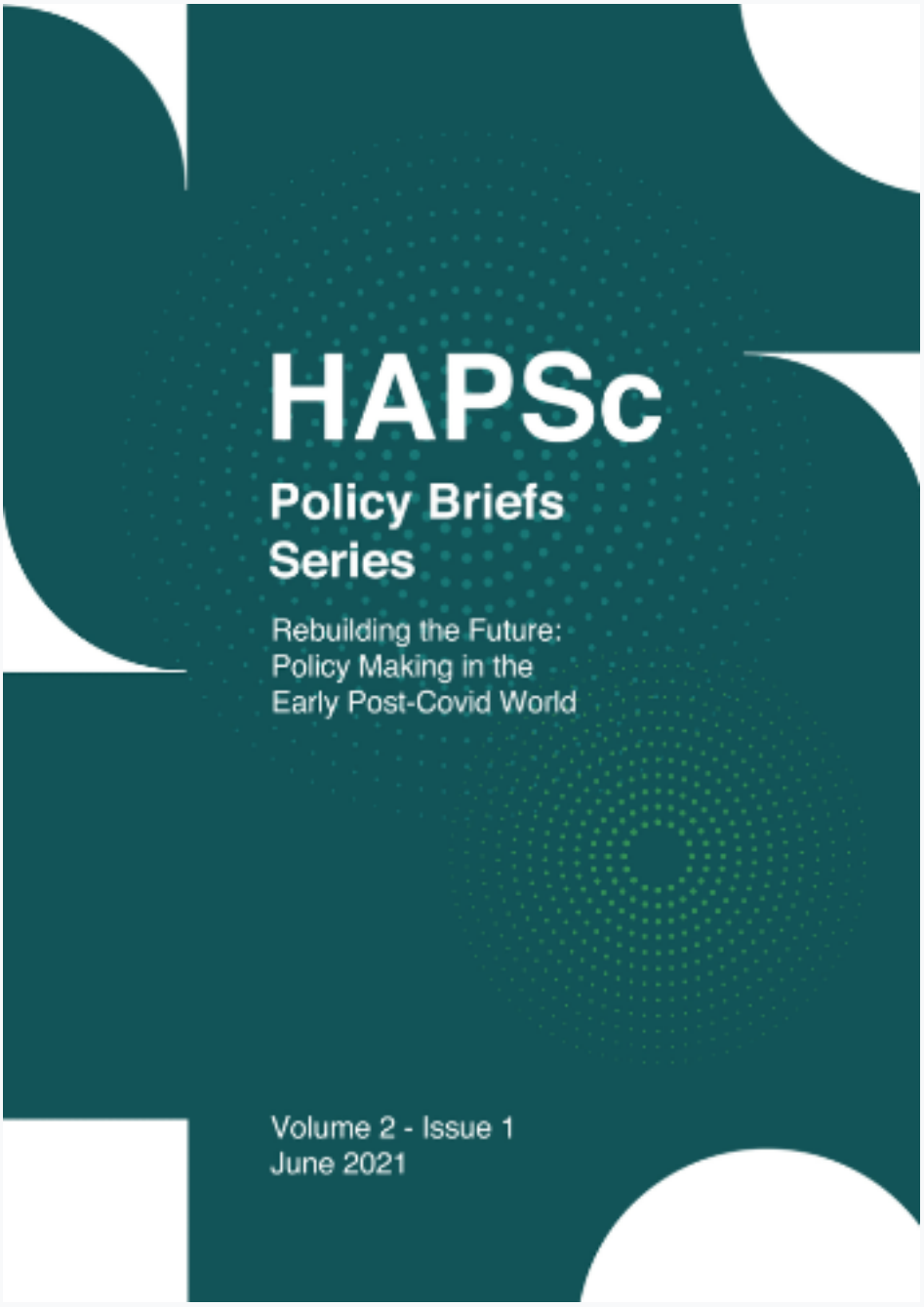
HAPSc Policy Briefs Series

Vol 2, No 1 (2021)

HAPSc Policy Briefs Series



HAPSc

Policy Briefs Series

Rebuilding the Future:
Policy Making in the
Early Post-Covid World

Volume 2 - Issue 1
June 2021

ISSN: 2732-6578 (print version) 2732-6586 (online)

The "HAPSc Policy Briefs Series" is published by the Hellenic Association of Political Scientists (HAPSc), in collaboration with the Laboratory of Health Economics and Management (LabHEM), University of Piraeus, the Public Policy and Administration Research Laboratory (LABDIPOL), University of Crete, the Jean Monnet Chair EduTRIP, University of Piraeus, the Laboratory of Education Policy, Research, Development and Interuniversity Cooperation (ERDIC), University of Piraeus and the Centre for Political Research and Documentation (KEPET). The journal is included in those actions using the emblem of the United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI).

The printed edition has taken place in Athens, Greece.

Indexed in: Google Scholar, Microsoft Academic, OpenAIRE, CORE, Crossref, BASE (Bielefeld Academic Search Engine), ROAD, SciLit, WorldCat, Research Bible, Journals Directory, Citefactor.

This journal is hosted by the Greek National Documentation Centre in its e-Publishing service (e-Publisher: EKT).

For access to the e-journal visit the following link: ejournals.epublishing.ekt.gr/index.php/hapscpbs/

ISSN: 2732-6578 (print version) 2732-6586 (online)

The "HAPSc Policy Briefs Series" is published by the Hellenic Association of Political Scientists (HAPSc) in collaboration with the Laboratory of Health Economics and Management (LabHEM), University of Piraeus, the Public Policy and Administration Research Laboratory (LABDIPOL), University of Crete, the Jean Monnet Chair EduTRIP, University of Piraeus, the Laboratory of Education Policy, Research, Development and Interuniversity Cooperation (ERDIC), University of Piraeus and the Centre for Political Research and Documentation (KEPET), University of Crete. The journal is included in those actions using the emblem of the United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI).

Supported by:

ISSN Paperback: 2732-6578

e-ISSN: 2732-6586

Printed in Athens, Greece for the Hellenic Association of Political Scientists.

June, 2021

Email: policybriefs@hapsc.org
Phone: +30 2103645390
Address: Voukourestiou 38, Kolonaki, Athens, Postcode: 10673
Secretariat: **Mr. Alkinoos Emmanouil-Kalos**, MSc

Table of Contents

ISSN: 2732-6578 (print version) 2732-6586 (online)

Topic 1

Democracy and Civil/Human/Social Rights in the New Era

Responsible Citizens against an Irresponsible State: The Case of Greece amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic[1]

Sofia Alexopoulou[2] & Antonia Pavli[3]

Abstract

How is it possible for citizens to act responsibly if they live in an irresponsible state? This is the key question that this paper revolves around in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in Greece. Individual responsibility is the dominant 'mantra' of post-modernity and is widely spread by the neoliberal dogma. The individual has to take care of him/herself in any possible way to avoid risks without depending so much on the benevolent state, which, in the developed world, takes the form of a welfare state. Thus, a new type of citizen appears, the "responsible citizen". The oxymoron, however, in the Greek case is that the state and particularly the political elites maintain bad practices of the past without being able to overcome the country's path-dependency structures by acting responsibly. The concept of "empathy" is undoubtedly the missing link in this intriguing puzzle of good governance. Will the Greek political elites be able to recognize and embrace empathy in practice?

Key Words: responsibility; responsible citizens; irresponsible state; political elites; COVID-19; neoliberalism; empathy; Greece.

Introduction

Responsibility of the individual is the dominant 'mantra' of post-modernity. The individual has to take care of him/herself in any possible way to avoid risks without depending so much on the benevolent state, which, in the developed world, takes the form of a welfare state. Michael Freeman and David Napier (2009: 403) claim that "[a] responsibilized society does not see individuals as socially situated but as autonomous actors making choices that determine their lives". This neoliberal discourse is not new. Instead, it flourished back in the 1980s when politicians, such as Margaret Thatcher in the UK and Ronald Reagan in the USA, came to power and applied a rigid neoliberal model. Since then, the neoliberal dogma has been spread to the rest of the world. In the COVID-19 era, the concept of responsibility has received a lot of attention since, according to the discourse that has been adopted both by politicians and medical experts, the limitation of the virus spread heavily relies on the "citizen", enacting thus a new type of citizen, the "responsible citizen". The aim of this paper is twofold: On the one hand, to shed light on this new type of "citizen", a citizen who has been constructed by the existing political regime in Greece under the shadow of the Covid pandemic, and,

[1] To cite this paper in APA style: Alexopoulou, S. & Pavli, A. (2021). Responsible Citizens against an Irresponsible State: The Case of Greece amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 2(1): 9-16. DOI: 10.12681/hapscpbs.27646
[2] Sofia Alexopoulou is Ph.D. Candidate in Political Science at Örebro University.
[3] Antonia Pavli is Affiliated Researcher at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens.

on the other hand, to expose the inconsistencies of the Greek political elites while they transfer their political responsibilities onto the citizens' shoulders.

From the socio-economic crisis to the COVID-19 crisis

The consequences of the long-lasting socio-economic crisis, which had challenged the Greek citizens for almost a decade, were still fresh. The implications of the socio-economic crisis, however, were not only vivid on the citizens' lives. Instead, the pressure that the European Commission, the International Monetary Fund, and the European Central Bank exerted on the Greek government to proceed immediately with radical cost-cutting measures and structural reforms on the operation of the welfare state (i.e., Pavli, 2017) strongly affected the healthcare sector (Hauben et al. 2012; Economou et al., 2014; Kentikelenis et al., 2014; Stylianidis & Souliotis, 2019). Specifically, according to OECD (2016), from 2009 to 2013, there was a significant decrease in public spending on health by 5 billion euros. This decrease in public expenditure on the healthcare sector was translated as a measure for downsizing the medical and paramedical staff, a lack of the necessary medical supplies (with the regional hospitals to be affected more), an increase of waiting time for patients to book an appointment with a physician and/or the need to book an appointment to visit a physician in a hospital in a different region from the region that they used to live, and so on (Kentikelenis et al., 2014; European Commission, 2018; NCDP, 2019). Thus, several barriers prevented citizens from enjoying their right to health.

Additionally, the austerity-driven policies influenced the 'habits' of the Greek citizens in terms of demand for healthcare services. Specifically, the abolition of the 13th and 14th wage in the public sector, the crucial cuts on the wages both on the public and private sector, and the rise of the unemployment rate, which left a lot of citizens without insurance, had – as a result – major impacts on the healthcare services landscape since the Greek citizens could not afford to seek for health-related services from the private sector (Zavras et al. 2016) or to have any access to healthcare services (European Commission, 2015; Stylianidis & Souliotis, 2019). To put it differently, the socio-economic crisis had a crucial impact on the proper operation of public hospitals and healthcare in general, while it affected the changing needs of citizens (Economou et al., 2014). Those citizens belonging to the more vulnerable social groups were worst affected (Rotarou & Sakellariou, 2017; NCDP, 2019).

Therefore, at the dawn of the COVID-19 crisis, the Greek healthcare system was unprepared to face the challenges associated with the pandemic. According to OECD (2020), in 2020, Greece was placed in second-to-last position on the list regarding the availability of Intensive Care Units (ICU) among

the EU countries, since there were only 5,3 ICUs per 100,000 citizens. Although the Greek state tried to enhance the healthcare infrastructure by adding more ICUs and by hiring medical and paramedical staff through the course of the pandemic (Mpouloutza, 2020), the demand proved so high that it put the healthcare system under colossal strain, ultimately being unable to meet the medical needs of the citizens (Eurofound, 2021). The weaknesses of the public healthcare system to equally offer its medical services to the citizens resulted in loading citizens with extra responsibilities. Specifically, as the Greek media have extensively pictured it, citizens' actions and behaviours have been the 'critical factor' for spreading the virus. For the pandemic to be under control, it was up to them, enacting a new form of citizen: the "responsible" citizen.

Enacting the "responsible" citizen

Following the discourse that has been developed since the very first days after the outbreak of the pandemic, both by politicians and medical experts and reproduced by the media (Žižek, 2020), citizens are the ones who are responsible 24/7 for controlling the spread of the virus by strictly adhering to hygiene rules as well as by interrupting or avoiding any type of social relationships, introducing the now infamous concept of "social distancing". Citizens, thus, have been responsible for accepting and obeying all the orders/restrictions imposed by the state without any disobedience. To be sure that this would be achieved, citizens are under the supervision and control of the state's panopticon. In this new reality, recalling the words of Michel Foucault (1979: 200), the individual becomes "the object of information, never a subject in communication". This, however, is not the only problem. As Foucault further argues:

> *He who is subjected to the field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection* (Foucault, 1979: 202-203).

Those who refused to subjugate themselves on this regime are labelled as the 'deviants' or the 'scapegoats' since they put the so-called 'general good' in danger. A very illustrative example of the 'deviants' is young people in Greece who were accused or framed by politicians and the Greek media as the source of spreading the virus in society. Specifically, young people have been criticized for not taking the state's recommendations/orders seriously (In.gr, 2020). In the opposite direction, when there was a rapid increase in the reported COVID-19 cases after the opening of the tourism industry

in summer 2020[4] by the government, tourists, as someone would expect, were not framed or directly framed as the source of spreading the virus. Instead, what prevailed was silence. It is worth mentioning here what the deputy minister for Civil Protection and Crisis Management states – in Yorgos Avgeropoulos's documentary "Parontes" (Being Present) (2021) – considered responsible for the increase of COVID-19 cases. According to him, the increase in COVID-19 cases was not linked with the high number of travellers on ships but with the irresponsible behaviour of young people who went to parties during their holidays on the islands. In other words, the spread of the virus in the middle of summer 2020 lay in the irresponsible behaviour of young people and not in the political decisions of governmental authorities (ibid.).

Exposing the 'irresponsible' state

As stated at the end of the previous section, the government in power (the political party that is in office during the pandemic, i.e., New Democracy, ND) decided to set in motion the practice of transferring the responsibility to certain social groups (i.e., young people) (Ethnos, 2020a) by downsizing its political responsibilities for addressing/handling the COVID-crisis. Strategically this practice is not something new in the Greek political scene. On the contrary, it is common to hide the long-standing and structural problems of the Greek state, such as bad governance (incidents of corruption and political scandals), the tendency to depreciate the public sector, and the inability to implement real reforms. Echoing Makrydimitris (1999), it seems that the "great patient" is still alive. By this concept, Makrydimitris means that both the state and the public administration were held accountable for setting obstacles to the country's social transformation after the fall of Junta in Greece. During this period, a 'paradoxical' or vice versa analogous relationship was formed between the democratization of the state and society, on the one hand, and the modernization and quality of the administration, on the other. In this light, various initiatives for the modernization and re-organization of the state seemed to fall into the void. However, the "great patient" does not only cover the operation of public administration, which has been accused heavily for all the weaknesses of the Greek state, as Makrydimitris argues. Instead, as we see it, it is extended to the quality of the political staff and not to something vague, as the state machinery.

In what follows, some examples expose the politicians responsible for managing the pandemic, either by blaming and/or transferring their responsibilities to others or by violating the same restrictions that

[4] In August 2020 there was a tremendous rise in the number of the recorded infections that reached 5,207 cases. Also, this dramatic increase fueled the public debate for what seemed to be an imminent second wave of the Covid-19 (Giannarou, 2020).

they have imposed on the rest of the citizens without, however, being equally treated. More specifically,

- the wrong decisions and delays for imposing the lockdown in the second populated city of Greece, Thessaloniki, during the second wave of the pandemic (Ignatiadis, 2020),
- the lack of the necessary medical supplies for treating patients properly, such as face masks, gloves (Ethnos, 2020b), and let alone the lack of ICUs at the public hospitals, which led to the commandeering of private clinics, see, i.e., the case of Thessaloniki (Ta Nea, 2020),
- the non-prioritization of the vaccination of medical and paramedical staff who are more vulnerable and more exposed to the virus in favour of some ND politicians (Efsyn.gr, 2021),
- the Deputy's Minister of health accusations towards physicians as the ones who were responsible for the deaths of patients with COVID-19 instead of the lack of ICUs (Naftemporiki, 2021),
- the Prime Minister's behaviour who disobeyed the recommendations/restrictions that his government forced the Greek citizens to apply, such as not wearing a face mask when he met some people while he was cycling in Parnitha (Almpanis, 2020) or when he participated in a social gathering in Ikaria with the number of the participants to be much higher than the number that was allowed for all the other citizens (In.gr, 2021),
- the enactment of a law that gives immunity from prosecution to all the stakeholders involved in handling the pandemic crisis (Kamilalis, 2021),
- the irresponsible actions from the parties of the opposition such us the public announcement of the former Deputy Minister of Health who admitted that he has not been vaccinated and he is not planning to do it soon (Ethnos, 2021), and,
- by the leader of the far-right political party, "Greek Solution", who has deliberately spread "fake news" regarding the effects of the vaccines (Ethnos, 2020c).

Certainly, irresponsible politicians and policymakers exist worldwide, even in countries praised for their transparency and high levels of trust. The difference is that they recognize their mistakes or their irresponsible behaviour and are willing to act as any other citizens when they are in a similar status. A relevant example is that of the Norwegian Prime Minister, Erna Solberg, who violated the Coronavirus restrictions when she celebrated her 60th birthday with 13 relatives at a mountain resort in late February, despite the prohibition of gatherings of more than ten people (Solsvik & Fouche, 2021). However, the Norwegian prime minister recognized her mistake for violating the existing restrictions and paid a fine of 20,000 Norwegian crowns as citizens in her country do. As the police chief said for justifying the fine to the country's Prime Minister: "Though the law is the same for all,

all are not equal in front of the law. It is therefore correct to issue a fine to uphold the general public's trust in the rules on social restrictions". In Greece, however, though the political staff had violated similar restrictions, none of them has acted like a "regular" citizen to set a 'good example' at any cost.

To summarize, the dysfunctional character of the Greek political scene is already known along with its long-standing problems, while tones of ink have already been spilt in describing them. In our view, beyond the country's path-dependency patterns of political irresponsibility, what is missing for changing the current situation is the introduction and cultivation of the concept of "empathy". Empathy is described "in shorthand as the ability to "put oneself in the other's shoes" (Pedwell, 2012: 280). In the Greek case, "empathy" presupposes that the political elites will make an effort to understand the feelings and the difficulties that citizens confront daily, without paying attention only to their preferences and interests that to be fulfilled they do not hesitate to manipulate and bend the law concerning COVID-19 restrictions.

Conclusion

After the above observations, a rhetorical question comes to mind: how is it possible for citizens to act responsibly if they live in an irresponsible state? Even if the question is rhetoric without an answer to be required, political scientists cannot stay apathetic. Otherwise, the discipline of political science is at risk of becoming "the cult of the irrelevant" (Desch, 2019), which means that it will not have any practical value for the real world. Political scientists must delve into the policy problems that arise in a given context and not only attempt to understand the parameters of the problem, but ideally to propose realistic solutions that will positively affect the citizens' lives. A good way to move forward is to apply "empathy", a relatively simple concept as we saw, but with a great power that can make citizens feel that they have responsible political leaders who are not so different to them. However, empathy needs time and effort in order to thrive. For this reason, empathy is important to be cultivated at least to younger generations as early as possible via the educational system. Typical training of empathy involves instruction about the benefits of showing empathy, how to identify emotions in other individuals, how to feel those emotions and how to act properly. While at the current moment empathy is absent in the Greek example, hope never dies, as they say.

References

Almpanis, Y. (2020). Political clash for Mitsotakis picture in Parnitha. CNN Greece. December 1. Available at: https://www.cnn.gr/politiki/story/245133/politiki-kontra-gia-ti-fotografia-mitsotaki-stin-parnitha (Accessed: 01/05/2021).

Avgeropoulos, Y. & Skoubri, A. (Director & Producers) (2021). Parontes (Being Present) [Documentary Film]. Athens: SmallPlanet &IMEDD. Available at: https://parontes.imedd.org/watch/ (Accessed: 01/05/2021).

Desch, M. (2019). How political science became irrelevant. Available at: https://www.chronicle.com/article/how-political-science-became-irrelevant/ (Accessed: 01/05/2021).

Economou, C., Kaitelidou, D., Kentikelenis, A., Sissouras, A. & Maresso, A. (2014). *The impact of the financial crisis on the health system and health in Greece*. Copenhagen, DK: World Health Organisation and the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies.

Efsyn.gr (2021). Political reactions continued for the out-of-series vaccinations of ND party members. Efsyn.gr. February 27. Available at: https://www.efsyn.gr/politiki/antipoliteysi/283393_politikon-antidraseon-syneheia-gia-toys-ektos-seiras-emboliasmoys (Accessed: 01/05/2021).

Ethnos (2020a). Coronavirus: The squares are overcrowded, the cases are increased, and the young people disobey the recommendations. October 18. Available at: https://www.ethnos.gr/ellada/129071_koronoios-boyliazoyn-oi-plateies-ta-kroysmata-ayxanontai-kai-oi-neoi-den-synetizontai (Accessed: 03/05/2021).

Ethnos (2020b) Coronavirus: Without facemasks and gloves the hospitals and the private physicians' offices. March 20. Available at: https://www.ethnos.gr/ygeia/95389_koronoios-horis-maskes-kai-gantia-ta-nosokomeia-kai-ta-idiotika-iatreia (Accessed: 01/05/2021).

Ethnos (2020c). Velopoulos delirium against vaccinations. Criticism from the government and the opposition. Ethnos. December 10. Available at: https://www.ethnos.gr/politiki/136852_paralirima-belopoyloy-kata-emboliasmon-adeiasma-apo-kybernisi-kai-antipoliteysi (Accessed: 29/06/2021).

Ethnos (2021). Polakis admits that he hasn't been vaccinated: "It makes no sense". Ethnos. June 17. Available at: https://www.ethnos.gr/politiki/161903_o-polakis-paradehetai-oti-den-ehei-emboliastei-den-ehei-noima-tora (Accessed: 29/06/2021).

Eurofound (2021). Living, working and COVID-19 (Update April 2021): Mental health and trust decline across EU as pandemic enters another year. Available at: https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_publication/field_ef_document/ef21064en.pdf (Accessed: 13/05/2021).

European Commission (2015). Assessment of the social impact of the new Stability Support Program for Greece. Brussels: European Commission. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/ecfin_assessment_social_impact_en.pdf (Accessed: 13/05/2021).

European Commission (2018). Inequalities in access to healthcare - A study of national policies. Brussels: European Commission. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8152&furtherPubs=yes (Accessed: 10/05/2021).

Foucault, M. (1979). *Discipline and punish*. Middlesex: Peregrine.

Freeman, M. & Napier, D. (2009). *Law and anthropology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Giannarou, L (2020). Experts calm but vigilant as virus spreads. August 21. Available at: https://www.ekathimerini.com/news/256375/experts-calm-but-vigilant-as-virus-spreads/ (Accessed: 01/05/2021).

Hauben, H., Coucheir, M., Spooren, J. McAnaney, D. & Delfosse, C. (2013). *Assessing the impact of European governments' austerity plans on the rights of people with disabilities*. EFC: European Foundation Center.

Ignatiadis, V. (2020). Mitsotakis self-criticism and spikes for the delays in Thessaloniki. Euro2Day. November 28. Available at: https://www.euro2day.gr/news/politics/article/2053875/aytokritikh-kai-aihmes-mhtsotakh-gia-kathysterhsei.html (Accessed: 01/05/2021).

In.gr (2020). Coronavirus: The pandemic bares its teeth again: Concern about the role of young people in spreading the virus August 16. Available at: https://www.in.gr/2020/08/16/greece/koronaios-pandimia-ksanadeixnei-ta-dontia-tis-anisyxia-gia-ton-rolo-ton-neon-stin-metadosi-tou-iou/ (Accessed: 03/05/2021).

In.gr (2021). Mitsotakis: The picture from Ikaria hurted the citizens, it will not repeat it. In.gr. February 10. Available at: https://www.in.gr/2021/02/10/greece/mitsotakis-eikona-tis-ikarias-pligose-tous-polites-den-

tha-epanalifthei/ (Accessed: 01/05/2021).

Kamilalis, T. (2021). Individual responsibility you, legislated impunity we. The Press Project. April 23. Available at: https://thepressproject.gr/atomiki-efthyni-eseis-nomothetimeni-asydosia-emeis/ (Accessed: 01/05/2021).

Kentikelenis, A., Karanikolos, M., Reeves, A., McKee, M. & Stuckler, D (2014). Greece's health crisis: from austerity to denialism. *Lancet*, 383: 748–753.

Makrydimitris, A. (1999). *The "great patient": The reform and the modernization of public administration*. Athens: Papazese Publications [in Greek].

Mpouloutza, P. (2020). Vasilis Kikilias in "K": Next day with 1,200 ICU beds. Kathimerini. May 3. Available at: https://www.kathimerini.gr/opinion/interviews/1076446/vasilis-kikilias-stin-k-epomeni-imera-me-1-200-klines-meth/ (Accessed: 10/05/2021).

Naftemporiki (2021). Reactions to Kontozamanis statements on medical liability for deaths outside the ICU. Naftemporiki. January 11. Available at: https://m.naftemporiki.gr/story/1679367/antidraseis-stis-diloseis-kontozamani-peri-iatrikon-euthunon-gia-tous-thanatous-ektos-meth (Accessed: 01/05/2021).

National Confederation of Disabled People (NCDP) (2019). Alternative Report of Greece 2019 (final version) and responses to the List of Issues and Recommendations. For the attention of the UN Secretariat of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Available at: https://www.esamea.gr/component/cck/?task=download&collection=article_filegroup&xi=1&file=article_file&id=4446 (Accessed: 01/05/2021).

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and European Union (2020). Health at a Glance: Europe 2020. State of Health in the EU Cycle. Paris: OECD Publishing. Available at: https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/82129230-en.pdf?expires=1620982421&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=8651AB44E352FDCF52340A3D88BE4F79 (Accessed: 10/05/2021).

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2016). *Health Policy in Greece OECD*. Paris: OECD Publishing. Available at: https://www.oecd.org/greece/Health-Policy-in-Greece-January-2016.pdf (Accessed: 10/05/2021).

Pavli, A. (2017). Creative disability classification systems: The case of Greece, 1990-2015. Studies from the Swedish Institute for Disability Research, No. 87. Ph.D. Dissertation. Örebro: Örebro Universitet. Available at: http://oru.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A1098338&dswid=5147 (Accessed: 02/05/2021).

Pedwell, C. (2012). Economies of empathy: Obama, neoliberalism, and social justice. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 30(2): 280–297.

Rotarou, E. & D. Sakellariou. (2017). Access to health care in an age of austerity: Disabled people's unmet needs in Greece *Critical Public Health*, 29(1): 48-60.

Sakellariou, D. & Rotarou, E.S. (2017) The effects of neoliberal policies on access to healthcare for people with disabilities. *Int J Equity Health*, 16: 199.

Solsvik, T. & Fouche, G. (2021). Norwegian PM fined by police over coronavirus rules violation. Reuters. April 9 Available at: https://www.reuters.com/world/norway-prime-minister-fined-by-police-over-virus-rules-violation-2021-04-09/ (Accessed: 02/05/2021).

Stylianidis, S. & K. Souliotis (2019). The impact of the long-lasting socioeconomic crisis in Greece. *BJPsych International*, 16(1): 16–18.

Ta Nea (2020). Requisition of clinics in Thessaloniki. The transfer of patients from two private clinics has started. Ta Nea. November 20. Available at: https://www.tanea.gr/2020/11/20/greece/epitaksi-klinikon-sti-thessaloniki-arxise-i-diakomidi-asthenon-apo-tis-dyo-idiotikes-monades/ (Accessed: 01/05/2021).

Zavras, D., Zavras, A. I., Kyriopoulos, I. I. & Kyriopoulos, J. (2016). Economic crisis, austerity and unmet healthcare needs: The case of Greece. *BMC Health Services Research*, 16: 309.

Žižek, S. (2020). *Pandemic!: COVID-19 Shakes the World*. New York; London: OR Books.

Self-Defense Mechanisms of Democracy during the Crisis: The Baltic States in Comparative Perspective[1]

Joanna Rak[2]

Abstract[3]

Theoretically embedded in studies on militant democracy, the study offers a comparative analysis of the use of self-defense mechanisms of democracy during the Coronavirus Crisis in Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia. The research aims to identify what anti-democratic measures were adopted to influence the sovereignty of the political nations and which served to either strengthen, maintain or undermine that sovereignty. Although neo-militant democracy goals prevailed in the Baltic states' pre-pandemic political and legal structures, the pandemic-induced measures resulted in variation. In Estonia, the restrictions put the sovereignty of the political nation in jeopardy. Simultaneously, in Lithuania and Latvia, the sovereignty of the political nations remained unthreatened. In Estonia, the electoral successes and increase in support for the extreme-right political party Conservative People's Party of Estonia turned conducive to the movement from neo- towards quasi-militant democracy. In Lithuania and Latvia, the extreme groupings did not receive comparable support and could not initiate an anti-democratic turn.

Keywords: Estonia; Lithuania; Latvia; neo-militant democracy; crisis; coronavirus pandemic.

Introduction

A worldwide surge in right-wing populism and de-democratization, which followed the 2007–2008 financial crisis, has attracted significant scholarly attention to the self-defense mechanisms of democracy (Gökarıksel, 2020). Particularly intense clashes between democratic and anti-democratic forces took place in the post-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe. On the one hand, by drawing upon World War II experiences, those democracies limited the freedom of activity of political parties and citizens, requiring them to respect the fundamental principles set out in constitutional provisions. On the other hand, there was growing social consent to breaking constitutional restrictions and changing the law in line with the political agendas of the right-wing ruling parties. This consent was gained as a result of the increase in the level of relative socio-economic deprivation after the great crisis and the inability to neutralize them on the part of the then left-wing ruling political parties. Studies on the effectiveness of self-defense mechanisms show that only in three post-communist countries, i.e., Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, democracies did not turn

[1] To cite this paper in APA style: Rak, J. (2021). Self-Defense Mechanisms of Democracy during the Crisis: The Baltic States in Comparative Perspective. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 2(1): 17-23. DOI: 10.12681/hapscpbs.27647
[2] Joanna Rak is Associate Professor at Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland.
[3] This research paper is a result of the research project Contentious Politics and Neo-Militant Democracy. It was financially supported by the National Science Centre, Poland [grant number 2018/31/B/HS5/01410].

out to be vulnerable to anti-democratic threats (Skrzypek, 2020; Stanley, 2019). It resulted from the joint efforts of strong civil societies and ruling elites to defend, preserve, and expand the sovereignty of the political nations. In a democratic system, a political nation can be defined as a set of equals who are part of one society and can decide on the most important matters of the state independently. Domestic sovereignty is understood here as the ability to make final decisions. The sovereign is the supreme ruler, so one who is no longer under anyone else's authority, and everything depends on them (Bäcker, 2020).

After the accession of post-communist member states to the European Union, the second great crisis was a consequence of the pandemic. In the state structures, where political nations were challenged, undermined, and eliminated, following the outbreak of the Coronavirus Crisis, the ruling elites stepped up the anti-democratic measures taken during the previous crisis. By limiting the participation of political nations in making political decisions, the ruling elites increased the scope of their own power competencies. Nevertheless, in the Baltic states, self-defense mechanisms have not proved to be as effective as in the pre-pandemic period. At the same time, Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian democracies became vulnerable to anti-democratic threats to varying degrees. These observations motivate the research questions about the nature of and reasons behind the differences. The article aims to identify what anti-democratic measures were adopted to influence the sovereignty of the political nations and which served to either strengthen, maintain or undermine that sovereignty.

Theoretical and Methodological Assumptions

The analysis of anti-democratic measures imposed in the Baltic states is theoretically embedded in scholarship on militant democracy. In the 1930s, by drawing on the observation that the Weimar Republic became vulnerable to subversive movements and parties, Karl Loewenstein recommended that "democracy must become militant" (Loewenstein, 1937: 423). As the researcher argued, the regime was defenseless and unable to defend itself against the Nazi Party because of democratic fundamentalism prevailing in the political and legal structure. The enemy of democracy took advantage of democratic freedoms, rights, and institutions to destroy democracy from within. Therefore, only anti-democratic restrictions could protect this system and work as efficient self-defense mechanisms of democracy. According to Loewenstein, democracy is militant when it uses anti-democratic legislative measures against subversive propaganda coupled with restrictions placed on democratic liberties of free speech, the press, association, assembly, universal suffrage, and organization in political parties to protect democracy from its enemies (Loewenstein, 1937).

In the 21st century, Loewensteinian anti-democratic restrictions are used and misused (Rezmer-Płotka, 2020; Skrzypek 2020). Democrats whose politics fall into the Loewensteinian tradition establish and maintain modern or neo-militant democracies. In those political and legal structures, anti-democratic measures serve to defend, preserve, or expand the sovereignty of political nations understood as an ability and freedom to make informed political decisions. At the same time, anti-democrats, which are enemies of democracy, establish quasi-militant democracies by misusing anti-democratic measures to challenge, undermine, and eliminate the sovereignty of political nations. Therefore, the same measures may have different political and legal consequences depending on the purposes of their implementation. Accordingly, it is necessary to identify what anti-democratic measures were adopted to influence the sovereignty of the political nations in the Baltic states. In addition, it is crucial to determine the measures' actual impact on the sovereignty of the political nations and thereby the intentions of the state authorities implementing those measures.

To address the research questions, the study draws upon a method of source analysis. The corpus of sources includes reports published on Verfassungsblog, a blog giving voice to international experts. It is a journalistic and academic forum of debate about topical events and developments in constitutional law and politics. The corpus contains the reports that included the searching phrases Estonia or Lithuania or Latvia and pandemic or/and epidemic or/and coronavirus or/and virus or/and COVID-19, published from the pandemic outbreak of coronavirus disease in March 2020 to the mass vaccination in April 2021. It covers the first year of imposing COVID-19-induced political and legal restrictions and consolidating the regimes that emerged from those measures. The reports concerning Estonia are as follows: State of Emergency in Estonia by Rait Maruste (17/05/2020), States of Emergency by Joelle Grogan (26/05/2020), COVID-19 in Estonia: A Year in Review by Merilin Kiviorg and Päivi Margna (12/03/2021); Lithuania: Travel Bans in Europe: A Legal Appraisal by Daniel Thym (19/03/2020), Lithuania's Response to COVID-19: Quarantine Through the Prism of Human Rights and the Rule of Law by Eglė Dagilytė, Aušra Padskočimaitė, and Aušra Vainorienė (14/05/2020), Lifting Travel Restrictions in the Era of COVID-19: In Search of a European Approach by Peter van Elsuwege (05/06/2020); and Latvia: COVID-19 in Latvia: Precaution Above All by Aleksejs Dimitrovs (02/05/2020). The qualitative report analysis serves to list Loewensteinian anti-democratic measures (restrictions placed on democratic liberties of free speech, the press, association, assembly, universal suffrage, and organization in political parties) and differentiate between those implemented to defend, preserve, or expand the sovereignty of a political nation (neo-militant democracy) or challenge, undermine, and eliminate it (quasi-militant democracy).

Anti-democratic Measures Influencing the Sovereignty of the Political Nations

Although neo-militant democracy goals prevailed in the Baltic states' pre-pandemic political and legal structures, the pandemic-induced measures resulted in variation. In Estonia, the restrictions put the sovereignty of the political nation in jeopardy. At the same time, in Lithuania and Latvia, the sovereignty of the political nations was not under threat. Only in Estonia, the electoral successes and increase in support for the extreme-right political party Conservative People's Party of Estonia (EKRE) turned conducive to the movement from neo- towards quasi-militant democracy. The government made attempts to meet the expectations of a radical part of the electorate. In Lithuania and Latvia, the extreme groupings did not receive comparable support and could not initiate an anti-democratic turn.

In Estonia, without consulting the parliament, the government declared a state of emergency by the Order Nr. 76 on 12 March 2020 (Grogan, 2020). The declaration drew on the definition of the epidemic as an "emergency situation" (Maruste, 2020). As Maruste underlined, the government ruled the state and dealt with the pandemic utilizing executive orders based on the Emergency Act. The orders of the government and its crisis committee, led by the prime minister, violated constitutionally guaranteed rights and freedoms, e.g., freedoms of movement, assembly, property, entrepreneurship, private life, self-determination, and rights to education. The repertoire of restrictions went beyond the Loewensteinian set of measures. Furthermore, the government had supervision competence on the execution of the orders and compliance with the Act. Although the government was not obliged to report to the parliament, its orders could be challenged in administrative courts if they transgressed constitutional freedoms or rights of a concrete person (Maruste, 2020). Citizens raised complaints concerning, among others, surveillance issues, data handling and protection, treatment of pupils with special educational needs, and right to education (Kiviorg and Margna, 2021). Nevertheless, Estonia had no specific or accelerated procedures for challenging orders. Therefore, administrative courts would process complaints after the state of emergence ends, in ordinary procedures. Estonians were deprived of adequate judicial control of the executive during the pandemic (Maruste, 2020; Kiviorg and Margna, 2021).

The new legal and political structures created opportunities to misuse anti-democratic measures and abuse power competencies. Due to the lack of parliamentary control and discussion, the government could take advantage of new power competencies achieved under the state of emergency for its own benefit and, thereby, challenge, undermine, and eliminate the sovereignty of the Estonian political nation. According to Maruste, the package of emergency legislation contained new, unrelated

provisions and legislation that loosely referred to the pressing needs of crisis management. Instead, it fell into the government's political agenda, such as changing the present pension system and stricter controls on migration (Maruste, 2020). The political nation could not participate in that decision-making process due to the COVID-19-induced legal changes.

In contrast to Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia did not introduce restrictions that would limit the sovereignty of the political nation (Dagilytė, Padskočimaitė, and Vainorienė, 2020; Thym, 2020; van Elsuwege, 2020; Dimitrovs, 2020). As Dagilytė, Padskočimaitė, and Vainorienė indicated, under Lithuanian constitutional law, health was considered one of the most significant values, and this rule established a legally legitimate objective for restricting several rights, e.g., freedoms of peaceful assembly and movement. The restrictions imposed under the Quarantine Resolution encompassed the ban of public events and assemblies of more than two people who were not members of the same family (Dagilytė, Padskočimaitė, and Vainorienė, 2020). Notably, the limitations did not exclude any part of the political nation from political decision-making processes in Lithuania.

It is worth highlighting that Article 30 of the Lithuanian Constitution and Article 38(1) of the Law on Contagious Diseases introduced the right to appeal to court when human rights were breached. Additionally, members of the Seimas, the courts, the President, and individuals could petition the Constitutional Court to conform to the government's acts with the Constitution and laws (Article 106). Unlike Estonians, Lithuanian citizens had timely access to justice during the pandemic (Dagilytė, Padskočimaitė, and Vainorienė, 2020).

As Aleksejs Dimitrovs showed, in Latvia, The Law on Emergency Situations and the State of Exception authorized the government to impose some restrictions regarding, e.g., freedoms of peaceful assembly and movement. At the beginning of the pandemic, the government banned public gatherings of over 200 people. Nevertheless, on 29 March 2020, the ban was extended to all such events, including religious and private gatherings, except for funerals outdoors, respecting two-meter distance rules. Later on, "baptism ceremonies in urgent cases" were considered another exception (Dimitrovs, 2020). However, like in Lithuania, the restrictions did not exclude any part of the Latvian political nation from political decision-making processes. Furthermore, Latvians also had timely access to justice.

The comparison of the Baltic states uncovered that in Estonia, the anti-democratic measures were adopted to undermine the sovereignty of the political nation. The government abused the extended power competencies to perform its own political agenda. In Lithuania and Latvia, anti-democratic measures were not misused and served to maintain the sovereignty of the political nations. In those

two neo-militant democracies, the restrictions worked as precautions intended to prevent the spread of coronavirus and protect human lives and health.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The analysis exposes the role of social consent to implement anti-democratic solutions. In Lithuania and Latvia, unconditional opposition to the inclusion of anti-democratic forces in the government, erected a barrier to abuses even during the crisis that encouraged malpractices. In contrast, in Estonia, crisis management became a tool in the hands of anti-democratic forces to extending their power competencies. As the Estonian case reveals, the lack of adequate procedures to resolve a crisis along with the social support for anti-democratic forces and their electoral success may trigger a movement from neo- to quasi-militant democracy.

By drawing upon Estonia's experience, Kiviorg and Margna stressed out that the laws regulating emergency situations should be revised to avoid future infringements of the principle of the rule of law. Since the state of emergency generates a field for power competencies misuse, the laws have to guarantee that constitutional rights and freedoms will not be violated arbitrarily by unconstitutional orders and restrictions that have no basis in the law. Moreover, the supervisory mechanisms should be developed and amended so as to provide citizens with the possibility to control the protection of their own rights and freedoms on an ongoing basis. Hasty, reactive, and haphazard changes during a crisis are not recommended (Kiviorg and Margna, 2021). Instead, it is recommended that in the early post-COVID-19 world, the state legislators face the challenge of reviewing the existing crisis management procedures and laws. The pandemic-derived experience in regulating political, legal, and social structure should be widely discussed and consulted with civil society. The existing and constantly modified regulations should be controlled not only in terms of compliance with the applicable law, the level of effectiveness in combating the threat, the level of social acceptance, but also the influence on the sovereignty of political nations.

References

Bäcker, R. (2020). Kategoria narodu politycznego. In: J. Wojnicki, J. Miecznikowska, & Ł. Zamęcki (Eds.), *Polska i Europa w perspektywie politologicznej. Księga jubileuszowa dedykowana profesorowi Konstantemu Adamowi Wojtaszczykowi z okazji 45-lecia pracy akademickiej*. Tom II. Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza ASPRA-JR, pp. 35–46.

Dagilytė, E., Padskočimaitė, A. & Vainorienė, A. (2020). Lithuania's Response to COVID-19: Quarantine Through the Prism of Human Rights and the Rule of Law. Available at: https://verfassungsblog.de/lithuanias-response-to-covid-19-quarantine-through-the-prism-of-human-rights-and-the-rule-of-law/ (Accessed: 03/04/2021).

Dimitrovs, A. (2020). COVID-19 in Latvia: Precaution Above All. Available at: https://verfassungsblog.de/covid-19-in-latvia-precaution-above-all/ (Accessed: 04/04/2021).

Gökarıksel, S. (2020). Antifascist Strategy Today: Lineages of Anticommunism and 'Militant Democracy' in Eastern Europe. In J. Rayner, S. Falls, G. Souvlis, and T.C. Nelms (Eds.), *Back to the '30s? Recurring Crises of Capitalism, Liberalism, and Democracy*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 215–234

Grogan, J. (2020). States of Emergency. Available at: https://verfassungsblog.de/states-of-emergency/ (Accessed: 04/04/2021).

Kiviorg, M. & Margna, P. (2021). COVID-19 in Estonia: A Year in Review. Available at: https://verfassungsblog.de/covid-19-in-estonia-a-year-in-review/ (Accessed: 03/04/2021).

Maruste, R. (2020). State of Emergency in Estonia. Available at: https://verfassungsblog.de/state-of-emergency-in-estonia/ (Accessed: 03/04/2021).

Loewenstein, K. (1937). Militant Democracy and Fundamental Rights I. *The American Political Science Review*, 3(31): 417–432.

Rezmer-Płotka, K. (2020). The Effects of Crises in the European Union as a Manifestation of the Militant Democracy Rule Implementation. *Przegląd Prawa Konstytucyjnego*, 6(58): 615–621.

Skrzypek, M. (2020). The Banning of Extremist Political Parties as a Measures of Neo-Militant Democracy: The Experience of Post-Communist States. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 1(2): 67–73.

Stanley, B. (2019). Backsliding Away? The Quality of Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe. *Journal of Contemporary European Research*, 15(4): 343–353.

Thym, D. (2020). Travel Bans in Europe: A Legal Appraisal. Available at: https://verfassungsblog.de/travel-bans-in-europe-a-legal-appraisal/ (Accessed: 02/04/2021).

van Elsuwege, P. (2020). Lifting Travel Restrictions in the Era of COVID-19: In Search of a European Approach. Available at: https://verfassungsblog.de/lifting-travel-restrictions-in-the-era-of-covid-19-in-search-of-a-european-approach/ (Accessed: 02/04/2021).

Contentious Politics in Defense of Neo-Militant Democracy in Poland: The Rationale Behind Fighting a Quasi-Militant Democracy[1]

Kamila Rezmer-Płotka[2]

Abstract[3]

The article aims to present voters, and self-governments' opposition toward the correspondence form of the presidential elections in Poland. The elections were to take place during the coronavirus pandemic (in May 2020), and due to the epidemiological threat, a decision was made to change their form. Initially, correspondence elections were to include older people, those being at risk of infection, and later all citizens with active voting rights. The organization of elections in this form faced great resistance due to doubts related to the secrecy of the elections, the transfer of voters' personal data to the Polish Post (Poczta Polska), or the pragmatic nature - no letterboxes, as well as legal ones - violation of the provisions of the Electoral Code which regulates electoral issues in Poland. Limiting electoral rights is also one of the symptoms of becoming a neo-militant democracy. The emphasis was put primarily on fears, doubts and allegations raised by protesters regarding the organization of elections in the correspondence form and the actual processes of quasi-militant democracy implementation. The analysis makes it possible to explain the reasons and motives for the resistance of the protesters and what solutions were proposed in their place. On this basis, it introduces recommendations to the government to restore stability in the state and end protests.

Keywords: elections; president; Poland; neo-militant democracy; civic freedoms; contentious politics.

Introduction

Presidential elections in Poland are held every 5 years. They are characterized with higher turnout than in other types of elections, although a president's role narrows down mainly to representation. In 2020, presidential elections were scheduled for May 10, and a possible second round for two weeks later. However, no one expected that the virus causing COVID-19 would begin to spread in January at such a large scale, and the coronavirus pandemic would be announced in March. As a result, state governments began to implement numerous restrictions and recommend staying at home. All mass events that could contribute to the spread of the epidemic have been cancelled. In Poland, however, questions have arisen about the organization of presidential elections in a difficult epidemiological situation. Initially, the elections were to be held in normal procedures as before the pandemic but with keeping extreme caution. However, this solution has been met with great resistance from society,

[1] To cite this paper in APA style: Rezmer-Płotka, K. (2021). Contentious Politics in Defense of Neo-Militant Democracy in Poland: The Rationale Behind Fighting a Quasi-Militant Democracy. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 2(1): 24-29. DOI: 10.12681/hapscpbs.27652

[2] Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Poland.

[3] This paper is a result of the research project Contentious Politics and Neo-Militant Democracy. It was financially supported by the National Science Centre, Poland [grant number 2018/31/B/HS5/01410].

including some politicians from the ruling party and even presidential candidates. At the end of March (March 31, 2020), a group of Law and Justice members submitted a draft to the Sejm which assumed postal voting for all voters. Public opinion polls conducted by numerous researchers indicated that most Poles are against the organization of elections on a predetermined date of May 10, 2020. The article aims to present voters' and self-governments' opposition toward the correspondence form of the presidential elections in Poland. The focus is primarily on fears, doubts and allegations raised by protesters regarding the organization of elections in this mode. The analysis explains the reasons and motives for the resistance of the protesters and solutions that were proposed in its place.

Presidential Election during the Coronavirus Pandemic

The events are perceived mainly within the theoretical framework the process of neo- and quasi-militant democracy. Neo-militant democracy is a political regime in which parliament and the judiciary are equipped with and using legal means to restrict democratic freedoms to defend democracy against those considered as its enemies (Loewenstein, 1937a: 418, Molier & Rijpkema, 2018). The term militant democracy was first used by Karl Loewenstein, who sought the reasons for the failure of the Weimar Republic against Nazism (Loewenstein, 1937a; 1937b). Although the characteristics adopted by democratic regimes have differed considerably since then, on the basis of the current literature, it is possible to indicate measures, which are useful for the study of modern democracies, i.e., neo-militant democracies. These include: the limitations of the freedom of assembly (Mareš, 2012: 34); the limitations of the freedom of the press (Capoccia 2005: 57–61); the limitations of the freedom of speech (Ijabs, 2016: 289; Mareš, 2012: 36); the limitations of the freedom of association (Mareš 2012: 36); the limitations of the freedom of religion (Müller, 2012: 1119); the limitations of passive voting rights (Ijabs, 2016: 289); the limitations of active voting rights (Ijabs, 2016: 289); the limitations of referendum organization (Ijabs, 2016: 288); legislation on counterterrorism and anti-terrorism (Macklem, 2006: 488–489); the limitation of registration and functioning of political parties (Mareš, 2012: 36); the limitation of naturalization (Ijabs, 2016: 289); the limitation of access to public employment (Mareš, 2012: 36); legislation on anti-extremism (Capoccia, 2005: 57–61; Sajó, 2005: 2280); movement restrictions (Sajó, 2005: 2280); restrictions on the independence of the judiciary (Kirshner, 2014: 21). Quasi-militant uses legal means, a characteristic of neo-democracy not to protect democracy, but to extend politicians' power competencies.

There are numerous reasons behind perceiving the correspondence voting in Poland in the context of the categories of neo- and quasi-militant democracy. Voters' and self-governments' opposition

indicated numerous threats, doubts and fears related to the form of elections adopted in pandemic realities. Based on the qualitative analysis of the statements appearing in the analyzed period they were arranged into four groups: 1) a group of factors related to the rule of law principle and democratic principles; 2) a group related to technical and organizational aspects of elections; 3) a group related to emotions, feelings, and trust in state institutions; 4) the last group which is related to the position held by authorities, institutions, and politicians. The groups were selected on the basis of the criterion of the frequency of their appearance and quotation in the mass media. The study focused on the news channels that had the greatest reach in Poland. The most opinion-forming media in the analyzed period were internet portals: Onet.pl, Wp.pl, TV stations: TVN24, Polsat News and the press: Rzeczpospolita, Gazeta Wyborcza (IMM, 2021). The listed media had the highest citation rates. Moreover, in the case of TV stations, the main news services were included in the analysis, TVN 24 at 7 p.m. and Polsat News at 6.50 p.m.

In the first group there are such elements as: an electoral process that does not meet fundamental democratic principles such as secrecy, immediacy, universality (especially because of the choice of a citizen between health and participation in elections with exposure to infection), changes to the electoral code shortly before the scheduled elections thereby failing to comply with and violating the rules and deadlines set therein (which violated also the Polish Constitution); the threat of invalid election of president.

The second group includes: voters' personal data could be intercepted and processed by unauthorized entities if ballot papers were lost (the cards contained, among others, personal ID number (PESEL), which can be easily used for taking bank loans); exposure to infection by touching ballot papers and envelopes; general logistical concerns about Polish Post's capabilities to deliver the voting packages in the short time which remained until the elections (this anxiety results from outstandingly low quality of Polish Post's services); the lack of installed mailboxes by citizens and possible penalties for their absence; the question of receiving voting cards either from postmen (they also expressed opposition because they would expose themselves and voters to infection by contacting with a large number of residents) or from soldiers and police officers, who would guard mailboxes since they are easily accessible and there is a risk of stealing ballot papers.

The third group of arguments encompasses: permanent anxiety and danger to life and health; fear of loved ones, sense of injustice due to restrictions on attending church masses, funerals, weddings and other family celebrations, and restrictions on gatherings, meetings with friends; periodic restriction of access to promenades, green areas, parks, forests; dissonance limiting contacts between people and participation in elections; a different nature of the political campaign and restrictions on access to

material for digitally excluded persons, as well as obstacles for campaign staffs, candidates and volunteers themselves; concerns about the possible consequences of the candidate's choice in case of a data leak; the fear that elections within this timeframe may be part of a political game that may be relevant to the final outcome of the elections; limited trust in the Polish Post; anger and frustration due to the possible transfer of data to the Polish Post without the citizen's knowledge.

The fourth group includes the following factors: opposition of local government representatives, e.g., city presidents to share voters' data; objections of the Polish Episcopal Conference (in Poland the Catholic Church has a significant voice on many issues).

Most of the measures indicating the occurrence of neo-militant democracy could be observed during the coronavirus pandemic in European countries, which was related to the lockdowns. However, the restrictions often were introduced unjustifiably and infringed democratic principles. In a crisis situation, citizens at first impulse to be scared by an unknown, look for help from the state and expect that it will allow them to safely go through the crisis. It turns out, however, that many political groups use such situations to achieve their political goals. When politicians use neo-militant democracy measures, not to protect democracy, but to expand the scope of their own power competencies, a quasi-militant democracy is created.

The categories of neo- and quasi-militant democracy allow researchers to study how and why within democratic systems there are introduced restrictions that make the political systems of modern states take on undemocratic features. The planned presidential elections in Poland are a particularly important case in this context, especially since election rights constitute the foundation of a democratic system. Conscious choice and the possibility to vote for candidates who will represent the public interest is a fundamental right of every citizen. In Poland, the proposed solutions became the subject of contentious politics and the source of conflicts and protests, mainly on the part of voters and self-governments' opposition. In such a way, the Law and Justice discriminated against other social groups considered as its enemies or enemies of democracy. Other social groups than the elderly were left with a choice 'vote and die' or 'stay at home and survive'. That is the main reason why the process of taking advantage of neo-militant democracy measures in Poland has become particularly clear. Previously introduced restrictions on, among others, public gatherings, restrictions on freedom of movement (e.g., for a certain period it was impossible to go to the forest or on the promenade), religious freedom - manifested by a limited number of people who could participate in church ceremonies and rites, did not prevent the rulers from organizing elections in which thousands of voters take part. The government also proposed to organize postal elections. However, under the pandemic, it would pose voters to the risk of infection potentially spread by postmen. Moreover, these proposals

 ISSN: 2732-6578 (print version) 2732-6586 (online)

also completely omitted regulations provided by the Electoral Code, which made them unconstitutional.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Presidential elections were to be held in Poland on May 10, 2020, but the pandemic hindered their organization. The government proposed to organize the elections in a correspondence form, violating the principles of the rule of law. For this reason, the categories of quasi- and neo-militant democracy were used to explain the resistance of public opinion, which allows to study modern democracies in terms of the presence of undemocratic features in order to either weaken or maintain democratic regimes. The paper draws upon a theoretical framework that sheds light on the nature of the actions of the government that resulted in public opinion's resistance. The purpose of using neo-militant democracy measures was closer to quasi-militant democracy purposes. The reasons for it were divided into four groups: 1) a group of factors related to the rule of law and democratic principles; 2) to technical, organizational aspects; 3) to emotions and feelings, trust in state institutions and 4) to the position held by authorities, institutions and politicians. Referring to them, the paper explains the reasons and motives for the resistance of the protesters which was caused mainly for limiting their active voting right in the context of contradictory government activities implemented for countering the pandemic. Accordingly, Poles opposed the expansion of the scope of the ruling powers of politicians, i.e., the implementation of goals characteristic of a quasi-militant democracy.

