agreements, including those who are concerned with the security of chemicals, pesticides and climate changes and the removal of dangerous waste. Using of environmentally damaging technologies contributed to the complication of international law by driving global health threats as air pollution, depletion of the ozone layer and climate change.

Moreover, ongoing scientific growth and developments have created global debate on codifying new international obligations and containing global punishments on certain new technologies, such as reproductive human clone (Taylor, 2002). In addition, the globalization of economics and companies has impacted politics and law as leaders and legal schemes adjust to the global age. There are similarities in public health where a combination of old and modern factors can be viewed. Nations have traditionally collaborated on infectious disease control, first through international hygienic treaties and later through the World Health Organization (WHO). Whereas, the phenomenon of the international collaborations is not new, given that recent global conditions are conflicting the control of infectious disease, the claim that a country cannot address rising infectious diseases by itself revealed that public health policy has been justifiably privatized (Fidler, 1996).

Globalization has aimed to a decrease "in both the political and practical capacity of the national governments", performing alone or in collaboration with other nations, to face global health threats. Globalization is a part of changes happening steady during the several years, its acceleration and inflation during the final twentieth century has paid the attention to the action that nations alone cannot deal with a lot of the health threats arising. Communicable-diseases are the most famous example of this declining capacity, but equally important are the impacts on non-communicable diseases (e.g. tobacco consumption- related cancer), nutrition, lifestyles and environmental conditions. This restriction of the state has been supported by actions to extra-liberalize the global trade and services. The potential health implications of more open global markets have started to be discussed within trade negotiations and continue unaddressed by proposed governance mechanisms for the emerging global economy (Dodgson, Lee & Drager, 2002).

Issue linkage

Globalisation has risen the development of international health law by improving current recognition of the interconnection of health and other contemporary global concerns. Global legal experts have usually categorized and analysed matters such as human rights, environmental protection, health and

arms control, self-contained areas with limited connections. Experts of international law have only presently acknowledged and argued the relationship between various subjects of international law, such as trade and human rights. As a result of "issue linkage'' international health law is progressively implied to be vital to other traditional legal realms including human rights, trade, environmental law and international labour law. Consequently, health appears as an important issue of multilateralism (Taylor, 2002). For instance, the extension of international trade channels the connection between health and trade in a number of the agreements of the World Trade Organization (WTO) which is obvious in areas including access to drugs, food security, communicable diseases and biotechnology (Taylor, 2002). Furthermore, health has been related to international peace and world security issues in numerous circumstances, including those of HIV/AIDS, and weapon systems (Taylor, 2002; Alvarez, 2002; WHO, 2002; Brundtland).

Issue linkage incorporating organized action on health and other different considerable concerns has also become gradually an ordinary codification attempt. Sustainable development includes the aim of coordination of environmental, economic and social policy to create optimal human condition (Taylor, 2002). The belief of sustainable development was presented the 1992 Rio declaration of Environment and Development and has been detailed in numerous international methods, including the norms on Climate Change and Biological Diversity. Wide interesectoral accomplishment, (including trade, agriculture, education) to enhance global health status is also in the centre of current governmental discussions encompassing the advised WHO Framework Conference on Tobacco control (Taylor, 2002; Alvarez, 2002; WHO, 2002; Brundtland).

International Health growth and International law

At all stages of growth, countries progressively acknowledge the need for frames for planned action on increasingly difficult, intersectoral and interconnected global health problems. International health growth in the twenty-first century will probably lead to the extended use of international law. It is essential to comprehend that common international law is an innately restricted system for international collaboration and that the global legislative procedure suffers from several faults- including dares to timely obligation and application- although significant benefits have been made in the last years (Taylor, 2002; Weiss, 1992).

In spite of their restrictions, agreements can be beneficial for increasing raising public awareness and stimulating international obligation and national action. Conventional international law can offer a legal foundation for international health commitments, and it can comprise institutional, and technical mechanisms to support compliance with international law by, for instance, improving the capacity of

countries to apply legal obligations. Mechanism established in international arrangements can include financial and practical aid, evidence exchange, scientific investigation, as well as agreement supervision and dispute solution (Taylor, 2002; Weiss, 1992).

Contemporary global health governance and its restrictions

Current trends have seen the number of intergovernmental association and other agents in the field of health and other sectors of foreign relations, to rise rapidly. For instance, as a result of the increasing variety of international law correlated with public health, a wide range of intergovernmental organizations now focuses on the explanation of international law (Taylor, 2002; Walt, 1998; Walt, 2000). These constitute the United Nations and its agencies, and global and regional organizations outside of the United Nation's system. A growing figure of these intergovernmental agencies with explicit law-making authority and appropriate mandates have functioned as stages for codification of international law related to health and others have affected current international law in this area (Taylor, 2002; Walt, 1998; Walt, 2000).

Crisis in 2009 indicated the insufficiency of global health governance. Due to "The outbreak of pandemic influenza A (H1N1)" (Fidler, 2010) countries were rushing for access to vaccines. This fact led the WHO to create a new "global framework" on equal influenza access. The international economic crisis deteriorated efforts to succeed the "Millennium Development Goals" the majority of which relate to health problems or tackle policy areas influencing health. The year ended with the "Copenhagen negotiations on global climate change, problem" (Fidler, 2010) with significant benefit for global health (Fidler, 2010).

Furthermore, there was a rapid spread of private sector-actors in international health. These comprise a broad range of non-governmental organization, foundations and income agencies, such as pharmaceutical companies with an influential intervention on international health policy, including the establishment of international law-making. Modern global health collaboration is comprised by innovative '' international health alliance'' that encompass various global health actors (Walt, 2000). Especially, the current increase of health research networks and public-private cooperation for health (Walt, 2000), as well as the cooperation and the economic contribution of private to public sector is remarkable in national (Kritas et al., 2020) and international level.

The vast majority, of international health actors energetically participated in global health collaboration, linked to wide-spread judgement of the United Nations and its specialized agencies. For Instance, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation cooperate with United Nations in order to help all people lead healthy and productive lives (Walt, 2000). This fact has led some critics to recommend a

decreasing role for intergovernmental organization in global health governance. Some have highlighted a ''power shift'' from intergovernmental association to private sector actors and innovative health alliances mentioned above (Walt, 2000).

Nevertheless, it can be claimed that rising global health autonomy involves multilateral organization to play a significant role in international health collaboration rather than a lesser one-at least in the term of realm of international health legislation and implementation (Walt, 2000). In general, as global integration growth, intergovernmental organizations with legislation authority will provide an increasingly essential mechanism through which countries can improve and implement public policy. Private actors and international health coalitions cannot replace international organizations as institutional central points for global dispute and codification of obligatory laws by national actors (Walt, 2000).

Institutional Burden

The rapid increase of "multilateral" organizations with over-coming legal authority raises concern that the growing sector of international law may increase in an unplanned and unreliable way. The perception of international environmental law the last 20 years indicates a significant fact for international health legislation efforts and global health governance.

Despite the noteworthy accomplishments in this domain, the lack of an "umbrella environmental agency" has contributed to unplanned legislation activity by many intergovernmental organizations and sometimes ineffective and inconsistent (Taylor, 2002). There are so many treaties and organizations worldwide relating to the environment that create the phenomenon of "institutional overload". Hence, the capacity of states to take part in and comply with them all has been exceeded (Taylor, 2002). The useless management of global environmental legislation has led most critics to support the construction of a new public international organization-"World Environment Organization".

The consequences of "institutional overload" and "inconsistency" are already presented in international health. For instance, the negative advances in biomedical science have impact on global public health and they recently triggered numerous regional and global initiatives (Taylor, 2002). The global standard-establishing effort in biotechnology has been relocated from "non-binding declaratory resolutions to codification of international heal law", there has been increasing findings of fragmentation, replication and inconsistency. Consequences of the biotechnology revolution are tackled in norms of the United Nations Environment Programme's Convention on Biological Diversity and Biosafety Protocol. According to world trade organization agreement on trade, the

correlated aspect of intellectual property creates standards for security of intellectual property applicable to biotechnology. Numerous other WTO agreements also use biotechnology related to trade arguments (Taylor, 2002). The United Nations Education, a scientific and cultural organization, has declared that the "possible preparation" of an "international instrument on genetic data" and a "universal instrument on bioethics" should be set as a follow-up to its Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights (Taylor, 2002). It is indistinct whether these recommended instruments would be constructing a binding international law. In December 2001, the United Nations General Assembly established an Ad Hoc Working Group of the Sixth Committee to deliberate an international alliance to penalize reproductive cloning of human being (Taylor, 2002).

International law in biotechnology is presented in a disintegrated and unformed way in which intergovernmental organizations with overlapping authorizations are facing sector-specific aspects of the genetics revolution in a partial and imperfect manner. The legal procure deteriorates concerns about legal regime that governs biotechnology. This is partially since standards adopted under the signals of different international organizations are being risen in gradually contrary ways, containing disagreeing legal standards connected to intellectual property (Taylor, 2002). "The experience of international legislation in biotechnology powerfully recommends that recent decentralized organizational framework is ill-equipped to cope with international lawful aspects of the immense public health implications of modern genetic technologies and other realms of global public health" (Taylor, 2002).

WHO's Role in International health law

An international health legislation command for WHO on coordination and collective management. A huger role for WHO, including the international health law initiative, is important for rational growth and efficiency implementation of international health law policy (Taylor, 2002). "Current codification efforts in biotechnology and lessons learnt from the last global environmental governance strongly recommend that international health legislation requires more efficacy on institutional coordination than the ones existing" in the recent decentralized organizational framework 20. More effective collective management is also needed since the phenomenon of "issue linkage" in current legislation could compound the problem of contradictory international health law rules emerging from different organizations with overlapping legal authority. In international law, the question of issue linkage is rapidly perceived to concern the allocation of legal jurisdiction among international organizations (Taylor, 2002).

Coordination does not indicate consolidation of all international health legal functions under WHO

auspices, full centralization is neither probable nor necessary (Taylor, 2002). It can be broadly understood that the domain of international health law is rapidly including increasingly more various and complicated concerns, and though health originates increasingly within the context of current codification efforts through issue linkage, not all such treaty efforts fall squarely within WHO's core mandate (Taylor, 2002). Furthermore, some international organizations with overlapping legal authorization may resist reduction of their respective authorization in favor of full centralization under the auspices of WHO. Governments are not likely to offer WHO such wide authorization or to provide it with the resources needed to implement such a mandate (Taylor, 2002; Kantartzi & Karlis, 2008).

Moreover, not all facts of decentralization of international legislation are ineffective. The rising "complexity" and "interconnectedness" of global health problems recommend that certain context require shifting beyond the "single instrument and single institution" approach, while simultaneously avoiding exaggerated fragmentation and lack of coordination (Taylor, 2002). The conditions and the opportunities are generated by the decentralization for specialization, innovation and dynamism. For instance, some existing international organizations, such as the food and agriculture organization of the United Nations, have grown significant technical expertise and will be a substantial resource for future global health legal collaboration (Taylor, 2002).

The biggest international health organization and one of the larger specialized agencies of the United Nations, WHO, has accountabilities to administrate global public health based on responsibilities assigned by its constitution and its affiliation with the United Nations (Taylor, 2002). A leading role by WHO could highly benefit international health law among the benefits of WHO having a chief role on the promotion and development of a legal system where rational decisions are made. Thus, WHO would serve as an administrator, catalyst and helper for international health agreements. However, this idea has also been previously suggested due to the leadership gap and disorientation dominant in this domain. Previous cases have shown that the intervention of WHO was a success when it came to major global health threats. For instance, the WHO International Health Regulations is the only international legal implement planned to offer a ramework for multilateral efforts to mitigate infectious diseases, was changed in 2005 to face the rising threat posed by the transationalization of infectious diseases (Taylor, 2002) and to embed recently grew systems for international organization and reaction (Taylor, 2008).

The leaders of WHO in organizing codification and implementation efforts among the various global actors actively involved in health lawmaking could, in theory, boost the growth of a more effective, incorporated and rational legal system and subsequently, better collective administration of global health concerns. WHO and other intergovernmental organizations cannot effectively coordinate the

international legal efforts. Efficacy of international standards and stability among different treaties and legal systems may not always be an initiative among nations codifying global obligations or the wide spectrum of global health actors that influence the international legal procedure. Additionally, WHO has not obligation authority over the activities of other independent intergovernmental organizations (Taylor, 2002).

While effective coordination of the increasingly complex international health law cannot be guaranteed, it can be followed with reasonable expectations and recognition of the restrictions of organizational action (Taylor, 2002). This essay, cannot entirely define the strategies WHO could use to support rational management of international legal developments, but numerous beginning points can be revealed (Taylor, 2002).

For international health law, it is significant to evaluate the interaction between the regulations and human laws, specifically those relating to individual patients and others who may probably preserve the disease. "During health emergencies, it is very common that the rights of individual patients and others are easily overlooked" (Toebes, 2015). While the regulations embed human rights law, the accurate consequences of this connection at a realistic level need additional survey (Toebes, 2015).

International agenda and further dialogue

WHO can prepare more effective and organized international health collaboration by using the agenda-setting that is obviously needed for international health law. It can play an important role for itself in catalyzing international agreements and national action by, among other things, institutionalizing a procedure of finding priority issues for international legal collaboration and supporting them among relevant voting groups. By prioritizing international legal action and coordinating appropriate public health and legal information, WHO can have a significant role and encounter an important need by educating governments, other global health actors and the public about global health issues ripe for legal consideration (Taylor, 2002). The plans of WHO can support effective consideration, collective management and growth of international legal matters by energetically participating in developing array of treaty efforts with significant consequences for global public health started in other forums (Taylor, 2002).

For instance, in December 2001, the General Assembly of the United Nations created an Ad Hoc Committee to examine proposals on a comprehensive and essential international agreement on protection and promotion of the rights and dignity of person with disabilities (Taylor, 2002). In the initial meeting, the Committee highlighted the human rights framework is needed to support the entire participation of persons with disabilities in economic and social life. WHO can provide a significant

contribution to this codification effort, and the growth of international health law, by informing and educating nations' representatives participating in dialogues about relevant public health and legal information within its field (Taylor, 2002). This kind of information could contain details of the global incidence of disabilities and public health considerations involved in human rights issues and accommodation access (Taylor, 2002). In addition, it can be emphasized that WHO may widen the dialogue by bringing forth information and motivation, global public opinion on the approach of prevention, treatment and rehabilitation that are ripe for international lawful action (Taylor, 2002).

Given this fact, as a remarkably obvious international organization, WHO has the chance to play a crucial role in setting the international health law agenda and, subsequently to contribute to the development of international health law (Taylor, 2002). However, WHO can boost global dialogue, construct effective partnerships and subsequently more coordinated, governmental and intergovernmental plans (Taylor, 2002).

Policies for treaty negotiations

Global actors can lead global health collaboration by helping, where appropriate, as a platform for codification and implementation of agreements with important public law effects. The data of environmental law and biotechnology recommend that critical public health issues of global legal concern not tackled in a timely and effective way may lead to excessive institutional fragmentation, considerable overlaps, unrecognized linkages and vital gaps in the absence of a legislative role for WHO (Taylor, 2002). As a public international organization, WHO is the only one with a multi-dimensional role. As for its responsibilities, one can indicate its institutional role, legal authority, codification of treaties and on top of all, dealing with global public health concerns (Taylor, 2002).

Given the problems increased by issue linkage and overlapping legal authority, the question is which types of issues will benefit from codification under WHO auspices (Taylor, 2002). We need to make a decision on an example-by-example basis and always be arguable (Taylor, 2002). The question that remains is the problematic overlapping of responsibilities of WHO's role and work in certain cases. There are certain issues, such as international tobacco control and covid-19 overlap with other international sectors, such as human rights, trade customs, and environment. It can be claimed, though, that those issues remain crucial to public health and therefore they must be dealt by WHO (Taylor, 2002).

Conclusions

It is imperative that rapidly evolving field of international law should be extended to cover all needs

of modern societies. Global Health governance is one of them. As a necessary factor, global health governance in the twenty-first century is a dynamic, effective and politically responsive institution to promote collective management as well as the rational development and implementation of international law policy (Taylor, 2002). Therefore, there must be a shift of interest towards the idea of international health law and a call to action for the codification of new instruments and the development of new strategies to face the challenges in global health. Global health actors must be assigned new roles and be given such responsibilities as to serve an international purpose. The number one priority of our times should be effectively and cautiously treated outside the restricted boarders of each state. If law is to play an essential role in global health governance in the future, new types will be required to channel more beneficial and cooperative action to address one of the defining issues of our time—the health of the world's population (Fidler, 2002).

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Topic 5

Environmental Policies, Energy and Politics

A Comparative Analysis of COVID-19 Effects on Air Pollution in Ten EU Cities in 2020[1]

Michail Melidis[2] & Stylianos Ioannis Tzagkarakis[3]

Abstract

The global pandemic has arguably induced many dramatic changes at all levels worldwide. The occurrence of some silver linings on the environment brought about a glimmer of hope and optimism. However, these are seen as rather short-lived and temporary mainly linked to lower economic output and the imposition of restrictive measures by the national governments to contain the spreading of the coronavirus. In such a context, the restart of the economy plausibly raises many concerns about the durability of those in the long run. An environmental sector that has attracted particular attention is air pollution which has seen significant improvements in urban centers and most polluted cities during the pandemic. Evidence shows that air pollution in the EU has decreased in 2020 as a result of reduced consumption of fossil fuels, road transport, lower economic output, and industrial activity, however, strong signs of retreat to pre-coronavirus levels are observed. The aim of this policy brief is to examine the effects of COVID-19 on air pollution by breaking down and comparing the average concentrations of three pollutants, nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), and particulate matter ($PM2.5$), and ($PM10$), per month in ten major European cities in 2020 with the use of data from the European Environment Agency.

Keywords: Air pollution; COVID-19; Environmental effects; Lockdown; Nitrogen Dioxide; Particulate Matter.

Introduction

Since the outbreak of the global pandemic, a plethora of studies have embarked on assessing the effects of the coronavirus on the environment at the international level (Helm, 2020). The pandemic could be argued that apart from the serious negative effects has generated some environmental benefits (Zambrano et al., 2020). Indicatively, these can be identified in the lower consumption of fossil fuels and the decrease of GHG emissions due to lower economic and industrial activity which, in turn, led to improved air quality, clearer skies, and a cleaner atmosphere in the world's most polluted cities. Likewise, the fall of tourism affected the quality and clarity of waters and beaches around the world while nature and wildlife in the absence of human presence seemed to bounce back

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(Melidis, 2020). On the other hand, some of the negative effects are met in the increased use of single-use plastics, the rise in household and medical waste and waste management (Saadat et al., 2020). In this regard, an environmental sector that lends itself to an interesting analysis and constitutes the centerpiece of this paper is air pollution which has seen significant improvements during the pandemic. The focus of this article is to look into and compare the levels of air pollution in ten major European cities by analysing the NO_2, $PM_{2.5}$, and PM_{10} pollutants and their monthly average concentrations in 2020, a year of several restrictive measures, national and local lockdowns. In a nutshell, the article demonstrates the significant reductions in emissions in ten EU cities and improved air quality, however, there are clear indications of a possible setback to the pre-pandemic levels. The structure of the article is as follows. Initially, it introduces the research methodology and key definitions then goes on to outline air quality in the EU followed by an analysis of air pollutants in a sample of ten EU cities, and lastly draws some conclusions and policy recommendations.

Methodology and Definitions

The article is drawn on a range of academic articles, environmental studies, and reports from environmental agencies and international organisations. The data for the statistical analyses were compiled by the official European Environment Agency datasets (EEA, 2020a). Specifically, we used the EEA's Air quality and Covid-19 viewer to track the average concentrations of nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) and particulate matter (PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$) per month in 2020. Here we provide some definitions of the key terms included in our research. Emission is the release of a pollutant directly into the atmosphere. The first pollutant examined is nitrogen dioxide (NO_2). NO_2 is a gaseous air pollutant principally generated during the combustion processes such as the burning of fossil fuels from vehicles, trucks, buses, powerplants, diesel-powered heavy construction, industrial boilers, and off-road equipment in combination with nitric oxide (NO) (EPA, 2020). Certain gases when reacting with NO in the atmosphere may result in the formation of NO_2. These reactions are characterized by rapidity and reversibility. Therefore, the two gases are reported together as nitrogen oxides (NOx). Nitrogen oxides play a crucial role in the formation of acid rain and smog with harmful effects on the environment (DEFRA, 2019). Road transport and energy production are the largest sources of NO_2 emissions. Exposure to NO_2 poses health and safety hazards such as coughing, irritation of the eyes, nose, and throat, congestion, chest pain, breathing difficulties, blood loss, lung damage, and ultimately death (WHO, 2017).

Subsequently, the term 'PM' refers to particulate matter (particles in the air) – a mix of extremely small solid particles and liquid droplets in the atmosphere (DEFRA, 2020). PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ are

inhalable and often come from different emissions sources bearing different chemical compositions. Particle pollution can emanate from the combustion of liquid and solid fuels for domestic heating, power generation, wood-burning stoves, forest fires, diesel engines, road traffic emissions, industry, agricultural burning, and dust (DEFRA, 2019). It can also be composed of a variety of sources such as sulphates, nitrates, ammonia, carbon, lead, organics, soil, dust, sea salt, and bioaerosols. A difference between these two is size where particles have a diameter of less than 10 and 2.5 micrometers respectively. According to World Health Organisation (2020), PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ are the two types of pollution that affect more people than any other pollutant. $PM_{2.5}$ is also known as fine particulate matter. Exposure to particle pollution may have serious effects on health such as lung and cardiovascular diseases, respiratory problems, and premature deaths. Fine particles are also linked to reduced visibility (haze) and adversely impact climate, ecosystems, and materials. Their limit values can be frequently found in exceedance in many European cities (WHO, 2017).

The selection of our EU cases (cities) rests on two criteria, high population, and high economic activity. To measure air pollution, we broke down the concentrations of air pollutants, NO_2, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$, and categorized them by month from January to December to show the variations in air pollution throughout 2020. Importantly, the concentrations of air pollutants are given in micrograms per cubic meter of air (ug/m3). With regard to data analysis, it is worth noting that the first lockdown in the EU came into force from mid-March to early May 2020. However, even after this period containment measures in many EU Member states continued to be in place but in a laxer form, particularly over the summer and in autumn. In November and December, many EU Member states imposed a second lockdown. Some states adopted strict restrictive measures and others either local or/and national lockdowns to contain the coronavirus cases and death toll. Lastly, some of the limitations of our research have to do with the lack of available data from the official European Environment Agency datasets, particularly in the concentrations of $PM_{2.5}$ regarding Paris, Barcelona, Berlin, and Rome (only for January - NO_2, $PM_{2.5}$, and PM_{10}) and the inclusion of a greater sample of air pollutants due to space restrictions.

Air quality

In a broader context, there has been observed a drop in economic and industrial activities resulting in a reduction in emissions of air pollution. This is manifested in the area of transport where the private use of vehicles diminished during the period of lockdowns. In essence, this translates into lower NO_2 concentrations in many densely populated areas and cities. Based on EEA's Air quality and COVID-19 viewer that tracks the average monthly concentrations of NO_2 and PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$, the

concentrations of NO_2 – a pollutant emitted by road transport – had a sharp drop in many EU cities where lockdown measures came into effect during the spring of 2020 (EEA, 2020a). The resume of economic and social activities seems to have contributed to the increase of the above-mentioned pollutants and in some cases, a strong tendency to go back to pre-pandemic levels is noted. In general, PM concentrations are caused by emissions from natural resources and man-made sources such as industry, agriculture, and residential heating and lockdown measures are less likely to have influenced them (EEA, 2020b). Particularly, PM_{10} concentrations dropped in EU cities but not eminently. Although it may be anticipated a decline in concentrations of fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$), a steady decrease in many European cities has not yet been observed. A reason for this could be that this pollutant's main sources are more diversified, encompassing, for example, the fuel combustion for the heating of institutional, commercial, and residential buildings, road traffic, and industrial activities. Furthermore, a considerable proportion of particulate matter is shaped in the atmosphere when reacting with other air pollutants such as ammonia – a pollutant attributable to the use of agricultural fertilisers at this time of year. Additional factors such as weather conditions can play a key role in the decrease of pollutants' concentration. On the contrary, meteorology variations may also result in increased air pollution and combined with frequent non-sequential relationships between changes in emissions and concentrations can give an explanation about the reason for the non-occurrence of lower pollution in all areas (EEA, 2020c).

Breakdown of NO2, PM2.5 & PM10 Average concentrations per month in 2020

In this section, an analysis of the average concentrations of three pollutants on a monthly basis is provided in a tabular form for 10 highly populated cities with high economic activity below.

Figure 1: NO2 Average concentrations (ug/m3) in 2020

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Average
Milan	69.8	54.0	33.3	23.7	20.6	23.9	23.5	20.9	34.1	39.2	47.9	43.0	36.17
Rome	No data	44.6	25.4	17.9	19.9	23.2	25.7	21.6	32.1	34.0	36.2	34.9	28.68
London	34.0	28.0	25.8	24.2	19.8	19.9	17.5	21.8	25.6	23.6	31.4	39.9	25.95
Paris	39.7	29.9	28.2	22.3	22.8	25.2	22.3	27.2	36.0	27.4	35.0	33.4	29.11
Madrid	47.1	45.4	23.0	12.2	12.9	16.0	20.2	22.2	27.9	29.8	40.4	24.6	26.80
Barcelona	36.2	35.2	21.5	14.4	15.8	17.2	21.6	17.6	25.9	27.6	30.7	26.5	24.18
Lisbon	31.0	34.7	16.8	11.7	13.0	10.6	17.3	11.2	23.2	23.4	27.5	22.1	20.20
Berlin	33.3	25.9	26.4	22.7	20.0	18.9	21.5	24.6	30.7	24.3	26.4	27	25.14
Brusells	26.2	18.7	19.3	17.6	16.7	15.5	13.2	16.3	23.5	17.3	25.3	27.6	19.77
Athens	40.8	40.8	34.3	23.7	39.0	34.9	33.9	33.1	32.7	37.7	26.6	31.7	34.10

Source: EEA (2020a)

As shown in Figure 1, the NO_2 average concentrations per month have dropped in most cities (Milan, Rome, Paris, Madrid, Barcelona, Lisbon, Berlin, and Athens) in 2020 but, towards the end of the year, there is a tendency to reach the pre-pandemic levels. In some cases (London and Brussels) these are seen in exceedance. The reductions are also clearly mirrored in the yearly average. Specifically, during the first lockdown (March-May) a significant decline is manifested almost everywhere. Similarly, these seem to remain relatively stable over the summer. However, in the following months until December, there has been a noticeable ramp-up. Interestingly, the variations in NO_2 average concentrations during the two lockdown periods (March-May and November-December) cannot be overlooked. Last but not least, cities such as Milan, Madrid, Paris, and Athens exhibited by far the highest concentrations in the pre-pandemic era and continue to do so throughout 2020 with the addition of London just before the advent of the new year.

Figure 2: $PM_{2.5}$ Average concentrations (ug/m3) in 2020

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Average
Milan	51.1	34.7	21.1	16.4	9.7	8.2	11.3	10.5	13.5	18.2	42.8	23.0	21.71
Rome	No data	16.0	13.4	12.8	8.9	7.4	9.6	11.1	11.3	9.3	19.5	11.7	11.90
London	10.6	7.3	8.8	14.8	8.7	7.9	5.3	10.8	9.0	6.4	15.1	11.5	9.68
Paris	No available data												
Madrid	14.1	14.8	6.9	6.6	7.4	7.9	10.7	8.6	7.5	7.3	12.5	4.4	9.05
Barcelona	No available data												
Lisbon	15.9	14.1	10.2	7.3	9.0	6.5	11.6	6.3	10.2	6.9	9.9	8.4	9.69
Berlin	No available data												
Brusells	11.0	6.8	9.4	13.0	8.9	7.9	5.9	9.2	10.3	6.3	13.3	14.0	9.66
Athens	21.7	16.6	14.6	12.8	13.4	10.1	12.6	12.6	12.1	11.0	14.0	14.8	13.86

Source: EEA (2020a)

More clearly, in Figure 2 a rather sharp decline in $PM_{2.5}$ average concentrations in all cases is demonstrated compared to pre-pandemic levels. Only London and Brussels seem to diverge significantly. A reflection of this decline is also met in the yearly average. Similar trends to the above pollutant (NO_2) are also observed here especially with the apparent increase in $PM_{2.5}$ average concentrations towards the end of the year (mainly November). Along these lines, the first (March-May) and second (November-December) lockdown do not seem to have a very strong impact on $PM_{2.5}$ average concentrations. Nor is it plainly observed a constant decline of those throughout. An interesting remark is that while periods of less restrictive measures such as the summer and early autumn would be expected to experience a significant and rapid increase of the average concentrations, this is hardly seen. Lastly, cities with high scores pre-pandemic such as Milan, Athens, and Lisbon are now amongst those with a remarkable decrease at the end of the year.

Figure 3: PM$_{10}$ Average concentrations (ug/m3) in 2020

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Average
Milan	68.9	45.0	31.4	24.4	16.9	14.5	18.9	18.0	23.1	27.5	56.6	26.2	30.96
Rome	No data	28.2	26.4	20.5	20.5	17.4	20.7	23.5	23.0	20.4	31.3	18.8	22.80
London	15.8	13.6	15.5	22.5	14.1	12.1	8.6	16.8	13.9	9.5	20.9	14.6	14.81
Paris	20.9	15.2	20.0	20.9	17.2	15.5	16.5	17.0	21.6	14.1	22.9	19.2	18.42
Madrid	21.6	26.6	12.7	9.1	12.7	15.0	23.0	17.0	16.1	14.2	20.0	7.7	16.31
Barcelona	24.8	27.4	19.5	14.6	17.7	18.5	22.4	21.0	19.3	22.4	24.4	13.5	20.46
Lisbon	23.8	24.5	20.0	12.6	16.2	11.9	20.7	13.1	19.3	15.7	19.3	15.7	17.73
Berlin	20.4	13.6	20.2	22.4	14.1	17.0	15.0	20.5	19.7	16.5	20.8	34.7	19.57
Brusells	14.2	11.9	14.9	22.8	16.6	14.6	11.0	15.8	18.5	10.3	18.3	17.0	15.49
Athens	32.9	27.1	24.9	20.5	28.2	19.8	24.3	22.2	25.9	22.4	21.0	23.7	24.42

Source: EEA (2020a)

In the same line with the above analyses (NO$_2$ and PM$_{2.5}$), PM$_{10}$ average concentrations note considerable reductions throughout the year and in almost all cities excluding Berlin and Brussels. Interestingly, the monthly average concentrations of PM$_{10}$ are by far higher in relation to PM$_{2.5}$. The contribution of the first and second lockdown measures to the overall decline of average concentrations while is not contested, however, raises some doubts about their efficiency given that a rather mixed picture is presented. As we drill down into the data, we observe that PM$_{10}$ average concentrations do not show a steady decline. Rather, it appears a quite strong tendency to bounce back to pre-pandemic levels compared to NO$_2$ and PM$_{2.5}$.

Conclusion

The article did provide a comparative analysis based on the latest available data about the effects of COVID-19 on air pollution in ten selected EU cities with high population and economic activity in 2020. With such a comparative approach and in spite of the limitations mentioned in the methodology, we aimed to illuminate and explain the variations in air pollution levels in a dramatic year featured by the imposition of two lockdowns and a generally stunted economy. What we can conclude from the above is that, first, there has been an overall reduction in average concentrations of the three pollutants but these reductions vary significantly among them. Second, the effect of lockdown measures in the decrease of NO$_2$ average concentrations appears to be important, but not that much with regards to the other two (PM$_{2.5}$ and PM$_{10}$). To some extent, it could be argued that their impact may be overstated. Third, reduced consumption of fossil fuels, road transport, lower economic output, and industrial activity constitute the main reasons for the overall decline in air pollution in our cases. Fourth, it is evidenced that the decline in emissions has not been steady and continuous particularly for the particulate matter (PM$_{2.5}$ and PM$_{10}$). Fifth, despite the significant decline in air pollution, a strong tendency to return to pre-pandemic levels based on the increasing average concentrations

towards the end of 2020 cannot be ignored. In a sense, this is a clear indication that the full opening of the economy and resume of various activities post-pandemic will reverse this picture and some of the silver linings that emerged during this period would be seriously compromised if no coordinated action is taken. While the numbers speak for themselves, some useful lessons can be drawn about possible improvements in the aftermath of the pandemic. Knowingly that the economic and social challenges will overwhelm the government agenda, a more targeted approach would be required. Our suggestions for improving air quality in urban centers and polluted areas would include wider use of technology to reduce unnecessary traveling, the development of an advanced urban transportation system, the phasing out of combustion engines in tandem with a provision of economic and fiscal incentives for the use of electric vehicles, further decoupling from fossil fuels and increased use of renewables to drive down energy costs for the industry. Considering the needs of the contemporary economy and citizens post-pandemic these suggestions could be seen as a leap forward to green growth and the transition to a carbon-free economy.

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Topic 6

Life-Long Learning, Educational Policies and Human Capital

New Methodological Approaches to Review Governance and Financing Arrangements in Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Skill Systems: A Data Collection Tool (DCT) 4.0 for Facilitating Self-Assessment Processes[1]

J. Manuel Galvin Arribas[2]

Abstract

The European Training Foundation (ETF) is more than aware that effective -good multilevel- governance arrangements in Vocational Education and Training (VET)-and Skill policies-is key for having sound skills in the labour market. The ETF developed new Data Collection tool 4.0 (DCT) to implement self-assessments working with partner countries (PCs) in governance and financing arrangements involving, at least, seven different categories of policy stakeholders (e.g. governmental actors-public servants-, social partners, private actors, key experts).

This -innovative- tool contains 65 indicators for self-assessing seven governance- and financing- functions including institutional coordination mechanisms (e.g. strategic and legislative framework, management of public-private partnerships, VET providers network, evaluation, research and data analysis provision, councils/committee's system etc.). The DCT 4.0 has been piloted in 5 ETF PCs (Albania, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Moldova and Uzbekistan). The results might inform further policy development driven by governance and financing arrangements/issues in ETF PCs (or perhaps, beyond). Further, this tool for policy analysis could inspire advisory processes focusing on how to support systemic reforms and/or carry out monitoring implementation-and/or policy review-, based on different types of governance and financing arrangements.

The pilot experience developed in COVID 19 times, confirmed that online facilitation is a good way to get good results. However, the human touch factor is essential to facilitate such self-assessment in more impactful way as it could be embedded in real time into current policy dialogue strategies in the countries.

Keywords: Vocational Education and Training (VET); Multilevel Governance and Financing skill arrangements; VET & Skills public policies; Monitoring and Assessment; Policy Making.

Introduction

Effective -good multilevel- governance arrangements in Vocational Education and Training (VET)- and Skill policies- are key to support in developing and using people's skills in the labour market. The success of vocational -skill- policies strongly relies on the operations- and performance- of a wide range of stakeholders, including governmental bodies, employers, employees (their associations/unions), education and training providers, representatives of civil society organisations and local communities (etc.).