The recommendations that can be proposed on the basis of the analysis focus on the governmental policy. It should admit that organizing elections during a pandemic was not the best idea and officially apologize citizens for its reckless decision. Furthermore, nothing justifies the desire to extend its power competencies and focusing on power rather than the health security of Poles. The next step should be taking action against those responsible for spending large sums on elections that had not taken place. It would also be better to regulate the transfer of sensitive citizens' data in order to avoid future transfers to other institutions without the consent of the persons concerned. In this way, the steps taken to rebuild voter confidence would become apparent. Citizens should be assured that the common good and their interests are more important than party and political interests, because politicians should be the representatives of the voters who voted for them. At the institutional level, it is important to take action to change and restructure the institution, which is The Polish Post, to which citizens have a low level of trust. One way would be to improve the functioning of this institution at every level. Next, an information campaign should be carried out with a positive impact, which would encourage citizens to use improved services.

The situation that took place in Poland is particularly important for the researchers of the process of quasi- and neo-militant democracy measures implementation. It is also a guide for other countries in which elections will take place possibly under equally difficult conditions, as another waves of coronavirus infections are expected. They reveal that social consultations are necessary to maintain democratic structures also in times of the pandemic.

References

Capoccia, G. (2005). *Defending Democracy Reactions to Extremism in Interwar Europe*. London: Baltimore.

Ijabs, I. (2016). After the Referendum: Militant Democracy and Nation-Building in Latvia. *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures,* 2(30): 288-314.

IMM. (2021). Onet.pl powraca na pierwsze miejsce „Najbardziej opiniotwórczych mediów w Polsce". Za nim RMF FM i Rzeczpospolita. Available at: https://www.imm.com.pl/onet-pl-powraca-na-pierwsze-miejsce-najbardziej-opiniotworczych-mediow-w-polsce-za-nim-rmf-fm-i-rzeczpospolita/ (Accessed: 11/05/2021).

Kirshner, A. (2014). *A Theory of Militant Democracy: The Ethics of Combatting Political Extremism*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Loewenstein, K. (1937a). Militant Democracy and Fundamental Rights I. *The American Political Science Review*, 3(31): 417-432.

Loewenstein, K. (1937b). Militant Democracy and Fundamental Rights II. *The American Political Science Review*, 4(31): 638-658.

Macklem, P. (2006). Militant Democracy, Legal Pluralism, and the Paradox of Self-determination. *International Journal of Constitutional Law*, 3(4): 488-516.

Mareš, M. (2012). Czech Militant Democracy in Action: Dissolution of the Workers' Party and the Wider Context of This Act. *East European Politics and Societies,* 33(26): 33-55.

Müller, J.-W. (2012). Militant Democracy. In: M. Rosenfeld & A. Sajó (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Constitutional Law*. New York: Oxford University Press. p. 1119.

Sajó, A. (2005). From Militant Democracy to the Preventive State. *Cardozo Law* 5(27): 2255-2294.

ISSN: 2732-6578 (print version) 2732-6586 (online)

Topic 2

Public Administration and Governance in Transformation

Blind Spots of Brazilian Law: Encouraging Insurrection, Parliamentary Immunity and the Defense of Institutional Safeguards[1]

Pedro H. Villas Bôas Castelo Branco[2] & Carina B. Gouvêa[3]

Abstract

In almost the whole world, distrust of political institutions delegitimizes their representation, leaving us without a shelter that protects us in the name of common interest (Gouvêa & Castelo Branco, 2020). The rupture in the relationship between the rulers and the ruled makes this conflict even more profound, with devastating consequences that arise from the inability to deal with the multiple crises that are being decanted and mapped in the internal political system. Democratic recession[4] contributes to the boiling of politicians who do not take constitutional ideals seriously, who do not see constitutions as a source of constraints to their powers, and instead use the constitution and legal rules to self-perpetuate, to legitimize arbitrary government and to ensure who will be re-elected as many times as possible. Populisms and populist movements represent the instrumental degradation of the power structures of democratic systems. In a recent published survey, we found that populisms (Gouvêa & Castelo Branco, 2020) have a conceptual-instrumental nature and can be defined as democratic illiberalism[5] with variable properties[6]. They represent

[1] To cite this paper in APA style: Castelo Branco, P. H. V. B. & Gouvêa, C. B. (2021). Blind spots of Brazilian law: Encouraging insurrection, parliamentary immunity and the defense of institutional safeguards. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 2(1): 31-36. DOI: 10.12681/hapscpbs.27653

[2] Pedro H. Villas Bôas Castelo Branco is Professor at the Institute of Social and Political Studies (IESP) at the State University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ) and Professor of the Law Graduate Program at the Veiga de Almeida University (PPGD/UVA).

[3] Carina B. Gouvêa is Professor of the Postgraduate Program in Law at the Federal University of Pernambuco (PPGD/UFPE).

[4] According to the Freedom House Report (2021), the impact of long-term democratic decline has become increasingly global in nature, broad enough to be felt by those living under the cruelest dictatorships, as well as by citizens of older democracies. Nearly 75% of the world population lived in a country that experienced a democratic recession in 2020. As COVID-19 spread throughout the year, governments across the democratic spectrum have repeatedly resorted to over-vigilance, discriminatory restrictions on freedoms and arbitrary or violent applications of such restrictions by police and non-state actors. The expansion of populist and authoritarian regimes, combined with the weakening and inconsistent presence of major democracies on the international scene, has had tangible effects on human life and security, including frequently resorting to military force to resolve political disputes.

[5] Democratic illiberalism represents the disintegration of the system in which liberalism and democracy are in conflict. The term illiberalism has been widely used by the doctrine. See: Zakaria, Fareed (1997). The rise of illiberal democracy. Foreign Aff., v. 76, p. 22; Mounk, Yascha (2018). The people vs. democracy: Why our freedom is in danger and how to save it. Harvard University Press; Puddington, Arch (2017). Breaking down democracy: Goals, strategies, and methods of modern authoritarians. Washington, DC: Freedom House. For Puddington (2017), illiberalism involves a rejection of liberal values and democratic norms in the specific political context. Contemporary populism emerged in a context of economic and financial crises and a deeper crisis of liberal democracy. The rise of economic inequality and the intensification of disbelief in politics would represent the failure of liberal elites to fulfill their promise of a political practice based on moderation and consensus, recognition of minority rights and mutual tolerance. This led to the crisis of liberal democracy. In this context, populism presents premises that are very different from those that underlie pluralist liberalism, such as the polarization of politics, in detriment of the search for consensus; popular homogenization, in detriment of the recognition of the heterogeneity of groups in the political community; the overlapping of conservative and exclusive values on progressivism (Gouvêa & Castelo Branco, 2020).

[6] The variable properties can manifest themselves through different political-cultural and ideological manifestations; from the intimidation of free press; to the rejection of election results; in the weakening and attacking institutional safeguards; in the massive use of intelligence and data control and surveillance services; in the polarization of sectarian politics by charismatic leaders; in the routinization of charisma; in rhetorical and demagogue speeches as particular styles of extremist communication; in the formulation of policies driven by impulses and subject to sudden changes and upheavals

a certain type of ideology, discourse, strategy, mobilization and political action in the specific cultural and political context. They decant themselves through formal and/or informal movements directly or indirectly in the democratic system by a charismatic leader who represents and leads an anti-establishment force resting their beliefs in moral and ethical institutions in order to consolidate and legitimize a populist political regime under the mantle of popular sovereignty and democracy. To subvert democracy, you have to become democratic.

Keywords: insurrection; parliamentary immunity; defense of institutional safeguards; populisms; Federal Supreme Court.

Introduction

The populist Bolsonarist movement[7] in Brazil represents an affront to democratic values and principles and, consequently, to the democratic rule of law (Gouvêa & Castelo Branco, 2020). According to Daly and Jones (2020) these concerns end up highlighting the problem of how to identify and punish the political power that resides outside formal institutions, as in the case of the "almost political parties"[8]. These organizations are not presented as parties to the electorate and, crucially, they avoid the formal channels of power dodging accountability and corrective measures specific to political parties. The movement, far from being representative, becomes a faction representing a certain extremist ideology, effectively a "shadow party".

Main Issues

The populist movement has formal, informal, direct and indirect aspects that constitute variable properties of populism. These are strategies commonly used in different specific contexts and are intended to expand their political strength. In Bolsonaro's populist movement, the use of political and

because it is designed to respond to the political climate of the moment; in undemocratic behavior; the rhetorical use of government policies and actions; exploring the popular feeling of disbelief in institutions; in the segregationist political agenda and agenda; in the systematic use of the media environment on social platforms such as WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook; in the unrestrained use and promotion of misinformation and fake news; in the subversion of the constitutional process and the rejection of the rules of the game; in the tolerance or encouragement of violence; in the excessive use of referendums; in the propensity to restrict liberties and culture; in the use of political and religious moralism; mythical politics; the politicized supervisory body; populist governance of the use of military power in politics and the "militarization of politics", among other behaviors that fit the anti-democratic and illiberal principles. These variables decant themselves through formal and informal movements directly or indirectly in the field of democratic illiberalism. (Gouvêa & Castelo Branco, 2020).

[7] A populist movement is understood as the way it manifests itself in the social, political and legal context.

[8] For example, in Brazil, the movement entitled "300 do Brasil" is investigated by Police Inquiry No. 4,828 , which points to evidence of the digital influencers that make up the core of the support base for the Bolsonaro government and that is related to actions of considerable harmful potential, taking into account that their manifestations, promoted both on social media and physically on the street, have instigated a portion of the population that, with ideological affinity, has been used to drive the extremism of the polarization and antagonism discourse, by illegal means, to the Powers of the Republic, more precisely the Federal Supreme Court and the National Congress (Gouvêa & Castelo Branco, 2020).

religious moralism, the unrestrained impetus for misinformation and fake news, the polarization and militarization of politics stands out (Gouvêa & Castelo Branco, 2020).

Inquiry 4,781 pending confidentiality at the Supreme Federal Court, established by Ordinance No. 69, of March 14th, 2019, is intended to investigate, considering the existence of fraudulent news, slanderous denunciations, threats and infractions covered by animus caluniandi, diffamandi or injuriandi, which attack the honorability and security of the Supreme Federal Court, which are the results of these movements. On February 16th, 2021, a Youtube video[9] came to the attention of the court, published by federal congressman Daniel Siveira, in the Youtube channel called "Política Play", where the said deputy during 19m9s, attacks the head of the Ministers of the Supreme Federal Court, through various threats and offenses to honor, expressly propagates the adoption of anti-democratic measures against the Supreme Federal Court, defends the AI-5[10]; also incites the immediate replacement of all Ministers as well as instigates the adoption of violent measures against their security, in a clear affront to democratic, republican principles and the separation of powers[11].

The arrest of the congressman was decreed by the Federal Supreme Court, which unanimously understood that there was a need to adopt vigorous measures to prevent the perpetuation of criminal activity. The Federal Supreme Court considered it imperative to prevent the perpetuation of criminal activity with the intention of harming or exposing the independence of the instituted powers and the Democratic Rule of Law to harm. The Court interpreted the crimes contained in the video as blatant because of their availability and accessibility to users connected to the worldwideweb. The crimes against the democratic constitutional order contained in the video inserted in a global system of interconnected computer networks and accessible at any time, were understood as crimes of prolonged consummation, which would constitute permanent criminal conduct.

In the decision, some signs that represent the legitimacy of the arrest are evidenced: (i) the author of the conducts repeatedly[12] attacks institutional safeguards in order to modify the current regime and the rule of law, through structures and financing aimed at mobilizing and inciting the population to subvert the political and social order; (ii) created animosities between the Armed Forces and the institutions; (iii) there is no possibility of spreading ideas contrary to the constitutional order and to

[9] Available at: https://youtu.be/jMfInDBItog.

[10] Institutional Act No. 5 represented the definitive insertion of the National Security doctrine in Brazilian legislation in Brazil's dictatorial period. It granted almost absolute powers to the President of the Republic, intending to combat subversion and ideologies contrary to Brazilian traditions. It is considered the most repressive of acts in the Brazilian legal field (Torres, 2018).

[11] Inquiry 4,781 Federal District. Available at: http://portal.stf.jus.br/processos/detalhe.asp?incidente=5651823.

[12] Representations against the Congressman on the Ethics Council of the Chamber of Deputies (REP1 / 21, REPs 3/21 to 9/21) include illegally recording his party's meeting held in October 2019; responds to lawsuit for breach of parliamentary decorum for offenses and possible threats to members of the Supreme Court, and for making an incitement for AI-5

the Democratic State (CF, articles 5, XLIV; 34, III and IV) nor the demonstration on social networks aimed at breaking the rule of law, with the extinction of the constitutional fixed clauses - Separation of Powers (CF, article 60, paragraph 4), with the consequent installation of arbitration; (iv) freedom of speech and pluralism of ideas are structural values of the democratic system, however, conduct and manifestations that have the clear purpose of controlling or even annihilating the power of critical thinking, indispensable to the democratic regime, are unconstitutional; (v) he preached violence, arbitrariness, disrespect for the Separation of Powers and fundamental rights, in short, pleading for tyranny, violence and the breach of republican principles, as evidenced by the criminal and inconsequential manifestations of the aforementioned parliamentarian. In these unprecedented circumstances, the National Congress, in a historical decision, maintained the arrest of the congressman[13] by 364 votes.

Conclusions

Brazilian democracy has been showing resistance when trying to prevent the legitimation of Bolsonaro's populist movement through the backlashing effects of democratic institutions, civil society and non-governmental organizations (Gouvêa & Castelo Branco, 2020).

Two hypotheses represent the key points of this discussion: parliamentary immunity whose foundation is the defense of democracy and not the other way around; and the concept of the act, which can no longer be thought of outside the digital revolution that expands its semantic extension.

The congressman's repeated criminal conduct constitutes an imminent threat to Brazilian democratic stability and to the constitutional order foundations. Its practices typify a pattern of anti-democratic insurrectionary behavior, incompatible with the mandate given to him by the popular vote. His conduct demonstrates and warns, if he remains in the position, that he will be a clear and present danger to the foundations of our constitutional order itself and the security and protection of our nation. If the parliamentarian remains in the position, he and his followers will feel empowered and

[13] According to article 53 §2 of the 1988 Federal Constitution, Deputies and Senators are inviolable, civilly and criminally, by any of their opinions, words and votes and, since the issuance of the diploma, members of the National Congress cannot be prisoners, except in the act of committing an unbailable crime. In this case, the records will be sent within twenty-four hours to the respective House, so that, by the vote of the majority of its members, it can decide on the arrest. On a continuous basis, the Chamber of Deputies voted on February 24, 2021, the admissibility of Proposed Amendment to the Constitution (PEC) 3/21 which determines that the arrest of deputies and senators in the act can only be decreed if it is related to unbailable crimes listed in the Constitution such as racism and heinous crimes. The proposal aims to change constitutional provisions that provide for parliamentary prerogatives. According to Conjur, the PEC wants to veto the possibility of a Minister of the Supreme Court decreeing the provisional arrest of a parliamentarian in a monocratic way, such as that which occurred with Deputy Daniel Silveira, detained by order of Minister Alexandre de Morais (see: Conjur. Câmara aprova admissibilidade da PEC sobre imunidade parlamentar. Pub. Feb 2nd, 2021. Available at < https://www.conjur.com.br/2021-fev-25/camara-aprova-admissibilidade-pec-imunidade-parlamentar> (Accessed: 24/02/2021).

allowed to continue to attack democratic institutions. Material parliamentary immunity cannot be used to shield the practice of crimes, especially against democracy, which is the condition for the possibility of the constitutional prerogative of inviolability.

The judicial review at this point remains an intractable tension. What are the criteria used to decree the arrest of a parliamentarian, as in the case of Brazil, which has a double protection of freedom of expression? It is not enough to affirm that there was an incitement or crime against the democratic order, but to justify why it is not affected by material parliamentary immunity. The need for fundamentality is justified as populist forces of authoritarian inclination can be strengthened by granting the status of victims of "entrenched elites" like the Ministers of the Brazilian Supreme Court.

Brazil has an authoritarian populist president, and, at this moment, the formal and informal democratic institutions must take the stage. The systems of checks and balances are capable of restricting and constraining the populist movement. The backlash effect, arising from both formal and informal institutions, represents the active and boiling exercise of Brazilian democracy, which has acted in a way to prevent the legitimation of the populist bolsonarist movement. In this sense, the movement's strength has brought together institutions, civil society, non-governmental organizations, political parties to incorporate diffuse manifestations of popular power in the name of democratic and constitutional values[14]. When the parliamentarian concludes by threatening democratic institutions, corrupting or interfering in the pillars that support their values, he denies the very premise of the constitutional system.

References

Daly, T. G. & Jones, B. C. (2020). Parties versus democracy: Addressing today's political party threats to democratic rule. International Journal of Constitutional Law, 18 (2): 509-538.

Folha de São Paulo (2021). Supreme is pressured to respond quickly to the application of the law of the dictatorship rehabilitated under Bolsonaro. Pub. March 21st. Available at: https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/2021/03/stf-e-pressionado-a-dar-resposta-agil-sobre-aplicacao-de-lei-da-ditadura-reabilitada-sob-bolsonaro.shtml. (Accessed: 22/03/2021).

[14] LSN in Brazil was invoked to prosecute opponents of Jair Bolsonaro (youtuber, businessman and influencer Felipe Neto will launch a project to defend people prosecuted by the government. The "Shut up is already dead" front has the idea of offering free defense to citizens who criticize President Bolsonaro's government or any public authority. The project intends to fight against authoritarianism and that it will be driven by the principle that, when a citizen is silent in the exercise of his legitimate right of expression, the voice of democracy weakens (Legal Consultant, 2021). In the same sense, the Federal Public Defender's Office and a group of lawyers have sued the Federal Supreme Court, in different petitions, with the request of a collective Habeas Corpus, in favor of all persons prosecuted, investigated or threatened with an investigation for a national security crime through manifestation of political opinion or the practice, in theory, of crimes against the honor of Jair Bolsonaro, ministers of state or other federal public agents (Migalhas, 2021) and it also supported the Supreme Federal Court's order for Congressman Daniel Silveira to be arrested. Congressmen, political parties and civil society organizations have been mobilizing for the Court to evaluate the repeal or updating of the law and the main argument is the restriction of freedom of expression (Folha de São Paulo, 2021).

Freedom House (2021). Freedom in the world 2021. Democracy under siege. Available at https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2021/democracy-under-siege. (Accessed: 04/03/2021).

Gouvêa, C. B. & Castelo Branco, P. H. V. B. (2020). Populismos. Belo Horizonte: Casa do Direito.

Legal Consultant (2021). Felipe Neto creates project to defend government prosecuted. Pub. March 18th. Available at: https://www.conjur.com.br/2021-mar-18/felipe-neto-cria-projeto-defender-processados-governo. (Accessed: 18/03/2021).

Migalhas (2021). Federal Public Defender and lawyers go to the Supreme Court in defense of the ones investigated by Bolsonaro. Pub. March 19th. Available at: https://www.migalhas.com.br/quentes/342103/dpu-e-advogados-vao-ao-stf-em-defesa-de-investigados-por-bolsonaro?U=2017B8D3_573&utm_source=informativo&%E2%80%A6=. (Accessed: 19/03/2021).

Puddington, A. (2017). *Breaking down democracy: Goals, strategies, and methods of modern authoritarians*. Washington, DC: Freedom House.

Torres, M.G. (2018). O judiciário e o Ato Institucional nº 5: repressão e acomodação em 1968. *MovimentAção,* 5 (09): 125-138.

 ISSN: 2732-6578 (print version) 2732-6586 (online)

Local Government in Greece at the Crossroads: Between Governability and Accountability[1]

Antonios Karvounis[2]

Abstract

This policy brief is based on the assumption that the recovery of Greece, after more than a decade of crisis, should include local government, the institution, which is closer to local people than central government, and, consequently, ought to be more accountable. One of the most important problem identified here is the democratic deficit of the first level of local governance system. Despite its strong political and social clout, local government in Greece remains an institution with limited capabilities, as the Greek State has been and remains one of the most centralized states in Europe. In fact, after the 2019 general election, just before and during the recent pandemic crisis, the legislative initiatives of the government, despite the international trends of decentralisation towards more participatory and accountable local institutions, turned to the traditional and favourite "mayor-centered" system of local governance for the sake of the "governability". As a result, the re-concentration politics of local government loom large for the post-coronavirus era.

Keywords: local government; local governance; accountability; governability.

Introduction

It is a truism that a great deal has changed in the world of Greek local government over the past thirty years and that much of this change has been the subject of intense political and media debate. Consequently, it is also safe to say that everybody is more or less aware of some of the key issues in recent history of local government. Since the late 1990s a number of changes in local government, if less dramatic, has been taking place in one of the most centralized states in Europe (Ladner et al., 2019). The so-called "mayor-centered" system of local governance with the absence of a system of strong institutional counterweights, as well as the confusion of roles within the system of local government, have aired public criticism for many years. The "Kapodistrias Plan" (1997) and the "Kallikratis Programme" (2010) have, in the eyes of many observers, brought high-profile territorial reforms in local government. Yet, the end product of these reforms has been a failure to solidify check and balance mechanisms versus the "mayor-centered" system of local governance. On the other hand, the "Kleisthenes Programme I" (2018), against the backdrop of a severe financial crisis, included provisions which intended to enhance local accountability and representation. Alas, a series of new legislative initiatives launched after the 2019 general elections has been interpreted as a direct attack

[1] To cite this paper in APA style: Karvounis, A. (2021). Local Government in Greece at the Crossroads: Between Governability and Accountability. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 2(1): 37-42. DOI: 10.12681/hapscpbs.27654

[2] Hellenic Republic, Ministry of Interior; Member of the Academic Staff of the Hellenic Open University.

on the very principles of the “Kleisthenes Programme I”. The politics of hung councils, i.e. councils where no party has a majority, drove the legislative initiatives of the new government towards more traditional “mayor-centred” solutions. Arguments for more democratic policy process and less dominant parties with little legitimacy have been overshadowed by voices for more, not necessarily better, “governability”. This policy brief attempts to grapple with the changes that have taken place in the first level of local government over the past decade of financial and pandemic crisis, in terms of accountability and governability. It begins by approaching the main trends of decentralisation in Europe. Our attention then turns to an historical overview of the main waves of reform in Greek local government. At the end, as a conclusion, although it remains unclear as to what the future may bring for local government, the recent developments chartered suggest that this is not a prospect which local authorities should reflect on easily.

The trends of the decentralization reforms in Europe

In recent years there has been a general trend towards greater decentralization of public administration in most European countries (OECD, 2019). In the midst of economic crisis, and despite the strong differences of the local authorities in terms of their legal and political status and their competences, the reforms in the field of local government internationally moved towards three main directions (Hlepas, 2005: 319; Hlepas, et al., 2014: 8):

(a) Most European countries (see Greece, Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands, Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy and Spain) have launched enforced or voluntary mergers of neighboring municipalities and communities, as well as (or alternatively) deepening inter-municipal cooperation. Such cooperation took place through the establishment of associations and the formation of inter-municipal agreements for the provision of services and the implementation of projects in order to address the problems caused by the fragmentation of local government ("traditional type of reforms").

(b) Countries, such as the United Kingdom, have taken radical steps to reduce spending through the introduction of New Public Management (NPM) methods and practices. A common denominator of those changes was the introduction of a business culture in the provision of public services and the transition to a "results-oriented" administration. Other countries, such as France, Italy and Germany, were more cautious.

(c) A third category of reforms ("participatory") is related to the enhancement of the democratic and political role of local authorities through the strengthening of structures, processes and practices of citizen participation (eg. local referendums, electronic voting, youth forums,

neighborhood committees, immigration councils). Such reforms were carried out in the Nordic countries, in the Netherlands, in Germany, in Austria, etc.

In Greece, the waves of the local government reforms seem, with the exception of the mergers of the first level of local government, to deviate from the international experience and to justify the findings of international organizations, such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), according to which Greece remains one of the most centralized countries internationally (OECD, 2019; 2012: 20), contrary to the constitutional claims and the requirements of the European Charter of Local Self-Government (Law 1850/1989).

The waves of the local government reforms in Greece

The fall of the dictatorship marked a sharp challenge to government centralization (linked to authoritarianism and the so-called "athenocentric state"), although early governments adopted a cautious attitude towards local government (Andronopoulos & Mathioudakis, 1988). In the 1980s, the accession to the European Communities and, in particular, the political change of 1981, inaugurated a period of continuous strengthening of the position of local government (Karvounis, 2004: 110). First, the Ministry of Interior introduced in 1984 two policies to address the problem of fragmentation of Municipalities and Communities: the policy of voluntary mergers (Law 1416/1984, Law 1622/1984) and the policy of inter-municipal / inter-communal cooperation (Law 2128/1994).

Regarding the results of these two policies, in the first case, we can safely talk about a total failure, whereas in the second case we can acknowledge a partial success (Hlepas, et al. 2014: 31). Secondly, the ratification of the European Charter of Local Self-Government (Law 1850/1989) of the Council of Europe signaled that public affairs should preferably be conducted by authorities closest to the citizens, while a higher level of administration was considered appropriate only when coordination or delegation of responsibilities was weak or less effective at the lower administrative level.

But the first really high-profile reform for the first level of local government came in the late 1990s. What the voluntary mergers did not succeed, the "I. Kapodistrias Plan" (Law 2539/1997) changed, through merging the administrative boundaries of the first-level of local government (municipalities and communities), reducing them from 5,921 (361 municipalities and 5,560 communities) to 1,034 (900 municipalities and 134 communities), without even changing their previous institutional status. The Code of Municipalities and Communities in 2006 (Law 3463/2006) constituted the main legislative text for their function (Hlepas, et al. 2014: 32). The bold reform of the "I. Kapodistrias Plan" did not, though, create effective municipalities throughout the country with financial sufficiency and the ability to raise their own resources.

At the beginning of a long period of economic crisis, the “Kallikratis Programme” (Law 3852/2010) sought to step up the 325 new larger municipalities into key "administrations", where most administrative procedures would be carried out. In fact, the “Kallikratis Programme” made a little progress in relation to the so-called “mayor-centered” system of local governance. With the establishment of the executive committee, the “Kallikratis Programme” tried to collectivize the executive function. Yet, in practice this reform did not yield the expected results (Katsoulis, 2017). In this very need to collectivize the decision-making process, taking into account the experience of almost ten years of implementation of Law 3852/2010, the "Kleisthenes Programme I" (Law 4555/2018) tried to open up possibilities for a more democratic composition and operation of local government bodies and more proportionate representation. "Kleisthenes Programme I", among others, introduced a new electoral system of proportional representation (largest remainder method), as well as institutions of local democracy (municipal referendums). More specifically, Law 4555/2018 came to answer one of the most persistent demands of recent years and concerned the issue of the quality of modern democracy, ensuring the essential conditions of transparency, accountability and protection of the public interest (Karvounis, 2021: 269). According to this electoral system, in contrast to the electoral systems of the past, in which the legislator gave at least 3/5 of the seats of the council to the winning party, it provided that the numbers of votes for each party to be divided by a quota representing the number of votes required for a seat (i.e. the total number of votes cast divided by the number of seats). The result for each party will usually consist of an integer part plus a fractional remainder. Each party is first allocated a number of seats equal to their integer. This will generally leave some seats unallocated: the parties are then ranked on the basis of the fractional remainders, and the parties with the largest remainders are each allocated one additional seat until all the seats have been allocated. The mayor comes from the party that receives more than 50% (50% plus one vote) of the valid votes (Ministry of Interior, 2019: 87-88).

However, after 2018, and contrary to the challenges of the particular period that required social consensus, coalitions and power-sharing arrangements on major problems at the local level (Barber, 2014), more traditional centralised arguments and policies were put forward, with the strengthening of the role of the mayor in the collective bodies and within the other legal entities of the municipalities (see, among others, Law 4623/2019, Law 4635/2019, Law 4674/2020 and Law 4735/2020). In fact, the recent legal initiatives from above, without prior consultation with the central union of municipalities, provided for the following “mayor-centric” arrangements:

- The municipal council’s coalitions must include the mayor's party.

- The majority of the members of the financial committee and the quality of life committee should come from the mayor's party.
- Transfer of decisive competences from the municipal council to the economic committee in which the mayor's party enjoys the majority of the seats.
- The president of the community comes from the winning party.
- After resignation or death of a mayor, his/her successor comes from the mayor's party.
- The majority of the members of the steering board of the municipal legal entities come from the mayor's party.
- Reduction of the term of office of the deputy mayors (one year) in the executive committee, where the supremacy of the mayor is indisputable.
- Suspension of the provisions for the holding of municipal referendum introduced by "Kleisthenes Programme I" for the municipal period 2019-2023.

There is no doubt that these initiatives speak of the primacy of centralizing tendencies over the democratic value of local government. The government considered that these arrangements were the most appropriate, so as the elected mayor to secure, at least, the support of the majority of the members of the council's committees, in the case of those councils where the mayor does not enjoy the majority of the seats. However, due to the above initiatives, a question inevitably arises as to the proportional nature of the results of the electoral system, which was provided by "Kleisthenes Programme I".

Conclusions

During the recent pandemic crisis, voices were raised about the need for centralized management of major public health problems, as well as in other areas of public policy (Hlepas, 2021: 3). At the local government level, these arguments raised under the veil of the 'governability'. After the introduction of the simple proportional system, in many cases the mayor's party does not enjoy the majority of the seats in the municipal council and so the mayor is obliged to elicit the support of other municipal councilors, by offering either deputy mayors or other positions in return (Hlepas, 2021: 6). By putting forward new legislative "mayor-centric" initiatives since 2019, the government treated the supreme collective body of local government, i.e. municipal council, less than a body in which the popular will is enshrined and more as an area where the mayor, the main executive body, exercises her/his power and enjoys exclusive rights. In the coming period, the government will restore the power of the mayors by abolishing the electoral system of simple representation and by bringing back the traditional, "mayor-centric" majority electoral system. In this way, in the post-pandemic era, despite

the widespread use of modern technology, centralism will remain the fundamental element of the public administration, causing serious malfunctions, delaying the paradigm shift in decentralisation of functions that the country desperately needs, and degrading in quality the politically controlled executive state structures.

References

Andronopoulos, B.K. & Mathioudakis, A.M. (1988). *Modern Greek Administrative History*. Athens: Exantas Publications [in Greek].

Hlepas, N.K. (2021). *The Local Government in the Post-Coronavirus Era*. Athens: diaNEOsis. Available at: https://www.dianeosis.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Chlepas_January.pdf [in Greek] (Accessed: 06/05/2021).

Hlepas, N.K., Goupios, I. & Sapounakis, T. (2014). *First-level local government: Its finance, the conferring of functions and the impact on human resources and public goods*. Athens: Koinoniko Polykentro Available at: https://kpolykentro.gr/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/meleth_TA_5_11.pdf [in Greek] (Accessed: 06/05/2021).

Hlepas, N.K. (2005). *The Mayor. The Mayor as Elected Leader*. Athens: Papazisis Publications [in Greek].

Karvounis, A. (2021). 'Local Government: The Municipalities'. In: Sotiropoulos, D.A. & Ntalakou, V. (eds), *The Modern Administrative System in Greece*. Athens: EAP Publications [in Greek].

Karvounis, A. (2020). *Introduction to the Organisation and Functioning of State*. Athens: Patakis Publications [in Greek].

Katsoulis, D. (2017). 'Change of Kallikratis: Why? Towards where? How?', Cahier of Local Government, 5 May. Available at: http://tetradioaftodioikisis.blogspot.com/2017/05/blog-post_5.html [in Greek] (Accessed: 06/05/2021).

Ladner, A., Keuffer, N., Baldersheim, H., Hlepas, N., Swianiewicz, P., Steyvers, K., Navarro, C. (2019). *Patterns of Local Autonomy in Europe*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ministry of Interior (2019) Encyclical 12 for the Municipal Elections of 26th May 2019, Athens: Ministry of Interior

OECD (2019). *Making Decentralisation Work. A Handbook for Policy Makers. Multilevel Governance Studies*. Paris: OECD.

OECD (2012). *Making the Most of Public Investment in a Tight Fiscal Environment: Multi-level Governance Lessons from the Crisis*. Paris: OECD.

ISSN: 2732-6578 (print version) 2732-6586 (online)

Topic 3

Social Policies and Welfare State: The Way Forward

 ISSN: 2732-6578 (print version) 2732-6586 (online)

Labor Market Deregulation & In-Work Poverty: Considerations on the Future of Social Policy[1]

Dimitris Kastanos[2]

Abstract

Over the past few decades, labor market deregulation has dominated the policymaking agenda. These practices entailed, among others, easing the regulatory framework for employment protection, weakening collective bargaining institutions and promoting non-standard forms of employment as a means to achieve the desired degree of flexibility. Meanwhile, conventional analyses failed to investigate the correlation between deregulation and in-work poverty. In fact, poverty was examined exclusively as a consequence of unemployment, thus obscuring its multidimensional nature. This policy brief aims to present the core arguments for and against deregulation, as well as to provide a literature review on the relation between deregulation and in-work poverty. Finally, some remarks are made on the urgent need for change in the orientation of policymaking in a post-covid era.

Keywords: Labor market deregulation; flexibility; in-work poverty; part-time employment; temporal contracts; non-standard employment; social policy; social protection; welfare state.

Introduction

The promotion of labor market deregulation is one of the greatest fields of conflict in economics and social sciences. Since 1980, deregulation measures are being promoted systematically. Typical examples of that are the Thatcher and Reagan administrations in UK and USA respectively, through a direct attack on the labor market institutions (Tourtouri et al., 2018). These proposals are not limited to western economies. International organizations such as the World Bank, which is actively engaged in establishing development programs for developing economies, fully aligns with the deregulation agenda. Furthermore, developmental aid is complemented by the provision of conditions for structural reforms. Conditionalities are usually strict and include, among others, the commitment to budgetary discipline and monetary restraint to combat inflation and wage moderation to foster the competitiveness of the economies (United Nations, 2009). Adopting this kind of measures was accelerated in the aftermath of the financial crisis of 2007-08, especially in Southern Europe, in response to what was viewed as a structural and fiscal crisis (Tourtouri et al., 2018).

As is evident, within the framework of conventional analysis, labor market deregulation coupled with low levels of inflation and budgetary balance is an essential condition for economic growth.

[1] To cite this paper in APA style: Kastanos, D. (2021). Labor Market Deregulation & In-Work Poverty: Considerations on the Future of Social Policy. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 2(1): 44-49. DOI: 10.12681/hapscpbs.27655
[2] Department of Economics, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens; HAPSc Committee on Political Economy

Meanwhile, the prevailing view equates social exclusion and poverty with exclusion from the labor market, hence, poverty is exclusively examined in the light of unemployment. Consequently, ignoring the multidimensional nature of social exclusion has led to the underestimation of the robust correlation between deregulation and in-work poverty in the public debate and the academic literature (Ioannidis et al., 2012). As a matter of fact, the pandemic can only deteriorate the existing problem, while at the same time, it is highly possible for the debate to return to claims in support of deregulation and further fiscal adjustment to revitalize the economy in the post-covid era. Keeping this in mind, this policy brief seeks to present the main arguments in favor of deregulation as well as the criticisms that they have received. Additionally, some ideas drawn from the academic literature, on the correlation of in-work poverty and labor market deregulation will be presented. Lastly, the discussion will result in general considerations regarding social and economic policymaking in the future.

The rationale for deregulation

The rise of arguments promoting deregulation in the labor market can be traced back to the stagflation crisis in the 1970s. During that period, the unemployment rates were high and persistent, along with accelerating inflation pressures, both in Europe and in the USA. Mainstream economic thinking perceived the perseverance of high unemployment rates as a product of the demand-side management of the economy, the excessively generous welfare state, as well as a result of strict employment protection and the central role of trade unions in the determination of wages during the post-war period (Baccaro & Rei, 2007). A report from OECD in the 1990s, titled "The OECD Jobs Study", unveil the core arguments in favor of deregulation, while it must be noted that this report came to be a landmark for the Washington Consensus (Freeman, 2005). Specifically, it is claimed that "Economic growth will play a part in reducing unemployment. But beyond the cyclical component of unemployment is a structural element that persists even into recovery "(OECD, 1994).

According to that point of view, a wage higher than the level set by the equilibrium in the labor market is considered to cause unemployment, since employers under these circumstances would proceed to hire a smaller number of employees. The debate concerning the minimum wage conforms to the same logic. As stated by Blanchard, Chief Economist of the IMF at the time, a minimum wage that reaches 30-40% of the median wage is sufficient to maintain aggregate demand and reduce poverty rates. However, he claims that, in reality, minimum wages tend to surpass the proposed ceiling, undermining employment prospects (Blanchard et al., 2013). Consequently, workers' ability to collectively bargain higher wages and resist reductions of the minimum wage must be weakened, to achieve the appropriate degree of flexibility. The same justification holds for the need to curtail

employment protection. Excessive regulation, for instance through setting an upper ceiling in collective dismissals, can protect employees but simultaneously it can pose restrictions on new hirings (OECD, 1994). Hence, easing the regulatory framework of employment is considered necessary whilst flexibility can be put forward through concluding part-time and/or temporal contracts (Ioannidis et al., 2012).

Regarding welfare, it is argued that unemployment benefits are a disincentive to active job searching. The emphasis of policymaking should not be placed in passive labor market measures, such as unemployment benefits, but in what is called active labor market policies, constantly improving human capital. To sum it up, it is said that flexibilization and welfare retrenchment can promote growth, thus creating jobs. As a result, potentially negative effects on poverty caused by the implementation of such reforms will be counterbalanced through the diffusion of benefits to the economy as a whole (trickle-down) (United Nations, 2009).

Testing the rationale: Deregulation and in-work poverty

The mainstream view has faced a lot of criticism, first and foremost about its empirical foundation. Specifically, the main hypothesis, according to which unemployment is a result of rigidities in the labor market, and thus, that deregulation will reduce unemployment, has been questioned by several studies (Baccaro & Rei, 2007; Aleksynska, 2014; Dosi et al., 2016). Even if it is accepted that deregulation does lead to the reduction of unemployment, that could be seen as misleading, since the reduction will be at the expense of the quality and earnings of the jobs created, while income compression will eventually lead to a lack of aggregate demand, thus reducing growth and challenging the "trickle-down" rationale (Dosi et al., 2016). Lastly, it must be noted that the lack of empirical foundations in the main arguments in favor of deregulation, eventually led to a shift on the part of international organizations, in the 2000s. The World Bank published a report in 2003 titled "Economies Perform Better in Coordinated Labor Markets" while an OECD study in 2004 supports that different institutional arrangements can result in the same outcome, thus questioning the view that deregulation can be a "one size fits all" solution (Freeman, 2005). Interestingly, at the onset of the crisis of 2007-08, the narrative of international institutions shifts again in favor of deregulation, indicating inconsistencies between theory and practice (Dosi et al., 2016).

Academic interest in in-work poverty began in the onset of the 20th century, deploying a variety of measures. These measures share a common definition of working poor as employed people living in a household (the unit of analysis) with income below a certain poverty line (Lohmann, 2018). For instance, ILO uses the international poverty threshold of 1,9$, which is a measure of absolute poverty,

while Eurostat defines working poor as those who live in a household whose income stands below 60% of the national equivalent median income, which is a measure of relative poverty. The relationship between deregulation and in-work poverty has been central to several academic contributions. Some scholars examine the causes and distribution of in-work poverty in country-specific studies, as in the case of Greece (Ioannidis et al, 2012). Others examine cross-country data trying to identify comparable trends, for example at the EU level (Dafermos & Papatheodorou, 2012; Marx & Nolan, 2012). These studies find that the incidence of in-work poverty is highly associated with part-time and/or temporal contracts, while it is significantly lower in full-time jobs. Similar conclusions can be derived from analyzing data on the work intensity of the household because insufficient working time is correlated with higher in-work poverty rates. Other contributions attempt to associate in-work poverty with labor market institutions, while it is also common to distinguish among different types of welfare regimes[3]. Thus, some findings show that decentralized wage-setting is linked with significant wage inequalities and that in-work poverty is much lower in more generous welfare states, as in the Scandinavian case (Lohmann & Marx, 2008; Dafermos & Papatheodorou, 2012). Furthermore, non-standard forms of employment are systematically under-secured. For instance, a study on the risk of not being entitled to unemployment benefits (as in the case of low hours worked and thus low social contributions paid), suggests that the social protection of non-standard employment is considerably low (Matsaganis et al., 2016).

The Washington Consensus failed to produce the desired outcomes. In developing countries, fiscal and monetary contraction, coupled with flexibilization of the labor market, didn't create new employment opportunities, even where economic growth was achieved -the so-called "jobless growth" (United Nations, 2009). Generally, structural reforms in labor markets not only tend to create insecure and low-paid jobs but also result in underemployment. In fact, according to Eurostat (2021), involuntary part-time in 2019 – a year before the pandemic outbreak- was 29.8% of the total part-time employment in the EU-27, while in the European South, it was much higher (54.4% in Spain, 65.8% in Italy and 66.4% in Greece)[4]. These trends indicate the incidence of underemployment, as well as that part-time employment, is in many cases a choice made by employers (Ioannidis et al., 2012).

[3] The most prominent distinction (attributed to Esping-Andersen) is among social-democratic, liberal and conservative welfare regimes, while usually a South-European regime is included.

[4] Involuntary part-time employment (% of total part-time employment) refers to those who seek a full-time job but can't find one. Data on involuntary part-time work are based on the Labour Force Survey and are available on https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=lfsa_eppgai&lang=en (Accessed: 11/05/2021).

Conclusions - Avoiding mistakes of the past

The current pandemic poses serious concerns about the future of work and social policy. Globally, workers have faced health threats and economic stress, especially those under-secured. It should also be noted, that "work from home" schemes, which grew during the lockdowns (and that for some "are here to stay") are linked with much lower social protection, whilst at the same time auditing compliance with existing regulation is a difficult task (ILO, 2021). Several measures have been considered to combat this problem, such as tax credits and in-work benefit schemes, used as an income support measure, as well as establishing a sufficient minimum wage (Marx & Nolan, 2012). An interesting suggestion would be the possibility of coupling income support measures with a "job guarantee" program provided by the state. These programs can have a two-fold use, as they reduce unemployment and simultaneously can set a desired and effective minimum wage (Anastasakis, 2020).

However, the aim of this policy brief is not to provide an extensive list of specific measures. Besides, such an attempt would require a detailed analysis of a country's institutional arrangements. Instead, this analysis aims to present some general considerations for the future of social policy. Failing to identify the social groups in danger, signals that any policy to reduce poverty will be fragmentary and hence ineffective (Dafermos & Papatheodorou, 2012). While the empirical foundations of deregulation policies are flawed, mainstream wisdom tends to equate deregulation with institutional quality (Aleksynska, 2014). However, as argued, the incidence of in-work poverty is highly related to non-standard forms of employment and the weakening of labor market institutions overall. Efforts to reconstruct economies in the post-covid era should be centered on the need for decent employment opportunities and avoiding mistakes of the past. The pandemic made clear the importance of the welfare state (Tzagarakis et al., 2020). Reviving the austerity discourse, due to high public debts, could reduce substantially the discretional use of social policy. There is an actual need to form a coherent framework of policy measures, with the extension of social security in types of employment that are currently under-secured, and not return to the rationale of welfare retrenchment.

References

Aleksynska, M. (2014). Deregulating labour markets: How robust is the analysis of recent IMF working papers? *ILO Conditions of work and employment series*, no. 47. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/travail/info/publications/WCMS_238796/lang--en/index.htm?ssSourceSiteId=global (Accessed: 11/05/2021).

Anastasakis, N. (2020). Fiscal Policies to Counter Climate Change and Economic Depression in the Post Covid-19 European Union. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 1(2), 295-300.

Baccaro, L. & Rei, D. (2007). Institutional Determinants of Unemployment in OECD Countries: Does the Deregulatory View Hold Water?, *International Organization*, 61(3): 527-569.

Blanchard, O., Jaumotte, F. & Loungani, P. (2013). Labor Market Policies and IMF Advice in Advanced Economies During the Great Recession, *IMF Staff Discussion Note*, no.2 Available at: https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/Staff-Discussion-Notes/Issues/2016/12/31/Labor-Market-Policies-and-IMF-Advice-in-Advanced-Economies-during-the-Great-Recession-40412 (Accessed: 11/05/2021).

Dafermos, Y. & Papatheodorou, C. (2012). Working Poor, labour market and social protection in the EU: a comparative perspective. *International Journal Management Concepts and Philosophy*, 6(1,2): 71-88.

Dosi, G., Pereira, M. C., Roventini, A. & Virgillito, M. E. (2016). The Effects of labour market reforms upon unemployment and income inequalities: an agent based model. *LEM Working Paper Series*, no. 2, Sant' Anna School of Advanced Studies.

Eurostat (2021). Involuntary part-time employment as percentage of the total part-time employment, by sex and age (%) [Dataset], Available at: https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=lfsa_eppgai&lang=en (Accessed: 11/05/ 2021).

Freeman, R. B. (2005). Labour market institutions without blinders: The debate over flexibility and labour market performance. *International Economic Journal*, 19(2): 129-145.

ILO (2021). Working from home. From invisibility to decent work. Geneva: ILO. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/forthcoming-publications/WCMS_765806/lang--en/index.htm (Accessed: 11/05/2021).

Ioannidis, A., Papatheodorou, C., & Souftas, D. (2012). Working yet poor. Dimensions of working poverty in Greece, *GSEE Labour Institute Reports*, 6 [in Greek].

Lohmann, H. & Marx, I. (2008). The different faces of in-work poverty across welfare state regimes. In: Andreß, H. & Lohmann, H., (eds), *The Working Poor in Europe. Employment Poverty and Globalization*. UK: Edward Elgar, pp. 17-46.

Lohmann, H. (2018). The concept and measurement of in-work poverty. In: Lohmann, H. & Marx, I. (eds), *Handbook on In-Work Poverty*. UK: Edward Elgar, pp. 7-25.

Marx, I. & Nolan, B. (2012). In-Work Poverty. *GINI Discussion Paper* 51, Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Labour Studies.

Matsaganis, M., Ozdemir, E., Ward, T. & Zavakou, A. (2016). Non-standard employment and access to social security benefits, European Commission Research note no. 8. Available at: https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/data/platform-economy/records/non-standard-employment-and-access-to-social-security-benefits (Accessed: 10/05/2021).

OECD (1994). THE OECD JOBS STUDY. Facts, Analysis, Strategies, Paris: OECD. Available at: https://www.oecd.org/els/emp/boostingjobsandincomestheoecdjobsstrategy.htm (Accessed: 11/05/2021).

Tourtouri, M., Papatheodorou, C., & Pavlopoulos, D. (2018). The Greek Labor Market Liberalization Trajectory. In: Papatheodorou, C., Cevik, S., Paitaridis, D. & Yilmaz, G. (eds), *Political Economy of Labour Income Distribution & Exclusion*. London: ISOPEG Publication, pp. 31-40.

Tzagkarakis, S., Pappas, I., & Kritas, D. (2020). Covid-19 has brought back the necessity of the welfare state: The Greek case. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 1(1): 67-73.

United Nations (2009). Rethinking Poverty. Report on the World Social Situation 2010, New York: United Nations Available at: https://www.un.org/development/desa/socialperspectiveondevelopment/2015/08/20/rethinking-poverty-report-on-the-world-social-situation-2010/ (Accessed: 10/05/2021).

Employment and Social Protection: Lessons from the Portuguese Response to the Pandemic[1]

Maria Clara Oliveira[2] & Ana Alves da Silva[3]

Abstract[4]

This policy brief examines the emergency measures enacted by the Portuguese government as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis in the fields of employment and social protection. During the pandemic several changes were introduced to the existing policies and new emergency programmes were created to prevent job loss and support families. While these emergency measures were essential to contain the negative effects of the crisis, they are also insufficient in what concerns their coverage and their scope. This study points to the need of a different approach in the design of future employment and social protection measures.

Keywords: Portugal; Employment; Social Protection; Emergency Measures; Pandemic Crisis.

Introduction

In Portugal, the first case of infection by the novel coronavirus was identified in early March 2020. Immediately after, the population voluntarily diminished its participation in outside activities and prepared for lockdown, which was effectively announced by the Portuguese government and implemented at the national level in mid-March. It was only in the beginning of May that restrictions started to be progressively lifted and that the country moved from a state of emergency to the state of calamity (a lower level of alert). The return to higher levels of mobility and activity coupled with the dynamics of the pandemic gave way to a second wave and the national health system became under intense pressure. As the third wave of the virus hit, Portugal ceased to be pointed as a 'success case' in the control of the pandemic, to be considered the worst country in what concerns the rates of new infections and deaths. The need to rapidly reverse this scenario led the government to adopt a second general lockdown that lasted between mid-January and mid-March 2021, when again the restrictions started to be lifted at a slow pace.

Throughout this period, the government implemented several emergency measures designed to respond to the pandemic. While this crisis has generated the need to reorganise numerous policy

[1] To cite this paper in APA style: Oliveira, M. C. & Silva, A. A. (2021). Employment and Social Protection: Lessons from the Portuguese Response to the Pandemic. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 2(1): 50-55. DOI: 10.12681/hapscpbs.27657

[2] Institute for Economic, Financial and Tax Law of the University of Lisbon (IDEFF, Portugal).
[3] Collaborative Laboratory for Labour, Employment and Social Protection (CoLABOR, Portugal).

[4] The author's contributions to this policy brief are part of the research project PTDC/DIR-OUT/32096/2017 funded by FCT (Portugal). This policy brief was written in May 2021.

sectors, this policy brief specifically looks at the fields of employment and social protection. The policy brief starts by examining the initial package adopted to counter the negative socioeconomic effects of the pandemic. It then moves to discuss how these measures evolved and to the analysis of the additional actions that were implemented over time. The last section debates the lessons learnt and puts forward recommendations to strengthen the policy sectors under analysis.

Portugal's first response to the pandemic in the fields of employment and social protection

The pandemic and the strategies enacted to control the spread of the virus, namely the two general lockdowns and social distancing, have produced negative socioeconomic effects that are likely to continue to be felt in the near future. Unemployment, poverty, and inequality are some of the several indicators affected in times of crises (Caldas et al., 2020). In order to reduce the effects, the Portuguese government implemented several emergency measures to support the good functioning of the labour market and to protect the families - social protection measures to support those who were not part of the labour market (previously to the pandemic or as a result of it) and those who were experiencing a reduction of income. A first group of measures was announced during the first lockdown (Governo de Portugal (n/d)):

1) Remote work was strongly recommended, whenever possible.
2) Businesses facing decreasing turnovers might resort to the simplified layoff mechanism. Employees who were in temporary layoff received only ⅔ of their original gross monthly salary, 70% of which was supported by the State. This funding was conditional, since the company could not fire the laid-off employees for a period of 60 days counting from the end of the measure. However, this does not prevent the company from ceasing temporary and short-term contracts and from dismissing independent workers and those still under probation.
3) Employer's contributions to social security were altered: while ⅓ of the contribution's amount had to be paid normally, the remaining could be delayed. Moreover, companies who had resorted to the layoff mechanism and were getting back to their activities were exempted from contributing to social security for a period.
4) Quick reinforcement of the existing social protection benefits and of their coverage: access to social benefits was guaranteed to all individuals already receiving them - i.e., unemployment benefit. Changes were also made to the eligibility criteria to facilitate access to benefits during the pandemic - those who lost their jobs during the lockdown

period were required lower levels of contributions to social security to be eligible for the unemployment benefit.

5) The existing benefit to support families with dependents who needed to be taken care of by a working adult therefore unable to work was redesigned to include workers unable to perform their normal work activities as a result of being in charge of children up to 12 in isolation or sick due to COVID-19.

6) As schools were closed, an emergency benefit was created to support families with children up to 12 years old. Individuals taking care of children and therefore unable to perform their normal work activities, could benefit from this measure. Only one parent/responsible per household was eligible and the amount transferred corresponded to ⅔ of the gross monthly wage, half of which was supported by the State and the other half by the employer.

7) For those who were independent workers and had to provide care to their children, a similar measure was enacted, but the value transferred was only ⅓ of their average earnings for the previous 12 months.

8) Support was also provided to those who had to be in isolation (for contracting the virus or for suspecting it) and therefore were unable to work. The benefit amounted to the same value of the beneficiary's salary and could be paid for a period up to 28 days.

Additional measures to counter the effects of the pandemic crisis

At the beginning of the pandemic, there was a high level of uncertainty regarding its possible duration. As the crisis unfolded, it became clear that it was going to extend longer than initially anticipated and that additional measures had to be taken not only in the field of public health, but also to mitigate the growing adverse socioeconomic effects. As mentioned above, a first battery of measures was announced by the Portuguese government shortly after imposing the first lockdown (Governo de Portugal, n/d; Caldas et al., 2020). However, these measures were still insufficient and changes to them were implemented, as well as new programmes targeting groups that had not been left behind in the first round.

In April 2020, only a few weeks after the announcement of the first set of measures and still during the first lockdown, new emergency benefits were created to cover several groups (Governo de Portugal, n/d):

A) Domestic workers unable to work were to receive ⅔ of their original daily/monthly salary and the State funded ⅓ of that amount.

B) Support was provided to managers and small businesses owners facing a reduction of at least 40% of the turnover during lockdown. The value transferred was based on the average income received in the 12 months prior to the pandemic.

C) Independent and informal workers with precarious or non-existing labour-dependent social protection were also covered by a new benefit. In order to be eligible for a six-month transfer, these individuals had to be integrated into the system and agree to make contributions to it for at least 6 months.

In June 2020, as the first set of restrictions was slowly being lifted, the government announced a new Economic and Social Stabilization Programme (Governo de Portugal, 2020). This strategy included several changes to the employment and social policy:

A) Two major alterations were introduced to the layoff programme - the amounts paid to beneficiary employees were increased, while the State's participation is reduced.

B) Additional support was provided to companies who had resorted to layoff - the government committed to transfer an amount equivalent to the minimum wage per worker in the first month or twice the value in case the company opted to receive the money within six months.

C) Workers who had been placed in layoff and whose wages amounted to less than two minimum salaries received a one-time benefit to compensate for their loss (payments were due in July and September).

D) Further support was provided to independent workers.

Over the following months, additional changes were also gradually introduced to various social security benefits, such as the unemployment benefit and family allowances, in order to facilitate access and to expand coverage and maximize their impacts (Governo de Portugal, n/d). These changes concern the eligibility criteria, the formulas used to calculate the amounts of money to be received, the duration of the benefit - i.e., the unemployment benefit was automatically extended for everyone who was already receiving it until the end of the year.

The negotiation of the State's budget for the year of 2021 was marked by an intense debate regarding the possibility of creating new social benefits. The beginning of the year 2021 witnessed the creation of a new emergency benefit that was designed to support those who were unprotected as a result of the end of previous benefits - some of which had already been extended, namely the unemployment benefit - or because they did not meet the eligibility criteria defined to access any other programme (Manso et al., 2021). This "umbrella" programme targets different groups: unemployed individuals

whose benefit can no longer be extended; recent unemployed individuals (job loss occurred during the pandemic crisis) who do not meet the criteria required to be integrated in other programmes; independent workers, domestic workers, and managers and small business owners whose income was severely reduced as a result of the crisis; all who need income support and cannot be included in any other available programmes, under the condition of integrating the social security system and committing to future contributions for the period of 30 months[5].