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To manage their complex interactions, effective governance needs to be multilevel and agile. Multilevel governance involves creating a set of arrangements for making binding decisions that engage a multiplicity interdependent actors (public and private) at different levels of territorial aggregation through continuous negotiation, deliberation and implementation (Schmitter, Wiener, Diez, 2018). Agile governance enables policymakers to rapidly gather input from a variety of stakeholders to design cross-cutting policy solutions (World Economic Forum, 2019).

The recent COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the importance of having an adaptable, resilient VET & skills systems supported by strong-and smart- institutional leadership based on both on smart coordination of multiple stakeholders and agile approaches to help decision-making in skill policies indeed.

The European Training Foundation (ETF) is pioneering implementation of such approaches -for a decade - working together with its partner countries (PCs) and using, for example, Torino process as key recipient to look at VET governance and financing arrangements, as well as, focusing on specific policy analysis and advice in VET governance issues[3]. The ETF also works in partnerships with other European/ international organizations (e.g. Cedefop, ILO, OECD) sharing such approaches.

In this respect, the ETF implemented a project (2016 -2018) on VET Governance inventory. This tool is based on a widely acknowledged analytical framework- data collection tool (DCT) – developed by the ETF for a baseline inventory of VET governance arrangements in its PCs[4].

Lessons learned on this project informed on the need to move forward monitoring governance and financing arrangements in more structured -and regular- basis working with ETF PCs for having more accurate indications on the quality of institutional arrangements -settings- whilst promoting policy thinking to address implementation of systemic changes.

The way forward has been implemented through facilitation of self-assessments supported by new methodological framework (so-called Data Collection Tool 4.0). Such methodological tool has been piloted involving a variety of stakeholders and policy actors. (more than 100 stakeholders)- in five ETF PCs (Albania, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Moldova and Uzbekistan).

VET Governance Inventory Methodology -Data Collection Tool (DTC)-4.0

Goals, target group and data collection use

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[3] For more information on ETF Torino process and governance work please check: www.etf.europa.eu.

[4] See also, ETF -Galvin Arribas and Papadakis (2019): https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/governance-arrangements-vocational-education-and-training .

Considering previous background, the main goal of ETF VET governance inventory -DCT- 4.0 is facilitating (self) assessments in ETF PCs focusing on governance and financing arrangement policy issues[5]. Such objective has been strategically managed to build expertise -and awareness- across stakeholders' communities in the five countries. Thus, analytical and advisory capacities are at heart of the self- assessments in order to promote further policy dialogue- using results/findings- for focusing on dialogue around needed reforms and modalities for implementing policies.

All this has been done engaging different categories of policy stakeholders to conduct country self-assessments. At least, a minimum of 7 different type of stakeholder's has been involved/engaged:

- Key Ministry or Agency in charge of VET skills policies.
- Key Ministry participating and/or financing VET and/or Skill policy making.
- Key Employers organisation participating in VET and/or Skills policy making.
- Key representative of relevant national Trade Union organisation
- Key representative of National and/or sectoral skill councils/committees.
- Key representative of Regional and/or local departments/bodies dealing with VET and/or Skills policy development.
- Key experts on VET & Skills working on and/or with leading institutions.

Other policy actors (e.g. VET providers, civil society representatives, policy advisors etc.) might be also involved in the self- assessments. This depends on institutional arrangements linked to constellation of policy actors within country contexts.

The collected data could be used to produce VET governance country profiles and research reports delivering conclusions and policy recommendations to support moving forward policy agendas in the countries and using governance and financing arrangements as drivers for systemic reforms.

Methodological approach

The methodological approach for analysing and assessing governance and financing arrangements working with country stakeholders distinguishes seven core functions to focus on:

A. Formulation -and implementation- of overall policy framework- including strategic policy tools-.

B. Provision of legal, normative and/or regulatory framework.

C. Management of VET-& skills- provider network.

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[5] This analytical framework prepared for ETF PCs could inspire to work with other countries worldwide. The author acknowledges inputs of ETF experts (Vincent Mc Bride, Margareta Nikolovska, Stylianos Karagianis and Siria Taurelli).

D. Operationalization, alignment and coordination of financial arrangements.

E. Management of public-private partnerships for VET & Skills development

F. Monitoring, evaluation and review of VET & Skills policies. This also include Research & Development.

G. Management of Information Systems (MIS). This also includes Data and Statistical provision-

In addition, the methodical framework presented below includes a set of indicators (see section H) addressing institutional-oriented coordination mechanisms (e.g. performance of VET/ skill councils, committees, agencies; inter-ministerial cooperation etc.), whilst proposing some other indicators to self- assessing roles/functions of sub-national level levels (regional/local).

Overall, the conceptual foundations linked to main functions and thematic domains/issues in the framework, has been translated into process indicators. From a policy research perspective, these can be explained as follows:

- How different VET & skills coordination mechanisms (legislative, institutional, public-private/financial and knowledge oriented) (Galvin Arribas, 2016) are in place-or not- for making systems work in efficient and effective manner, whilst supporting relevant policy reforms.

- How strengthening dialogue, cooperation and coordination across all governmental stakeholders (ministries, agencies, public bodies, etc.) is being developed, in the policy making of VET & Skills policies within LLL perspective.

- How involvement of the right mix and balance of non-state stakeholders (social partners, NGOs, employers etc.) is effectively operating, in cooperation with public stakeholders to support VET & Skills policies for system development.

- How coordination of financing arrangements is aligned to support implementation of adequate and sustainable financial policy mechanisms (public and private) for funding VET & Skills policies and systems.

The matrix should be managed as a questionnaire. This has 65 process indicators for self- assessing effectiveness/efficiency of stakeholder's performance in the rulemaking processes. After each section, the framework also includes questions for collecting qualitative information from informants to support wrapping up scorings. The questionnaire should include a background section to classify sociodemographic data of informants.

TABLE 1. OVERALL PLANNING, MANAGEMENT & FINANCING of VET & SKILLS: -SELF- ASSESEMENT OF CORE FUNCTIONS		
VET & SKILLS GOVERNANCE FUNCTIONS	**INDICATORS** PLEASE, ASSES IN NEXT COLUMN YOUR DEGREE OF AGREEMENT WITH FOLLOWING INDICATORS REGARDING GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS, PERFORMANCE,OPERATIONS, INSTITUTIONAL SETTINGS (etc.)	(1) Strongly Agree (2) Agree (3) Neither Agree nor Disagree (4) Disagree (5) Strongly Disagree (6) Do not know/ Not Applicable
A Formulate and implement VET & skills national policy framework (goals, strategies, plans, etc.)	• (A.1) *The national policy for vocational education and training (VET) -and skills- has been developed involving both state and non-state stakeholders.* • (A.2) *The policy for VET combines long term objectives and short-term targets.* • (A.3) *The policy can be updated to include new developments in both initial training for young people and continuing training for adults.* • (A.4) *The national policy for vocational education has a multiyear perspective.* • (A.5) *Cooperation and coordination between national and sub-national (regional, local) public departments and agencies are effective.* • (A.6) *Cooperation between government and non-government organisations (including social partners) is transparent and effective.*	(1)…(2)…(3)...(4)…(5)...(6)
A. Qualitative Assessment by interviewee ▪ Overall, *do you think that current public administration practices allow good multi-level cooperation, flexible, agile as well as -less formal- way of managing policy processes on VET & Skill policies? How credible and effective are VET -and skills- strategies?* Please, outline your reasons for the scores that you provided. Assessment of the interviewer of the questions in this section: ▪ Were the question clear to the interviewee. ▪ Were there parts of section that the interviewee did not understand. ▪ Any specific changes that you would recommend to the questions in this section.		
B. Provision of legal/ regulatory/ normative framework for VET and Skills	• (B.1) *Legal framework for VET aims to meet the expectations of both public and private stakeholders.* • (B.2) *There is a good understanding on the legal framework for VET by all stakeholders which facilitates policy implementation.* • (B.3) *The legal framework responds to the needs of women.* • (B.4) *The legal framework support lifelong learning (LLL), not only initial VET (I-VET).*	(1)…(2)…(3)….(4)…(5)…(6)

	• (B.5) *It is common practice in the country to involve VET stakeholders in the updating of regulations and norms.*	
B. Qualitative Assessment by interviewee		
• Overall, *do you think that the current legal framework is prepared for facing challenges of VET & Skills in XXI Century within LLL perspective*? (e.g. relevant Qualifications, Work Based Learning -WBL-, digitalization of economy and leaning processes, regulating integration of innovation & research, etc.) Please, outline your reasons for the scores that you provided. Assessment of the interviewer of the questions in this section: • Were the question clear to the interviewee. • Were there parts of section that the interviewee did not understand. • Any specific changes that you would recommend to the questions in this section.		
C. Management of VET provider networks.	• (C.1) *VET providers are accessible to users, such as students, parents, and employers (etc.).* • (C.2) *The network of VET providers is optimal and based on clear governance structure.* • (C.3) *A Quality Assurance (Q.A) policy is in place across, both system and provider levels* • (C.4) *Measuring quality –internal and external –is undertaken to support the performance of VET provider.* • (C.5) *VET schools are able to make decisions on curriculum and teaching -and innovation- practices.* • (C.6) *VET School financial autonomy is fair enough to support effective and efficient provider operations and partnerships with industry, employers, civil society (etc.).* • (C.7) *VET schools are accountable for the decisions they make.* • (C.8) *Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) exist in the country and, overall, these institutions meet stakeholder expectations.* • (C.9) *Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) are partnership -based institutions (public-private, university and research, etc.), which are well resourced in terms of both financial and human capacities.*	**(1)…(2)…(3)…(4)…(5)...(6)**
C. Qualitative Assessment by interviewee		
• Overall, *do you think that the VET provider network functions effectively*? *Is VET network provision and composition supporting sustainable access to VET*? Please, outline your reasons for the scores that you provided above. Assessment of the interviewer of the questions in this section: • Were the question clear to the interviewee. • Were there parts of section that the interviewee did not understand. • Any specific changes that you would recommend to the questions in this section.		

D. Financial arrangements (including budgeting, mobilization & allocation processes)	(D.1) *The budget setting process for VET & Skills development is driven by good dialogue among key ministries.* (D.2) *Budget planning is targeted to long-term strategic goals and challenges* (D.3) *Allocation of financial resources is based on criteria following clear and transparent rules.* (D.4) *Funding mechanisms are well designed in terms of the objectives of budget.* (D.5) *Mechanism in place for mobilization of additional funding resources as required to meet needs of VET & Skills stakeholders.* (D.6) *The need for equity of outcomes is taken into account in decisions about the distribution of funding.* (D.7) *The sources of financing include both public and private sources.* (D.8) *Incentives for employer's participation are in place and adequate to support VET & Skills financing policies.* (D.9) *Employer's financial and/or fiscal incentives are effective and transparent.*	**(1)…(2)...(3)…(4)...(5)...(6)**

D. **Qualitative Assessment by interviewee**
- Overall, *do you think public VET and skills are well resourced*? A*re fiscal resources available and coordinated for matching the current needs in terms of financing of VET & Skills systems*? Please outline your reasons for the scores that you provided above.

Assessment of the interviewer of the questions in this section:
- Were the question clear to the interviewee
- Were there parts of section that the interviewee did not understand
- Any specific changes that you would recommend to the questions in this section

E. Management of public–private partnerships (PPPs) for VET & Skills provision.	(E.1) *PPPs in VET & Skills are supported by relevant legislation.* (E.2) *Fiscal arrangements are adequate for formation and implementation of PPPs.* (E.3) *Social Dialogue plays an effective role at national and, in concrete, sectoral levels for VET & Skills policy formation and implementation.* (E.4) *Financial and non-financial incentives motivate employer's participation in VET & Skill policy development.* (E.5) *Social Partners & Employers cooperation with VET schools is structured and effective, for instance, for having sound Work Based Learning -WBL- policies and practices.*	**(1)…(2)...(3)...(4)...(5)...(6)**

E. **Qualitative Assessment by interviewee**
- Overall, *what do you think of the potential for public private partnerships in your country*? Please outline your reasons for the scores that you provided above.

Assessment of the interviewer of the questions in this section:
- Were the question clear to the interviewee

- Were there parts of section that the interviewee did not understand
- Any specific changes that you would recommend to the questions in this section

F. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review of VET & Skills policies.	• (F.1) *There is a recognised- and sound- monitoring and research system.* • (F.2) *Monitoring is used to support evaluations -and policy review- in the country.* • (F.3) *Different type of evaluations (e.g. on different policies such as qualifications, school operations, occupations, adult learning etc.) are conducted to inform VET policy implementation.* • (F.4) *Evaluation and reviews of VET & Skills policies, involve the participation of different stakeholders.* • (F.5) *Research, development and innovation are used to support VET & Skills policy development.*	**(1)…(2)...(3)…(4)...(5)...(6)**

F. Qualitative Assessment by interviewee
- Overall, *do you think that research, development and innovation functions support country to adapt to changes and preparing the future of VET & Skills within LLL perspective?* Please outline your reasons for the scores that you provided above.

Assessment of the interviewer of the questions in this section:
- Were the question clear to the interviewee
- Were there parts of section that the interviewee did not understand
- Any specific changes that you would recommend to the questions in this section

G. Management of Information Systems (MIS) & Statistical provision to support policy making	• (G.1) *Management Information Systems (MIS) are used to collect data to support planning and decision-making processes.* • (G.2) *Information systems are used to improve governance decisions and reducing uncertainties, for example, for adopting policy options on using of skills for employment/labour market purposes.* • (G.3) *Management Information Systems have been designed and upgraded involving different type of VET & Skills stakeholders.* • (G.4) *Overall, data produced by information management systems are public accessible to VET & Skills stakeholders and citizens.*	**(1)…(2)...(3)…(4)…(5)...(6)**

G. Qualitative Assessment by interviewee
Overall, *how far do you think that data is used in the planning and decision-making processes for VET and skills development?* Please outline your reasons for the scores that you provided above.
Assessment of the interviewer of the questions in this section:
- Were the question clear to the interviewee.
- Were there parts of section that the interviewee did not understand
- Any specific changes that you would recommend to the questions in this section

TABLE 2. SELF ASSESMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL COORDINATION MECHANISMS FOR VET & SKILLS POLICY MAKING		
TYPE OF INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISM	**INDICATOR** **PLEASE, ASSES IN NEXT COLUMN YOUR DEGREE OF AGREEMENT WITH FOLLOWING INDICATORS REGARDING GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS, PERFORMANCE,OPERATIONS, INSTITUTIONAL SETTINGS (etc.)**	**(1) Strongly Agree** **(2) Agree** **(3) Neither Agree nor Disagree** **(4) Disagree** **(5) Strongly Disagree** **(6) Do not know/ Not Applicable**
H. National VET/Skills Councils	• (H.1) *National Council (NC) for VET exists and, overall, outcomes meet stakeholder expectations.* • (H.2) *The NC composition represents key VET & Skills stakeholders at national level.* • (H.3) *The NC meets on regular and effective manner in the course of the year coordinating relevant VET & Skill policy agendas.* • (H.4) *Advice/feedback processes delivered by the NC is distributed to stakeholders in systematic and transparent way.*	**(1)…(2)...(3)…(4)…(5)...(6)**
A. Qualitative Assessment by interviewee • Do you think there is scope for more capacity development actions to improve the performance of national council operations? Please outline your reasons for the scores that you provided above Assessment of the interviewer of the questions in this section: • Were the question clear to the interviewee • Were there parts of section that the interviewee did not understand • Any specific changes that you would recommend to the questions in this section		
I. Sectoral VET/Skills Councils/ Committees	• (I.1) *The Sector Councils /Committees (SSCs) exist and, overall, meet stakeholder expectations.* • (I.2) *SSCs composition represents key sectoral VET & Skills stakeholders.* • (I.3) *The SCs meet on regular and effective manner in the course of the year and they have proper resources to deploy mandate.* • (I.4) *SCs sectors are the most appropriate ones to contribute on VET & Skills and economic development.* • (I.5) *SCs have sub-committees to address specific issues in different VET & Skills policy areas.* • (I.6) *The results of the SSC add value to VET and skills policy development.* • (I.7) *Advice/feedback processes delivered by the SSCs is effective and distributed to*	**(1)…(2)...(3)…(4)…(5)...(6)**

	right stakeholders.	
B. Qualitative Assessment by interviewee ▪ *Do you think there is scope for more capacity development actions to improve the performance of sector councils*? Please outline your reasons for the scores that you provided above. Assessment of the interviewer of the questions in this section: ▪ Were the question clear to the interviewee ▪ Were there parts of section that the interviewee did not understand ▪ Any specific changes that you would recommend to the questions in this section		
J. Regional/ Subnational VET & Skills -Authorities (e.g. Councils)	▪ (J.1) *The Regional/local level is well represented and contributes to the role of VET & Skills socioeconomic and regional development.* ▪ (J.2) *The regional / local levels participate on formation and implementation of local partnerships with employers and other key actors.* ▪ (J.3) *Overall, regional/local levels should have more responsibilities in supporting national level on VET & Skills policies.* ▪ (J.4) *Regional/ local level cooperate with VET schools and this add value to performance of VET institutions.* ▪ (J.5) *The Regional Council (RC) composition (if this exists) operates under clear governance structure.*	(1)…(2)...(3)…(4)…(5)...(6)
C. Qualitative Assessment by interviewee ▪ Overall, *do you think there is a good level of delegated policies and competences to regional and/or local authorities in the country*? Please outline your reasons for the scores that you provided above Assessment of the interviewer of the questions in this section: ▪ Were the question clear to the interviewee ▪ Were there parts of section that the interviewee did not understand ▪ Any specific changes that you would recommend to the questions in this section		
K. National VET Agencies and/or other type of executive and supervisory bodies.	▪ (K.1) *The national agency- executive/supervisory body- on VET/Qualifications/Quality (etc.) executes national policies in transparent and accountable manner.* ▪ (K.2) *There is a recognised level of expertise and good outcomes provided by National Agency to support VET & Skills policy development/implementation, evaluation and review (etc.).* ▪ (K.3) *Overall, governing board representation in the national agency is composed by key VET & Skills stakeholders.*	(1)…(2)...(3)…(4)…(5)...(6)
D. Qualitative Assessment by interviewee ▪ *Do you think there is scope for more capacity development actions to improve the performance of national agency?* Please outline your reasons for the scores that you provided above Assessment of the interviewer of the questions in this section: ▪ Were the question clear to the interviewee. ▪ Were there parts of section that the interviewee did not understand ▪ Any specific changes that you would recommend to the questions in this section		

L. Inter-Ministerial Working Cooperation/ Coordination	▪ (L.1) *There is effective cooperation among different Ministries involved on shaping and financing VET & Skills policies.* ▪ (L.2) *There are inter-ministerial cooperation mechanisms (e.g. governmental committees, thematic sub-committees etc.) to support VET & Skills policy dialogue and coordination.* ▪ (L.3) *VET providers and stakeholders believe there is effective cooperation between different Ministries involved in VET & Skills policies.*	(1)…(2)...(3)…(4)…(5)...(6)

E. **Qualitative Assessment by interviewee**
- Overall, *do you think there is scope for more cooperation and interaction among different ministries with responsibilities on VET & Skill policies?* Please, outline your reasons for the scores that you provided above

Assessment of the interviewer of the questions in this section
- Were the question clear to the interviewee
- Were there parts of section that the interviewee did not understand
- Any specific changes that you would recommend to the questions in this section

Conclusions

Overall, DCT 4.0 is a new tool for supporting self-assessments on VET and skills governance and financing among stakeholder's community in ETF PCs. The ETF methodology should be seeing as an innovative development which would need to be further discussed and disseminated involving countries and international community (organisations/partners, donors). Targeting participation of, at least, seven type of stakeholders is a core element for such innovative approach.

Following feedbacks received from informants on the use of the tool in 5 ETF PCs (Albania, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Moldova and Uzbekistan), the DCT 4.0 has been found extremely useful to monitor and assess gaps in governance and financing arrangements.

Policy makers, practitioners and research communities might benefit using and adapting tool to different contexts (fit for purpose). The tool might inspire further policy analysis, monitoring and dialogue (e.g. identify policy gaps, development of monitor strategic/evidence -based frameworks, challenging institutional performance/ policy roles etc.).

However, key element is to focus on data analysis options addressing different type of stakeholders. This is because highest levels of public servants (governmental actors) tend to be more optimistic self-assessing proposed indicators, whereas non -state stakeholders (e.g. social partners, employers) could hold more critical opinions on VET & Skills system – and policies- operations/governance arrangements.

Thus, facilitation processes of DCT 4.0 is crucial at this stage. In COVID 19 times, self-assessments were conducted successfully on-line. Nevertheless, on-site self-assessments (face to face bilaterally and/or focus groups) might build better ground to profit human touch as objectivity -and timely- factors, as well as to promote strategically sound policy dialogue within implementation process of the methodological tool.

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Topic 7

Social Movements, Social & Human Rights, Activism and Law

Crisis of the Rule of Law in the EU through the Case Law of the ECJ: The Case of Poland[1]

Kassiani Oikonomou[2]

Abstract

This article describes the rule of law crisis in Poland through the case law of the ECJ. In particular, the country in 2018 adopted the law on the Supreme Court, bringing about two changes; the reduction of the retirement age for judges and secondly, it gave the President of the Republic of Poland the discretion to extend the active judicial service of judges of the Supreme Court. This article concerns the case C-619/18 Commission v Republic of Poland, in which the Commission in 2018 pursuant to Article 258 TFEU appealed to the Court of Justice of the European Union, seeking to prove that this law violates the obligations of Article 19 (1) paragraph 47 TEU in conjunction with Article 47 of the Charter, with the Commission claiming that these provisions infringe both the principle of permanence and the principle of the independence of judges.

Keywords: rule of law crisis; Poland; EU; European Commission; ECJ; Article 19(1) TEU; Article 47 of the Charter; Article 258 TFEU.

Introduction

During the economic crisis in the EU, the rule of law crisis appeared in some of its Member States, such as Poland (2016), which violated this principle and the fundamental values of Art. 2 TEU, taking on a "systematic character". According to Art. 2 TEU, the EU is based on "the values of respect for the human dignity of liberty, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities" (Metaxas, 2017). As Chrysomallis (2019: 4) points out: The principle of the rule of law is paramount to the above-mentioned "constitutional foundations" - which constitutes the liberal value identity of the Union-obliging the Member States and the institutions to respect it during the performance of their duties. This respect is very important because it is an element of the EU decision-making process but also "generates" mutual trust between the Member States and between European citizens, on which the legal EU structure is based after the establishment of the AFSJ.

The EU has adopted the term rule of law backsliding (Koncewicz, 2018; Pech and Scheppele, 2017), to better describe this phenomenon, "of a global nature, the systematic weakening of constitutional checks and balances by a new generation of elected but authoritarian leaders (Kaczynski, Orban,)

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(Chrysomallis, 2019: 5; Scheppele, 2017). A term that shows the continuous slippage of some EU countries (Poland, Hungary, Romania) from the liberal and democratic model of governance-something that is a precondition for EU membership-in more anti-liberal forms of government (illiberalism). Pech and Scheppele (2018) aptly define the rule of law regression as: "the process through which elected public authorities deliberately implement governmental blueprints which aim to systematically weaken, annihilate or capture internal checks on power with the view of dismantling the liberal democratic state and entrenching the long-term rule of the dominant party."

According to Chrysomallis (2016; 2019: 5): A common feature of all these government plans for the weakening of the rule of law, which have manifested themselves in a number of Member States of the European Union in the last decade, are the interventions in the judiciary, with the aim of imposing restrictions on its independence as well as its impartiality. In addition, targets of equal importance are the system of judicial review and especially the constitutional courts, wherever such an institution exists.

Background

From 2017 onwards, with legislation that took place in Poland, the new Polish law on the Supreme Court (hereinafter the law on the Supreme Court), which entered into force on 3/4/18 concerned: the reduction of the retirement age of judges (from 70 to 65 years), who were appointed before 3/4/18, with the possibility of extension of the active judicial service of the judges of the particular court beyond the age of 65, provided that a declaration of desire for further performance of the duties is submitted by the judge concerned, accompanied by the submission of a certificate of good health of the defendant and the consent of the President of the Republic of Poland to the judges of the Supreme Court. Also, a very important element for the granting of this consent is that: (i) the President of the Republic of Poland was not bound by any criteria with this decision not to be subject to any judicial review and (ii) national measures gave the President of the Republic of Poland the discretion to extend the active judicial service of judges of the Supreme Court, thus violating the principle of judicial independence and, consequently, EU law.

Case Commission v Republic of Poland

Commission Actions

The Commission on 20/12/17 initiated the procedure of Art. 7 TEU against Poland also mentioned it to the Council to ascertain violation of the values set out in Article 2 TEU by Poland while at the

same time on 2/10/18 appeal to the ECJ according to the article. 258 TFEU for non-compliance of Poland with the obligations arising from Article. 19 (1) TEU and in conjunction with those of Article 47 of the Charter. The Commission has also filed a separate application for interim measures that they can be taken in accordance with Article 279 TFEU and Articles 160 (1) and 7 of the Rules of Procedure, pending a decision by the Court on the substance.

On 15/11/18 and in the context of the Commission's appeal, the President of the Court ordered Case C-619/18 to be expedited under Article 23A of the Statute of the Court   however, Poland has asked the Court to dismiss the Commission's action as unfounded.

The judgment of the Court

In its judgment on 24/6/19, the Court initially recalled that Union law is based on the fundamental assumption that Member States share common values as derived from Art. 2 TEU which they accept. Recognition which means the existence of mutual trust between the Member States but especially their courts as regards the recognition of these values which the Union upholds and "among which the principle of the rule of law is chosen", i.e. the observance of EU law.

Although the organization of justice, falls within the competence of the Member States, they themselves, in the exercise of that competence, must comply with their obligations under EU law. They are required to provide for legal remedies, as well as the means necessary to ensure effective judicial protection within the meaning of the Charter and in areas governed by EU law. Specifically, each Member State owes in accordance with Art. 19 (1) TEU "to ensure that bodies which are part of the 'courts' within the meaning of Union law, in the national system of legal remedies in areas governed by Union law, meet the requirements for effective judicial protection". To ensure that a court -the Supreme Court in this case- can provide this protection by ensuring the independence of the body, an independence is of the utmost importance.

The Court has repeatedly emphasized that the necessary freedom of judges from any external interference or pressure imposes certain guarantees in order to protect the persons entrusted with the judicial task, such as life tenure service. The Court's assessment of the first complaint represents the innovative part of the decision. The Court makes it clear that the principle of the equality of judges is not absolute and exceptions are allowed provided that they are based on legitimate and compelling reasons. Reasons which are subject to the principle of proportionality.

Finally, it defined the legal and imperative reasons, stating that: first, the measure must have a legitimate aim, second, it must be proportionate and "inasmuch as it is not such as to raise reasonable

doubt in the minds of individuals as to the imperviousness of the court concerned to external factors and its neutrality with respect to the interests before it".

Poland's arguments concerning the reduction of the retirement age for judges of this court to 65 were aimed at harmonizing this age with the general retirement age, which applies to all officials in Poland. With the explanatory memorandum of the draft law of the Supreme Court, the introduction of a new mechanism that will allow the President of the Republic of Poland to decide "at his discretion" to extend the active judicial service which was reduced by the above law but also the fact that this measure was applied to about 1/3 of the members of the current court (this includes the first President whose term guaranteed by the Constitution was shortened to 6 years) it is something that can raise reasonable doubts as to the real aims of this reform, insofar as it is neither "appropriate" for the attainment of Poland's aims nor proportionate . The Court also held that (the grounds for justification put forward by Poland) this measure of reduction of the retirement age is not justified by a legitimate aim, at the same time infringing the principle of the removability of judges, a principle which is inherent in their independence.

The Court also considered whether the extension procedure provides sufficient guarantees for the protection of the judiciary from political influence, as well as for the elimination of any doubts as to its independence and impartiality, emphasizing in this way the positive obligation of the Member States as it follows from Art. 19 TEU (Simonelli, 2019). Therefore, since the opinion of the National Judicial Council on the request for an extension are not reasoned and the body itself cannot be considered independent, the Court has concluded that: "the discretion held by the President of the Republic for the purposes of authorizing, twice and each time for a 3-year term, between the ages of 65 and 71, a judge of a national supreme court such as the Sąd Najwyższy (Supreme Court)". It was ruled that this power could give rise to reasonable doubts, especially among citizens, as regards in particular the impartiality of the judges concerned by external elements and their neutrality with regard to the interests of those before whom they may be challenged.

Conclusions

This case underscored the Court's clear position on the question of the Union principle, but also the role of the judge in European integration, making it increasingly important. The Court was called upon to reconsider its attitude towards national judicial systems in order to respond to the rule of law judgment brought before it. For the first time, it declared the incompatibility of a national legislative provision with EU law due to the violation of Art. 19 TEU, going even further in the judgment (Pech and Platon, 2019; Simonelli, 2019) of its decision in a previous case (ASJP).

Consolidating the conditions necessary to ensure judicial independence in accordance with Art. 19 (1) TEU, the Court referred to the conditions that national measures must meet in order not to affect the above principle which guarantees effective judicial protection. The Court (as in ASJP) also considered Art. 19 (1) TEU and not the application of Art. 47 of the Charter, clarifying here the "independent protection of judicial independence", and emphasizing the principle of equality of judges as a key factor in ensuring the independence of the judiciary.

The regression of the rule of law in Member States is a risk both at the political level where they are linked to "the weakening of the legitimacy of the Union's decision-making system by the participation of governments that do not respect its values" (Chrysomallis, 2019: 6; Kochenov and Bárd, 2018: 10-11, 13-17, 19-21, 24-26) and at the legal level for the evolution of European integration, of the EU legal order. Also, a matter of particular importance is the Member States' respect of the rule of law, because it "generates" mutual trust between the Member States and between European citizens where the legal structure of the Union is based after the establishment of the AFSJ, which is based on the principle of mutual recognition of judicial decisions.

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Limitations to the Right to Freedom of Assembly in Poland during the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Case of Women's Strike[1,2]

Przemysław Osiewicz[3]

Abstract

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic poses a threat not only to public health and human life, but also to civil rights and freedoms. Such a claim applies not only to authoritarian states, but also to democratic political structures. Significant restrictions on civil liberties were introduced under the pretext of ensuring security in at least several member states of the European Union. One of them is Poland. The main purpose of this paper is to examine causes, developments, and consequences of the limitations to the right to freedom of assembly in Poland influencing the activities of the social protest movement Women's Strike (Strajk Kobiet) during the ongoing pandemic. The text concludes recommendations both for the Women's Strike social movement and for the government. Their implementation should reduce the current tensions in Poland and enable the opening of constructive social dialogue.

Key words: neo-militant democracy; the right to freedom of assembly; Poland; COVID-19; protests; Women's Strike; contention; contentious politics; protest movement; anti-democratic measures.

Introduction

In Loewenstein's opinion, the primary sources of threat from anti-democratic forces are connected with the democratic ethos. These are tolerance, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, the right to peaceful assembly, free elections and equality (Loewenstein, 1939). All of the above-mentioned elements could be violated to weaken a democratic regime by its political enemies. Such a process, which took place in Europe in the 1930s, is also noticeable in the second decade of the twenty-first century (Rak, 2020a). The rise of populism and the radical right reshaped the political systems in

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some European states. For this reason, a number of scholars focus on various aspects of the so-called neo-militant democracies (Rak, 2020b; Rijpkema, 2018; Teitel, 2007).

Civil rights and liberties have been gradually limited in Poland since 2015. The ruling party started introducing elements of military democracy with significant changes in the judiciary system, which in turn opened the way to changes concerning important ideological issues, including abortion regulations. The main purpose of this paper is to examine causes, developments, and consequences of the limitations to the right to freedom of assembly in Poland influencing the activities of the social protest movement Women's Strike (Strajk Kobiet) during the ongoing pandemic.

Freedom of assembly: the Polish legislation before the pandemic

After the fall of communism in Poland, the parliament adopted the Law on Assemblies (Act of 1990). Freedom of assembly was later guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 1997. In 2012, the Polish parliament adopted law amending the Law on Assemblies of 1990 (Law amending, 2012), yet these amendments were rather of technical and procedural nature.

More significant changes were introduced after the electoral victory of the Law and Justice party (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość). In 2016, the Polish parliament adopted a set of amendments to the Law on Assemblies which enabled state authorities to prohibit assemblies if they coincided with the so-called cyclical or recurrent assemblies. Such assemblies were defined as public gatherings organized by the same entity at the same location at least four times a year or annually, for example, on national holidays. The legal changes favoured social gatherings connected with the ruling party. The Law and Justice party, for instance, was organising the so-called Smolensk monthly – a public gathering commemorating President Lech Kaczynski and other victims of the 2010 presidential plane crash. The 2016 amendments were used against the main opposition political parties and social movements like the Citizens of Poland (Obywatele RP) and the Committee for the Defence of Democracy (Komitet Obrony Demokracji) that were attempting to block these gatherings, because the Smolensk monthly was registered as a cyclical gathering.

Emergency measures introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic

Although the ruling party had previously attempted to impose limitations to freedom of assembly after 2015, it was the COVID-19 pandemic that provided them with the best opportunity to do so without any public debate. The Act of 2 March 2020 on special solutions related to preventing, counteracting and combating COVID-19 was approved by 416 out of 460 members of the lower house of parliament. All public assemblies could have been forbidden due to the pandemic threat.

The health minister declared a state of epidemic emergency in Poland on 12 March 2020. All mass public gatherings and assemblies were banned excluding those held by the state authorities because the latter did not meet the legal definitional criteria for the banned public assemblies. What is more, on 24 March 2020 the government introduced severe constraints on freedom of movement. Citizens were allowed to leave their houses only in duly justified circumstances, for instance, to go to work or buy food. The police began controlling pedestrians and drivers in order to verify whether their movement was justified or not.

The government claimed that the main objective was to protect the safety of citizens. In the opinion of the main opposition political parties, namely Civic Coalition, the Polish Peoples' Party, and the Left; the government restricted freedom of movement and freedom of assembly in an unconstitutional manner. Instead of introducing a state of emergency on the basis of the 1997 Constitution, the government introduced significant limitations of civic freedoms under the ordinary law. If a state of emergency had been declared, the presidential elections would have had to be postponed. Such a scenario, however, was not in the political interest of President Andrzej Duda and the Law and Justice party. Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki stated that the elections could be held, despite the pandemic threat. As a consequence, the liberties were taken without declaring the state of emergency that would justify such extraordinary measures. Citizens, who were leaving their houses for purposes other than "meeting the necessary needs of everyday life", risked high fines and other kind of repercussions, including proceedings in court and detention. Protesting was not classified as a legitimate need.