Final remarks

The socioeconomic effects of lockdown measures to tackle the spread of Covid-19 in Portugal have pressured the Portuguese Government towards a progressively more inclusive social policy design. Still, the reduction of economic activities, the loose eligibility criteria imposed to firms recurring to layoff measures and the low amounts of emergency social transfers have left a large proportion of the working population struggling to make ends meet. The Covid-19 pandemic has thus revealed that decades of labour market deregulation have produced deep-rooted social vulnerabilities that the exceptional institutional framework built during the pandemic is not able to overcome.

Recent research shows that further policy intervention is thus needed to reduce the exposure of workers to market risks and increase primary, labour dependent, social protection (Caldas et al., 2020). As the main source of social vulnerability is the high dissemination of loose work arrangements, such as temporary, short-term contracts, bogus and informal self-employment, the provision of protection to all workers requires public policies summoning up various institutional domains: labour law, in order to strengthen employment relations; civil and commercial legal fields, in which actions to restrict the regulatory gaps that enable increasing putting-out systems of labour deployment are needed; and a less segmented, more inclusive social security system.

As already mentioned, the examination of the Portuguese case points to the need to adopt a different approach towards employment and social protection policies - one that understands that these two policies are intertwined and that envisages more robust and inclusive measures. Further discussion is needed on how to conceive, design and implement such strategies. Moreover, additional investigation is required to understand to which extent these patterns can be found in other countries, to assess whether this is perceived as a problem that needs to be solved and to analyse any propositions that might be under discussion to respond to this matter.

[5] For additional information on this benefit: Manso, L. et al. (2021). Apoio Extraordinário ao rendimento dos trabalhadores. WP 5 - Políticas em Análise. Lisboa: CoLABOR.

 ISSN: 2732-6578 (print version) 2732-6586 (online)

References

Caldas, J. C., Silva, A. A. & Cantante, F. (2020). *As consequências socioeconómicas da COVID-19 e a sua desigual distribuição*. Lisboa: CoLABOR.

Governo de Portugal (2020). PEES - Programa de Estabilização Social e Económica. Lisboa: XXII Governo de Portugal. Available at: https://www.portugal.gov.pt/pt/gc22/comunicacao/documento?i=programa-de-estabilizacao-economica-e-social (Accessed: 10/05/2021).

Governo de Portugal (n/d) - A resposta de Portugal à COVID19. Available at: https://covid19estamoson.gov.pt (Accessed: 11/05/2021).

Manso, L. et al. (2021). *Apoio Extraordinário ao rendimento dos trabalhadores. WP 5 - Políticas em Análise*. Lisboa: CoLABOR.

 ISSN: 2732-6578 (print version) 2732-6586 (online)

Realigninng Economic Governance with Full Employment[1]

Constantine E. Passaris[2]

Abstract

Full employment remains an economic mirage and an elusive destination for most countries. The ascendance of the new global economy of the 21st century has revealed the economic governance fault lines and the need to redirect the scope and substance of economic policy. This has been accentuated by the cataclysmic trifecta of the first three decades of the 21st century. Human capital has emerged as the driver for the new economy in the creation of the wealth of nations. In effect, the paradigm for the creation of economic growth has shifted from the resources under our feet to the brain power between our ears. This policy brief concludes by proposing a new institution of economic governance whose overarching mandate is to achieve full employment.

Keywords: Economic governance; new global economy; human capital; full employment.

Introduction

The ascendance of the new global economy of the 21st century has precipitated transformational change on the economic, social, and political landscape and redefined the role and scope of labour in the economy. The new economy has elevated the role of human capital to a new iconic pedestal in the creation of the wealth of nations. In effect, the new economy has shifted the emphasis for the wealth of nations from the resources under our feet to the resources between our ears. In consequence, the strategic deployment of human capital in a country's economic capacity is the modern trajectory towards attaining economic growth and prosperity.

The first three decades of the 21st century have recorded a cataclysmic trifecta. Starting with the global financial crisis of 2008 which adversely affected our financial institutions. This was followed by the protracted Great Recession which triggered unprecedented levels of unemployment. In the third decade, COVID-19 created a tsunami of economic devastation that brought national economies to their knees. All of this has spotlighted the need for an incisive re-evaluation of the efficacy of our contemporary labour policies.

New Global Economy

The new global economy of the 21st century has transformed the economic, social, and political landscape in a profound and indelible manner. The new economy has become a catalyst for

[1] To cite this paper in APA style: Passaris, C. (2021). Realigninng Economic Governance with Full Employment. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 2(1): 56-62. DOI: 10.12681/hapscpbs.27658
[2] Constantine E. Passaris is Professor of Economics at the University of New Bruswick, Canada.

geopolitical reconfiguration, economic integration, trade liberalization, technological advancement, financial interconnectedness, and reconstructing the role of labour. The new economy is composed of a trilogy of interactive forces that include globalization, trade liberalization and the information technology and communications revolution. Globalization has melted national borders and redefined economic outreach. Free trade has enhanced global economic integration and extended the economic architecture. The IT Revolution has given birth to computer capacity and electronic networks. All three pillars of the new economy are driven by a virtually borderless world with a tremendous capacity for electronic connectivity (Passaris, 2020).

The new global economy is driven by technological change and financial liberalization. The free flow of capital, labour, goods and services within free trade regions, the development of new financial instruments and institutions, and the instantaneous access to information and communication through new digital networks, have created a fully integrated global economic ecosystem of tremendous scope and opportunity. Furthermore, the new economy is built on a culture of innovation and global outreach. Indeed, the signature mark of the new global economy is new ideas, new technologies and new initiatives.

Economic Governance

Economic governance can take different forms and structures. My operational definition of economic governance is the multi-dimensional aspects of direction and policy that impact on the economy including the machinery and institutional architecture for the delivery of economic governance initiatives. Good economic governance is not a static concept. In this regard Dixit points out "that different governance institutions are optimal for different societies, for different kinds of economic activity, and at different times. Changes in underlying technologies of production, exchange and communication modify the relative merits of different methods of governance" (Dixit, 2008: 673).

A modern template for economic governance requires an innovative blueprint and a contemporary strategy that is congruent with the structural changes that were precipitated by the new global economy of the 21st century. The reimagining process should result in the restructuring of existing institutions through renewal and institutional innovation or precipitate designing brand new economic institutions in response to the structural changes that were triggered by the new global economy.

The pursuit of good economic governance in the 21st century requires a new vision and a modern mandate. I propose four principles to guide the process of redesigning economic governance in the form of the 4E's of modern economic governance. This checklist of modern economic governance axioms includes efficient, effective, endurable, and empowering. Efficient refers to the expenditure

constraints for implementing economic governance and the pursuit of a cost-effective formula. Effective refers to the efficacy of economic governance institutions, the machinery of economic governance and economic policy to achieve the desired outcomes. Endurable refers to the resilience of economic governance institutions to withstand external economic shocks and deter digital vulnerability. Empowering economic governance is the measure of building bridges and forming partnerships for the purpose of achieving the economic goals and aspirations of civil society.

An integral part of economic governance is the efficacy of economic policy. The redesign of economic governance should consider the complementarity between the architecture of economic governance and the formulation and implementation of economic policy. Public policy can no longer be segmented, compartmentalized, and developed in silos. Indeed, the modem context requires elevating the mission of public policy to a completely different formulaic structure that embraces a multidimensional context for designing public policy, as well as a more holistic and comprehensive direction. In consequence, the contemporary economic governance landscape requires building bridges between economic policy, social policy, and environmental policy.

The contemporary institutional landscape for economic governance was designed for the old economy of the 20th century and is no longer potent in meeting the challenges and opportunities of the new economy of the 21st century. The modern institutional architecture of economic governance should have a pronounced global mindset. Global economic interdependence is a fact of life in the 21st century and our institutions of economic governance need to adapt and evolve to embrace it rather than ignore its existence. At the end of the day, the internationalization of the governance architecture, its accompanying machinery of governance and the scope and substance of its public policies is a prerequisite for modernizing the mission and mandate of governance.

Human Capital

The ascendance of the new global economy of the 21st century has spotlighted the central role of human capital in empowering economic growth and development. Human capital has become a transformational agent for the creation of the wealth of nations. The structural changes on the economic landscape precipitated by the new global economy have elevated the requirements for formal education and introduced new competencies and proficiencies as well as a modern list of skills. The contemporary composition of human capital has become more complex and has morphed into an essential and strategic tool in contributing to the wealth of nations.

The new global economy of the 21st century has transformed the desired educational outcomes and required skill set from the foundational 3R’s of reading, writing and arithmetic to a more complex

and integrated skill set and competencies. The modern array of desired educational outcomes include literacy, numeracy, scientific literacy, IT literacy, financial literacy, cultural and civic literacy, creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, communication and collaboration (World Economic Forum, 2020).

In effect, the conventional human capital assets commonly referred to as the 3R's are being augmented with new human capital assets such as technological literacy, new technological competencies, a global mindset, cross cultural appreciation, and effective communication skills. The modern workplace requires labour to demonstrate the capacity to think critically, communicate clearly, and solve complex problems expeditiously. A global mindset has emerged as the sine qua non for the modern workplace. This entails the importance of acquiring competency in several languages, cultural sensitivity, and a comfort level with working in a multicultural workspace. All of this in recognition of the global linkages and interconnectedness that are the signature mark of the new economy of the 21st century.

Unemployment Dilemma

It is becoming abundantly clear that the contemporary structure of economic governance is ineffective in redressing the persistent problem of unemployment. The global financial crisis of 2008, the protracted Great Recession that followed, and COVID-19 have exposed the lack of efficacy in the economic governance architecture and the fault lines in economic policy.

Unemployed human resources are the singular most significant loss of economic endeavour and sustainable development for all countries. This takes on added importance in the context of the new global economy where human capital is a country's foundational economic asset. The economic costs of unemployment are numerous and multifaceted. At the micro level, unemployment reflects a loss of individual income and livelihood. At the macro level, unemployment has a deleterious impact on aggregate output, productivity, and national income.

Furthermore, the social costs of unemployment are also significant. They take the form of the loss of self-esteem, and a lack of purpose. All this leading to family break ups, psychological breakdowns, and many types of health consequences. The political costs associated with high rates of unemployment are exclusively borne by the government in power. They contribute to the stigma of economic failure, a tarnished record of economic accomplishment and a failed attempt at re-election.

In redesigning the contemporary economic governance architecture, it is worth noting a historical milepost that was a result of a previous economic crisis. The Great Depression of the 1930's revealed

the adverse impact of financial instability. In consequence, it resulted in the creation of a new economic governance institution in the form of the modern central banking system whose mandate was to promote and maintain financial stability. The consequences of the structural changes that accompanied the new global economy and the cataclysmic trifecta of the 21st century should follow suit with the creation of a new economic governance institution whose primary mandate should be to pursue full employment.

New Institution

The pursuit of good economic governance in the 21st century will require the creation of a new institution whose singular mission is to achieve full employment through the efficient deployment of a country's human resources and their effective integration in the new economy. The benefit of a new institution of economic governance that is mandated to achieve full employment is to optimize the contribution of human capital assets in the most effective and efficient manner. All of this for the purpose of maximizing a country's productive capacity and standard of living.

The conceptual framework for this new institution will rely on the template of a central bank. The operational structure of this new economic governance institution should be designed to be non-political, at arm's length of government, devoid of any government interference and embrace a long-term decision-making horizon. An independent agency whose purpose is to ensure that in the pursuit of full employment, politics and policy are kept far apart. This institution should report to the national Parliament and submit an annual report. It will be governed by a board of directors that will include representatives of government, the private sector, academia, policy experts, unions as well as representatives from the social economy.

More specifically, the mission for this institution will involve monitoring the evolution of the employment landscape and serving as a catalyst for developing new economic and labour policies. It should provide periodic assessments of the educational and training priorities of the new economy and recommend remedial action in terms of absorbing the unemployed. It should be tasked with undertaking labour forecasting and human resource planning for the purpose of correcting labour supply shortages and production bottlenecks. It should facilitate the economic integration of immigrants and conduct an ongoing labour market dialogue between the public, private and social sectors. It should encourage periodic curriculum renewal in collaboration with post-secondary institutions, universities, polytechnics, community, and trade colleges. It should monitor the flow of new entrants in the labour force with respect to their levels of education, skills, and competencies. In the final analysis, the overarching mission of this economic governance institution is to ensure the

strategic, efficient, and effective deployment of a country's human resources to achieve the maximum economic and social benefits.

The new institution should be visionary and proactive in achieving the optimal utilization of a country's human resources. Furthermore, it should develop a holistic and comprehensive strategy for harnessing the economic empowerment of human capital for the collective good by advancing national economic and social objectives. In this mission, the active engagement of the private, public, voluntary, and social sectors of the modern economy are essential. This new economic governance institution must earn the respect and confidence of the public and be accountable and transparent.

In effect, my proposed new economic governance institution is an imperative machinery of institutional reengineering and a new architectural model that is congruent with the challenges and opportunities of the new global economy of the 21st century. Old economy jobs are becoming obsolete and disappearing while new employment opportunities are emerging that require new skills, more education, and contemporary technical competencies. The creation of a new economic governance institution with a mandate to promote full employment will undoubtedly involve an additional operational cost that will be allocated from the public treasury. However, those costs will be offset by the direct and indirect benefits and revenues that will accrue to the economy, government, and civil society by achieving full employment. It should be emphasized that inaction and the absence of a concerted effort to resolve the problem of chronic unemployment also incurs significant costs.

Conclusion

In the Chinese language, the word for crisis is composed of two characters. One denotes danger and the other denotes change leading to new opportunities. This is the context for my proposed redesign of economic governance in response to the new global economy and the cataclysmic trifecta of the first three decades of the 21st century. This period of profound structural change is a new opportunity and an operational turning point for writing a new chapter on realigning economic governance and full employment.

The new economy has spotlighted the prominent role of human capital. The fuel of the new economy is technology, and its currency is human capital. In consequence, a new institution of economic governance must be added to the governance architecture for the purpose of achieving full employment and optimizing the utilization of a country's human resources.

References

Dixit, A. (2008). "Economic Governance". In: S. N. Durlauf & L. E. Blume (eds), *The New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics* (2nd edn). Basingstoke & New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Passaris, C. (2020). "Economic Governance in the Aftermath of the Great Recession". In: A. Hermann & M.A. Madi (eds.), *The 2008 Crisis Ten Years On: in Retrospect, Context and Prospect*, pp.345-374.

World Economic Forum (2020). "Resetting the way we teach science is vital for all our futures", Available at: https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/08/science-education-reset-stem-echnology/?utm_source=sfmc&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=2729072_Agenda_weekly-21August2020&utm_term=&emailType=Newsletter (Accessed: 05/05/2021).

Youth Unemployment and EU: A Love-Hate Relationship[1]

Theodore Varvaressos-Drosos[2]

Abstract

Youth unemployment remains a key concern for the European Union's member-states, especially the weakest, for at least 10 years. Although the European Union has taken initiatives in the past, young citizens throughout the European Union are still facing the serious problem of unemployment every day. And statistical findings do not look promising of a better or more steady future, even though EU is aiming to invest even more money in the field of youth employment. Therefore, the dynamic of youth unemployment is having a major socioeconomic consequence. This is the reason why realistic measures and initiatives need to be taken in order to avoid the repeat of 2008. Youth unemployment in the European Union as well as the measures and the initiatives that have been taken both during the Economic Crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic are being analysed in the current policy brief.

Keywords: youth; youth unemployment; European Union; labor; COVID-19; Next generation EU; Youth guarantee; Early Post-Covid World.

Introduction

Young people are often looking for work so that they can contribute to family income, maintain their student housing, prepare for their future profession, or simply have extra pocket money. But what is the harsh reality? Opportunities in the labor market were already limited and uncertainty prevailed before the COVID19 pandemic which did not come to make things easier. Youth unemployment in 2020 has skyrocketed. In particular, before the pandemic, youth unemployment in the EU stood at 14.9%, down from the highest level of 24.4% in 2013. In August 2020 it stood at 17.6% and further growth is expected. We, therefore, understand that before 2020, measures of EU seemed to be paying off, measures that will be analysed subsequently. But the pandemic came to reverse and further delay their performance (Amadeo & Anderson, 2020).

It is crucial to understand this urgent situation, given that young Europeans must be ready to be the European workforce of the near future. They need immediate support from the European Commission. The special characteristics of youth unemployment[3] make the intervention of the Commission even more necessary and urgent:

[1] To cite this paper in APA style: Varvaressos-Drosos, T. (2021). Youth Unemployment and EU: A Love-Hate Relationship. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 2(1): 63-69. DOI: 10.12681/hapscpbs.27659

[2] Department of International and European Studies, University of Piraeus.

[3] Youth unemployment defines the professional condition of a person (15-24) who, while able and willing to work, cannot find work.

1. The youth unemployment rate[4] remained always double or higher than general unemployment (Allen, 2010).
2. The integration of a stable labor market started to take longer, due to job-to-job transitions and fears of precarious work (Allen, 2010).
3. Vulnerable groups, such as youth of ethnic and racial minorities or young people with disabilities, continued to be disadvantaged throughout the last decade (Council of Europe, 2005).
4. Youth inactivity did not show an analogous decrease as youth unemployment.
5. The consequences of unemployment at an early age can have devastating impacts on the life of a young person. Beyond the immediate negative effects of unemployment on individuals and public finances, youth unemployment has been shown to have longer-term effects known as "scarring effects".

The time has come for young people to play a major role in the European economy and society. Having realized the seriousness of the situation, it is time to focus on what the EU has done and what can be done in the future in order to avoid an unemployed "lockdown generation".

Current situation

To tackle the problem, we must first accept that it exists. The figures are the most graphic means of capturing how youth unemployment affects the daily lives of millions of our fellow human beings. One is that the Great Recession and the European debt crisis have had the most salient impact on youth unemployment. Since 2009 unemployment has been rising steadily[5]. The pandemic of COVID19 brought back this disaster and desperation prevailed. Within a year unemployed young people increased by 456,000 in the EU. Specifically, in November 2019 the unemployed under 25 reached 3,711,000 while the following year (2020) they exceeded 4,000,000. In any case, the figures are far from the disastrous unemployment of 2013 of close to 23% but still at the same level as in the first quarter of 2009. At the time, youth unemployment had reached 18.3% (Hernanz & Jimeno, 2017). Therefore, every day around 4 million young Europeans live without work or seek salvation in undeclared work. And the problem is becoming increasingly acute in young people who have mobility, mental or psychological problems. Therefore, bearing in mind that the Covid-19 pandemic

[4] Unemployed people are those who report that they are without work, despite the fact that they are available for work and that they have taken active steps to find work.
[5] Youth unemployment rate is the number of unemployed 15–24-year-olds expressed as a percentage of the youth labour force. This phenomenon appears when there is a redundant job offer. In a way the unemployment rate is the number of people unemployed as a percentage of the labor force.

will not subside quickly, but also that youth unemployment tends to be twice as high as unemployment in general, Europe must act immediately, in a coordinated and above all united way to deal with the consequences of the pandemic.

The EU had become aware of the problem and in the past has taken several valuable measures, initiatives, and set up programs ready to tackle youth unemployment. For example, the first program Youth Guarantees (2013) has had results, as it has created opportunities for young people and has acted as a powerful lever for structural reforms and innovation. Youth Guarantees has helped more than 24 million young people since 2013. The improved economic situation in Europe has been beneficial for young people too. To continue with, the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) is one of the main EU financial resources to support the implementation of Youth Guarantee schemes (European Commission, 2009). The YEI is easily characterized as a success given that has directly helped over 2.4 million young people across the EU. "The EU and member-states are investing an estimated €22 billion in youth employment operations for the whole 2014-2018 programming period" (Europa, n.d.a).

In 2020 EU commission pathed again the way and set the standards for the future. The recovery plan that was proposed "Next Generation EU" has young people at its heart (Europa, n.d.b):

1) Reinforcement of the European youth guarantee (Europa, n.d.c): all Member States are committed to the purpose that via the reinforced Youth Guarantee it is ensured that every young person, under the age of 30, who signs up to the youth guarantee should receive a high-quality offer of job education, apprenticeship, or traineeship in just four months. In more detail:

- employment
- continuing education
- apprenticeship within 4 months of subscription to the programme (by apprenticeship is meant time-sharing between work and school. Companies often guarantee a contract and a salary worthy of your work. By the end of the apprenticeship, students benefit from a diploma and a full qualification) (Europa, n.d.d)
- traineeship within four months of being unemployed or leaving formal education (Europa, n.d.e).

2) Along the line of offsetting the impact on youth employment, on the 1st of July 2020 the European Commission, also, proposed the initiative "Supporting youth employment- A Bridge to employment for the next generation". The Bridge to Employment will be more inclusive to avoid all forms of discrimination, and will cover more broadly the most vulnerable

groups, such as young people from racial and ethnic minority groups and will provide personalized advice and guidance (Europa, n.d.f).

3) The European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA) unites governments and key stakeholders intending to strengthen the quality, supply, and overall image of apprenticeships across Europe, while also promoting the mobility of apprentices (Europa, n.d.g).
4) Modernization of vocational education and training to make the transition from school to work smoother. Over the next five years Commission is aiming to see more than four out of five graduates from vocational education and training employed (Europa, n.d.h).
5) European Network of Public Employment Services and the Action Plan for the Social Economy are aiming to deal with the unemployment of youngsters. Additional measures to support youth employment include, in the short term, incentives for employment and the start-up of new activities, and, in the medium term, capacity building, networks of young entrepreneurs, and inter-operational training centers (Europa, n.d.i.).
6) Erasmus Young Entrepreneurs is a cross-border exchange programme that offers young or ambitious entrepreneurs the opportunity to learn from experienced entrepreneurs who run small businesses in one of the participating countries (Erasmus, n.d).

All the above are intended to be financed through the Next Generation EU and the long-term EU budget. At least €22 billion should be spent on youth employment support. The Commission urges Member States to step up and support youth employment.

However, it is crucial to understand the urgency of the situation, given that EU competitors are gaining in labour-intensive products, the EU needs to invest in employment. The solutions that the EU proposed are set to be implemented in the following years. The important question that arises, is: Is this enough?

Recommendations

From the previous analysis, then, we became aware of the influence of unemployment on Europe's economic and social life, but at the same time we browsed into the useful tools used or about to be used by the EU to combat youth unemployment. So, it is time for suggestions. Let us take a realistic and creative look at what more can be done in areas that have been neglected. European Commission needs to turn her attention to seven (7) important measures/investments:

1) Encourage entrepreneurship in young people (Talend Rise, 2017). The ambitious who start businesses play a major role in the economy. Therefore, from an early age, entrepreneurship should be promoted. This can cover a range of things, from

knowledge in how to start and run a business effectively, to soft skills such as creativity and problem solving or even how to deal with bureaucracies and legal obligations. All highly necessary attributes when it comes to starting a business that the majority of young people are unaware of should be accessible. Moreover, it would be wise if the EU could give a generous monetary amount to enterprises supported or staffed by young entrepreneurs in order to cope with the first difficulties caused by the crisis of COVID-19.

2) Decision-makers and stakeholders of the EU need to cooperate with lawmakers to give motives to businesses to hire young people. These motives could be given:
    a) via tax deduction,
    b) Payment of the salary of new young employees 50% by the state and 50% by the EU.
    c) public investments (Heimberger, 2019).
3) Expand apprenticeships. European Union as it has already been mentioned is increasingly interested in expanding apprenticeships in the workplace. That is why all EU Member States can follow Germany's example. Apprenticeships are a well-known measure in Germany, one of the EU members states with the lowest youth unemployment rate. In the German case, companies pay a large part of student training, and the Federal Government is responsible for the payment of the remaining amount. A very useful measure that is being exported and attempted to other countries, such as the United States or Great Britain. Why not in the European Union?
4) Correction of the poor funds' management by the member-states. European Central Bank and EU Commission need to intervene and ensure 80% or more absorbency of the funds given to support youth employment by each member. This can be done either by increasing the fines for non-absorption or by creating more opportunities and work programmes for young people in labour-deprived sectors.
5) Focusing on the education of new technologies since the skills that were once considered optional are now necessary.
6) Training of teachers and trainers in VET, particular in the digital field and support mobility of VET learners, teachers, and trainers across Europe.
7) Support young athletes.

Conclusions

From the present Policy brief we induce that the road is long, given that the rate of youth unemployment will certainly show an increase due to COVID19, but fortunately the first steps have been taken. All that is required right now is to increase the speed of these steps. The European Union has indeed been dealing with the problem of youth unemployment for years, sometimes with tangible and concrete results, but other times with unproductive results. The important next step should be to take the necessary measures and initiatives. So young people, who today make up a small percentage of our Union, will be able to make up the100% of the future. The European Union will not fail if it aims too high and does not reach it, but if it aims too low and content itself on it. Let us work hard and collectively so that young people can bring hope to the post-COVID19 era.

"I think that no idea is so outlandish that it should not be considered and viewed with a searching, but at the same time, I hope, with a steady eye" (Winston Churchill).

References

Amadeo, K. & Anderson, S. G. (2020). Force and Its Impact on the Economy, September 27, 2020. Available at: https://www.thebalance.com/labor-force-definition-how-it-affects-the-economy-4045035 (Accessed: 10/05/2021).

Allen, D. (2010). The structural funds and cohesion policy: Extending the bargain to meet new challenges. In: Wallace, H., Pollack, M., Young, A. (Eds.), *Policy-making in the European Union*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, pp. 229-252.

Council of Europe (2005). Education Pack "All Different – All Equal" – "Ideas, resources, methods and activities for informal intercultural education with young people and adults" (revised edition). Council of Europe.

Hernanz, V. & Jimeno, J. F. (2017). Youth Unemployment in the EU. CESifo Forum. München: ifo Institut - Leibniz-Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung an der Universität München. Available at: www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/166711/1/cesifo-forum-v18-y2017-i2-p03-10.pdf (Accessed: 18/05/2021).

European Commission (2009). Europa Youth unemployment: five million young people unemployed in the EU27 in the first quarter 2009. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/STAT_09_109 (Accessed: 15/05/2021).

Europa (n.d.a). Youth Employment Initiative (YEI). Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1176&langId=en (Accessed: 10/05/2021).

Europa (n.d.b.). Employment, social affairs & inclusion. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/social/home.jsp?langId=en (Accessed: 10/05/2021).

Europa (n.d.c.). Youth employment support. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1036&langId=en (Accessed: 16/05/2021).

Europa (n.d.d.). The reinforced Youth Guarantee. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1079&langId=en (Accessed: 11/05/2021).

Europa (n.d.e.). Apprenticeships. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1198&langId=en (Accessed: 14/05/2021).

Europa (n.d.f.). Traineeships. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1045&langId=en (Accessed: 09/05/2021).

Europa (n.d.g.). Commission launches Youth Employment Support: a bridge to jobs for the next generation. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=9719&furtherNews=yes (Accessed: 10/05/2021).

Europa (n.d.h.). Commission launches Youth Employment Support: a bridge to jobs for the next generation. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=9719&furtherNews=yes (Accessed: 11/05/2021).

Europa (n.d.i.). European network of Public Employment Services. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1100&langId=e (Accessed: 10/05/2021).

Erasmus (n.d.). Erasmus Young Enterpreneures. Available at: https://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/page.php?cid=20 (Accessed: 10/05/2021).

Talent Rise (2017). Education in Australia: What needs to change to reduce youth unemployment? November 8. Available at: https://talentrise.org/education-australia-needs-change-reduce-youth-unemployment/ (Accessed: 15/06/2021).

Heimberger, P. (2019). Unemployment in Europe: What should be done? WIIW (Wienner Institute fur Interantionale Wirtschaftsvergleiche). May 19. Available at: https://wiiw.ac.at/unemployment-in-europe-what-should-be-done-n-378.html (Accessed: 11/05/2021).

Social Protection after the Pandemic: Lessons Learned from the Eurozone Crisis[1]

Alkinoos Emmanouil-Kalos[2] & Emmanouil Prokakis[3]

Abstract

As vaccinations against Covid-19 move forward and the health crisis will eventually reside, focus will ultimately turn solely on the economic consequences of the pandemic. Having faced a serious economic turmoil during the past decade and with the perceptions about the role of the welfare state having changed drastically in the meantime, the European Union needs to learn from its mistakes in dealing with such crises and ensure sustainable recovery for its members. In this paper, the correlation between social protection expenditure, income inequality and poverty is examined, as well as the GDP and the employment rates, using the Eurostat database for the period 2007 – 2017 (subject to data availability). By attempting to identify the mechanisms that could lead to such results, the aim of the policy brief is to paint a realistic picture of the role of social protection in the European economies. Among other things, the results show that social protection expenditure correlates positively with employment rates and the GDP per capita, and negatively with income inequality and poverty. We conclude that the welfare state retrenchment during the Eurozone crisis deepened the recession and probably led to long-term adverse effects, broadening the gap between the North and the South. Building on the measures taken during the pandemic to protect employment and the economy, post-pandemic recovery policies should focus on rebuilding strong welfare states, directly create jobs and aim at the convergence of the economies through expansionary policies and growth.

Keywords: Social Protection Expenditure; Income Inequality; Poverty; European Union; Eurozone Crisis; Great Recession; Post-Pandemic Recovery; Welfare State; Employment of Last Resort.

Introduction

Shortly after the global financial crisis and its effects on the EU both at an economic and a political level, the world is faced once again with an economic crisis, this time triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic. The extent and the universality of the economic consequences of the pandemic have activated a series of policies that hardly resemble the response against the economic turbulence in the Eurozone back in 2010, at least while the health crisis is under way. The provisions of the Stability and Growth Pact have been put on hold and the ECB continues to provide liquidity through an extended Qualitative Easing program, as the EU member - states *"[…] took decisive action to protect employment, income and access to services through a variety of support measures"* (Social Protection Committee, 2020). As Tzagkarakis et al. (2020) note, the welfare state has once again emerged as a vital institution in modern economies, especially during a crisis. However, it is widely acknowledged

[1] To cite this paper in APA style: Emmanouil-Kalos, A. & Prokakis, E. (2021). Social Protection after the Pandemic: Lessons Learned from the Eurozone Crisis. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 2(1): 70-78. DOI: 10.12681/hapscpbs.27660
[2] Department of Economics, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens; HAPSc Committee on Political Economy
[3] Department of International and European Studies, University of Piraeus; HAPSc Committee on Political Economy

that once the health crisis is over, there will be a return to austerity in the EU in order to tackle the debt and the deficits accumulated during this period.

The return of the Economic Adjustment Programs has been foreshadowed by the amendment of the ESM Treaty in February 2021. During the previous decade, these programs targeted the welfare state (as well as the labor market institutions) and led to significant cuts, severely underestimating the macroeconomic consequences and the contractionary effects of such policies (Blanchard & Leigh, 2013; IMF, 2013).[4] This policy brief aims to examine the correlation between social protection expenditure, income inequality and poverty during the Eurozone crisis along with employment and the GDP, to identify the policy orientation required for post-pandemic sustainable recovery and growth. In the first section, the methodology and the datasets used are presented. In the second section, we present the correlations between the variables and attempt to interpret the mechanisms behind them. Finally, the implications of the findings are discussed for the design of the post-pandemic policies at an EU level.

Data and Methodology

This policy brief studies the EU-28 countries with the addition of Norway and Switzerland, using the Eurostat database. The datasets used include the social protection expenditure, the employment rate, GDP per capita, the Gini coefficient and material deprivation. Social protection expenditure (SPE) refers to social benefits that aim to support households and individuals from certain risks. For this study, SPE is presented both as a percentage of GDP and as social protection expenditure per capita in Purchasing Power Standard (PPS). GDP per capita is also expressed in PPS, to control for the different costs of living in the region. Employment rate describes the employment to population ratio, while the Gini coefficient, one of the most popular inequality indices, displays income inequality in an economy, taking a value from 0 to 1, with 0 signaling total income equality and 1 total income inequality. The material deprivation (MatDep) rate depicts the percentage of the population that cannot afford some basic goods or services out of a specific list of goods.[5] The average value of each dataset is calculated for the years 2007 - 2017 or 2008 - 2017 (according to data availability), and the Pearson correlation between these values is presented. It is important to note that the correlations that

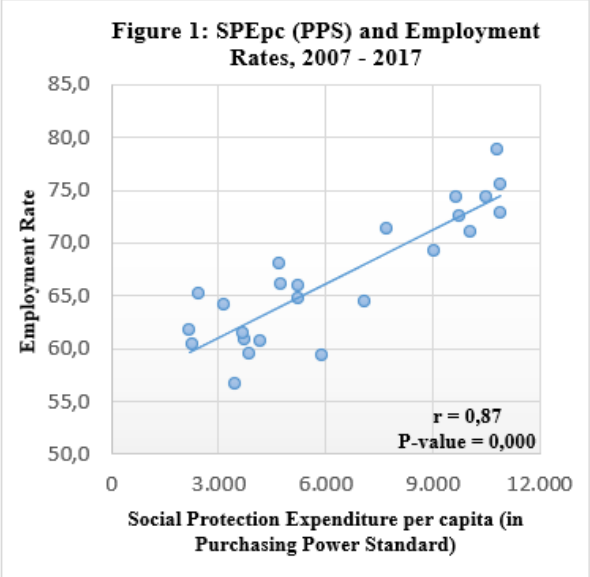
[4] Olivier Blanchard, Chief Economist of the IMF at the time, recognized that fiscal multipliers were underestimated during the design of the European Economic Adjustment Programs (Blanchard & Leigh, 2013). IMF (2013), in its evaluation for the 1st Program implemented in Greece, admits to the underestimation of the fiscal consequences of austerity too. These admissions, however, seem to have been forced by the obvious failure of their original predictions and not by a sincere realization of the inadequacy of their analytical framework, as the continuation of these policies showed.

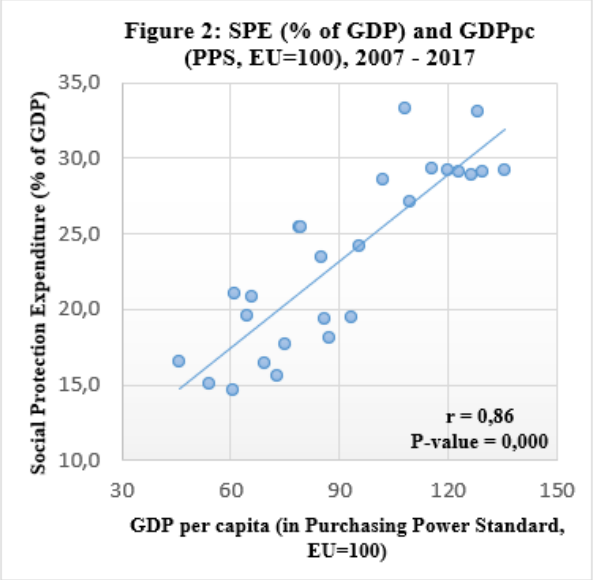
[5] According to the definition given in europa.eu (n.a.), material deprivation variable *"measures the percentage of the population that cannot afford at least three of the following nine items: to pay their rent, mortgage or utility bills; to keep their home adequately warm; to face unexpected expenses; to eat meat or proteins regularly; to go on holiday; a television set; a washing machine; a car; a telephone".*

are examined hold for each year separately too. Since correlation does not necessarily mean causality, there is a theoretical analysis of how each variable can affect the other so as to lead to these results.

Results

Before we delve into the correlation between social protection expenditure, income inequality and poverty, it is interesting to examine the relation between social protection expenditure and other fundamental macroeconomic variables, such as the employment rate and the GDP.





Source: Eurostat (2020a; 2020b; 2020c), data processed by the authors

** In Figure 1, Greece, Italy, France, Belgium, Luxembourg and Estonia are outliers and therefore not included. In Figure 2, Switzerland, Luxembourg, Norway and Ireland are outliers and therefore not included. In both cases, the inclusion of the outliers would show a statistically significant, moderate, positive correlation.*

The reasoning behind examining the correlation between the social protection expenditure and the employment rate is quite clear: the welfare state in general and social protection in particular have been long accused of promoting complacency among the beneficiaries and stripping the motives for participation in the labor market. A problematic view for several reasons, yet a popular argument against the welfare state in the public debate. We would expect that if this argument is valid, there should be a negative correlation between social protection expenditure and employment rates.

Figure 1 shows a statistically significant, strong positive correlation between SPE and Employment Rate. Consequently, the argument that social protection hinders labor market participation is not empirically verified by the aforementioned data. On the contrary, there seems to be a tendency for countries that spend more on social protection to present higher employment rates. To explain this result, the relation among the two variables can be examined from both perspectives. Higher

employment rates can lead to increased social protection expenditures by broadening the tax base and thus provide the state budget with more resources to finance social protection.[6] Moreover, generally the higher employment rates should mean fewer citizens in need of social protection. These two effects combined can translate into higher and more efficient social protection. At the same time, higher social protection expenditure can lead to increased employment rates, by increasing the aggregate demand. By providing disposable income to low-income households (and, therefore, households with high propensity to consume) consumption in the overall economy is boosted, creating the need and the motives for increased production (and, consequently, private investment), resulting in the creation of more jobs.[7]

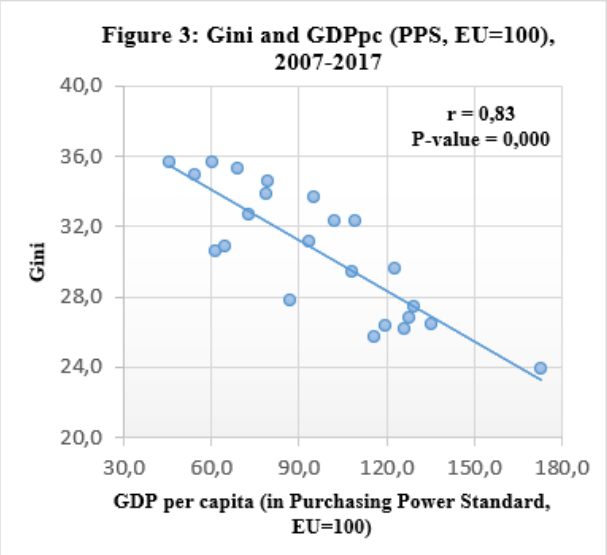
As far as the correlation between SPE and GDP per capita is concerned, Figure 2 shows a statistically significant, strong positive correlation as well. Although in this figure social protection expenditure is calculated as a percent to the GDP, the same conclusion would have been reached with the use of the data on the first figure. The tendency that the higher GDP per capita, the higher the social protection expenditure is (expressed either as a percent of GDP or as per capita) can once again be interpreted both ways, which are not mutually exclusive. Increased affluence in an economy can sensitize and promote the need for the protection of vulnerable groups and low-income households. At the same time, as mentioned above, social protection expenditure allows low-income households to actively participate in the economy, triggering the multiplier effect and increasing economic activity. As Dercon (2011) notes, social protection promotes inclusive growth, while at the same time improves economic efficiency by correcting market failures.

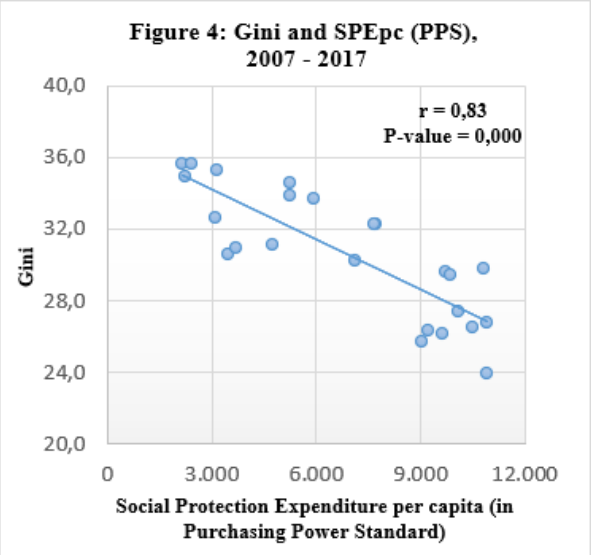
Given the correlation between the two variables, extensive social protection seems to – generally – be a characteristic (and some would argue a prerequisite) of a strong economy. As pointed out by Sestito & Ca'Zorzi (2001), who found a similar correlation for the period 1993 – 1996, the level of social protection expenditure should not be attributed solely to the level of GDP (and vice versa). A characteristic example is the Nordic countries, where the extensive welfare state is part of their culture and on the foundation of their economic institutions, and not just a mere economic outcome derived from high GDP.

[6] As the Euro is practically a foreign currency for the members of the Eurozone (in the sense that they don't have the authority to issue new money to fund their policies), and due to the provisions of the Stability and Growth Pact, countries in the EU need to fund their activities through tax revenues.

[7] Since it is not a temporary positive shock in demand but a permanent feature of the economy, simply increasing operation to full capacity to meet increased demand on the short-run is not a viable solution for the firms, motivating them to invest in capital and employees in order to maintain or even increase their market share.

ISSN: 2732-6578 (print version) 2732-6586 (online)





Source: Eurostat (2020a; 2020c; 2020d), data processed by the authors

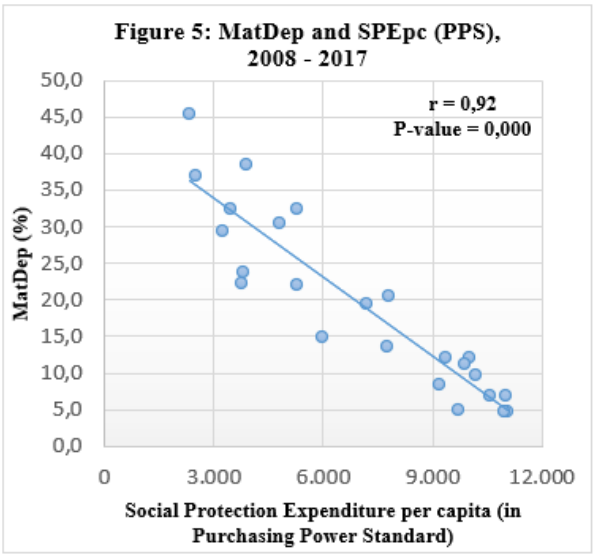
** In Figure 3, Malta, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, Slovakia, Switzerland, Ireland and Luxembourg are outliers and therefore not included. In Figure 4, Malta, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, Slovakia and Luxembourg are outliers and therefore not included. In both cases, the inclusion of the outliers would show a statistically significant, moderate, negative correlation.*

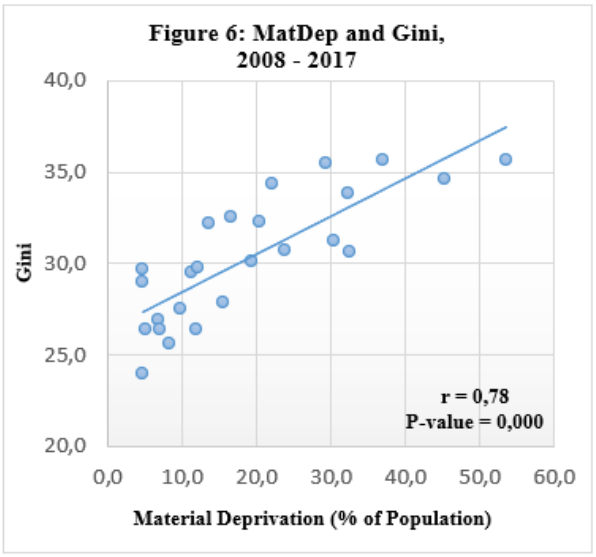
According to Figure 3, there is a statistically significant, strong negative correlation between the Gini coefficient and the GDP per capita, indicating a tendency for lower income inequality co-existing with higher GDP per capita (and vice versa). Higher GDP per capita usually translates into higher tax revenue, which can be used to finance social protection, and therefore income distribution policies, reducing income inequality. Moreover, as observed in Figure 2, social protection expenditure is positively correlated with higher GDP per capita, and the increased disposable income of lower-income households plays an important role in this. On that basis, the mechanism behind the negative correlation between the Gini coefficient and the GDP per capita, is the same one that governs the correlations examined in Figures 1 and 2, concerning the increase in the aggregate demand via the redistribution of income to low-income households with higher propensity to consume, thus improving the performance of the overall economy.

For this mechanism to apply in all these correlations, it is implied that social protection expenditure does, actually, lower income inequality. Figure 4 shows that indeed, higher social protection expenditure correlates with lower income inequality, as there is a statistically significant, strong negative correlation between the two variables. Although quite intuitive, this result is very useful to be born in mind when assessing the efficiency of social protection policies in an economy. The volume of spending alone does not guarantee either efficiency or successful social protection. Cosmin (2012), examining the EU plus Norway and Iceland, finds that an increase in government expenditure

for social protection lowers income inequality. Sanchez & Perez-Corral (2018) reach the same conclusion analyzing the EU-28.

It is important to address that in mainstream economic theory, the role of income inequality in economic performance is highly debated, and until recently the dominant (neoliberal) perspective had been in favor of letting inequality rise, predicting that this would be beneficial for the overall economy. This perspective leans on the notion of "trickle-down economics", claiming that savings from the higher-income households (and firms) would lead to higher productive investments, thus creating jobs and benefiting the society as a whole. Although it works in theory, real-world economics show that large portions of the higher-income savings leave the economy, being invested in international financial products or ending up in tax havens. This leads to reduced effective demand, hurting the economy and growth. The stagnation that advanced capitalist economies have been facing has led to OECD and IMF-led studies which recognize that increasing inequality has been hindering growth and should be contained (Cingano, 2014; Dabla-Norris et al., 2015). Of course, the debate is far from over.





Source: Eurostat (2020a; 2020d; 2020e), data processed by the authors

** In Figure 5, Bulgaria, Malta, Estonia, Czech Republic, Slovenia and Luxembourg are outliers and therefore not included. The inclusion of the outliers would show a statistically significant, moderate, negative correlation. In Figure 6, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia and Slovakia are outliers and therefore not included. The inclusion of the outliers would still show a statistically significant, strong, positive correlation.*

Figure 5 shows a statistically significant, strong negative correlation between the material deprivation rate and social protection expenditure. This result is not really surprising, given that the goal of the welfare state is to mitigate material deprivation by promoting access to basic goods for lower income households. It is important to be noted, though, as arguments against higher social protection expenditure may question whether social protection actually reduces poverty.

Contrary to the debate around income inequality that was addressed earlier, there seems to be a consensus on the need for the elimination of poverty. However, the debate on how poverty should be eliminated remains, while opinions vary, ranging from the role of a big, interventionist state to the completely unregulated free market that promotes an efficient allocation of resources. Regardless of the various theories, European states do tend to be more interventionist in order to ensure social protection – at least to a certain extent – in comparison to other countries (e.g. the USA). Given the results portrayed in Figure 5, the argument that less state intervention leads to more economic efficiency and socially-desired results does not seem to apply in Europe. Higher social protection expenditure is strongly correlated with lower rates of population living in conditions of material deprivation.

According to Figure 6, there is a statistically significant, strong positive correlation between material deprivation rates and income inequality in the European economies of this study. As mentioned before, the debate on the role of income inequality remains strong and topical. In line with the previous findings of this study, however, a strong correlation between poverty rates and income inequality appears reasonable: states with higher income inequality tend to show higher material deprivation rates.

Conclusions and Discussion

This study presents some basic trends that appear in the European economy. Far from an in-depth analysis, that certainly is useful but also in danger of biased models that lose touch with the reality they are supposed to examine, this policy brief aims to take a step back and try to comprehend the bigger picture. Given the results that the welfare state retrenchment produced both at a social, as well as at an economic level during the past decade (Kotroyannos et al., 2013; Tzagkarakis et al., 2021), the findings presented at the study seem to depict a realistic picture of the European economy. Decreased social protection seems to weaken employment and the GDP instead of strengthening them, while increasing poverty. Rising income inequality doesn't seem to translate in better economic results via increased productive investments, but rather in increased poverty and lower GDP.

When the health crisis subsides and the focus will turn solely on the economic effects of the pandemic, the orientation of the EU policies should prioritize the rebuilding of a strong welfare state, inclusive and sustainable growth and the creation of quality jobs. The pandemic-induced economic crisis is characterized by both a demand and a supply shock, which differentiates it from the oil crisis of the '70s and the global financial crisis of 2007. As the restrictions are being lifted and trade and travel will be returning to normal, the supply chains will be "rebuilt". However, as shown by the secular

stagnation that followed the global financial crisis, the effects of a demand shock are long-lasting, with fiscal policy being a very effective tool to tackle them (Stockhammer, 2021).

The post-pandemic EU has the chance for a new social contract and a restart of its failed economic framework. The orientation of a European New Deal should be towards the convergence of the economies through growth, investments and solidarity, and not through contractionary policies that dangerously broadened the gap in the past decade (Sbarouni et al., 2019). From the convergence of the trade balances through institutional reform (Emmanouil-Kalos, 2020) to the implementation of ECB-financed ELR programs, a series of radical yet necessary reforms must take place, in order for the EU to adequately rise to the challenges that lie ahead.

The modest (yet important in the European reality) attempts to cope with the recession and keep unemployment from skyrocketing during the pandemic should be maintained and expanded. ELR programs must finally be implemented in member-states throughout the EU, supported by the European Commission and financed by the ECB. Admittedly a radical reform for the conservatism of the EU, but a much needed one in order to fight unemployment and the stagnation that threatens European economies for the next decade. As Anastasakis (2020) points out, ELR programs can also be used as a tool towards countering climate change, and be combined with green public investments. Although tackling unemployment is a priority in order to ensure social protection, it should not be ignored that in-work poverty is actually an important part of overall poverty, a result possibly linked to the deregulation of the labor market (Dafermos & Papatheodorou, 2012). Decent wages must be ensured throughout the EU, for a sustainable recovery and long-term growth.

References

Anastasakis, N. (2020). Fiscal Policies to Counter Climate Change and Economic Depression in the Post Covid-19 European Union. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 1(2), 295-300.

Blanchard, O. & Leigh, D. (2013). Growth Forecast Errors and Fiscal Multipliers. *The American Economic Review*, 103(3), 117-120.

Cingano, F. (2014). Trends in Income Inequality and its Impact on Economic Growth. *OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers*, No. 163.

Cosmin, E. (2012). Social Protection Public Expenditures and Income Inequality. *"Ovidius" University Annals, Economic Sciences Series*, 7(1), 1403-1407.

Dabla-Norris, E., Kochhar, K., Ricka, F., Suphaphiphat, N. & Tsounta, E. (2015). Causes and Consequences of Income Inequality: A Global Perspective. *IMF Strategy, Policy, and Review Department*, SDN/15/13.

Dafermos, Y. & Papatheodorou, C. (2012). Working poor, labour market and social protection in the EU: a comparative perspective. *International Journal of Management Concepts and Philosophy*, 6(1/2), 71-88.

Dercon, S. (2011). Social Protection, Efficiency and Growth. *University of Oxford, Center for the Study of African Economies*, CSAE Working Paper WPS/201117.

Emmanouil-Kalos, A. (2020). Revisiting the "Keynes Plan" for an International Clearing Union in a Eurozone Perspective. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 1(2), 287-294.

Europa.eu (n.a.). Glossary: Material deprivation. *Eurostat Statistics Explained*. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:Material_deprivation [Accessed: 10/05/21].

Eurostat (2020a). Expenditure: main results. Available at: https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=spr_exp_sum&lang=en [Accessed: 03/04/20].

Eurostat (2020b). Employment rates by sex, age and citizenship (%) [lfsa_ergan]. Available at: https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=lfsa_ergan&lang=en [Accessed: 03/04/20].

Eurostat (2020c). GDP per capita in PPS [TEC00114]. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tec00114/default/table?lang=en [Accessed: 03/04/20].

Eurostat (2020d). Gini coefficient of equivalised disposable income - EU-SILC survey. Available at: https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc_di12 [Accessed: 03/04/20].

Eurostat (2020e). Material Deprivation rate by sex - EU-SILC survey. Available at: http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=tessi080&lang=en [Accessed: 03/04/20].

IMF (2013). Greece: Ex Post Evaluation of Exceptional Access under the 2010 Stand-By Arrangement. International Monetary Fund, IMF Country Report No. 13/156.

Kotroyannos, D., Lavdas, K. A., Tzagkarakis, S., Kamekis, A. & Chourdakis, M. (2013). "Solidarity and Welfare State in Greece", *GSTF International Journal of Law and Social Sciences (JLSS*), 2 (2): 7-11.

Sanchez, A. & Perez-Corral, A. (2018). Government Social Expenditure and Income Inequalities in the European Union. *Hacienda Pública Española / Review of Public Economics*, 227(4), 133-156.

Sbarouni, V., Petelos, E., Kamekis, A., Tzagkarakis, S. I., Symvoulakis, E. K., Lionis, C. (2020). "Discussing issues of health promotion and research in the context of primary care during the ongoing austerity period: an exploratory analysis from two regions in Greece", *Medicine and Pharmacy Reports*, 93(1): 69-74.

Sestito, P. & Ca'Zorzi, M. (2001). The retreat of the welfare system: myths and reality - a broad comparison of trends in social protection expenditure across EU countries. In: Buti, M., Sestito, P. & Wijkander, H. (eds). *Taxation, Welfare, and the Crisis of Unemployment in Europe*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.

Social Protection Committee (2020). *SPC Annual Review of the Social Protection Performance Monitor (SPPM) and developments in social protection policies: Report on key social challenges and key messages*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Stockhammer, E. (2021). Post-Keynesian Macroeconomic Foundations for Comparative Political Economy. *Politics & Society*, 003232922110065. https://doi.org/10.1177/00323292211006562.

Tzagkarakis, S. I., Pappas, I., & Kritas, D. (2020). Covid-19 has brought back the necessity of the welfare state: The Greek case. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 1(1), 67-73.

Tzagkarakis, S. I., Pappas, I., & Kritas, D. (2021). Aspects of social vulnerability in Greece during the protracted, multifaceted crisis. In: Pantazis, S. et al. (eds.), *Proceeding of the 7th Scientific Conference of IAKE: Social vulnerability and development: Challenges for education, economy and culture*. Heraklion. IAKE. In Greek: Τζαγκαράκης, Σ. Ι., Παππάς, Η. & Κρήτας, Δ. (2021). Πτυχές της κοινωνικής ευπάθειας-ευαλωτότητας στην Ελλάδα την περίοδο της παρατεταμένης, πολυδιάστατης κρίσης. Στο: Πανταζής, Σ., Μαράκη, Ε., Στριλιγκάς, Γ. Μπελαδάκης, Ε., Τζωρτζάκης, Ι., Μαρκάκη, Ε. κ.α. (επιμ.). *Πρακτικά 7ου Διεθνούς Επιστημονικού Συνεδρίου ΙΑΚΕ: Κοινωνική ευαλωτότητα και ανάπτυξη: προκλήσεις στην εκπαίδευση, την οικονομία και τον πολιτισμό*. Ηράκλειο: Ινστιτούτο Ανθρωπιστικών και Κοινωνικών Επιστημών (ΙΑΚΕ).