Women's Strike as an expression of opposition to neo-militant democracy

Women's Strike is a Polish protest movement which was founded in 2016. It all started with setting up a Facebook profile. The group's foundation was a response to the rejection by parliament of the civil project to liberalize the abortion law. It is an informal, non-party initiative of women, both non-affiliated and belonging to various women's organizations (*Strajk kobiet*, 2020). The main goal of Women's Strike is to promote the respect for women's rights and interests. The movement began with massive anti-government protests, especially with the organization of the so-called Black Monday. The protests took place in 143 cities in Poland, and a total of over one hundred thousand demonstrators took part in them (Cocotas, 2017). In the Women's Strike, the principle of full autonomy of the local strike groups applies. This means that in the case of joint action, they have a favourable minimum, namely a common name, slogan, and basis for visual identification as well as formal and material support. The scheme and content of the activities of individual local groups is

free from any interference. The group became particularly active in the spring of 2020, when the ruling party began preparations for significant changes in the abortion law in the initial stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the activists of the movement, the government was trying to use lockdown for political purposes and carry out unpopular, controversial changes (Walker, 2020).

Measures applied to block protests of Women's Strike

Women's Strike engaged in defending women's rights. During the pandemic, the ruling party initiated a legislative procedure aimed at tightening the already restrictive abortion laws. The draft law on the ban on abortion was presented in the parliament and was committed on 16 April 2020. According to Women's Strike, the protest movement formed during the 2016 Black Monday strike, the government tried to use the lockdown to introduce the highly controversial amendments in order to avoid mass protests.

On 14 April 2020 the protesters were driving their cars with posters and banners in the major Polish cities. They also stood in the streets observing social distancing or were silently queuing and holding posters in front of grocery shops. Such measures were legal and did not constitute violations of the sanitary regulations. Some women held umbrellas – a clear reference to the mass protests of 2016 when more than 100 thousand protesters had protested against abortion ban (Center for Reproductive Rights, 2016). Some supporters of Women's Strike put up posters and banners in windows of their apartments, on balconies, behind cars' windows, and in other visible places. The protest's organizers did their best to avoid potential repercussions for their supporters, especially high fines and detention. For this reason, they applied protest measures which were in line with the sanitary law and other limitations. The police, however, checked out the IDs of 24 protesters. Four of them were fined and six cases were referred to court. In addition, all persons were notified to sanitary inspectors who could impose much higher fines for alleged violations of the sanitary regulations. According to the police officials, the protesters were fined either for blocking traffic or for unjustified movement in the times of pandemic. Yet the actions undertaken by the police were unconstitutional and violated the right to freedom of assembly, because the state of emergency had not been declared (Malecki, 2020).

However, mass protests were yet to come. On 22 October 2020, the Constitutional Court issued a ruling that outlawed terminations on the grounds of severe health defects (*Poland abortion*, 2020). The Tribunal's decision caused a lot of controversy and led to a sudden outbreak of social discontent and mass protests. The Women's Strike thus became overnight the leading protest movement around which supporters of the maintenance of the abortion compromise or liberalization of the abortion law, representing various social groups. In hundreds of Polish cities and towns, thousands of people took

to the streets to manifest their opposition to introducing such significant changes. However, the situation of the protesters was complicated by the fact that the epidemic situation in Poland was deteriorating at the same time. The government and law enforcement used the sanitary restrictions in force to stifle protests. The police checked participants' identity documents, detained them, and used direct coercion measures. Some of the interventions were characterized by brutality, which was exceptional for Polish conditions, including beatings of demonstrators by ununiformed officers from anti-terrorist units (Beswick, 2020).

Conclusions and recommendations

Restrictions on the freedom of assembly cause a number of controversies in Poland. Opposition members interpret the introduced epidemic restrictions as an excuse to limit civil liberties and prevent protests against government policy. The decision of the Constitutional Tribunal, which tightened the applicable abortion law, only reassured them that the ruling party was using the pandemic to achieve its political goals. On the other hand, the approach of the police to the protesting members and supporters of the Women's Strike only confirmed that the government is not open to dialogue and seeking compromise.

The above facts confirm that there is a need for a new approach. The implementation of the recommendations below may help to bring closer positions of both sides. The first recommendation concerns initiating a social dialogue between representatives of pro-abortion and anti-abortion groups, as well as the most important political parties. The second recommendation concerns the suspension of the possibility of publishing the tribunal's judgment in the official journal until a compromise solution is found. The third recommendation concerns the refraining of the police from using excessive security measures such as tear gas and police battons, and direct coercive measures such as mass detention of protesters. The fourth recommendation concerns the temporary suspension of protests by the Women's Strike until a compromise is reached, especially due to the difficult epidemic situation. The fifth recommendation is about the lifting of double standards with regard to organized protests. The government cannot suppress the protests of the Women's Strike under the pretext of an epidemic threat, and at the same time tolerate mass demonstrations organized by sympathetic groups and organizations.

Implementation of the above recommendations will reduce social tensions and create favourable conditions for initiating and continuing constructive dialogue between the parties. The solutions could also be applied in other countries in the event of similar social tensions.

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Policy on Public Assemblies in Times of Crisis: Recommendations Concerning the Strategy of Militant Democracy[1,2]

Kamila Rezmer-Płotka[3]

Abstract

The main purpose of the article is to present the activities undertaken by decision-making centres and public administration entities in Poland in relation to protests against the restriction of abortion law. These protests took place during the second wave of the pandemic and continue. It all started with the judgment of the Constitutional Court, which decided to restrict abortion law in Poland, so far there was a so-called abortion compromise, which allowed abortions to be carried out in three specific cases. The verdict met with resistance from a large part of society and triggered protests that turned into large-scale public gatherings, despite the coronavirus pandemic. During this period assemblies were reduced or banned completely, which may be one symptom of using by the government the strategy of militant democracy. The study's focus is primarily on the activities taken by decision-making centers with regard to protesters. The analysis makes it possible to explain the ways and causes of protests and public gatherings held despite the restrictions introduced to prevent the spread of the virus. On this basis, it introduces recommendations to the government to restore stability in the state and end the protests.

Keywords: freedom of public gatherings; militant democracy; coronavirus pandemic; decision-making; Poland; contentious politics; contentious performances; protests.

Introduction

The issue of abortion in Poland was regulated on the basis of the Law of 1993, the so-called abortion compromise that allows abortion to be carried out in three clearly defined cases. These cases are:

1) pregnancy which poses a risk to health or life of the woman;

2) a high likelihood irreversible foetal impairment or an incurable life-threatening disease;

3) suspicion that pregnancy is the result of a criminal act e.g., rape (Act of 7 January 1993).

Despite the existence of this regulation, several attempts have already been made in Poland to amend the law, usually to restrict it. The first serious attempt took place in 2016 by referring to the work of

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the citizens' committee the draft law „Stop abortion" (Print No. 784, 19 August 2016), as well as the rejection by the Sejm of the draft law "Save women" (Print No. 830, 9 September 2016). Then there was the so-called black protest or umbrella protest. During the protest, mainly women, but also some men dressed in black and holding umbrellas protested on the streets of Polish cities. That day they usually took a day off at work or protested in the workplace. Another re-initiation of legislative process on citizen's extremely bioconservative draft of bill on abortion took place during the first wave of pandemic in Poland, but quite quickly no action was taken in this matter. The party's decision on further postponing the legislation was inconsistent with clearly declared interests of bioconservative activists who, perceiving abortion as the biggest evil that was worse than pandemic of virus, vastly criticized it.

However, the second wave of pandemic has emerged, and the subject of abortion has returned to public discourse along with the Constitutional Court's conclusion that a premise of severe and irreversible handicap or incurable life-threating illness is not constitutional. This decision triggered a wave of mass protests, despite the ongoing pandemic threat and the ban of public assembly. Moreover, it restricted freedom of assembly in one of the indicators of the militant democracy. The category first used by Karl Loewenstein in relation to the Weimar Republic (Loewenstein, 1937a; 1937b), to define a political regime in which parliament and the judiciary are equipped with legal means to restrict individual democratic freedoms in order to defend democracy against those who are considered its enemies (Loewenstein, 1937a: 418; Molier & Rijpkema, 2018). In Poland, the Constitutional Court issued a ruling that restricts the freedom of individual, in the name of political interests, which means that the enemies of the political regime are those who have accepted the compromise so far or sought to liberalise it in order to extend the freedom of individuals.

The analysis accounts for why Poles held anti-government assemblies despite the restrictions introduced in connection with the spread of the virus and what activities have been taken to suppress protests. On this basis, it makes recommendations to the government to restore stability in the state and end the protests.

Protests against the restriction of abortion law

The protests against restricting abortion law initially took a symbolic form, i.e., images and photos were posted on social media with an overlay depicting, for example, a red lightning and the words "hell of a women." Women also painted the symbol of lightning with red lipstick on their hands or windows. As part of the protest, they also dressed in black and painted their lips in red. Spontaneous protests began to turn into an organized women's protest movement with Maria Lempart as leader.

The main demands in addition to opposing the decision of the Constitutional Court included: calls for the resignation of the government, respect for human rights, a secular state, legal abortion and sex education, independent courts.

The protest spread across Poland and the local assemblies began to be organized. In many cities, women took to the streets and held marches during which their participants carried banners proclaiming slogans against the government and the abortion law change. The next step involved protests in churches across Polish cities; protesters walked in with banners or leaflets. They also blamed the Catholic Church for restricting abortion laws. Indeed, it plays an important role in the state and is often equated with the electorate of the ruling party. Protesters also hung hangers (a symbol of illegal abortion), distinctive lightning posters on the doors of temples, and began organizing gatherings in the residences of important hierarchs of the Catholic Church. Protesters also blocked the most important streets in the cities, as well as the entrances and exits from the Sejm building.

However, the most important protest took place on 30.10.2020 under the slogan "Everyone in Warsaw." Thousands of citizens marched through the streets of the state capital, chanting and shouting anti-government slogans and urging them not to respect the constitutional court's ruling. The march was organized in such a way that its last point was to reach the house of the president of the ruling party. Since then, there have been many more protests, but also other actions, e.g., on November 1, on the All Saints' Day, in front of the deputy prime minister's house a performance took place referring to the well-known Polish work "Dziady" by Adam Mickiewicz (naTemat, 2020a). In the window of one of the buildings actors recreated scenes from this art and played the roles of ghosts banished the president of the ruling party. Local protests continued, and were celebrated, in form of protest against the restricting of abortion law, 102 anniversary of the polish women's right to obtain electoral rights. This protest was the last significant one, although there is an announcement of further protests. Since the end of November, the first signs of demobilization can be observed, as the number of protests and the turnout have decreased significantly.

Activities of decisions-making centres and public administration entities in Poland against protesters

The activity undertaken by decisions-making centres and public administration entities in Poland against protesters can be divided into:

1) verbal condemnation, declarations;

2) activity and involvement of law enforcement services;

3) activity of opposition parties.

Within each distinct type of activity, conciliatory and antagonistic activities can be distinguished.

As part of the first type, i.e., oral activity in the context of conciliatory activities, the compromise proposed by the President to somewhat soften the position of the Constitutional Court can be distinguished, since the proposal was intended to reinstate a condition which has been declared unconstitutional, but excludes suspicion of, for example, Down syndrome (naTemat, 2020b). Further calls from Prime Minister to protest but at home via the internet due to the prevailing pandemic played a significant role in shaping social attitudes toward assemblies (Wprost.pl, 2020). The first type of antagonistic activity can be classified as the president of the ruling party's speech of 27 October 2020 urging the defence of churches or taking action against protesters (Polsatnews, 2020), which has led to the mobilisation of the so-called defenders of the church and nationalist militias. These activists have formed the so-called National Guard. The category of verbal persuasion also includes calls from ruling party politicians on consequences for those who supported the strike, such as teachers, lecturers and students (Business Insider, 2020).

As part of the second type, i.e., the activity and activism of law enforcement services, police provided activists with peaceful walking assistance and displayed the slogans "Girl, we are with you!" (Wyborcza, 2020). The use of excessive coercive measures by the police, such as telescopic sticks, pepper gas, detention and the IDs checking and checks, may fall into the category of antagonistic activity. Excessive use of force was also highlighted by the Ombudsman (PAP, 2020).

The third type of activity is that undertaken by opposition parties. As part of the conciliation activity, there were calls from opposition in the form of official positions that encouraged reflection on the issue of abortion in Poland and a return to the abortion compromise reached many years ago. It should be considered on their own, as some of them are antagonistic. It is also about peacefully participating in and supporting protesters and promoting their legal protection. Opposition parties and activities that are clearly non-conciliatory may be included in the category of antagonistic activities.

Due to the wide diversity of opposition parties, it should be taken into account that all statements, social media posts or field activities are very dispersed, heterogenous and individualized. It is much simpler to divide that oral activity with regard to the ruling party, which has a highly coherent discourse, although in the face of the crisis caused by protests and the issue of restricting abortion law, the first divisions within the party began to occur.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Discussion on the abortion compromise has been going on for many years in Poland, but since 2016 the discourse on this issue has been significantly exacerbated. Subsequent attempts at change ended with mass protests, up to the last ones that took place during the coronavirus pandemic. For this reason, protests have been called for several times, even by Prime Minister, and there have also been threats of a total ban on gatherings across the country. The study contributes to our understanding of contemporary militant democracy practice in Poland. In this case, the issue of abortion is rather an ideological matter and related to the dominant religion in Poland. The main reason for such large-scale protests was the constitutional court's decision to restrict on abortion provisions, but also concerns about the restriction of human rights and freedoms and possible further solutions, such as the inability to use prenatal testing. Activities of decisions-making centres and public administration entities in Poland concerning protesters can be divided into the following categories: verbal condemnation, declarations; activity and involvement of law enforcement services and activity of opposition parties, and within them individual activities can be conciliating or antagonistic.

The recommendations that can be proposed on the basis of the analysis are verbal condemnation, declarations, above all, softening of language, changing the political discourse and rhetoric used in it to be more conciliatory and seeking to preserve the *status quo* or changes that will be most acceptable to the majority of citizens. Governments should desist from antagonising different social groups against each other and show that are a community despite their differences, which connects a common historical heritage. At the level of activity and involvement of law enforcement services, the government should rebuke officers who abuse force in unjustified cases and draw consequences for them. It is also necessary to show citizens that anyone who attacks another person for no reason will not escape sanctions. Especially when one is armed and the other shows no signs of aggression and does not violate public order. The government should not involve law enforcement services in suppressing peaceful protests, which are one of the manifestations of civil society. At the last level, i.e., the activity of opposition parties would first of all be necessary to invite all representatives of the opposition to the talks and to reach a new compromise or to preserve the existing one. The government should start a constructive discussion with other parties and start to take into account at least some of their demands at a level acceptable to all parties and allowing for a policy of agreement. First of all, to take decisions that are important for the state on the international stage, its stability over internal divisions and programme differences, take action to rebuild the image abroad, primarily engage in community actions.

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What is the Practical Significance of the Relation between Gender Equality and Ecological Balance?[1]

Nagia (Panagiota) Kloukina [2]

Abstract

Nowadays it is indisputable that climate change is a global phenomenon. On the one hand, there have recently been ever-increasing efforts by the international non-governmental institutions (NGOs), including the European Union (EU), to combat climate change either through mitigation or adaptation methods or both. On the other hand, the whole "planet rescue package" is integrated within a "greener" capitalist system, from the governance of which the environmental damages actually originate as a result of the maximum possible capital accumulation at the expense of the weaker. Climate change is thus involved in a vicious circle and produces as well as maintains social discriminations. Gender inequality as a form of social discriminations is therefore involved in the same vicious circle of the neoliberal way of addressing societal problems. Recognizing the great spectrum of analyzing climate change policy within a political structure, namely capitalism, only the connection between the devastating dominance of the human over nature and the still existing marginalization of women in the modern era will be elaborated. The aim of this paper is therefore to outline and analyze the basic framework of the eco-feminist movement about the interrelated environmental degradation and the underestimation towards women, as the feminine gender symbolizes nature.

Keywords: ecology; feminism; eco-feminism; capitalism; gender inequalities; climate change.

Introduction

In 1960s John Lennon has been singing "woman is the negro of the world" in order to indicate a parallelism between the suppression due to different color or race and the one due to different gender. This artistic expression among others indicates that woman is confronted with gender discriminations contained in sovereignty dipoles, such as the dipoles between black and white, production and reproduction, human and nature, speech and body. The gender dipole and its symbolical role are the subject of critical review by the movement of eco-feminism (Plumwood, 1992:10). The term "ecofeminism" appeared for the first time in 1974 in the scripts of Françoise d'Eaubonne, a French feminist, who encouraged women towards an ecological revolution in order to save the planet. In 1980s this term turned into a movement at the same time with the developing «green movement» and the massive antiwar and antinuclear demonstrations. The term eco-feminism has been therefore

developed as the need to find out ways through which feminism and environmentalism could be combined in order to promote the respect towards women and the natural world. The primary idea is that there is a long historical precedent of relevance between women and nature that led to their suppression (Miles, 2020). The analysis of this idea seeks to shed light on the main challenges of its practical implementation in order to achieve social equity. Hence the paper is structured as follows: it starts with the development of the methodological steps of this research, then analyzes briefly the background of gender symbolization along the centuries and the practical significance of eco-feminism in the current developed and underdeveloped world. Lastly, it draws some conclusions and comes shortly to policy recommendations.

Methodology

Methodologically, this paper draws on a range of different sources such as books, articles in academic journals and environmental reports, with a view to providing an outline of a whole universal trend. It should be mentioned that due to the fact that eco-feminism has a lot of different sub-divisions, only the necessary common grounds of the movement will be analyzed in order to draw conclusions relevant to the topic.

Historical Background

Nature has been depicted in many ancient cultures as a mother nurturer on veils and statutes and has been honored as such. The move from nature to technology, from conservation to production and from matriarchy to patriarchy was signaled by the rural revolution, as Engels describes in his book "The origins of the Family, Private Property and the State" (Engels, 1992). On a socioeconomic level, the result was that nature and women were turned from nurturers' symbols to production means, while on a symbolical level the animistic polytheistic religions were substituted by male monotheistic ones. During the Enlightenment period (18th century), the neoteristic idea of the rational control over the natural and social environment was established as a means for prosperity. The resulting dualism in turn enhanced the hierarchy between dipoles of controlling and being controlled, which is still dominant in the Western culture (Plumwood, 1992:12). Moreover, on the 19th century, it shall be noted that the woman is depicted as the wild nature that needs to be tamed. As a result gender identities are being established and reproduced. As Riane Eisler mentions in her book "The Chalice and the Blade" the root of the problem lies within a social system where the blade is being established as an ideological tool according to which the male nature is connected with violence and dominance (Eisler, 1988: 46).

Women in the world today

As seen above, production and reproduction are connected with the dipole male and female. For example children's care as an emotional process is connected with the female and is considered easier compared to education and sciences that are part of the production and are therefore superior and connected with the male. Female is considered as not productive and needs the intervention of the male to become so. As an ecofeminist activist, Vandana Shiva, mentions "a clear and alive river is not a natural resource, but must be developed through dams to become productive" (Shiva, 1988:4). In that context the female body is seen as an object of expropriation and colonization as the nature (Karen, 2000:26).

The symbolical colonization is materialized through the colonization of the "underdeveloped" world in Asia, Africa and Latin America (Karen, 2000:31), where women are even more vulnerable due to the differences in the living standards, job opportunities and education level comparatively to the "developed" countries. Whereas the 1951 Refugee Convention does not include the category of climate refugees, it stresses that climate change exacerbates existing inequalities and that women are among the most affected by climate change; underlines that people in rural areas in developing countries, in particular women, are especially vulnerable, as they are often dependent on natural resources, do much of the agricultural work, particularly in food production and collecting water and fuel for the family and are very often responsible for the bulk of unpaid work in households and communities; underlines that agriculture is directly linked to environmental conditions; emphasizes that women, being in the frontline, are the first to face injustice and poverty (European Parliament, 2017). Statistically, women have less access in the economic resources and less property rights, as they possess less than 1% of the global resources and represent 70% of the population that earns less than 1 $/per day contrary to the necessity for more opportunities to shape decisions and influence policy, as has been officially recognized since the 13th Conference of Parties on climate change (COP 13) held in Bali in 2007. They are also sub-represented systematically on a political and financial level, as they represent 17% of the Members of the Parliament and 8% of the Ministers. In addition, they carry out a big part of the world's non-paid work that mainly corresponds to children's/elderly care and housekeeping. It is quite alarming that women are occupied for about the two thirds of the hours worked internationally and receive only 10% of the global income. They are also the main victims of sexual harassment; they represent 80% of the refugees and displaced people and in case of natural disasters their fatality is quintuple compared to men. Additionally, women have special health needs mostly concerning reproduction and due to impediments posed by culture, tradition or societies, the equity of rights and obligations between men and women is rebutted (European Parliament, 2012).

Gender perspective & environmental policy on a legal basis

However, there is an attempt that the international conventions consider the vulnerability of women. The Hyogo Action Plan 2005 about the natural disasters, points out the significance of the gender dimension in climate; namely Article 13d sets that "a gender perspective should be integrated into all risk disaster risk management policies […] early warning, information management, and education and training" (Hyogo Action Plan, 2005).

Historically, Agenda 21 and Rio Declaration have included multiple provisions that consider gender discriminations and promote the embodiment of women in climate politics. Indicatively, Principle 21 of the Rio Declaration mentions that "Women have a vital role in environmental management and development. Their full participation is therefore essential to achieve sustainable development." The international community has endorsed several plans of action and conventions for the full, equal and beneficial integration of women in all development activities; in particular the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women emphasize women's participation in national and international ecosystem management and control of environment degradation. Several conventions, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex) and conventions of ILO and UNESCO, have also been adopted to end gender-based discrimination and ensure women access to land and other resources, education and safe and equal employment. Also relevant are the older 1990 World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and the Plan of Action for implementing the Declaration (A/45/625, annex). The effective implementation of these programs will depend on the active involvement of women in economic and political decision-making and will be critical to the successful implementation of Agenda 21 (UNCED, 1992).

The EU perspective

The role of women as protagonists of the climate change in individual and communal level is obvious. Either women immigrants become "green" ambassadors in Denmark or Indians create traditional agricultural associations. Despite the increased consciousness, the gender dimension is included only in the European programs and plans related to climate policy and in the financial growth in favor of the developing countries but is absent from any EU climate policy. Specifically, the Energy Roadmap 2050 that sets the EU priorities for a green transition does not take into consideration the prejudice concerning the roles between men and women disregarding the fact that the main green energy domains, such as agriculture, are dominated by men, which has a practical significance in the opportunities offered by both genders as for the education and the business logic as well as the wages

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differences or the jobs' differentiation into scientific places and office jobs. Lastly, it is not only a matter of climate justice but also an issue of effectiveness, as women represent half of the population (European Parliament, 2012).

Conclusions

This paper aimed to provide an overview of the eco-feminist trend, which dates back but is still timely all over the world as the basis to eliminate gender disparities and natural disasters. The goal besides is not the reversal of dualism in the benefit of women, as traditional feminism supported, which would just legalize patriarchy. The aim is the complete deconstruction for both genders and the reconstruction of the natural and social identity of the human being through non-hierarchy and non-dominance. Nevertheless, the fact that this view of fighting against the environmental exploitation is not universally accepted, should not deter the long-term struggle of all the people to protect the planet. Hence, the planet has certainly its own rights primarily not to be polluted and the respect towards it, is the obligation of anyone regardless of any gender.

Policy recommendations

The application of an effective policy of equity between both genders in crucial domains, such as transportation, energy, agriculture is inseparable from a fair not only EU but also international climate policy. Therefore, the consciousness itself of the gender inequity contains a two-fold action: the provision of social welfare in order to reverse the man-made vulnerability and the embodiment of women in climate politics in order to achieve the maximum independency and liberation (European Parliament, 2017). This is strongly confirmed by the 4th Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 2007, which defines that the impact of climate change varies according to gender, age and class, with the poor being most likely to suffer the most. All in all, achieving gender equality is a key to human development, environmental conservation and in the fight against poverty (European Parliament, 2012).

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Volunteering and Sustainable Development[1]

Konstantinos Lapidis[2]

Abstract

Volunteering as an action brings all the necessary elements of social activation of the individual on a voluntary basis, which gives a particular dynamic to voluntary organizations as part of civil society. Voluntary organizations are actors of ideas and potential partners of the state in pursuing their objectives. On this basis, it is very important to develop a dialog among the local and central authorities with these organizations, with a view to making them an active part in policy-making and a tool to awaken citizens about development issues and beyond. Volunteering as a tool can lead to a fundamental change in citizens' attitudes and bring about a shift towards sustainable solutions, always through dialog and with the assistance of the state.

Keywords: sustainable development; volynteering; civil society; governance.

Εθελοντισμός και Βιώσιμη Ανάπτυξη

Κωνσταντίνος Λαπίδης

Περίληψη

Ο εθελοντισμός σαν δράση φέρει όλα τα απαραίτητα στοιχεία κοινωνικής ενεργοποίησης του ατόμου σε μια εθελοντική βάση, γεγονός που προσδίδει μια ιδιαίτερη δυναμική στις εθελοντικές οργανώσεις ως κομμάτι της κοινωνίας πολιτών. Οι εθελοντικές οργανώσεις είναι φορείς ιδεών και εν δυνάμει συνεργατών του κράτους στην επιδίωξη των σκοπών τους. Στη βάση αυτή, είναι πολύ σημαντικό να αναπτυχθεί ένας διάλογος τόσο σε τοπικό επίπεδο Οργανισμών Τοπικής Αυτοδιοίκησης (Ο.Τ.Α) όσο και σε κεντρικό επίπεδο, με τις οργανώσεις αυτές, με σκοπό να καταστούν ενεργό μέρος ως προς την εκπόνηση πολιτικής και εργαλείο αφύπνισης των πολιτών γύρω από ζητήματα αναπτυξιακού χαρακτήρα και όχι μόνο. Ο εθελοντισμός σαν εργαλείο μπορεί να οδηγήσει σε μια ριζική αλλαγή νοοτροπίας των πολιτών και να επιφέρει μια στροφή προς βιώσιμες λύσεις, πάντα με διάλογο και με την αρωγή της πολιτείας.

Λέξεις Κλειδιά: βιώσιμη ανάπτυξη, εθελοντισμός, κοινωνία των πολιτών, διακυβέρνηση.

Εισαγωγή: Η προσέγγιση της βιωσιμότητας από την βάση προς την κορυφή

Οι αστικές περιοχές αποτελούν σημεία αναφοράς για πληθώρα κοινωνικών, οικονομικών, πολιτικών και περιβαλλοντικών πιέσεων. Το γεγονός αυτό αποτελεί βασική πρόκληση για τις κεντρικές και τοπικές δημόσιες αρχές, οι οποίες καλούνται να συγκεράσουν ενα σύνολο κοινωνικών αναγκών, οικονομικών συμφερόντων και πολιτικών συσχετισμών με στόχο την επίτευξη του καλύτερου

δυνατού αποτελέσματος για τον πολίτη. Η βιωσιμότητα σαν έννοια έχει μια πολυεπίπεδη εξάρτηση απο την κοινωνική πραγματικότητα, γεγονός που την καθιστά εξαιρετικά περίπλοκη ως προς την υλοποίηση της. Οι καθημερινές «απειλές» σε επίπεδο βιωσιμότητας είναι πολλαπλές. Αυτό καθιστά αναγκαία «τη συνδυασμένη συμμετοχή ενός ευρέως φάσματος ανθρωπίνων δικτύων, γνώσεων, αισθητήρων και καινοτόμων ιδεών» για την προσέγγιση οποιασδήποτε λύσης (Βλαχοκώστας κ.α., 2015: 84). Προβλήματα όπως η ατμοσφαιρική ρύπανση, η αλόγιστη κατανάλωση, η καταπάτηση των δικαιωμάτων, η ανισότητα (π.χ. Ρομά, μετανάστες), η αδιαφάνεια, η φτώχεια, χαίρουν μιας ολιστικής αντιμετώπισης από τις δημόσιες και τοπικές αρχές, δηλαδή από την κορυφή προς την βάση (top-down governance). Το ζήτημα όμως της βιώσιμης ανάπτυξης, ακριβώς λόγω της ιδιαίτερης και πολυεπίπεδης φύσεως του (Εικόνα 1), δεν δύναται να επιλυθεί δια αυστηρών επιβολών και νομικών ρυθμίσεων. Χρειάζεται μια συνολική αλλαγή νοοτροπίας και αξιακής θεώρησης στην κατεύθυνση μιας ανάπτυξης με όρους περιβαλλοντικής ευαισθησίας, διαγενεακής και ενδογενούς δικαιοσύνης, υπεύθυνης και ηθικής κατανάλωσης και όχι με όρους οικονομικής μεγέθυνσης, χωρίς ίχνος κοινωνικής και περιβαλλοντικής αντίληψης και παιδείας (Ζέρβας, 2012).

Εικόνα 1: Πυλώνες Βιώσιμης Ανάπτυξης.

Πηγή: Τσοτσορός (2018).

Για να επιτευχθεί αυτή η αλλαγή σε επίπεδο νοοτροπίας σημαντικός παράγοντας, μεταξύ άλλων, είναι η κοινωνία των πολιτών, ο ρόλος της οποίας είναι κομβικός για το εγχείρημα της βιώσιμης ανάπτυξης (Νικολάου, 2014). Οι πολίτες πρέπει να κατέχουν υπεύθυνη θέση απέναντι σε όλα τα παραπάνω ζητήματα. Αυτό μπορεί να επιτευχθεί μόνο μέσα από την ενεργό συμμετοχή τους για την αντιμετώπιση των προκλήσεων και προβλημάτων, με γνώμονα τη βελτίωση της ποιότητας της ζωής τους. Με αυτό τον τρόπο, ο πολίτης θα μπει στην διαδικασία αναγνώρισης και υπολογισμού των

προβλημάτων, πράγμα το οποίο θα δημιουργήσει τα δεδομένα εκείνα που θα προσδώσουν στον πολίτη την γνώση και την ωριμότητα ώστε να συμβάλει ατομικά και συλλογικά στην ευρύτερη ανάπτυξη με όρους βιωσιμότητας. Έτσι θα δημιουργηθεί ο λεγόμενος «Έξυπνος Πολίτης» που θα συμβάλει σε μια κοινωνία η οποία θα πληροφορεί, θα προωθεί και θα επιβλέπει την αναπτυξιακή διαδικασία.

Στο πλαίσιο της «Έξυπνης Κοινωνίας» οι πολίτες παρά τις ειδικότητες τους, το φύλο και τις προτεραιότητες τους, θα πρέπει να λάβουν γνώση του συνόλου των προβλημάτων και να αποκτήσουν την υπευθυνότητα για την αντιμετώπισή τους αυτών με γνώμονα την ισότητα, τη δικαιοσύνη και τα ανθρώπινα δικαιώματα. Κατά αυτό τον τρόπο θα επιτευχθεί «μια προσέγγιση με κοινωνικό προσανατολισμό απο την βάση προς την κορυφή» (bottom-up), γεγονός που θα οδηγήσει στην γενικότερη αλλαγή της νοοτροπίας. Όπως γίνεται κατανοητό, η πρόκληση είναι μεγάλη γι' αυτό σημαντική είναι η πρόβλεψη στόχων, κινήτρων και καινοτόμων εργαλείων για τους πολίτες. Σκοπός σε αυτό το στάδιο δεν είναι η υλοποίηση πολιτικών με χαρακτήρα επιβολής αλλά η προώθηση πολιτικών που θα επιτρέψουν στον ίδιο τον πολίτη να κάνει την ζωή και την συμπεριφορά του πιο βιώσιμη. Με άλλα λόγια θα λέγαμε ότι πρέπει να επιτευχθεί μια συλλογική προσπάθεια συμμετοχής από την βάση με σκοπό τη βιωσιμότητα σε κάθε επίπεδο του κοινωνικού βίου. Ο πολίτης πρέπει να αποκτήσει το ενδιαφέρον και το υπόβαθρο να ανταπεξέλθει σε όλα τα στοιχεία που καθιστούν μια πόλη βιώσιμη, εκκινώντας απο την ευαισθητοποίηση η οποία θα οδηγήσει σε κοινωνική συμμετοχή.

Για να υπάρξουν τα κίνητρα για τους πολίτες, πρέπει πρώτα να υπάρξουν τα εργαλεία που θα τους ευαισθητοποιήσουν. Στο σημείο αυτό η συμβολή της διοίκησης τόσο τοπικά όσο και κεντρικά είναι εξαιρετικής σημασίας, καθώς πρέπει να εξάγει έξυπνες και καινοτόμες ιδέες για να πετύχει αυτή την ευαισθητοποίηση. Κάποιες πολύ καλές κατευθυντήριες προτάσεις θα ήταν:

1) η παροχή όλων των απαραίτητων μέσων και κινήτρων που θα επιτρέπουν την συμμετοχή και αλληλεπίδραση μεταξύ των πολιτών και την δυνατότητα να καταστούν «Έξυπνοι Πολίτες». (Πχ. Ενημερωτικές δράσεις σε τοπικό και όχι μόνο επίπεδο, διενέργεια συνεδρίων κ.α),

2) η παροχή παραδειγμάτων συλλογικής ευαισθητοποίησης και συλλογικών δραστηριοτήτων προς την κατεύθυνση της βιώσιμης ανάπτυξης. (Πχ. Καλές πρακτικές από άλλες χώρες στην αντιμετώπιση ζητημάτων βιωσιμότητας μέσα από την κοινωνία πολιτών),

3) αξιοποίηση όλων των τεχνολογικών μέσων και διαδραστικών τεχνικών μέσα από πλατφόρμες συλλογικής ευαισθητοποίησης, κοινωνικής δικτύωσης και λήψης αποφάσεων σε μια βάση διαφάνειας, ισότητας και συνεργασίας,

4) προσέγγιση της νέας γενιάς με κάθε τρόπο (τυπικό ή άτυπο),

5) συλλογή απόψεων, γνώσεων και πιθανών λύσεων από τους πολίτες.

Κίνητρα και εργαλεία για την δημιουργία «Έξυπνων Πολιτών»

Εξαιρετικό «εργαλείο» για την επίτευξη της ευαισθητοποίησης των πολιτών είναι ο εθελοντισμός, καθώς αποτελεί ένα ιδιαίτερο έναυσμα μέσα από το οποίο η κοινωνία πολιτών οργανώνεται, δικτυώνεται, μαθαίνει και ευαισθητοποιείται σε μια βάση μη κερδοσκοπική, γύρω απο ζητήματα κοινωνικού και περιβαλλοντικού περιεχομένου, ακριβώς όπως και οι 17 στόχοι του Ο.Η.Ε για την βιώσιμη ανάπτυξη. Χαρακτηριστικό είναι ότι ο τελευταίος στόχος απο τους 17 αναφέρεται στην συνεργασία για την επίτευξή τους, αναγνωρίζοντας στο σημείο αυτό τον καταλυτικό ρόλο των διάφορων ενδιαφερόμενων μερών (stakeholders) και την ανάγκη συμμετοχής τους στο να γίνει ο κόσμος καλύτερος (UN Volunteers, 2020). Ο εθελοντισμός έρχεται να συμβάλει σε αυτή ακριβώς την διαδικασία ως εργαλείο που ενισχύει την κοινωνική ευαισθητοποίηση και την συμμετοχή των πολιτών με σκοπό, μεταξύ άλλων, την ατομική τους κινητοποίηση και εξέλιξη. Ο εθελοντισμός ως εργαλείο δύναται να κινητοποιήσει τις περιφέρειες και να ενεργοποιήσει τους πολίτες σε επίπεδο εθνικού σχεδίου υλοποίησης για τους Στόχους Βιώσιμης Ανάπτυξης. Επίσης, οι εθελοντικές οργανώσεις μπορούν εν δυνάμει να αποτελέσουν δίαυλους επικοινωνίας μεταξύ της κυβέρνησης ή της τοπικής αυτοδιοίκησης και των πολιτών για την προώθηση σοβαρών ενεργειών στην κατεύθυνση της βιώσιμης ανάπτυξης. Άρα, θα λέγαμε ότι ο εθελοντισμός σαν εργαλείο ενέχει όλα τα απαραίτητα στοιχεία που χρειάζεται μια πολιτική για να πετύχει. Αυτό όμως που χρήζει ιδιαίτερης ανάλυσης είναι το πώς ο εθελοντισμός μπορεί να διαδραματίσει τον ρόλο του διαμεσολαβητή ανάμεσα στην κοινωνία των πολιτών και την κυβέρνηση ή τον εκάστοτε Ο.Τ.Α υπό το πρίσμα μιας συγκεκριμένης στόχευσης που είναι η βιώσιμη ανάπτυξη.