ISSN: 2732-6578 (print version) 2732-6586 (online)

Topic 4

Education, Life-Long Learning and Human Capital

 ISSN: 2732-6578 (print version) 2732-6586 (online)

Online Education in the Developing World in the Pandemic Era: The Paradox of Disruption[1]

Sumit Mukerji[2]

Abstract

As the world is gripped by the devastating Pandemic with unabated ferocity, online education has become the order of the day disrupting and supplanting classroom teaching. While in common perlance Disruption has a negative and destructive connotation, theoretical literature on education posits it as Innovative disruption implying transforming the expensive, inaccessible Higher Education sector into one of affordability thereby creating a new market and value network disrupting the erstwhile market and value system. This process is one of negation of the negative to produce a Positive. However, inherent within this positive, is a greater negative because online education has perpetuated a deep Digital Divide and what appeared affordable and accessible at the outset, ultimately minimized the benefits for those segments of learners who were supposed to attain maximum benefit from the online system. Even so, the acceptance of the reality that online education has come to stay and not disappear, has superseded the initial recalcitrance. To consolidate its perpetuity, online education must go through a process of self-disruption implying the negation of the negative ingrained within itself. It must disrupt itself creatively and innovatively and provide a Constructively Deconstructive alternative to the prevailing system. The proposed policy brief seeks to explore the Dual Paradox of Disruption of Disruption and the search for Alternative within Alternative.

Keywords: Disruption; Digital Literacy; Pandemic; Deconstructive; Hobson's Choice; Symbiotic; Massification; Holocaust.

Introduction

When the deadly pandemic broke out upon the world like a holocaust, breath taking changes occurred in multifarious domains of life turning life itself topsy turvy. In the realm of education, online classes became the New Normal. It generated speculations in the academia whether Digital or Remote Learning would become perpetual in the days to come. Critics apprehended that the perpetuation of the system would perpetuate a deep-seated Digital Divide with constraints of affordability, accessibility, Digital Literacy, Infrastructure, Connectivity, etc. A renowned educationist warns that, the qualitative difference between technological and physical interaction would amount to a one-way flow entirely directed towards learners. The result would be homogenization of knowledge thereby hindering the creation of inquisitive critical citizens as Martha Nausbaum visualized and also indoctrination rather than enlightenment as Noam Chomsky put it. In India where 55,000 villages do

[1] To cite this paper in APA style: Mukerji, S. (2021). Online Education in the Developing World in the Pandemic Era: The Paradox of Disruption. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 2(1): 80-85. DOI: 10.12681/hapscpbs.27661

[2] Sumit Mukerji is Professor at the Department of Political Science and Director of Centre for Studies on Bengali Diaspora of the University of Kalyani, India.

not have mobile facility, this is sure to backfire (Das, 2020). Despite its numerous pitfalls, the message conveyed is loud and clear. Online Education is not a passing phenomenon. It has come to stay. It is not however an unheard-of innovation which has taken humanity aback. The Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) gained wide currency in 2012 with its promise of delivering learning content online to any person and providing an affordable, flexible way of learning skills (Kaplan, Haulien, 2016, 441-50). However, its doubtful accessibility to those with low level of socio-economic background and the Differently abled, was an indisputable fact but since MOOC emerged as a supplementary and not indispensable alternative, therefore its legitimacy was not subjected to searching analysis but even so, it had emerged as a global trend. A decade ago, in Chinese universities, students communicated with their Professors either through e mail or not at all (Shi, 2012: 9-10). The cost-effectiveness of online education vis a vis the cost of Higher Education evoked acceptance from the academia particularly because the devices and software were user friendly and hence conducive to qualitative excellence. However, reality in a kaleidoscopic world, is not static but relentlessly dynamic. Today, in the era of Pandemic, the seminal question is, will online education replace conventional education? Policy makers will have to explore the answer in multifarious domains for the articulation of an appropriate policy blueprint.

Main Body of paper

Online Education emerged as a Disruptive Innovation signifying the transformation of expensive or highly sophisticated products or services to a broader population through cost-effective massification of learning and de-commercialization of knowledge through changing models of access. Disruption here meant undoing the erstwhile system which was expensive. It was not a major breakthrough but its cost-effectiveness accounted for its compelling attraction. Peter Stokes in 2011, was skeptical whether traditional classrooms would disappear in the face of this disruptive wave and also was not categorical in answering the question whether it would change the world of learning in a fundamental way (Stokes, 2011). Shortly before the Pandemic, Julia Fisher forecasted its revolutionary potential to equip learners with Social Capital (Fisher, 2020). Paradoxically, in developing countries, the very promise of accessibility accounting for the credibility and legitimacy of the disruption, is replaced by its very anti-thesis that is inaccessibility leading to a second cycle of disruption of disruption which corrodes its legitimacy. Thus, the legitimating disruption, now becomes the agent of its own de-legitimation.

The Second cycle of Disruption: Online Spectacle in India

India is the second largest online market after China with 560 million internet users. In 2019, the internet penetration in rural India was 290 million while in urban India it was 337 million. After the pandemic, India was confronted with the crude reality of Digital Divide signifying not only access to Internet but also pedagogy and population that was unconnected. Online learning was better known as Emergency Remote Learning but it largely bypassed the learners inhabiting the remote regions many of whom walked 1km to the highway to catch the connection because connectivity at home was almost nil. The All-India Forum to Save Public Education said in a Press Note that the online mode was neither effective nor inclusive. Attendance in the class conducted by teachers online has been below par. A big reason is that the penetration of high-speed internet with generous amounts of data is not uniform across the country. This Exclusionary mode would be least suited to the requirements of the student community of the country. There was also the heart-rending incident of Kerala where online class First Bell had started from June 1, 2020 in a channel named Victors where a talented Student of Mallapuram district who had no television or smartphone in her house, committed suicide out of frustration. Another similar case happened in Mansa district of Punjab where a class xi student committed suicide for the same reason. Her disconsolate father lamented his inability to buy his daughter a smartphone because of fund crunch (Saifulla, 2020). These examples should not be treated as exceptions rather than the rule because the lockdown following the pandemic, unleashed a wave of poverty which was more massive than the pandemic wave imperiling the existence of nearly 70% of the poor families. Not only did it widen the rural-urban divide but also in the tribal belts infested with dense forest, it was found that sometimes 2G data is available but more importantly barring a couple of families in the neighborhood, nobody has a smartphone. In many cases students cannot afford more than a couple of online classes as their internet package is limited. Here online learning has proved self-defeating and relapsed into a second cycle of self- disruption, this time a negative one.

The Psychological Divide

Whenever a path breaking innovation takes place, all stakeholders have to go through an inner revolution and adapt to the positive disruption abandoning their erstwhile values, perceptions, habits and actions. When adaptation and acceptance are lacking, anomic behavior to use the analogy of Emile Durkheim, becomes the order of the day. It grips both the teachers and the students with a sense of despondency and many of them are gripped by depression. Suicide, a phenomenon so elaborately articulated by Durkheim, is common among the students while teachers are overwhelmed by internal

disorganization and confronted by self-disruption syndrome recovery from which, is not very easy. This was very much in evidence in India where the level of Digital Literacy of many teachers was less than even the students. Digital Literacy created a Digital Divide between those teachers who were tech savvy and those who were not. Apart from inertia and indolence, there was also the problem of lack of experience in online teaching and the psychological divide created by online teaching where teachers do not know who their students are, cannot assess their body language and cannot provide personal attention to students to solve their difficulties. Consequently, online lectures become monotonous monologues without interaction and debate common in classroom teaching. Here, there is a different kind of access problem as students do not have direct access to their teachers and classmates and recognition can be at most through voice but not face. Online teaching thus seems to be conducted in a no man's land where teachers and students do not share any bond of mutual empathy. The joy of learning and teaching cannot be inhaled online.

How to Live with Online Learning: The Third Disruption

For all its limitations and dangers, online education is indispensable for the time being and co-existence with both pandemic and online learning is imperative. However, a third disruption is necessary to negate its Negativism and return to Positivism. The thrust of the education policy blueprint should be to accentuate the third disruption though online learning can at most be a utilitarian palliative rather than an alternative. However, it has to be accepted as a fortuitous alternative by the policy makers who must explore supplementary alternative expedients to make the alternative feasible. Here one might take a leaf out of the book of the countries of the Third World and Latin America.

In India, students in Kerala have started collecting discarded television sets from households for repair and distribution among needy students (Safiullah, 2020). In the same way, discarded smartphones can be refurbished and used for the benefit of those who cannot afford it. The alumni of universities can contribute substantially in this respect and Jadavpur University in West Bengal, has already raised Rs 5 lakhs. The University has embarked on a fund-raising drive for buying smartphones. Two female entrepreneurs in India have raised funds for buying digital devices. Entrepreneurs both male and female, can make a decisive contribution here. The e-pathsala the e-learning app of National Council for Educational Research and Training (N.C. E. R.T) is also a very good policy initiative.

In Afghanistan, the Directorate of Technical and Vocational Education, has developed the Alternative Education Scheme for persistence of Coronavirus based on Distance Learning with a combination of multimedia, print media. Video, focused on using local solutions to avoid dependencies. Broadcasting

video lessons through television, radio, websites, portals, social media, educational videos and making videos available through CDs form part of its grand design.

In Argentina, Educ.ar, the educational portal of the Ministry of Energy, has provided curated digital resources for teachers, administrators, students and families. Seguimos Educando began to broadcast educational content from April1, 2020 with 14 hours of television content per day and 7 hours of video. For students without access to technology or connectivity, television and radio programming is supplemented with notebooks packed with learning resources delivered to homes and also self-learning resources, films, interviews, educational and communication proposals through video conferencing and tools. In El Salvador, parents are actively involved as self-learning guides and are given guidance through grades. The Cuban ministry for higher education has sought to link Higher Education Institutions with science, technology and innovation entities.

In Austria, psychological counselling is provided in 23 languages. This is particularly significant in view of the mental health issues triggered off by the stress and isolation of online learning. The government of Ghana has taken the initiative to ensure education anytime anywhere by revolutionizing teaching through Information Communication Technology (ICT) and its mission to transform Ghana into an ICT driven high income economy through education. This is significant because African countries rank in the bottom third in terms of internet affordability and availability making online education a distant prospect. (World Bank Edtech Team, 2020)

Today in the face of the unprecedented global shift towards remote learning, policy makers will have to take decisions in the face of uncertainty. Professional development for Digital Literacy, providing free wifi or subsidized internet facility to students, revamping infrastructural support, providing incentives to teachers and students to motivate them, reviving the radio particularly through Community Radio, which does not require Internet coverage, and which was slowly falling into desuetude, using solar power gadgets, blended mode of learning and integration of ICT with rural areas, are some of the policy recommendations that might mitigate the negative disruption of online learning. This third disruption will not be all-pervasive, but even partial disruption will negate and deconstruct much of its negative impact and provide a constructively deconstructive positive antidote to the malady.

Conclusions

It is now an accepted reality that online learning has come to stay though perhaps in hybrid mode. Like the second wave of the Pandemic with which the world is besieged today, and which is likely to be followed by a third tidal wave, corresponding waves of disruptive innovation must be unleashed

as part of the Challenge- Response Paradigm. The education policy must be formulated with the objective of minimizing the Digital Divide which is also true of the wealthiest countries. The policy makers should try to motivate teachers and students by conveying the message that while online education is the Hobson's Choice today yet one need not be totally subservient to it because on the one hand, teachers and learners will have to adapt to the New Normal but conversely, the New Normal too must be made feasible and practicable for the former thereby blunting the edge of its apprehended hegemony. The relation of the world of education with the New Normal must be symbiotic and not antagonistic. Einstein's precept that imagination is greater than knowledge can be the guiding force here as the challenge is to reimagine and reinvent education through the highest manifestation of human ingenuity which alone shall enjoy hegemony in a turbulent world.

References

Das, S, (2020). Online Siksha Srenikaksher Bikalpa Noy (Online Education is not the alternative to classroom teaching), June 9, Ananda Bazar Patrika.

Fisher, J. F. (2020). The Next Decade of Disruption in Education? Unlocking Networks. Available at: https://www.christenseninstitute.org/blog/the-next-decade-of-disruption-in-education-unlocking-networks/ (Accessed: 10/05/2021).

World Bank (2020). How countries are using edtech (including online learning, radio, television, texting) to support access to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, (March 2020 to June 2020). Available at: https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/edutech/brief/how-countries-are-using-edtech-to-support-remote-learning-during-the-covid-19-pandemic (Accessed: 15/05/2021).

Kaplan, A. M, & Haulien, M. (2016). Higher Education and the Digital Revolution, About MOOC's SPOC's, Social Media and the cookies Monster. *Business Horizons*, 59(4): 441-450.

Safiullah, A. N, (2020). Siksha byabasthay Samajik Baisamya Bridhhi (The increase of social inequality in the educational system), June 16, Dainik Statesman, India.

Shi, Y. (2012). Online versus Classroom-A mathematical model for the future of Education, International Proceedings of Economics Development and Research., Humanity, Culture and Society, vol58, IACSIT Press, Hong Kong.

Stokes, P. (2011). Is Online Learning a Disruptive Innovation. Available at: https://www.hepg.org/blog/is-online-learning-a-disruptive-innovation (Accessed: 13/05/2021).

ISSN: 2732-6578 (print version) 2732-6586 (online)

Topic 5

Sustainable Development and Environmental Policies

Assessing Air Quality in Greece in Times of a Global Pandemic[1]

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

Abstract

The transformation of the world in a matter of months evinced the magnitude of the pandemic worldwide with a rising death toll and rapid spreading of infections from a previously unknown virus that appeared in Wuhan (China) in December 2019. Aside from the severe health and economic effects of the coronavirus, the environment has seen a few considerable improvements. Amongst others, air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions have dropped at a global level as countries struggled to contain the spread of the coronavirus. Although Greece has a long record of problems and challenges in its environmental policy, the pandemic seemed to have caused a significant decline in its air pollution levels. This is mostly manifested in the reduced average monthly concentrations of three air pollutants (NO2, PM2.5, and PM10) in 2020 compared to pre-pandemic levels. The aim of this paper is to assess Greece's air quality by looking at three cities (Athens, Thessaloniki, and Patra) and comparing the average concentrations of NO2, PM2.5, and PM10 over the period 2019-2020.

Keywords: Air quality; Greece; COVID-19; Nitrogen Dioxide; Particulate Matter.

Introduction

Many rural areas and cities across the world are seriously impacted by increased levels of air pollution (Melidis and Tzagkarakis, 2020; Saadat et al., 2020; Zambrano-Monserrate et al., 2020). Indicatively, most people in Europe dwell in cities in which EU air quality limits are often found to exceed (EEA, 2020). According to a recent report of EEA (2020), air pollution in Europe's urban centers causes severe effects on the health of Europeans, raises medical costs, decreases productivity, and affects the economy. Generally, implementing EU environmental policy in times of crisis has not been an easy task for many EU Member states (Melidis and Russel, 2020). A policy sector that has traditionally felt various problems in its implementation is air quality (EC, 2019). In this sense, air pollution seems to have a significant impact on Greece's population (Klein K. et al., 2019). For example, high levels of ozone concentrations are often reported in Athens compounded by its topography as a basin surrounded by mountains and weather conditions with high temperatures, low

[1] To cite this paper in APA style: Melidis, M. & Tzagkarakis, S. I. (2021). Assessing Air Quality in Greece in Times of a Global Pandemic. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 2(1): 87-93. DOI: 10.12681/hapscpbs.27663

[2] Dr. Michail Melidis is an Associate Lecturer at the University of Exeter (UK). His work and research interests are focused on the analysis and implementation of environmental policies in EU, Greece, and the UK.

[3] Dr. Stylianos Ioannis Tzagkarakis is Teaching Fellow on Comparative Public Policy and Postdoctoral Researcher (with scholarship from the State Scholarships Foundation-IKY) at the Department of Political Science of the University of Crete, Greece. He is Field Manager of the Centre for Political Research and Documentation (KEPET) of the University of Crete, General Secretary of the Hellenic Association of Political Scientists (HAPSc) and Member of the Steering Committee of the ECPR Political Culture Research Network.

wind speed, and temperature inversions. Based on the latest environmental performance review of OECD (2020) on Greece, two of its major cities, Athens and Thessaloniki are situated at the top 20% of the highest polluted areas in OECD countries. Unexpectedly, the advent of the pandemic appears to have left a positive footprint thus resulting in a reduction of GHG (Greenhouse Gas) emissions, a cleaner atmosphere, and improved air quality (Melidis, 2020; Melidis and Tzagkarakis, 2020). The aim of this paper is to investigate, compare and analyse air quality in three Greek cities focusing on the average monthly concentrations of three air pollutants (NO2, PM2.5, and PM10) across two years, pre (2019) and during (2020) the pandemic. The article presents that 2020 compared to 2019 has seen significant improvements in air quality with the imposed restrictions and measures by the Greek government to contain the spread of the coronavirus. The paper is structured as follows. First, we set out the scene by outlining some basic definitions, then we go on to explain the methodology of our research followed by an analysis of the three air pollutants, and finally provide some broader conclusions.

Definitions

According to the definition of Britannica encyclopedia, air pollution is ‘’the release into the atmosphere of various gases, finely divided solids, or finely dispersed liquid aerosols at rates that exceed the natural capacity of the environment to dissipate and dilute or absorb them. These substances may reach concentrations in the air that cause undesirable health, economic, or aesthetic effects’’. ‘Exposure to air pollution may generate adverse health issues such as breathing problems, chronic diseases, premature mortality, and increased hospitalization primarily for the most vulnerable groups and those living in highly polluted areas. In this regard, there are short and long-term health risks (WHO, 2013). Particularly, as short-term effects are irritated or itchy eyes, nose, and throat, skin rashes, asthma, coughing, shortness of breath, headaches, nausea, and chest infections. As long-term effects are the development of lung cancer, the aggravation of existing lung diseases, and other chronic respiratory illnesses, such as bronchitis, emphysema and pneumonia, cardiovascular disease, and allergies. Some of the most harmful pollutants to human health are PM, NO2, and ground-level O3 (WHO, 2018). For the purposes of this research, we focus solely on PM2,5, PM10, and NO2. PM represents particulate matter and is also known as particle pollution. It is a term for the mixture of tiny solid particles and liquid droplets in the air. Particle pollution encompasses PM10 inhalable particles with a diameter of equivalent to or less than 10 micrometers and PM2.5 fine inhalable particles, with a diameter equivalent to or less than 2.5 micrometers (EPA, 2021). PM’s main sources include construction sites, vehicular emissions, powerplants, industries, dust, and fires. Subsequently,

nitrogen dioxide (NO2) is defined as a gaseous air pollutant composed of nitrogen and oxygen which constitutes one of a group of highly reactive gases called nitrogen oxides, or NOx (EPA, 2021). It is mainly formed and released in the atmosphere with the burning of fossil fuels such as diesel, coal, oil, and gas. It can also be formed indoors with the burning of wood and natural gas (WHO, 2018). Key sources of NO2 emissions comprise power plants, buses, trucks, and off-road equipment. Other NOx and NO2 can conduce to particle pollution and to the chemical reactions that form ozone (EEA, 2020; EPA, 2020).

Methodology

For the purposes of this study, three air pollutants NO2, PM2.5, and PM10, are examined on a monthly basis over a two-year period. The main source of data derives from the official European Environment Agency datasets and, particularly, EEA's Air quality and Covid-19 viewer that traces the average monthly concentrations of nitrogen dioxide (NO2) and particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5). The pollutants are presented in micrograms per cubic meter of air (μg/m3). The above-mentioned cities are representative of the high level of economic activity and population density. For example, almost half of the population of Greece currently resides and works in Athens followed by Thessaloniki and Patra. Although the sample is limited, it does offer though a clear picture of air quality in the main urban areas after the imposition of restrictions and lockdowns.

Sources of poor air quality and pollution in Greece

Sources such as vehicular fumes and emissions to natural events such as forest fires comprise some of the main causes of air pollution in Greece (OECD, 2020). Vehicular pollution is not only found in Greece but is generally seen as the main contributor that impacts all the countries in the world (AQI, 2020). Combustion sources such as vehicle engines, industrial sites, and the burning of wood and other materials have been also accused of contributing to large amounts of pollution. Against this backdrop, large amounts of fine particulate matter are identified in the atmosphere such as black carbon including the soot that bears carcinogenic potency after inhalation. The release of chemicals such as nitrogen dioxide (NO2) and sulfur dioxide (SO2) - linked to vehicular emissions - are found in zones of high traffic. Likewise, volatile organic compounds (VOCs) such as methylene chloride, toluene, and benzene as well as finely ground particulate matter such as silica and gravel dust are emitted with metals such as lead or mercury from industrial zones or construction sites (AQI, 2020). Despite the reduction in the average exposure to small particulates, from the outset of the decade, premature deaths ascribed to ozone and PM2.5 appear to be steady overall except for variations

related to weather conditions. Natural sources, such as the Saharan dust is regarded as a determinant, particularly in Southern Greece, for particulate pollution (OECD, 2020). Other sources include the extensive use and large numbers of heavy-duty vehicles including buses, trucks, cars, and motorbikes (OECD, 2020). The consumption of fossil fuels such as diesel is another offender. It is also observed in provincial zones a greater use of diesel-fueled vehicles (i.e., older motorbikes and cars) that contribute to a higher release of noxious fumes and oil vapors (AQI, 2020). Additional sources of pollution are power plants, factories, and industrial sites (OECD, 2020). For instance, coal-fired power plants may experience sharp increases in energy demand during the winter period in some areas of Northern Greece due to severe climate conditions (AQI, 2020). To respond to the increasing energy demands for the heating of businesses and households, power plants may increase the use of coal and thus the pollution on the whole. Similarly, to meet their own energy needs, the use of diesel and coal-based heavy machinery for a large number of manufacturing facilities and factories across the country can cause high pollution with the release of industrial chemicals (OECD, 2020).

Breakdown of NO2, PM2.5 & PM10 Average concentrations per month in 2019 & 2020

In this section, we will present an analysis of the three pollutants in a tabular form with a view to illustrating the main trends and variations of the average concentrations on a monthly basis over the period 2019-2020. That said, apart from the monthly values for each city, we calculated the average for each year and the overall difference in order to see more clearly the changes that occurred as a result of the lockdowns and various restrictions.

NO2 Average concentration (µg/m3)															
City	Year	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Average	Difference
Athens	2019	35	37.1	38.1	39.6	43.5	39.3	36.0	27.5	37.4	39.5	34.8	34.9	36.88	3.07
	2020	40.5	40.8	34.3	23.7	39.0	34.9	33.9	33.1	32.7	37.7	26.6	28.6	33.81	
Thessaloniki	2019	36.9	34.6	30.9	23.7	20.1	21.3	19.3	20.1	22.5	36.0	30.9	26.3	25.44	4.18
	2020	29.3	29.8	21.8	16.5	14.2	16.4	17.4	19.7	21.4	23.2	24.7	20.8	21.25	
Patra	2019	35.6	33.0	32.5	31.1	25.0	25.8	26.1	28.9	28.3	36.6	37.1	34.2	30.20	3.9
	2020	37.5	34.8	25.9	14.3	19.9	18.6	25.0	20.0	30.1	31.7	28.7	28.9	26.30	

Regarding nitrogen dioxide (NO2), the table above exhibits high concentration levels before the first lockdown in all three cities. A closer look shows that the highest concentrations are recorded in Athens as the most populated city with the highest economic activity. Surprisingly, while Patra is the least populated city among the three, its overall NO2 concentrations are in excess concerning those of Thessaloniki while reaching those of Athens. The comparison between 2019 and 2020 reveals that a significant drop in NO2 emissions took place in April 2020 as a result of the first lockdown. However, since then, there has been a steady rise until October 2020. The second coronavirus surge

in November 2020 brought about a second nationwide lockdown which led to a mixed picture in terms of NO2 emissions.

PM 2.5 Average concentration (μg/m3)

City	Year	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Average	Difference
Athens	2019	20	19.1	17.2	17.8	12.9	15.3	13.7	13.5	14.1	18.6	15.8	18.3	16.37	2.46
	2020	22.1	16.6	14.6	12.8	13.4	10.1	12.6	12.6	12.1	11.0	14.0	14.9	13.90	
Thessaloniki	2019	34.6	26.9	24.4	17.6	14.3	15.4	15.3	17.1	16.5	22.2	17.3	24.8	19.46	0.71
	2020	33.3	24.0	18.6	15.1	12.9	10.7	12.9	13.4	14.0	16.4	26.3	27.5	18.75	
Patra	2019	20.1	19.6	22.2	15.5	10.9	12.9	12.0	11.5	12.3	14.3	15.1	22.3	15.21	1.41
	2020	28.7	19.5	15.2	10.7	7.3	7.5	10.4	10.1	9.8	10.8	16.0	19.6	13.80	

A similar trend is also observed for particulate matter (PM2,5). Broadly, PM2,5 concentrations were generally seen higher in Thessaloniki in relation to Athens and Patra respectively. From a comparative perspective, no stark differences were noticed in 2019 and 2020 as all the cities experienced reductions. Indicatively, the period from February to October featured by the first lockdown was favourable for constant reductions. As mentioned earlier with NO2, we do note a reversal of this trend towards the end of the year (November and December) with some increases amidst the second lockdown.

PM 10 Average concentration (μg/m3)

City	Year	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Average	Difference
Athens	2019	34.1	29.5	28.6	31.2	26.0	28.7	23.6	25.9	28.1	31.0	30.2	33.1	29.17	4.49
	2020	33.5	27.1	24.9	20.5	28.2	19.8	24.3	22.2	25.9	22.4	21.0	26.1	24.67	
Thessaloniki	2019	54.1	47.6	45.3	33.9	30.6	32.7	30.1	34.2	34.8	56.3	59.4	45.1	39.50	3.11
	2020	52.7	43.6	34.4	28.4	34.9	28.5	29.0	28.0	34.0	34.9	44.0	44.2	36.38	
Patra	2019	29.8	33.2	36.1	28.7	23.6	28.8	26.4	28.8	27.2	29.8	29.9	33.3	29.32	3.69
	2020	38.5	31.0	24.6	20.0	19.4	19.4	23.8	22.8	25.0	24.2	27.5	31.3	25.63	

With regards to PM10, the average concentrations in terms of value across 2019 and 2020 are significantly higher than those of PM2.5. Thessaloniki once more shows the highest records during the stated period. It should be mentioned that all the three cases demonstrated a decline in concentrations for most of the period of 2020 and noticeable increases over the last months of 2020.

Conclusions

To wrap up, the above data demonstrated that NO2, PM2,5, and PM10 emissions in Athens, Thessaloniki, and Patra in 2020 saw a reduction overall. It may be argued that this decrease in emissions was a reflection of the reduced economic activity and vehicular use particularly during the first lockdown which contributed to a cleaner atmosphere. On the other hand, the second lockdown in November 2020 emerged as a brake which reversed the dominant trend inducing some increases and a mixed picture towards the last months of 2020. In such a context, the various restrictions and the first lockdown seemed to have played a pivotal role in the emission reduction. Reasonably, this

fall in emissions gives a glimmer of hope but at the same time, the easing of restrictions and the expected rapid economic recovery to pre-pandemic levels as seen by the average concentrations in November and December 2020 witnessed that the overall emission reductions could be viewed as a temporary and short-lived phenomenon. This trend arguably raises some doubts about the next day after the pandemic and the actions that should be foregrounded. Drawing on that, policymakers should focus their efforts on reducing vehicular use or replacing it with alternative sources (i.e., electric cars) to improve air quality in urban centers. In this regard, strategic and long-term planning assisted by the latest technological advancements for the reduction of industrial, construction, and energy emissions in the run-up to a zero-carbon economy are more than necessary. In the midst of a climate emergency, the increasing use of alternative energy sources and the provision of economic incentives to industries to adopt innovative strategies that are successful in other countries could largely offer useful solutions and lessons on how to improve the state of the environment and citizens' health and well-being (Lee, 2013). Although such initiatives and strategies imply bold decisions, it can generally be inferred that national governments should consider policies with a greener footprint. Advocates of a more sustainable economic model are the new generation (youth) and generally, the public opinion in many EU Member states, as well as the strong scientific community whose contributions to finding efficient ways and tackling environmental problems, are of utmost importance. In this setting, no retreats are allowed to policies that proved harmful for the development, the environment, and people. Instead, tapping into the momentum, desire, and pledge of many EU states to curb GHG emissions and transition to a more sustainable future can give a new vision of the next day. Greece should step up its efforts and harness all the best practices and means offered by the EU to proceed to the essential changes in its transportation networks, and energy and construction plans. Although the above mentioned provide a strong base for reflection, the challenges that lie in their implementation may muddy the waters given the strong voices and pressures from a part of the society and industry to prioritize quick growth over the environment with the known consequences.

References

Air Quality Index (AQI). "Air quality in Greece". Available at: https://www.iqair.com/us/greece (Accessed: 25/04/2021).

Britannica Encyclopedia (n.d.). "Air Pollution". Available at: https://www.britannica.com/science/air-pollution (Accessed: 25/04/2021).

EC (2019). The Environmental Implementation Review 2019: Country Report Greece. Brussels: European Commission. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eir/pdf/report_el_en.pdf. (Accessed : 11/05/2021).

European Environment Agency (EEA) (2020). Air Quality and Covid-19. Available at: https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/air/air-quality-and-covid19 (Accessed: 24/04/2021).

Klein, K. et al. (2019). Transboundary air pollution by main pollutants (S, N, O3) and PM in 2017, Greece, MSC-W Data Note 1/2019. Oslo: Norwegian Meteorological Institute (EMEP/MSC-W). Available at: www.emep.int/publ/reports/2019/Country_Reports/report_GR.pdf. (Accessed: 25/04/2021).

Lee, S. Y. (2013). Existing and anticipated technology strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in Korea's petrochemical and steel industries. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 40: 83-92.

Melidis, M. & Russel, D. J. (2020). Environmental policy implementation during the economic crisis: an analysis of European member state 'leader-laggard'dynamics. *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning*, 22(2): 198-210.

Melidis, M. (2020). What are the effects of COVID-19 on the environment*? HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 1(1): 251-257.

Melidis, M. & Tzagkarakis, S. I. (2020). A Comparative Analysis of COVID-19 Effects on air Pollution in Ten EU Cities in 2020. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 1(2): 167-174.

US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (2020). Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2) Pollution. Available at: https://www.epa.gov/no2-pollution/basic-information-about-no2 (Accessed: 24/04/2021).

OECD (2020). OECD Environmental Performance Reviews: Greece 2020, OECD Environmental Performance Reviews. Paris: OECD Publishing. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1787/cec20289-en (Accessed: 27/04/2021).

Saadat, S., Rawtani, D. & Hussain, C. M. (2020). Environmental perspective of COVID-19. *Science of The Total Environment*, 138870.

World Health Organization (WHO) (2018). Ambient (Outdoor) Air Quality and Health Fact Sheet No. 313 (Accessed: 24/04/2021).

World Health Organisation (WHO) (2013). Health risks of air pollution in Europe –HRAPIE Project (Accessed: 24/04/2021).

 ISSN: 2732-6578 (print version) 2732-6586 (online)

Environmental Issues of European Cargo Ports[1]

Christos Bentsos[2]

Abstract

Sea ports and the shipping industry are crucial elements of the international supply chain. Over the last years there has been a growing awareness on the environmental impact of port operations and development. The development of port industry can have a substantial environmental impact. Sustainability is expressed in economic, environmental, and social dimension. The major impacts are on air pollution and especially greenhouse gas emission, the water pollution and the health effects. International policy instruments and governments are crucial factors defining the actions of ports, which are expected to enhance environmental management and reduce the harm of shipping activities. This paper focuses on the environmental dimension and the attempts to reduce the GHG emissions in line with the Paris Agreement and the 2030 UN SDGs. The attention of European Union regulatory environmental framework is laid in the reduction in the sulphur content of certain liquid fuels, the framework for port reception facilities for the delivery of waste from ships, and the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure. The European Green Deal aims to a 90% reduction in the transport emissions by 2050.

Keywords: Ports; Sustainability; Environmental impact of port activity; Green Deal.

Introduction

Sea ports and shipping industry are crucial elements of the international supply chain, as maritime trade volumes reached a total of 11.08 billion tons in 2019 (UNCTAD, 2020). Nowadays there has been growing awareness on the environmental impact of port operations and development. Important environmental aspects of ports activities are those of vessel and cargo handling operations, industrial activities in ports, port planning and extension actions, and hinterland accessibility (Lam & Notteboom, 2014).

Sustainability is expressed in economic, environmental, and social dimension. According to Serrano et al. (2018) the concept of port sustainability comprises four dimensions; the economic, the social, the environmental (Sislian, et al., 2016) and the institutional dimension (Laxe et al., 2017).

The World Ports Sustainability Program (WPSP) was launched in 2018 to contribute to the sustainable development of world ports in line with United Nations Sustainability Agenda and its seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Verhoeven, 2020). The Program is led by the International Association of Ports and Harbors (IAPH) with some of the world's major port industry-

[1] To cite this paper in APA style: Bentsos, C. (2021). Environmental Issues of European Cargo Ports. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 2(1): 94-100. DOI: 10.12681/hapscpbs.27664
[2] Athens University of Economics and Business.

related organizations. The focus areas are the resilient infrastructure, climate and energy, community outreach and port city dialogue, safety and security, and governance and ethics.

The development of port industry can have substantial environmental impact. One of the major impacts is air pollution and especially greenhouse gas emission (Lashof & Ahuja, 1990). Ships that call at ports provoke significant air pollution. Land side activities and mainly cargo operations at terminals, are responsible for air quality deterioration. Emissions of dust from bulk cargo handling, electricity consumption, and gases from cargo handling equipment have a negative impact on the air quality (Villalba & Gemechu, 2011). Another major impact is water pollution deriving from ballast water and cargo residue. Furthermore, health effects such as asthma, have been noticed to the residents of the surrounding port area (Bailey & Solomon, 2004).

Environmental policy

Legislative initiatives are created to improve the quality of marine fuels. Ports comply with regulations, including environmental requirements and investment to avoid legal affairs. Another motive for ports undertaking environmental initiatives is responding to societal pressures. Environmentally friendly practices can influence positively the attraction of trading partners and potential investors (Lee & Lam, 2012). Other motivation for investing in environmental management is the improvement of operations related to operational costs as technology replacement in port industry is hindered due to the capital-intensive assets. The operational issues are determined by operational performance, cost's reduction and control, health and safety issues, labor relations, processes standardization, environmental problem-solving and remediation plan (Adams, et al., 2009). Overall, ports are required to comply with regulatory and societal requirements with respect to environmental protection.

The environmental policy can be categorized according to the type of enforcement mechanism to supporting investments, market access control, environmental standard regulation, pricing, and monitoring and measuring (Aregall et al., 2018). They refer to action for addressing vessel emissions such as cold ironing, use of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) and vessel speed reduction in the port.

EU Policy

The European Union regulatory environmental framework regarding the European ports' environmental policies includes the Natura 2000 ecological network including all Special Protection Areas, reduction in the sulphur content of certain liquid fuels, framework for port reception facilities for the delivery of waste from ships, the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure, regulation on shipments of

waste, and voluntary participation by organizations in a Community eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS) (Alexandropoulou et al., 2021). On December 2019, the European Green Deal, developed a strategy on implementing the United Nation's 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, by increasing the European Union's greenhouse gas emission reductions target for 2030 to at least 50% and towards 55% compared with 1990 levels. The Green Deal aims to 90% reduction in the transport emissions by 2050, boosting the supply of sustainable alternative transport fuels for aviation, shipping and road transport (Alexandropoulou et al., 2021). The greening of the shipping sector is priority for European ports. In 2020, the European Commission published the Sustainable Europe Investment Plan as the investment pillar of the European Green Deal and aims to exploit over €1 Trillion in the next decade to implement the objectives of the Green Deal (ESPO, 2019-2020).

Port management tools

Ports should consider transnational communication and policy learning in developing their green port management tools. Firstly, pricing strategies can improve port's competitive position for instance by lowering charges (Yap, Lam & Cullinane, 2011). It is common in European ports to exert the environmental governance through the mechanism of terminal concession agreements, which often take the form of performance-based agreements to create incentives for terminal operator to meet the objectives of the port authority (Notteboom et al., 2012).

From the regulators point of view, International Maritime Organization (IMO) and Marine Environment Protection Committee have provided treaties, regulations and guidelines concerning the green impact of the port and shipping sector. The major convention of relevance here is the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), which adopted in 1973 and entered into force in 1983. MARPOL established a global standard to prevent pollution of the marine environment by ships from operational or accidental causes. The original annexes focused only on preventing pollution to the marine environment, but it has been updated at various times and in 2005 MARPOL Annex VI came into force with the aim of preventing air pollution from ships (Bergqvist & Monios, 2019). In 2010 imposed more stringent limits and introduce emission control areas (ECAs). ECAs are often referred to as SECAs because of their prominent sulphur limit of 0.1% as of 2015. The amendment set a reduced global cap of sulphur levels from 3.5% to 0.5% by 2020.

In 2008, IAPH requested its Port Environment Committee, in collaboration with regional port organizations, to provide a mechanism for assisting ports to combat climate change. As a result, in 2008 the C40 World Ports Climate Declaration was adopted, leading to the World Port Climate Initiative (WPCI), numbering 55 ports worldwide that pursue various green measures like discounts

to vessels scoring above a certain threshold on the Environmental Ship Index (ESI). This led, in 2018, to WPSP which developed the ESI to enable better emission visibility. About 5500 vessels of the world fleet of 50,000 vessels are registered so far (WPCI, 2017).

The European Union has pioneered in creating sustainable ports by implementing policies like energy efficiency and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (Di Vaio & Varriale, 2018). EU Regulation No.2015/575 focused on monitoring and reporting carbon dioxide emissions from maritime transport (Sharma & Das, 2020). In 2018, EU implemented a Monitoring, Reporting and Verification scheme for voyages, to and from European ports, according to which shipping companies shall report on GHG.

ESPO introduced the environmental indicators which provide information about the management efforts that influence the environmental performance of the ports. The Port Authority defines its intentions and principles concerning the environmental performance which provides a framework for action and assists ports in developing environmental targets (ESPO, 2020).

The Top 10 environmental priorities reflect the environmental issues that are prioritized by the port managing bodies over time and should be considered when developing port regulations in Europe. The relative positions of the priorities have changed over the years. The first priority for ports since 2013 had been the air quality which can be explained by the continuous establishment of new legislation. Climate change raised in priority ranking for ports during recent years as a result of the ongoing EU and national policy discussions for the issue of climate change. Noise and relationship with the local community are both important issues, especially for urban ports. The relationship with the local community is crucial to a port's license to operate. The management of ship waste remains a priority issue and reflects the economic costs and the environmental impacts of waste handling. It is an important component of programs to assist 'green shipping' and can also be a criterion for the application of differentiated fees. Water quality increase in the top 10 port priorities as well as the garbage/port waste reflecting ports readiness to reduce marine litter (ESPO, 2020).

Green services to shipping

Green services are of increasing importance and refer to the efforts by the port managing bodies in order to contribute to energy transition and greener shipping. These services are the provision of OPS, LNG bunkering facilities and environmentally differentiated port fees (ESPO, 2020). As fossil fuels are slowly being replaced by renewable energy sources, many port authorities are supporting energy transition by facilitating renewable energy production (ESPO, 2016).

Shore side policy refers to cold ironing or onshore power supply (OPS) or shore-side electricity (SSE) is the process whereby ships at berth connect to shore side electricity rather than running their auxiliary generators in order to provide power for hoteling (Bergqvist & Monios, 2019). The use of SSE instead of auxiliary engines reduces the consumption of marine fuel, exhaust emissions, noises, and vibrations from ships. Emission reduction depends on the proportion of renewable energy generation (Bergqvist & Monios, 2019). Low voltage OPS mainly relates to inland and domestic vessels, and auxiliary vessels. The high voltage OPS figure refers to commercial seagoing vessels, where around half of the ports offer high voltage OPS. Trends are steady due to the higher costs of using electricity compared to tax-exempt fossil marine fuels. When ships connect with the shore-side electricity system, they are requested to pay energy tax. Only a limited number of EU Members have obtained, after a long administrative process, a temporary permit by the EU, to apply a reduced rate of taxation to shore-side electricity for ships (ESPO, 2020).

LNG only partially reduces GHG emissions compared to cold ironing, its performance with local air emissions is almost equal and it does not require the same infrastructure investments as cold ironing. On the other hand, it will not reduce engine noise as cold ironing does, and remains an expense for vessels to be able to adapt their engines (Winnes et al., 2015). An increase of 11% has been noted since 2016 and currently, one third of the ports offer this service to ships (ESPO, 2020).

Legislative initiatives and environmentally differentiated port dues have been undertaken in the attempt to enhance the quality of marine fuels that ships use (Adams et al., 2009). These ports aim to encourage the reduction of air emissions and to enhance waste management. In the next two years, around one third of ports plan to introduce environmentally differentiated port fees (ESPO, 2020).

Conclusions

According to literature review, as port operations impact the environment in terms of water and air quality, the attempts focus to reduce the GHG emissions and the marine pollution from ports in line with the Paris Agreement and the 2030 UN SDGs. The legislative initiatives focus on the improvement of marine fuels' quality. Ports are motivated to comply with environmental regulations in order to avoid legal affairs, to respond to societal pressures, and improve operational performance. These initiatives might result in higher costs in the short term but increase the competitiveness of the port in the medium to long term. Environmental policy includes the cold ironing, the use of LNG and the reduction of vessels' speed.

The attention of European Union regulatory environmental framework is laid in the reduction in the sulphur content of certain liquid fuels, the framework for port reception facilities for the delivery of

waste from ships, and the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure. The European Green Deal aims to a 90% reduction in the transport emissions by 2050. The port management tools include pricing strategies and concession agreements. IAPH through WPCI pursued green measures like discounts to vessels according to their ESI's score. Climate change raised in priority ranking for ports during recent years. The management of ship waste remains a priority issue and reflects the economic costs and the environmental impacts.

Lastly, six common green port performance indicators are the speed reduction after landfall, cold ironing, using electrically powered equipment, encouraging the use of low-Sulphur fuel, use of recyclable resources, and encouraging public transport mode development.

References

Adams, M., Quinonez, P., Pallis, A. & Wakeman, T. (2009). Environmental issues in port competitiviness. Dahlhausie University. Atlantic Gateway Initiative. Centre for International Trade and Transportation. Wokring Paper 7.

Alexandropoulou, V., Koundouri, P., Papadaki, L. & Kontaxaki, K. (2021). New Challenges and Opportunities for Sustainable Ports: The Deep Demonstration in Maritime Hubs Project. In: P. Koundouri (ed.), *The Ocean of Tomorrow* (Vol. 57). Springer, Cham, pp. 173-197.

Aregall, M., Bergqvist, R. & Monios, J. (2018, March). A global review of the hinterland dimension of green port strategies. Transportation Research Part D, *Transport and Environment*, 59: 23-34.

Bailey, D. & Solomon, G. (2004). Pollution prevention at ports: Clearing the air. *Environmental Impact Assessment Review* (24): 749–774.

Bergqvist, R. & Monios, J. (2019). Green Ports in Theory and Practice. In: R. Bergqvist, & J. Monios (eds.), *Green Ports: Inland and Seaside Sustainable Transportation Strategies*. Cambridge: Elsevier, pp. 1-17

Di Vaio, A. & Varriale, L. (2018). Management Innovation for Environmental Sustainability in Seaports: Managerial Accounting Instruments and Training for Competitive Green Ports beyond the Regulations. *Sustainability*, 10(3): 783.

European Sea Ports Organisation. (2020). Environmental Report, EcoPortsinSights 2020.

Lam, J. S. & Notteboom, T. (2014). The Greening of Ports: A Comparison of Port Management Tools Used by Leading Ports in Asia and Europe. *Transport Reviews*, 34(2): 169-189.

Lashof, D. & Ahuja, D. (1990). Relative contributions of greenhouse gas emissions to global warming. *Nature* (344): 529–531.

Laxe, F., Bermúdez, F., Palmero, F. & Novo-Corti, I. (2017). Assessment of port sustainability through synthetic indexes. Application to the Spanish case. *Marine Pollution Bulletin*, 119(1): 220-225.

Lee, C. & Lam, J. (2012). Managing reverse logistics to enhance sustainability of industrial marketing. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 41(4): 589-598.

Notteboom, T., Verhoeven, P. & Fontanet, M. (2012). Current practices in European ports on the awarding of seaport terminals to private operators: Towards an industry good practice guide. *Policy & Management* 39, (1): 107–123.

Serrano, B., González-Cancelas, N., Soler-Flores, F. & Camarero-Orive, A. (2018). Classification and prediction of port variables using Bayesian Networks. *Transport Policy*, 67: 57-66.

Sharma, E. & Das, S. (2020). Measuring impact of Indian ports on environment and effectiveness of remedial measures towards environmental pollution. *International Journal of Environment and Waste Management (IJEWM)*, 25(3): 356-380.

Sislian, L., Jaegler, A. & Cariou, P. (2016). A literature review on port sustainability and ocean's carrier network problem. *Research in Transportation Business & Management*, 19: 19-26.

UNCTAD (2020). *Review of Maritime Transport*. Geneva: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

Verhoeven, P. (2020). *World Ports Sustainability Report*. Worlds ports Sustainability Program.

Villalba, G. & Gemechu, E. (2011). Estimating GHG emissions of marine ports — the case of Barcelona. *Energy Policy* 39: 1363–1368.

Winnes, H., Styhre, L. & Fridell, E. (2015). Reducing GHG emissions from ships in port areas. *Research in Transportation Business & Management*, 17: 73-82.

WPCI (2017). *ESI Steadily Going Stronger*. World Port Climate Initiative.

Yap, W. Y., Lam, J. S. & Cullinane, K. (2011). A theoretical framework for the evaluation of competition. *Singapore Economic Review*, 56 (4): 535–559.

Climate Change: How it Affects the European Security[1]

Angeliki-Efraimia Markopoulou[2]

Abstract

This policy brief, in the context of environmental policy, addresses the issue of climate change and whether it affects the European security. The chronic and ever-increasing problem of climate change, in addition to its obvious consequences in the fields of agriculture, health, economy and others, can now create "gaps" in the security of states, in ways that will be explained. Some current issues related to the analysis will be announced, the European Union's positions on the problem will be reported and in addition the positions of UN officials and especially the Security Council will be reported. Then some suggestions-recommendations will be given aimed at addressing the problem.

Keywords: European Security; Climate Change.

Κλιματική Αλλαγή: Πώς Επηρεάζει την Ευρωπαϊκή Ασφάλεια

Αγγελική-Εφραιμία Μαρκοπούλου[3]

Περίληψη

Το συγκεκριμένο άρθρο πολιτικής, στο πλαίσιο της περιβαλλοντικής πολιτικής, πραγματεύεται το ζήτημα της κλιματικής αλλαγής και κατά πόσο αυτή επηρεάζει την ευρωπαϊκή ασφάλεια. Το χρόνιο και διαρκώς αυξανόμενο πρόβλημα της κλιματικής αλλαγής, εκτός από τις προφανείς συνέπειές του στον τομέα της γεωργίας, της υγείας, της οικονομίας και άλλων, μπορεί πλέον να δημιουργεί «κενά» στην ασφάλεια των κρατών, με τρόπους που θα εξηγηθούν. Θα γνωστοποιηθούν μερικά σύγχρονα προβλήματα που σχετίζονται με την ανάλυση, θα αναφερθούν οι τοποθετήσεις της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης για το πρόβλημα και επιπλέον θα γίνει αναφορά στις θέσεις αρμόδιων του ΟΗΕ και συγκεκριμένα του Συμβουλίου Ασφαλείας. Έπειτα θα δοθούν ορισμένες προτάσεις-συστάσεις στοχεύοντας στην αντιμετώπιση.

Λέξεις-Κλειδιά: Ευρωπαϊκή Ασφάλεια; Κλιματική Αλλαγή.

Εισαγωγή

Κλιματική Αλλαγή: Τι είναι;

Το φαινόμενο της κλιματικής αλλαγής συντελείται διότι οι εκπομπές διοξειδίου του άνθρακα αυξάνουν τη θερμοκρασία του πλανήτη, με αποτέλεσμα την άνοδο της στάθμης των υδάτων, τη μεταβολή των βροχοπτώσεων, τη μείωση της βιοποικιλότητας, καθώς και την εξασθένηση των οικοσυστημάτων. Οι φυσικές επιπτώσεις των φαινομένων αυτών είναι η τήξη των παγετώνων, η

[1] To cite this paper in APA style: Markopoulou, A. E. (2021). Climate Change: How it Affects the European Security. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 2(1): 101-107. DOI: 10.12681/hapscpbs.27665
[2] Department of International and European Studies, University of Piraeus.
[3] Τμήμα Διεθνών και Ευρωπαϊκών Σπουδών, Πανεπιστήμιο Πειραιώς.

σταδιακή υποχώρηση των ακτών και η ερημοποίηση-λειψυδρία. Ταυτόχρονα, παρατηρείται μια αύξηση των επικίνδυνων καιρικών φαινομένων, όπως πλημμύρες, κυκλώνες, καύσωνες. Σύμφωνα με τα στοιχεία της Διακυβερνητικής Ομάδας για την Κλιματική Αλλαγή (IPCC), τα οποία γνωστοποιήθηκαν στην τελευταία, μέχρι στιγμής, έκθεσή της, το 2019, επιβεβαιώνονται οι αρνητικές επιπτώσεις της αλλαγής του κλίματος. Επιπλέον, γίνεται σαφές πως η ανθρωπογενής υπερθέρμανση του πλανήτη αλλάζει ριζικά τους ωκεανούς (Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή, 2019). Παρόλα αυτά, η σημασία που δίνεται στην κλιματική αλλαγή εξακολουθεί να είναι περιορισμένη, καθώς τα αποτελέσματά της δεν είναι ορατά, παρά μόνο όταν αυτά πλήττουν άμεσα τους ανθρώπους και κατ' επέκταση τα κράτη.

Σύνδεση της Κλιματικής Αλλαγής με την Ασφάλεια των Κρατών:

Η κλιματική αλλαγή επηρεάζει άμεσα τις βασικές παραμέτρους της ζωής και της ευημερίας των ανθρώπων αλλά και των κοινωνιών. Συνέπειες όπως η ερημοποίηση, η σταδιακή μείωση των φυσικών αποθεμάτων νερού, αλλά και των βασικών πόρων για την ανθρώπινη επιβίωση, προκαλούν βιοποριστική ανασφάλεια. Αποτελούν ορατές και σκληρές και ασύμμετρες απειλές που εκτείνονται και στην ασφάλεια των κρατών οι οποίες με την σειρά τους οδηγούν σε αστάθεια.

Μια από τις πρώτες μελέτες που συνδέουν την κλιματική αλλαγή με την ασφάλεια των κρατών αποτελεί η έκθεση του Lester Brown, με τίτλο "Redefining National Security", που εκδόθηκε το 1977. Η έρευνά του καταλήγει στο συμπέρασμα ότι «οι νέες απειλές πηγάζουν άμεσα ή έμμεσα από τη ραγδαία μεταβαλλόμενη σχέση μεταξύ της ανθρωπότητας, των φυσικών πηγών και συστημάτων της γης. Το άγχος το οποίο δημιουργείται, μέσω της σχέσης αυτής, εκδηλώνεται ως οικολογικό στρες και ως ανασφάλεια για τη στενότητα των πόρων. Έπειτα, μεταφράζεται ως πληθώρα προβλημάτων, όπως οικονομική ανασφάλεια, πληθωρισμός, ανεργία, έλλειψη κεφαλαίων και νομισματική αστάθεια. Τελικά, αυτό το μετεξελιγμένο οικονομικό στρες μετατρέπεται σε κοινωνική αναταραχή και πολιτική αστάθεια που καταλήγει να πλήττει τις δομές της κοινωνίας» (Βασιλάκη, 2010).

Ο πρώην Γενικός Γραμματέας του ΟΗΕ, Μπαν Κι-Μουν, είχε εκφράσει την ανησυχία του για την πιθανότητα οι περιορισμένοι πόροι (ενέργεια, νερό ή αρόσιμη γη) να οδηγήσουν σε συγκρούσεις. Προειδοποίησε τα κράτη-μέλη να επικεντρώσουν το ενδιαφέρον τους στα οφέλη της έγκαιρης δράσης. Το όλο και πιο ασταθές κλίμα δεν θεωρείται πλέον αποκλειστικά περιβαλλοντικό ή οικονομικό ζήτημα. Δεν πρόκειται να κλονιστεί μόνο η εθνική ασφάλεια, αλλά και η συλλογική ασφάλεια στα πλαίσια ενός εύθραυστου και όλο και περισσότερο αλληλεξαρτώμενου κόσμου (Parry, n.d). Τις ανησυχίες αυτές μοιράζεται και ο νυν Γενικός Γραμματέας του ΟΗΕ Αντόνιο Γκουτέρες παρακολουθώντας τα ποσοστά του ουδέτερου ισοζυγίου του άνθρακα και το 2021 (Γκουτέρες, 2021).

Πρόσφατο παράδειγμα απειλής της ασφάλειας των κρατών εξαιτίας της κλιματικής αλλαγής

αποτελεί η κατάσταση στην Αρκτική. Ειδικότερα, η Αρκτική διαμορφώνεται διαρκώς εδαφικά, εξαιτίας κυρίως των διαρκώς αυξανόμενων θερμοκρασιών που οδηγούν στο λιώσιμο των θαλάσσιων πάγων και παγετώνων, ειδικά στην Ευρασιατική Αρκτική. Αυτό έχει ως αποτέλεσμα η περιοχή να απειλείται από χώρες που επιθυμούν να σφετεριστούν τους πόρους της, όπως το πετρέλαιο, την ξυλεία αλλά και να εκμεταλλευτούν την μεταβαλλόμενη γεωπολιτική δυναμική της. Έτσι, παρατηρείται η αύξηση των εντάσεων μεταξύ των παράκτιων κρατών (Ρωσία, Ηνωμένες Πολιτείες, Καναδάς, σκανδιναβικές χώρες), που διεκδικούν την εκμεταλλεύσιμη πλέον περιοχή της Αρκτικής (Κωστάκος, 2016).