Επίσης, όπως ήδη έχουμε αναλύσει παραπάνω, η βιώσιμη ανάπτυξη αποτελεί μια διαδικασία η οποία εκτείνεται σε όλη την ανθρώπινη δραστηριότητα. Αυτό έχει ως αποτέλεσμα να είναι εξαιρετικά δύσκολη έως αδύνατη η παρακολούθησή της. Είναι πολύ σημαντικό να αναφέρουμε ότι οι εθελοντικές οργανώσεις θα μπορούσαν να παίξουν τον ρόλο του κατά τόπους ελεγκτή. Όλες οι παραπάνω δυναμικές του εθελοντισμού και των ομάδων του σε επίπεδο βιώσιμη ανάπτυξης αποτελούν πρόβλεψη και σε Ευρωπαϊκό επίπεδο με το λεγόμενο Plan of Action for volunteerism in the 2030 Agenda (UN Volunteers, 2020). Βασικό χαρακτηριστικό των εθελοντικών ομάδων είναι ότι δεν φέρουν μια ολιστική αντιμετώπιση σε επίπεδο βιώσιμης ανάπτυξης αλλά επικεντρώνονται σε συγκεκριμένους τομείς, γεγονός το οποίο δίνει την δυνατότητα στην κοινωνία των πολιτών να συμβάλει εκεί που πραγματικά μπορεί να το κάνει ουσιαστικά.

Συγκεκριμένα, ο εθελοντισμός σε επίπεδο κοινωνικής δικτύωσης και γνώσης μπορεί να συμβάλει με πολλούς και διάφορους τρόπους:

1) Οικοδόμηση εμπιστοσύνης και γεφύρωση του κοινωνικού κεφαλαίου μεταξύ διαφορετικών ανθρώπων που δεν έχουν συνηθίσει να αλληλεπιδρούν, με την παράλληλη εργασία προς έναν κοινό στόχο.

2) Δημιουργία δεξιοτήτων σε διάφορους τομείς, όπως στην περίπτωση νέων εθελοντών που αποκτούν δεξιότητες που βελτιώνουν την απασχολησιμότητα τους, καθώς και τις δεξιότητες άλλων, μέσω της μεταφοράς γνώσεων και εμπειριών.

3) Ενίσχυση της αποτελεσματικότητας των προσπαθειών για ειρήνη και ανάπτυξη μέσω συμμετοχικών μορφών παρακολούθησης και λογοδοσίας.

Σε καθαρά τοπικό επίπεδο, ο εθελοντισμός ως εργαλείο θα λέγαμε ότι αποτελεί την πηγή, βάσει της οποίας μπορεί η διοικητική αρχή να προσεγγίσει την κοινωνία των πολιτών σε ένα επίπεδο όπου η ρύθμιση και η εναρμόνιση κατευθυντήριων γραμμών δεν είναι τόσο απλή υπόθεση. Ο εθελοντισμός φαίνεται να μπορεί να αποτελέσει τον δίαυλο για την επίτευξη ενός ώριμου διαλόγου μεταξύ Περιφερειακών διοικητικών αρχών και κοινωνίας πολιτών. Προς την κατεύθυνση αυτή, θα λέγαμε ότι η διοικητική αρχή οφείλει να:

1) προβεί στην καταγραφή των τοπικών εθελοντικών οργανώσεων και στον διαχωρισμό τους ανάλογα με τον σκοπό που υπηρετεί η κάθε μία, με βάση τους 17 στόχους του Ο.Η.Ε για την βιώσιμη ανάπτυξη,

2) δρομολογήσει ενημερωτικές δράσεις (συνέδρια, φόρουμ συζητήσεων, σεμινάρια) για την βιώσιμη ανάπτυξη,

3) διευκολύνει τη διασύνδεση και παράλληλα να ενεργοποιήσει τους πολίτες προς την κατεύθυνση της βιώσιμης ανάπτυξης μέσα από την δημιουργία πλατφόρμας απόψεων και προτάσεων.

4) καθιερώσει ένα μόνιμο δίαυλο επικοινωνίας με τις εθελοντικές οργανώσεις (πχ. μόνιμη αντιπροσωπεία διαβούλευσης με τις διοικητικές αρχές).

5) αναγνωρίσει ένα μόνιμο ρόλο στις εθελοντικές οργανώσεις σε επίπεδο συλλογής δεδομένων βάση τον σκοπό και τη θεματική κάθε οργάνωσης (πχ ετήσια αναφορά για τους Στόχους Βιώσιμης Ανάπτυξης σε τοπικό επίπεδο).

Συμπεράσματα

Οι εθελοντικές οργανώσεις αποτελούν ένα πολύ ισχυρό δίκτυο ανθρώπων που εξ' ορισμού συνάδει με αξίες και ιδέες που αφορούν όλες τις πτυχές της ανθρώπινης δραστηριότητας. Το γεγονός αυτό από μόνο του δημιουργεί μια τεράστια προοπτική για την κοινωνία των πολιτών μέσα από το παράδειγμα των εθελοντικών οργανώσεων, ώστε να αποκτήσει έναν εναργέστερο και πιο δυναμικό ρόλο στην προσπάθεια υλοποίησης πολιτικών ή ακόμα και στην χάραξη τους. Για να επιτευχθεί αυτή η κινητοποίηση πρέπει η πολιτεία τόσο σε κεντρικό όσο και σε περιφερειακό επίπεδο να οργανώσει και να προσδώσει στις εθελοντικές οργανώσεις χαρακτήρα κοινωνικού εταίρου με ουσιαστικές αρμοδιότητες. Όλες οι παραπάνω προτάσεις κατευθύνονται σε ακριβώς αυτό τον στόχο ο οποίος εάν επιτευχθεί τότε θα έχουμε θέσει τις βάσεις για την δυνατότητα παροχής λύσεων και ουσιαστικών προτάσεων από την κοινωνία για την κοινωνία.

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Topic 8

Immigration, Refugees and Human Rights

The Persistence of the Temporary: The Refugee as an Entrapped Subject[1]

Angelos Nastoulis[2]

Abstract

This article presents aspects of the refugee crisis with an emphasis on the subject. Turning the attention to the refugee as a person, aspects of their lived experience emerge that cannot be seen with the naked eye. We examine the "identity" of the refugee, the accommodation centers, the politicization of the issue and the attempts to solve the problem. The experience of refugees highlights the problematic policy pursued at European level to resolve the refugee crisis, which affects their integration into local communities.

Keywords: refugee identity; integration; camps.

Η Επιμονή του Προσωρινού: Ο Πρόσφυγας ως Εγκλωβισμένο Υποκείμενο

Άγγελος Ναστούλης

Περίληψη

Σε αυτό το άρθρο παρουσιάζονται πτυχές της προσφυγικής κρίσης με έμφαση στο υποκείμενο. Στρέφοντας τον προσοχή στο άτομο πρόσφυγα, αναδύονται όψεις της βιωμένης εμπειρίας τους που δεν μπορούν να γίνουν ορατές με γυμνό μάτι. Εξετάζεται η «ταυτότητα» του πρόσφυγα, οι δομές φιλοξενίας, η πολιτικοποίηση του προσφυγικού και οι απόπειρες λύσης του προβλήματος. Η εμπειρία των προσφύγων αναδεικνύει την προβληματική πολιτική που ακολουθείται σε ευρωπαϊκό επίπεδο για την επίλυση της προσφυγικής κρίσης, που επηρεάζει την ενσωμάτωσή τους στις τοπικές κοινωνίες.

Λέξεις κλειδιά: «πρόσφυγας», ενσωμάτωση, δομές.

Εισαγωγή

Το παρόν κείμενο έχει ως στόχο να προσεγγίσει το ζήτημα της προσφυγικής κρίσης των τελευταίων ετών συνδυάζοντας στοιχεία που προκύπτουν από την ιδιωτική σφαίρα του πρόσφυγα και την υπάρχουσα θεσμική αντιμετώπιση του προβλήματος. Η ένταση των προσφυγικών ροών από το 2015 και η κατάσταση έκτακτης αντιμετώπισης στην οποία βρέθηκε το ελληνικό κράτος, ανέδειξε πτυχές που έως τότε δεν είχαν αναγνωριστεί. Η προσφυγική κρίση δεν περιορίζεται μόνο στις πολιτικές

διαχείρισης, αλλά λαμβάνει πολλές και ιδιάζουσες μορφές που στον πυρήνα τους τα αποτελέσματα βιώνονται από τα άτομα-πρόσφυγες. Για αυτό τον λόγο επιλέχθηκε στην ανάλυση που ακολουθεί να δοθεί έμφαση στο υποκείμενο.

Ο «πρόσφυγας» ως ταυτότητα

Η αποτύπωση και η μελέτη της εμπειρίας των προσφύγων μέσα από τις αφηγήσεις τους αποτελεί εδώ το κύριο εργαλείο κατανόησης του σύμπαντος που βιώνουν. Η ανάδειξη της οπτικής των προσφύγων οι οποίοι ως ενεργοί συμμετέχοντες και φυσικοί αφηγητές των ιστοριών τους νοηματοδοτούν και τοποθετούνται σχετικά με τις εμπειρίες της ζωής τους πριν και μετά τον πόλεμο, αποτυπώνουν μία νατουραλιστική εικόνα που κατανοώντας τη, θα οδηγήσει πιθανώς στην ανάπτυξη βελτιωμένων πολιτικών. Σε αφηγήσεις που πλέον είναι διάχυτες στο διαδίκτυο και αποτελούν ανοιχτές πηγές μελέτης, η εμπειρία των προσφύγων συγκροτείται αφηγηματικά πάνω σε τρεις βασικούς άξονες: η ζωή πριν την απόφαση διαφυγής, το ταξίδι και η εγκατάσταση στην χώρα υποδοχής.

Στο πρώτο πεδίο κυριαρχεί η αποτύπωση μίας συνηθισμένης βιωματικής εξέλιξης όπου η καθημερινότητα κυλά υπό κανονικές συνθήκες και τα άτομα είναι αφοσιωμένα στην επαγγελματική και προσωπική τους πορεία (Refugee Lives: A Million Stories, 2019a). Αν και σίγουρα βίωναν δυσκολίες που στις δυτικές χώρες δεν συναντά κανείς εύκολα, η μερική απογοήτευση που αυτές προξενούσαν, δεν αποτελούσαν αιτία οντογέννησης σκέψεων μετανάστευσης. Η βιογραφική ρήξη έρχεται με την αρχή του πολέμου ή των εσωτερικών επεμβάσεων των καθεστώτων. Η κλιμάκωση των συρράξεων στις πόλεις ανέτρεψε βίαια την καθημερινότητα (Refugee Lives: A Million Stories, 2018a) και σε αυτό το σημείο ξεκινά ο δεύτερος αφηγηματικός πυλώνας,. Εικόνες καταστροφής και θανάτου έρχονται να αντικαταστήσουν σταδιακά τις πρώτες εικόνες ανέχειας εξαιτίας της έλλειψης βασικών αγαθών. Η ανατροπή της φυσικής εξέλιξης του βίου, γεννά, ως φαίνεται, την ανάγκη μετανάστευσης που ταυτόχρονα σημαίνει την ανάληψη του ρίσκου του θανάτου. Σε πολλές αφηγήσεις συναντάμε παρεμφερείς φράσεις στις οποίες αναδεικνύεται η διαφυγή ως ανάγκη αυτοφροντίδας (Morales, 2019: 165). Η διάχυση του φόβου και της ανασφάλειας που προξένησε η βία ως εμπειρία, μεταβάλλεται σε εδραιωμένη κατάσταση κατά την πορεία του ταξιδιού. Οι αφηγήσεις σχετικά με το ταξίδι εμπερικλείουν επώδυνες καταστάσεις, ιδιαίτερα τραυματικές, καθώς προκειμένου να διαφύγουν από τη χώρα τους και να περάσουν τα σύνορα με την Τουρκία έθεσαν τον εαυτό τους σε κίνδυνο και παράλληλα βίωσαν απώλειες συγγενών ή συνοδοιπόρων τους (Refugee Lives: A Million Stories, 2019b). Η προσωρινή παραμονή στην Τουρκία συνήθως δεν αναλύεται, καθώς στα πλαίσια της εμπειρίας τους, η νοηματοδότηση του ταξιδιού έχει ως σημαντικό σημείο την έλευση στην Ελλάδα. Ως εκ τούτου, σταθερό μοτίβο των αφηγήσεων αποτελούν ο φόβος

και οι κίνδυνοι που ενείχε το ταξίδι μέσω της θάλασσας. Σε αρκετές περιπτώσεις ο αριθμός των προσπαθειών για μετάβαση στην Ελλάδα είναι σχετικά μεγάλος, γεγονός που επιβεβαίωνε την νέα ρευστή κατάσταση στην οποία είχαν εισέλθει, έχοντας ως μοναδικό αμετάβλητο στοιχείο την εμπειρία της ματαίωσης και της ανασφάλειας. Η εμπειρία του θαλάσσιου ταξιδιού περιγράφεται συνήθως ως κάτι τραυματικό, καθώς κλήθηκαν να διαχειριστούν οι ίδιοι καταστάσεις μεταξύ ζωής και θανάτου (Refugee Lives: A Million Stories, 2018b). Παράλληλα, η αναφορά στους διακινητές είναι ισχνή, και όταν υπάρχει διαφαίνονται σημάδια ενοχής, λόγω των παράνομων μέσων που χρησιμοποίησαν, αλλά η ηθική της ανάγκης εδώ υπερτερεί.

Το τέλος του ταξιδιού που σηματοδοτεί τον τρίτο και τελευταίο πυλώνα του νοηματικού πλαισίου των αφηγήσεων, χαρακτηρίζεται από αμφιθυμία. Η αρχική ανακούφιση του αίσιου τέλους, συναντά τον προβληματισμό για τις συνθήκες διαβίωσης στις δομές φιλοξενίας.

Η δομή ως «μηχανή»

Η περιπέτεια της διαφυγής που προσπαθήσαμε να περιγράψουμε συγκροτεί μία νέα ταυτότητα για τα άτομα. Η ταυτότητα του πρόσφυγα συγκροτείται για τους ίδιους μέσα από τραύματα και συναισθήματα, όπως οδύνη, επιβίωση, φόβος, αγωνία, απόγνωση. Συναισθήματα που για τους ίδιους αποτελούν ένα κοινό τόπο εμπειρίας και συνάντησης. Η δική τους οπτική όμως δεν αρκεί για να αναγνωριστούν ως υπαρκτά θύματα, χρειάζεται να αναγνωριστούν και από τις χώρες υποδοχής σε κοινωνικό και πολιτικό επίπεδο. Όσο και αν η ταυτότητα του πρόσφυγα ενέχει χαρακτηριστικά ευαλωτότητας, μοιάζει στην πορεία της προσφυγικής κρίσης να παραφθείρεται από την αρχική της σημασία.

Η δημιουργία και ανάπτυξη των δομών φιλοξενίας, αποτέλεσε το πρώτο βήμα στην υποδοχή των προσφύγων ώστε να γίνει καταγραφή των ατόμων και να κωδικοποιηθούν οι ανάγκες τους, εκτός από την δεδομένη και θεμελιώδη παροχή των βασικών αγαθών. Όμως με την πάροδο του χρόνου και την συνεχή ένταση των προσφυγικών ρευμάτων προς τα ελληνικά νησιά, ο χαρακτήρας των δομών μετατράπηκε σε μία «γκρίζα ζώνη». Η μαζική προσέλευση δημιούργησε πίεση στις δομές, με αποτέλεσμα αρκετές από αυτές να φιλοξενούν πολλαπλάσια άτομα σε σχέση με τις προδιαγραφές δημιουργίας τους. Σύμφωνα, με την ετήσια έκθεση για το έτος 2019 του Ελληνικού Συμβουλίου για τους Πρόσφυγες, τον Οκτώβριο στο ΚΥΤ της Μόριας στην Λέσβο, διέμεναν 14.400 πρόσφυγες ενώ η χωρητικότητα είναι 2.840 (Greek Council For Refugees, 2019). Αυτή η «ασφυξία» σε συνδυασμό με την έλλειψη κρατικού ελέγχου στο εσωτερικό των δομών, έχει ως αποτέλεσμα να μοιάζουν τα κέντρα φιλοξενίας σε αυτοδιαχειριζόμενες και αυτοδιατηρήσιμες κοινότητες. Η παρουσία της Ύπατης Αρμοστείας και των ΜΚΟ δεν μπορεί υπό τέτοιες συνθήκες να καλύψει ανάγκες

μεμονωμένων ατόμων που χρήζουν ειδικής μεταχείρισης (σωματικές και ψυχικές παθήσεις) και σε συνδυασμό με την αδυναμία αποσυμφόρησής τους αλλά και τις γραφειοκρατικές αργόσυρτες διαδικασίες σχετικά με την εξέταση των αιτήσεων ασύλου, αναδύει ένα δομικό πρόβλημα στην πρακτική και συμβολική διαχείριση των προσφύγων.

Η πίεση στις δομές αποτυπώνεται στις μαρτυρίες των προσφύγων που πλέον γίνονται γνωστές από τις εκθέσεις των φορέων που δρουν στους χώρους αυτούς και από τη δημοσιογραφική κάλυψη. Στο περίγραμμα των αφηγήσεων κυριαρχούν οι κακές συνθήκες διαβίωσης στις εγκαταστάσεις, η παραμονή σε σκηνές ανεξαρτήτως καιρικών συνθηκών, η έλλειψη υγιεινής, η μεγάλη αναμονή για ιατρική περίθαλψη, ιδίως για τα άτομα που χρήζουν ψυχολογικής υποστήριξης (Médecins Sans Frontières, 2019). Επίσης, μαρτυρώνται βίαια επεισόδια μεταξύ ομάδων προσφύγων, απόρροια του ετερογενούς ψηφιδωτού εθνοτήτων που βρίσκονται στις δομές. Σε ρεπορτάζ του BBC στη δομή της Μόριας το 2018 (Archive of the Refugee and Migration Crisis in the Aegean, 2018), αναφέρεται από πρόσφυγα κουρδικής καταγωγής ότι οι διαμάχες εθνικών και θρησκευτικών ομάδων που υπήρχαν στον χώρο της Μέσης Ανατολής «σύρθηκαν» στο νέο τόπο συνάντησης, δηλαδή στο κέντρο φιλοξενίας. Η περαιτέρω έκθεση των ατόμων σε βίαιες καθημερινές καταστάσεις σε ένα περιβάλλον που προσδοκούσαν να είναι ασφαλές, επιβαρύνει την τραυματική συνθήκη μέσα στην οποία ζουν, καθώς δεν πρέπει να ξεχνάμε τα βιώματα που απέκτησαν κατά τη διάρκεια του ταξιδιού. Σε δομές φιλοξενίας στη Λέσβο στο διάστημα του Ιανουαρίου-Σεπτεμβρίου 2017 περιθάλπηκαν 213 θύματα σεξουαλικής βίας από την αρχή του ταξιδιού τους (Médecins Sans Frontières, 2017).

Τα κέντρα φιλοξενίας λοιπόν, από την οπτική των προσφύγων φαίνεται να λειτουργούν ως μία «μηχανή» (Guattari, 1995). Η μηχανή διακρίνεται από τρία πεδία: Πρώτον, παρέχει μία πρώτη γραμμή περίθαλψης. Μία προσωρινή ανακούφιση, έστω και φαινομενική. Δεύτερον, δημιουργεί ένα περιβάλλον μερικής αυτοτέλειας. Ο κόσμος εντός του χώρου αυτονομείται σε κάποιο βαθμό από τις τρέχουσες κοινωνικές πρακτικές, σχηματίζοντας ένα κλειστό σύμπαν με την δική του οργάνωση και ρουτίνα. Τρίτον, στον μικρόκοσμο των δομών αναπτύσσονται δυνάμεις κοινωνικές και σωματικές. Αυτό το σύστημα σχέσεων εδράζεται τελικά πάνω στη λογική της ψυχικής και σωματικής αντοχής. Συνοψίζοντας αυτή την παρομοίωση και προσθέτοντας την αμφιθυμία για τις δομές που διαφαίνεται στις αφηγήσεις των προσφύγων, αναδύεται η αμφιλεγόμενη αποτελεσματικότητά τους. Αν ο ονομαστικός στόχος τους είναι η πρωτοβάθμια φροντίδα των προσφύγων, εντέλει λειτουργούν επιβαρυντικά για τα ίδια τα άτομα και έτσι δικαιολογούν τον όρο «μηχανή» που χρησιμοποιούμε εδώ. Καθώς μία μηχανή μετατρέπει κάτι σε κάτι άλλο, στην προκειμένη περίπτωση επιβεβαιώνεται ότι ένας μεγάλος αριθμός προσφύγων μπαίνοντας στις δομές, δεν ανακουφίζεται αλλά «φθείρεται» περισσότερο. Έχοντας ως γνώμονα την οπτική των προσφύγων, φαίνεται ότι οι δομές φιλοξενίας

αποτυγχάνουν να εκπληρώσουν το σκοπό σύστασής τους. Ο πόνος που βιώνεται από τα άτομα επαρκεί για να αποδιαρθρώσει τον κοινωνικό χώρο και να καταστήσει την πολιτική αυτή αποτυχημένη.

«Πρόσφυγας» ή «εισβολέας»;

 Η παραμονή των προσφύγων στις δομές γίνεται, ως φαίνεται, η αιτία να αποξενώνονται και να ενισχύονται συναισθήματα απελπισίας, εντούτοις η εγκατάστασή τους σε περιοχές των αστικών πόλεων βοηθά τα άτομα να νιώσουν ασφάλεια και να συνδεθούν με την τοπική κοινωνία (Hyndman and Wenona, 2017: 5). Η θυματική χροιά της ταυτότητας του πρόσφυγα δεν αναδεικνύεται στην πρώτη περίπτωση με ανθρωπιστικούς όρους, αλλά συρρικνώνεται μέσω της πολιτικοποίησης στο ζήτημα της εσωτερικής ασφάλειας των κρατών φιλοξενίας. Η αποξένωση του προσφυγικού συναισθήματος από τη Δύση, με την πλασματική αίσθηση της νίκης επί του θανάτου, έχει ως πυρήνα την παροχή της προσωπικής ασφάλειας του πολίτη από το κράτος. Καθώς βιώνουμε όμως τα πρώτα αποτελέσματα της παγκοσμιοποίησης, η έντονη ρευστότητα που πλέον διαχέεται στις δυτικές κοινωνίες μετά και την μεγάλη οικονομική κρίση της τελευταίας δεκαετίας, ενισχύουν τα συναισθήματα φόβου. Μία ενδεχόμενη απορρύθμιση, μπορεί να οδηγήσει σε κατάρρευση των κοινωνικών δεσμών των πολιτών. Έτσι, τρομοκρατικές επιθέσεις του παρελθόντος σε ευρωπαϊκές πρωτεύουσες, μέσα από τις πολιτικές καταστολής που αναπτύχθηκαν, επηρεάζουν την αντιμετώπιση της προσφυγικής κρίσης.

Ο χρονικά μεγάλος περιορισμός των ατόμων υπό κακές συνθήκες σε κέντρα φιλοξενίας, δεν επιτρέπει έστω και συμβολικά την αντιμετώπισή τους ως εν δυνάμει πολίτες. Μέσω των δομών επιχειρείται να συμβιβαστούν τα ασυμβίβαστα: η επιθυμία για μερική απομόνωση των ατόμων που μαζί τους φέρουν την ανάγκη λύσης ενός παγκόσμιου προβλήματος ενώ ταυτόχρονα ικανοποιείται η επιθυμία της ηθικής ορθότητας (Bauman, 2007: 76). Οι πρόσφυγες μεταξύ αυτών των αντιφατικών μηνυμάτων, δεν αλλάζουν χώρο απλά, αλλά χάνουν το χώρο τους πάνω στη Γη. Αιωρούνται σε ένα χωρικό κενό όπου ο χρόνος έχει σταματήσει και εγκαθίστανται σε ένα τόπο χωρίς να είναι εγκατεστημένοι αλλά συναισθηματικά εν κινήσει. Εντός των δομών ζυμώνονται σε μία μάζα με ιδιαίτερα χαρακτηριστικά. Αναπτύσσουν μεταξύ τους κοινούς τόπους μοιράσματος της βιωμένης οδύνης αλλά για τον γενικό πληθυσμό δεν είναι απροϋπόθετα τα θύματα ενός ξεριζωμού. Περισσότερο προσλαμβάνονται ως «κοντινοί ξένοι» ή οι «Άλλοι» (Volkan, 2017: 86) που παρά την ένταξη τους σε μία συλλογική ταυτότητα, όπως αυτή του πρόσφυγα, μπορεί να ευθύνονται και οι ίδιοι για την διαφυγή τους. Η διάχυση της εξατομίκευσης στις δυτικές κοινωνίες, δεν καθίσταται αρωγός για την αναγνώριση συλλογικών πολιτισμικών τραυμάτων. Αντιθέτως, το άτομο ως μονάδα

ευθύνεται για τις δικές του κακοτυχίες. Με αυτό τον τρόπο, η πολιτικοποίηση της προσφυγικής κρίσης ενισχύει δύο κρίσιμες λειτουργίες, δηλαδή ενώ αποσυνδέεται η αιτία από το αποτέλεσμα στο ανθρωπιστικό πεδίο, ταυτόχρονα συνδέεται στο πολιτικό. Με λίγα λόγια, η αιτία που είναι η αναγκαστική διαφυγή από τη χώρα καταγωγής/διαμονής δεν σχετίζεται με την ταυτότητα του πρόσφυγα που ζητά βοήθεια και έτσι με αυτό τον τρόπο παραμένει ο «ξένος». Από την άλλη πλευρά, στο πολιτικό πεδίο η αιτία που είναι η «έξοδος» συνδέεται με το αποτέλεσμα, το οποίο είναι η παράνομη είσοδος στην χώρα φιλοξενίας. Συνεπακόλουθα, ο χρωματισμός τους ως «παράνομα εισερχόμενοι» που χρήζουν βοήθειας, δεν βοηθά στην ανάδυση της θυματικής τους ταυτότητας και την αντιμετώπισή τους σε διακρατική κλίμακα και όχι σε τοπική, αλλά περισσότερο αντιστρέφει την ταυτότητα του πρόσφυγα σε αυτή του «εισβολέα».

Παλινδρομήσεις μεταξύ λύσης και διαιώνισης του προβλήματος

Η θεσμική αντιμετώπιση της προσφυγικής κρίσης από την Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση και συνεπακόλουθα, η κατεύθυνση των κρατών μελών για να στοιχηθούν στην πολιτική λύση του προβλήματος αναδεικνύει το παράδοξο μιας πολιτικής που όλο και περισσότερο εστιάζεται στο τοπικό σε ένα κόσμο που διαμορφώνεται από παγκόσμιες διαδικασίες. Η σμίκρυνση του πεδίου της πολιτικής παρέμβασης, συρρικνώνει έτσι τις πολιτικές αντιμετώπισης στο πεδίο της ασφάλειας, δίνοντας αντιφατικά μηνύματα στους πρόσφυγες αλλά και εν γένει στους ευρωπαίους πολίτες. Το αρχικό κλείσιμο των συνόρων των βαλκανικών κρατών στις αρχές του 2016 αποτέλεσε την αρχή του ντόμινο για τα υπόλοιπα ευρωπαϊκά κράτη. Η συμφωνία της ΕΕ με την Τουρκία την ίδια χρονιά, ήρθε προς επιβεβαίωση αυτής της εσωστρεφούς πολιτικής (CNN Greece, 2016). Ενδεικτικά, στα κύρια σημεία της περιλαμβάνονται: η επιστροφή στην Τουρκία μεταναστών που δεν τους αναγνωρίζεται το καθεστώς πρόσφυγα και η παραμονή τους απειλεί την δημόσια τάξη, για κάθε επιστροφή Σύρου στην Τουρκία από τα ελληνικά νησιά ένας άλλος Σύρος θα επανεγκαθίσταται από την Τουρκία στην ΕΕ λαμβανομένων υπόψη των κριτηρίων τρωτότητας του ΟΗΕ με προτεραιότητα σε όσους δεν έχουν εισέλθει ή προσπαθήσει να εισέλθουν παράτυπα στην ΕΕ και τέλος η Τουρκία θα αναλάβει την καλύτερη φύλαξη των παράνομων διαδρομών που αποτελούν τα κενά σημεία των εξωτερικών συνόρων της ΕΕ. Στα ανωτέρω σημεία φαίνεται να καλλιεργούνται οι τρεις νοηματικοί άξονες που βρίσκονται σε κεντρικό σημείο των κατευθυντήριων γραμμών της ευρωπαϊκής πολιτικής. Η αποτροπή της προσέγγισης των περιφερειακών συνόρων, η δυνητική ποινικοποίηση της ταυτότητας του μετανάστη και το κριτήριο της «τρωτότητας» για την αναγνώριση του καθεστώτος του πρόσφυγα.

Η προέκταση αυτών των νομικών κατευθύνσεων αντανακλάται και στην πρόσφατη αναθεωρημένη ελληνική νομοθεσία. Στο άρθρο 46 του ν. 4636/2019 προβλέπεται ότι οι αιτούντες/ούσες άσυλο θα μπορούσαν να κρατηθούν για έως και 36 μήνες (σωρευτικά) στην Ελλάδα: το πολύ 18 μήνες για σκοπούς ασύλου και στη συνέχεια επιπλέον 18 μήνες για σκοπούς απέλασης (ΦΕΚ 46/ Α΄/01.11.2019). Η επιλογή του μέτρου της κράτησης ως εργαλείου πολιτικής αποτροπής των προσφυγικών και μεταναστευτικών ροών αποτελεί το δεύτερο «μέσο» υλοποίησης της ευρωπαϊκής οδηγίας περί αποτροπής, μετά από αυτό της ισχυρής φύλαξης των συνόρων.

Επιπλέον, τα κριτήρια της ευαλωτότητας για την αναγνώριση πολιτικού ασύλου αφήνουν τον ακριβή καθορισμό των ευάλωτων ομάδων στη διακριτική ευχέρεια των κρατών μελών που εφαρμόζουν το δίκαιο της ΕΕ. Ως εκ τούτου, η έννοια των προσώπων που χρήζουν ειδικής προστασίας στη διαδικασία ασύλου δεν εναρμονίζεται πλήρως μεταξύ των εθνικών συστημάτων ασύλου. Ο ελληνικός ορισμός των ευάλωτων ομάδων (ΦΕΚ 51/ Α΄/03.04.2016) βρίσκεται σε αντίθεση με τη νομοθεσία άλλων χωρών καθώς συμπεριλαμβάνονται τα πρόσωπα με μετατραυματικό σύνδρομο και ιδιαίτερα οι επιζήσαντες ναυαγίων. Οι πιέσεις τις οποίες υφίσταται η Ελλάδα από λοιπά κράτη της ΕΕ για να αναθεωρήσει τον εν λόγω ορισμό, κυρίως λόγω των διαδικαστικών εγγυήσεων που συνεπάγεται στο πλαίσιο της διαδικασίας στα Κέντρα Υποδοχής και Ταυτοποίησης των νησιών του Ανατολικού Αιγαίου, δείχνει και την δυσκολία στην εφαρμογή των κριτηρίων καθώς οι πρόσφυγες στις δομές επικαλούνται χωρίς να διαθέτουν κάποια από τα κριτήρια ευαλωτότητας με σκοπό να διαφύγουν από τα κέντρα φιλοξενίας.

Συμπεράσματα

Η πολιτική της ΕΕ στο προσφυγικό ζήτημα φαίνεται να χαρακτηρίζεται από εσωστρέφεια και από μία διπολική αντιμετώπιση των ατόμων που φθάνουν στα σύνορά της. Η διάχυση της αποτροπής μέσω των νομικών διατάξεων που αναπτύχθηκαν προηγουμένως εναλλάσσεται σε συμβολικό επίπεδο με πολιτικές οίκτου, που περισσότερο επιδεινώνουν παρά θεραπεύουν το πρόβλημα. Η συμφωνία της ΕΕ με την Τουρκία φαίνεται ότι κάλυψε πρόσκαιρα την προσφυγική κρίση που εντάθηκε μετά την μαζική έξοδο των Σύρων προσφύγων. Πλέον όμως, σύμφωνα με την Ύπατη Αρμοστεία, το 38,1% του συνολικού πληθυσμού των προσφύγων το 2020 είναι αφγανικής καταγωγής και το 38,1% άλλης καταγωγής πλην της συριακής (United Nations Refugee Agency, 2020). Αναδεικνύεται έτσι η πρόσκαιρη αντιμετώπιση του ζητήματος επειδή αυτό εισήρθε στο πεδίο των πολιτικών υποθέσεων μέσω των τοπικών του απολήξεων και επιπτώσεων. Τις οποίες επιπτώσεις, βιώνει η Ελλάδα λόγω της συνοριακής εγγύτητας με τους δρόμους που ενώνουν την Ευρώπη με τις χώρες προέλευσης των προσφύγων και της εργαλειοποίησης του προσφυγικού από την πλευρά της

Τουρκίας για διεθνείς πολιτικές διεκδικήσεις. Καθώς η έως τώρα πολιτική φαίνεται να μην θεραπεύει το υπάρχον πρόβλημα, θα πρέπει να δοθεί έμφαση στα ακόλουθα:

1. Ένα ενιαίο ευρωπαϊκό καθεστώς ασύλου που θα αποτελέσει τη βάση για τη μετεγκατάσταση των προσφύγων μεταξύ των κρατών μελών, το οποίο με τη σειρά του ανοίγει το δρόμο για δίκαιη κατανομή ευθύνης σύμφωνα με το άρθρο 80 της Συνθήκης Λειτουργίας της Ε.Ε. Στα πλαίσια αυτά, θα πρέπει να συζητηθεί εκ νέου το καθεστώς των «κριτηρίων ευαλωτότητας».

2. Την καθιέρωση μηχανισμού υποχρεωτικής ανακατανομής στο εσωτερικό της Ε.Ε. Όλα τα κράτη-μέλη θα πρέπει να φιλοξενούν πρόσφυγες ανεξαιρέτως. Σε περίπτωση συστηματικής άρνησης μίας χώρας, τότε πρέπει να επιβληθούν κυρώσεις, όπως η αναστολή δικαιωμάτων ψήφου στο Συμβούλιο και η μακροπρόθεσμη αποπομπή της από την Ε.Ε.

3. Οι πρόσφυγες που φιλοξενούνται μπορούν αν το επιθυμούν να παραμείνουν υπό προϋποθέσεις που θέτει το Κράτος Δικαίου στις χώρες της Ε.Ε σύμφωνα με την οποία η ιδιότητα του πολίτη, ανεξαρτήτως θρησκείας ή φυλής, που σέβεται τους νόμους μίας οργανωμένης κοινότητας υπερισχύει κάθε άλλης ταυτότητας που εκείνος διαθέτει, ενισχύοντας έτσι την ενσωμάτωση και όχι την απομόνωση.

4. Το Υπουργείο Μεταναστευτικής Πολιτικής να αποκτήσει την πλήρη αρμοδιότητα της διαχείρισης του ζητήματος εντός της χώρας.

5. Η σταδιακή μείωση των δομών φιλοξενίας στην Ελλάδα και ταυτόχρονα η σταδιακή βελτίωση των εγκαταστάσεων όσων θα λειτουργούν.

6. Η ενίσχυση των κέντρων φιλοξενίας με ιατρικό προσωπικό για την όσο το δυνατόν καλύτερη περίθαλψη των προσφύγων.

7. Η κατάρτιση ατομικού σχεδίου δράσης για τους πρόσφυγες, που θα αφορά την ενσωμάτωσή τους στην τοπική κοινωνία. Δημιουργία πλάνου επαγγελματικής προοπτικής, ευκαιρίες εργασίας αλλά και επιδοτούμενα προγράμματα/σεμινάρια επαγγελματικής κατάρτισης.

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Securitization of Migration Perceptions of Police and Market Actors in Greece: A Comparative Study in the Islands of Crete and Lesvos[1]

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Abstract

Migration is a multifaceted issue with a variety of research implications. In the case of Greece, the migration/refugee crisis of 2015 has been the subject of security centered policies since its beginning. Migration practices in Greece in conjunction with official statements (speech acts) from political and generally security actors, such as the police, suggest that migration in Greece has been securitized. The Greek police are a significant security actor that conveys important security messages and exerts significant influence on the public, since their role lies in the maintaining of public order. Yet, their role in the securitization of migration in Greece has been largely unexplored. Market actors are also an important driving force in attitude shaping at the labor market. Thus, the aim of this paper is twofold. First to explore and illustrate the perceptions and attitudes of the Greek police pertaining to migration and its relation to security and second to investigate whether these perceptions do exert influence on Greek market actors in the respective research areas (Crete and Lesvos), thus impeding the migrants'/refugees' integration in the labor market of Greece. In order to do so, a mixed methodology is used, applying both quantitative (structured interviews with police officers) and qualitative (semi-structured interviews with entrepreneurs) methods, so as to investigate whether police officers' stances reinforce market actors' perceptions on refugees with an emphasis on the economic sector of security as referred to by the Copenhagen School. The research was carried out in the Greek islands of Crete and Lesvos. These diverse geographical areas were chosen due to their different socio-economic conditions as well as due to their different migrant/refugee flows, hence providing fertile ground for optimal research outcomes.

Keywords: Security; Securitization; Migration; Police; Market Actors; Crete; Lesvos; Securitization of Migration; Greece.

Introduction

Migration has always been a multifaceted and contesting issue. In the case of Greece, ever since the migration/refugee crisis started to unfold in 2015, it was placed at the top of the security agenda of

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the Greek state resulting in respective policies to tackle the issue (Dimari, 2020). The securitization two-branch theory defines securitization as the process through which a political issue becomes a security threat, either through speech acts (Copenhagen School) or practices (Paris School) (Buzan et al, 1998; Bigo, 2002). As far as Greece is concerned, despite securitization and its application in the Greek case having been largely explored (Karyotis, 2012; Kalantzi, 2017, Dimari, 2020), the interrelation between security actors and other political elite actors has not been thoroughly explored. Thus, the aim of this paper is twofold. First to explore and illustrate the perceptions and attitudes of the Greek police pertaining to migration as well as its relation to security and second to investigate whether these perceptions do exert influence on Greek market actors in the respective research areas (Crete and Lesvos), thus impeding the migrants'/refugees' integration in the labor market of Greece.

In order to do so, a mixed methodology is used, applying both quantitative (structured interviews with police officers) and qualitative (semi-structured interviews with entrepreneurs) methods, so as to investigate whether police officers' stances reinforce market actors' perceptions on refugees with an emphasis on the economic sector of security as referred to by the Copenhagen School. The research was carried out in the Greek islands of Crete and Lesvos. These diverse geographical areas were chosen due to their different socio-economic conditions as well due to their different migrant/refugee flows, hence providing fertile ground for optimal research outcomes.

Indeed, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), more than 1 million refugees and migrants sought to enter the EU in 2015 (UNHCR, 2015. By the time this research was conducted, 10.927 refugees resided at the hot spot of Lesvos, with a hosting capacity of 4.187 (Ministry of Digital Telecommunications and Information Policy, 2018).

As far as Crete is concerned, the foreigners with a residence permit valid throughout Crete amounted to 32,535 in 2018 (Directorate of Foreigners and Immigration of the Decentralized Administration of Crete, 2018). With the establishment of a Regional Asylum Office of Crete in July 2017 the island emerged as key location in Greece's reception of refugees and migrants. While UNHCR has successfully accommodated approximately 240 refugees, those arriving irregularly to the island face harsh conditions and risk of deportation. UNHCR expanded its accommodation scheme earlier in the spring with the aim of gradually housing 750 asylum seekers in 125 rented apartments across Crete (ECRE, 2020) Up to 2018, there were more than 800 refugees that benefitted from ESTIA in Crete, with150 apartments in Heraklion, Chania and Sitia (UNHCR, 2018).

A two-way to Study Securitization of Migration

The post-cold war era shifted security analyses towards a process of reflections resulting into what is known as the deepening and the widening of the security agenda (Buzan, 2008). An outcome of this process was the emergence of what became to be known as securitization. The term 'securitization' was coined by Oli Wæver during the 1990s. This notion was later on further elaborated by the Copenhagen School of Security according to which securitization is the process of rendering something a threat by simply mentioning it. Who mentions it? The securitizing actor. Why is this so important? Because it has the power to bend normal political practices to safeguard a referent object that could be military, political, economic, societal or even environmental (Buzan et al, 1998). In the case of migration, its study is embedded in the context of the societal sector of security as articulated by the Copenhagen School (Taureck, 2006). The societal sector is, in its turn, studied in the context of identity and biopolitics. Thus, when migration is studied in the securitization framework the focus is on how migrants that enter a country are constructed as a threat to an existing national identity and may therefore erode it and threaten its existence in various ways (Buzan et al, 1998). A crucial aspect of the securitization process, which defines whether it is successful or not, is acceptance by the public audience (Léonard & Kaunertm, 2010).

Another securitization approach was articulated by the Paris School of Security Studies (Collective, C.AS.E, 2006), arguing that security is often characterized by the delivery of entire security sectors to "professionals of unease" who are in charge of managing existing threats and identifying new ones (Bigo, 2002: 63-65). Specifically, according to Bigo (2002), securitization, as a phenomenon, is observed beyond speech acts, recognizing that the threat can also be created by daily habits and practices and cooperation between security experts (such as police and military). Hence, practical work, disciplinary procedures and expertise are just as important as all forms of speech. In other words, the actions of bureaucratic structures or networks associated with security practices and the specific technologies they use may play a more active role in securitization processes than speech acts (Lenoard, 2011).

The role of the police is particularly important when it comes in carrying out specific security actions, since they are the responsible for maintaining peace and order in the society (UNHCR, 2004). Thus, the reason why migration is securitized can only be clarified when searched in relation to the perceptions and motives of the security actors, namely those actors that by virtue of their position and authority in the public societal structure are the ones who make the security assertions. Thus, a security actor can be any public figure, agent or organization (Bigo, 2002). Market actors, are also

significant political elites as they are in position to exert influence to government or to local administration, especially in small cities and islands.

Methodology

A mixed methodological strategy is used, applying both quantitative and qualitative methods, so as to investigate whether police officers' stances are in tandem with market actors' perceptions on refugees with an emphasis on the economic sector of security as referred to by the Copenhagen School. The research was carried out in the Greek islands of Crete and Lesvos due to different socio-economic conditions as well due to their different migrant/refugee flows, hence providing fertile ground for contrastable research outcomes.

Semi-structured interviews have been conducted with 150 market actors at the islands of Lesvos and Crete during the period of October-December 2018. The questions were divided into: open questions, opinion questions and elaboration probes. There were five sections: introductory part, personal questions, entrepreneurship issues, migration issues and concluding section, with a total of 25 questions. Discourse analysis was conducted for the identification of securitizing speech acts.

In addition, structured questionnaires have been distributed to police officers (32) at the islands of Lesvos and Crete during the period of October 2018. The questions were divided into two parts and the Likert Scale was used: the first part concerned personal information, whereas the second part revolved around migration and security. The first section regarded the military sector, the second the political, the third the economic sector, the fourth the societal and the fifth and last the environmental. In total, there were 25 questions. The statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS.

Findings

The discourse analysis that was conducted in the 150 semi-structured interviews to market actors revealed securitizing speech acts that revolve around the sectors of economy, health, politics, terrorism, national interest and identity. For the purposes of this research, and in order to explore speech acts pertaining to the economic sector as stated by the Copenhagen School, speech acts were extracted from the entrepreneurship issues and concluding remarks of the discourse analysis of the interviews. In the following tables, the key demographic characteristics of the research participants in Crete and Lesvos respectively are provided.

Table 1: Key demographic characteristics of interviewed businessmen in Crete

Business Sector:						
Food Service: 9	Retail: 21	Manufacturing: 3	Services: 19	Construction: 10	Tourist: 10	Total: 75
Educational Level:						
Primary education: 1	High school: 7	Secondary: 16		College: 9	Tertiary: 41	Total: 75
Sex:						
Men: 60				Women: 15		
Employees:						
Total of employees: 889	Average number of employees per company: 11.85		Total migrant workers or refugees: 166		Businesses employing migrants or refugees: 27	

Table 2: Key demographic characteristics of interviewed businessmen in Lesvos

Business Sector:						
Food Service: 17	Retail: 36	Manufacturing: 1	Services: 14	Construction: 1	Tourist: 6	Total: 75
Educational Level:						
Primary education: 5	High school: 5	Secondary: 25		College: 9	Tertiary: 31	Total: 75
Sex:						
Men: 44				Women: 31		
Employees:						
Total of employees: 258	Average number of employees per company: 3.44		Total migrant workers or refugees: 17		Businesses employing migrants or refugees: 5	

Analysis of Qualitative Results

The discourse analysis pertaining to security perceptions of market actors in Lesvos concerning migrants shows that they are perceived as a threat, with a referent object being the economic sector. Specifically, in the question whether migrants are beneficial of harmful for the market (Question 9), a respondent claimed that "*they are a 'risk [for the job market] because they will look for work and many of us will be left out.*" Another respondent also stated that they are "*a risk for the job market*". On the reasons for that, the respondent stated that "*there will be impoverished people who will be looking for a job, their salaries will fall, they will basically be preferred, because we also have the recent example of some years ago of the pan-Eastern influx when Albanians, Romanians came here,*

who actually dropped a bit the levels of salaries". Last, another respondent perceived them as a *"great danger for my children"*.

In the question whether the migration issue has affected the economic situation of the island (Question 10), one of the respondents claimed that *"everything has been negatively affected…because the people who are coming now are at a low level, resulting in delinquent situations on the island and it makes it difficult for both the business and the people working in the area"*.

In addition, when asked on the actions, the participants think that should be taken by governmental agencies in order to integrate refugees into business (Question 18), one of the respondents stated *"let them first do something for the unemployed",* whereas another participant responded that the first who should be employed are the *"Greeks who have a problem, the unemployed Greeks and then to take the foreigners as well. Here we have twenty percent unemployment in Greeks and we will employ the refugees?"*

The discourse analysis pertaining to security perceptions of market actors in Crete yields different results. In particular, in the case of Crete, respondents have a more positive stance towards migrants. On the question whether migrants constitute a threat or peril for the economy (Question 9) a respondent stated that *"people coming from other places and being active in Greece enrich our culture and this is also helpful for the economy"*. Another participant stated that they constitute an opportunity *"under certain conditions",* whereas another respondent holds the same view stating that *"when there can be a control then it is definitely an opportunity"*. Last, a participant answered that they are *"a great opportunity for entrepreneurs".* In addition, some participants have a more negative stance, claiming that *"for the Greek economy they cannot be considered as an opportunity"* or stating that *"It depends on what point of view you look at it. It can be a danger and an opportunity for some jobs that the locals do not go to"*.

Concluding, in the case of Lesvos, it seems that the recurring theme of the discourse analysis regarding the economic sector as a referent object is that migrants pose a threat for the economy, whereas for Crete perceptions are more positive, as on the one hand, the increased workload of companies and on the other hand, the demanding work that accompanies certain sectors such as agriculture, are not covered by the local labor market. Also, many respondents have a tolerant and positive view of the influx of immigrants.

Analysis of Quantitative Results

The analysis that was conducted in the 32 structured questionnaires to police officers revealed a highly securitized stance towards migration in all sectors stated by the Copenhagen School. For the purposes of this research, and in order to explore views pertaining to the economic sector as a referent object, the results from the third section (economic) of the questionnaire alongside with some necessary personal information and a graph from the military (first) section are presented.

Table 3: Key demographic characteristics of interviewed police officials in Lesvos

Greek Police Ranking						
Police Captain: 1	Police Sergeant: 4	Police Second Sergeant: 4	Police Officer: 3	Police Warrant Officer: 2	Police Lieutenant: 2	Total: 16
Age:						
26-35: 9	36-45: 2	46-55:	56 and more:	Total: 16		
Sex:						
Men: 14			Women: 2			
Years of Service:						
1-10: 3	10-20: 7	20-30: 5	30 and more: 1			

Table 4: Key demographic characteristics of interviewed police officials in Crete

Greek Police Ranking							
Police Captain: 1	Police major : 2	Police Sergeant : 4	Police Second Sergeant: 1	Police Officer: 1	Police Warrant Officer: 4	Police Lieutenant: 3	Total 16
Age:							
26-35: 4	36-45: 10	46-55: 2	56 and more:	Total: 16			
Sex:							
Men: 9			Women: 7				
Years of Service:							
1-10: 1	10-20: 3	20-30: 10	30 and more: 2				

Tables 5 & 6: Questions 2,4, Part A (Personal Information)
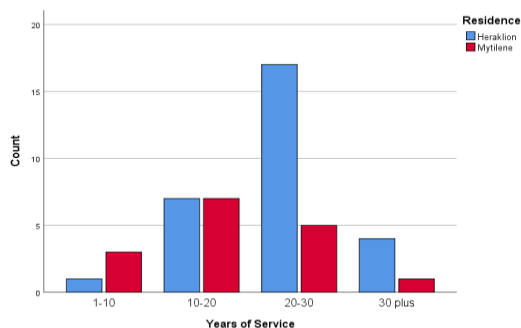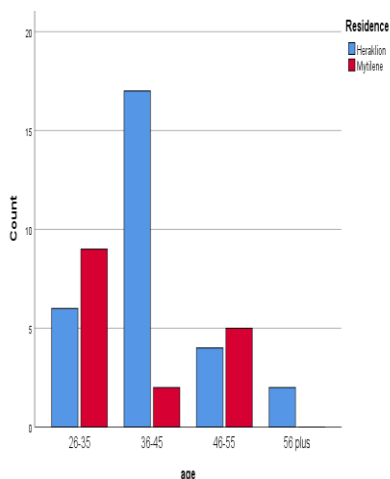
Table 7: Question 1, Part B (Migration & Security), Section 1: Military

In your opinion, at what level does the refugee crisis constitute a security issue for Greece?
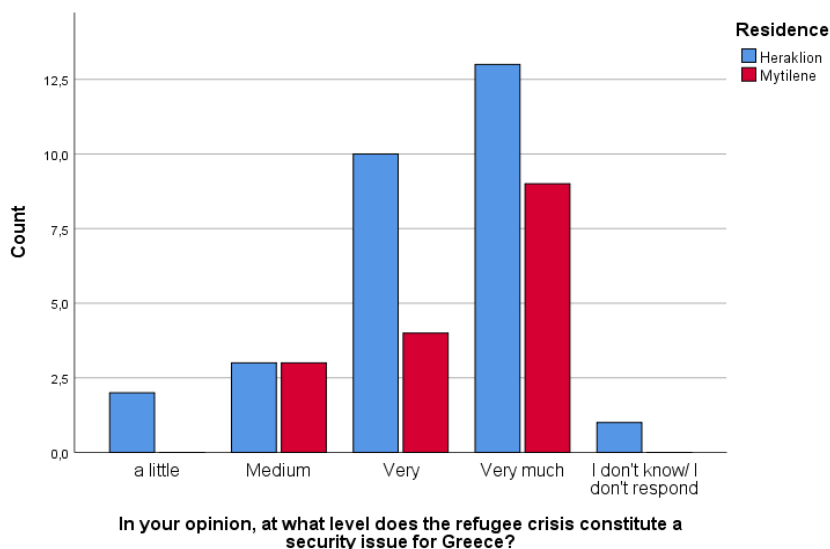
Tables 7 & 8: Question 1, Part B (Migration & Security), Section 3: Economic

In your opinion, at what level do migrants constitute an opportunity for the job market of your area?

In your opinion in what level do migrants pose a danger for the job market of your area?
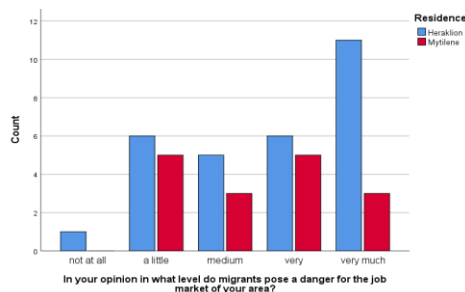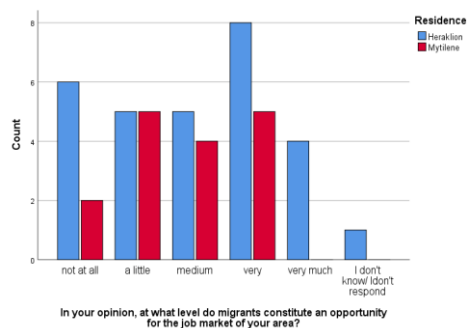
Table 9: Question 2, Part B (Migration & Security), Section 3: Economic
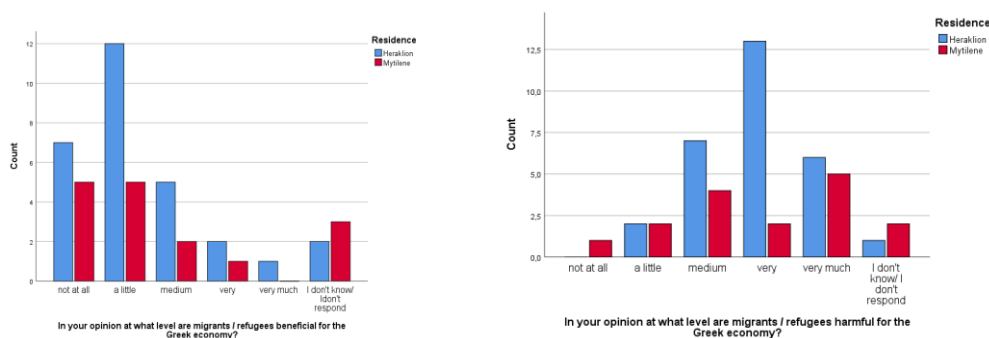
The above graphs show that for the military sector for both groups of respondents the migration/refugee crisis poses a threat for national security. As far as the economic sector is concerned, in the case of Lesvos, most respondents view migrants/refugees as an opportunity for their local economy, whereas a limited number of them perceives them as a danger. Despite that, respondents in their overwhelming majority think that migrants/refugees are harmful for the Greek economy and that they lead to economic instability, partially contributing to its productive sector. As far as Crete is concerned, police officers are split regarding whether migrants/refugees are an opportunity or danger for their local economy. Half of them view them as an opportunity whereas half of them as a danger. They also believe that migrants are mostly harmful rather than beneficial for the Greek economy and that they lead to economic instability, adding little to the productive sector of Greece.

Conclusions

It turns out that both in Lesvos and Crete migration is securitized. Securitization is extended in market actors in Lesvos whereas in Crete there is lucrative ground to cultivate tolerance and integration in the local labour market. Therefore, it is necessary to enforce education and training to securitization actors in order to diminish securitization, increase tolerance and enforce integration procedures to labour market, especially in areas such as Crete, that have more opportunities for integration.

At the same time, it is necessary to ensure evidence-based planning for the relocation of refugees in order to prevent the creation of any form of competition between the most disadvantaged groups in Greek society and refugees (Kotroyannos et al., 2019). Hence, a successful process of integration of refugees is the mechanism that will allow the achievement of important conditions of social welfare both for the refugees themselves and for society and the economy as a whole. From the findings of the research, we conclude that the conditions for the integration of refugees in the socio-economic system exist, especially in certain sectors of the economy but also in certain areas such as Crete, as

others, such as Lesvos, have limited opportunities for integration due to the high levels of securitization.

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Immigration, Refugees and Human Rights[1]

Ioannis Mouroutsos[2]

Abstract

This article presents the operation and implementation of the European HELIOS program in Greece which focuses on refugees and immigrants. It also analyzes the implementation of the program and actions in the field of housing, education and resettlement of refugees in local communities. At the same time, the role of local government in the implementation of the HELIOS program is highlighted as well as further initiatives by the Local Government for the orderly settlement and living of immigrants and refugees in local communities.

Keywords: immigration; refugee crisis; local administration; project Helios; refugees; immigrants; Greece.

Μετανάστευση, Πρόσφυγες και Ανθρώπινα Δικαιώματα

Ιωάννης Μουρούτσος

Περίληψη

Σε αυτό το άρθρο παρουσιάζεται η λειτουργία και εφαρμογή του Ευρωπαϊκού προγράμματος HELIOS στην Ελλάδα το οποίο επικεντρώνεται στους πρόσφυγες και μετανάστες. Επίσης, αναλύεται ο τρόπος υλοποίησης του προγράμματος και οι δράσεις στον τομέα της στέγασης, της εκπαίδευσης και της εγκατάστασης των προσφύγων στις τοπικές κοινωνίες. Ταυτόχρονα, επισημαίνεται ο ρόλος της τοπικής αυτοδιοίκησης στην εφαρμογή του προγράμματος HELIOS, καθώς και η περαιτέρω ανάληψη πρωτοβουλιών από την Τοπική Αυτοδιοίκηση για την εύρυθμη εγκατάσταση και διαβίωση των μεταναστών και των προσφύγων στις τοπικές κοινωνίες.

Λέξεις Κλειδιά: μεταναστευτικό, προσφυγική κρίση, τοπική αυτοδιοίκηση, πρόγραμμα Helios, πρόσφυγες, μετανάστες, Ελλάδα.

Εισαγωγή

Η Ελλάδα συγκαταλέγεται στα κράτη – μέλη που βίωσαν μια άνευ προηγουμένου αυξανόμενη πίεση μεταναστευτικών ροών, οι οποίες κορυφώθηκαν το 2015-2016 και είχαν ως αποτέλεσμα την εισροή μεγάλου αριθμού μεταναστών και προσφύγων στα νησιωτικά παράλια της χώρας. Μια από τις μεγαλύτερες προκλήσεις στη σύγχρονη ιστορία της Ελλάδας αποτελεί αναμφίβολα το μεταναστευτικό ζήτημα λόγω της ιδιαίτερης πολυπλοκότητας και του πολυδιάστατου χαρακτήρα,

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καθώς περιλαμβάνει κρίσιμους τομείς όπως αυτό της οικονομίας και του κοινωνικού κράτους. (Lamb, 2016).

Εξίσου σημαντικό είναι και το ζήτημα της ένταξης των μεταναστών στη χώρα υποδοχής το οποίο αποτελεί μια έντονη και διαρκή πρόκληση για κάθε τοπική κοινωνία ιδιαίτερα σε περιόδους οικονομικής και κοινωνικής κρίσης. Φαινόμενα όπως η περιθωριοποίηση και ο κοινωνικός αποκλεισμός αυξάνουν την πίεση και ενισχύουν τον ρατσισμό και την ξενοφοβία (Kritikos, 2020).

Ως εκ τούτου, σκοπός του παρόντος άρθρου είναι η παρουσίαση του Ευρωπαϊκού προγράμματος HELIOS που ξεκίνησε να υλοποιείται πιλοτικά στη χώρα μας το 2019 και συνεχίζει μέχρι και σήμερα, εγγράφοντας στο πρόγραμμα μετανάστες και πρόσφυγες, παρέχοντάς τους στέγαση και σίτιση, δίνοντάς τους παράλληλα τη δυνατότητα παρακολούθησης εκπαιδευτικών σεμιναρίων αλλά και συνεδρίες επαγγελματικού προσανατολισμού για την προώθησή τους στην αγορά εργασίας. Μέσα από τη δομή του παρόντος άρθρου θα αναλυθούν οι στόχοι και η λειτουργία του προγράμματος αλλά και η συμβολή της τοπικής αυτοδιοίκησης ενισχύοντας τις δεξιότητες των ωφελούμενων ώστε να αποκτήσουν οι ίδιοι σταδιακά αυτονομία μέσα στις τοπικές κοινωνίες. Καταληκτικά, θα αναφερθούν πρωτοβουλίες διοικητικής υποστήριξης που πρέπει να αναληφθούν από τους φορείς της Τοπικής Αυτοδιοίκησης για την ενσωμάτωση και ένταξη των προσφύγων – μεταναστών στον ιστό της τοπικής κοινωνίας, διασφαλίζοντας ένα καλύτερο επίπεδο διαβίωσης και ευημερίας.

Κύρια Ανάλυση

Το Φθινόπωρο του 2019 η ελληνική κυβέρνηση, για να αποσυμφορηθούν τα νησιά του ανατολικού Αιγαίου, ανακοίνωσε ότι θα εγκατασταθούν μετανάστες και πρόσφυγες σε πολλά σημεία της Ελλάδας, σε ποσοστό που δεν θα είναι πάνω από 1% του πληθυσμού ανά Περιφέρεια, ενισχύοντας τις υποδομές και τις υπηρεσίες στις τοπικές κοινωνίες, ώστε να αντιμετωπίσουν τις ανάγκες της έκτακτης φιλοξενίας (Ναυτεμπορική, 2019). Σύμφωνα με στοιχεία που δημοσιεύθηκαν στον τύπο (Το Ποντίκι, 2019), ο συνολικός αριθμός προσφύγων και μεταναστών που θα μετακινηθεί από τις Περιφέρειες Βόρειου και Νότιου Αιγαίου προς τις υπόλοιπες Περιφέρειες της χώρας, αντιστοιχεί σε ποσοστό 1% για κάθε Περιφέρεια, με βάση τον πληθυσμό της και καταγράφεται αναλυτικά στον πίνακα που ακολουθεί.

Πηγή: Εφημερίδα Το Ποντίκι

Οι Περιφέρειες και οι Δήμοι με τη σειρά τους, για να μπορέσουν να ανταποκριθούν στην πρόκληση εγκατάστασης και φιλοξενίας των προσφύγων, χρηματοδοτούνται από την Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση μέσω προγραμμάτων υλοποίησης για την ένταξη των μεταναστών στις τοπικές κοινωνίες προσφέροντας σίτιση και στέγαση, όπως επίσης και προγράμματα για την εκπαίδευση και απασχόλησή τους (Papadopoulos et al., 2019). Ένα Ευρωπαϊκό πρόγραμμα που ξεκίνησε να υλοποιείται πιλοτικά στη χώρα μας το 2019 και συνεχίζει μέχρι και σήμερα είναι το HELIOS (International Organization for Migration – IOM, 2020a).

Πιο αναλυτικά, τον Φεβρουάριο του 2019, ο Διεθνής Οργανισμός Μετανάστευσης (ΔΟΜ), σε συμφωνία με το Υπουργείο Μεταναστευτικής Πολιτικής, το οποίο αργότερα μετονομάστηκε σε Υπουργείο Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου, προχώρησε σε αίτηση έκτακτης χρηματοδότησης προς την Γενική Διεύθυνση Μετανάστευσης και Εσωτερικών Υποθέσεων (DG HOME) της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής για την υλοποίηση του προγράμματος HELIOS (Hellenic Integration Support for Beneficiaries of International Protection). Το πρόγραμμα HELIOS σχεδιάστηκε ως μια ολοκληρωμένη παρέμβαση για όλους τους ενήλικες δικαιούχους διεθνούς προστασίας και τα μέλη της οικογένειάς τους, οι οποίοι έχουν αναγνωριστεί από 1/1/2018 και διαμένουν στα στεγαστικά σχήματα του συστήματος υποδοχής (πρόγραμμα ESTIA, πρόγραμμα FILOXENIA, Ανοιχτές Δομές Φιλοξενίας. Κ.Υ.Τ, κ.τ.λ.). Στόχος του προγράμματος HELIOS είναι να διευκολύνει την σταδιακή και ομαλή ένταξη των ωφελούμενων στην ελληνική κοινωνία. Ως εκ τούτου, σκοπός του είναι η

ενδυνάμωση των δεξιοτήτων των ωφελούμενων ώστε να αναλάβουν οι ίδιοι σταδιακά την ανεξάρτητη διαβίωσή τους (European Commission. 2020).

Πιο συγκεκριμένα, το πρόγραμμα παρέχει:

α) Ενίσχυση της αυτόνομης στέγασης των ωφελούμενων που θα έχουν τη δυνατότητα να συνάψουν σύμβαση μίσθωσης στο όνομά τους. Με αυτό τον τρόπο θα περιλαμβάνεται η επιδότηση ενοικίου, η οποία λειτουργεί ως συνεισφορά για την κάλυψη του κόστους ενοικίασης κατοικίας και συναφών βασικών λειτουργικών εξόδων, και επίσης η συνεισφορά στις δαπάνες εγκατάστασης στη νέα κατοικία τους, η οποία προβλέπεται να καλύψει μέρος της εγγύησης της μίσθωσης καθώς και τα πρώτα έξοδα εγκατάστασης. Είναι σημαντικό να αναφερθεί ότι οι ωφελούμενοι θα μπορούν να λάβουν την επιδότηση στέγασης από 6 έως και 12 μήνες.

β) Την δυνατότητα στους ωφελούμενους του προγράμματος, να παρακολουθούν μαθήματα ένταξης για άνω των 16 ετών, εφόσον δεν είναι ήδη εγγεγραμμένοι στη δημόσια εκπαίδευση. Επίσης, τα μαθήματα ένταξης περιλαμβάνουν την εκμάθηση της ελληνικής γλώσσας, στοιχεία ελληνικού και ευρωπαϊκού πολιτισμού, καθώς και την επίτευξη δεξιοτήτων που θα ενισχύσουν την ετοιμότητά τους προς εργασία..

γ) Μέσα από ατομικές συνεδρίες επαγγελματικού προσανατολισμού θα δίνεται η δυνατότητα σε πρόσφυγες και μετανάστες να προωθηθούν στην αγορά εργασίας.

δ) Μέσα από διάφορες δράσεις (αθλητικές δράσεις, πολιτιστικές εκδηλώσεις, κ.ά.), θα προωθείται η κοινωνική συνοχή.

ε) Υφίσταται δυνατότητα παρακολούθησης της διαδικασίας ένταξης μέσω τακτικής αξιολόγησης της προόδου ένταξης των ωφελούμενων, ώστε να διασφαλιστεί ότι βρίσκονται σε θέση να διαπραγματευτούν επιτυχώς με τις ελληνικές δημόσιες υπηρεσίες μετά την ολοκλήρωση του προγράμματος HELIOS και ότι θα μπορέσουν να ζήσουν αυτόνομοι στην Ελλάδα.

Η υλοποίηση του προγράμματος έχει ήδη ξεκινήσει από την 1η Ιουλίου 2019 και αναμένεται να ολοκληρωθεί στις 30 Νοεμβρίου του 2020 με προοπτική ανανέωσης, όπως ανακοίνωσε σε πρόσφατη τοποθέτησή του ο Υπουργός Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου (Πρώτο Θέμα, 2020). Η Διεύθυνση Κοινωνικής Ένταξης, εκπροσωπώντας την Γενική Γραμματεία Μεταναστευτικής Πολιτικής, παρακολουθεί την υλοποίηση του Προγράμματος HELIOS, όπως και κάθε προγράμματος που σχετίζεται με την κοινωνική ένταξη μεταναστών και προσφύγων, κυρίως μέσω της σύστασης ομάδων εργασίας, ανά άξονα προτεραιότητας του Προγράμματος, με τους εκπροσώπους του ΔΟΜ και παρεμβαίνει υποστηρικτικά για την επιτυχή υλοποίησή του (Υπουργείο Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου, 2020).

Μέχρι σήμερα και με βάση τα επίσημα στοιχεία που ανακοίνωσε στις 20 Νοεμβρίου 2020 ο Διεθνής Οργανισμός Μετανάστευσης για το πρόγραμμα HELIOS στην Ελλάδα, 21.725 δικαιούχοι εγγράφηκαν στο πρόγραμμα HELIOS και έλαβαν υποστήριξη για ανεξάρτητη διαβίωση ενώ 8.246 δικαιούχοι έλαβαν επιδοτήσεις ενοικίου κατά την εύρεση ανεξάρτητης στέγασης (IOM, 2020b).