Εκτός από την περιοχή της Αρκτικής, οι θερμές συγκρούσεις που ήδη υπάρχουν στην Αφρική, αλλά και οι οικονομικές επιπτώσεις των ακραίων καιρικών φαινομένων εκεί, όπως για παράδειγμα στην Νιγηρία, αλλά και σε μέρη όπως το Μπαγκλαντές στην Ασία, που βυθίζεται κάτω από το ανερχόμενο επίπεδο της θάλασσας, αυξάνουν το μεταναστευτικό ρεύμα προς τη σχετικά πολύ ασφαλέστερη Ευρώπη. Παράλληλα, όμως, ούτε η Ευρώπη μένει άθικτη αφού πλήττεται από πλημμύρες και ξηρασίες. Η Νότια Ισπανία ερημοποιείται, οι δασικές πυρκαγιές κατά το καλοκαίρι στις μεσογειακές χώρες πολλαπλασιάζονται, και οι παραποτάμιες πόλεις, όπως το Παρίσι, πλημμυρίζουν (Κωστάκος, 2016).

Οι θέσεις της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης για το πρόβλημα:

Η κλιματική αλλαγή συνεχίζει να διαδραματίζει ολοένα και σημαντικότερο ρόλο στις συζητήσεις της Ευρώπης για την ασφάλεια. Η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση έχει αρχίσει να αναπτύσσει στρατηγικές «ασφάλειας του κλίματος» στοχεύοντας ακριβώς στην αντιμετώπιση των συνεπειών της απειλής της ασφάλειας.

Ωστόσο, οι υπεύθυνοι χάραξης πολιτικής αγνοούν το πώς να διαμορφώσουν άμεσες πολιτικές πρωτοβουλίες. Έτσι, οι προσπάθειες αντιμετώπισης διαφόρων απειλών που σχετίζονται με το κλίμα έχουν αποτύχει. Η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση, με την Ευρωπαϊκή Πράσινη Συμφωνία (European Green Deal), φιλοδοξεί στον μετασχηματισμό της σε ακμάζουσα κοινωνία που διαθέτει μια σύγχρονη και αποδοτική, ως προς τη χρήση των πόρων, οικονομία, στην οποία έως το 2050 οι εκπομπές αερίων του θερμοκηπίου της ΕΕ θα έχουν καταστεί κλιματικά ουδέτερες (Ευρωπαϊκό Συμβούλιο-Συμβούλιο Της Ευρώπης, 2021).

Η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση κατέχει ουδέτερο ρεκόρ στο σχεδιασμό πολιτικών ασφάλειας του κλίματος για την αντιμετώπιση αυτών των θεμάτων. Οι ηγέτες της έχουν αναγνωρίσει την ανάγκη τέτοιων πολιτικών, προφορικά, αλλά και σε πληθώρα εγγράφων πολιτικής, και η ΕΕ έχει κάνει μεγάλη πρόοδο στο ξεκίνημα της για την αντιμετώπιση των ευρύτερων επιπτώσεων ασφαλείας του κλίματος.

Παρόλα αυτά, πρέπει να εστιάσει στην ανάπτυξη μιας πιο ολοκληρωμένης στρατηγικής στραμμένη στην επιτυχή ανταπόκριση και προετοιμασία για τη γεωπολιτική αστάθεια που προκαλεί η κλιματική αλλαγή. Έτσι, μεμονωμένα κράτη-μέλη έχουν αναγνωρίσει την ανάγκη να ενσωματωθεί στην ατζέντα τους το κλίμα και την ασφάλεια (Γερμανία, Σουηδία, Δανία, Κάτω Χώρες, Ισπανία κ.α.). Οι ευρωπαϊκές κυβερνήσεις εστιάζουν, επίσης, στην προσπάθεια να παρέχουν την δυνατότητα στο Συμβούλιο Ασφαλείας να αποφασίζει για την ασφάλεια του κλίματος, παρά τις ενστάσεις κάποιων αναπτυσσόμενων χωρών (Youngs, 2014).

Επιπλέον, η δημόσια διαδικτυακή διάσκεψη που συνδιοργανώθηκε από το Ινστιτούτο Μελετών για την Ασφάλεια της ΕΕ (EUISS) και την Ευρωπαϊκή Υπηρεσία Εξωτερικής Δράσης (ΕΥΕΔ) στις 11 Δεκεμβρίου του 2020, είχε ως επίκεντρο τον αντίκτυπο της κλιματικής αλλαγής στην ασφάλεια και την άμυνα της ΕΕ. Συγκεκριμένα, παρουσιάστηκε από τον Ύπατο Εκπρόσωπο της Ένωσης, Joseph Borrell, ο χάρτης που δείχνει την πορεία για την κλιματική αλλαγή και την άμυνα. (EEAS, 2020). Ο χάρτης αυτός επικεντρώνεται σε τρία σημεία που θα μπορούσαν να πραγματοποιηθούν δράσεις:

- Στην επιχειρησιακή διάσταση, που στοχεύει στην ενίσχυση της επίγνωσης της κατάστασης, της έγκαιρης προειδοποίησης και της στρατηγικής πρόβλεψης, καθώς και την ενσωμάτωση της κλιματικής αλλαγής και των περιβαλλοντικών πτυχών στον σχεδιασμό και την υλοποίηση πολιτικών και στρατιωτικών αποστολών και επιχειρήσεων της CSDP.
- Στην ανάπτυξη ικανοτήτων, δηλαδή την εστίαση σε νέες προκλήσεις, όπως η διασφάλιση της αποτελεσματικότητας του στρατιωτικού εξοπλισμού υπό ακραίες καιρικές συνθήκες αλλά και η υιοθέτηση ενεργειακά αποδοτικών τεχνολογιών για τις αποστολές και τις επιχειρήσεις.
- Στην διπλωματική προσέγγιση, δίνοντας έμφαση στη συμμετοχή σε συζητήσεις που πραγματοποιούνται σε πολυμερή φόρα και σε πλαίσια εταιρικής σχέσης για την αλλαγή του κλίματος και την άμυνα.

Στην Σύνοδο για το κλίμα που διεξήχθη στις 22 Απριλίου του 2021, η Γαλλία πρότεινε την επιβολή φόρου στον άνθρακα για να επιταχυνθεί η εφαρμογή των δεσμεύσεων για μείωση των εκπομπών άνθρακα μέχρι το 2030. Σε αυτή τη λογική μείωσης των εκπομπών συμφώνησαν και άλλες χώρες όπως η Βρετάνια, η Ιαπωνία, οι ΗΠΑ, προτείνοντας η κάθε μια δικό τους ορίου μείωσης των εκπομπών.

Στις 5 Μαΐου 2021, μετά από διαπραγματεύσεις, το Συμβούλιο και το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο κατέληξαν σε μια προσωρινή πολιτική συμφωνία που κατοχυρώνει νομικά τον στόχο μιας κλιματικά ουδέτερης Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης έως το 2050 και παράλληλα την μείωση των εκπομπών αερίων του θερμοκηπίου, τουλάχιστον 55% έως το 2030 (European Council-Council of the European Union,

2021).

Επίσης, πρέπει να αναφερθεί ότι σε συζήτηση του Συμβουλίου Ασφαλείας για την αλλαγή του κλίματος που διεξήχθη στις 23 Φεβρουαρίου του 2021 τονίστηκε από τον Αντόνιο Γκουτέρες ότι πρέπει περιοριστεί η παγκόσμια αύξηση της θερμοκρασίας στους 1,5 βαθμούς μέχρι το τέλος του αιώνα. Επιπλέον, ο πρωθυπουργός Μπόρις Τζόνσον, ο οποίος ήταν πρόεδρος της διαδικτυακής συνάντησης, προέτρεψε τα μέλη του Συμβουλίου να επιδείξουν την παγκόσμια ηγεσία που είναι απαραίτητη για να διατηρήσουν ασφαλή τον κόσμο (UN, 2021). Με σκοπό την επίλυση του προβλήματος των απειλών στην ευρωπαϊκή ασφάλεια εξαιτίας της κλιματικής αλλαγής πρέπει να παρθεί μια σειρά από μέτρα από διάφορους φορείς παγκοσμίως.

Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση:

Η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση οφείλει να ηγηθεί της προσπάθειας αντιμετώπισης του προβλήματος με τα μέσα που διαθέτει. Πρέπει να επενδύσει για την μετάβαση σε οικονομία μηδενικού άνθρακα που θα οδηγήσει στην διατήρηση του ορίου αύξησης της μέσης θερμοκρασίας του πλανήτη στους 2°C. Παράλληλα, μπορεί να προχωρήσει και στην έκδοση «πράσινων ομολόγων» για να προσελκύσει επενδυτές. Μεγάλη σημασία πρέπει να δοθεί και στη βελτίωση της ενεργειακής απόδοσης στην βιομηχανία, δηλαδή στην αντικατάσταση των εξοπλισμών από πιο σύγχρονα μηχανήματα και μεθόδους (Σαρτζετάκης & Χαραλαμπίδης, 2020).

Η ΕΕ οφείλει να εξισορροπήσει τη δέσμευσή της για ελεύθερο εμπόριο και την επιθυμία της για πρόσβαση σε φυσικούς πόρους και ανανεώσιμες πηγές ενέργειας, αποφεύγοντας παράλληλα τις εξτρεμιστικές εμπορικές πολιτικές. Ταυτόχρονα, πρέπει να ενσωματώσει την κλιματική ασφάλεια σε όλες τις πτυχές των εξωτερικών πολιτικών της και να επικεντρωθεί σε αυτή την πολιτική περισσότερο, πέρα από το βραχυπρόθεσμο ενδιαφέρον λόγω τρεχόντων προβλημάτων ασφαλείας (Youngs, 2014).

Κράτη:

Τέλος, για την επίλυση του χρόνιου ζητήματος της κλιματικής αλλαγής και της απειλής της ασφάλειας, κάθε κράτος μπορεί με τη σειρά του να προβεί στα εξής μέτρα:

- Εσωτερικά, να επικεντρωθούν στην ανάπτυξη πολιτικών για να διαμορφωθούν πράσινες-έξυπνες πόλεις, με την εφαρμογή φιλικών προς το περιβάλλον τεχνολογιών. Μπορούν να στοχεύσουν στη βελτίωση του σιδηροδρομικού δικτύου και των αστικών συγκοινωνιών αλλά και στην ενθάρρυνση χρήσης ποδηλάτων με την δημιουργία ποδηλατοδρόμων (Σαρτζετάκης & Χαραλαμπίδης, 2020).

- Εξωτερικά, πρέπει να αποφύγουν να δώσουν προτεραιότητα στην αυτοσυντήρηση ενόψει των περιορισμένων πόρων και αντίθετα να ενισχύσουν τη δέσμευσή τους για συνεργασία που βασίζεται στην ασφάλεια των κρατών (Youngs, 2014).

Συμπεράσματα

Εν κατακλείδι, από την παραπάνω ανάλυση γνωστοποιούνται τα καταστροφικά αποτελέσματα στην ευρωπαϊκή ασφάλεια που προκαλούνται από την κλιματική αλλαγή αλλά και οι τρόποι που αυτά τα αποτελέσματα μπορούν να περιοριστούν-αν όχι να εξαλειφθούν. Πρέπει να τονιστεί ότι για να υπάρξει οποιαδήποτε πρόοδος στο κομμάτι της κλιματικής αλλαγής και στην διατήρηση της ευρωπαϊκής ασφάλειας οφείλουν να συνεργαστούν όλα τα κράτη μεταξύ τους. Αυτή η συνεργασία μπορεί να επέλθει με την περαιτέρω εμβάθυνση/ολοκλήρωση στα πλαίσια της Κοινής Πολιτικής Ασφάλειας και Άμυνας, με την προϋπόθεση, όμως, ότι τα κράτη θα είναι διατεθειμένα να εκχωρήσουν κυριαρχία με σκοπό να αντιμετωπιστεί το πρόβλημα της ασφάλειας -το οποίο δημιουργεί η κλιματική αλλαγή- συλλογικά, ως Ένωση, εφόσον επηρεάζει το μεγαλύτερο μέρος των κρατών-μελών όπως αναφέρθηκε και παραπάνω. Επομένως, πρέπει να δοθεί αρχικά βαρύτητα στην περιφερειακή συνεργασία.

Βιβλιογραφικές Αναφορές

Βασιλάκη, Α. (2010). Κλιματική αλλαγή και ασφάλεια στη Μεσόγειο: προβλήματα και προοπτικές. HELLANICUS. Διαθέσιμο στο: https://hellanicus.lib.aegean.gr/handle/11610/12272 (Πρόσβαση: 15/03/2021).

Γκουτέρες, Α. (2021). Ουδέτερο ισοζύγιο άνθρακα μέχρι το 2050, η επείγουσα αποστολή του κόσμου. Η ΚΑΘΗΜΕΡΙΝΗ, 3 Ιανουαρίου. Διαθέσιμο στο: https://www.kathimerini.gr/world/561212269/antonio-gkoyteres-oydetero-isozygio-anthraka-mechri-to-2050-i-epeigoysa-apostoli-toy-kosmoy/ (Πρόσβαση: 08.01/2021).

EEAS-Strategic Communications (2020). Towards a climate-proof security and defence policy: A Roadmap for EU action. European Union External Action Service (EEAS). December 11. Available at: https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/90320/towards-climate-proof-security-and-defence-policy-roadmap-eu-action_en (Accessed: 14/05/2021).

Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή (2019). Η ΕΕ χαιρετίζει την έκθεση των Ηνωμένων Εθνών για τους ωκεανούς και την κλιματική αλλαγή [Δελτίο Τύπου, 25 Σεπτεμβρίου]. Διαθέσιμο στο: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/el/IP_19_5869 (Πρόσβαση: 10/03/2021).

Ευρωπαϊκό Συμβούλιο-Συμβούλιο Της Ευρώπης (2021). Ευρωπαϊκή Πράσινη Συμφωνία, Ο στόχος της ΕΕ για κλιματική ουδετερότητα έως το 2050. Διαθέσιμο στο: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/el/policies/green-deal/ (Πρόσβαση: 07/05/2021).

European Council-Council of the European Union (2021). European climate law: Council and Parliament reach provisional agreement [May 5 Press release]. Available at: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/05/05/european-climate-law-council-and-parliament-reach-provisional-agreement/ (Accessed: 15/05/2021).

Κωστάκος, Γ. (2016). Η κλιματική αλλαγή ως απειλή για την ασφάλεια στην Ευρώπη. Η ΚΑΘΗΜΕΡΙΝΗ, 4 Δεκεμβρίου. Διαθέσιμο στο: https://www.kathimerini.gr/politics/886478/i-klimatiki-allagi-os-apeili-gia-tin-asfaleia-stin-eyropi/ (Πρόσβαση: 08/05/2021).

Parry, J. E. (n.d.). The greatest threat to global security: Climate change is not merely an environmental problem' United Nations. Available at: https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/greatest-threat-global-security-climate-change-not-merely-environmental-problem (Accessed: 28/12/2020).

Σαρτζετάκης, Ε. Σ. & Χαραλαμπίδης, Ν. (2020). Η πανδημία, η κλιματική αλλαγή και η μεγάλη ευκαιρία. Greenpeace, 28 Ιουλίου. Διαθέσιμο στο: https://www.greenpeace.org/greece/issues/klima/14707/i-pandimia-i-klimatiki-allagi-kai-i-megali-eykairia/ (Πρόσβαση: 26/12/2020).

United Nations (2021). World risks 'Collapse of everything' without strong climate action, Attenborough warns Security Council [February 23 Press release]. Available at: https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/02/1085452 (Accessed: 26/04/2021).

Youngs, R. (2014). Climate Change and EU Security Policy: An Unmet Challenge. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Publications Department. Available at: https://carnegieendowment.org/files/climate_change_eu_security.pdf (Accessed: 25/03/2021).

ISSN: 2732-6578 (print version) 2732-6586 (online)

Topic 6

Migration and Refugee Issues in the New Decade

COVID-19 and its Impact on Labour Migration: The Case of Asia[1]

Antonia - Nefeli Karaleka[2]

Abstract

Globalized economy relies on labour migration. In the current effort to rebuild the future in an early post-COVID world, the impact of this health crisis had on the international migration workers should be studied. For more than a year now, professionals of different skill levels have been obliged to either return to their home country or to stay trapped in their destination country unemployed or with little access to social security or the ability for self-protection by potential virus infection. The impact was huge both for the origin and the destination countries. One of the most important effects was on international remittances. Some initiatives were taken to manage this situation. This policy brief aims to enlighten new areas on which extra effort should be made regarding labour migration.

Keywords: Labour migration; COVID-19; Asia; origin and destination countries; employability.

Introduction

The current globalized economy relies on labour migration (IOM, 2020). International labour migration[3] seems to be an integral and necessary part for the status quo of our economy. Undoubtedly, the face of labour migration is very different not only in every city, country and continent but also for each family and professional sector. The current health crisis brought up the discussion about migrant labour. While there are important exceptions for specific professions (such as doctors, scientists, policy makers, journalists, governmental official, etc.) the majority of work travelers are not able to continue traveling and may not be able to do so for the foreseeable future (Yayboke, 2020). An important distinction should be made between business trips, i.e. have a base in the origin country and traveling for some days to visit a client/partner etc. and migration labour, i.e. people living their origin country to migrate for a long period of time (not necessarily permanently) to save money and send remittances back to their family. The majority of these people are low-skilled workers who are in the forefront of travel restrictions (Migration Data Portal, 2021). Due to COVID-19 related layoffs, many of them risk their legal residence in the country as they are on temporary work visas (Ranjan, 2020). In other words, these people should either find another job suitable for their visa category, try to acquire a different type of visa or decide to take one of the scarce flights back to their home country.

[1] To cite this paper in APA style: Karaleka, A. N. (2021). COVID-19 and its Impact on Labour Migration: The Case of Asia. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 2(1): 109-117. DOI: 10.12681/hapscpbs.27666

[2] Antonia Nefeli Karaleka is Political Scientist - Researcher, Managing Editor – EUREOPE Magazine: a bimonthly review.

[3] **Labour migration** according to the International Organization for Migration is *the movement of persons from one State to another, or within their own country of residence, for the purpose of employment. Labour migration is defined as covering both migrants moving within the country and across international borders* (IOM, 2021).

All the above-mentioned scenarios seem equally difficult or not even feasible in some cases. Finding another job during the pandemic is challenging and, in some cases, not even possible for migrants as due to the lack of job vacancies, open positions are covered by locals instead of migrants. However, this is not always the case. For example, during the last one year, there was an increase in labor migrants in specific professional sectors and in the framework of the developing gig-economy[4]. Migrants get hired for supportive services (food delivery, hospitals' cleaning, supply chain, track drivers, emergency manufacturers for gloves and sanitizers, etc.) usually as temporary, contract workers for a commitment of a specific period of time (ADBE, OECD & ILO, 2021). Of course, this kind of professions put them into greater risk of infection while at the same time they may have decreased accessibility to the health system. At the same time, trying to get different type of visa can be impossible as public services are, in the most countries, not open to the audience and online communication or digital platforms are not enough developed to support this kind of procedures. Finally, regardless of the difficulty to go back home because of the rarity of flights, returning to the origin country may be as harmful for the family and the migrant as staying in the reception country. Chances are that economic hardship in the origin country would be, if not worse, at least the same and job positions would not be available (Irudaya Rajan, Sivakumar & Srivasan, 2020). Even though data show that the total amount of remittances sent to the origin countries has increased because some migrants returned back home with their savings, this is beneficial only for the very short-term (ADBE, OECD & ILO, 2021). After a while, the lack of remittances sent from migrants to their families and as a result to the local economy, will put them into great financial strain. This fact, in turn, increases global inequality.

This brief discusses the impact of COVID-19 on labour migration both for the country of origin and for the country of destination. What is more, it comments on the impact on the international migration and suggests specific measures which could be taken from different actors not only on a national level but also on the international one. The focus area of the brief is Asia as it is a continent with both major origin and destination countries for labour migration.

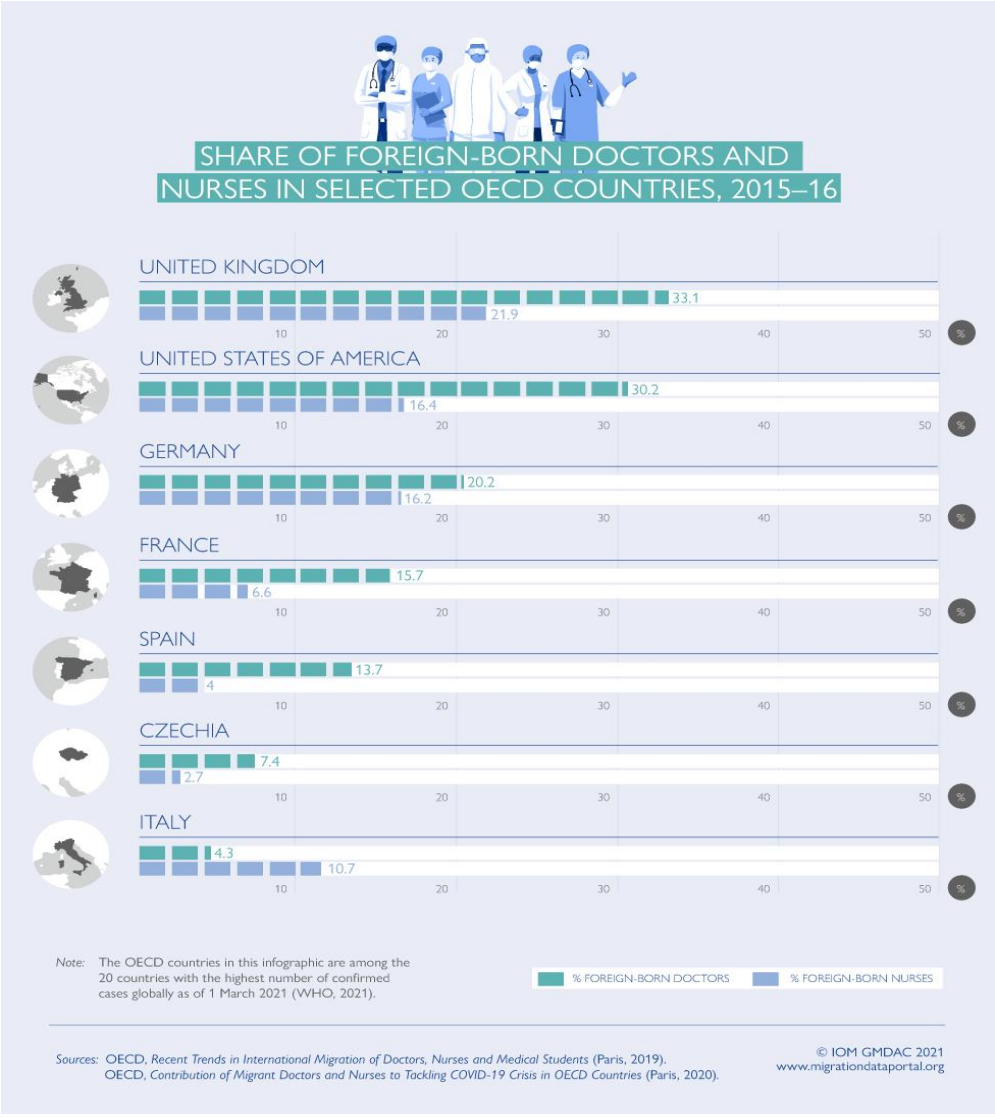
The impact of Covid 19 on the countries of origin in Asia

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of international migrants globally was 272 million (3.5% of the world's population and 74% of all migrants were of working age (20-64 years). Two out

[4] **Gig-Economy** is *based on flexible, temporary, or freelance jobs, often involving connecting with clients or customers through an online platform. The gig economy can benefit workers, businesses, and consumers by making work more adaptable to the needs of the moment and demand for flexible lifestyles. At the same time, the gig economy can have downsides due to the erosion of traditional economic relationships between workers, businesses, and clients*. (Investopedia, 2021).

of three countries with the largest number of migrants living abroad are Asian countries, i.e. India (17.5 million migrants) and China (10.7 million migrants). Accordingly, these two countries are the top 2 remittance recipients in the world and USA, UAE and Saudi Arabia are the top remittance-sending countries. Migrant workers are estimated to be around 164 million, 58% out of them are men and 42% are women (ADBE, OECD & ILO, 2021). Another important fact is that among the 20 countries with the highest number of COVID-19 cases as of 1 March 2021, at least 7 countries depend on migrant workers in the critical sector of healthcare services (see Image 1).

Image 1: Share of Foreign-Born Doctors and Nurses in Selected OECD Countries



There is no doubt that labour migration has a potential of a triple-factor impact. To begin with, for the countries of destination, migrant laborers contribute to the economic growth through the increase in human capital of different skills levels. For countries of origin, international labour migration reduces home underemployment and most importantly, increases remittances. Especially the latter is

crucial for some Asian countries whose economy relies on the inflow of dollars coming in the country by migrant workers (Rahman et al, 2014).

Focusing on the outflows of migrant workers, there was radical collapse of deployment during the first months of the pandemic (see image 2). The Philippines, one of the largest, at an international level, origin countries (in comparison with the size of the population) , saw a radical decrease concerning the outflow of migrant workers. From January to May 2020, new hires deployed were only 71.000, i.e. 60% lower compared to the 174.300 migrants who were deployed the same period of 2019. India, the first country in the world in receiving remittances, from April to September 2020 had only 1.6% of the outflow of the same period of 2019 (Khadria, n/a). Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Indonesia, Nepal, Thailand and People's Republic of China: all of them faced a more or less important decrease in the number of labour migrants (ADBE, OECD & ILO, 2021).

In addition to the decreased outflows, since the beginning of the COVID-19 health crisis and as a response to it, many labour migrants decided to return to their home countries (Foley & Piper, 2021). Economic restrictions, jobs layoffs, expiration of their residence permit, border closure, the risk of infection by the virus and in some cases unequal treatment by the social services, led many labour migrants to go back to their origin country. It should be noted that there were also a lot of people who wanted to return but they could not due to many reasons and among them, due to reduced international flights and their government's lack of readiness to accept them back.

Until now, three different effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are mentioned: decreased outflows from the origin countries, increased number of returnees and migrants stranded in their host country sometimes without being able neither to work nor to travel back home.

 ISSN: 2732-6578 (print version) 2732-6586 (online)

Image: Changes in Outgoing Deployment, 2019-2020

OFW = overseas foreign worker, PRC = People's Republic of China.

Source: Asian Development Bank Institute, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, and International Labour Organization (2021). *Labor Migration in Asia: Impacts of the COVID-19 Crisis and the Post-Pandemic Future*.

All in all, in many cases migrant workers returned back home with more debt than when they left. At the same time, the remittances they were sending from the destination country back to their origin country were, in the vast majority of cases, the basic income for their families and a strong boost for the local economy. Their return, due to the pandemic, was harmful for the economic growth of their

country of origin as well as for the economic sustainability of the households. Even though the total amount of inflow remittances slightly increased because migrants brought with them their savings, the recurrence radically decreased and stopped (Migration Data Portal, 2021). Taking into consideration that 90% of global remittances are sent by migrants from the countries most affected by COVID-19, the spillover effect spread rapidly (Migration Data Portal, 2021). What is more, many migrant labourers reported salaries being withheld and non-paid because of the emergency situation many companies were faced with due to COVID-19 and because of the short time available prior to their return (Knomad, n/a). On top of that, migrants returning to their countries need to be integrated again into the local communities both socially and financially. However, the majority of the biggest countries of origin are also struggling financially and the pandemic made the situation even worse. The protection and support measures both on a regional and on an international level were inefficient and inadequate (Saddiqi, 2021).

The impact of COVID 19 on the destination countries in Asia

The impact of COVID-19 pandemic was also important for the destination countries in Asia. Specifically, from April to August 2020 there was a decrease of foreigners entering Japan on work visas, excluding re-entry, from 123.000 to 627 compared to 2019 during the same period. At the same time the number of interns entering the country decreased impressively. Also, the number of labor migrants decreased in the Republic of Korea and in Malaysia only for some months. In Thailand the registration of work permits fell to 1/3 of their pre-pandemic levels and in Hong Kong, China the number of employment and investment visas were reduced (ADBE, OECD & ILO, 2021).

The fundamental outcome of the above-mentioned facts for the destination countries is the decline in the stock of migrant workers. For example, in Singapore, the number of migrant workers fell by more than 5% during the first 6 months of 2020, i.e. more than 70.000 workers. A visible decrease there was also in Taipei, China (ADBE, OECD & ILO, 2021). In Asian countries which basecore job functions on their migrant workforce, the pandemic had serious negative results. When it comes to low-skilled migrants, the lack of them, due to reasons mentioned before (return to home country, etc.), means lack of workforce for gig-economy job positions. Part-time, domestic, construction and food delivery services which are usually staffed by low-skilled migrants faced a lack of human capital. Furthermore, another outcome of this situation is that each destination country had to coordinate the process of return of migrants back to their home countries. What is more, the country had the responsibility to keep under control the infection rate among the migrants. Migrants in general and many of the labour migrants specifically were much more exposed to the possibility of infection by COVID-19 because of the lack of access to proper healthcare and social security system and their

poor living conditions. As a result, each destination state had to create, if not already existing, and support both financially and in terms of workforce an efficient and effective social security emergency mechanism for labour migrants. The aim of this mechanism is the coordination of the extra help needed for those who were hit harder by the health crisis (ILO, 2019). Finally, another major effect of the pandemic for the destination countries which used to base a lot of their job functions on migrants, either low-skilled or high-skilled, is the turn to automatization. It will not be surprising that after the recurrent lockdowns and opening-closure of borders, these destinations would need fewer migrants for their workforce because of the advancement of automatization.

Policies suggested

Counting more than a year since the beginning of the pandemic, there were some emergency measures taken from the Asian countries to protect labor migrants. For example, Philippines put a limit on deployment of new agency or direct hires of healthcare workers to other countries (ADBE, OECD & ILO, 2021). This kind of protectionism seemed to be quite common during the last months as the majority of countries needed to protect themselves and their local workforce. Even though such initiatives on a local level are necessary, they are not enough unless they are part both of a more developed network of interconnected national and international actions and of a worldwide aim for solidarity.

In this context, local governments should focus on the improvement of emergency preparedness planning in a crisis context. The global network is always present. However, each separate country should be alert for urgent needs and able to rely on its own forces (IOM, 2020). Developing crisis management skills of the administrative institutions is necessary not only for the current situation but also for the future (Paliath, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic should work as a lesson for future learning after all. Labor migration governance should be strengthened in all levels. Many changes should be made both in terms of the administration and goal-setting. Migrants' wages protection and improvement should become a crucial priority. At the same time, extra effort should be made on the improvement of housing conditions of labor migrants as their poor living standards are very often the cause of infections' rate increase (ILO, 2020). In general, their access in the social security system should be either considered as of particular emergency need or, at least, secure and stable.

However, all the above would not be determinant if the general framework of migrant workers' social integration and cohesion is not extended (Gagnon, 2021). Two suggestions are made here. First of all, migrant workers should not be dependent by their current job but to be able to adapt to the changing circumstances by constantly increasing their employability. In other words, an idea would

be to emphasize on the improvement of the access migrants have to upskilling and reskilling. In this way, they would be more resilient to emergency and as a result more adaptable and self-sufficient. The state would not need to apply urgent support plans on a great extend and both socially and financially would operate more efficiently. At the same time, increasing the employability of migrants would also lead to the increase of employability of locals as they would need to upskill themselves to be able to "compete" the rest of the workforce. The second suggestion is to ensure Migtech advancement. Migrant Access to Technology is a key component to avoid isolation. Furthermore, it provides access to reliable information for migrants during the migration cycle, i.e. pre-departure stage, post-arrival stage, return and repatriation stage. Finally, it supports digital literacy as it opens new online learning channels and digital tools.

To sum up, labor migration is a crucial topic and it became even more important during the current health crisis. The impact of COVID-19 on both the countries of origin and destination in Asia is prominent and deep-rooted. Already, some measures have been taken and new policies have been adopted to support people under this status quo. However, many more actions can take place and their proper coordination on both the national and the international level would be beneficial and fruitful not only for the global labor migrant community but also for the global workforce in general.

References

Asian Development Bank Institute, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, and International Labour Organization (2021). Labor Migration in Asia: Impacts of the COVID-19 Crisis and the Post-Pandemic Future.

Foley, L. & Piper, N. (2021). Returning home empty handed: Examining how COVID-19 exacerbates the non-payment of temporary migrant workers' wages. *Global Social Policy*, 14680181211012958.

Gagnon, J. (2021). Inequalities and international migration: securing benefits for all post COVID-19. OECD, January 18. Available at: https://oecd-development-matters.org/2021/01/18/inequalities-and-international-migration-securing-benefits-for-all-post-covid-19/ (Accessed: 09/05/2021).

ILO (2021). Labour migrants. Available at: https://ilostat.ilo.org/topics/labour-migration/# (Accessed: 09/05/2021).

ILO in India (2021). Labour migration in South Asia. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/newdelhi/areasofwork/labour-migration/lang--en/index.htm (Accessed: 09/05/2021).

Impact of COVID-19 on Remittances (n.a.). Available at: https://www.knomad.org/covid-19-remittances-call-to-action/#:~:text=The%20Call%20to%20Action%20%E2%80%9CRemittances (Accessed: 09/05/2021).

International Labour Organization (2019). Preparing for the Future of Work: National Policy Responses in ASEAN + 6.

International Labour Organization (2020). Protecting migrant workers during the COVID-19 pandemic Recommendations for Policy-makers and Constituents. Policy Brief, International Labour Migration.

International Organization for Migration (2020). *World Migration Report 2020*. IOM.

International Organization for Migration (2020). *Covid-19 and the transformation of migration and mobility globally – Temporary migration regimes and their sustainability in times of COVID-19*. IOM Online Bookstore. Available at: https://publications.iom.int/books/covid-19-and-transformation-migration-and-mobility-globally-temporary-migration-regimes-and (Accessed: 09/05/2021).

Investopedia Team (2021). Gig-Economy, Business-Small Business. Investopedia. Available at: https://www.investopedia.com/terms/g/gig-economy.asp (Accessed: 06/06/2021).

IOM (n.d.). Mobility Impacts COVID-19. Availablea at: https://migration.iom.int/ (Accessed: 09/05/2021).

Irudaya Rajan, S., Sivakumar, P. & Srinivasan, A. (2020). The COVID-19 Pandemic and Internal Labour Migration in India: A "Crisis of Mobility". *The Indian Journal of Labour Economics*, 63: 1021–1039.

Khadria, B. (n.d.). Skilled Labour Migration from Developing Countries: Study on India. Geneva: International Migration Programme International Labour Office. Available at: http://ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---migrant/documents/publication/wcms_201778.pdf (Accessed: 09/05/2021).

Kyoung, G. & Kim, Y. (2018). India's Internal Labor Migration Paradox. The Statistical and the Real. World Bank. Available at: http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/429181519662555108/pdf/WPS8356.pdf (Accessed: 09/05/2021).

Migration Data Portal (2021). Migration data relevant for the COVID-19 pandemic. March 10. Available at: https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/migration-data-relevant-covid-19-pandemic (Accessed: 09/05/2021).

Paliath, S. (2021). A year after Covid-19 lockdown, India still doesn't have reliable data or policy on migrant workers. March 26. Available at: https://scroll.in/article/990527/a-year-after-covid-19-lockdown-india-still-doesnt-have-reliable-data-or-policy-on-migrant-workers (Accessed: 09/05/2021).

Pasricha, A. (2021). In India, COVID Resurgence Deals Second Blow to Migrant Workers. Voice of America – English, April 18. Available at: https://www.voanews.com/south-central-asia/india-covid-resurgence-deals-second-blow-migrant-workers (Accessed: 09/05/2021).

Rahman M.M., Yong T.T., Ullah A.K.M.A. (2014). Migrant Remittances in South Asia: An Introduction. In: Rahman M.M., Yong T.T., Ullah A.K.M.A. (eds.), *Migrant Remittances in South Asia. International Political Economy Series*. Palgrave Macmillan, London, pp. 1-30.

Ranjan, R. (2020). Impact of COVID-19 on Migrant Labourers of India and China. *Critical Sociology*, 089692052097507.

Saddiqi, Z. A. (2021). *The impact of COVID-19 on labour migration governance, recruitment practices and migrant workers Rapid assessment Pakistan, March–November 2020*. International Labour Organization.

Sasikumar, S. K. (1995). International Labor Migration Statistics in India. *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, 4(4): 555–563.

Yayboke, E. (2020). Five Ways COVID-19 Is Changing Global Migration. March 25. Available at: https://www.csis.org/analysis/five-ways-covid-19-changing-global-migration (Accessed: 09/05/2021).

Health and Migration: Health Securitization and Policy-Making Perspectives in the Post-Pandemic Era[1]

Zisis S. Kyrgos[2] & Dimitrios G. Pantazis[3]

Abstract

It is not to deny that the up-to-date literature has already discussed the emergence of forced human mobility due to the outbreak of health crises, owing to the latter's adverse socio-political effects on the intrastate or regional systems. However, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has been playing a crucial role in enhancing the research upon health crises and health securitization, hence, further recognizing their multidimensional character. Under these circumstances, this text attempts to estimate whether and to what extent the states will reconsider their agendas –in the post-pandemic era– in terms of more successfully managing health crises and associated migration, so as to respectively reduce the potential negative consequences in their internal systems.

Keywords: health crisis; diseases; migration; health securitization; future policy-making; post COVID-19 era.

Introduction

Although modern medical and pharmaceutical sciences have advanced to an extensive degree, health can still be regarded as a main human security issue (Hough, 2015: 254). A variety of factors, such as the environment-human relationship, human mobility, existing human underdevelopment, or even unsanitary practices undeniably have a knock-on effect on the outbreak of major health crises related to communicable diseases (Ellwanger et al., 2021). Furthermore, and in recent years, there has been an increasing interest in issues related to health, as matters that may primarily and in future concern humanity, especially when taking into consideration the increasing globalization and interaction of human societies. Not only this, but the COVID-19 pandemic has –additionally, and inter alia– played a crucial role in re-examining health in security terms. It is, moreover, aptly noted that, in accordance with the latest research trends, scientific publications regarding infectious diseases tend to increase, particularly after a disease outbreak. The most up-to-date commonly cited research concerns coronaviruses, Influenza, Ebola, and Zika viruses, accompanied by an interlinked interest between the emergence per se and health security (The Elsevier Community, 2020).

[1] To cite this paper in APA Style: Kyrgos, Z., & Pantazis, D. (2021). Health and Migration: Health Securitization and Policy-Making Perspectives in the Post-Pandemic Era. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 2(1): 118-127. DOI: 10.12681/hapscpbs.27667

[2] Zisis S. Kyrgos is Researcher at Hellenic Institute for Strategic Studies (HELISS) and Institute for International Relations (IIR), Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, Athens.

[3] Dimitrios G. Pantazis is Political Scientist, BA (Dept. Political Science and Public Administration, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens).

Given the above, and taking into account the multi-dimensional impact which a disease outbreak and diffusion might have on intrastate and regional systems, this paper reports on whether, to what extent, and in what terms can health prevention response be regarded as a policy-making parameter in the future, particularly referring to health-related population mobility and the need for states to confront its specific negative aspects. To extract the necessary conclusions, the methods of literature review and multi-leveled analysis are applied throughout this text. To be specific, this essay's rationale is based on contextualization, correlational implications, and variables identification.

This paper is divided into three sections. The first part gives a brief overview of the cause-effect patterns, which disease outbreaks and health crises may have on state systems. In the second part of the research, it is assumed that the aforementioned consequences may lead to health-associated migration processes; hence, further correlational implications reaffirming this supposition are implicated and evaluated. The remaining part of the paper proceeds as follows: it is estimated that host-nations' policy agents stand positive on migration as long as the latter does not affect the security and viability of the state itself. However, policy-makers might seriously take the respective potential negative aspects into account; hence, it is concluded that states may re-define their agendas on intrastate and interstate health crisis management and migration. Consequently, this policy brief refers to potential policy-making perspectives.

Diseases and epidemics: generative factors and impacts on systems

This section briefly reviews the determinants that can lead towards the (re)emergence of diseases and highlights the potential impacts on states. For the needs of this research, it is to be made clear that "an epidemic can be an outbreak of a novel disease or can occur when the number of cases of a known disease exceeds the typical number experienced in that area or region. Endemic diseases are ones that persist in an ecosystem or population" (Johnson, 2011: 16).

Human activity plays a catalytic role in the outbreak of communicable infectious diseases. Mayer (2000: 938) argues that the last-named situation "is as much a matter of social, ecological and geographical change as it is of smaller scale molecular or microbiological phenomena". He also notes that "the appearance of new pathogens in populations can therefore be due to the following factors (Ibid: 940): 1. Cross-species transfer. 2. Spatial diffusion. 3. Pathogenic evolution, or change in the structure and immunogenicity of earlier pathogens. 4. The new description of a pathogen that had been present in humans for years, but which is 'newly recognized'. 5. Changes in the human-environment relationship."

Moreover, and concerning climate change factors, Lafferty (2009: 898) concludes with a correlation between the emergence of infectious diseases with global warming, under the argumentation that "temperature and precipitation affect physiology"; therefore, "climate can affect species distributions".

In addition, and drawing on Johnson's (2011) work on health and development, a set of parameters may tangibly or intangibly guide to distinct observations in demographic and epidemiological models in a particular region. The living standards, public health infrastructure and capabilities, medical and technological innovation, existing sanitary culture, access to health, and political initiatives can be considered such motives (Johnson, 2011: 14-21). Tutu & Bursingye (2020: 30) also discuss the interconnection between development and health, by explaining that "low-to middle income" societies suffer more mortality, owing to infectious diseases at a notable high rate (around 80% of total deaths worldwide).

Furthermore, it cannot be disputed that epidemics may have a variety of socio-political impacts. Mortality per se can lead to increased social panic or even guide to further political instability. Menzel (2018: 15-17) discusses that diseases might contribute to societies' collapse, especially in the cases of weak states, and, thereby, in an increase in violent phenomena, which can drive in "loss of political legitimacy" –as national capacity is being questioned– in turn. Notwithstanding, infectious diseases' mortality rates can be amplified by existing social underdevelopment; the latter can also trigger political crises.

Regarding the effects of infectious diseases' emergence on economic processes, Goenka & Liu (2010: 127) argue that communicable diseases can have an impact "through three channels: labor productivity (...), human capital accumulation (...) and population size (...)". Bloom et al. (2018) analyze that epidemics may lead to increased health system expenditure, trade shrinkage, or even a GDP decrease, due to economic policy-makers' inability to predict respective risks. Furthermore, in their review on health crises' impact on agriculture, Zhang et al. (2020: 409-12) note that diseases may even cause both supply chain disturbance and a decrease in demand, due to social panic.

Health crises and health-related migration: Correlational implications

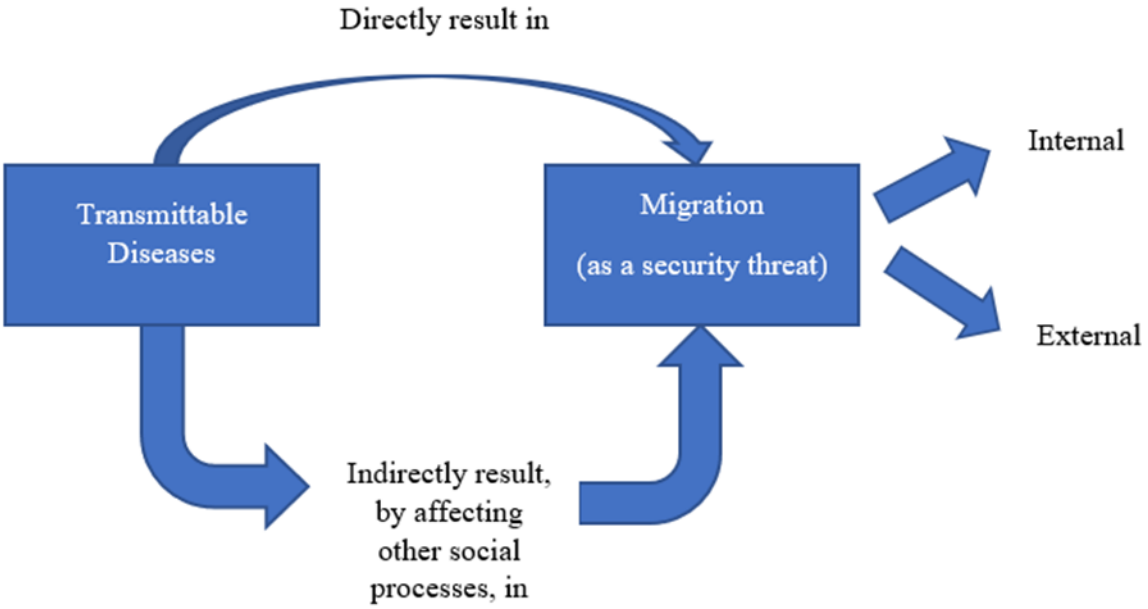
Taking into consideration the above-mentioned formalities, it is possible to attempt defining the causal relation between migration and disease outbreaks under two different –not necessarily distinct– perspectives.

 ISSN: 2732-6578 (print version) 2732-6586 (online)

Sub-process 1

It is initially assumed that diseases are capable of causing internal displacement or external migration. This may occur (see Diagram 1) either directly –as the afflicted population attempts to flee from a health crisis– or indirectly –by affecting other social processes (see previous section's implications) in the system suffering a disease outbreak, which in turn urge individuals to flee seeking a better living standard.

Diagram 1: First proposed migration – diseases correlation (Source: own elaboration)



Nevertheless, a disease itself is almost never seen as the sole driving force behind a population's movement. Especially in the last century, there are only a handful of examples where an infectious disease caused the migration of a population. Such an example can be seen in the Spanish Flu Epidemic of 1918 and 1919, where the high mortality rate of the disease led to several populations moving internally, particularly in the case of the United States of America (Brundage & Shanks, 2008: 1193-9). This could be argued as a result of the societal collapse brought about by the death or otherwise incapacitation of a high percentage of the population affected.

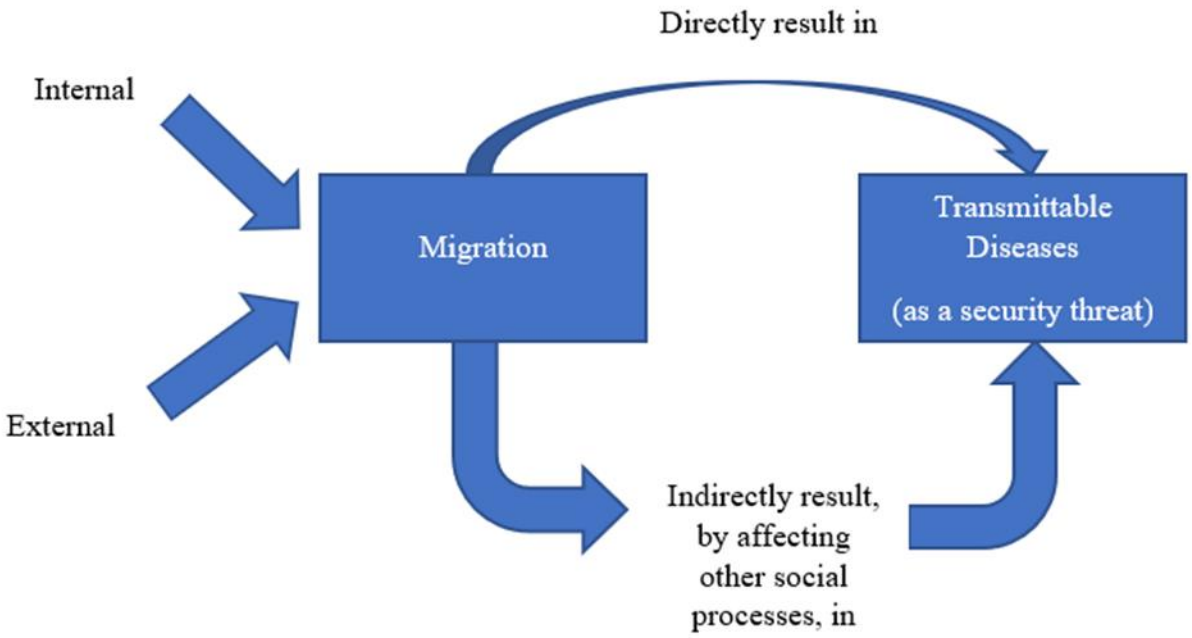
However, it certainly remains a necessity for researchers to fully and synthetically examine the negative societal changes a disease brings to a system, which lead individuals to flee from their country of origin and seek refuge within the borders of another state. Some of these issues were discussed in the previous section.

 ISSN: 2732-6578 (print version) 2732-6586 (online)

Sub-process 2

The second approach moves the aforementioned sub-process forward (see Diagram 2), outlining that migration is capable of spreading communicable diseases, through normal human interaction among individuals forced to internally or externally move. Furthermore, a disease's diffusion may be indirectly enhanced by various processes that occur during the migration phase itself (see below).

Diagram 2: Second proposed migration – diseases correlation (Source: own elaboration).



Correspondingly, there are many examples of migration bearing the potential threat of directly spreading a disease across borders documented in the relevant literature. For instance, Casteli & Sulis (2017: 283-9) recognize several risk factors regarding the spread of diseases through these processes. Those parameters were divided into different categories, according to the migratory phase they belong to. Therefore, transmission factors can be detected in the pre-departure, travel, interception, destination and return phases, as seen in the following table:

Table 1: Migration Phase and Indicative co-responding risk factors

Phase	Factors
Pre-departure	Political and socio-economic circumstances Biological characteristics Pathogen's distribution
Travel	Transports and travel conditions Human trafficking Epidemiological characteristics of transit areas
Interception	Poor living conditions Human rights violations Inadequate medical care
Destination	Socio-economic deprivation Access to care Legal status
Return	Pre-travel advice Poor medical assistance Reduced immunity against local pathogens

Source: Casteli & Sulis, 2017: 283-9

Accordingly, as seen in the case of SARS-CoV-2, the highly infectious nature of the virus resulted in governments deciding to impose restrictions on traveling, in order to mitigate the spread of the disease (Zanin & Papo, 2020). In the case of Australia, the restrictions on travel resulted in the reduction of the imported COVID-19 cases, as well as the delay of the emergence of the disease inside the Australian continent for up to one month more than the original estimations (Adekunle et al., 2020: 257-9). On the other hand, in the case of Greece, along with several other European countries, the first recorded cases of the pandemic were imported from other countries, which had already been affected by the disease (Pappas & Glyptou, 2021).

This observation safely leads to the conclusion that migration, which bears the element of an infectious disease's diffusion, might be perceived as a security threat for the health sector of a state, in the context of health systems' resilience. On that, and although there are contested definitions on the last-named concept per se, Blanchet et al. (2020: 102) mention that in health sciences, resilience is often identified as a system's ability to predict and confront a catastrophic situation. Not only this, but global migration may lead to a series of social transformations. Krämer & Fischer (2019: 14-15), list demographic, epidemiological, healthcare and risk transition, as well as urbanization, among them. The aforementioned could be perceived as indirect state security dangers by policy-makers, forasmuch as existing social schemes, including social cohesion, mass psychology, the economy and political systems' stability, can ultimately be affected by them, as examined in the first part of the research.

Health and migration securitization: estimating policy-making paradigm shifts

Voss et al. (2020: 120) provide a well established definition with respect to securitization of health in the context of forced migration, stating that "rising numbers of migration to high-income countries and events of large-scale migration have triggered concerns related to foreigners and disease. In the public debate, immigrants are frequently perceived, conceptualised, or framed as a threat. Such debates are often dominated by security concerns through health issues, [...] implying that immediate (unexceptional) political action is required to reverse the threat". Thereby, and following the previous correlational implications, it is safe to assume that host-states are being faced with three distinct courses of action to ensure health security levels –alongside the sub-processes of health-related migration– that are:

6. No reaction to exogenous sub-processes, but intrastate management instead;
7. A reaction based on deterrence, through proactive migration measures;
8. A solid response, through dealing with the causes that generate health-related migration, namely effective health crisis management actions at the source.

By trying to analyze the aforementioned options, and drawing upon previous formalities and a selection of available literature, it is to argue that –as for the first claim– treating refugee populations in the intrastate system can limit host-countries' available resources, due to increased risks of transmission in camps, enhanced aid requirements, and vulnerability per se (Johnson, 2011: 136-8). Furthermore, host-nations may negatively be affected, as a result of the complex "nature of diseases in the globalized world", which poses a threat to human societies –directly– or have an influence on "social, political, economic, and military" structures –indirectly– (Rushton, 2011: 782). For instance, Bloom et al. (2020: 2-3) aptly heed that even "tradeoff" measures have a critical macroeconomic effect which policy-makers ought to consider. It is, moreover, noted that mere intrastate reactions require increased initiatives, especially in terms of health management and planning. Although the last-named are essential for health systems' viability, Mirzoev et al., (2020: 679) contend that policy-makers –still– account for them as non-prospective practices.

The second and third options may be considered similar, due to their resemblance to external actions. Nevertheless, proactive migration policies have generally not proven to be of the effectiveness expected. Therefore, there has been a "shift of interest" from deterrent migration strategies towards operations at the core of the issue, by using "surveillance and emergency response" methods (Rushton, 2011: 758). Besides, modern globalization has led to the supposition that health overlaps

national borders, as it is associated with human rights and ethics (Littlejohn et al., 2020: 75; Gunn, 2005: 166); hence, it requires more systematic and proportional actions.

Given the above, it is not simplistic or illogical to estimate that policy-makers, especially those who are most affected by the issue under consideration, will propose (i) multi-leveled measures, and (ii) at source, namely at the place of a disease or health crisis outbreak. To this end, it is supposed that agents may choose to solely act –definitely a more costly approach– or exploit other mechanisms –in the prism of global health governance. Per Lee (2020: 898), the latter is primarily "characterized by collective action less focused on national borders" and may involve non-state actors, such as NGOs. On that, she (see Ibid: 912) also proposes a series of measures in order for global health governance to be enhanced. Such an option bears more promising and effective results, especially if taking into account the balancing and burden-sharing perspectives. Not only this but there are also a number of publications reviewing health as a foreign policy-making aspect or parameter (McInnes & Lee, 2006; Katz & Singer, 2007; Feldbaum et al., 2010; Labonté & Gagnon, 2010), which can be promoted through global health governance institutions.

Conclusions

By taking the above reasoning into consideration, it is possible to extract some useful conclusions regarding future health securitization perspectives. At first, the security issues stemming from the correlation of migration and health have been well established, both in the relevant literature and this research. By further analyzing the correlation, it was possible to extract the two probable connections. It is however important to state that this conclusion has been reached through the process of certain research modelling. A different method could potentially bore different results regarding the issue. In addition, from the relevant literature briefly mentioned above, it was made clear that infectious diseases are capable of causing internal displacement, without affecting other parts of a society, as well as external migration, in cases where the disease is capable of altering and damaging societal processes to the extent that a population move is justified.