Επίσης, δεν πρέπει να αγνοηθεί ο συνολικός αριθμός των προσφύγων και μεταναστών που έχουν εισέλθει στη Ελλάδα συνολικά την περίοδο 2019 και 2020 που ανέρχεται σε 89.374 (UNHCR - Operational Portal Refugee Situations, 2020) από τους οποίους μόλις 21.725 είναι αναγνωρισμένοι πρόσφυγες και έχουν εγγραφεί στο πρόγραμμα HELIOS (IOM, 2020b). Με βάση τα παραπάνω στοιχεία φαίνεται ότι χρειάζεται αρκετή προσπάθεια ακόμα για να επιτευχθεί η εγγραφή σε όσο το δυνατό μεγαλύτερο αριθμό προσφύγων στο πρόγραμμα HELIOS, συνυπολογίζοντας μέσα σε όλα ότι η προσφυγική ροή συνεχίζεται (Clark, 2020) με αρκετά μειωμένη συχνότητα όπως παρατηρούμε από τα επίσημα στοιχεία της FRONTEX για το 2020.
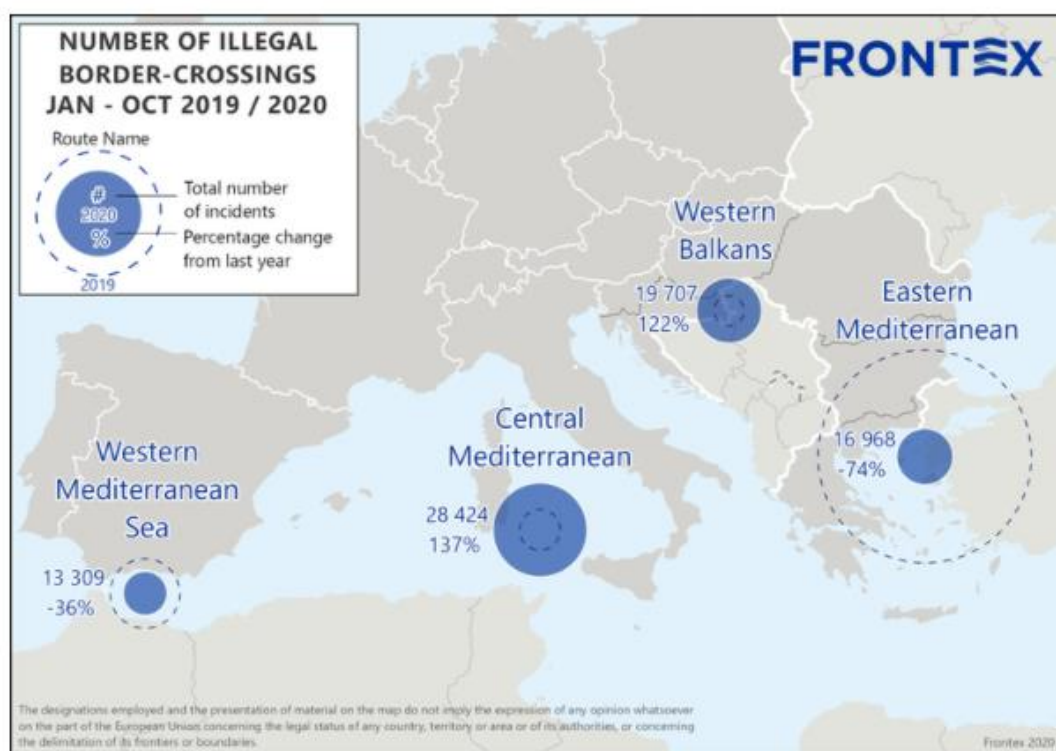
Πηγή: Frontex (2020)

Σε άλλα στοιχεία, όπως παρουσιάζονται από τον Διεθνή Οργανισμό Μετανάστευσης για την συμμετοχή των ωφελούμενων στις δράσεις του προγράμματος HELIOS, παρατηρείται ότι συνολικά 3.911 συμμετείχαν στη δράση υλοποίησης όσον αφορά τα Εργαστήρια Διαμονής, 4.399 συμμετείχαν σε συνεδρίες παρακολούθησης ενοποίησης, 2.965 έλαβαν μέρος στις εγγραφές μαθημάτων ολοκλήρωσης και τέλος 2.393 παρακολούθησαν Συνεδρίες Συμβουλευτικής Εργασίας (IOM, 2020b).

Επιπρόσθετα, σε όλη την Ελλάδα οι Δήμοι έχουν αναλάβει να λειτουργήσουν ως μηχανισμοί κοινωνικής ένταξης εφαρμόζοντας Ευρωπαϊκά προγράμματα ενσωμάτωσης των μεταναστών στην τοπική κοινωνία, όπως είναι ο τομέας της εκπαίδευσης και ο ρόλος ενίσχυσης της κοινωνικής συνοχής σε τοπικό επίπεδο, όπως περιγράφεται στην Εθνική Στρατηγική για την Ένταξη, που παρουσίασε το Υπουργείο Μεταναστευτικής Πολιτικής (Υπουργείο Μεταναστευτικής Πολιτικής, 2018). Με το πρόγραμμα HELIOS απασχολούνται συνολικά 300 υπάλληλοι σε όλη την Ελλάδα και υπάρχουν παράλληλα 19 Κέντρα εκπαίδευσης ένταξης (IOM, 2020b). Η εν λόγω συμμετοχή και εγγραφή μεταναστών και προσφύγων στα κέντρα εκπαίδευσης που δραστηριοποιούνται σε 19 δήμους της χώρας προϋποθέτει συγκεκριμένα κριτήρια, όπως η υποχρεωτική συμμετοχή στα μαθήματα ένταξης, η παρουσίασή τους σε κάποιο Κέντρο Ένταξης και Μάθησης για εγγραφή στα μαθήματα ένταξης το αργότερο δύο εβδομάδες αφότου προσκομίσουν στο προσωπικό του HELIOS, το μισθωτήριο συμβόλαιο και τα υπόλοιπα απαραίτητα έγγραφα για το επίδομα ενοικίου. Τα μαθήματα έχουν διάρκεια έξι (6) μηνών για κάθε ωφελούμενο. Οι δικαιούχοι που είναι επιλέξιμοι για εγγραφή στο έργο HELIOS καλούνται να παρακολουθήσουν ενημερωτικές συνεδρίες όπου έχουν την ευκαιρία να μάθουν περισσότερα για το έργο. Κάθε κύκλος μαθημάτων αποτελείται από 360 ώρες διδασκαλίας για μια περίοδο περίπου έξι (6) μηνών, κατά τη διάρκεια των οποίων οι δικαιούχοι παρακολουθούν τρεις (3) ώρες τάξεων την ημέρα, πέντε (5) ημέρες την εβδομάδα. Τα μαθήματα ένταξης είναι διαθέσιμα σε όλους τους δικαιούχους που είναι εγγεγραμμένοι στο HELIOS και είναι τουλάχιστον 16 ετών ενώ είναι υποχρεωτικά για τους δικαιούχους που λαμβάνουν επιδοτήσεις ενοικίασης (IOM, 2020a).

Μια εξίσου σημαντική λειτουργία που έχει εισάγει το πρόγραμμα HELIOS, είναι η δημιουργία μιας διαδικτυακής πλατφόρμας με το όνομα Heliospiti από τον ΔΟΜ και τους συνεργάτες του προγράμματος στον πυλώνα της στέγασης, όπου οι δικαιούχοι του HELIOS μπορούν να αναζητήσουν διαμέρισμα με την υποστήριξη εξειδικευμένου προσωπικού. Σε αυτό το πρόγραμμα συμμετέχουν και οι φορείς της τοπικής αυτοδιοίκησης ανά Δήμο, καθώς συνεργάζονται με το εξειδικευμένο προσωπικό του HELIOS, για την άμεση εύρεση στέγασης σε πρόσφυγες και μετανάστες.

Στόχος της τοπικής αυτοδιοίκησης είναι μέσα από πρωτοβουλίες διοικητικής υποστήριξης να συμβάλει στην υλοποίηση προγραμμάτων για τους πρόσφυγες και τους μετανάστες ώστε να σταθούν στα πόδια τους, να αποκτήσουν δεξιότητες και ικανότητες και να ενσωματωθούν αποτελεσματικά στις τοπικές κοινωνίες, μέσα από δράσεις που εφαρμόζονται στους δήμους.

Το πρόγραμμα HELIOS που παρουσιάστηκε παραπάνω αποτελεί ένα σημαντικό εργαλείο για την ενσωμάτωση των μεταναστών και των προσφύγων στην τοπική κοινωνία, ωστόσο, προκειμένου να

μπορέσουν οι Δήμοι να ανταπεξέλθουν επιτυχώς στις αυξανόμενες μεταναστευτικές-προσφυγικές ροές, χρειάζονται να υλοποιηθούν περαιτέρω δράσεις πολιτικής μέσα από συγκεκριμένες προτάσεις όπως:

- Να ενισχυθούν οι Μόνιμες Δομές για την ένταξη των Μεταναστών στους Δήμους, ιδιαίτερα σε αυτούς που αντιμετωπίζουν τις αυξημένες ροές των μεταναστών, όπως είναι η ανατολική νησιωτική Ελλάδα, και να στελεχωθούν με το απαραίτητο επιστημονικό και εξειδικευμένο προσωπικό.

- Να ενεργοποιηθούν και να αναβαθμιστούν τα Συμβούλια Ένταξης Μεταναστών όπως προβλέπονται στο Νόμο «Κλεισθένης» (Άρθρο 79 του Ν.4555/2018). Ένα μέτρο το οποίο δεν έχει προχωρήσει σε πολλούς δήμους της χώρας και θεωρείται ότι θα βοηθήσει στη διαχείριση και αποτελεσματική λειτουργία του προσφυγικού στις τοπικές κοινωνίες.

- Να γίνουν ενέργειες αντιστροφής των άσχημων στερεοτύπων που επικρατούν πολλές φορές στις τοπικές κοινωνίες για τους μετανάστες-πρόσφυγες μέσω δράσεων διαβούλευσης και ενημέρωσης αλλά και μέσω εμπέδωσης ενός κλίματος που θα διευκολύνει την κοινωνική συνοχή και την απάλειψη των διακρίσεων.

- Να αξιοποιηθούν όλα τα χρηματοδοτικά εργαλεία ενίσχυσης της τοπικής αυτοδιοίκησης για την υποστήριξη στέγασης και σίτισης, όπως επίσης να υλοποιηθούν και όπου υπάρχουν να ενισχυθούν σε τοπικό επίπεδο προγράμματα εκπαιδευτικής υποστήριξης των προσφύγων και των μεταναστών.

Επίλογος

Σύμφωνα με όσα αναφέρθηκαν παραπάνω, γίνεται αντιληπτό ότι το πρόγραμμα HELIOS, αν και εφαρμόζεται μόλις ένα χρόνο στην Ελλάδα, μπορεί να συνεισφέρει θετικά στην ένταξη των μεταναστών και των προσφυγών στις τοπικές κοινωνίες με τη συνδρομή των φορέων της τοπικής αυτοδιοίκησης.

Εξίσου σημαντικό όμως είναι να ενισχυθούν περαιτέρω οι δράσεις του προγράμματος HELIOS με την παροχή αποτελεσματικών υπηρεσιών, που θα προσφέρουν στους μετανάστες και στους πρόσφυγες τη δυνατότητα να συνεισφέρουν με ίσους όρους στις τοπικές κοινωνίες μέσα από τη συμμετοχή τους στην πολιτιστική, οικονομική και κοινωνική ζωή της χώρας.

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The Dublin Regulation: Dimensions, Problems and Perspectives[1]

Sofia Demerouti[2]

Abstract

Over the last 20 years, with the development of the Common European Asylum System, the policymaking towards asylum seekers has transposed to the European Union. EU's ambition though to build a harmonized asylum system differs from reality and the injustices among Member States led to the deep crisis of the Dublin Regulation. This policy brief, examines the process of the Dublin Regulation, the problems that are still being confronted and the legislative framework of the regulation. The paper concludes with the proposal of recommendations and perspectives that could lead to a deeper integration of the system.

Keywords: Dublin Regulation; Immigration Policy of EU; European Union; Common European Asylum System; Asylum seekers.

Introduction

It is undeniable that the Dublin Regulation is a very complex subject which includes a plethora of major parameters such as fairness among the Member States of European Union (EU), fundamental human and refugees' rights and of course the effectiveness of the Regulation.

The Dublin Regulation practically, evaluates the responsible Member State for the assessment of individual asylum applications within the EU according to the so – called Dublin criteria. In order to understand the conditions and the reasons that led to the Dublin Regulations, it is legitimate to lay down the framework of the European Union's immigration policy within which they were created. (Brouwer, 2013)

Until the beginning of 1980's, the formation of a Common European Asylum System was not a priority and remained in the third pillar: Justice and Home Affairs (JHA). This changed drastically with the increase in the number of applicants due to international developments and setbacks (conflicts in the European continent and difficult political situations in countries outside Europe) which created the need to coordinate the national asylum policies of the Member States of the Community and the existence of a common strategy.

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Common European Asylum System (CEAS)

Briefly referring to the formulation of the European immigration policy, we can identify two milestones. The Schengen Agreement refers to an extra-EC initiative between five European Community countries (Belgium, Germany, France, Luxembourg and the Netherlands) to control the Union's external borders and free movement of Member States' citizens in the Single European Area. The creation of such an area would not have been possible without the simultaneous regulation of immigration and asylum issues. It also introduced the first pan-European police database, the Schengen Information System (SIS). In addition, the Single European Act in 1987, created the Common Market, a Community area with free movement of people, goods, services and capital (Brekke, 2014).

On 15 of June 1990, **the Dublin Convention** *was signed* and it was the first binding treaty in the field of asylum. It was a transnational and not a Community creation. It was intended to regulate the EU Member State which was each time responsible for examining an asylum application in order to deal with the abuses by the applicants, but also in order to tackle the inaction of the states invoking their incompetence. The fundamental premise of the convention was that all contracting States were considered *safe countries* and therefore the determination on a basis of objective criteria, against the personal wish of the applicant, would not infringe their rights (Velluti, 2014).

The step forward came with the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997), when asylum and immigration policy came under the first pillar and part of the Member State's jurisdiction was transferred to the Union. At the same time, an area of "freedom, security and justice" was established, in which " *In order to establish progressively an area of freedom, security and justice, the Council shall adopt: (a) within a period of five years after the entry into force of the Treaty of Amsterdam, measures aimed at ensuring the free movement of persons in accordance with Article 7a, in conjunction with directly related flanking measures with respect to external border controls, asylum and immigration, in accordance with the provisions of Article 73j(2) and (3) and Article 73k(l)(a) and (2)(a), and measures to prevent and combat crime in accordance with the provisions of Article K.3(e) of the Treaty on European Union"* (Treaty of Amsterdam, article 2).

The Dublin II Regulation (343/2003 / EC) was adopted in February 2003 to implement Article 63 TEC, which required the Dublin Convention to be replaced by a Community legal act. It has been implemented by all EU Member States, as well as by Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland. This Regulation, which is considered to be the first cornerstone of CEAS, was based on the principle of causality. At the same time, the Eurodac database established an administrative fingerprint

database. It thus set the criteria for determining which Member State would be responsible for the asylum procedure.

The criteria were as follow[3]: Principle of family unity, insurance of residence permits or visas, illegal entry or stay in a Member State, legal entry in a Member State, application in an international transit area of an airport (Fullerton, 2016).

The crisis of Dublin Regulation

The Dublin II Regulation did not constitute a quota system for the distribution of asylum applications in all EU Member States but transferred almost the entire burden of management to the countries located at the Union's external borders. The point of the Rules of Procedure, which has largely created the present crisis and is a constant field of tension between States, is the criterion of the applicant's illegal entry and residence to determine the State responsible for examining the asylum application.

The industrialized countries of Northern and Central Europe, have long been the preferred destination for asylum seekers, since, for the period 2000-2004 (the time of enactment of the Dublin II Regulation), four countries of the European Union (United Kingdom, France, Germany and Austria) received two thirds of asylum applications worldwide each year (Eurostat, 2009). The desire of these countries to reduce the flows to their territories and to combat asylum shopping in conjunction with their political displacement in the Union led to the adoption of this criterion. Therefore, with the exception of family reunification and the liability of a state for the legal residence and entry of a third-country national -an extremely limited case- , the liability falls on countries of illegal entry which are not other than regional countries such as Greece, Italy, Malta and Cyprus. These states followed a relatively relaxed fingerprinting process, facilitating the transition to the North (Hatton, 2009).

Dublin III Regulation

The above weaknesses of the Regulation, problems related both to the effectiveness of the system and the level of protection of the rights of asylum seekers were recognized by the Commission, which in 2008 submitted a proposal for the reform of the Dublin II Regulation. The Commission proposal, was intend to increase the efficiency of the system and to ensure higher standards of protection for persons covered by the procedure, while at the same time addressing the particular pressures of reception facilities and asylum systems in the Member States. The most interesting point of the

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[3] The criteria are to be applied in the order in which they are presented in the Regulation and on the basis of the situation existing when the asylum seeker first lodged his/her application with a Member State (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM%3Al33153).

Commission's Proposal was the introduction of a new procedure in the Regulation allowing the temporary suspension of transfers to the responsible Member State, in cases where a State is facing a *" particularly urgent situation which puts a great deal of pressure on the reception capacity, its asylum system or infrastructure"* (Preamble, para. 21) or when the Commission considers that *the level of protection of applicants for international protection in a particular Member State does not comply with Community asylum law*, in particular as regards the access to the asylum procedure, in order to ensure that all applicants for international protection enjoy an adequate level of protection in all Member States (Preamble, para. 22).

This proposal was justified in terms of solidarity for those Member States which, due to their geographical location, face intensive pressures. However, it was not adopted in the revised Regulation 604/2013/ EU, because as the Commission acknowledged, the consultation process showed that the majority of Member States were in favor of maintaining the fundamental principles of the Regulation. The compromise solution was the introduction of the Early Warning Mechanism (Regulation 604/2013 / EU, Article 33).

As is clear from the above provision, the Regulation once again does not overturn either the criteria for determining the responsible Member State or their hierarchy.

Some of the notable changes are that the scope of asylum is expanded to include beneficiaries of international protection and stateless persons, while the concept of "international protection" is expanded to add asylum seekers and subsidiary protection applicants. It also establishes the right to inform applicants in a language they understand about the current legal framework on asylum in the EU and the implementation of the Dublin III Regulation and provide a personal interview in order to facilitate the process of identifying the responsible Member State, and in any case before the transfer decision is taken (European Commission, 2015).

Towards a reform of the CEAS: Dublin IV Regulation Proposal

In May 2016, the Commission once again seeks to reform the CEAS by submitting a proposal to the European Parliament and the Council (European Commission, 2016). Its objectives can be summarized as follows: **(a)** establishing a viable and equitable system for allocating asylum applications by providing a permanent allocation mechanism within the Dublin Regulation based on the logic of relocation; **(b)** preventing secondary movements through the greater harmonization of asylum systems and the imposition of sanctions on those making secondary travel, **(c)** facilitating return and combating irregular migration through the strengthening of the Eurodac system and **(d)** upgrading the role of EASO.

Even though earlier that year EU Commissioner for migration Dimitris Avramopoulos had announced that the revamp would be based on a distribution key system and he told MEPs in the civil liberties committee that "Dublin should not be any more just a mechanism to allocate responsibility […] it needs to be a solidarity instrument among member states", Commission chose in the submitted proposal to "streamline" the current system and supplemente it with a correctional mechanism of equal treatment (Nielsen, 2016).

In particular, it was proposed to introduce an allocation correction mechanism, which will work as follows: an automated system will record all applications for international protection and will continuously monitor the percentage of applications for each designated responsible Member State compared to a set key reference rate. Whenever the number of applications for which a Member State is responsible exceeds 150% of the number specified in the reference key, the mechanism will be activated automatically, resulting all new applications submitted to the disproportionately pressured Member State to be transferred to another Member State with a number of applications less than the number specified in the reference key.

Additionally, the criteria for determining the Member State responsible for examining the asylum application remain the same and some new obligations are added to them. The application for international protection must be submitted to the Member State of first irregular entry, where the applicant must remain until the procedure is completed and the applicant has an obligation to check whether the application is inadmissible, in case the applicant comes from a first country of asylum or from a safe third country, in which case the applicant will be returned to the third country and the admissions authority will be Member State. Finally, a proposal was adopted to abolish the disclaimer clause 12 months after the irregular entry, while the discretion clause is made less extensive, to ensure that it is used only for humanitarian purposes for the extended family (European Parliament, Policy Department, 2016).

The above proposals for the new Dublin Regulation provoked a strong wave of reactions, especially from the countries of first entry, which hoped for a substantial and tangible rationalization of the asylum system. The new regulations are obviously moving in the opposite direction from the one announced by the Commission. Not only do they not facilitate these states, but new obligations are introduced for them.

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the formation of the asylum system, it was clear that the division of responsibility between the Member States would not be done in a harmonizes and meritocratic way with the states on the

southern and eastern borders of the Union bearing the brunt of managing the refugee issue since the criterion of illegal entry was the dominant criterion for determining the responsible state. The inherent imbalances of the Dublin system were exacerbated by the pathogenesis of the asylum and host systems of the periphery of the European Union, which began to come under increasing pressure from mixed migratory flows.

From the examination of the way that EU handled the refugee crisis, two main findings emerge:

- The policies pursued are largely incompatible with international and EU law.

- Effective management of those entering European territory is not achieved, in terms of an equal distribution of responsibilities between the Member States and, in that regard, an equal burden on their asylum and reception systems, in fulfillment of the principle of solidarity in Article 80 TFEU.

Member States have engaged in a "zero-sum game", developing a more defensive than cooperative attitude, based on the lack of mutual trust. The European Parliament's proposal could launch a new dialogue within the EU. Clearly, a radical overhaul of the Dublin Regulation is a key precondition for managing the refugee issue and dealing with the crisis:

- The construction of a substantially CEAS, which will harmonize the standards of protection and social inclusion of applicants for international protection and refugees from all Member States is needed.

- The European Parliament should support the use of distribution keys, based on a rigorous assessment of the extent to which States are meeting their obligations.

- To cope with imbalances caused or exacerbated by significant numbers of arrivals and limited capacity, Asylum Migration and International Fund resources for emergency measures should be increased in future budgets to ensure that adequate resources can be quickly made available to deal with conditions of heavy migratory flows as prescribed in the provisions of the AMIF Regulation.

- The European Parliament should ensure future legislation avoids coercion.

- A comprehensive reform of the EU immigration policy - whose extremely restrictive logic has led to an overburdening of asylum systems - also needs to be reconsidered.

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Topic 9

International Economics and Global Economy: Trends and Directions

Democracy, Transformation and the Relational Economy:
Prospects for a Successful Society[1]

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Abstract

Not least because of existential crises such as climate change, poverty or social inequality, the transformation currently taking place is changing the way people live together in a sustainable manner. However, such challenges can only be overcome by humanity as a whole. Therefore, it is necessary to develop new collective problem solving modes that take into account the relationship of the individual to his environment. As a starting point for this, we propose the introduction of a systemic-relational economy which, starting from companies, establishes a holistic world view oriented towards the growth of good relationships. This is the preferable way to meet the changing demands of modern life and to achieve ecologically, economically and socially sustainable success.

Key words: Transformation; Economy; Systemic; Relational; Technology; Society; Barriers; Corporation; Individual; Change.

> The world is changing:
> I feel it in the water,
> I feel it in the earth,
> and I smell it in the air.
> (J.R.R. Tolkien, 1988)

Introduction

The world is at a crossroad. Now, at the beginning of the 21st century, mankind is confronted with challenges that it can only solve on a global level. Climate change, poverty, hunger and social inequality are just some of the existential crises of our age. None of them can be solved by a small group of people or individual nations alone. Rather, an effort by humanity as a whole is needed. The problem here is that past and present problem-solving modes are not able to adequately deal with the

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challenges and crises we have to face. Therefore, new approaches are needed to understand and shape the world of today and tomorrow.

The world is growing closer together due to the progressing globalisation and the increasing spread of information technologies such as the internet and mobile devices. The global data stream enables its users to access almost all imaginable information. One can exchange thoughts, messages and cute animal photos in real time. Our lives are becoming increasingly "smart", but also diverse and complex, making problem solving difficult; we have not yet collectively learned to use the new technologies and to understand their impact on the way we live together.

In contrast to previous transformation processes, it is no longer technologies that are causing the actual change, but rather our handling of them is creating the change in the way we live and work together (Nefiodow, 2017). While the so-called "Industrial Revolution" was characterised by the introduction of technologies such as the steam engine or looms powered by it, the beginning of the information age was determined by the spread of computers. Today, it is all about connecting humans, machines, but also humans and machines. Thus, we are talking about a social component, the ability to communicate.

As the world grows closer together, mankind is beginning to realise that the problems of this world are not natural states, but the product of human development. Already today we produce more food than is needed for the world society (Hasell, 2013), there is more than enough wealth to enable every human being to live a dignified life, we know strategies to end the destructive way of doing business, etc. Nevertheless, these problems persist.

The world community agreed in 2015 on 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as a result of a process started long before. They address, among other things, the above-mentioned problems and are intended to serve as a blueprint to enable "peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future" (UN, 2015) and to act as a "call to action" (ibid.). The sense, nonsense, usefulness, compatibility and practicability of the various SDGs have already been sufficiently discussed elsewhere, for example in Christian Berg (2020), and will not be discussed further below. It is a fact, however, that the challenges described by SDGs are of undiminished relevance and can be called timeless, so to speak.

At the same time, SDGs represent the increasingly widespread recognition that such challenges can be overcome if people actively work on them together. This is probably one of the reasons why we are at the beginning of a global transformation that could fundamentally change the way we live together. Change is a constitutive characteristic of human social systems and nothing special. But a

transformation is much more than that. It is a fundamental change in collective values, morals, views and lifestyles, which leads towards actively shaping the future and a new social reality.

Therefore, the question arises: How can world society manage to achieve such a transformation towards a sustainable way of life that enables all people to live in dignity? To answer this question, we will present an interdisciplinary perspective in the following, which can be described as a "systemic-relational economy" and serve as a starting point for a sustainable future.

Entry Points for a Relational Economy

But what is a systemic-relational economy (SRE) anyway? SREs can be understood as the sum of the positive social, economic and ecological relationships of individuals and social groups among themselves and with their environment. This involves a holistic view of the social system and a high quality of relationships. They are achieved through positive win-win thinking among equal partners in order to recognise potentials and possibilities, thus achieving the best possible results. In this way, a dignified life and the realisation of SDGs can be accomplished.

This requires systemic-relational ways of thinking and procedures that replace classic linear-causal problem-solving modes. The world is becoming increasingly opaque due to the increase in dynamic, social and emergent complexity. Cause and effect are linked by longer and more complex chains of effects and are separated in space and time. Actors have different perspectives, assumptions and interests and there are discontinuous, erratic changes (Scharmer, 2016). The more complex causality chains become, the more impenetrable they are and the more impossible linear-causal approaches become. This makes it more difficult, or almost impossible, to derive behaviour and recommendations from experience. On the other hand, a systemic-relational approach makes it possible to look at the whole system, which allows to find potentials and connections for problem solving in the whole system.

Nevertheless, the realisation of a systemic-relational economy is subject to a multitude of challenges and resistance. These are inherent in the system, because the system already reacts to the planning of a change, which simultaneously generates implementation and resistance (Luhmann, 1995). Resistance is inseparably linked to change. It exists everywhere where change occurs (Hauschildt & Salomo, 2007). The systemic-relational economy uses this opposition as a strength, as it can provide indications of previously unnoticed opportunities and risks (Schirmer, 1999). A constructive approach to such natural defensive reactions, from within the system, in transformation processes is therefore absolutely essential if the probability of success of the change is to be increased (Doppler & Lauterburg, 2013).

There are various ways to successfully introduce a systemic-relational economy. One strategy lies in the use of laws. Such laws, passed by states, nations or even supranational institutions such as the EU, could formally bring about a systemic-relational economy. The responsible parliaments or other bodies with legislative power would thus be able to stipulate, for example, that companies must generate an ecological and social profit. This could be achieved, for example, by means of a positive ecological balance sheet or a gain in social justice (Berg, 2020).

However, the road to this goal is not only rocky in parliamentary democracies based on free elections. Other forms of government would also have a hard time here, as long as they are not ruled by an eco-dictator whose very existence already contradicts an SRE. Majorities are needed to pass laws, and these must be organised. Ideally, the introduction of SRE-laws would be the subject of an election campaign so that voters could vote for them. It is then necessary for an executive that is capable of acting to enforce the provisions that have been adopted. In addition, laws are rules and as such they provoke resistance, either in spite of, or because their content does not fit into one's own world view. There are countless other examples of this perception, such as the fundamental values of the EU, which are repeatedly called into question, not only at its external borders.

Just how difficult the successful initiation and implementation of laws can be is shown by the recent debate around the Fridays for Future movement, which, as is well known, calls for compliance with the Paris climate targets and the limitation of global warming to well below 2°C. While the Paris Agreement is a binding treaty under international law its implementation is at least questionable.

However, this is not meant to be an argument against corresponding laws. It is merely a matter of hurdles that must be taken into account in this process. A legal basis can also prove helpful for other approaches. The state is thus able to create the necessary framework for economic processes to take place at all. Only in this way is it possible for companies to implement SRE elements. This includes, for example, the possibility of co-determination at company level, which can develop into democratically managed companies, or the possibility of founding non-profit organisations.

As the previous examples show, relatively high hurdles can be assumed if the challenges are only tackled at the meta-level presented so far. In order to increase the probability of successfully overcoming transformation barriers, other levels in the social system must be considered.

Accordingly, we see companies as the optimal starting point for a transformation towards SRE. This is due to the fact that at this social level people interact with others and a lot of people-to-people interactions take place here. The effectiveness of the individual in institutions is higher than at superordinate social level. The latter is largely determined by the corporate level, which alongside

political institutions is an important part of the social order and social interaction. At the same time, companies guarantee the visibility of individuals and their relationships, which together form a society.

We therefore propose to take precisely those measures that make companies the starting point for the transformation towards SRE. People spend a lot of time at work. On average, 8 hours on about 200 days per year. In addition, work plays an important role in the personal development of each individual. Work shapes us, both in terms of the work we do and in connection with the social contexts and relationships that exist there. It gives us identity and meaning to life because it allows us access to a particular social group and guarantees our livelihood (Sennett, 1998).

Moreover, views and skills acquired at work can be easily transferred to other areas of human coexistence. For example, Norbert Elias describes what he calls the economy, which includes the world of work as a sphere that forms society together with the state sphere (Elias, 2012). The economic sphere is often seen as the more innovative and the starting point for social change processes (Frerichs, 2014). Systems theory also suggests that because of the interdependence relationship of social systems, patterns of order can be transferred from one social system (e.g. economy) to another (e.g. society as a whole) (Jetzkowitz, 2002).

Skills once learned in the company that serve as key factors for SRE, such as the ability to engage in dialogue, a holistic view, willingness to cooperate, empathy, compassion, respect and appreciation for one's counterpart and the environment as a whole, are not simply discarded when one goes home, but remain and have a lasting effect on behaviour. SREs are basically constant negotiation processes that make it possible to deal with the complexity of the immediate environment and thus to confront the complexity of reality as a whole. In this way, important skills for life in a democracy are trained, which is why SRE can be seen as an exercise in democratic principles.

All in all, synergy effects between political and economic levels are thus evident, which were already taken up by Acemoglu and Robinson (2012). This underscores the importance of good interplay between the institutions in order to strengthen the development towards sustainability and extended problem-solving modes.

Conclusions

In recent years, a variety of relational approaches have been developed to drive forward the transformation of the economy and society. Many of them originate from the field of pluralist economics, an increasingly important current within the economic sciences that recognises different

research paradigms and opposes the dominance of the often highly simplistic neoclassical school of thought. In this way, economics can take into account the increasing complexity and heterogeneity of the dawning new world and thus contribute to many innovative solutions to overcome the existential crises of the 21st century.

The "Theory U" developed by Otto Scharmer (2016) has established itself as one of the most prominent examples on the individual level. This approach, derived from systems theory, focuses on a change in consciousness of the place from which people act and thus opens the way for a systemic-relational view of the world. This enables each individual to create a positive future within his or her own sphere of influence.

At the level of larger social units, it is approaches such as the Donut Economy developed by Kate Raworth (2017) that are driving forward a transformation from an economic indicator-based approach to a social, ecological and economic approach within the boundaries of the "ecosystem earth". Here too, a systemic-relational approach is applied, which ultimately aims at overcoming the challenges that lie ahead of us as humanity.

It is important to stress that despite all the adversities, challenges and crises that the future may hold, we humans are not helpless in the face of them. Precisely because we ourselves have caused many problems such as climate change and social inequality, it is in our power, indeed it is actually our duty, to find solutions and implement them together. To this end, it is important that we remember that we are always strongest when we overcome the gaps between us, reach out to our neighbours and actively shape the future together.

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Topic 10

International Organizations and International Relations in the 21st Century

Rethinking Security: The Limits of the Traditional Concept of Security in a World of Non-Traditional Threats[1]

Dawid Aristotelis Fusiek [2]

Abstract

This essay discusses the evolution of the modern conception of security and argues that there is a need for its expansion in order to tackle the rising non-traditional threats. Traditionally, the realist paradigm of national security has dominated the academic debate, while promoting a military and state-centric approach to "doing security". Despite emergence of non-military and non-state security threats, the paradigm of national security is still figuring at the center of the modern state. However, the proliferation of non-traditional threats combined with the states' inability to address them have troubled the academia and policymakers. This perception has been further reinforced by the latest Covid-19 pandemic, which demonstrated not only the limitations of national security, but also the dangerous consequences of this new type of threat. As climate change effects become more tangible and destructive, it becomes evident that the coronavirus outbreak is another indication that the security landscape is not equipped to confront rising threats. Therefore, there is a need for the development of a more holistic security concept and the dismantlement of the preexisting strictly state-centric and military approaches.

Keywords: security; non-traditional threats.

Introduction

The sovereign state is a quintessential element of the theory and worldview of political scientists and the main source of political authority in the contemporary international system. Since its creation (there is no consensus when this occurred), it has dominated the field to such extent that it is practically impossible to perceive political order beyond or without it (Baumann et al. 1998). It has also been one of the most debated concepts in the last decades, particularly following the end of the Cold War when a series of new developments challenged the traditional perception of statehood and its boundaries. Forces such as globalization, cosmopolitanism, and the dramatic increase of multilateralism signalized the arrival of new forms of authority and political entities, which could transcend both statism and the "inherited" dualistic view of national and international (Bartelson,

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2001). Not surprisingly scholars began to either refer to state and sovereignty as obsolete ideas (Jackson, 2003), talk about "organized hypocrisy" (Krasner, 1999), or even create utopian dreams of world society (Buzan, 2004).

Two decades after this initial "renaissance", both scholar's expectations and predictions have proven to "be way off" as the state has not only maintained but also further validated its authority and presence. During the last years, several states (mostly superpowers) have repeatedly shown the return of statism through the adoption of unilateral policies (e.g. Trump's economic protectionism) and actions challenging the international order (e.g. Russian invasion of Crimea), even though the existence of limitations to sovereignty such as International Law or economic forces (Brown, 2010). This situation has created a paradox: whereas the modern political and academic discourse ceaselessly questions the authority of the state, it is still taken for granted and figures at the center of the political analysis.

As the century progresses, the new challenge to the concept of statehood has derived from the sector that has traditionally enjoyed the monopoly of power, security (Weber, 1945). The emergence of non-traditional security threats has revealed the weaknesses and limitations of state-centric security and the paradigm of national security. Both the intensification of these threats and the states' inability to address them have troubled the academia and policymakers and highlighted the necessity of rethinking the concept of security. The latter has been further reinforced by the latest Covid-19 pandemic, where a microorganism demonstrated to be capable of spreading terror and "bringing governments to their knees". This turn of events has validated the preexisting perception among scholars that the security landscape is not ready to absorb the rising threats.

However, as climate change effects become more tangible and destructive, it becomes evident that the Covid-19 is just an omen of similar future phenomena. The orthodox security frameworks have repeatedly failed to capture these types of threats, while the state has proved to have inadequate authority and force to tackle them, hence generating the question: Is there a need for a new conception of security? To answer the question, this brief analysis seeks to provide an overview of the evolution of the concept of security. Then, by using contemporary examples, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, the paper investigates the limitations of the traditional concept of national security and concludes with some recommendations.