Correspondingly, it was assessed that it is in a country's best interest to promote multi-leveled global securitization of health in order to preemptively address respective emergencies, before these being capable of affecting the country itself. In other words, aiding other countries with managing a health crisis could later benefit the countries providing the assistance, by stalling –or completely diverting– the management of a similar crisis inside their borders; something which would have been inevitable, due to the transmitting nature of contagious diseases. Furthermore, it could help mitigate the societal and political destabilization; therefore, preventing a migration crisis that may have negative effects

from occurring. Last, the successful results of such a process can even lead host-states in strengthening their diplomatic capabilities. Further research on the subject could shed more light on the projection of soft power such a policy may have.

References

Adekunle, A., Meehan, M., Rojas-Alvarez, D., Trauer, J. & McBryde, E. (2020). Delaying the COVID-19 epidemic in Australia: Evaluating the effectiveness of international travel bans. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 44(4): 257–259.

Blanchet, K., Diaconu, K. & Witter, S. (2020). Understanding the Resilience of Health Systems. In Bozorgmehr, K., Roberts, B., Razum, O., & Biddle, L. (Eds). *Health Policy and Systems Responses to Forced Migration* (1st ed.). Springer, pp. 99-117.

Bloom, D. E., Cadarette, D. & Sevilla, J. P. (2018). Epidemics and economics. IMF. Available at https://www.elibrary.imf.org/view/journals/022/0055/002/article-A015-en.xml (Accessed: 10/05/2021).

Bloom, D. E., Prettner, K. & Kuhn, M. (2020). Modern Infectious Diseases: Macroeconomic Impacts and Policy Responses (No. 13625). IZA Institute of Labor Economics. Available at : https://www.iza.org/publications/dp/13625/modern-infectious-diseases-macroeconomic-impacts-and-policy-responses (Accessed: 11/05/2021).

Brundage, J. F., & Shanks, G. D. (2008). Deaths from Bacterial Pneumonia during 1918–19 Influenza Pandemic. *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, 14(8): 1193–1199.

Castelli, F. & Sulis, G. (2017). Migration and infectious diseases. *Clinical Microbiology and Infection*, 23(5): 283–289.

Ellwanger, J. H., Veiga, A. B. G. D., Kaminski, V. D. L., Valverde-Villegas, J. M., Freitas, A. W. Q. D. & Chies, J. A. B. (2021). Control and prevention of infectious diseases from a One Health perspective. *Genetics and Molecular Biology*, 44(1 suppl 1).

Feldbaum, H., Lee, K., & Michaud, J. (2010). Global Health and Foreign Policy. *Epidemiologic Reviews*, 32(1): 82–92.

Goenka, A. & Liu, L. (2010). Infectious diseases and endogenous fluctuations. *Economic Theory*, 50(1): 125–149.

Gunn, S. W. A. (2005). The Humanitarian Imperative in Major Health Crises and Disasters. In: Piel, A., Davies, M. A., Sayers, B., Gunn, S. W. A., & Mansourian, P. B. (Eds), *Understanding the Global Dimensions of Health* (1st ed.). Springer, pp. 159–168.

Hough, P. (2015). Health and security. In: Hough, P., Moran, A., Pilbeam, B., & Stokes, W. (Eds), *International Security Studies: Theory and Practice* (1st ed.). Routledge, pp.254–266.

Johnson, S. A. (2011). *Challenges in Health and Development: From Global to Community Perspectives*. Springer.

Katz, R. & Singer, D. A. (2007). Health and security in foreign policy. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 85(3): 233–234.

Krämer, A. & Fischer, F. (2019). *Refugee Migration and Health: Challenges for Germany and Europe*. Springer.

Labonté, R. & Gagnon, M. L. (2010). Framing health and foreign policy: lessons for global health diplomacy. *Globalization and Health*, 6(1): 14.

Lafferty, K. D. (2009). The ecology of climate change and infectious diseases. *Ecology*, 90(4): 888–900.

Lee, K. (2020). Global Health Governance and Diplomacy. In: Merson, M. H., Black, R. E., & Mills, A. J. (Eds). *Global Health: Diseases, Programs, Systems, and Policies* (4th ed.). Jones & Bartlett Learning. pp. 893–923.

Littlejohn, T., Beyrer, C. & Kass, N. (2020). Global Health, Human Rights, and Ethics. In Merson, M. H., Black, R. E., & Mills, A. J. (Eds). *Global Health: Diseases, Programs, Systems, and Policies* (4th ed.). Jones & Bartlett Learning. pp. 75–94.

Mayer, J. D. (2000). Geography, ecology and emerging infectious diseases. *Social Science & Medicine*, 50(7–8), 937–952. https://doi.org/10.1016/s0277-9536(99)00346-9

McInnes, C. & Lee, K. (2006). Health, security and foreign policy. Review of International Studies, 32(1): 5–23.

Menzel, C. (2018). The impact of outbreaks of infectious diseases on political stability: Examining the examples of Ebola, Tuberculosis and Influenza (No. 2). Konrad Adenauer Stiftung. Available at: https://www.kas.de/documents/252038/253252/7_dokument_dok_pdf_52294_1.pdf/95dc732e-2eda-2698-b01f-7ac77d060499?version=1.0&t=1539647543906 (Accessed: 15/05/2021).

Mirzoev, T., Green, A. & Orgill, M. (2020). Management and Planning for Global Health. In Merson, M. H., Black, R. E., & Mills, A. J. (Eds). *Global Health: Diseases, Programs, Systems, and Policies* (4th ed.). Jones & Bartlett Learning, pp. 679–729.

Pappas, N. & Glyptou, K. (2021). Accommodation decision-making during the COVID-19 pandemic: Complexity insights from Greece. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 93.

Rushton, S. (2011). Global Health Security: Security for whom? Security from what? *Political Studies*, 59(4): 779–796.

The Elsevier Community (2020). *Infographic: global research trends in infectious disease*. Elsevier. Available at: https://www.elsevier.com/connect/infographic-global-research-trends-in-infectious-disease (Accessed: 12/05/2021).

Tutu, R. A. & Busingye, J. D. (2019). *Migration, Social Capital, and Health: Insights from Ghana and Uganda*. Springer.

Voss, M., Wahedi K. & Bozorgmehr, K. (2020). Health Security in the Context of Forced Migration. In Bozorgmehr, K., Roberts, B., Razum, O., & Biddle, L. (Eds). *Health Policy and Systems Responses to Forced Migration* (1st ed.). Springer, pp. 99-117.

Zanin, M. & Papo, D. (2020). Travel restrictions during pandemics: A useful strategy? *Chaos: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Nonlinear Science*, 30(11): 111103.

Zhang, S., Wang, S., Yuan, L., Liu, X. & Gong, B. (2020). The impact of epidemics on agricultural production and forecast of COVID-19. *China Agricultural Economic Review*, 12(3): 409–425.

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

[1] To cite this paper in APA Style: Rezmer-Płotka, K. (2021). Policy on Public Assemblies in Times of Crisis: Recommendations Concerning the Strategy of Militant Democracy. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 2(1): 128-133. DOI: 10.12681/hapscpbs.27668

[2] This paper is a result of the research project Contentious Politics and Neo-Militant Democracy. It was financially supported by the National Science Centre, Poland [grant number 2018/31/B/HS5/01410].

[3] Kamila Rezmer-Płotka is PhD student of political science at the Faculty of Political and Security Studies (Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń), and Secretary of the Board in the scientific journal „Polish Political Science Yearbook". Graduate in public policy (BA) and political science (MA).

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.

 ISSN: 2732-6578 (print version) 2732-6586 (online)

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.

References

Business Insider. (2020). Strajk kobiet. MEN chce wyciągać konsekwencje wobec nauczycieli. Available at: https://businessinsider.com.pl/wiadomosci/strajk-kobiet-men-chce-wyciagac-konsekwencje-wobec-nauczycieli/67pyb7v (Accessed: 26/11/2020).

ISAP (1993). Ustawa z dnia 7 stycznia 1993 r. o planowaniu rodziny, ochronie płodu ludzkiego i warunkach dopuszczalności przerywania ciąży. Available at: https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU19930170078 (Accessed: 20/11/2020).

Loewenstein, K. (1937a). Militant Democracy and Fundamental Rights I. *The American Political Science Review*, 3(31): 417-432.

Loewenstein, K. (1937b). Militant Democracy and Fundamental Rights II. *The American Political Science Review*, 4(31): 638-658.

Molier, G., Rijpkema, B. (2018). Germany's New Militant Democracy Regime: National Democratic Party II and the German Federal Constitutional Courts's 'Potentaility' Criterion for Party Bans: Bundesverfassungsgericht, Hudgment of 17 January 2017, 2 BvB 1/13, National Democratic Party II". *European Constitutional Law Review*, 2 (14/2018).

naTemat. (2020a). "A kysz, nie podzielisz nas". Tysiąc osób oglądało „Dziady" przed willą Kaczyńskiego. Available at: https://natemat.pl/325415,dziady-przed-willa-kaczynskiego-w-warszawie-tysiace-osob-na-widowni (Accessed: 25/11/2020).

naTemat. (2020b). Duda proponuje nowy kompromis ws. aborcji. „Rozumie obawę, która legła u źródeł protestu. Available at: https://natemat.pl/325235,duda-proponuje-nowy-kompromis-ws-aborcji-ochrona-dzieci-z-zespolem-downa (Accessed: 26/11/2020).

PAP. (2020). Rzecznik Praw Obywatelskich zaniepokojony użyciem srodków przymusu wobec demonstrantów. Available at: https://www.pap.pl/aktualnosci/news%2C742948%2Crzecznik-praw-obywatelskich-zaniepokojony-uzyciem-srodkow-przymusu-wobec (Accessed: 27/11/2020).

Polsatnews. (2020). Jarosław Kaczyński o protestach: obrońmy Polskę. Available at: https://www.polsatnews.pl/wiadomosc/2020-10-27/kaczynski-o-orzeczeniu-tk-innego-wyroku-byc-nie-moglo/ (Accessed: 27/11/2020).

Sejm.gov. (2016). Druk nr 784. Obywatelski projekt ustawy o zmianie ustawy z dnia 7 stycznia 1993 r. o planowaniu rodziny, ochronie płodu ludzkiego i warunkach dopuszczalności przerywania ciąży oraz ustawy z dnia 6 czerwca 1997 r. – Kodeks karny. Available at: https://www.sejm.gov.pl/Sejm8.nsf/druk.xsp?nr=784 (Accessed: 20/11/2020).

Sejm.gov. (2016). Druk nr 830. Obywatelski projekt ustawy o prawach kobiet i świadomym rodzicielstwie. Available at: http://orka.sejm.gov.pl/Druki8ka.nsf/0/3C2A10A649B1C39EC12580290048DCD3/%24File/830.pdf (Accessed: 20/11/2020).

Wprost. (2020). Morawiecki: Protestujmy, ale w sieci. Protesty doprowadziły do wyższej liczby zakażeń. Available at: https://info.wprost.pl/wydarzenia-dnia/10385540/morawiecki-protestujmy-ale-w-sieci-protesty-doprowadzily-do-wyzszej-liczby-zakazen.html (Accessed: 26/11/2020).

Wyborcza. (2020). Policjanci: Dziewczyny, jesteśmy z wami. U nas nie ma klauzuli sumienia. Available at: https://katowice.wyborcza.pl/katowice/7,35063,26436082,policjanci-dziewczyny-jestesmy-z-wami-u-nas-jednak-nie-ma.html (Accessed: 26/11/2020).

 ISSN: 2732-6578 (print version) 2732-6586 (online)

Immigrants' Inclusion in the Workplace in Romania. The Impact of Covid-19[1]

Aurica-Iris Alexe[2]

Abstract

Immigration is a recent phenomenon for Romania which remains a net emigration country. The country is slowly transforming from a transit to a destination becoming more attractive for labour immigrants and immigrants for study purposes. Considering the need for evidence based policies, this paper provides an overview on the dynamic of the labour immigration in Romania and the profile and characteristics of the immigrant workers in terms of numbers, economic sectors and occupations and how and what are the mechanisms that ensure immigrants' inclusion in the workplace in Romania. Moreover, the policy brief aims to analyse the impact that the pandemic of Covid-19 had on immigrant workers in Romania and what were the effects at macro and individual level, respectively labour immigration and immigrant workers' access and participation on the national labour market.

Keywords: Immigration; Labour market; Inclusion; Employment; Covid-19; Immigrant Worker.

Introduction

Immigration has both direct and indirect effects on the economic and social development of the community, cities, regions and countries (Boubtane et al., 2016; Borjas, 2019). The authorities manage immigration and migrants' integration at local, regional, national and European level aiming to reduce the negative consequences and maximize the benefits of immigration and immigrant participation in the economic, social and cultural life of the host society. In this regard, it is necessary to gather relevant data and scientific evidence to substantiate public policies that highlight the valuable contributions that migrants make across Europe, also emphasizing the costs and losses that result from not recognizing and neglecting the positive contributions of migration and immigrants in terms of economic and social impact (Lynch & Pfohman, 2013).

The relationship between immigration and economic growth depends on multiple variables, such as the size and composition of migratory flows, the structure of immigrants' qualifications and skills, the integration process, the size of immigration stocks in the country, the immigrant human capital potential translated in a smooth access and high participation on the national labour market as well as the long-term fiscal impact and the social state budgetary costs.

Evidence collected by different countries as well as studies that researched the socio-impact of the pandemic suggest that the Covid-19 crisis is likely to have a disproportionate impact on immigrants

[1] To cite this paper in APA Style: Alexe, A. I. (2021). Immigrants' Inclusion in the Workplace in Romania. The Impact of Covid-19. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 2(1): 134-141. DOI: 10.12681/hapscpbs.27669
[2] The Doctoral School of Cybernetics and Statistics, Academy of Economic Studies in Bucharest, Romania.

and refugees, including on their labour market outcomes (OECD, 2020a). The immigrants are found more often in a more vulnerable position in the labour market because they might have less stable employment conditions, or less professional experience in the workplace. At the same time, the pandemic hit hard economic sectors where immigrants are overrepresented, for example, the hospitality sector (OECD, 2020b).

Immigrants' inclusion in the workplace in Romania

Immigration is a relatively new phenomenon for the Romanian society, which has seen a greater intensification mainly in the last twenty years. Romania remains mainly a transit country for immigrants in their way to countries of destination in the Western Europe. At the same time, the country, or more specifically, main cities and regions with high socio-economical development, are becoming more attractive for immigrants. Thus, it is visible that Romania is in a slow process of transforming itself from a transit into a destination country mainly for labour immigrants and immigrants for study purposes.

After the fall of communism, since 1990 with the opening of borders, Romania started to become attractive for immigrants coming mainly from Turkey, the Arab Countries and China who wanted to open up small businesses. Starting with 2005-2006, there had been an increase in the number of immigrants, their countries of origin and a diversification of the purpose for which immigrants choose Romania as their destination. Since 2007, when Romania became member state of the European Union (UE), immigration to Romania has been on an ascendant trend, main types of migratory inflows being labour immigration, immigration for study purposes and immigration for family reunion.

Unlike the Romanian emigration estimated at over 15% of the total active population, immigration is less significant in figures, accounting for less than 0.5%. According to the data provided by the General Inspectorate for Immigration (GII), at the end of 2020, a number of approximately 140,000 immigrants live in Romania, out of which approximately 84,000 are third-country nationals residing temporarily or permanently on the national territory and around 52,000 are EU mobile citizens (GII, 2020). Although 2015 was the year of a humanitarian crisis that required the management of thousands of people a day crossing the borders seeking for refuge in the EU, Romania has not been affected by this massive influx of asylum seekers. During the period 2000 to 2019, the trend of asylum applications registered by Romania has remained in general terms very similar as in previous years, with an average number of 2,500 applications per year, with an exception for 2017 when it was double this number. Nevertheless, in 2020, the Western Balkans route was reactivated, and more than 6000

asylum application have been registered, a record in the last 13 years. More than 70% of the immigrants that applied for asylum in 2020 crossed the Romanian border with Serbia and arrived in Timiș County (GII, 2020).

As regards the composition of the immigrant stocks in Romania, in 2021, more than 60% of the immigrants living in Romania are family members of a Romanian citizen / EU and EEA citizen or came with family reunification. One third of the immigrants from Romania represent the category of those who came to study and to follow the courses of the Romanian universities. Labour immigration accounts for around 20% of total immigrant population. The main countries of origin for foreigners with temporary residence in Romania are Republic of Moldova, Turkey and China. As concerns the territorial distribution, the immigrants choose the main cities of Romania (Constanta, Timisoara, Iasi, Cluj) that provide economic, educational and employment opportunities, the region of Bucharest-Ilfov (Bucharest is the capital city) attracting more than half of the immigrants with legal stay in Romania (GII, 2007-2020).

Over the past decade, Romania's total population has decreased by around 5% and the labour resources by more than 9%, one of the highest rates in EU. Mass emigration is considered one of the core causes of the population decline, as more than 3.8 million Romanians have left to work and study abroad. The sharp drop in the Romanian labour force as well as increasing labour shortages in different economic sectors along with the economic growth in the last three years generated by investment projects in infrastructure/construction and real estate market, contributed to a higher need of immigrant workers for the Romanian labour market.

The National Immigration Strategy for the period 2019-2022[3] acknowledges this situation and provides strategic actions to balance the deficit of the national labour force by easing the access, participation and integration of TCNs into the Romanian labour market, such as: - facilitating and simplifying the access to the Romanian territory of the citizens from third countries for employment purposes or as posted workers; - facilitating the admission of third-country nationals to attend a higher education institution in Romania for areas and professions identified as registering personnel shortages.

Studies regarding the impact of immigration on native wages and employment indicate that labour immigration does not represent a threat to the national labour market, on the contrary, labour immigration has had positive effects for the beneficiary countries (Constant & Zimmermann, 2013;

[3] At the moment, the National Strategy on Immigration for the period 2019-2022 is still under debate and it has not been yet approved by the Romanian Parliament.

Kahanec & Zimmerman, 2016). Immigrant workers are productive; they do not take the jobs from the native workers or lead to wage losses, but stimulate the national economy and are needed in the long run. If the immigrant labour force is complementary to the native workforce, immigrant workers may even reduce domestic unemployment and, consequently, more employed immigrants may cause a higher demand for labour for the natives (Constant & Zimmermann, 2013).

The impact of the labour immigration on the national labour market in Romania needs a more complex approach that is tied to the specific migration profile of the country. This is also reflected, as well, in the public policies in the area of immigration and integration developed by the authorities. Thus, the immigrant workers profile is mirrored by the profile of the Romanian emigrant who went to work abroad, in terms of occupational and economic sector in which he is employed and as regards skills and qualifications. Therefore, what clearly defines the immigrant workforce is complementariness to native workers. The vast majority of immigrant workers in Romania fall into the category of low and medium skilled workers (Alexe & Paunescu (eds) et al., 2010; Platonova et al., 2013). According to Roman et al. (2021) young immigrants do not take jobs of native youth and "in the conditions of a labour crisis, young immigrants can be a valuable resource for the Romanian labour market."

The main fields of activity in which TCN workers are found in Romania are: construction, infrastructure and shipyards, hospitability sector, textile/manufacturing, domestic and child care, commerce and food industry, medical personnel. TCNs work in professions such as: welding, locksmith, metal and naval constructors, unskilled workers in the demolition of buildings, merchandise manipulator, commercial worker, chef, kitchen worker, stone mason, carpenter, confectioner, dressmaker, painter, wall and ceilings, gypsum plasterboard, tiles, etc.

Impact of Covid-19 on immigrant workers in Romania

The literature on labour migration (Chiswick & Miller, 2014) discusses the immigration for employment purposes in the context of the "push" factors (labour demand) and "pull" factors (labour supply). In this sense, labour immigration is in direct relationship to the economic cycle - the need for labour force rises as the economy grows- and, at the other end we have the immigrants willing to respond to this demand. In the period 2007 to 2021, when we analyse the labour immigration in Romania we observe its evolution in direct correlation with the economic situation of the country. During periods of economic growth (2007-2008 and 2018-2021), the labour immigration expressed in the number of employment permits issued to third country nationals has a sharp increase, while in times of economic stagnation or contraction, the labour immigration drops and/ or maintain a

relatively constant number. As the labour migration inflows are very sensitive to the changes of the Romanian economy, every year, as a result of a tripartite negotiation – Government, trade-unions and employers – the annual quota is established, respectively, the number and types of employment authorizations that can be issued to TCNs to work in Romania. Depending on the needs of the labour market, there is the possibility to supplement the annual quota of TCNs migrant workers admitted for employment in Romania.

The figures provided by the GII (2018-2021) show that the number of employment permits issued to immigrant workers in Romania has been continually increasing, every year, even in 2020, the year marked by the sanitary crisis of Covid-19. During the years of 2018 and 2019, the economic growth reached around 4.5% while in 2020 there was a downturn of minus 0.4%. In 2018, the annual quota was 15,000 work authorizations while in 2019 and 2020 it was supplemented to reach 30,000. For 2021, the annual quota has been set to 25,000 work authorizations. The analysis of the number of employment authorizations issued to TCNs to work in Romania in correlation with the economic growth indicates that, at macro level, the pandemic has only paced the process of recruiting and bringing in immigrant labour force to respond to the needs of the national labour market. The possible explanations may be that macro level processes are lengthier and have a certain time lag. Considering that the administrative and bureaucratic procedures to recruit and bring in immigrant workforce can take from three up to six months or more, the effects of the outbreak of the sanitary crisis have been two folded: new recruitments were stopped while the ongoing processes have been put on stand-by. A direct positive effect of the pandemic was the digitalisation of services and the setting up of an online platform by the General Inspectorate for Immigration to deal with the administrative immigration procedures that employers and recruitment agencies should comply with for recruitment and hiring of immigrants in Romania.

The Covid-19 pandemic has produced a major shock not only in the Romanian economy, but also in the European and global economy. All affected states have taken the first budgetary, political and liquidity measures to increase their capacity to respond to the negative consequences of the pandemic and to provide support to affected citizens and economic sectors during the health crisis. The main concern, in the conditions of social isolation and ceasing of economic activity, was to ensure that the population income will not drop down harshly. Immediate economic measures taken by the Romanian authorities were to partially subsidize suspended jobs in the affected economic sectors by using European structural funds and, to develop different schemes to help the recovery of the companies most affected by the crisis. The most affected economic activities with the highest number of suspended employment contracts were manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, repair of vehicles,

and hotels and restaurants, which accounted for more than 50% of suspended contracts, while more than half of employment contracts terminated were concentrated in wholesale and retail trade, repair of vehicles, manufacturing and constructions.

The assessments made so far provide sufficient arguments to conclude that the Covid-19 pandemic has had and will have a disproportionate impact, the most exposed being the vulnerable groups: people in the informal area of the economy, those working in the most affected sectors and workers with a low level of qualification. Many other categories of workers are not found in aid and support schemes, namely people without employment contracts, day workers and unpaid family workers (Chivu & Georgescu, 2020). The Covid-19 pandemic affected one of the most vulnerable categories in the Romanian society, the immigrants. The categories most affected in terms of source of income and long-term employment were low-income immigrants and women, unemployed immigrants, students, especially because they do not even know the language of the host country and access to health services was drastically reduced (Roman et al., 2020).

An immediate response of the authorities and civil society organisations to the Covid-19 outbreak was to provide refugees and migrants in Romania with reliable information concerning the virus, its transmission and protection against it, in several different languages. The information, including a guide on prevention on Covid-19 in 9 languages was posted on the website of GII, UNHCR, IOM and other NGOs working with immigrants and refugees. Several NGOs put in place hotlines to support the immigrants with information and the support they needed.

The sanitary crisis had negative consequences regarding the immigrants and refugees' access and participation on the Romanian labour market. A lot of immigrants working in the economic sectors affected by the pandemic lost their jobs or had their employment contracts suspended and, because their income was not enough, most of them were unable to pay their rent or to provide for their families. In a lot of cases, the family was relying on one salary and / or the family members that were also working were employed in informal economy or worked as daily workers. This occupational situation made them vulnerable and they had been particularly hit by the crisis. For those in Romania with an employment visa, losing their job that was linked to the right of residence as well as the pandemic circumstances that made it almost impossible to find a new job, jeopardised their right to stay. A particular situation for the immigrant workers in Romania is that accommodation, meals and local transport services are included in the wage package. This is the reason why, when the immigrant worker lost the job, he/she lost also the accommodation and means to cover the living costs. An open

letter[4] of the NGOs Coalition for the Rights of Migrants and Refugees represent one of the advocacy efforts of the Romanian civil society to draw attention on the harsh situation of the immigrant workers as well as to ask for immediate measures of support. Other measures of the authorities to support immigrant workers hit by the pandemic were changes in the legislation targeting migrants that lost their right to stay or providing the possibility to extend the visa period considering this exceptional situation and different institutional targeted measures such as the agreement between the GII and the National Employment Agency for job placements for migrant workers who lost their jobs.

Conclusions

The economic recovery of Romania after the pandemic of Covid-19 will also be translated into labour shortages in different economic sectors, particularly the ones most hit by the pandemic such as: tourism and HoReCa sectors, constructions, manufacturing, commerce, and transportation. Considering the mass emigration of Romanians that contributed to the already existing needs of the national labour market, immigration and immigrant workers represent the best and immediate solution for the companies and employers in Romania.

The management of immigration in Romania and labour immigrant inclusion in the workplace has to take into account the ascending trend of labour immigration and to provide a stronger correlation between the legislation and practices of the immigration regime and the sectoral areas such as employment. There is a need for a better inter-institutional coordination between bodies with responsibilities in the field of immigration. Also, the public policies regulating integration of immigrants should put in place mechanisms to prevent systemic vulnerabilities and social costs for immigrants and adopt measures targeted for the vulnerable groups among the migrants. The role of local authorities, NGOs and local communities to support the immigrant workers through information and services should be strengthen, as well.

References

Alexe, I., & Păunescu, B. et al. (eds.) (2011). *Study on the immigration phenomenon in Romania. Foreigners' integration into the Romanian society*. Bucharest: Soros Foundation Romania.

Borjas, G. J. (2019). Immigration and economic growth. *NBER Working Paper* 25836.

Boubtane, E., et al. (2016), Immigration and economic growth in the OECD countries 1986- 2006, Document de Recherche du Laboratoire d'Économie d'Orléans

[4] See: https://cdmir.ro/wp/2020/06/12/scrisoare-deschisa-situatia-muncitorilor-straini-din-romania/

Chiswick B., & Miller P. (2007). The International Transferability of Immigrants' Human Capital Skills, *IZA Discussions Paper* 2670

Chivu, L., & George G., (2020). Labour market vulnerabilities under the COVID-19 impact in Romania Vulnerabilități ale pieței muncii din România sub impactul COVID-19 - Munich Personal RePEc Archive (uni-muenchen.de).

Constant, A., F., & Zimmermann, K. F., (2013) (eds.) *International Handbook on the Economics of Migration*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

General Inspectorate for Immigration, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Romania National Immigration Strategy 2019-2022. Available at: https://webapp.mai.gov.ro/frontend/documente_transparenta/188_1549983152_Anexa%20nr.%201%20-%20Strategia%20na%C5%A3ional%C4%83%20pentru%20imigra%C8%9Bie.pdf (Accessed: 10/06/2021).

General Inspectorate for Immigration, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Romania, activity report for the period 2007-2020. Available at: http://igi.mai.gov.ro/ro/content/analiza-activitatii (Accessed: 20/06/2021).

Kahanec, M., & Zimmermann, K. F., (2014),.How skilled immigration may improve economic equality. *IZA Journal of Migration*, 3:2

Lynch C., & Pfohman S., (2013). Hidden Talents, Wasted Talents – The real cost of neglecting the positive contribution of migrants and ethnic minorities. Bruxelles: European Network Against Racism (ENAR).

OECD (2020a). Policy Responses to Coronavirus (Covid-19) What is the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the immigrants and their children. Available at: https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/what-is-the-impact-of-the-covid-19-pandemic-on-immigrants-and-their-children-e7cbb7de/ (Accessed: 05/05/2021).

OECD (2020b). *Managing international migration under Covid-19*. Paris: OECD.

Platonova, A., et al., (2010; 2011; 2012; 2013). Policy Highlights – Summary of the Research Findings of the IOM Independent Network of Labour Migration and Integration Experts (LINET). Bruxelles: International Organisation for Migration.

Roman, M., et al., (2020). How are European migrants from the MENA countries affected by COVID-19? Insights from an online survey (Accessed: 06/05/2021).

Roman, M., et al., (2021). Impactul migrației tinerilor asupra economiei, pieței muncii, învățământului și asistenței sociale. Available at: https://migrantcenter.ro/mitul-imigrantilor-care-le-iau-joburile-nativilor-demontat-intr-un-studiu-trans-national-la-care-a-participat-si-romania-impactul-migratiei-tinerilor-asupra-economiei-pietei-muncii-invatamantului/ (Accessed: 06/05/2021).

ISSN: 2732-6578 (print version) 2732-6586 (online)

Topic 7

International Relations and International Cooperation in a Post-Covid-19 Framework

 ISSN: 2732-6578 (print version) 2732-6586 (online)

Preservation of the ASEAN Regionalism: Responding to the Belt Road Initiative as the New 'Carrot or Stick' Policies[1]

Hino Samuel Jose[2]

Abstract

The increasing China's geopolitical and economic influence through BRI has impacted the global development landscape. The rising implementation of BRI in Eurasia, Africa, and Asia-Pacific has surrounded Europe and its Western counterparts into a new durability test against their regionalism. ASEAN as the unique strategic region in the emerging Asia Pacific is now being challenged with the presence of BRI and how can it impact the regional political and cooperation architecture. The carrot or stick approach that has been used by many scholars to perceive western Marshall Plan seemed to be reignited reflecting from China's trade war with Australia and the other countries. This article discusses the way ASEAN could navigate its regionalism amid the rising China's influence in post-RCEP adoption. Learning from Africa, ASEAN should be able to preserve its way and institutionalization of its regime in order to last amid the increased China's political economy influence in Southeast Asia through BRI. The implementation of BRI has also been impacting ASEAN efforts on South China Sea and Myanmar Crisis, which will open the question on how to play ASEAN way into its best role in Asia Pacific as the rising power.

Keywords: ASEAN; BRI; China; Regionalism; Political Economy; Development.

Introduction

The global community cannot deny that the Asia Pacific is now becoming the emerging powerhouse of the new international political economy landscape. The mainstream study of 'state transformation' for instance has been mainstreaming the emerging power dynamics in today's scholarly debates (Hameiri & Jones, 2019). China as the rising global contemporary power implements its political economy strategies to strengthen its influence in and beyond the Asia Pacific through a new solution in pursuing growth. That particular solution as discussed by Hameiri and Jones (2016) is by penetrating their Chinese way of economic influence in transnational products and investment networks (Hameiri & Jones, 2016). This solution, called the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), is the investment of a multibillion-dollar projects that were placed from Asia to Africa to increase China's economic connectivity and value-added political economy. The BRI projects in Africa alone, for instance, increased drastically since Covid-19 at a rate of 5.2% with the value of 132 billion USD in

[1] To cite this paper in APA Style: Jose, H. S. (2021). Preservation of the ASEAN Regionalism: Responding to the Belt Road Initiative as the New 'Carrot or Stick' Policies. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 2(1): 143-150. DOI: 10.12681/hapscpbs.27670

[2] Faculty of Social and Political Science, Universitas Pembangunan Nasional Veteran Jakarta.

11 years span (2006-2017) (Ukpe, 2020). This could be seen as China's unilateral movement to challenge the world's renowned economic development principles which were called as "Washington Consensus" or WC that was developed by the US and the starting point where the new developmental paradigm (Kennedy, 2010). The WC itself was embraced as the model for countries to developing their own economy through foreign aids and loans that are being channeled by Bretton-woods financial institution, while the Beijing Consensus (BC) relied more into unilateral policy and embracing the multi-polarity of ideas (Jarso, 2018).

The rising power of the "Beijing Consensus" is now imminent with enormous government intervention that is motivated to outnumber the western's influence over the regional political economy landscape (Vangeli, 2019). As we know, western financial aid also comes with the rules where the debtor government should restrict their macroeconomic policies to ensure that the debt is well targeted and managed as part of the debtor's accountability (Shelton & Kebemba, 2012). On the other hand, BRI is more lenient and respecting the national macroeconomic policies' sovereignty, which made BRI under the BC consensus tend to be favorable for those states that wouldn't want to hustle themselves. The ASEAN regional political economy landscape currently is in need of FDI and foreign financial assistance as the region itself doesn't acquire the supranational power to collectively fund each country, this made BRI tend to be favorable in the region. However, the rising China power through BRI is disliked by Japan, along with the historic rival of China – Shinzo Abe argued in 2016 that BRI's financing through the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) is not transparent and carefully assessed (Bhagawati, 2016). Although Japan challenged it and swore to reform Asian Development Bank, DIP. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) to challenge AIIB shortly in terms of development financing, the nexus between development-geopolitics-anti western notion can be concluded as the reconfiguration of China's expansionist strategy. This expansion is complemented by flexible financing and easier mechanisms which made countries targeted by China's BRI felt heavy enough to reject the offer, unlike the western strict OECD financing (Garlick, 2020). This multi-faceted and pragmatic approach makes BRI more promising compared to the historic Marshall Plan, while it also enhances Chinese land trade connectivity with the continued support from Chinese banks to Europe by utilizing the strategic economic corridor line (Hoque & Tama, 2020).

Methodology

This brief is analyzed through a qualitative analysis that was based on document-based and internet-based research from secondary data source. This paper is discussing the issues and contexts guided by the following research questions: (1) How can ASEAN perceive BRI as it can be perceived as the

new carrot or stick policy; (2) What are the matters of regional disintegration caused by China's geo-economics and geopolitical interests; and (3) What ASEAN can expect from their regional dilemma? These questions pretty much guide the research in deliberating further the analysis in this brief.

BRI as the New China's 'Carrot or Stick' Foreign Policy

When it comes to the discourse of Chinese foreign policy, Tianxia, or "everything below the sky" has to become the main driver of China's perspective in perceiving global affairs (Mingming, 2012). The implementation of the Belt Road Initiative (BRI) is now being seen as a progressive Tianxia construction of China's geopolitical interest in increasing connectivity of China with the other 70 targeted countries (Korwa, 2019). The increasing Chinese grasp within Africa and Asia has shown the signal that this effort has allowed China to redefine its bilateral relationship into a more ideal atmosphere suited to its political and socio-economic goals (Kavalski, 2009). BRI is also the single powerful Chinese riffle that can shoot bullets to its western alliance counterparts without opening a direct risky confrontation, while at the same time colluding with other states to exclude western's presence (Fels, 2017). This however will be another political and economic issue for ASEAN to thrive with its well-known complex regional principles. The absence of supranational authority in each ASEAN member state made enforcement and political solutions tend to rely more upon interdependence relations intertwined with the subject that being played on.

BRI can be perceived with the 'carrot or stick' approach by ASEAN learning from what happened in Africa. Through BRI, countries can acquire multi-million dollar infrastructure and investment projects, which will support the agenda of domestic development. In political science, the carrot or stick approach is perceived by the realist/ liberal thought as the means to influence a particular actor/ side to the direction of the actors with hard power abilities (Thayer, 2006). The implementation of carrot or stick has been the key solution used by major powers to achieve their agenda, for example, the EU tends to use the carrot-or-stick approach when dealing with human rights/ sustainability issues with other states – and same for the US when they are excluding Iran in the global supply chain (Akcay & Kanat, 2017). On BRI, the carrot or stick approach can be used when deconstructing the practices of BRI's investment in Asia and Africa when China slammed heavy tariff to Australia's export to China as its response to Aussie's cancellation of BRI's MoU in Victoria in April 2021 (Wood, 2021; Khaliq, 2021).

These events have reflected the true nature of carrot or stick, and as argued by Johnson (2018), China's BRI targets have been always directed to the least developing countries with tremendous unrealized development potentials (Johnson, 2018). The problem is that most of these African states

are struggling with political crisis, massive corruption, and bad governance – and it is irrational from a holistic view for states like China to keep investing without even expecting any payback. This investment seems to be a carrot for African states' development, however, with them unable to repay the debt, they must trade their strategic ports and mining locations to be handed over to China. This kind of exchange is a "stick" hitting the African countries, and many western countries argued that this debt-trap diplomacy has prolonged another nightmare and not bringing sustainable prosperity (Dianjaya, 2019).

ASEAN Regionalism Preservation: A View and Dilemma From Within

Speaking with an inward-looking approach, ASEAN is a prone region, and the way of consensus-building became the main driver of the region's decision making. However, it doesn't include a way for ASEAN to prevent several overlooked issues like foreign intervention from non-ASEAN actors within the intra-regional affairs. ASEAN did come up with an answer when in 2016, ASEAN Adopted the Outlook on Indo-Pacific, which laid down the fundamental stipulations of ASEAN's new spirit to develop their regional ecosystem against contemporary challenges (Scott, 2019). The contention of China-US rivalry, the increased changes between ASEAN member inter-state relations, and Indonesia's growing role as the spearhead in ASEAN made regional instability imminent (Siahaan & Risman, 2020). However, the incorporated Chinese geopolitics in ASEAN have made it harder for ASEAN regionalism to prevail for a more firm stance against China's influence. For instance, China, Cambodia, and Vietnam tend to be more closer towards China – while Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore tried to pursue a stronger clause against China's intervention.. To understand this further, on the question of Myanmar for instance, China's strong interest in Myanmar's industries and the adjacent important geostrategy of China's connectivity to the Indian Ocean Regio via Myanmar did affect the way ASEAN states interact on political issues. Myanmar need a more democratic solutions, but the aforementioned pressing matter on China's geostrategic importance made Burma's neighbor like Vietnam and Thailand to becoming more reluctant to pursue stronger democratic solutions for Myanmar 2021 crisis. Vietnam and Thailand are China's strategic trade and political partner, and their ties with China made their stance to be softer than and not as hardcore as Indonesia, Singapore, and Malaysia because they were evading from colliding with Beijing. These "turbulences" are now being "exacerbated" by China's growing BRI influence in Myanmar as the country needs more infrastructure until up to 9 billion USD in total (Hiebert, 2020). A tangible proof to describe this issue was the adopted 5 point consensus on Myanmar that seems weaker than expected by the public community. The consensus did not imply

any clause about foreign intervention, like what China did, and it also did not stipulate a firm democratic restoration that has been demanded by the people of Myanmar on their protests (Lee, 2021). Foreign intervention in Myanmar as we know will just worsen the condition as people's core issues can't be alleviated.

What ASEAN should expect is a prolonged stagnancy in the region with an increased role of China in Southeast Asia architecture, especially after the adoption of the RCEP. It isworthy to note that China was the first country that completed its RCEP ratification, even faster than Indonesia as the spearheader. The BRI is the key to answer the infrastructure development gap and to promote hyper-efficient infrastructure projects that cater to promising innovations, and this has made China became the strategic partner of 128 countries in the world. ASEAN, in reality, needs Chinese investment in BRI projects across the region because the unique geographic characteristics and its trade commonalities need China's BRI to achieve their ASEAN Masterplan on Connectivity/ MPAC (Chia, 2016). This is feasible if there is no protectionist posture that might surface against the flow of BRI's funding and noteworthy impact on domestic fiscal policies that are being incorporated with BRI funding (Foo et al, 2019). ASEAN has one dilemma, where ASEAN should be careful when opening their doorstep towards an external entity, because the more dependent ASEAN towards that particular entity, the harder it is to centralize ASEAN role. This is because the region will be unable to take a firm stance and feasible solutions as the regional stance will be disintegrated and divided by foreign hands. These kinds of disintegrated interests caused by foreign dependencies might struck the consensus-building and mutual trust among others to keep believing in ASEAN way. Especially with the fact that ASEAN cannot apply its minus X mechanism in a political matter, which means full consensus is required for any regional norm-setting process.

What should be done to preserve ASEAN regionalism?

ASEAN should be able to imply strategic political measures, and this will be obscured by tremendous China's Tianxia policy. This kind of Tianxia, which was manifested through BRI, will become the key benchmark where China is able to embed Chinese foreign policy traditional historic vision in the changing global world order. It is worthy enough to be considered that this will weaken the ASEAN way of regionalism in moving forward to achieve its 2025 community blueprint. This will become imminent if ASEAN is no longer struggling for a more top-down approach to learning from another region. The BRI that has successfully bridged Asia and Europe through the Eurasia region is now being concerned by the Western European counterparts as China already knocked their front yard,

and ASEAN is now also struggling to enforce China to the ASEAN way game in the South China Sea and other high political issues.

Back to the carrot or stick notion, ASEAN should reconsider its role as a bridgebuilder in the new international setting as any attempt to strike China's financial means might result in another diplomatic headache with China. The carrot given by China will just be another stick that also devastates ASEAN efforts in resolving direct issues with China (for instance in the SCS). ASEAN cannot become a bridgebuilder as the rising regional power in the world of post-RCEP because China's grasp within the BRI in ASEAN will just show the world that ASEAN is incapable of handling its region – and how can it even handle a larger mega-trade agreement? However, ASEAN can still gain great momentum as BRI is not flawless either. ASEAN needs to realize that BRI's implementation seemed to be stagnant on several projects due to leadership regime changes (Zhexin, 2018). ASEAN has the urgency in embracing solutions and enforce intra-regional partnerships to ensure a great cohesiveness inside to prevent any leakage of regional spirit when encountering external partners like China. With the absence of the United States from the RCEP, ASEAN can still ensure that China is not provoked directly on their yard with the US' meddling on it.

Conclusions

Now it is going to be a matter of ASEAN perception, it is up to the region to perceive it as China's good deeds or the other way around. One thing for sure, ASEAN shouldn't overlook even the issues deemed insignificant. ASEAN should scrutinize the way it decides their own regional fate, because if it is not controlled then it will fail to rejuvenate the regional values. And any failure in coping up with the contemporary challenges will bring ASEAN policymaking into another stagnancy as experienced by another region in the world such as the African Union that was obstructed by overwhelming multidimensional challenges. The Pan Africanism movement that was resounded by the African Union through its megaphone diplomacy only gives contradicting results. We can see their prolonged bad governance has disabled the region from thriving in Pan African prosperity shared values. Therefore, ASEAN shouldn't let the ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific just standing there as a normative guidance without concrete efforts to defending it from external storms. In 2016 the region has been using their megaphone diplomacy to promote the shared vision stipulated within the Outlook on Indo-Pacific. Hence it is imperative for ASEAN to learn from the AU and overwhelming Beijing control that has caused the AU to lose their centrality. ASEAN's determination should be designed with an ideal way of cooperative mechanism that can allow the ASEAN Way of regionalism to co-exist with China's growing interest, whilst putting various efforts in contributing to positive growth

and safe political space for ASEAN. The way of potectionism against China is not the best policy option seeing from the US – where the withdrawal of the US from CP-TPP has weakened its relation with Asian countries that "loves" their partnership with the US. This has opened wider space for China to explore and gives new hope and policy assistance for the member states who require development cooperation and financial assistance. ASEAN should cater its regional cooperation to ensure that they will not fall into another debt-trap diplomacy or being pulled by loan to surrender their sovereignty like what happened to other BRI countries like Sri Lanka. All for the preservation of ASEAN Way in a new integrated Asia Pacific statecraft in a multipolar world.

References

Akcay, E. Y. & Kanat, S. (2017). Carrot and Stick Approach in International Relations: An Evaluation Throughout Turkey's Accession Negotiations with the European Union. *Journal of Süleyman Demirel University Institute of Social Sciences*, 4(29): 415-435.

Bhagawati, J. (2016). *Japan's Grand Strategy to Coutner China: An Analysis of the "Partnership for Quality Infrastructure*. New Delhi: Institute of Chinese Studies.

Chia, S. (2016). ASEAN Economic Integration and Physical Connectivity. *Asian Economic Papers*, 15(2): 198-215.

Dianjaya, A. R. (2019). The Politics of Chinese Investment in Africa Under Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) Project. *Nation State: Journal of International Studies*, 2(2): 123-133.

Fels, E. (2017). *Shifting Power in Asia-Pacific? The Rise of China, Sino-US Competition, and Regional Middle Power Alliance*. Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Garlick, J. (2020). The Regional Impacts of China's Belt and Road Initiative. *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*, 49(1): 3-13.

Hameiri, S., & Jones, L. (2016). Rising powers and state transformation: The case of China. *European Journal of International Relations*, 27(1): 72-98.

Hameiri, S., & Jones, L. (2019). Reframing the rising powers debate: state transformation and foreign policy. *Third World Quarterly*, 40(8): 1397-1414.

Hiebert, M. (2020,). China's Belt and Road Initiative faces huge challenges in Southeast Asia. Dipetik, September 3, dari Think China. Available at: https://www.thinkchina.sg/chinas-belt-and-road-initiative-faces-huge-challenges-southeast-asia (Accessed: 15/05/2021).

Hoque, M. & Tama, R. (2020). China's Belt and Road Initiative: Global Politics and Implication. *European Scientific Journal*, 16(31): 279-299.

Jarso, G. (2018). The Beijing consensus versus the Washington consensus: The dilemma of Chinese engagement in Africa. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, 12(1): 1-9.

Johnson, L. (2018). The Belt and Road Initiative: What is in it for China? *Asia and Pacific Policy Studies*: 1-19.

Kavalski, E. (2009). *Do as I do: The Global Politics of China's Regionalization. Dalam E. Kavalski, China and the Global Politics of Regionalization* (hal. 1-16). Farnham: Ashgate.

Kennedy, S. (2010). The Myth of the Beijing Consensus. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 65(1): 461-477.

Korwa, J. R. (2019). Kebangkitan China melalui Belt and Road Initiative dan (Re)konstruksi Hubungan Internasional dalam Sistem Westphalia (China's rise through BRI and the (Re)construction of International Relations within the Westphalian System). *Jurnal Hubungan Internasional*, 8(1): 1-10.

Lee, C. (2021). ASEAN Summit on Myanmar and the 5-Point Consensus. Dipetik May 11, dari Asia Link University of Melbourne. Available at: https://asialink.unimelb.edu.au/insights/asean-summit-on-myanmar-and-the-5-point-consensus (Accessed: 26/06/2021).

Mingming, W. (2012). All Under Heaven (Tianxia) Cosmological Perspective and Political Ontologies in Pre-Modern China. *Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, 2(1): 337-383.

Scott, D. (2019). Indonesia Grapples with the Indo-Pacific: Outreach, Strategic Discourse, and Diplomacy. *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 38(2): 194-217.

Shelton, J. & Kebemba, C. (2012). *WIN-WIN PARTNERSHIP? China, South Africa and the Extractive Industries*. Johannesburg: South Africa Resource Watch.

Siahaan, S. Y. & Risman, H. (2020). Strengthening ASEAN Centrality Within the Indo-Pacific Region. *People, International Journal of Social Sciences*, 6(1): 254-266.

Thayer, C. L. (2006). *American Empire: A Debate*. New York: Taylor and Francis Group.

Ukpe, W. (2020,). African nations sitting on debt volcano. Dipetik June 12, dari Nairametrics. Available at: https://nairametrics.com/2020/06/11/african-nations-sitting-on-debt-volcano/ (Accessed: 15/05/2021).

Vangeli, A. (2019). Diffusion of ideas in the era of the Belt and Road: Insights from China–CEE think tank cooperation. *Asia Europe Journal*, 17: 421-436.

Zhexin, Z. (2018). The Belt and Road Initiative: China's New Geopolitical Strategy? *China Quarterly of International Strategic Studies*, 4(3): 327-343.

 ISSN: 2732-6578 (print version) 2732-6586 (online)

Chinese Industrial Policy: A Challenge for the European Union amid the Global Pandemic[1]

Pavlos Petidis[2]

Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic, which triggered lockdowns in Europe and around the world, had a major effect on European Union (EU) industries. Multiple supply chains in a variety of industries were disrupted, especially at the start of the crisis, and particularly in internationalized and complex value chains. Unparalleled policy responses have been undertaken in Europe and the world to mitigate the impact of this economic shock and help recovery. However, the pandemic has also created a wide spectrum of opportunities in many sectors of the global economy, as consumers and businesses have changed radically their behavior. Under this context, superpowers such as the People's Republic of China have taken constructive steps to facilitate the digital transformation of their industry leaving behind United States and the European Union. The purpose of this policy brief is the provision of an overview of China's national strategic plan titled "Made in China 2025" and its fundamental pillars as well as the development of policy recommendations regarding strengthening European Union's industrial policy amid the global pandemic.

Keywords: Industry 4.0; European Union; Made in China 2025; Digitalization; Fourth Industrial Revolution; Covid-19.

Introduction

Since the 2010s, China has risen as an emerging superpower in terms of Purchasing Power Parity (O.E.C.D., 2020). Because of rivalry in the manufacturing sector stemming from both low-wage countries like Vietnam and highly developed countries like the United States, China embarked on a journey to align its economic and technological competitiveness with the economic paradigm of "Industry 4.0" and meet the demands of its increasingly trained workers (Wang & Chen, 2020). In that respect, the global pandemic intensified China's conviction in having a digitized industrial complex that can cope with the economic consequences of an unprecedented crisis. Chinese industries are not only pushing the technological wave in traditional areas such as electronics, machinery and aviation, but they are also driving technological innovations in emerging areas such as advanced nuclear energy, next generation telecommunication technologies, big data and supercomputers, Artificial Intelligence, robotics, and space technology. The European Union has provided explicit policies to curb the gap with the Chinese industry in terms of competitiveness (Zachariadis & Szczepanski, 2019). Member states also support global projects such as Industrie 4.0 in Germany, the

[1] To cite this paper in APA style: Petidis, P. (2021). Chinese Industrial Policy: A Challenge for the European Union amid the Global Pandemic. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 2(1): 151-157. DOI: 10.12681/hapscpbs.27671

[2] Pavlos Petidis is Postgraduate Student, MSc International and European Economic Relations, Athens University of Economics and Business.

Factory of the Future in France and Italy, and Catapult centers in the United Kingdom. But an urgent need for a comprehensive industrial strategy has been underlined by policymakers and pressure groups amid the global pandemic. The need for investment, changing business models, data issues, legal issues of liability and intellectual property, and skill mismatches are some of the challenges that must be addressed if the benefits of new manufacturing and industrial technology are to be realized.

The rise of Industry 4.0 and "Made in China 2025"

Industry 4.0 emphasizes the transformation of the production, function, and service of manufacturing systems and goods through the convergence of intelligent digital technology such as machine learning, real-time data, and the Internet with traditional industry. The factory, suppliers, distributors, even the product become digitally linked, resulting in a reconfiguration of the entire value chain process where automation of the manufacturing process, transfer of data, and interconnectivity constitute its central pillars. Industry 4.0 technologies provide companies with better awareness, control, and data visibility across their entire supply chain. In addition, as machine learning algorithms learn to rapidly customize machines to adapt to customer-supplied requirements, companies can gain an advantage over less-efficient rivals by using supply chain management resources to bring goods and services to market quicker, cheaper, and with higher quality.

As part of the Thirteenth Five-Year Plan (F.Y.P.), China devised its national strategic plan titled «Made in China 2025» (M.I.C.), which was portrayed as a roadmap to transition away from being a manufacturer of low-tech products facilitated by lower labor costs to a global powerhouse in high-tech industries (Wang & Chen, 2020). Regarding overall policy direction, M.I.C. and F.Y.P. overlap, with F.Y.P. emphasizing the “crucial significance to the government's leadership in progressing indigenous innovation, achieving technical self-sufficiency, and improving the state's position in the market” (Zachariadis, 2019). M.I.C. also signifies a departure from the smaller-scale 2006 initiative "Strategic Emerging Industries" (S.E.I.), which focused on updating advanced technology to protect the role of strategic emerging industries such as renewables and alternative fuels. It constitutes a state-driven program that includes regulatory oversight of foreign investments in strategic sectors, mergers and joint ventures, access to foreign intellectual property, and agreements between the government and foreign entities. Thus, the scope of M.I.C. is more comprehensive, focusing on the entire manufacturing process rather than just technological advances, supporting conventional industries and services, and incorporating “unique steps for innovation, efficiency, product quality, and green development” (Zachariadis & Szczepanski, 2019).

 ISSN: 2732-6578 (print version) 2732-6586 (online)

To reduce China's dependence on foreign technologies, Beijing has enacted a broad spectrum of regulatory reforms. By requiring banks to disclose their source code and use domestic I.P. and encryption, these safe and controllable standards can limit foreign competition and provide access to technology from abroad (Wang & Chen, 2020). Supply-side initiatives are being implemented by the federal and provincial governments to help businesses improve their manufacturing processes. Chinese companies are naturally given preferential treatment when they receive funding from state banks. Subsidies, low-interest loans, and bonds are distributed by state-owned banks, primarily to small and medium-sized businesses. Various organizations and trusts also provide direct financial assistance. The Advanced Manufacturing Fund, for example, has $3 billion available to update technology in critical sectors, while the National Integrated Circuit Fund has $21 billion (Wang and Chen, 2020). Importantly, funding is contingent on businesses using indigenous I.P. to replace international I.P.

As per with leading business conglomerates, they have concentrated on future technology. Telecommunications, wireless-sensor networks, 3D printing, industrial e-commerce, cloud computing, and big data seem to have built intellectual property and power. Baidu and other companies have been given permits and licenses to test their self-driving cars. For example, Baidu has unveiled «Project Apollo» a platform that offers hardware and open-source code for other manufacturers to build their vehicles. Also, the government has been making materials more accessible and offering incentives to companies working on electric batteries. To encourage foreign investments and acquisitions, the government has also directed companies to increase their international brand awareness, become more familiar with overseas cultures and markets, and strengthen investment activity risk management. The target of increasing the domestic content of core components and materials to 40% by 2020 and 70% by 2025 would help with self-sufficiency and the ultimate goal of localizing the manufacturing process (O.E.C.D., 2020).

As it dictates policy and incentivizes research and development and industrial modernization, M.I.C. contributes to expanding government power over critical industries. Beijing is altering Chinese companies' established business relationships by promoting acquisition, restructuring, and access to foreign intellectual property. State-owned entities have begun to merge, especially those that overlap with M.I.C. 2025 sectors. This, coupled with large multinationals that are already implementing the government's growth plan, would aid in developing national champions capable of competing more effectively with foreign multinationals. Between 2005 and 2016, Chinese companies spent 13.6 billion dollars in Germany and 135 billion dollars in the United States, gaining access to intellectual property and forming joint ventures with companies that had already achieved the desired automation

and innovation (Institut Jacques Delors, 2019). This, on the other hand, entails direct government financing of private equity, which is then used to promote investments. China's rail industry has already produced exports to Asian neighbors, and the One Belt, One Road initiative will be used to pursue innovation and expansion. Over 100 billion dollars in investments in South America's ten main sectors have resulted in joint ventures and manufacturing and service-based exports for Chinese firms (Institut Jacques Delors, 2019).

European Industrial Policy at the Crossroads: Challenges and Policy Recommendations

In this context, the last decade has seen a rebalancing of the global economy. The Chinese economy's unprecedented size and pace of growth over the last decade has also been reflected in the country's ambition to increase its political power and gain geopolitical control through economic might. Parallel to China's development, the poor financial success of the E.U. and other previously dominant highly industrialized countries has changed the world's economic center of gravity to the east. Most importantly, this change has occurred at an astonishing pace. To retain its international competitiveness against China, the E.U. must continue to concentrate on global supply chains and accelerate national recovery and resilience strategies to avoid further widening the gap with other leading economies.

A comprehensive industrial policy should pay attention to the importance of strategic value chains. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on value chains have so far not triggered a change in the functioning of the globalized economy; however, they increased the awareness of vulnerabilities. A high-level and permanent governance should be developed at the E.U. level to track and improve strategic technical areas critical to E.U. industrial competitiveness and build the conditions for the establishment of essential chains of value in Europe (Institut Jacques Delors, 2019). The European Parliament, in particular, should enable the E.U. and the Member States to pool resources and jointly invest in strategic industries. The choice of transferring up to 4% of the R.R.F. to InvestEU could be investigated as a means of mobilizing such capital. Since the window of opportunity for effective technology implementation is usually at the interface of applied science and commercialization, this new governance mechanism should be highly diligent in tracking innovations. By leveraging Europe's recognized industrial strengths in managing cross-disciplinary ventures, as well as Europe's heritage of excellence in scientific research, the E.U. industry will improve its role at the forefront of emerging technologies, such as developing trustworthy Artificial Intelligence, automated mobility and logistics, advanced materials, and biotechnology. Examples such as semiconductors and batteries show how combined efforts can support European value chains (Raza et al., 2021).

An E.U. industrial strategy should ensure appropriate policy responses to equalize the playing field for European companies. Provision of advisory mechanisms for S.M.E.s would enable them to redefine their value chain positioning, absorb advanced technologies, and master innovation management. Within the E.U., investments co-financed by E.U. instruments and programs should be driven by stringent requirements based on E.U. added-value and conditionality aimed at prioritizing investments in the European economy (Institut Jacques Delors, 2019).The E.U. should encourage the export of E.U. goods and innovations by making overseas financing available through the EIB and Export Credit Agencies. Also, the E.U. should collaborate with other O.E.C.D. Members to ensure that the O.E.C.D. export credit rules are well suited to the needs of the E.U.'s export industries (O.E.C.D., 2020). The E.U. must work within the International Working Group on Export Credits (I.W.G.) to reach an ambitious international export credit discipline with non-OECD countries that can promote openness and a level playing field.

The coronavirus pandemic has had a negative impact on corporate R&D decisions. The COVID-19 pandemic has harmed the balance sheet potential for increased investment in many cases, while Europe lags in R&D spending in the vital sector of computer software and hardware development (Raza et al., 2021). National and European R&D public investments, in collaboration with private investments, would help improve the digital economy by assisting the E.U. in leading the technological transition in areas where the E.U. has a competitive advantage, such as highly trained populations, manufacturing industries and advanced equipment, healthcare, and education systems (Raza et al., 2021). In addition, the establishment of A.I. excellence centers across Europe will serve as world-class research hubs, global talent magnets, and local points of contact for the community and stakeholders (Institut Jacques Delors, 2019). Concerning regional initiatives, the added value of regional investment opportunities should be realized by developing an enabling mechanism for inter-regional investment platforms and financial schemes that help promote funding priorities. The Vanguard Initiative, a network of European regions with a high-level political commitment to using intelligent specialization strategies, can work as a roadmap.

In terms of digital and technological re/upskilling, the draft recovery plans of the Member States lack the requisite emphasis on industrial sector modernization and labor-force skill requirements. The Recovery and Resilience Facility's impact risks being reduced due to a lack of attention under a plethora of priorities, especially in creating the right framework conditions for businesses to recover and adjust (O.E.C.D., 2020). Thus, digital re/upskilling steps are a means of increasing the resilience and productivity of E.U. companies. Digital and technological skills in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (S.T.E.M.) are also essential in strategic value chains such as artificial

intelligence (A.I.). The E.U. and the Member States already recognized this in initiatives such as the recently started European Software Skills Alliance or the E.U. Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition and its national counterparts.

The federal recovery and resilience plans should aim to boost the competitiveness of the E.U. industry via R&D investments and digital re/upskilling. In addition, regions encourage the use of makerspaces in higher education institutions. Makerspaces enable community members to design, prototype, and produce products with resources that would otherwise be inaccessible or prohibitively expensive, such as 3-D printers, digital fabrication machines, and computer-aided design (CAD) software. Higher education institutions should create makerspaces to assist students in using rapid prototyping equipment, thereby gaining skills for Industry 4.0 and sharing their ventures, which can serve as a jumping-off point for students to launch start-ups, get guidance on how to market a product, and connect with potential lenders.

Finally, the European Union should be prepared to take global action to build the conditions for E.U. industrial leadership to thrive. This involves promoting circular economy approaches and setting an example in renewable, innovative technology, and decarbonization policies to guide the global and domestic implementation of the Paris Agreement (Institut Jacques Delors, 2019). Building on this action plan, the European Raw Materials Alliance has one of its key actions to implement a Circular Economic for complex products like electric vehicles, cleantech, and hydrogen equipment. European industries, especially E.E.I., must address competitiveness issues to address the risk of carbon and investment leakage (as long as the climate policies of other major economies do not match the European efforts).

The E.U. must ensure that policies supporting the transition to a low-carbon economy address entire value chains rather than individual industries and that it strives to create effective price signals through market-based instruments such as carbon pricing and global taxes. Carbon price coherence must resolve both direct and indirect carbon leakage risk in some sectors. This should be viewed in conjunction with the development of a “Carbon Leakage Plan” (O.E.C.D., 2020). Finally, the E.U. must ensure adequate access to alternative energy sources and raw materials at reasonable prices, such as large amounts of renewable energy and fuels, and foster global technological harmonization (e.g., U.N. framework), which is a critical factor in improving the competitiveness of historically highly export-intensive sectors. Mutual understanding of requirements and regulatory collaboration will help to reduce construction costs and prevent administrative redundancy (Directorate-General, 2019).

Conclusions

The European Union is facing the major challenge of creating strong industrial structures that can compete with the rise of Chinese power. Creating a holistic industrial policy based on cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things is recognized as the most appropriate tool in the hands of policymakers. The speed with which this policy will be achieved will also determine the EU's position in global competition.

References

Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (2019). A vision for the European industry until 2030: final report of the Industry 2030 high level industrial roundtable. Publications Office of the EU. Available at: https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/339d0a1b-bcab-11e9-9d01-01aa75ed71a1 (Accessed: 09/05/2021).

Institut Jacques Delors (2019). Beyond Industrial Policy: Why Europe Needs a new growth strategy? Available at: https://institutdelors.eu/en/publications/beyond-industrial-policy-why-europe-needs-a-new-growth-strategy-2/ (Accessed: 10/05/2021).

O.E.C.D. (2020). The face mask global value chain in the COVID-19 outbreak: Evidence and policy lessons. OECD Policy Responses to Coronavirus. Available at: https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/the-face-mask-global-value-chain-in-the-covid-19-outbreak-evidence-and-policy-lessons-a4df866d/ (Accessed: 15/05/2021).

Raza, W., Grumiller, J., Grohs, H. & Pintar, N. (2021). Post Covid-19 Value Chains: Options for Reshoring Production Back to Europe in a Globalised Economy - Think Tank. European Parliament Think Tank. Available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EXPO_STU%282021%29653626 (Accessed: 13/05/2021).

Wang, J. & Chen, Y. (2020). Made in China 2025 and manufacturing strategy decisions with reverse QFD. ScienceDirect. Available at: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0925527319303664 (Accessed: 10/05/2021).

Zachariadis, I. & Szczepanski, M. (2019). EU industrial policy at the crossroads: Current state of affairs, challenges and way forward. European Parliament Think Tank. Available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_IDA%282019%29644201 (Accessed: 11/05/2021).

ISSN: 2732-6578 (print version) 2732-6586 (online)

Topic 8

European Union after Covid-19: Towards Recovery

 ISSN: 2732-6578 (print version) 2732-6586 (online)

Post-COVID Prospects for the EMU: The Pandemic Core-Periphery Divide, Palliative Measures and the Stakes of the Conference on the Future of Europe[1]

Matilde Ceron[2]

Abstract

The policy brief draws from previous and ongoing research on the heterogeneities of the impact of the - in principle - symmetric shock of the pandemic within the EU. Considering the pre-existing gaps within the core and periphery, further worsened by the Covid-19 outbreak, the analysis presents the economic and social prospects in 2020 and in the years to come across the Member States. In doing so the work identifies the key challenges in line with the legacy of the Eurozone crisis and well-established limits of EMU governance assessing palliative emergency instruments such as Next Generation EU against the benchmark of the scale of the core-periphery divide. In doing so the contribution puts forward policy recommendation for ambitious reform of economic governance of the Eurozone, against the backdrop of an unprecedented window of opportunity for transnational solidarity opened by the pandemic crisis in parallel with the onset of the Conference of the Future of Europe.

Keywords: Covid-19; pandemic; NGEU; EMU reform; Eurozone; CoFoE; periphery.

Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has heavily impacted global and European societies, worsening existing and introducing additional policy challenges. Within the EU, the outbreak situates itself along the deep-rooted legacy of the Great Recession in an era which pairs strong political divisions and conflict among the Member States with an ongoing reform debate in the context of the Conference on the Future of Europe. The impact of the outbreak, its implications and the future prospects for recovery and reconstruction are a tale of many 'Europes', with sharp distinctions across the old continent hardly fully repaired of even comprehensively mitigated by current common action.

The contribution highlights how the symmetric shock of the outbreak turns, however, into very asymmetric consequences across the Member States, worsening divergences between the core and periphery and carrying problematic political implications for after the crisis. At the same time the sheer scale of the tragedy and unprecedented challenge of the recovery have facilitated a – albeit temporary – suspension of long-time vetoes resulting in programs such as Support to mitigate Unemployment Risks in an Emergency (SURE) and Next Generation EU (NGEU) unthinkable ahead

[1] To cite this paper in APA style: Ceron, M. (2021). Post-COVID Prospects for the EMU: The Pandemic Core-Periphery Divide, Palliative Measures and the Stakes of the Conference on the Future of Europe. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 2(1): 159-165. DOI: 10.12681/hapscpbs.27672

[2] Matilde Ceron is a Post-Doc research fellow of Political Economy at the Department of Political and Social Sciences of the University of Pavia (Italy) and a PhD candidate in Political Studies at the University of Milan.

of the outbreak and even in its early stages. Against this background, the commencing Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFoE) takes place within a window of opportunity for a rethinking of current boundaries of economic and political integration within the EU. Nevertheless, outlooks presented below indicate the temporary and short-lived nature of such opening. Through a critical assessment of the Covid-19 crisis and the current paths towards a joint recovery and reconstruction effort we pinpoint the limits of existing measures and highlight policy recommendations for comprehensive and ambitious Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) reform, at the same time indicating the high stakes of the CoFoE to take place in the year ahead.

Many 'Europes': outbreak, containment and fiscal responses

Especially in the early phase of the pandemic, the outbreak hit primarily Southern countries, which topped the 2020 death-toll ranking. Considering the first wave until end August 2020, Spain and Italy (622 and 587 deaths-per-million respectively) are only surpassed by Belgium, racking nearly six times the casualties (111) of Germany (CSSE, 2020). By end year Italy surpassed Spain (over 1226 victims-per-million) while Germany and many others remained far behind in the human cost of the pandemic ('just' 403 deaths-per-million). Similarly, differences emerge also in terms of cases: nearly 10'000 per million in Spain by end August while not reaching 3'000 in Germany. Heterogeneity extends from the severity of the outbreak to its mortality, not unlinked with the pre-existing context – for example within the healthcare system – and policy choices for the containment of the outbreak. In turn, differences resonated with the economic performance across the EU27 in 2020 and onward as highlighted by early analyses of the pandemic (Ceron et al., 2020; Colfer, 2020; de Jong and Ho, 2021).

Along with differences in severity of the outbreak by cases and deaths and to some extent different levels of preparedness across Member States – which may be partially to blame on the legacy of the economic crisis – somewhat parallel divergences emerged in containment measures. As displayed by the Oxford Covid Government Response Tracker (OxCGRT), even in the early stages of the pandemic Member States split nearly evenly in April across different levels of restrictions, to converge in May and June towards similarly decreasing stringency over time, but with sizeable tails at both ends of the distribution (Hale et al., 2020). Differences remained substantial over the remaining period of the year. In the broadest terms such dynamics translate in countries displaying on average more severe lockdowns and closures in the south west of Europe, followed by a middling level of restrictions in the core and some parts of the East, with very limited measures in some Nordic and Baltic countries, partially reflecting areas somewhat spared by the outbreak. Such differences

come with likewise quite asymmetric prospects for Member States' economies during 2020. From this perspective, it should be noted that the geographic distribution of the OxCGRT's Stringency Index averaged over 2020 – capturing containment measures such as lockdowns, school closures and limits to businesses and movement – peaks in Italy. More periphery countries such as Portugal and Spain, follow. Other Southern Member States (such as Greece) mildly impacted by the health crisis are not far behind, with their Stringency Index surpassing overflown countries such as Belgium. (Hale et al., 2020)

Considering the diverging impact of Covid-19 in the Eurozone, the fiscal pandemic response aligns with the narrative as well. Quite problematically, the ranking of countries mobilizing the most resources far from aligns with Member States leading by outbreak and/or stringency of restrictions to economic activities. The budgetary impact of Covid-19 related measures ranges from barely 1% of GDP in Romania to nearly 7 in Lithuania (European Commission, 2020). At the lower end of the spectrum, one finds heavily impacted countries: Spain barely surpassing 1% and Portugal around 3%, well below the EU average of 4%. On the opposite end, countries like Austria and Denmark, relatively spared comparatively, stacked up support measures exceeding 5% of GDP. Differences do not stop at the overall values of the fiscal stimulus deployed in 2020 as substantial heterogeneities extend to the chosen measures (Andreson et al., 2020). The more fragile Southern economies – along with countries in the east which did not face quite as much of a health shock – rely substantially less on direct fiscal measures and more on public guarantees and deferrals. For example, if the immediate fiscal impulse in Germany is assessed as worth 8.3% of GDP – comparable with interventions in the UK and US – Spain stops at 4.3%, Italy at 3.4, Greece at 3.1 and Portugal at 2.5. A closer look at the fiscal measures of the four biggest Member States during the first wave reinforces the more modest support both in terms of scale and composition within the periphery: in Italy and Spain support measures paled in comparison to Germany (Ceron et al., 2020).

The persistent (core-periphery) economic divide

The pandemic hence bears different implications for countries' economic performances in 2020. Against the benchmark of an overall expected drop of 6.8% of GDP in the Eurozone, heterogeneities are sizable (European Commission, 2021). Countries such as Luxembourg and Ireland regained or even overshoot by the third quarter (Q3) all the ground lost in the first two quarters of 2020. Countries like Greece barely experienced any rebound in Q3 leaving them with a cumulative gap above 10% of GDP. Croatia, Spain, Malta, Portugal and Cyprus are short to follow, with Italy not far behind leaving Southern Member States all clocking at or above minus 5% of GDP. Such divergent paths are not

short-term: the core-periphery divide is a persistent feature of the pandemic aftermath. Most of the EU27 are forecasted to fully recover 2019 levels of GDP in 2021 or 2022, with Italy and Spain as the sole exceptions (European Commission, 2020).

The bleak background evidences how the divergent economic performances – arising ahead of Covid-19 and reinforced by the crisis – imply parallel worsening prospects for public accounts in the South. Countries most impacted by the pandemic – already on frailer economic grounds – had narrower fiscal spaces for the economic response, experiencing worse contractions in GDP. The pandemic is worth deteriorations in budgetary balances in 2020 nearly twice as severe as the financial crisis and skyrocketing public debts (European Commission, 2020). However, such dynamics are once again geographically heterogeneous within the Eurozone. Budget balances in 2020-2022 see Spain and Italy well exceeding the minus 10% benchmark in 2020 and at least in the first instance remaining beyond minus 9 and 8 respectively in 2021 and 2022. Conversely, Sweden and Denmark and within the EA Luxembourg - and to a lesser extent Germany – barely even exceeded the 3% threshold in 2020, expected to return within such limits already in 2021 or at the latest in 2022 (European Commission, 2020). A crisis comparatively more severe – with a potentially quicker but heterogeneous rebound – than the Great Recession, building onto a legacy of core-periphery divergences well established within the literature is bound to likewise put under severe stress an Eurozone governance framework lacking any substantial solidarity and stabilisation mechanism (Camus and Claeys, 2020). Early into the outbreak some of the cornerstones of European economic integration, the Stability and Growth Pact and the state aid regulation, came to a suspension. Months of negotiations, delays and watered-down compromises preceded emergency measures – in themselves a testament to the lack of appropriate mechanism within the existing framework – whose resolutive contribution is, however, far from uncontroversial.

Next Generation EU: palliative solution to structural problems

Firstly, the question arises on the extent to which NGEU may bridge or mitigate the worsening of the core-periphery gaps. Additionally, the lessons from the past (and current) crises, pinpoint the mechanisms and failures within the current governance infrastructure leading to such a divide, opening the interrogative on whether they are corrected by NGEU.

Commission's forecasts already highlight two obstacles which may hinder the effectiveness of NGEU: additionality and productivity (European Commission, 2020). Forecasted impact varies substantially from the best to the worst scenarios. Moreover, while allocations favour worst hit countries, their economic context implies a higher risk of limited additionality – with shrinking fiscal

spaces ahead of the deployment of NGEU – and lower productivities. Best case scenario estimates of a medium term output impact of 1.5% of GDP within the Eurozone (e.g. Bańkowski et al., 2021) come indeed with the caveats of the quality of investment, the productivity context and the absorption capacity, for which the South has a less than stellar track record. Another concern is the timing of the plan, slowly progressing from political agreement in July 2020 to the official presentation of the National Recovery and Resilience Plans only by April 2021. Disbursements far from coincide with the heat of the crisis: limited resources reach countries in need by 2022 as grants are expected to peak in 2024 (Darvas, 2020; Giovannini et al., 2020). Grants and guarantees disbursements in 2021 are just 0.28% of GNI in the EU27, shortly exceeding 1 in top-receivers such as Croatia, Bulgaria and Greece, with Spain and Italy only stopping at 0.62 and 0.46 respectively (Darvas, 2020).

Moreover, the Great Recession and aftermath link core-periphery divergence to structural limits of the EMU. The previous crisis left the legacy of a severe gap in GDP prospects and especially investment, further widened by the pandemic (Buti, 2020). NGEU does – partially – address the investment gap, albeit potentially with limited impact on national institutional quality necessary to fully exploit the benefits of the program. Similarly, the limited fiscal space in the South – capping the potential for national support to the economy even with the suspension of the SGP – is similarly partially countered by the joint recovery effort. However, neither tackle the structural shortcomings of the EMU ecosystem: the lack of room for substantial national stimulus requiring on one hand the suspension of the Pact through the general escape clause – unsustainable as a solution in a medium term – and the sole recourse to (horizontal) coordination of domestic fiscal policies in the absence of instruments for effective stabilisation and solidarity (Buti, 2020). Where the NGEU intervenes in this domain it does so solely as a temporary palliative fix to the incompleteness and unfitness of the governance, which hence stands to require comprehensive long-term restructuring.

Policy implications and the stakes of the CoFoE: an ambitious EMU reform agenda

Avoiding the concrete risk of divergences in recoveries further increasing fragmentation in the absence of effective tools to tackle such imbalances is among the key challenges for the EU post-pandemic reconstruction. NGEU, with its highlighted limit in timing, scale and dependence on national circumstances – running against the primary beneficiary of its support – is currently entrusted with halting the further centrifugal pull of the pandemic. A dangerous vortex for the periphery which has already in the past jeopardised the stability of the Eurozone. The divergent recovery paths run unmitigated for two to three years given the delayed deployment of NGEU.

The European (and national) response to the crisis highlights the importance of the ability to support economies through tough times, a need not only fully internalised by the EMU and the SGP, which should be accounted for within the ongoing review of the EU economic governance framework. If a temporary palliative fix is not resolutive to the EMU shortcomings, the feasibility of any form of transnational solidarity is an unexpected innovation of the pandemic context, aided on one side of the symmetric natural disaster like nature of the human tragedy of Covid-19 – with difficult to assign blame to the worst hit Member States (Bremer and Genschel, 2020) – and on the other on the temporality of NGEU. A permanent solution is a major upcoming challenge, as the existing divide is bound to remain a long-term fixture of the Eurozone in the post-pandemic era. At the same time, the solidarity boosting context of the Covid-19 outbreak is conversely far from permanent, along with the window of opportunity for ambitious EMU reform (Ceron et al., 2020). Such compressed time-frame offers a high-stake policy objective for the commencing tightly scheduled Conference on the Future of Europe: equipping the Eurozone for the stormy waters exiting the pandemic, before the taste for solidarity is replaced by political divisions between debtors and frugal countries.

References

Anderson, J., Bergamini, E., Brekelmans, S., Cameron, A., Darvas, Z., Jiménez, M., Lenaerts, K. and C. Midões. (2020). The fiscal response to the economic fallout from the coronavirus. *Bruegel Blog*. 24 November. Available at https://www.bruegel.org/publications/datasets/covid-national-dataset/#table (Accessed: 10/05/2021).

Bańkowski, K., Ferdinandusse, M. Hauptmeier, S., Jacquinot, P. and Valenta, V. (2021). The macroeconomic impact of the Next Generation EU instrument on the euro area. Occasional paper No 255. Available at: https://www.ecb.europa.eu//pub/pdf/scpops/ecb.op255~9391447a99.en.pdf (Accessed: 09/05/2021).

Bremer, B., and P. Genschel. (2020). Corona Solidarity. EUIdeas. Available at: https://euideas.eui.eu/2020/05/07/corona-solidarity (Accessed: 05/05/2021).

Buti, M. (2020). A tale of two crises: Lessons from the financial crisis to prevent the Great Fragmentation. Available at: https://voxeu.org/article/lessons-financial-crisis-prevent-great-fragmentation (Accessed: 12/05/2021).

Camous, A, Claeys, G. (2020). The evolution of European economic institutions during the COVID-19 crisis. *European Policy Analysis*, 6: 328– 341.

Ceron, M., Palermo, C. M., and Salpietro, V. (2020). Limiti e prospettive della gestione europea durante la pandemia da Covid-19. *Biblioteca Delle Libertà*, LV(228): 1-31.

Colfer, B. (2020). Public policy responses to COVID-19 in Europe. *European Policy Analysis*, 6(2) 126–137.

CSSE (2020). COVID-19 Data Repository by the Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) at Johns Hopkins University. Available at: https://github.com/CSSEGISandData/COVID-19 (Accessed: 10/05/2021).

Darvas, Z. (2020). Next Generation EU payments across countries and years. Bruegel Blog. 12 November. Available at: https://www.bruegel.org/2020/11/next-generation-eu-payments-across-countries-and-years/ (Accessed: 08/05/2021).

de Jong, M., and Ho, A. T. (2020). Emerging fiscal health and governance concerns resulting from COVID-19 challenges. *Journal of Public Budgeting, Accounting and Financial Management*, 33(1): 1-11.

European Commission. (2020). Autumn 2020 Economic Forecast. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-performance-and-forecasts/economic-forecasts/autumn-2020-economic-forecast_en (Accessed: 10/05/2021).

European Commission. (2021). Winter 2021 Economic Forecast. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-performance-and-forecasts/economic-forecasts/winter-2021-economic-forecast-challenging-winter-light-end-tunnel_en (Accessed: 07/05/2021).

Giovannini, A., Hauptmeier, S., Leiner-Killinger, N. and Valenta, V. (2020). The fiscal implications of the EU's recovery package. Economic Bulletin Boxes. *European Central Bank*, vol. 6. Available at: https://www.ecb.europa.eu//pub/economic-bulletin/focus/2020/html/ecb.ebbox202006_08~7f90a18630.en.html (Accessed: 10/05/2021).

Hale T., Webster S., Petherick A., Phillips T., and Kira B. (2020). Oxford covid-19 government response tracker. *Blavatnik School of Government*, n. 25.

 ISSN: 2732-6578 (print version) 2732-6586 (online)

The Role of European Agencies in Transboundary Crises: Perspectives in the Post COVID-19 Era[1]

George Nastos[2]

Abstract

European Agencies (EAs) have a significant influence on policy-making and decision-making in key areas, whether we are talking about the daily lives of the citizens or about crisis management. The emergence of EAs was an institutional response to the need for policy coordination in the EU´s system of governance. The last decade has created a new reality for the European Union, characterized by successive external transboundary crises. The increasingly urgent need for a European crisis response could signal a more active role for European agencies. During the global financial and public debt crisis, part of the EU's response was to set up three new European Agencies. The refugee crisis further strengthened existing agencies, such as EASO and FRONTEX. EU agencies are already playing an increasingly important role in shaping European policies as solutions to crises. Through the experience of the ongoing pandemic crisis of COVD-19, this policy brief seeks to highlight the importance of European Agencies in an effective European response to crises and to contribute to the discussion about the future role of EAs in transboundary crisis management.

Keywords: EU Agencies; transboundary crises; European governance.

Introduction

A crisis is characterized as a large-scale event that occurs unexpectedly, requires immediate action and threatens the fundamental values of a society (Larsson et al, 2009). A key feature of crises is that they cannot be dealt with using standard practices and existing resources. They require urgent action by the authorities in conditions of deep uncertainty (Donaldson, 1991). Crisis management refers to the preparation of, response to and recovery from extreme events. It can be further analysed in specific phases and activities, including threat assessment, prevention, mitigation, and recovery (Widmalm, Parker & Persson, 2019)

Transboundary crises are defined as those threats that require urgent action and cross geographical, political, economic, social and legal boundaries (Ansell, Boin, & Keller, 2010). Transboundary crises involve higher numbers of participants, who tend to be more scattered and often with different agendas, while at the management level they create the need to adapt to an unprecedented partnership under conditions that are much more difficult to achieve (Ansell, Boin, & Keller, 2010). Crises require flexibility and adaptation to the particular circumstances they represent. These two key advantages are often limited by the political, administrative and statutory framework. In a fragmented

[1] To cite this paper in APA style: Nastos, G. (2021). The Role of European Agencies in Transboundary Crises: Perspectives in the Post COVID-19 Era. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 2(1): 166-174. DOI: 10.12681/hapscpbs.27673
[2] George Nastos is Political Scientist (BA, MA, Phd-c), University of Crete.

institutional framework, conditions for effective crisis management at national level appear to be threatened by the roles played by national and regional governments (Parrado & Galli, 2021).

When discussing crisis management in the EU, the tendency is to focus on the key players and decision-making centers. This article seeks to highlight the role of European Agencies in managing transboundary crises in the EU and to contribute in the debate for a more active and effective role of EAs in crisis management. The first part provides a summary of the profile of EAs today. What EAs are, why they are created and what role they play in the European system of governance. Through the study of primary and secondary sources, the next part notes the main actions of the EAs in the pandemic crisis, any weaknesses that occurred and what new agencies were created. The last section summarizes the results and provides recommendations aiming to contribute in the further discussion about the role of EAs in crisis management, through the experience of the greatest health crisis in the history of the EU.

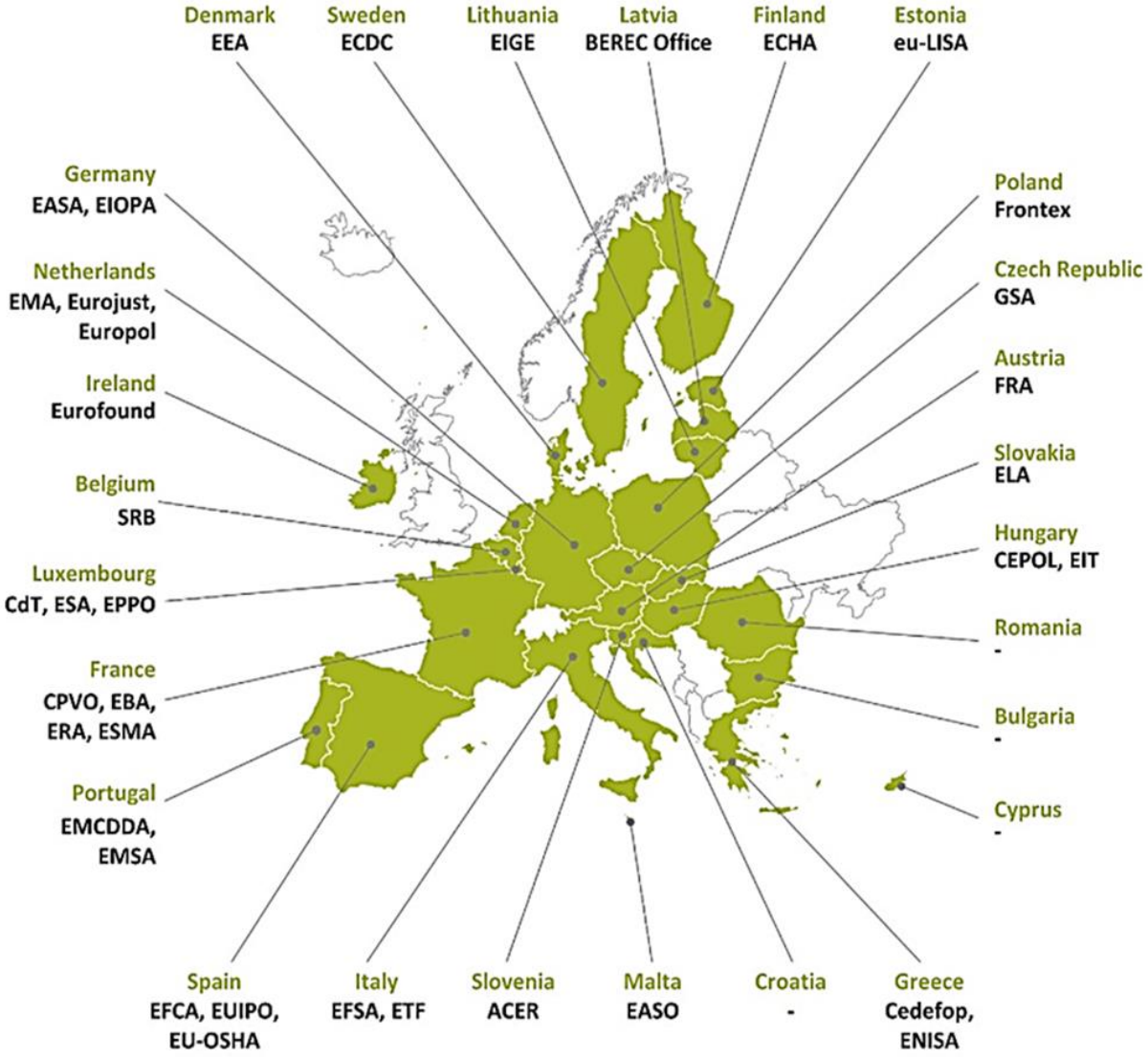
The European Agencies

EU agencies exist as "intermediaries" between the institutions of the EU and the Member States in the complex EU executive system (Everson & Vos, 2021). Most were set up as new bodies to take on responsibilities previously held by the Commission and/or the Member States. The reasons behind the creation of agencies are the highly technical nature of the tasks they are assigned to or the desire for efficiency. They are governed by a Management Board composed of representatives of both the Member States and the Commission. They contribute to the implementation of EU policies and support cooperation between the EU and national governments by pooling technical expertise (European Court of Auditors, 2020). The EU agencies operate within a framework of security mechanisms to ensure that the extension of the regulatory powers, caused by crisis situations, is discussed at the appropriate political level in a transparent manner (Pollak & Slominski, 2021).

The emergence, proliferation and institutionalization of EU agencies has been widely studied. Most studies on European Agencies concern their functioning, their contribution to the EU multi-level governance system, their role in decision-making, issues of legitimacy and accountability, whether and how they contribute to cooperation between Member States or whether they have gradually slipped out of the control of the Member States by exercising a de facto decision-making power. After the last major transboundary crises the EU faced, that is the financial and the migration crises, a relatively lesser until then field of study has emerged, concerning how a crisis situation affects EU agencies, what role EU agencies should play in crisis management and how they could contribute to

a more effective management of transboundary crises (Jordana & Triviño-Salazar, 2020; Pollak & Slominski, 2021).

Image 1: European Agencies (European Court of Auditors, Special Report 22/2020)



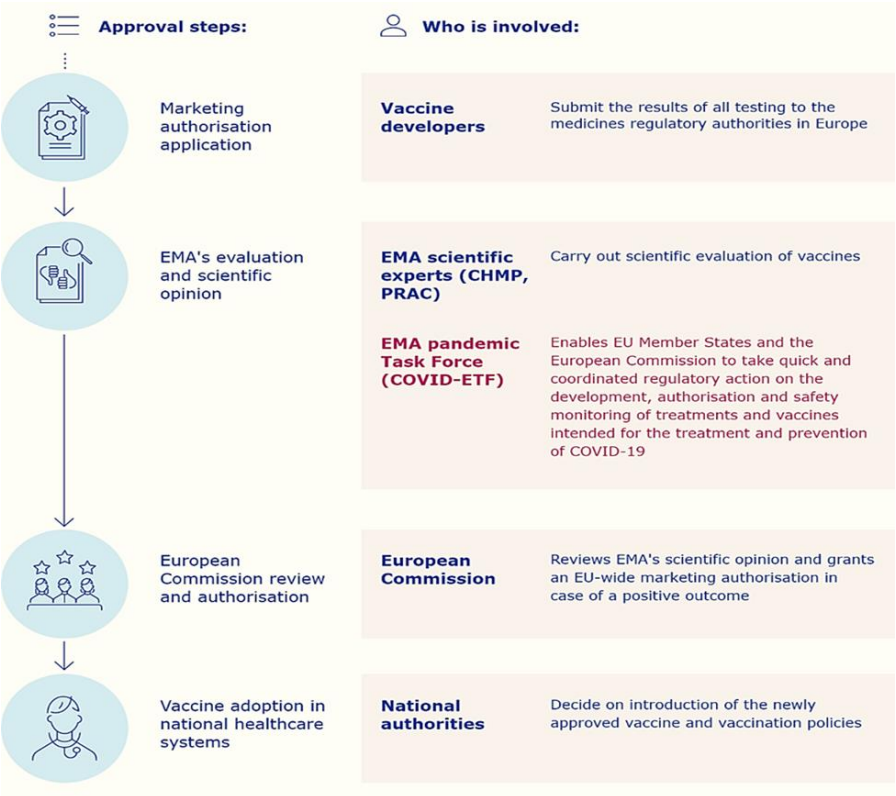
European Agencies during the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic, caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, has had an impact on most agencies in the European Union, which have directly or indirectly dealt with the crisis in various ways. Some EU agencies have been particularly active and important in supporting a functioning EU. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) provides regular information on human and fundamental rights restrictions that have inevitably arisen from the efforts to control the dispersion

of the virus. The European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) helps to ensure that aviation operations can continue as smoothly as possible while remaining safe for the public (Kaeding, 2020). Monitoring and publishing surveys regarding the impact of the pandemic in various policy areas, data collection and analysis, issuing guidelines, formulating and updating security protocols, playing a leading and decisive role in policy decisions, are some of the actions of almost all EU agencies. Two directly involved agencies in the COVID-19 pandemic crisis are the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC).

The European Medicines Agency (EMA) plays an important role in enabling the development, scientific evaluation, approval and monitoring of COVID-19 vaccines in the European Union. EMA has set up task forces to address the scientific, regulatory and operational challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. One of them, COVID-19 EMA pandemic Task Force (COVID-ETF), is to help the Member States and the European Commission to take quick and coordinated regulatory action on the development, authorization and safety monitoring of treatments and vaccines intended for the treatment and prevention of COVID-19 (European Medicines Agency, 2020).

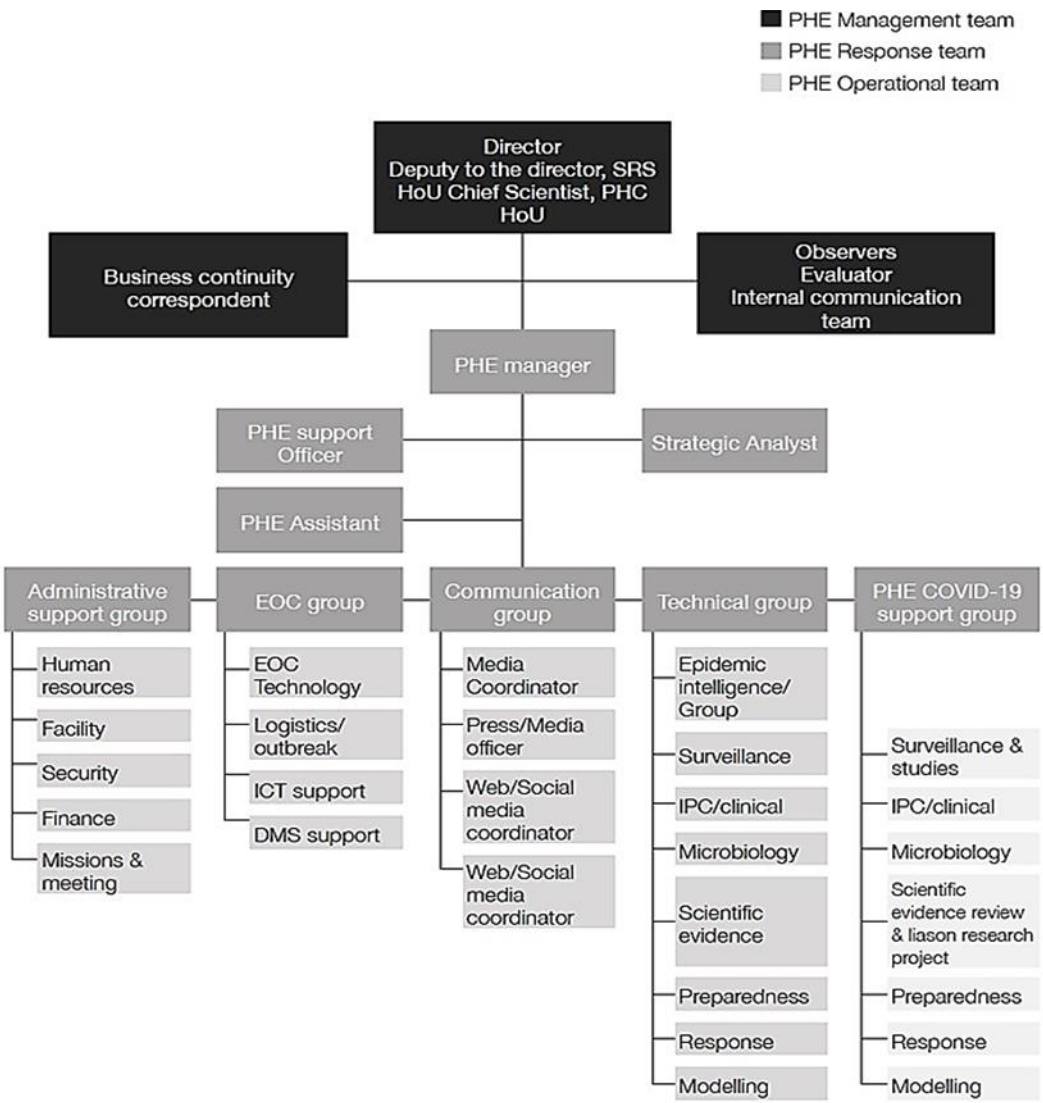
Image2: Evaluation and approval steps for COVID-19 vaccines (www.ema.europa.eu)



For the ECDC, the COVID-19 pandemic is the most serious public health crisis the agency had to respond since its establishment in 2004, when it was set up to support an effective European response to public health threats. ECDC's role includes the continuous publication of epidemiological data and monitoring results regarding the progression of the disease, its spread, hospitalizations, intensive care unit occupancy and other response measures in all Member States.

Also, it includes rapid risk assessments, scientific guidance to support decision-making issues related to effective pandemic treatment, the dissemination of disease information and treatment measures directly to physicians and the general public and responding to a wide range of specific requests from the European institutions and bodies, the Member States and other stakeholders (ECDC, 2020).

Image 3: ECDC's Public Health Emergency (PHE) organization structure (ECDC, 2020)



Despite the active action of the EU agencies, many have criticized the effectiveness and contribution of some agencies to the crisis, especially during the first phase of the pandemic (Brooks & Geyer, 2020; Jordana & Salazar, 2020). Civil Protection Mechanism's (CPM) RescEU, upgraded from 2019, a system of a common stock of transport, medical equipment and hospitals, was not designed to meet a situation in which all Member States require the same resources at the same time. As Covid-19 unfolded, national governments were either already facing the pandemic or fearing that they would soon. The outcome, in many cases, was to keep strategic resources at home (Brooks & Geyer, 2020).

Also, there has been criticism of the slow procedures in the approval of COVID-19 vaccines, with vaccines receiving EMA's approval much later than both the United States and the United Kingdom. While the US and UK used quick approvals that limited the liability of providers when the vaccines were ready, EMA continued to slow down procedures. The rationale was that the procedures followed by EMA are "more appropriate" and "thorough" for the safety of the vaccines (Michalopoulos, 2020).

Although the ECDC's contribution is valued by many actors responsible for managing the pandemic crisis, there has been criticism of the organization's performance in the first phase of the pandemic in early 2020 (Jordana & Salazar, 2020). Criticism concerns the delayed assessment and response at the beginning of the pandemic and in the absence of a more precautionary approach on setting and guiding the agenda (ECDC, 2020).

As already mentioned, crises in the past have led to the creation of new agencies as additional tools for dealing with emergencies and preventing similar future crises. In April 2021 it was announced that a new executive agency would be set up to help Europe recover from the COVID-19 crisis (European Commission, 2021). The European Health and Digital Executive Agency (HaDEA) will implement the EU's COVID-19 recovery response programme. The newly established EU4Health, came into being on 26th March, making €5.1 billion available to strengthen the resilience of health systems and promote medical innovation and digital transformation. EU4Health is intended not only to fill any gaps revealed during the pandemic, but to ensure that the EU is prepared if faced with new health threats (Lovell, 2021).

As part of building a European Health Union, the European Commission has proposed, since November 2020, a new health security framework for future health challenges (European Commission, 2020). Based on lessons learnt from the coronavirus pandemic, the new framework will extend the role of EU agencies in the coordination of preparedness and response measures.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In the EU, there is no central agency for transboundary crisis management and, as Boldin & Boin (2017) argue, there is a gap between the rules written on paper and their practical use when it comes to EU crisis management. The immigration and economic crises have led to the expansion of the role of European agencies. The extent to which the EU decides to manage a crisis by strengthening transnational tools and policies has an impact on its agencies. The nature of transboundary crises makes the elements of coordination and information perhaps the most crucial part of successful crisis management. This indicates the important role of the European Agencies, as by their nature they are specialized bodies that become coordination nodes, harmonizing rules and providing reliable information in specific policy areas.

The pandemic will inevitably lead to an upgrade of the role of some European Agencies. As very accurately noted by Brooks & Geyer (2020), it seems likely that the Commission will seek to reiterate its "traditional" response to public health crises: the creation and strengthening of technocratic organizations, and to carefully lay the groundwork for a possible expansion of its spheres of activity, while avoiding a formal treaties change.

Trying to build a perfect central agency that would deal with transboundary crises, does not necessarily mean more effective crisis management. According to Boin and Hart (2010), the crucial issue is not formal structures, but the quality of communication and coordination within the agencies of different countries. Multiplying agencies, often with overlapping tasks, might make it more difficult to respond to transboundary crises, which by their nature require high levels of coordination, and to which the time factor is the catalyst for the successful management of a crisis. So the answer to crisis management is not more agencies. It is more detailed and better prioritization of initiatives, conceptualization of the problem, formulation of goals and the various alternatives to achieving them. When it is necessary for these objectives to be achieved through an existing or a new agency, the EU and the member states should provide those agencies with the necessary resources, autonomy, responsibilities for the fulfillment of their mission as well as control and accountability for their effectiveness.

In other words, the issue is not to increase the number of European Agencies in order to deal effectively with crises, but to upgrade the framework of their creation, resources, operation and evaluation. The latest European Court of Auditors Special Report on EU agencies (2020) suggests the need for reorganization, even reduction of agencies where there is coherence and overlap in the same policy area. The existence or creation of an agency should be on the basis of necessity with

clear responsibilities, mission and evaluation of achievement of objectives. In other words, the evaluation should focus not only on the activities of the organizations but also on their significant contribution to the implementation of the respective policy.

Monitoring and information about the contribution of European Agencies in politics and cooperation in the EU is limited. So, there is also a need for better information and discussion in the public sphere about the actions, the role and the performance (negative or positive) of EU agencies, as they may be pioneers in resolving crisis situations or long-term social challenges.

Finally, especially in transboundary crises, there is a need for closer operational links between the agencies' action groups and the Member States. As Jordana & Triviño-Salazar (2020) point out, when key EU policy makers agree on a common response that has fewer political costs than disagreement, only then can European Agencies, such as the ECDC, play a more active role. Transboundary crises of the last decade present an opportunity to open the discussion about a new, more effective and rational framework regarding the creation, the function and the role of European Agencies.

References

Ansell, C., Boin, A. & Keller, A. (2010). Managing Transboundary Crises: Identifying the Building Blocks of an Effective Response System. *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, 18: 195-207.

Blondin D. & Boin A. (2017). Managing Crises in Europe: A Public Management Perspective. In E. Ongaro & S. Van Thiel (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Public Administration and Management in Europe*. Palgrave Macmillan, London, pp. 459-474

Boin, A. & Hart, P. (2010). Organising for Effective Emergency Management: Lessons from Research. *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 69: 357-371.

Boin, A., Ekengren, M. & Rhinard, M. (2013). *The European Union as crisis manager: patterns and prospects*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brooks, E. & Geyer, R. (2020). The development of EU health policy and the Covid-19 pandemic: trends and implications. *Journal of European Integration*, 42(8): 1057-1076.

Donaldson, L. (1991). Coping with Crises: The Management of Disasters, Riots and Terrorism. *Australian Journal of Management*, 16(1): 99–102.

EU Agencies Network (2020). EUAN response to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. Available at: https://euagencies.eu/ (Accessed: 10/05/2021)

European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (2020). Strategic and performance analysis of ECDC response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Available at: https://www.ecdc.europa.eu (Accessed: 09/05/2021).

European Commission (2020). European Health and Digital Executive Agency. Available at: https://hadea.ec.europa.eu (Accessed: 11/05/2021).

European Commission (2020). Health security and infectious diseases. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/health/security/overview_en (Accessed: 10/05/2021).

European Court of Auditors (2020). Future of EU agencies – Potential for more flexibility and cooperation. Special Report 22/2020. Available at https://www.eca.europa.eu (Accesed: 05/05/2021).

European Medicines Agency (2020). EMA's governance during COVID-19 pandemic. Available at: https://www.ema.europa.eu (Accessed: 11/05/2021).

Everson M. & Vos E. (2021). EU Agencies and the Politicized Administration. In J. Pollak & P. Slominski (eds), *The Role of EU Agencies in the Eurozone and Migration Crisis. European Administrative Governance*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, pp. 21-51.

Jordana, J., Pérez-Durán, I. & Triviño-Salazar, J.C. (2020). Drivers of integration? EU agency board members on transboundary crises. *Comp Eur Polit*, 19: 26–48.

Jordana, J. & Triviño-Salazar, J.C. (2020). EU agencies' involvement in transboundary crisis response: Supporting efforts or leading coordination*? Public Admin*, 98: 515–529.

Jordana, J. & Triviño-Salazar, J.C. (2020). Where are the ECDC and the EU-wide responses in the COVID-19 pandemic? *The Lancet*, 395(10237): 1611-1612.

Kaeding, M. (2020). More important than ever – EU agencies in times of crisis. European Institute of Public Administration. Available at: https://www.eipa.eu/ (Accessed: 03/05/2021).

Larsson, P., Frisell E.H. & Olsson S. (2009). Understanding the Crisis Management System of the European Union. In: S. Olsson (ed.), *Crisis Management in the European Union*. Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg, pp. 1-16.

Lovell, T. (2021). New executive agency launched to help Europe's recovery from COVID-19. Healthcare IT. Available at: https://www.healthcareitnews.com/ (Accessed: 10/11/2021).

Michalopoulos, S. (2020). Greek professor questions EMA's delay in approving COVID-19 vaccine. EURACTIV. Available at: https://www.euractiv.com (Accessed: 10/05/2021).

Parrado, S. & Galli, D. (2021). Intergovernmental veto points in crisis management: Italy and Spain facing the COVID-19 pandemic. International Review of Administrative Sciences, 0 (0): 1-17.

Pollak J. & Slominski P. (2021). EU Agencies in Times of Crisis: An Introduction. In: J. Pollak & P. Slominski (eds.), *The Role of EU Agencies in the Eurozone and Migration Crisis. European Administrative Governance*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, pp. 3-19

Widmalm, S., Parker, C.F. & Persson, T. (2019). *Civil Protection Cooperation in the European Union: How Trust and Administrative Culture Matter for Crisis Management*. European Administrative Governance. Springer.

 ISSN: 2732-6578 (print version) 2732-6586 (online)

The EU Political Framework for SDGs 2030 and its Implications to Greece in Political CSR and Development Activities[1]

Evangelos Taliouris[2] & Nikolaos Trihas[3]

Abstract

Business innovation, job creation, environmental sustainability and good governance are fundamental issues for sustainable development (SD) in European Union (EU). SD and policy making in EU is vital for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) fulfillment by 2030, especially if we take into account the asymmetries and the need of cohesion among member states including Greece. The lack of cohesion and the asymmetries indicate the necessity of a horizontal harmonization. Despite the fact that is not a policy topic such as defense or foreign policy which are quite high at national policy agendas, it is a topic that can bring member states together and increase cohesion, according to nonfunctional perspectives. Moreover, the fact that SDGs are based on 17 Goals and numerous indicators provides a significant opportunity for hybrid policy instruments and realms that associated with poverty, good governance and corporate citizenship. What is also interesting is that EU has a policy plan since 2016 as well member states and regions. The aim of this paper is to further examine the European policy framework for SDGs 2030 with a special reference to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policy making process in Greece. In particular, this paper has a special emphasis on sectors such as tourism, in order to seek the relationship between CSR and SD in policy planning by 2030 (e.g. European Regional Development Fund). Tourism as a policy field is based on a twofold analysis from state initiatives towards development (protocols, infrastructures, regulations) and private sector responsible entrepreneurship. Therefore, it is an interesting field of political analysis because it tests the state's adaptation in international challenges (e.g. climate change, unemployment, poverty, COVID-19), whilst at the same time is linked with business sector activities and development planning.

Keywords: Sustainable Development; Sustainable Development Goals 2030; Corporate Social Responsibility; Governance; Tourism Policy; European Union; Greece.

Introduction

Sustainable Development (SD) is an interdisciplinary policy field for international affairs, with particular implications for governance issues in countries and regions. The definition of SD in 1987 in the Buntdlant Report "Our Common Future" (WCED, 1987) was an important step in order a framework to be set in this political discourse. In 2000, the formulation of the eight (8) Millennium Development Goals was a universal measurable attempt to deal with poverty and SD challenges, and

[1] To cite this paper in APA Style: Taliouris, E. & Trihas, N. (2021). The EU Political Framework for SDGs 2030 and its Implications to Greece in Political CSR and Development Activities. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 2(1): 175-181. DOI: 10.12681/hapscpbs.27674

[2] Evangelos Taliouris is Adjunct Lecturer in International Organizations and Institutions at Hellenic Mediterranean University and Researcher at the Center for European Policy and Regional Development. Department of Political Science of the University of Crete.

[3] Nikolaos Trihas is Assistant Professor at the Department of Business Administration and Tourism of the Hellenic Mediterranean University.

within this context, United Nations (UN) in 2015 set the framework for SD Agenda 2030 in parallel with seventeen (17) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UN, 2015). In 2016, the European Union (EU) set the policy framework and suggestions for SDGs 2030 (EC, 2016), while the Member States (MS) are responsible for their SD national strategy (for instance Greece published it in July 2018).

Different approaches for SD exist in academic literature, practice and international politics (e.g. strong or weak sustainability) (Castro, 2004, Baker et al., 2005), especially in policy topics such as climate change or business and economy adaptation to sustainability (e.g. rules for environmental design). The institutional setting and the administration has a crucial role also to play in to the viability of SD policy, whilst the USA example for climate change adaptation is interesting. EU has a long-term tradition in policies regarding SD and environment, despite the fact that is not as institutionally homogenous as USA. In Paris in 1972, the Council for Environmental Policies met and EU set the framework for policy harmonization of domestic environmental regulation with international circumstances as well as local institutional features at member states level (Doussis, 2016). The connection of environmental standards through directives with other policy topics such as industry, infrastructures, rural sector in 90s and 21st century, was a significant step. Hence, the environmental policy and its harmonization with regional development and its adaptation in production line and development sectors (e.g. industry, tourism etc.) is not a linear process because of member states' different development characteristics and institutional traditions. However, EU is characterized as a "model of environmental governance at the regional level" (Doussis, 2016: 401).

In this context, this paper aims to analyze the EU policy framework for SDGs 2030 and its implications to member states like Greece in policy tools and topics. Moreover, this paper will elaborate the political dimension of responsible entrepreneurship as a policy field with a reference to SDGs and in association with development activities (e.g. tourism). Summing up, this paper will analyze the process of an international policy to European and national policy measures, via literature review, archive research (e.g. national documents) and evidence based policy analysis.

EU policy for responsible entrepreneurship and SDGs 2030

EU harmonization with international standards and policies for SD was under the Summits (Rio, Johannesburg), which then turn into strategies and directions that linked global with regional and local over time. One of the main challenges during these processes was both the member states political capability to develop such policy measures domestically and at the same time to be attached to development activities, such as infrastructure, education and entrepreneurship (responsible

entrepreneurship). The latter was essential for European business sector not only for the number of its operational fields (e.g. industry, transport, tourism, etc.), but also for its share to employment and economic growth. Since 2001 and 2003, the concept of responsible entrepreneurship indicated the European political approach for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and its linkage with SD (Taliouris, 2018, 2019; Taliouris & Trihas, 2017).

More specifically, the SD Strategy for 2001 (Commission of the European Communities, 2001b), the Green Paper of 2001 (Commission of the European Communities, 2001a) and the Commission's position in 2002 (Commission of the European Communities, 2002) underline that CSR and responsible entrepreneurship is not a solely business case but a political too, that member states have the opportunity and responsibility to respond politically and set up institutions and policy measures. In 2009, the EU revised SD Strategy, as well as the political content of CSR, which further enriched politically via the Europe 2020 Strategy and the revised CSR Strategy 2011-2014 (Commission of the European Communities, 2010, 2011). The latter was essential because defines up till now the political CSR perspective in EU and explains the business contribution to SDGs 2030 fulfillment in EU SD Strategy in 2016 (Commission of the European Communities, 2016).