The emergence of state-centric security and the shift in the paradigm

The lack of a universal definition has made security "essentially a contested concept" (Buzan, 1983). In its more abstract form, it can be defined either as a negation of certain elements, such as the absence

of disease or external threats, or a conscious human process that leads to a secure state (Grizold, 1994: 39). The latter interpretation has set the foundations for both the traditional concept of security and its state-centric perception. The interconnection between the two notions was firstly distinguished by Thomas Hobbes, who attributed the creation of the state to the human attempt to achieve "security" by escaping the "state of nature" (Hobbes, 1929). Hobbes's argument and the notion of "Leviathan" were then utilized by Max Weber to formulate a functioning definition of a state: a human community that has the absolute monopoly upon the legitimate use of physical force. To ensure its "right" and maintain its sovereignty the different human communities need to create a professional security bureaucracy (for example, border security, or military and law enforcement), which correspondingly leads to the creation of an organized political entity. In this manner, security does not only gain a territorial dimension (Diehl, 1996) but also becomes the "raison d'etre" and the core responsibility of the state. This results in a "chicken and egg problem": the sovereign state enjoys the monopoly to achieve security, while simultaneously security poses a prerequisite for its existence.

The state-legitimizing theories of Weber and Hobbes set the base for the realist construct of security and the political theory of Realism. In this approach, the state becomes the referent object and the sole actor in the international system. Due to the ongoing anarchy and the power dilemmas, security is instrumentalized to accomplish and preserve the nation's interest within the context of a broad "balance of power" (Waltz, 1997). As security is almost tautological or interconnected with the notion of power, it takes a strictly national and military dimension (Keohane & Nye, 1977). The realist perception of "doing security" reached a peak during the Cold War, where the two superpowers, the US and the Soviet Union, competed with each other and sought security through military build-ups and arms race, thus validating the premises of the realist theory (Mearsheimer, 2001). Furthermore, the creation of the field of Security Studies by two realists, Thomas Schelling and Henry Kissinger, and the dominance of Realism in International Relations resulted in the establishment of state-centric realist construct of security as the only theoretically acceptable framework (Rowley & Weldes, 2012).

The end of the Cold War brought new security threats, principally non-military, mostly posed by non-state actors that challenged both the role of the state and the traditional concept of security. In the case of the former, globalization, the technological revolution of the 1990s, and the growing global economic interdependence forced the state to yield some of its traditional powers to the collective political, economic, or security institutions (McFarlane, 2000). This shift combined with the increase of multilateral cooperation showed that the state was no longer the only unitary actor, hence "dealing a blow" to the preexisting traditional realist thinking (Morgan, 2007). As regards the latter, the emergence of non-military threats prompted the question of whether the state can deal with such

transnational security matters. The preexisting traditional concept of security and the practice of hierarchizing threats proved to be suffering from state-centrism and militarism (Lacy, 2005). Within this context, the realist construct of security became limited, while the parallel growth of political liberalism diminished its popularity.

The combination of these developments resulted in the deepening and widening of the construct of security (Lutterback, 2005) and the appearance of new theories and concepts. Scholars started to take greater interest either in the social construction of threats (Buzan, Waever & Wilde, 1998) or the context of conflicts (Homer-Dixon. 1991), while policymakers began to acknowledge the limitations of the traditional view of security. For example, UNDP's 1994 Human Development Report induced the notion of human security to broaden the definition of global security. Therefore, all the signs were indicating that the end of the Cold War marked a shift in the study of security from a traditional paradigm to a broader and more comprehensive approach. However, the events of 9/11 put a halt to this positive momentum.

The rise of non-transnational threats and the coronavirus pandemic

The Twin Tower attack was a major event in the history of world politics with a tremendous impact on academia. The decision of the US to respond to the 9/11 attacks by physically eliminating the terrorist threat in Afghanistan and then Iraq proved that the traditional conception of national security was still the presiding one. It became apparent that the nation-state, although having some limitations, is the only societal organization that has both the capacity and the authority to ensure security (Buzan, 1984). Except for that, the failures of liberalism and intergovernmental organizations to tackle humanitarian crises (e.g. the Rwanda Civil War in 1994) further confirmed the perception that the nation-state is simply the best available institution (Fjader, 2014). As a result, scholars resumed the examination of serious threats through the scope of the state. Research in issues of "low politics" diminished and the academic debate on environmental or human security was marginalized. Yet, the recent multiplication and proliferation of "new security threats" has challenged this paradigm and caused the concern of policymakers and scholars.

Over the last decades, a combination of factors has shown that the state-centric security conception remains deeply problematic. The "US War on Terror" demonstrated "the inability of the national security paradigm to effectively deal with threats from non-state actors in a rapidly globalizing world" (Shani, Makoto & Pasha, 2007: 3). Despite the elimination of the visible sources of insurgencies like ISIS or Al-Qaeda, the persistence and adaptability of non-state actors have made it an extremely difficult issue to deal with. This complexity prompted different states to admit their limitations and

invest in intergovernmental structures (Argomaniz, 2011). Still, as the ISIS hits after 2015 has demonstrated, the centrality of the state in the intergovernmental solution contributes negatively to the efficiency of counterterrorism (Europol, 2019). The same applies to other transnational threats, such as organized crime or drug and human trafficking, which have instrumentalized "national gaps" or state corruption to continue their operation, regardless of the existence of global initiatives (Kemp, 2020).

Furthermore, the current threats to international security have no longer a military or national character, but instead, they are transnational and caused by primarily economic and social phenomena. The non-traditional security threats, such as climate change, irregular migration, and resource scarcity, pose a two-fold danger. While they directly lead to loss of life and violence, they also have downstream consequences and multiply existing vulnerabilities, leading indirectly to economic crises, social fragmentation, political instability, and conflict. Moreover, contrary to other threats, they cannot be tackled with organized military forces and other hard power resources as they cannot be visualized or personified to a visible, declared foe (Meijnders, Putten & Rood, 2017). An excellent example is climate change. Whereas it can impact the ecosystem and have a catastrophic dimension through natural disasters like the 2020 Australian wildfire, it can also facilitate violence by inducing other phenomena such as resource scarcity or drought (e.g. the case of the drought preceding the Syrian Civil War). Other examples are the European refugee crisis in 2015, which resulted in internal divisions in the EU and the rise of far-right violence, and the current Covid-19 pandemic. The latter has been especially interesting as it has been the biggest testament to the need of rethinking the conception of security and the hazard of rising non-traditional threats.

On the one hand, the divergent responses to Covid-19 from the state and the people have demonstrated the difficulties of upgrading a non-traditional and non-military threat to the status of a security matter. Despite the existence of direct losses, the referent object (the national population) could not portray an "invisible microorganism" as an existential threat that justifies the adoption of strict preventive policies such as the "lockdown measures". This development can be attributed either to the long-established military character of traditional security, the restrictive framing of the national security paradigm, or the lack of preexisting experience of the audience with a similar issue (Resende & Budryte, 2013). To tackle this problem, the securitizing actors, such as state officials and presidents, attempted to personify the virus and elevate it to the level of an existential threat by using specific rhetoric. For example, Donald Trump compared Covid-19 with Pearl Harbor and September 11 attacks (BBC, 2020), while the Greek Prime Minister, Kyriakos Mitsotakis chose a war analogy to mobilize people to stay home (Kathimerini, 2020). Nonetheless, as the experiences of the first wave

have shown, the speech act by itself is not enough to convince the audience and characterize the danger as a threat (Sears, 2020).

On the other hand, the Covid-19 pandemic showed that the downstream consequences of non-traditional threats are not only extremely dangerous but also very difficult to tackle by the state. Although having adopted protective measures to lessen the virus fatalities, the state did not manage to confront the socio-economic repercussions of the pandemic and ensure both the health safety and economic well-being of its referent object (IPSOS, 2020). This hierarchization of threats, characteristic of national and realist conception of security, resulted not only in a collision of interests and values between the referent object and securitizing actor but also in the deterioration of the preexisting issues. Specifically, a recent UN report has found out that the COVID-19 is reversing decades of progress on poverty, healthcare, and education (UN, 2020), while the rising number of demonstrations all over Europe against the lockdown measures are great manifestations of the growing population's unrest. Apart from that, another byproduct of the pandemic was also the worsening of human rights all over the world as numerous politicians exploited the "state of emergency" to seize more power and promote their political agendas (The Economist, 2020).

Conclusion

This essay has discussed the evolution of the modern conception of security and argued that there is a need for its expansion. Traditionally, the realist paradigm of national security has dominated the academic debate and pushed the agenda towards a military and state-centric approach to "doing security". However, the proliferation and multiplication of non-traditional threats, such as economic collapses, climate change, and terrorism have revealed that the preexisting traditional conception of security is gravely flawed and self-restrictive. This perception has been further validated by the current pandemic that showed not only the limitations of national security but also the dangers of this new type of threat. The national governments were not always able to securitize efficiently an invisible microorganism and address all the security concerns of its referent object, hence leading to social unrest and the deterioration of already existing problems.

For this reason, there is a need for the development of a more holistic concept. The expansion of the scope of security convoys its own set of problems, but the nature of the contemporary threats has demonstrated that is no longer enough to define security as the absence of conflict. On the contrary, it could prove more beneficial to view it as a public good in a similar manner to Richard Ullman (1983). On top of that, the application of a strictly national and military lens to the management and analysis of non-traditional threats should be dismantled as it has no merit for both political governance

and research. In lieu, researchers should encompass human wellbeing factors into their analytical doctrines, while policymakers should be open and promote more preventive and non-conventional security policies on the domestic and international level. Moreover, global cooperation is also crucial in addressing and administering non-traditional threats, since their effects transcend the authority and capacity of the state. In fact, the Covid-19 pandemic manifested the economic and political benefits of multilateral endeavors in the handling of transnational crises (e.g. EU recovery fund). Finally, it is important to view the current pandemic as a cautionary tale on the hazards of non-traditional threats to avoid similar future scenarios.

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The Militarization of the Belt and Road Initiative[1]

Themistoklis Z. Zanidis[2]

Abstract

This paper focuses on the potential militarization of the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative which is expected to change the current balance of power in the Indo-pacific Region, Africa, Central Asia, Middle East, Europe and South America. Inevitable, such an extensive and expensive investment program, which of great economic and political importance to China, is considered to be the indicator of the country's global ambitions. Simultaneously, the military dimension of the BRI is also extremely important for China as enables it to gradually become a reliable security partner at least for developing initiative member states which do not have the resources to provide security to these infrastructures in their own territory. This is also crucial for Beijing's competitors, the European Union and especially the United States which realize that via the BRI China will able to project military power in an extended geographical area way greater than the China Sea. Undoubtedly, for the Westerners, BRI and its potential militarization is a threat to their cohesion and global dominance.

Keywords: International Relations; China; USA; EU; BRI; Economy; Trade; Trade War; Competition; Policy.

Introduction

It was no sooner than 2017 when the Chinese Armed Forces (People's Liberation Army-PLA) launch its first military base outside China's geographical borders, in remote Djibouti. This specific step signified the abandonment, in the most tangible way, of the previous country's doctrine according to which China does not place military units or establish military bases abroad (permanent military presence abroad). It is obvious that this move reflected the new role that Beijing wants to play in Global Affairs. In the context of the Chinese emergence, therefore, the country's Armed Forces had to protect its national interests across borders. In fact, as China's aspirations and, consequently its interests expand, its armed forces extend their strategic horizon respectively. Literally, the Chinese Defense White Paper in 2015 pointed out the country's maritime interests as well as the responsibility of the Chinese armed forces to protect them as one of their main tasks (The State Council Information

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Office of People's Republic of China, 2015)[3]. China's national security limits no longer attach to the country's borders but expand according to the extent of its overseas interests. However, at the present day, where exactly are these particular Chinese interests located besides of course the China Sea? Moreover, the questions remain: Will China resort to military force in order to defend the BRI? In addition, can the development of the initiative on a global scale serve as an excuse for the increased Chinese military presence abroad? Does China intend to use the BRI infrastructure to support military projection? Last but not least, what about the reaction of the Westerner powers, US and EU regarding the Chinese plans?

Main Considerations

Since 2013, when it was officially announced, the BRI (Belt and Road Initiative, also known as the new Silk Road[4]) has been constantly expanding Chinese interests in Asia, Africa, Europe and yet in Latin America. This indicated that in any geographical area the BRI extends, the Chinese Armed Forces will inevitably follow in order to protect it. The Chinese authorities, struggling not to provoke possible reactions by the countries participating in this initiative, which already are more than 70 worldwide[5], officially deny, through the Ministry of Defense, that the BRI has any geostrategic parameter. However, despite all the Chinese assurances, it is certain that this enormous investment, which has no precedent in history, will inevitably need some kind of military protection from Beijing. In effect, the nature of the BRI and its importance regarding the increasing Chinese influence worldwidely and the seamless continuation of the country's development has expanded both its geographical scope and its subject matter as it now includes the Arctic (which is of particular interest to China even if it's not an Arctic state), Cyberspace but also Space.

Such a large-scaled and ambitious investment plan will necessarily face a variety of security threats. The aforementioned concern political instability, the existence of extremism, civil wars and conflicts (Libya and Yemen respectively), terrorist attacks, kidnappings from the transnational organized crime and natural disasters in many regions where the BRI operates, render BRI's safety (including project workers who are of Chinese descent as well as the numerous Chinese companies active in the

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[3] Furthermore, you can read the Chinese Defense White Paper for 2019 (The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, 2019).

[4] The Silk Road dates back to the Han Dynasty 2,000 years ago and was essentially a network of trade routes connecting China with the Mediterranean via Eurasia for centuries (Chatzky and McBride, 2020).

[5] The geographical scope of the BRI is constantly expanding. It so far covers more than 70 countries, representing about 65% of the world's population and about a third of the world's gross domestic product (GDP). BRI's scope is constantly expanding to cover 138 countries, including 38 in sub-Saharan Africa and 18 in Latin America and the Caribbean (Oxford Business Group, 2020).

projects[6], etc.) imperative for the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party as the aforementioned threats can adversely affect negatively the smooth growth of infrastructure projects by burdening China with additional costs which may be, due to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, unbearable. Simultaneously, the traditional security threats of the Chinese initiative derive from the other Great Powers of the International System, especially the United States and their general military presence in Asia which is competitive with the Chinese interests in general.

The actual intentions of the Chinese leadership are clear regarding the extensive program to strengthen the combat readiness of the country's armed forces with a variety of modern equipment in order to be able, in the near future, to meet the increasing security demands[7]. The impressive growth of the Chinese arsenal, both technologically and quantitatively[8], in turn intensifies the security dilemma of neighboring countries and enhances the development of a new arms race in Asia. The Chinese strategists are trying really hard to reconcile the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, China's consistent tactic of avoiding permanent alliances, with the urgent need to provide security to the BRI and the country's ever-expanding interests. The BRI, as the vanguard of Chinese interests worldwide but also as a measure of Beijing's ambition, is more likely to force the Chinese leadership to reconsider the above-mentioned principles and tactics of the country as already indicated by the moves to establish a military base abroad and the rapid modernization of the country's military capabilities (Sutton, 2020). The ways in which the Chinese leadership will choose to defend its interests overseas remain to be verified in the future.

The BRI is of great economic and political importance to Beijing as is considered to be the indicator of China's global ambitions[9]. Today, the military dimension of the BRI is also extremely important for China as enables it to gradually become a reliable security partner at least for developing initiative member states which do not have the resources to provide security to these infrastructures in their own territory. This is also crucial for Beijing's competitors, the European Union and especially the

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[6]It is estimated that as of January 2020, 2951 BRI-related projects worth $ 3.87 trillion worldwide were planned or underway with the participation of 2630 companies. See at https://www.refinitiv.com/en/resources/special-report/belt-and-road-initiative-bri-project-and-investment-report

[7] China's military budget has been steadily rising since 1994. The increase conforms to the country's economic growth, and shows that Beijing is converting its economic power into military in order to pursue its geopolitical ambitions (Zanidis, 2020).

[8] China ranks at the second place with approximately $261 billion in military expenditure, almost 1/3 of the respective American. The interesting feature in the case of China is not the 2nd place but the fact that the country already owns 14% of the global share while it shows a steady increase since 2018, equal to 5.1% as well as the amazing 85% since 2010 (Zanidis, 2020)

[9] The project is expected to allocate more than $ 1 trillion in investments, mainly in the development of infrastructure for ports, roads, railways and airports, as well as power stations and telecommunications networks (5G). Research such as Morgan Stanley predicts that China's total spending on the BRI could reach $ 1.2-1.3 trillion by 2027 (Chatzky and McBride, 2020).

United States, which previously led the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which excluded China, thus being considered the direct competitor of the BRI. For its part, the EU was very suspicious to the 2012 Chinese 16 + 1 initiative[10], which involves a 10 billion € investment program in Central and Eastern Europe, as it perceived this Chinese initiative as a hidden operation to erode the cohesion of the European Union. A source of concern is the fact that many of the EU's member states are also members of NATO, while some of them at the Eastern Europe are former Soviet Republics recently turned to democracy and free economy with the result that their structures are still considered by the West vulnerable to external influence. The statement by German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel is indicative of European concern about Chinese penetration on the continent: *If we do not develop a [European] strategy on China, then China will be able to divide Europe* (Sawhney, 2018). Chancellor A. Merkel reiterated similar concerns, as well as the French President E. Macron who warned about the real aspirations of the Chinese investment plan. Furthermore, the BRI poses a threat to EU cohesion due to BREXIT as the United Kingdom seeks other sources of funding besides European with Chinese investments being enticing.

The BRI also concerns other states including the US, Australia, Japan and India which is participating in the Chinese initiative. These specific states have established the *Quadrilateral Security Dialogue* as a counterweight to the Chinese initiative (Lalwani & Byrne, 2017) in the Indo-Pacific region. However, the possible transformation of the BRI into an extended alliance, under the leadership of Beijing, and the possibility of the Chinese military deployment in various member states, in order to protect the infrastructure, are of great concern to the US and NATO military Staffs as it will mean an extensive increasing of Chinese influence on a global scale. Things are getting even worse for the Westerners as the Chinese initiative involves both EU and NATO states threatening its overall cohesion.

At this point, we will focus again on the American attitude as the two powers, United States and China, constitute the modern hegemonic dipole competing for Global hegemony. Regarding US, the BRI is nothing more than a Chinese attempt to unify all of Eurasia under its rule with incalculable consequences for the global balance of power. Modernization and expansion of the Chinese Armed Forces is part of Beijing's broader pursuit of extending its influence in Eurasia by protecting its most valuable investment but also removing US Armed Forces from Southeast Asia where their presence is significant. For the United States, China has merged its trade and military ambitions into a

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[10] Besides from China, it consists of Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia (EU members) as well as five Balkan states, Albania, Bosnia, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia.

comprehensive strategy to guide its rise to World Power since President Xi himself has openly linked trade with military power, arguing that: *The implementation of the military-political integration strategy is essential condition for building integrated national strategies and strategic capabilities and for achieving the Party's goal of building a strong army in a new era* (Gjedde, 2020). In particular, the US Navy is principally concerned about Beijing's pursuit of access to various ports including Burma, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Djibouti, Egypt, Israel, Turkey, Greece, Italy, Spain, Morocco, France, Belgium and the Netherlands as it foresees a prospect rivalry for maritime control. This contains the rapid growth of the Chinese fleet, which is building modernships, at a frantic pace, in an effort to become a "Blue Water Navy" (Pharis, 2009). The US National Security Strategy identifies China as a strategic competitor (Schneider-Petsinger et al., 2019)[11], but Chinese investment is welcome in many countries that do not share common interests with Washington.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the BRI is a challenge both for the states in its favor and for their competitors for different reasons. Beijing needs to balance its traditional foreign policy principles with its growing global influence. In this context, inevitably it will need to offer security to its investment, the BRI, while its policies indicate that it is moving towards this goal without provoking, at the same time, too much the neighboring states. Undoubtedly, global ambitions are not in line with any form of isolation, even a military which is something that does not go unnoticed by China's rivals, the EU and especially the US. For the Westerners, the BRI is a threat to their cohesion, as several of their member states are involved in the initiative and consequently a challenge to their interests worldwide for the time being on an economic-commercial level but probably in the future also on a military level. Hegemonic rivalry between the United States and China is already in full swing in all areas, thematically and geographically, with the BRI somehow being the Chinese siege ram threatening to overthrow US hegemony as it's expected to significantly exert Chinese influence globally and make Beijing the new superpower, erasing for good the "Century of Humiliation" from the consciences of the Chinese people. At the same time, the European Union must protect the special interests of its Member States by maintaining its cohesion, which has been hit hard by BREXIT, in consultation with the US, in order to maintain a commonly accepted front against the larger geopolitical and economic competitor. The 21st is expected to be the century of change and the EU must take the position it deserves for its size in the new international system that is gradually taking shape.

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[11] The United States has also been described by China as a strategic competitor as evidenced by the Department of Defense (DoD) National Defense Strategy 2018 (Mattis, 2018).

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The Evolution of War Conflicts. The Fourth Military Revolution (RMA) & Operational Applications[1]

Nicholas Paounis[2]

Abstract

The phenomenon of War, historically could be characterized as multidimensional. War, that is, the confluence of military forces, over the course of the Centuries, has differed in terms of Strategic Concept, in terms of Doctrine of Operations, and in terms of technological capabilities. At the heart of the new form taken by the phenomenon of war is the possibility of mass collection and utilization of information, in combination with the technological development of weapons systems. New technologies have also attracted the doctrines of military operations. Traditional military forces, but also emerging ones, are at the forefront of new developments in the field of war.

Keywords: War; Fourth Military Revolution; Operational applications.

Introduction

If we wanted to define the concept of war, we could describe it, as organized conflict between states or between social groups, using armed force to achieve ideological domination, the seizure of wealth or the seizure of territories. The evolution of technology in combination with the evolution of globalized society and the "emergence" of new forms of threats, tends to change drastically, even the "ontology" of war. But the intentions of a conflict remain unchanged.

In the present paper we won't attempt to give a new form of typology of each type of conflict, but will describe the role of information in the new field of conflict, the change of battle doctrines, the partial shift of the center of gravity of operations from human to robotic applications, and from the platform (jets, ships etc) to the missile.

All the aforementioned changes mark the so-called "fourth military revolution" or "revolution in military affairs", to which the modern military forces must adapt, otherwise they will be marginalized, and will be defeated by a potential opponent. However, factors such as "friction", "uncertainty" and "liquidity" remain unchanged as inherent properties of war.

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1) Info-Based Warfare and Cyber Warfare.

We are undoubtedly living in the age of post-industrial society, or the age of information ("information age", commonly known as the digital age, or season of the "digital revolution"), the period where technology applications (eg mobile phones, computers , tablets, etc.), IT (device software eg Windows, android, etc.), improved the quality of life of citizens, as the collection, processing and exchange of information created a new framework in the areas of services, research, transactions etc.

Sociologists talk about the post-industrial age, the "key" of which is considered the concept of information. Of course, the aforementioned cosmogenic changes in the level of access to information have a key impact on the areas of internal security and national defense. Telecommunications and information are vital parameters for the successful conduct of military operations. The goal of any military action is to prevail against the opponent, with the lowest possible losses in a short period of time.

The early form of the Internet, known as ARPA-NET (Advanced Research Project Agency), was a military application developed by the Pentagon in the 1960s to help researchers securely circulate information related to the developing world military programs. In the early 1980's, the adoption of a single information transmission protocol (TCP / IP Transmission Control Protocol / Internet Protocol), as well as the separation of military activities through MILNET (Military Network, now SIPRNET), contributed to the rapid development of the "peaceful" uses and applications "of the Internet. After the end of the Cold War, the widespread use of the Internet, led to the gradual networking between private companies, households, public services, which is crucial for increasing the influence of the Internet in all human activities and consequently in security (Palermo & Cox, 2014).

Nowadays, on the one hand, the interdependence between society and infrastructure on the Internet is constantly increasing, on the other hand, there is a lack of security when using the Internet, so the question arises as to whether it is possible to shield economic, industrial and public infrastructure against malware. And here is the core of the philosophy for the development of a new kind of "military" operations.

In the field of "cyber warfare", the battlefield is Cyber space (cyber space), ie a battlefield in the internet spectrum without physical space (longitude, latitude). Cyberspace means the general networking of people, companies, services (and so on), via PCs and telecommunications, regardless

of geographical location. Cyberspace is not a single field, since each individual network creates its own independent cyberspace (McCallion, 2020).

In conclusion, cyberspace is numerous, while the stratification of a cyberspace is divided into three categories i) hardware (H / Y) ii) semantic (information content) iii) syntax (software, operating systems, applications, etc.).

Due to the new data that emerged, a new strategic concept for the so-called "Information Based Warfare" was developed. Information-Centered (or Information-Based) Warfare - like Network-based - has at its core the activities around the concept of "information", and can be part of a "Non-Linear Warfare" (in the broadest sense), in order to actors (State, International Organization, paramilitary organization, militia, terrorist group, etc.), to impose on the enemy in a sudden, bloodless and effective way (Paounis, 2019).

Info based Warfare, however, focuses on the collection, evaluation, and dissemination of information, without including further extensions of Net-Centric Warfare (e.g., data traffic from operations centers to platforms). The problem of over-accumulation of information and the consequent inability to fully evaluate them, led the US to the so-called "decentralized" models of governance.

A "subcategory" of Info based Warfare can be considered Cyber Warfare. The objectives during a "Cyber War" are summarized as follows: Cyber defense: i) protection of deadly information systems and information from a hostile cyber attack, ii) silencing of hostile information (De Vries, 1997).

In the context of a cyber attack, the objectives are: i) access and exploitation of enemy information, ii) attacking enemy information systems, iii) spreading false news aimed at the morale of enemy, civilians and soldiers, etc. These attacks can through the use of malware (viruses, Trojan Horse etc), or through the deliberate introduction of large amounts of information into a system (inability to process and crash or malfunction of the system). The aforementioned are considered the weapons of a cyber attack.

Through a cyber attack, it is common to seek alternative i) attack on infrastructure (eg electricity distribution network), ii) blocking users from accessing a system (eg banning the use of services), iii) cyber espionage and iv) the alteration of data circulating in a system (eg destruction or alteration of web page content). These targets may include hostile telecommunications, water supply, financial institutions, transport, insurance and postal services, and military installations.

The advantage of Cyber Warfare lies in the fact that the attack is carried out almost inexpensively, without the involvement of conventional means of strike (aircraft, missiles, etc.), and can cause damage to critical facilities, and lead to the collapse of the enemy state. It can also pave the way for

a second attack with conventional weapons. The "non-linearity" of the attack can cause chaos, disorganization of state services and low morale among the people. Unlawful acts can be carried out by individual hackers, or small criminal groups and of course by properly organized services of a state actor (Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory, 1995). So far, the most recent example is the collapse of all of Estonia's infrastructure following a cyber-attack in 2007 (Ottis, 2008).

2) Net Centric Warfare and Anti Access/Area Denial

Network-centric warfare (NCW) is the entire military operation to gather information and transmit it to attack platforms. The process is implemented through the networking of weapons, sensors, satellites and decision-making centers, in order to have a unified perception of the existing tactical situation, speed of decision-making, synchronization and increased viability of friendly forces, and finally effective use of weapons systems. Commonly, the integrated interconnection of all sensors, weapons systems and command centers offers an excellent picture of the tactical situation, the possibility of timely and correct decision-making, perfect coordination (or at least to the best degree) and maximization of the result on the battlefield (Kopp, 2008).

The benefits at management level are manifold. Due to the very good knowledge of the tactical situation, faster decisions are allowed, a fact which implies the firing of an immediate overwhelming fire in order to eliminate the possibility of the opponent escaping, the realization of the appropriate maneuver, etc. However, the challenge comes from the fact that an unprecedented amount of information is over-concentrated with a high rate of renewal, which carries the risk of inability to manage all the information, ie irrational judgment and decision making.

From a technical point of view, a SoSA (System of Systems Analysis) is required, ie a wider network of high-processing, data management and data analysis computers that will be interconnected and provide an "integrated picture" to support command, control, communications & Intelligence, the continuous flow of data to weapons systems, etc (Anand, Raja, Rajan, 2011).

The first attempt to interconnect several weapons systems, decision-making centers and even multinational forces, took place during the first Gulf War in 1991. The challenge in this case was in addition to coordinating the actions of a multinational force, and cooperation due to ethno-religious peculiarities. The Alliance's Joint Communication and Unification Coordination Center was set up and operated at the Defense and Aviation Building (MODA) in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia (Paounis, 2018).

China - especially after 2005 - carefully studied the new possibilities stemming from the widespread use of satellite systems (Yaogan-30), unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV's/Drones), ground-based

observation networks, electronic warfare aircrafts, and networked with each other to create an unprecedented observation grid, collection and utilization of information. The "end" of all these multi-grid systems are the YJ-18 missiles (Dong Feng DF-21, and, very soon the DF-100). The famous anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) was achieved in the same way (Tsai, 1996). The Turkish Armed Forces also waged a network-centric war during the occupation of Afrin, during the Olive Branch operation (Paounis, 2018).

3) Artificial Intelligence Weapons and the generation of Hypersonic Missiles.

The end of the INF Treaty on August 2, 2019, due to the reluctance of the US to extend its further implementation, coincides with the development of new missile systems, known as post-nuclear super-weapons. The Treaty, in its implementation, prohibited the development of medium-range surface-to-surface cruise missiles and missiles, ie from 500 to 5,500 km/IRBM's (Grivas, 2013).

The main reason for the negative attitude of the USA was the development by China and Russia networks of anti-access areas (A2/AD) and air defense "domes" respectively, with the aim of preventing the approach of specific geographical areas by the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Air Force. As a proper solution to "pierce" the aforementioned "domes", the development of a new generation of missile systems was chosen, among other things (Grivas, 2019).

Central to the new generation - of any kind - missiles, is artificial intelligence (hence the high degree of independent navigation, in the phase of approaching the target), and high accuracy. In recent years, maneuvering missiles (supersonic & hypersonic missiles) have appeared to avoid anti-ballistic missiles, and to strike a decisive blow against the target.

Russia presented the anti-ship missiles P-800 Oniks, 3M22 Zircon etc (Kimball & Kingston, 2019). China has DF-17s and recently introduced the DF-26 long-range missile, capable of maneuvering and striking "medium" targets, such as Destroyers. In October 2020, the US tested the C-HGB system, which developed a speed greater than 5 mach (hypersonic missile). As a result, the great military forces of the planet are entering a new era where the existing anti-ballistic missile systems (Patriot PAC3, S-400/SA-21, SAMP/T etc.) are becoming obsolete and the development of new ones is immediately required.

Another notable element of the new missile formats is the case of the CHAMP missile, which has an EMP-type warhead, through which it emits electromagnetic pulses and can disrupt the enemy's electronic infrastructure (soft kill).

Significant changes are also observed in the Artillery. New rockets with increased range, with thermobaric heads, and shells with propulsion mechanism are introduced. In general, Artillery tends to become a "game changer" factor.

4) UAV's and Loitering Munitions

Over the past decade, there has been a rapid development of "Unmanned Air Vehicles" technology around the world. Indicatively, the countries with the systems in use are as follows: USA (MQ-9 Reaper, MQ-1 Predator), United Kingdom (WatchKeeper 450), Israel (Hermes, Heron), Turkey (Bayraktar TB2, ANKA, Karayel, Akinci), Russia (Sukhoi Okhotnik), Spain (Skeldar V-200), Iran (Shahed, Mohajer) and Azerbaijan (Orbiter). There are at least 30 countries using Unmanned Aerial Vehicles.

In fact, Azerbaijan, with the assistance of Turkish Bayraktar (in combination with the high mobility of the Infantry), crushed the Armenian military forces during the recent conflict in Artsakh (autumn 2020), while making widespread use of Loitering Munitions. The specific munitions, after being launched, searches for the target either autonomously or under the guidance of a soldier, and then charges and destroys it. Their small size and large autonomy make them difficult to deal with and extremely effective in attacking ground and sea targets. Loitering munitions are being developed by countries such as Israel (IAI Harop / Harpy), Turkey (Alpagu / Kargu), and Iran (Qasef-1).

The distinction between loitering munitions and UCAV's is blurred (e.g. Harpy), but it can certainly be argued that robotic applications are flooding the military technology sector, and are becoming increasingly crucial to the successful outcome of operations (Gettinger & Michel, 2017).

The US Navy is developing the LOCUST system, which launches a "Squadron of Drones" over a hostile area, which is literally scanned. During tests, 31 drones were launched in 40 seconds, which can interfere with enemy telecommunications and generally operate in the E/M range. Finally, the role of UAVs in network-centric operations is considered crucial in the sense that they "collect" and directly transfer the image of targets to impact platforms.

Conclusion

It becomes clear that the changes on the battlefield are at the "crossroads" for the way future operations are conducted. In a broader analysis, we would see a change in the Doctrine of War (e.g. Multi Domain Battle), but also the use of Social Media (twitter, youtube) during a conflict. Countries

facing military threats need to redefine the training, doctrine and military equipment framework in order to successfully meet the new operational requirements.

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Topic 11

The Political Economy of the European Union in the 21st Century

Revisiting the "Keynes Plan" for an International Clearing Union in a Eurozone Perspective[1]

Alkinoos Emmanouil-Kalos[2]

Abstract

The last decade has been turbulent for the EMU, with many structural weaknesses becoming apparent. While in a state of emergency, the European Central Bank has had to "reinvent" itself in order to stabilize the Eurozone, while the vital importance of the imbalances between the member states has been recognized, as the establishment of the Macroeconomic Imbalances Procedure (MIP) indicates. Yet, it is widely acknowledged that the architecture of the Eurozone needs structural reforms. This policy brief aims to present the case for the adoption of the core ideas of the "Keynes Plan" for an International Clearing Union, which could function as an important first step towards fighting intra-eurozone imbalances, hence strengthening the EMU. Given the existence of the European Central Bank and the common currency, a moderate version of such a plan could be implemented even without the need for any changes in the EU treaties, and could be the stepping stone for further economic integration.

Keywords: Eurozone; International Political Economy; Keynes Plan; Current Account Balance; International Trade; ECB; TARGET2; Euro; Bretton Woods.

Introduction

Since the Global Financial Crisis erupted in 2007 and the chain reaction it caused – especially in the European economies – the criticism towards the accumulation of excessive trade surpluses by some countries has resurfaced. Countries such as China, Japan and Germany have been accused of creating severe imbalances in international trade, which spark recessionary effects on other countries due to rising unemployment and current account deficits. As Krugman, Obstfeld and Melitz (2018: 580) mention *"external balance is attained when a country's current account is neither so deeply in deficit that the country may be unable to repay its foreign debts in the future nor so strongly in surplus that foreigners are put in that position".* Although for years the idea that surplus countries should adjust their current account balance (just like the deficit countries) has been swept under the carpet, it is now once again gaining traction even among mainstream economists after a turbulent decade of economic uncertainty.

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Taking Germany as an example (as this policy brief focuses on the Eurozone), Bernanke (2015), ex-Chairman of the FED, has claimed that "Germany's trade surplus is a problem". In the same spirit, Gabriel Felbermayr (director of the Munich-based Ifo Center for International Economics) said in 2018 that *"(the trade surplus) is turning out to be an increasing issue, not just with the U.S. but with other trade partners as well, and also within the European Union […] The surplus is becoming toxic, and also within Germany many argue now that we need to do something about it with the purpose of lowering it. It turns out to be a liability rather than an asset."* (CNBC, 2018). Even the International Monetary Fund has joined the calls for Germany to reduce the excessive trade surplus (Reuters, 2018).

The need for a simultaneous adjustment of both excessive deficits and surpluses, as well as the way in which that could be accomplished, was already highlighted after the WWII and was debated at the United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference (best known as the Bretton Woods Conference). The British proposal for the regulation of the international economic system, led by John Maynard Keynes and known as the "Keynes Plan", included the creation of an International Clearing Union, which would facilitate the correction of imbalances (both excessive deficits and excessive surpluses) and stabilize the international economic system as a whole. In the end, the British proposal was rejected by the USA, which came forth with a proposal that better suited its interests (known as the "White Plan"). The international monetary system that arose from the latter (the Bretton Woods System) collapsed in the early '70s, due to the same weaknesses that the "Keynes Plan" had foreseen and aimed to fix.

Although the implementation of the "Keynes Plan" at an international level still seems to be far from feasible, at a Eurozone level things seem more promising. The institutions and the tools that can support the implementation of such a plan have already been established (the European Central Bank and the Euro), and a decade-long economic turbulence, accompanied by a new post-pandemic economic challenge, has intensified the calls for a change in the European macroeconomic architecture and the role of the ECB. This policy brief aims to present the case for the implementation of (at least a version of) the "Keynes Plan" in the Eurozone, as has been proposed by the relative literature. In section 1, the main concept of the "Keynes Plan" is presented. In section 2, there is a brief review of the core similarities and differences between the "Keynes Plan" and the Eurozone architecture, as well as suggestions for possible reforms. Finally, the paper concludes with a brief discussion on the potential and the feasibility of such a plan.

1. The "Keynes Plan" for an International Clearing Union

Although an in-depth analysis of the "Keynes Plan" is beyond this policy brief's scope, it is important to succinctly present the main concept of the British proposal for the post-WWII international economic order. By doing so, we can assess which parts of the proposal were not feasible back then but are feasible now, and vice versa, in order to adjust it in today's Eurozone needs and capabilities.

First of all, the International Clearing Union proposed by Keynes would entail an international (supranational) Central Bank, in which the member states would hold reserves in an international currency.[3] The aim of the plan was to provide the international payments system with more flexibility, and avoid the shortcomings and the potential crash of a "gold standard" based system (as it happened in 1971). In essence, the plan aimed *"[...] to generalize the essential principle of banking as it is exhibited within any closed system"* (Keynes, 1943: 22). As Paus and Troost (2011: 9) point out, *"under the gold standard system, the price of money in circulation had to be fixed in terms of a specified amount of gold. To increase money supply, gold had to be imported. Because gold was used as payment in international trade, gold imports could only result from a trade surplus"*. Thus, a system like this actively creates incentives for the accumulation of surpluses. As Whyman (2014) notes, when the surpluses remain unused, as dictated by the mercantilist approach that such a system promotes, they are withdrawn from the global economy, leading to reduced aggregate demand, rising levels of unemployment and economic underperformance. The deficit countries can restore their current account balance through deflation and other adjustment programs, which will only augment the problem of the insufficient aggregate demand and its consequences (Piffaretti, 2009). At the same time, there is no pressure on the surplus countries to adjust their balance, an asymmetry that renders the system ineffective and problematic, with potentially dangerous side-effects.

The "recycling" of the surpluses and the balance in the global current accounts was a core element of the British proposal for an International Clearing Union. According to the White Paper of the proposal that the British Government published in 1943, *"we need a system possessed of an internal stabilizing mechanism, by which pressure is exercised on any country whose balance of payments with the rest of the world is departing from equilibrium in either direction, so as to prevent movements which must create for its neighbours an equal but opposite want of balance"* (Keynes, 1943: 20). As mentioned above, every member would hold reserves in this supranational Bank, through which the international payments would take place with the use of a supranational currency, the Bancor. The exchange rate between the national currencies and the Bancor would be fixed (to reduce uncertainty), with the

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[3] The proposed name was *Bancor*, from the French "*banque or*", meaning "bank gold".

possibility of adjustment of the exchange rate only after the approval of the Governing Board.[4] The key part of the plan was the provision that both the excessive deficits and the excessive surpluses would be charged with an interest rate, thus providing incentives to both creditors and debtors to balance their current accounts.

Such a system would also provide the tools to control the international money supply according to the needs of the global economy, without the restrictions of a "gold standard" based system (that was indeed proved problematic later). As stated at the White Paper of the plan, there was a need for *"a quantum of international currency, which is neither determined in an unpredictable and irrelevant manner as, for example, by the technical progress of the gold industry, nor subject to large variations depending on the gold reserve policies of individual countries; but is governed by the actual current requirements of world commerce, and is also capable of deliberate expansion and contraction to offset deflationary and inflationary tendencies in effective world demand"* (Keynes, 1943: 20).

There have been many calls for the redesign of the international economic architecture throughout the years, many of which are inspired by the "Keynes Plan". More recently, Davidson (2002), Greenwald and Stiglitz (2010) and Ocampo (2010) among others have proposed their own versions of a "Keynes Plan", adjusted for the 21st century international environment and institutions. Still, the Global Financial Crisis doesn't appear to have shifted the international economic system enough for the implementation of – what could be called "radical" – reforms. Time will show whether the post-pandemic global economy will lead to structural changes.

2. Eurozone and the "Keynes Plan": Compatibility and Reforms

While such a plan seems hard to be implemented at a global level, the European integration (and, in particular, the monetary integration) could render it more easily applicable in the Eurozone. The core institutions that are essential for a version of the "Keynes Plan" to work have already been established in the Eurozone, with the European Central Bank assuming the role of the clearing agency and the Euro taking up the role of the Bancor. The clearing and settlement system, through which the payments among the members take place, is called TARGET2. Given the use of the Euro and its function as a closed system, the Eurozone (unavoidably) resembles Keynes' idea for an International Clearing Union. Moreover, as stated by Lavoie (2015: 9), *"TARGET2 has no limits as to the size of the advances that can be taken by national central banks from the European Central Bank, [...] whereas Keynes's Plan imposed a ceiling on the amounts that could be normally borrowed by the*

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[4] The Governing Board would consist of the Central Bankers of the member – states, thus legitimizing the devaluations and prevent currency wars.

national central banks from the International Clearing Bank, in addition to imposing limits on the length of time during which the ceiling could be exceeded", therefore rendering it even less constraining than the "Keynes Plan" in that perspective.

Still, issues such as the absence of national currencies and the need for protection against financial speculation require certain adjustments for compatibility within a Eurozone framework. The "Keynes Plan" was designed taking into consideration the existence of national currencies. The debate whether the monetary integration should have proceeded faster than the economic (and political) integration or not has been raging for decades, and it is not an issue this policy brief aims to address. Nevertheless, it is widely accepted that such a system reduces the flexibility that is needed at a domestic level for the adjustment of an economy (again, whether this is for better or for worse is beyond the scope of this paper). As Mr. Bini Smaghi (2011: 3), Member of the Executive Board of the European Central Bank at the time, admitted: "*the euro area is in fact the only area of the world where monetary and fiscal institutions are completely separate, in which the fiscal authority cannot count on the monetary authority, not only to prevent a solvency problem, but also a liquidity problem*". Under the "Keynes Plan", even though there would be a regime of fixed exchange rates between the Bancor and the national currencies, the Governing Board of the Supranational Bank could allow (or even demand) for the devaluation of a currency if deemed necessary. Accordingly, the national Central Banks could still act as "lenders of last resort". Such tools are not available in the Eurozone.[5] Considering the political infeasibility of (re)introducing national currencies in the Eurozone members for domestic use, we are left with what Whyman (2014) calls "ICU-light" version.[6]

The symmetrical treatment of the excessive surpluses and deficits remains a core element in any version of the "Keynes Plan" that could be proposed. In 2011, as a result of the European debt crisis that started a couple of years before, the Macroeconomic Imbalance Procedure (MIP) was introduced as a tool to monitor the imbalances within the European Union as a whole. Excessive current account surpluses were recognized as an issue requiring attention, due to the adverse effects that they could have on the EU and the Eurozone economy among others, but even within this framework it is not

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[5] Although the ECB is not permitted to purchase government bonds on the primary market, since 2015 it has included government bonds on its Quantitative Easing (QE) program, thus buying them on the secondary market. The QE program was further extended as a measure against the economic effects of the pandemic. Still, it's considered an *ad hoc* measure.
[6] Amato *et al.* (2016) present the case for the introduction of fiscal currencies in the framework of a "Keynes Plan" implementation in the Eurozone, claiming that this would work in favor of the European monetary system and speed up economic recovery. Such a plan, though, seems politically infeasible in the foreseeable future, and is not covered in this policy brief.

considered as urgent a matter as the deficits (European Commission, 2016).[7] This asymmetry in the treatment of excessive surpluses and deficits becomes more obvious when we take into consideration the indicative thresholds proposed for the current account imbalances, beyond which adjustment should take place: +6% of GDP (for excessive surpluses) and -4% of GDP (for excessive deficits), calculated as a 3-year backward moving average. If a version of a "Keynes Plan" was to be implemented in the Eurozone, the symmetrical treatment of the excessive surpluses and deficits would be vital, with both creditors and debtors paying a penalty when exceeding the set thresholds.

Consequently, the surplus countries would have to adjust their current account balance too in order to avoid the fines. It is now well known what an adjustment means for the deficit countries in the Eurozone. Internal devaluation (since there is no national currency to devaluate), in an attempt to restore the competitiveness of the economy. The recessionary effects of such measures are unavoidable, and when used excessively they have shown to lead to extremely high and permanent unemployment, along with severe loss of output. Even the "successful" adjustment of the current account balance is not a result of higher competitiveness of the economy, but it is due to lower disposable income and therefore reduced imports.

The simultaneous adjustment of the surplus countries would "ease the blow", since the spillovers of their expansionary effects would affect the economies of the deficit countries positively. As Whyman (2014) summarizes, there are two main ways that creditor countries can reduce their excessive surpluses in order to avoid the fines. One way is by boosting the domestic economy. As Bernanke (2015) explains (referring to the case of Germany), investments for public infrastructure, spending through targeted reforms and even a rise in the wages will reduce the excessive surplus while having positive effects on the economy. Another way (especially if the economy is already operating in near full employment and the danger of inflation arises), would be to use the resources for productive investments – especially in the deficit countries – in the form of Foreign Direct Investments (FDI). In both cases, the expansionary effects of the policies followed by the surplus countries would act (at least partly) as a counterweight to the contractionary effects of the policies implemented in the deficit countries, stabilizing the Eurozone economy as a whole. Such measures would have an important effect at political level too, as they would strengthen solidarity among the EU members and EU societies as well.

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[7] As the European Commission (2016: 51) states, "Against this background, both in the legislation and in practice it is clear that the MIP applies to both deficits and surpluses, although not necessarily with the same concerns in mind or with the same degree of urgency."

Another issue concerning the implementation of a version of the "Keynes Plan" in the Eurozone stems from the fact that there needs to be protection against the adverse effects of financial speculation. When the "Keynes Plan" was written – and for the decades that followed – capital controls were normal, and they were effective in reducing financial speculation. In today's world, and especially within the Eurozone, the implementation of capital controls is out of the agenda. That is not to say, however, that there are no concerns in the EU about financial speculation. In 2011 (and again in 2013) the European Commission proposed the introduction of an EU "Financial Transactions Tax", which could serve as a tool to reduce financial speculation. Although discussions had been on hold for years, a joint statement by Germany and France in 2019 brought the proposal back for discussion (EUR-Lex, 2019). With the support of two of the most influential countries in the Eurozone, it is safe to assume that sooner or later a version of the European "Financial Transactions Tax" will be introduced. Whether this initiative suffices for the prevention of financial speculation remains to be seen.

Conclusions

This policy brief aimed to present the core elements of the "Keynes Plan" and how it could work within the Eurozone framework. It is important to note that the proposal for the implementation of such a plan does not imply that the imbalances in the Eurozone or the structural weaknesses of some economies will suddenly disappear. It merely suggests how existing tools and institutions, as well as policies that are already under consideration, can function in a more stabilizing way for the Eurozone. A successful implementation of such a plan could pave the way for "EU-induced" growth and lead to a renewed trust to EU institutions and solidarity among the member states.

Concessions will have to be made even for a modest version of such a plan to be implemented, but it has become apparent that the way the Eurozone functions needs to change in order to cope with the challenges that arise. Both the European Central Bank and the European Commission have showed that they are ready to introduce flexibility in the system, in ways that ten years ago would have seemed unthinkable. It seems unavoidable that the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic will lead to major developments in the Eurozone and the EU as a whole. The "Keynes Plan" could be a step towards a symmetrical recovery and even further economic integration.

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Fiscal Policies to Counter Climate Change and Economic Depression in the Post Covid-19 European Union[1]

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Abstract

The Covid-19 health crisis will eventually fade out, but the consequential economic crisis is right ahead of us, along with the ongoing climate crisis. The European Union's policies and institutions seem to hinder the green transition, in favor of fiscal balance and debt repayment among its member states. This paper proposes some fiscal policies, such as an EU "Employer of Last Resort" (ELR) program, which could successfully counter the upcoming depression and climate change, to finally bring economic and social prosperity to the EU's citizens.

Keywords: Climate change; fiscal policies; Employer of last resort; European Union.

Introduction

The world will inevitably face a huge challenge dealing with the Covid-19 economic crisis that is a consequence of the pandemic. Although many pharmaceutical companies are announcing the long-awaited vaccines that will put an end to the pandemic, the economic and social consequences of the Covid-19 induced crisis are yet unknown. The IMF projects, regarding the Eurozone's General Government Fiscal Balance for 2020, a disheartening -10.1% of its GDP (IMF, 2020: 6).

Long before Covid-19 emerged, global leaders had pledged in the Paris Agreement to act against an even bigger and more devastating threat: *Climate Change*. As Bill Gates warned in a recent online interview at Trevor Noah's *The Daily Show*: "Once climate change comes, you can't get out of it. There is not a vaccine for that" (Gates, 2020). According to the Universal Ecological Fund, 9% of the global GHG[3] emissions are produced in the European Union's member states (Watson et al, 2019: 1).

This policy brief aims to bring back up the importance of dealing immediately with climate change and the economic recession that lingers on. In the first section, there is an analysis of the opportunities

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[3] Greenhouse Gas. The main human-induced productions of greenhouse gases are Carbon Dioxide (CO2), Methane (CH4), Nitrous Oxide (N2O), and Ozone (O3).

and positive outcomes that the pandemic brought. In the second section, the author mentions the potential economic threats that the structure of the EU and its institutions may create. In the third section, there is a summary of the long-run priorities and regulations that the European Commission has bound to propose by the end of 2024. The fourth and final section, includes the fiscal policies within the framework of EU becoming an "Employer of last resort" and structural changes, for the European Union to effectively reduce its GHG emissions and restore the economic and social needs of its citizens.

Opportunities

According to the American Association for the Advancement of Science, if we wait to respond to climate change and reduce GHG emissions, the effects of climate change will be highly unpredictable and potentially irreversible (Molina et al, 2014: 19). The Covid-19 crisis had a huge impact on the global CO_2 emissions, recording an all-time high reduction of 8.8% in the first half of 2020 compared to 2019, as a result of the lockdowns across the world (Liu et al, 2020: 1). This extraordinary result came along with an unprecedented rise of the General Governments' debts worldwide, from 83% in 2019 to 98.7% in 2020 (IMF, 2020: 9). The IMF projections of the rising debts imply that we need to find more sustainable ways of reducing GHG emissions, but they also imply that we *can* reduce them substantially, through decisive government intervention, if the majority of the people support these interventions (Hepburn et al, 2020: 4).

Furthermore, a lot of firms and enterprises were forced by their government to change their work environments, as a result of the pandemic. Digital and remote working practice have become an essential part of work-life in 2020 (Hepburn et al, 2020: 15). As long as the employees have the ability and willingness to do so, this could become a new norm and a behavioral shift could be supported by governmental policies that are directed towards digitalization and eco-friendliness. The main reasoning behind this idea is that it motivates the private sector to innovate in digital technologies and, simultaneously, it decreases the use of automobiles. As a consequence, it reduces CO_2 emissions from citizens who drive daily to go to their workplaces.

Another impact of the Covid-19 was the rise of unemployment. According to Eurostat's "news release euro indicators" that was released on October 1st, 2020, the unemployment rate in the EU has risen to 7.5% and in the Eurozone to 8.1% (Eurostat, 2020). If the unemployment rate doesn't fall after the pandemic is over, this workforce could be re-trained and employed by the governments, as a new workforce for the green transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy.

Threats

The European Union and Eurozone member states have a more difficult time than other countries in addressing the Covid-19 induced economic outcomes, mainly due to the Maastricht treaty and its criteria[4]. The debt to GDP ratio in the Eurozone countries will rise from 84% in 2019 to 101.1% in 2020, based on the IMF projections (IMF, 2020: 9). Valdis Dombrovskis, the Executive Vice President of the European Commission, in a recent press conference[5], reminded us that the fiscal measures to counter the pandemic will have to be rebalanced: "All of us will have to endure a new period of restrictive measures" (Dombrovskis, 2020). This statement implies that new austerity will be forced upon member states to restore their balance sheets when the pandemic is over.

Austerity policies in depressed economies cannot produce a sustainable long-term fiscal balance and can be counterproductive. On the contrary, fiscal stimulus during an economic crisis can improve the long-run fiscal balance (DeLong et al, 2012: 234). In addition, many economists and global institutions have argued that fiscal stimulus, as a form of public investment during a recession, tends to have a higher multiplier than in normal phases of the economy (DeLong et al, 2012: 234, Hepburn et al, 2020: 8, IMF, 2020: 40).

These economic policies could pose a crucial threat against the green transition if we keep in mind that the governments have to spend a big part of their budgets towards green investments to effectively address climate change, which will probably not produce any economic surpluses in the short-run. In a study by Miklos Antal, two correlations were analyzed: the first between economic growth and environmental impacts and the second between economic growth and unemployment. He has concluded, that without systemic changes, the green transition with simultaneous full employment cannot be reached (Antal, 2014: 284).

Regulations

European institutions have agreed on a longterm budget plan for the upcoming years (2021-2027) and have dedicated 30% of this budget to fight climate change (EC 2020). According to the EC, this will be "the largest stimulus package ever financed through the EU budget", which sums up to 1.8 trillion Euros. In order to finance this huge budget, the EC has bound to propose new sources of revenue by June 2024, such as a Financial Transaction Tax (FTT) and a new Common Corporate Tax Base (CCTB) (European Commission, 2020). These regulations, and especially the FTT, have been

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[4] Two of those criteria include that every member state must not exceed public deficits of more than 3% and the debt to GDP ratio should not be more than 60%.

going on in the public and political debate in the EU since the financial crisis that hit the region in 2010.

The FTT regulation was brought to the table in January 2013 when more than half of the Eurozone countries came up with a proposal of a financial transaction tax, so the financial sector pays its fair share of the crisis (Kastner, 2018: 1648). After a year of long debates and a lot of compromises and changes to the original proposal, the FFT regulation has been put on hold permanently. According to Kastner, this reform was blocked by the financial institutions with heavy use of lobbying and carefully waiting until the storm of the financial crisis has passed, before arguing about the scientific evidence against it (Kastner, 2018: 1661). It remains to be seen if the same forces will block the new attempt of bringing the FTT regulation back on the table. The main difference between then and now is that the climate crisis will not fade out as the financial crisis eventually did.

On the bright side, regulations regarding the reduction of GHG emissions have been successfully adopted in the EU. Following the Paris Agreement, the EU in 2018 has inserted policies and measures, that are expected to reduce GHG emissions in its member states by 58% in 2030 in comparison to 1990 (Watson et al, 2019: 9). Although the EU is on track to reducing its GHG emissions, these policies have not addressed the unemployment that the new production model shift will create.

Fiscal Policies - Conclusions

It should be obvious by now, that in order to counter climate change and restore economic and social prosperity, the EU has to propose some fiscal policies that are unconventional within its framework and structure. The climate crisis needs fiscal policies to counter it, just like the Covid-19 crisis needed, but for a longer period. The private sector by itself is not likely to give up fossil fuel dependency, not at least until the costs of clean energy are low enough and the macroeconomy is stabilized (Hepburn et al, 2020:4). Thus, fiscal policies and regulations by the authorities must be injected for a sustainable socioeconomic recovery and green transition.

The main fiscal policy that the EU could use is Minsky's Employer of Last Resort (ELR) program. Hyman Minsky was not supporting "one size fits all" policies and believed that policies must be coordinated with the institutional and structural changes during their adaptation (Wray, 2007: 3). In the EU, the member states have different needs and fiscal space, so policy-makers have to identify potential co-benefits during the policy design stage and shape implementation criteria to maximize their impact. As priorities between the member states and social needs can differ substantially, the prioritization of relevant co-benefits is likely to also differ (Hepburn et al, 2020: 13). From this

perspective, the fiscal policies should differ between the member states and cannot be implemented under the EU's current framework.

Minsky argued that only the governments can offer unlimited jobs to those who are unemployed at the going wage, for either skilled or unskilled labor, depending on the applicant's particular skillset. This program could eliminate unemployment, reduce poverty, boost effective demand, and set an effective minimum wage (Levrero, 2019: 44). Although Minsky's ELR job proposals were different than those in the context of climate change, the main notion for the ELR to be successful is the same: the ELR program should provide visible public benefits for all the taxpayers (Wray 2007: 14).

The ELR program for countering climate change and unemployment could include public investments in (Hepburn et al, 2020: 13):

- Clean physical infrastructure investment in the form of renewable energy assets, storage (including hydrogen) and grid modernization

- Renovations and retrofits such as improved insulation, heating, and domestic energy storage systems

- Educational and training programs to address unemployment from COVID-19 and structural shifts from de-carbonization

- Sustainable agriculture, ecosystem regeneration and accelerating clean energy installations

There are many difficulties in implementing an ELR program in EU countries. The main reason is the European Central Bank's (ECB) structure that limits the ability of Eurozone countries to finance public deficits, which are crucial for an ELR program (Levrero, 2019: 53). The EU financed the member states public deficits to counter the pandemic as there was no other alternative for the member states to contain the economic outcomes of the pandemic. The same economic solution could be adopted to counter climate change and the upcoming depression, accompanied by regulations that will provide new sources of income, such as the FTT and the CCTB which have been announced. Structural reforms, based upon the current needs of the citizens, in the EU's institutions must be discussed, as the restrictive fiscal framework is not harmonized with the economic and social problems of the EU's member states regarding public investments. If the EU breaks out of its conventional economic policies, the green transition can be rapid while socioeconomical stability and prosperity can be achieved.

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The Differentiated EU Policy on Facing Economic Crises:
Prospects for EU to Anticipate the Financial and Fiscal Crises of its Member States[1]

Maria S. Katsigianni[2]

Abstract

The present policy brief shed light to the recent developments, in EU level, as regards the economy of the European member states threatened by financial and fiscal crises. In particular, it evaluates the prospects for a top down – driven recovery, in the framework of the EU Economic Governance. The estimates emerged from this survey show that the speed of a recovery based alone on the efforts of the individual member states would be insufficient to address the urgent problems of economic crises and under-development. Therefore, are evaluated the alternative policy options of the EU aimed at stimulating any economic dysfunctions without endangering its existence. This policy note concludes that the EU's response to the Eurozone crises will depend on its ability and determination to deal with and prevent any future challenges that may arise.

Keywords: Eurozone crisis; EU funding mechanisms; precautionary measures; reforms.

Introduction

The need for this survey arises as a consequence of the continuous and rapid evolution of the EU's role in the field of member states' finances. Particular attention is given to the – until recently – EU's inability to detect economic malfunctions and prevent them before they become a threat to the Union. In specific, the present policy brief aims to arise an interdisciplinary dialogue as regards the EU's interventionist role in the economic policy of its member states and provides some recommendations on the best policy options in the following axes: a) Re-elaboration of the Commission's role, b) Further strengthening of ESM, c) EU independence from international funding organizations, d) Enhancement of controlling and supervisory measures. Before proceeding to the analysis of the recommended mechanisms, it is provided a concise summary of what has the EU done so far to anticipate and face economic crises. The present policy brief is targeting government policymakers who are interested in formulating or influencing EU policy.

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The emergence of significant EU weaknesses to maintain financial stability

Historically, despite the fact that according to the EU's founding treaties, fiscal policies were left up to each Member State (MS), some countries in the EU, particularly those that share euro currency, decided to coordinate their economic policies throughout the year to ensure their alignment with common objectives and responsibilities (Economic and fiscal policy coordination, n.d.). In accordance to the EU's "economic and fiscal policy coordination", several priorities for action have been developed, including financial assistance for the MS and the EU economic governance. In specific, the EU financial assistance mechanisms that apply on MS threatened by financial difficulties, act correctively and provide loans on condition that the MS would implement policies designed to address their structural problems (How is financial assistance provided to EU countries?, n.d.). On the other hand, the EU's economic governance framework monitors, prevents and corrects problematic economic situations that could hit national economies, affecting all EU countries (EU Economic governance: monitoring, prevention, correction, n.d.). In particular, European Commission monitors the MS for potential problems, such as risky or unsustainable policies or declining competitiveness. As regards the prevention of economic imbalances, EU governments have agreed on a wide range of rules (How the EU monitors national economic policies, n.d.), including the Stability and Growth Pact established in 1997 for the Commission and the Council of the EU to monitor their budgets and to ensure that fiscal discipline is maintained (Safeguarding the euro in times of crisis, 2019). In the corrective field of EU's economic governance, was established the Excessive Deficit Procedure to ensure that governments take effective action to correct economic problems (How the EU monitors national economic policies, n.d.).

The corrective and supervisory mechanisms mentioned above have not proved to be effective in times of economic crises (Safeguarding the euro in times of crisis, 2019). The first weaknesses of the EU system to anticipate and deal effectively with fiscal crises were evident as early as 2003 when Germany and France tried to avoid sanctions for their high fiscal deficits. The situation worsened when the global financial crisis broke out in 2007 in the United States and brought to light more of EU's institutional weaknesses (Explanatory Memorandum on the Proposal for a Council Regulation establishing the European Monetary Fund, 2017). As early as 2009, it was revealed that the EU lacked sufficiently solid instruments to act decisively in response to challenges to its financial stability and became obvious that there was a great need for a more effective governance framework for EU (Proposal for a COUNCIL REGULATION on the establishment of the EMF, 2017). The period between 2010 – when the first rescue fund was established for Greece – and 2018 – when Greece became the last country to successfully exit its financial programme – was a defining phase in the

history of European integration (Safeguarding the euro in times of crisis, 2019). The Greek experience of 2010 led the euro area to consider a different approach to lending terms. In response to the immediate emergency challenges, many acts were adopted, creating new financial security mechanisms that helped the most affected countries to overcome their difficulties, preventing the crisis from escalating further (Explanatory Memorandum on the Proposal for a Council Regulation establishing the EMF, 2017).

The main Funding mechanisms and facilities emerged

In May 2010 was established the European Financial Stabilization Mechanism (EFSM) for the Commission to provide financial assistance to EU countries threatened by severe financial difficulties. ESFM allowed the Union to respond in a coordinated and rapid manner to acute difficulties on a purely temporary basis; so far has provided financial assistance to Ireland and Portugal and a short-term bridge loan to Greece, on condition of reforms' implementation. Subsequently, in June 2010 was created the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF), as a temporary crisis resolution mechanism for euro area countries and till now has provided financial assistance to Ireland and Portugal between 2011 and 2014, and short-term bridge loans to Greece in July 2015, conditional on the implementation of reforms (Proposal for a COUNCIL REGULATION on the establishment of the EMF, 2017). EFSF no longer provides new financing but continues to manage activities linked to its outstanding loans and bonds (How is financial assistance provided to EU countries?, n.d.). As early as December 2010, the European Council agreed on the need for the euro countries to establish a permanent stability mechanism replacing the EFSF for granting possible new financial support (Explanatory Memorandum on the Proposal for a Council Regulation establishing the EMF, 2017). Thus, in February 2012, the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) was created as a permanent intergovernmental institution, by and for euro area countries, to safeguard financial stability in EU. The ESM's arrival is emblematic of the euro area's advances in these areas, and of its commitment to combat future crises and sustain its single currency (Safeguarding the euro in times of crisis, 2019).

Policy recommendations

The recent euro crisis made clear that the EU lacked a comprehensive funding assistance mechanism, which would face but also prevent any economic malfunctions that may occur. Despite the immediate measures taken in order to prevent the crisis from escalating further, there are still much to be

achieved (Explanatory Memorandum on the Proposal for a Council Regulation establishing the EMF, 2017). With that in mind, the following policy recommendations are in order:

a) Re-elaboration of the Commission's role in monitoring, preventing and correcting financial imbalances

The European Commission, being the Institution that promotes the general interest of the EU, plays a prominent role not only in the economy of the MS individually, but also in the EU as a whole. Therefore, measures should be taken in order to strengthen its role to monitoring, preventing and correcting economic imbalances. First and foremost, it is recommended for the Commission to tighten its budgetary assessment, reconsidering the rules on the Excessive Deficit Procedure, which is a central aspect of the assessment. The Commission's opinion on the MS's draft budgetary plan should acquire a more clear orientation, as well as an obligatory compliance. In terms of the assessment of Stability Programmes and Convergence Programmes that take place each spring, Commission should focus on medium-term fiscal plans, rather than on providing concrete ex ante guidance for the budget of the year ahead (Annual draft budgetary plans (DBPs) of euro area countries, n.d.).

Another factor under consideration is redefining the role of the "Directorate - General for Economic and Financial Affairs", keeping closer cooperation with finance ministries for its national economies and taking more responsibilities in order for the Union to promote and achieve economic growth, higher employment and stable public finances. The Commission, on behalf of the EU should also strengthen its offer of technical assistance and expertise, mobilizing expertise from the Commission services, national administrations and international organizations to design and monitor reforms, bearing in mind the former "Structural Reform Support Service", established in July 2015 (Financial assistance to Greece, n.d.).

b) Further strengthening of ESM and the activation of the EMF

Although ESM has constituted a valuable tool in facing economic crises, given the short time of its establishment, it is highly recommended to evolve further and acquire a more effective role. What ESM could do is to impose simpler and improved procedures and to acquire a more formal position in the legal firmament of the Union. Except for the EFSM, most of the funding mechanisms created to face the euro crisis were established outside the legal framework of the Union, thus, emphasis should be placed on the legitimacy of these financial aid institutions (Strategic plan 2016-2020, 2016).

ESM shall be integrated into the EU's framework and this could be accomplished through the activation of the European Monetary Fund (EMF), contributing to increasing transparency and

accountability in the EMU. This will further strengthen ESM's institutional anchoring and create new synergies within the EU framework, in terms of transparency, efficiency of the EU financial resources and legal review. In order for the EMF to enhance the democratic control should be accountable to the European Parliament and to the Council, reporting annually on the execution of its tasks (Proposal for a COUNCIL REGULATION on the establishment of the EMF, 2017). Taking into consideration that only two of ESM's six available aid tools have been used so far – long term loans for Greece, Ireland, Cyprus, and Portugal and indirect aid to help Spain recapitalize its banking sector – it should be considered the idea these tools to be enhanced, expanded in new areas of cooperation or even become a blended toolkit ready to face any discrepancies.

c) The EU independence from international funding organizations

As early as 2010, it was obvious that the euro system had to proceed to reform. At that time, the euro area countries facing financial imbalances sought assistance from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), in order to finance their deficits and return to recovery. Actually, it was a forced solution under time pressure, but in fact the euro countries never depended upon IMF entirely. As Klaus Regling mentioned 'We needed to create our own European funds (Safeguarding the euro in times of crisis, 2019). In line with this statement, it had become apparent that concrete measures should be taken, in order for the Union to become economically independent of IMF and other international mechanisms, utilizing its own forces.

Due to the big concern as regards the acceptance and legitimacy of Troika, which has often been the target of intense criticism in European countries, it is highly recommended the establishment of a supervisory body that will be widely accepted by the MS. Another aspect that should be taken into consideration is the fact that during the last euro crisis, IMF specialized in rehabilitating less developed economies, which means that the new mechanism should focus especially on the economy of the weaker members of the Union (Safeguarding the euro in times of crisis, 2019). Further, the role of the European Central Bank (ECB) could also be enforced both in allocating funds and cooperating with potential funding bodies within the EU. As the monetary policy action of the ECB has proved crucial during the euro area crisis (Explanatory Memorandum on the Proposal for a Council Regulation establishing the EMF, 2017), the euro area leaders shall take advantage of its previous experience in order to build a more efficient and independent funding mechanism.

d) Enhancement of controlling and supervisory measures towards the Member States

One of the major lessons to be learned from the euro's crisis, according to Christine Lagarde, is that the EU needs "to have the right data – the case of Greece in particular shows that, when economic statistics aren't accurate, the fallout can be devastating" (Safeguarding the euro in times of crisis, 2019). To this statement is based the last recommendation of this policy brief. Keeping in mind that several states have been observed to report false information it is highly suggested, a part of the EU's budget is suggested to be allocated towards the establishment of an empowered safety valve that would impose severe sanctions in cases of false data or non-compliance with data analysis specifications. Should any discrepancies regarding the economic development of each MS to be observed, an immediate response must be in order, in case the partner would not comply within a given timeframe.

This would constitute as a legal ground for any possible derogation from the legal reference procedures, encouraging European countries to comply in fear of a penalty. In this framework, new improved auditing tools and alternative schemes of monitoring are vital in re-defining the EU's policy with further attention on trust and further cooperation within the euro area. As regards the Economic monitoring, the European Commission conduct regular analysis of a broad range of national and international economic data and forecasts for a wide-range of economic indicators such as GDP growth, inflation, and unemployment (How the EU monitors national economic policies, n.d.), tasks that should be enhanced through an advanced supervisory mechanism.

Conclusions

Passing to the results of this research, it could be pointed out that the recent euro area crisis brought to light some of its institutional weaknesses, whilst it made apparent that any economic malfunctions were not possible to be handled by the euro area countries on a country-by-country basis (Safeguarding the euro in times of crisis, 2019). In response to the immediate emergency challenges, many acts were adopted in EU level, creating new financial security mechanisms that helped the most affected countries to overcome their difficulties. Nevertheless, several improvements need to be planned and executed, but the forecasts are encouraging, as the European leaders have understood the importance of structural measures to ensure European prosperity. The present policy brief concludes that the EU's response to the Eurozone crises will depend on its ability and determination to deal with and prevent any future challenges that may arise. In the years to come, EU shall take advantage of the lessons learned along the way and try to figure out how will handle possible crises in the future.

What remains to be done is for the EU Institutions to play an even stronger role in the process and try to predict and prevent potential crises in all sectors of the economy and the society as a whole.

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