The business sector responsibility and conduct to SDGs 2030 is an important step towards the Sustainable Development Agenda, not only internationally but in EU too. This fact is justifiable because European business sector has a significant responsibility due to its share and impact in international transactions and trade. EU in the official document "Towards a sustainable Europe by 2030" (Commission of the European Communities, 2016) stresses the importance of business sector in sustainability issues via the form of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and the practices of responsible entrepreneurship at chapter "3.2.3 Responsible business conduct, corporate social responsibility and new business models" (p. 26-27) (EC, 2003). The European CSR and responsible entrepreneurship approach focuses on topics such as sustainable international supply chains, linkages with social economy, sustainable consumption etc. As mentioned above, political CSR perspective exists in EU since 90s, via an implicit and silent CSR way both in business practices and policy making (e.g. environmental and labor legislation) (Taliouris, 2018, 2019). Hence, the fact that CSR is linked explicitly with SDGs 2030 is nothing but the continuation of an existing political process, which became more explicit in 2001 by the first European definition for CSR.

In 2007, the programs "Small, Clean and Competitive" and "Opportunity and Responsibility" were introduced (Commission of the European Communities, 2007; EC, 2007b), which focused on CSR practices and policy making for SMEs. In 2007, 2011 and 2014, CSR became a policy topic in EU (EC, 2007a, 2011, 2014), that concluded in the National Public Policies reports. The main CSR policy

instruments and topics are presented in these EU reports incorporated also its member states practices, while SMEs are a unique CSR policy topic. This is plausible because SMEs are the backbone of EU development sectors, they contribute significantly to domestic production line and they hold a significant position in supply chain at international and domestic level. Hence, SMEs special characteristics towards CSR and sustainable development are significant and they were also mentioned in EU renewed CSR Strategy 2011-2014 and in the "Towards a sustainable Europe by 2030" policy document (Commission of the European Communities, 2011, 2016). In conclusion, the link of CSR policies and SDGs 2030 with the use of Structural Funds (European Investment Bank, European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund) was useful in 2014-2020 programming period (e.g. social inclusion- 9iv, vocational training- 8v-8iii, entrepreneurship- 3a-3c), the new programming period 2021-2027 and Smart Specialization Strategies at regional level in Europe.

The CSR policy in Greece and the political discourse for tourism development

The UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2015, 2017) has linked tourism activities with the implementation of SDGs 2030 and in particular with SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 12 (sustainable production and consumption), and SDG 14 (life bellow water). In parallel, the EU targeting (EC, 2016) had set an overall target of 20% and 25% of public expenditures related to climate change adaptation, during programming periods 2014-2020 and 2021-2027. At the same time, Commission proposed to double financial resources for social pillar and sustainable infrastructure, due to the fact that SD public spend funding must go hand in hand with the gradual decline for unsustainable environmental infrastructure. Consequently, the new programming period 2021-2027 correlation with 17 SDGs is useful, especially with responsible entrepreneurship actions in sectors such as tourism. This is also reflected in the European Green Deal (Commission of the European Communities, 2019), both in the field of non-financial reporting and in sectors such as industry, transport and services that related with tourism sector.

Tourism is a vital sector for the Greek economy, as in 2019 it contributed 20.8% of the country's GDP, generated revenue of 17.7 billion Euros, as well as 946,200 jobs (21.7% of total employment) (SETE, 2020). On the other hand, Greek tourism is characterized by development asymmetries because of the overconcentration of tourism development in few regions (mainly island or coastal) as well as the one-dimensional model of mass tourism. Unfortunately, these characteristics conclude to tourism sector seasonality, its vulnerability to crises (e.g. COVID-19, economic downturn), its weak infrastructures especially in islands and coastal areas. Moreover, the high dependence on tour

operators, the continuous decrease of average tourist consumption and the illegal constructions underline an unsustainable investment environment both economically and environmentally. Therefore, these weaknesses jeopardize the political will for a sustainable tourism development, which has been declared by Ministry of Tourism in recent years[4]. Natural capital is the basis on which the tourism as a sector must be based on and related with public policy planning and entrepreneurship that combines elements of sustainability and CSR in tourism destination management, climate change infrastructures, rural tourism, etc.

Conclusions

European Union since its foundation has been based on common policies in a number of fields such as the economy, trade, etc. A basic assumption, however, is that political cohesion is not simple and linear as a process. In particular, CSR and responsible entrepreneurship are policy fields that many debates among states and non-state actors lasted since 2000 (e.g. non-financial reporting Directive was completed in 2014). Moreover, there are different policy tools and approaches to CSR, which affects other policy areas and tourism as well. The Commission has issued CSR policy reports ("National Public Policies for CSR") in 2007, 2011 and 2014. From literature review process, these policy models for CSR (Albareda, Lozano, & Ysa, 2007; Albareda et al., 2009; Letica, 2010; Taliouris, 2018) are elaborated further and grouped in geographical terms (Nordic, Rhineland, Anglo-Saxon etc.) and institutional traditions for CSR (Greece is part of the Mediterranean "Agora Model" together with member states such as Italy, Spain and Portugal).

The European policy framework for CSR in relation to SDGs 2030, is important to be linked from one hand with business innovation but also to analyze in depth the postmodern governance issues regarding the role of the state. Stakeholders' synergies and good governance are mentioned in SDG 17. The traditional role of states has been changed in that globalization terms from international institutions but also non-state actors. Hence, the achievement of SDGs 2030 is not an easy policy task for member states like Greece, while tourism sector potentials are being questioned if we take into account the risks and the challenges that must be addressed. The tourism overconcentration in specific regions, the issue of insularity, the absence of sustainable infrastructures in parallel with the tourism impact in national economy and employment growth indicate responsible entrepreneurship in that development sector as a challenge for sustainable development policy design and implementation.

[4] Tourism National Development Strategy 2014-2020; National Strategy 2021-2030 in 2019; CSR National Strategy in 2017; National Strategy for SD Agenda 2030 in 2018.

References

Albareda, L, Lozano, M.J. & Ysa, T. (2007). Public Policies on Corporate Social Responsibility: The Role of Governments in Europe. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 74: 391-407.

Albareda, L, Lozano, M.J., Tencati, A., Perrini, F. & Midttun, A. (2009). The Role of Government in Corporate Social Responsibility. *Ethical Prospects*, Part 2: 103-149.

Baker, S., Kousis, M., Richardson, D. & Young, S. (2005). *The politics of sustainable development*. London: Routledge.

Castro, C.J. (2004). Sustainable Development: Mainstream and Critical Perspectives. *Organization & Environment*, 17(2): 195-225.

Commission of the European Communities (2001a). *Green paper. Promoting a European framework for Corporate Social Responsibility*. Brussels

Commission of the European Communities (2001b). *A Sustainable Europe for a Better World: A European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development*. Brussels.

Commission of the European Communities (2002). *Corporate Social Responsibility: A business contribution to Sustainable Development*. Brussels.

Commission of the European Communities. (2007). *Small, clean and competitive. A programme to help small and medium-sized enterprises comply with environmental legislation*. Brussels

Commission of the European Communities (2010). *Europe 2020. A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth*. Brussels

Commission of the European Communities (2011). *A renewed EU strategy 2011-14 for Corporate Social Responsibility*. Brussels.

Commission of the European Communities (2016). *Reflection paper Towards a sustainable Europe by 2030*. Brussels.

Commission of the European Communities (2019). *The European Green Deal*. Brussels.

Doussis, E. (2016). European environmental policy and environmental protection in EU. In: N. Maravegias (Ed.), *European Union: Creation, evolution, perspectives*. Athens: Kritiki publishing [in Greek].

European Commission (2003). *Responsible entrepreneurship: A collection of good practice cases among small & medium-sized enterprises across Europe*. Brussels.

European Commission (2007a). Corporate Social Responsibility National Public Policies in the European *Union*. Luxemburg: Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

European Commission (2007b). *Opportunity and Responsibility. How to help more small businesses to integrate social and environmental issues into what they do*. Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry.

European Commission (2011). *Corporate Social Responsibility National Public Policies in the European Union*. Luxemburg: Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

European Commission (2014). *Corporate Social Responsibility National Public Policies in the European Union*. Luxemburg: Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

European Commission (2016). *Reflection paper towards a sustainable Europe by 2030*. Brussels.

Hellenic Republic - Ministry of Tourism (2013). *National Development Guidelines in the tourism sector 2014-2020*. Athens.

Hellenic Republic (2017). *National strategic plan for corporate social responsibility*. Athens.

Hellenic Republic (2018). *National Strategy for SD Agenda 2030*. Athens.

Hellenic Republic - Ministry of Economy (2019). *National Strategy 2021-2030*. Athens.

Letica. B. (2010). Three Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Models in New European Union Member States and Candidate Countries. *International Relations Quarterly*, 1(4): 1-16.

SETE (2020). Basic figures of Greek tourism 2019. Available at: https://sete.gr/el/stratigiki-gia-ton-tourismo/vasika-megethi-tou-ellinikoy-tourismoy/ (Accessed: 03/11/2020).

Taliouris, E. (2018). European Policy for Corporate Social Responsibility: Governance Context, Linkage with Sustainable Development and Crisis as a Policy Factor. *European Quarterly of Political Attitudes and Mentalities*, 7(1): 32-47.

Taliouris, E. (2019). Policy Making for Corporate Social Responsibility and Responsible Entrepreneurship in Greece: EU Policy Framework, Governance Context and Business Sector as Aspects in Sustainable Development Process. *European Quarterly of Political Attitudes and Mentalities*, 8(3): 15-25.

Taliouris, E., & Trihas, N. (2017). Public Policy for Corporate Social Responsibility and Governance for Sustainable Tourism Development in Greece. *Business Ethics and Leadership*, 1(4): 49-57.

United Nations (2015). *Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015.

UNWTO (2015). *Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals*. Madrid: World Tourism Organization.

UNWTO (2017). *UNWTO Tourism Highlights 2017 Edition*. Madrid: World Tourism Organization.

World Commission on Environment and Development (1987). *Our Common Future*. United Nations.

The EU Institutional Framework and the Social Dimension Policies: Barriers, Challenges and Prospects[1]

Stylianos Ioannis Tzagkarakis[2]

Abstract

The discussion about the role and the forces around the European social dimension is vast, especially when it comes to the multidimensional challenges that exist and the ways they should be addressed. Firstly, it should be noted that the European Union has been constructed upon a minimalist direct involvement in the field of social policy as it is rather considered a matter of the national welfare states (Leibfried, 2015). This does not mean that there was not central or indirect impact on social policy during the decades of the Europeanization process but that the main consequences have been formed indirectly, thus making them also difficult to be measured. At the same time, the European social dimension is a field of policy which has been impacted by the interrelation between politics, law and markets as long as it is formed under the competition between social policy intervention towards market correction and reinforcement of free movement. Specific tools have been created in order to force convergence also in the Europe 2020 framework, but still more effort is necessary in order to force convergence on the social pillar. This paper examines the current challenges in the European Union (EU) social dimension in order to stress the necessity for alternatives towards enhancing European social dimension.

Keywords: European social dimension; European Union Institutions; welfare state; social policy.

Introduction: the different European welfare states towards the difficult task of European convergence

Welfare state analysis involves different theoretical steps, from the structural institutionalism of the early 1950s and 1960s to the latest institutional recalibration analyses (Pierson, 2001; Hemerijck, 2012). Building on historical institutionalism both Titmuss (1968; 1974) and later, the seminal study of Esping-Andersen (1990), created the most significant welfare categorizations which included the analysis, in a coherent way, of specific institutional elements such as the relations between the state, labor markets, gender and the family. During the 1990s, welfare state analysis and comparative welfare research, used path-dependency analysis in order to identify institutional variables, in the context of globalization, de-industrialization, population ageing and European integration (Esping-

[1] To cite this paper in APA Style: Tzagkarakis, S. I. (2021). The EU Institutional Framework and the Social Dimension Policies: Barriers, Challenges and Prospects. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 2(1): 182-188. DOI: 10.12681/hapscpbs.27675

[2] Dr. Stylianos Ioannis Tzagkarakis is Teaching Fellow on Comparative Public Policy and Postdoctoral Researcher (with scholarship from the State Scholarships Foundation-IKY) at the Department of Political Science of the University of Crete, Greece. He is Field Manager of the Centre for Political Research and Documentation (KEPET) of the University of Crete, General Secretary of the Hellenic Association of Political Scientists (HAPSc) and Member of the Steering Committee of the ECPR Political Culture Research Network.

Andersen, 1990; 1996; Gallie, 2009). Based on this theoretical orientations, several scholars insisted on the existence of a distinct south European-Mediterranean welfare model (Ferrera, 1996; Rhodes, 1996). Moreover, latest analyses study and compare the East European welfare states with the traditional welfare regimes (Fenger, 2007).

After a long period of convergence in the European context, the latest analyses still indicate that there are different parts of Europe in terms of welfare. According to Ferragina et al (2015) there are some important differentiations should we split the outcomes between old and new social risks. Regarding old social risks it seems that two significant groups could be categorized, which could also reflect the problem between the European core and periphery diversion which has been clear during the recent economic crisis of the Eurozone countries. While all welfare states reduce effectively poverty and inequality regarding general population, several differences occur in terms of analyzing the conditions between different societal groups. Hence, the periphery (Mediterranean and Liberal regimes) is characterized by lower replacement rates and higher inequality, than the core countries (Social-democratic and Continental), while Germany seems to be a differentiated case than in the past analyses, as it stands alone. Regarding new social risks (which is an issue that should be included in the analysis of welfare regimes taking into account the structural transformations made), it seems that the traditional clustering is followed but with more similarities on the one hand between Social-democratic and Liberal and on the other, Conservative and Mediterranean (Ferragina et al., 2015).

Attitudes towards welfare state is an issue largely connected with institutional parameters and vice versa. As Kulin and Mueleman (2015) indicate, the level of self-transcendence values is connected with the increased support on governmental intervention but this is more obvious in East-West comparison than in comparison driven merely by social spending. Furthermore, it seems that attitudes towards welfare state are connected with historical experiences and connected with that, differences among age groups exist. These are obvious in the East European welfare states in which the communist history and experiences differentiate attitudes towards welfare state from West European ones as well as between the age groups of the post-communist cases (Kulin & Mueleman, 2015).

The EU institutional framework and the social dimension

While politically the EU was constructed in order to focus on the Europeanization of the economic pillar and keep the social to the national welfare states, the former affected drastically the latter. The multi-tiered polity (Pierson & Leibfried, 1995) which is constructed does not include a strategy for a European welfare state but eroded the sovereignty of national welfare states as a spill-over outcome (Leibfried, 2015). Thus, although social policy is mainly implemented at national level, the national

welfare states are essentially integrated into the multilevel and complex European system of governance and due to its focus on economic and monetary integration, it detaches part of the national sovereignty of the Member States and indirectly influence the way social policy is implemented, leading them towards a semi-sovereign condition (Falkner, 2010; Ferrera, 2005; Hemerijck, 2006; Leibfried & Pierson, 2000; Rhodes, 1998).

Due to the fact that economic activity is not totally separated from social and political institutions (Hall, 1999), social policy integration is reinforced through central actors such as the European Commission, the Council, the European Parliament and the European Court of Justice. The Open Method of Coordination was the tool in order to promote the positive integration dimension. At the same time, the European Court of Justice impose restrictions to national welfare states through market compatibility requirements (Leibfried, 2015). Through these processes de jure pressures occur to the national welfare states but what is interesting is that these are effects and not direct social policy implementation. While centrally promoted tools such as the Social Protocol of 1993, the Social Charter of the 1980s and the recent of 2017, are important towards the implementation of positive integration along with the inclusion of social dimension, their contribution has been less practical than legislative activity through certain directives which lead towards the federalization of EU social policy (Leibfried & Obinger, 2008). Especially, the Social Chapter in the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997 has expanded the anti-discrimination framework of EU policies (Leibfried, 2015).

However, as it has already been mentioned, the EU social dimension is not just a corrective framework for the market but a part of it. Due to the fact that in the central level the direct intervention is rather limited, the ECJ, through relevant caseload, has been quite intervening on national social policies. This is also clear as long as social policy, after agriculture, is the second issue on demand for ECJ decisions (Leibfried, 2015). Freedom of movement and services are the main pillars which drive ECJ and thus have consequences on national social policies as more powers are given to this instrument (Kratochvíl & Sychra, 2019), raising also concerns about the democratic deficit that they entail.

It turns out that there is a dynamic effort in order to keep a balance between national reforms towards privatization or activation and single market convergence. This strategy is implemented either through EU regulations or ECJ decisions, creating crucial constraints on national social policy. While this balance aimed to keep old welfare measures with single market convergence and the enforcement of the private sector, the replacement of old welfare measures with active welfare policies was also promoted through localization as well as the empowerment of the third sector, of voluntary organization and of the private sector (Andreotti & Mingione, 2016). This strategy was introduced in

order to address more effectively the challenges that the single market (the harmonization of tax systems, the EMU and the Maastricht criteria) and the multidimensional transformations (changes in production, employment, public utility role of the state) pose to the national welfare states. Also, due to a) the EU structure that has weak central capacity for social policy and b) the reform limitations of ECJ rulings and EC initiatives, the pressures to the national welfare states were addressed through localization and/or activation strategies. However, the effectiveness of the localization strategy in the social policy sector is not horizontal and depends on the institutional efficiency-decentralization of the welfare regime, the funding capacity as well as the professional-organizational capacity (Andreotti & Mingione, 2016). Taking into account the interstate and intrastate inequalities across the EU, it turns out that localization strategies without strong central welfare system will sustain or increase the social or territorial inequalities.

The strategy Europe 2020 and its role in the convergence efforts

The strategy 'Europe 2020" was an important European mode of governance that tried to achieve specific targets in specific policy fields. Its analysis in order to be comprehensive should include the philosophical as well as the organizational part, in an attempt to combine the underlying values with its structural-organizational characteristics.

In terms of the governance "philosophy" of the Europe 2020, it should be firstly emphasized that the main value which characterize the implemented policies is growth (Daly, 2012). While there is a clear emphasis on addressing the problems of poverty and social exclusion, the way that this objective is presented and implemented is rather market focused. This is a normal outcome as growth is a value which is directly connected with market-oriented institutions (De Haan, Lundstrom, Sturm, 2006). At the same time, efficiency as well as reforms, which are the other two crucial objectives, are also values which reflect the opinion that the welfare state is more a mechanism of management of the social risks rather than a direct intervention framework for protection against poverty risk (Daly, 2012). This is clear also by the fact that Europe 2020 is not a framework which addresses poverty by using redistributive measures while the three dimensions of poverty included create a rather vague yet difficult to monitor and protect framework. Accordingly, while some steps have been made in order to include elements from the social investment theory, which focus on the preparation of the society and individuals for various multidimensional transformations (Vandenbroucke, Hemerijck, Palier, 2011), the fundamental theoretical background of the Europe 2020 is liberalism as long as it focuses mainly on growth and the initiatives to a less regulated labor market as a solution to the

poverty and social exclusion problem (Daly, 2012). It is actually a transition from the solidary-communal responsibility to the individual one.

The governance "toolkit" of Europe 2020 is the other important field of analysis. The Europe 2020 strategy is part of the European Semester and is based on flagship initiatives and each of them consists of focused initiatives along with tools and instruments while using eight headline indicators. The member states define their national targets which are in line with Europe 2020 guidelines (6 economic and 6 for employment) and with convergence and stability reports under the Stability and Growth Pact. The European Commission initiates the European Semester and EU leaders determine their stances towards challenges and priorities for the EU. According to Armstrong (2012: 290), the abovementioned structure is more "a coordination of governance" rather than "a governance by coordination". At the same time, there is a procedure where an equilibrium tried to be reinforced between growth and social cohesion and fiscal contraction. However, what is obvious is the return of non-legislative influence in the field of EU social policy rather than a coordinated intervention towards reducing social problems as long as the social Open Method of Coordination has been vastly diminished (Armstrong, 2012).

Conclusions

Clearly, while specific European tools have been introduced, the European social dimension is still a laggard. Moreover, the economic crisis and the tremendous diversions between North-South and core-periphery have created more challenges for social policy. However, in the EU framework, social policy interventions of the national welfare state are reduced or become more costly. People are either afraid of reductions due to EU convergence or demand more from the EU depending on their situation, even if the EU has limited-specific capacity for action in this field (Beauddonet, 2015). This fear is logical but should be addressed not through populist expressions but with responsible coordinated and needs-assessed central policy making. These perceptions-fears could be also associated with the fact that the national capability reduction in the social policy field was not proportional with EU policy making capacities increase. The latter is a political decision and as the economic crisis along with the ongoing pandemic have shown, it may become one of the most important challenges for the EU that will ultimately determine its future. Concluding, the analysis indicate that while convergence has been generally promoted during the last decades in the European context, there are still important differentiations between the welfare states that should be addressed through the expansion of the Europeanization efforts-tools that have already been introduced in order to address effectively the social problems that have been aggravated due to sequential crises

(economic, migration, pandemic). While the different European welfare models could not be extinct as they depict different political, cultural and economic characteristics, the objective of social problems reduction should become a European issue as well adapted to each specific case-welfare model. However, the return of non-legislative influence in the field of EU social policy rather than a coordinated intervention towards reducing social problems is not a strategy that could foster European social dimension and at the same time keep a balance between social welfare and economic stability. This should be a priority of the EU given the new challenges posed by the pandemic.

References

Andreotti, A. & Mingione, E. (2016). Local welfare systems in Europe and the Economic Crisis. *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 23(3): 252-266.

Armstrong, K. A. (2012). EU social policy and the governance architecture of Europe 2020. *Transfer*, 18(3): 285–300.

Beauddonet, L. (2015). A threatening horizon: the impact of the welfare state on support for Europe. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 53(3): 457-475.

Daly, M. (2012). Paradigms in EU social policy: A critical account of Europe 2020. *Transfer*, 18(3): 273-284.

De Haan, J., Lundstrom, S., Sturm, J. E. (2006). Market-Oriented Institutions and Policies and Economic Growth: A Critical Survey. *Journal of Economic Surveys*, 20(2): 157-191.

Esping-Andersen, G. (1990). *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*. Cambridge: Polity.

Esping-Andersen, G. (1996). *Welfare States in Transition: National Adaptation in Global Economies*. London: Sage.

Falkner, G. (2010). The EU's Social Dimension. In: Cini, M. (ed.), *European Union Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 276-290.

Fenger, H.J.M. (2007). Welfare regimes in Central and Eastern Europe: Incorporating post-communist countries in a welfare regime typology. *Contemporary Issues and Ideas in Social Sciences*, 3(2): 1–30.

Ferragina, E., Seeleib-Kaiser, M. and Spreckelsen, T. (2015). The Four Worlds of 'Welfare Reality' – Social Risks and Outcomes in Europe. *Social Policy and Society*, 14 (02): 287-307.

Ferrera, M. (1996). The 'Southern model' of welfare in Europe. *Journal of European Social Policy*, 6 (1): 17-37.

Ferrera, M. (2005). *The Boundaries of Welfare: European Integration and the New Spatial Politics of Social Protection*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gallie, D. (2009). Institutional Regimes and Employee Influence at Work: A European Comparison. *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, 2 (3): 379-393.

Hemerijck, A. (2012). *Changing Welfare States*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hall, P. A. (1999). The Political Economy of Europe in an Era of Interdependence. In: Kitschelt, H., Lange, P., Marks, G. and Stephens, J. (eds.), *Continuity and Change in Contemporary Capitalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 135–163.

Hemerijck, A. (2006). *Recalibrating Europe's Semi-Sovereign Welfare States*. Berlin: Social Science Research Center.

Kratochvíl, P. & Sychra, Z. (2019). The end of democracy in the EU? The Eurozone crisis and the EU's democratic deficit. *Journal of European Integration*, 41(2): 169-185.

Kulin, J. & Mueleman, B. (2015). Human Values and Welfare State Support in Europe: An East–West Divide? *European Sociological Review*, 31 (4): 418–432.

Leibfried, S. & Obinger, H. (2008). Nationale Sozialstaaten in der Europäischen Union. In: Höpner, M. and Schäfer, A. (eds.), *Die politische Ökonomie der europäischen Integration*. Frankfurt am Main: Campus, pp. 335–365.

Leibfried, S. & Pierson, P. (2000). Social Policy: Left to Courts and Markets? In: Wallace, H. & Wallace, W. (eds.), *Policy-making in the European Union*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 267-292.

Leibfried, S. (2015). Social Policy: Left to the Judges and the Markets? In: Wallace H., Pollack, M. A. & Young, A. R. (eds.), *Policy-Making in the European Union* (7th ed.), Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 263-292.

Pierson, P. & Leibfried, S. (1995). The Dynamics of Social Policy Integration. In: Leibfried, S. & Pierson, P. (eds.), *European Social Policy: Between Fragmentation and Integration*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, pp. 432–465.

Pierson, P. (2001). Coping with permanent austerity: welfare state restructuring in affluent democracies. In: Pierson, P. (ed.), *The New Politics of the Welfare State*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 411–55.

Rhodes, M. (1996). *Southern European Welfare States: Between Crisis and Reform*. London: Frank Cass.

Rhodes, M. (1998). Defending the Social Contract. The EU between global constraints and domestic imperatives. In: Hine, D. & Kassim, H. (eds.), *Beyond the Market. The EU and National Social Policy.* London: Routledge, pp. 36-59.

Titmuss, R. (1968). *Commitment to Welfare*. London: George Allen & Unwin.

Titmuss, R. (1974). *Social Policy: An Introduction*. New York: Pantheon.

Vandenbroucke, F., Hemerijck, A. and Palier, B. (2011). The EU Needs a Social Investment Pact. *OSE Paper Series*, Opinion Paper No. 5, May. Brussels: L' Observatoire social europeen.

 ISSN: 2732-6578 (print version) 2732-6586 (online)

European Green Deal: Slowing Down Multi-Speed Integration with Innovation[1]

Dimitra Axarli[2]

Abstract

With the creation of the Green Deal, the European Union aims to achieve the goal of climate-neutrality by 2050. Multi-speed European integration is very likely to take place during the procedure of transition, if the proper precautions are not taken. Although this would not necessarily be a reason to be concerned about in other cases, in the case of climate-neutrality would be most distressful. That is because of the lack of justness multi-speed transition carries and the nature of the goal itself. Although the EU has created a whole mechanism to reassure that the transition will take place in a fair and just way, it concentrates on regions with specific features (such as fossil and carbon dependency), leaving behind other, less concerning regions. This Policy Brief aims to create a link between the Just Transition Mechanism and the possibility of multi-speed integration and to propose an additional pillar that –even though might seem gentler- may be enough to prevent this issue. That is, the creation of several model-like projects from the European Commission, that could be proposed and applied in almost any region. One of these projects could be the innovative Vertical Agriculture scheme.

Keywords: European Green Deal; Just Transition Mechanism; Cohesion Policy; Multi-Speed; Farm to Fork Strategy; Old and Abandoned Buildings; Vertical Agriculture; Aquaponics.

Introduction

Having the European Green Deal in mind, the EU aims to reform and reshape as many sectors as possible. Although it is –and should be- the first priority for the EU to invest in regions where the transition would be most drastic, the question is, how will the funding be distributed from member-state to member-state –and their regions-, without causing inequality and creating different scales of development.

This Policy Brief, aims to approach that issue with a more versatile perspective. Starting with understanding what multi-speed integration really is and how it may interfere with the goals of Cohesion Policy, the focus will then shift towards the importance of the problem, regarding the implementation of the European Green Deal project. After realizing just how urgent it is to take action against any possibility of creating different development levels and the importance for the European Commission to simultaneously focus and create models of projects which –from their nature- can be applied in any region, the proposal of the Vertical Agriculture Project will arise, as a

[1] To cite this paper in APA Style: Axarli, D. (2021). European Green Deal: Slowing Down Multi-Speed Integration with Innovation. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 2(1): 189-197. DOI: 10.12681/hapscpbs.27676

[2] Department of International and European Studies, University of Piraeus; Hellenic Association of Political Scientists.

fair and just scheme that will potentially benefit not only each and every member-state (and their region), but also the whole Continent, and the EU in general.

1. Explanation of the problem

In this part, the main goal is to provide the reader with a basic idea of the multi-speed European Union, why this could potentially interfere with the Cohesion's Policy interests and how important it is for the EU to avoid multi-speed integration for the sake of climate-neutrality.

Multi-speed European Union

Before showing just how urgent it is for the EU to avoid climate-neutrality setout with a multi-speed approach, it is only natural to explain the meaning of multi-speed integration. According to the White Paper of the European Union for the future of Europe (European Commission, 2017), there are several possible approaches on the way the European Union will develop in the future. One of the possibilities is that the member-states which are more likely to be on the same level, to cooperate with each other and continue their integration, while others join them only when they are equally prepared. There are pros and cons with that.

Yet, when it comes to climate-neutrality, it is pointless. That is, because this goal is only achievable and long-term viable when every single member-state and its regions participate in the transition. There are two reasons for that; firstly, when the EU reaches its goals of climate-neutrality without every member-state transitioning, it will mean that some member-states changed drastically their economy while others took small –if any- steps to change, for example, their carbon-dependent regions. This outcome would devastate the unity of the Union and would surely deepen the gap between some member-states, leading to even more injustice (Rosamond, 2004). Secondly, climate problems by default don't take into consideration borders. As much as some member-states may try to achieve climate-neutrality all by themselves, the real change is to come only with the participation of all of them.

Besides, after the first shock from the COVID-19 hit (Melidis & Tzagkarakis, 2020), EU began a massive campaign under the "NextGenerationEU" title, where European Commission found an opportunity window to promote the Union's integration through billions of investments, taking a step even further for the unity of EU and decreasing in that way a possibility of two (or three)-speed integration (Mitsos, 2020).

Cohesion Policy

In order to avoid multi-speed transition while reaching for climate-neutrality, it is important for the EU to respect the goals of Cohesion Policy. By confining differences, the Cohesion Policy aims to invigorate economic cohesion and social connectivity between all the member-states. Cohesion's Policy main -but not the only- goal is to support the less developed regions (Andreou, 2016). In this case, even though it still remains of great importance to support the most vulnerable regions, it is vital to prevent any further injustice by doing so.

The current period of the Cohesion Policy starts in 2021 up until 2027 and during this period the European Union will focus more on innovation, ecology and regional development (European Commission, 2019). The EU funds each region of each member-state through European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund (ESF) and the Cohesion Fund (CF). Approximately 75% of ERDF and CF resources will be distributed to create a smarter Europe, with innovative cities, developed regions and a greener and carbon free Europe, based on a circular economy. These two priorities will be the main focus on regional investments (European Commission, 2018). Since it is the purpose of Cohesion Policy to stabilize the differences and achieve cohesion, what better solution than to also fund model-like projects that have the potential to be applied almost in any region. Thus, this proposal could, also, benefit from Cohesion's Policy funds (European Commission, 2021).

The Importance of the Problem

There is a main issue regarding the implementation of EU's Green Deal projects; the possibility of an increasing multi-speed Union (Melidis & Russel, 2020), since some countries like Sweden are far more climate-neutral than Poland for example[3]. This underlines the need to focus not only on some specific regions, but also to any region regardless of its economic, population and geographic status and it shows exactly why it is of vital importance for the European Commission –now more than ever- to create smaller, regional-friendly, innovative projects and provide them to the member-states. This Policy Brief will, thus, propose a pioneering project –as an example- that could tackle this issue and still provide the EU with one more mean to reach the 2050 goal of climate-neutrality.

So, the goal is firstly, to find a way to avoid from the beginning any further multi-speed integration due to the ambitious and complex goal of a climate-neutral European Union and secondly to maintain

[3] As Worland (2020) notes, Poland is very skeptical about the 2050 climate-neutral transition, in fact a large amount of its economy still depends on carbon.

the focus on the quantity of regions where projects may apply. This means that -apart from the regions, for instance with highly carbon-intensive activities, that will need the most attention due to the transition-, the EU should simultaneously invest in creating, promoting and proposing projects that may have the potential to be applied to as many regions as possible and create a whole new approach to the Just Transition Mechanism (according to *European Commission's 2020* press publication: "[…] *the territorial just transition plans will identify the most impacted territories that should be supported*").

Green Deal from its core is meant to be applied to all the member-states. This means that climate-neutrality is a goal that can only be reached when certain steps are followed by as many regions as possible. It is, thus, of most importance to focus on a just transition, not only from region to region inside each member-state, but also from member-states' to member-states' regions. In other words, it is vital for the EU's Green Deal to adopt the values and the goals of Cohesion Policy, in order to avoid an even greater division of integration.

Even though there is undoubtedly a focus on a just distribution of the funds via the projects, the truth is that there is more to be done. The reason is that the Just Transition Mechanism (European Commission, 2020), as thoughtful and well-functioning as it is, is not enough. To be able to really make sure that the transition towards a climate-neutral Europe will not take place while the distance between the development of the regions of each member-state becomes greater than ever, the European Commission should respectively give a fair amount of time and energy to create pioneering projects (for example, with an additional skill to InvestEU Advisory Hub or TSI programs[4], to not only create certain projects for each member-state separately, but also to promote and propose model-like projects) that could apply in any member-state, adopting it of course to the specific features of each one of them, and thus avoid the creation of a developmental gap between them.

2. The Solution: Vertical Agriculture Project

The Vertical Agriculture Project, which is this policy brief's proposition for a just and climate-neutral project, was first conceived as an innovative idea from Dr. Despommier Dickson from the University of Columbia. It fits perfectly for the EU's purposes, since it focuses on agriculture, environment and energy goals, at a local-regional level. It may not drastically change the performance of the whole

[4] InvestEU Advisory Hub and Technical Support Instrument are programs that EU launched in order to create and promote projects for member-states.

Continent, yet small steps are equally important not only to achieve but also to maintain climate-neutrality.

This project will on the one hand provide a potential of new job vacancies to any EU region, and also enhance their productivity, boost their economy and the goal of becoming a low-carbon, eco-friendly, climate-neutral Continent will be one step closer to its achievement. In addition, all the fresh goods that will be cultivated are going to be sold to the local markets, focusing mainly on the Green Deal's goal of Agriculture and Food (and specifically the "*Farm to Fork Strategy*"), but also covering themes from other goals, such as environment and energy.

The Vertical Agriculture Project could be proposed as a model-like solution for every region where buildings no longer serve their purpose. We are talking about buildings where renovation is most costly, buildings whose construction has stopped due to lack of funds and finally, abandoned buildings. Those buildings could change their form and become the vessel of innovation. The main theme is, instead of demolishing or completely abandoning them, to have a local interior vertical garden, with all the equipment necessary for it to be self-functional. Something similar to recycling, but with buildings.

In order to promote and propose this project from top-down (from the European Council to the member-states and their regions), randomization is the key. That is, because firstly if counting on randomness the European Commission will be released from a blame-game of intentionally supporting some regions over the others and secondly, due to the overall justness it carries. Random selection is a fair way of choosing one thing over another due to its lack of biases and the presence of the conditioning that each region has equal chances to implement the project (Duxbury, 2012). In this policy brief, randomness lies on the location of abandoned/old and left-under-construction buildings. Wherever there is such a building, there is an opportunity for its region to thrive.

Additionally, it goes without saying that this proposal is only complementary and certainly not as urgent as it is the support of regions where the transition will drastically change the lives, jobs and economic situation of their people. Yet, even if it may seem trivial to some extent for now, if such a small addition would take place, it could drastically change the course of EU's unity.

Finally, the key for this project to really thrive is for each region to make adaptations according to its population (diversity, density, demographics), local conditions, access to labor and the preferences of its consumers (Martin et al., 2016).

3. Proposals and Benefits for the EU and its Member-States

By providing the reader with several proposals, in this unit, the focus will be on the technical issues regarding the implementation of the Vertical Agriculture Project and the potential benefit of its adaptation for both the European Union and its member-states.

Proposals

While keeping in mind that each member-state (and each region of each member-state), has different needs and possibilities, the main goal is to present to them a basic model so that they can either follow it by the book or make any necessary changes. The final call, though, may be at the discretion of the region or the State.

The buildings may keep their shape as it is though they will obtain a new interior and exterior form. The main goal is to recreate those abandoned/ semi-build/ old houses so that they can become fully functional.

About the energy goal, on the rooftop of each building, there will be placed solar smart-flowers, a kind of photovoltaic that absorbs almost 50% more solar energy than a traditional photovoltaic. In that way, this renewable source of energy could be used in two ways; firstly, to provide the needed energy for the functioning of the building and secondly the rest of it could be used where is necessary, or can be stored for local use (Tatang et al, 2018).

As for the environment goal, in each building, the outer side will be covered with plants from several different species, gaining the so-called vertical agriculture look, while also respecting the biodiversity of each region. This will improve the air quality, will balance out the temperature of the roads and blocks close to it and provide the passengers with a more beautiful sight.

Finally, and more importantly, for the agriculture and food goal, seasonal fruits and vegetables (like tomatoes, lettuce, cucumber, sweet potato and strawberries) are going to be cultivated inside those buildings vertically, using mainly aquaponics. Aquaponics is a combination of hydroponics and fish farming. It only utilizes approximately one tenth of the water that soil-based cultivation does and is a process that does not use pesticides. Certain kinds of fish can be used for that, like tilapia (Al-Kodmany, 2018).

In each building there will be a system to monitor crops, for the convenience of the people who work there and a tank of used water or rainwater, which then passes through a filter system and can be used for the aquaponics. In that way, there will be no extra consumption of the city's water. Lastly, there

will be a feeding system, where a mechanism directs a programmed amount of water and light to the individual crops.

This process will hence give to the EU regions a self-sufficiency boost, producing a great deal of energy on their own while depending on renewable energy sources, and will also give them the opportunity to ameliorate their productivity and provide their residents with jobs as well as selling to the people in need fresh, reasonably priced goods like vegetables, fish and fruits, reaching, thus, the farm to fork goal of Green Deal.

Benefits for the European Union

Firstly, and more importantly, this project is both preventing a problem and providing a solution while simultaneously creating a new area for the implementation of Green Deal's goals. It is less time consuming than any other project, since it is already fixed while also very adoptable and flexible. It has the potential to be applied almost everywhere.

While also focusing on huge projects and drastic changes, the EU will, at the same time, provide the regions with an opportunity to flourish at a local level, which in fact proves the inclusiveness and adaptability of its climate-neutral goals.

By investing in this project, the EU will also achieve a global goal, combining innovation and the protection of the environment, with a project in such a numerically large scale. Nowadays, proving that she can stay strong and coherent despite the COVID-19 crisis and its aftermath is of vital importance.

Benefits for the Member States

Since it is only a proposal, member-states and their regions are not in the slightest obliged to accept and continue with it. Nevertheless, it is certain that they will. And that is, because; firstly, there will be a project that is already given as a proposal from the European Commission, which provides the opportunity for every region of every member-state to choose an already created and approved project for as many regions as possible and secondly, the aftermath of this project will only be positive. It will provide the people in need with jobs and food (thus the unemployment rate and poverty will be reduced), and to its citizens a cleaner atmosphere. These buildings could even become an attraction for tourists, boosting even more the local economy. Especially for member-states, such as Poland, that may not be ready for a wide transition just yet, starting with small regional projects could be a great solution for both the EU and the country itself.

Conclusions

Climate-neutrality by 2050 seems like a huge transition with many variables to consider. Different member-states have different potentials to reach this goal, which may lead to a multi-speed EU problem. Focusing mainly on regions (and in a larger scale member-states) highly dependent on fossil fuels and carbon exploitation, is a very reasonable and yet incredibly complex task, and there is no doubt that will create different layers of development through EU's regions. This policy brief proposed an additional, gentler approach through a small-scaled vertical agriculture project with not as massive impact as those mentioned before, but still with lots of benefits to provide.

References

Al-Kodmany, K. (2018). *The Vertical Farm: A Review of Developments and Implications for the Vertical City*. [ebook] Chicago.

Andreou, G. (2016). European Cohesion Policy. In: Maravegias (ed.). *European Union: Creation, progress and prospect*. Kritiki Publications [in Greek].

Duxbury, N. (2012). *Random Justice: On Lotteries and Legal Decision-Making* [ebook]. Oxford Scholarship Online. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198268253.001.0001

European Commission. (2017). White Paper for the future of the European Union [online]. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/leyki_bivlos_gia_to_mellon_tis_eyropis_el.pdf [in Greek]. [Accessed: 15/07/21].

European Commission (2018). EU budget: Regional Development and Cohesion Policy beyond 2020. [online] Retrieved by: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-3885_en.htm [Accessed: 14/07/21].

European Commission (2019). New Cohesion Policy [online]. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/2021_2027/ [Accessed: 14/07/21].

European Commission (2020). *Financing the green transition: The European Green Deal Investment Plan and Just Transition Mechanism*. European Commission - Press release [online]. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_17 [Accessed: 15/07/2021].

European Commission (2021). *Supporting sustainability transitions under the European Green Deal with cohesion policy*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union

Martin, G., Clift, R. and Christie, I. (2016). *Urban Cultivation and Its Contributions to Sustainability: Nibbles of Food but Oodles of Social Capital*. [ebook] Guildford.

Melidis, M., & Russel, D. J. (2020). Environmental policy implementation during the economic crisis: an analysis of European member state 'leader-laggard' dynamics. *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning*, 22(2): 198-210.

Melidis, M., & Tzagkarakis, S. I. (2020). A Comparative Analysis of COVID-19 Effects on air Pollution in Ten EU Cities in 2020. HAPSc Policy Briefs Series, 1(2): 167-174.

Mitsos, A. (2020). The Recovery Program as a Major Step towards a Fiscal Union: The Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 after the Commission's proposals. *ELIAMEP*, Policy Brief no 127/2020 [in Greek].

Rosamond, B. (2004). *European Integration Theories*. Metaixmio Publications [in Greek].

Mulyana, T., Sebayang, D., Fajrina, F. & Faizal, M. (2018). *Design and Analysis of Solar Smartflower Simulation by Solidwork Program*. IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering, 343(1), 012019.

Worland, J. (2020). *Europe Has Big Plans for a Green New Deal. Poland's Coal Country Isn't So Sure*. *TIME*. Available at: https://time.com/collection/great-reset/5900740/europe-green-new-deal-poland/ [Accessed: 15/07/2021].

Post-Pandemic Recovery and Sustainable Growth in the EU: A Post-Keynesian Approach[1]

Alkinoos Emmanouil-Kalos[2]

Abstract

Once again, the EMU faces an economic crisis, this time caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. To avoid the mistakes of the insufficient response to the global financial crisis, it is vital that this time the focus will turn on achieving fast, sustainable recovery, instead of contractionary measures that would hinder recovery and long-term growth. This paper briefly presents the basic elements of the Post-Keynesian / Post-Kaleckian framework of analysis for the economic regimes. The concept of the wage-led and profit-led regimes is addressed, based on which it can be assessed what kind of policies are needed in an economy to promote sustainable, long-term growth. As the relevant literature finds that the Euro Area as a whole and most of the Eurozone members are wage-led, it is concluded that the EU needs to design and implement policies that will strengthen the labor share and address the long-standing problem of unemployment. Given the need to counter climate change, the proposed policies should be coordinated and used as tool to achieve the goals set by the European Green Deal.

Keywords: Economic Regimes; Functional Income Distribution; Sustainable Growth; Post-Pandemic Recovery; European Union; European New Deal; Post-Keynesian Growth Models

Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed drastically, at least for the time being, the approach that dominates mainstream economic thought concerning the role and the importance of the state in the economy. Back in the global financial crisis, a "silent consensus" for the inefficiency of the financial sector to self-regulate led to quantitative easing (QE) programs by the central banks – a "non-standard monetary policy". This solution was promoted as another problematic hypothesis of the mainstream economic thought – the underestimation of the links between the financial sector and the real economy – became too dangerous to ignore any longer, with a series of bankruptcies ready to unravel in a domino effect. Moreover, the excessive inflation that critics feared would be caused by the QE programs was never realized, showcasing the narrow (and, ultimately, inaccurate) way that mainstream economic theory perceives of the mechanisms of inflation. Yet, unlike in 1929 when the Great Depression led to Roosevelt's "New Deal", the prevailing economic doctrine was not overturned, as was particularly shown in the EU through the "Five Presidents' Report" and the

[1] To site this paper in APA style: Emmanouil-Kalos, A. (2021). Post-Pandemic Recovery and Sustainable Growth in the EU: A Post-Keynesian Approach. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 2(1): 198-206. DOI: 10.12681/hapscpbs.27645
[2] Department of Economics, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens; HAPSc Committee on Political Economy

Economic Adjustment Programs that problematic economies were forced to implement (Reissl & Stockhammer, 2016).

It took an even greater shock, that of the pandemic and its economic consequences, for even the most conservative policymakers to openly recognize the limits of "self-regulated" markets (at least at a policymaking level). Governments stepped in to protect jobs and businesses, substantially increasing their expenditures. The welfare state – that has been accused the last decades of being overly expensive and inefficient, and in many cases has been severely weakened by "fiscal adjustments" – stands out once again as a vital aspect of the modern economies, especially during a crisis (Tzagkarakis et al., 2020).

In the new economic reality that has been forged by the pandemic, EU leaders and EU Institutions have a historical chance to "escape from the habits of thought" that have led to a series of economic deadlocks in most of the capitalist economies throughout the world over the last fifteen years.[3] As Stockhammer (2021) emphasizes, the secular stagnation that followed the global financial crisis shows the long-lasting effects of a demand shock, making the fiscal policy a vital and effective tool to deal with such a crisis. Calls for a "European New Deal" have been intensified, and such a radical shift to the orientation of the economic policies could not help but include an agenda for the green transformation of the European economies. This policy brief aims to present a Post-Keynesian / Post-Kaleckian framework on which the recovery of the European Union can be built upon, and how instrumental it is for a successful transition to sustainable, all inclusive, growth.

1. Economic Regimes and Functional Income Distribution

The policies needed to design a sustainable, long-term growth strategy, depend on the overall economic regime of an economy. As Lavoie & Stockhammer (2013) explain, if an increase in the profit share has expansionary effects on the overall economy, the economy is profit-led. On the contrary, if it is an increase in the wage share that creates expansionary effects on the economy, the economy is wage-led. It becomes apparent that the design of a growth strategy requires a deep understanding of the characteristics of the economy in question, as the wrong orientation of the policies implemented can have adverse effects: an increase in the profit share at a wage-led economy, as well as an increase in the wage share at a profit-led economy, will have contractionary effects and hinder growth.

[3] Keynes (2018/1936: vii) refers to *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* as the result of his struggle to escape from "*...habitual modes of thought and expression*" that classical economics education had wrongfully impose on economists.

To identify whether the economic regime of a country is wage or profit-led, researchers examine what the effect of an increase (or decrease) in the wages will be on the aggregate demand, and therefore its components (consumption, investments, public expenditure and net exports).

Functional Income Distribution and the Decline of the Labor Share

It is obvious that examining the functional income distribution is vital in this framework of analysis, as it can provide useful insights on inequality and the overall economic performance of most advanced capitalist economies, especially after the global financial crisis. The downward trend of the labor share since the neoliberal era begun has been observed by various studies (IMF, 2007; OECD 2012; ILO, 2013; OECD, 2015).

Before we examine the role of government policies on functional income distribution, it is important to note that there is an inherent trend for the wage share to decline, due to the architecture of the contemporary international capitalist system. Stockhammer (2013) summarizes the main reasons behind the tendency for the wage share to fall. To begin with, technological change is pushing the wages of unskilled workers downwards, and it even causes unemployment to rise. For mainstream economists this is the main reason for the decline of the labor share internationally, since inequality can be attributed to technological change without the need for deeper investigation of its causes. Even in a broader and more realistic analysis of inequality, however, technological change is undoubtedly one of the contributory factors.

Moreover, globalization has been heavily debated regarding its role in the rising inequality and the suppression of the labor share. Stockhammer (2013) briefly presents the two main approaches: the Classical Trade Theory and the Political Economy of Trade approach. The first one stems from the Stolper–Samuelson theorem (Solper & Samuelson, 1941), which predicts that in advanced economies, international trade favors capital and might hurt the wages, while in developing economies it will benefit the workers. Although popular in mainstream economics, the empirical evidence does not support this theory. As Stockhammer (2013: 46) notes *"While workers in the North have been hurt, it is doubtful whether workers in the South have benefited. There is limited research on the effect of globalization on functional income distribution in the South, but there is a substantial body of evidence that inequality has increased in developing economies as a result of globalization"*. On the other hand, the Political Economy of Trade approach focuses on the effect that trade has on the bargaining position of capital and workers. As Rodrik (1997) explains, the liberalization of trade benefits capital (as the most mobile factor) and its bargaining power, pushing wages downwards. A

series of studies have found negative effects of intensified trade on the wage share in both developed and developing countries.[4]

Last but not least, the process of financialization has altered fundamentally the capitalist system over the last decades. Epstein (2005: 3) defines financialization as *"[…] the increasing role of financial motives, financial markets, financial actors and financial institutions in the operation of the domestic and international economies*". According to Stockhammer (2013), financialization has favored the bargaining power of the capital against the workers heavily, due to the unrestricted movement of capital and the variety of choices to invest in financial products, as well as the shift of firms' strategy to short-term high profit, in order for the managers to satisfy the shareholders. Financialization has played a crucial role in the decrease of productive investments in the real economy, and its consequences to the effective demand. As far as the functional income distribution is concerned, the rapid increase in financial income has resulted in the further shrinkage of the wage share (Stockhammer, 2013; Hein, 2015; Kohler et al., 2019).

Pro-Capital versus Pro-Labor Distributional Policies

Given the aforementioned tendency for the labor share to decline, the distribution of income between capital and labor ultimately rests upon the mixture of policies implemented. Pro-capital policies entail the "liberalization" of the labor market by weakening collective bargaining institutions and reducing (or even abolishing) minimum wage, as well as a tax system "friendly" to capital gains and corporate income. These policies are designed to impose wage moderation, and decrease the wage share in the long-run. On the other hand, pro-labor policies aim to maintain or even increase the wages in the long-run, through strong labor market institutions and a more extensive welfare state (Lavoie & Stockhammer, 2013).

As mentioned before, it becomes apparent that in the context of the Post-Keynesian / Post-Kaleckian framework, designing public policies should be based on the features of the economy and not on ideological doctrines, as the "one size fits all" approach has proven devastating time and time again. Lavoie & Stockhammer (2013) concisely categorize the four possible scenarios concerning the match between the economic regimes and the distributional policies: Pro-capital policies in a profit-led economy would lead to profit-led growth, as the conservative concept of "trickle-down economics" predicts. The authors call this scenario "neoliberalism in theory". On the contrary, pro-capital policies in a wage-led economy would lead to stagnation or unstable growth dependent on exports or the

[4] See, for example, Harrison (2002) and Jayadev (2007).

accumulation of debt (export-led or debt-led growth – "neoliberalism in practice"). On the other hand, the implementation of pro-labor policies in a wage-led economy can lead to sustainable, long-term growth, a scenario labeled as "social Keynesianism" inspired by the Golden Age of Capitalism in the post-World War era. Finally, pro-labor policies in a profit-led economy could lead to stagnation and are doomed to be abandoned ("doomed social reforms").[5]

Empirical Studies on EU Economic Regimes

Bhaduri & Marglin (1990) worked on a concise model that allows for the empirical examination of the impact of a change in the functional income distribution on growth. The Bhaduri / Marglin model has sparked numerous empirical researches that examine the economic regime of countries, and some of them are presented below, focusing on the EU and its member-states.

Onaran & Galanis (2013) focus their analysis on the G20 countries and the Euro Area. They conclude that the Euro Area as a whole is significantly wage-led, a result that agrees with Stckhammer et al. (2009). Moreover, the find Germany, France and Italy being wage-led as well. For Germany, there are various researches that conclude its wage-led status (Naastepad & Storm, 2007; Hein & Vogel, 2008; Stockhammer et al., 2011). Naastepad & Storm (2007) and Hein & Vogel (2008) also agree with the wage-led results for France.

2. A European (Green) New Deal

If we accept the Post-Keynesian / Post-Kaleckian framework of analysis as a realistic approach to examining the economy, there appears to be a need for quite radical reforms in the economic governance of the EU. Given the current architecture of the EU system in general and the Eurozone in particular, the European Central Bank needs to officially be transformed into an institution that will use its power to implement a new economic agenda. It has become apparent that the recovery from the current economic crisis and the prevention of future such crises demand active intervention at an EU level, since member-states alone cannot face these challenges (Katsigianni, 2020). The complete separation of the monetary and fiscal policy, a unique characteristic of the Eurozone (Bini Smaghi, 2011), has to be reconsidered in order for the necessary policies (deriving from this analysis) to be implemented. The economic integration of the EU should focus on the convergence of the economies in a growth-oriented manner, as austerity measures have broadened the gap among the member-states (Sbarouni et al., 2020). Alvarez et al. (2019) identify the need for a progressive reform

[5] As Lavoie & Stockhammer (2013) note, this scenario is associated with the neoliberal TINA ("there is no alternative") slogan, popularized by Margaret Thatcher and claiming that progressive policies are futile.

of the fiscal governance in the EMU with augmented coordination of the member-states in various aspects (economic, environmental, social policies), addressing the democratic deficit of the current system and promoting transparency. The asymmetry in the trade balances within the EU is also an important problem that needs to be addressed in a fair and expansionary way, for the successful and sustainable convergence of the European economies (Emmanouil-Kalos, 2020).

Europe suffers from high unemployment, and youth unemployment in particular (Pastone, 2018), and the pandemic has augmented the problem (Lambovska et al., 2021). Especially the South European member states that suffered the most from the Eurozone economic crisis, such as Greece for example, have a severe problem of youth unemployment (Kotroyannos et al., 2013; Kotroyannos et al., 2015; Tzagkarakis et al., 2021) that substantially hinders their growth prospects. Unfortunately, the dominant economic perspective isn't really concerned with it. For Post-Keynesians, full employment is a vital prerequisite of a truly liberal and functional capitalist economy. As there appears to be a need for the increase of the labor share for the aggregate demand to revive the economy, it is about time that policies that actively promote employment were implemented.

One of the most decisive and controversial policies (for mainstream economists) that the Post-Keynesian literature proposes, is the implementation of Employer of Last Resort (ELR) programs. Supported by the European Commission and financed by the ECB, ELR programs can be the solution to the persistent unemployment. Argitis & Koratzanis (2021) note that although the Short-Time-Working (STW) schemes during the pandemic were a positive response, they are not enough to combat unemployment at a fundamental level, as they neither create new jobs nor are they oriented towards long-term growth. As Anastasakis (2020) emphasizes, ELR programs can be oriented towards countering climate change, rendering them an important tool in the broader efforts for sustainable development. Of course, the design of such programs would have to be tailor-made to each country's needs, as the "one size fits all" has proved to be problematic.

The implementation of ELR programs can give a long-needed boost to the European economies, while also restore the faith of its citizens not only to the EU but also to the capitalist system itself. However, the creation of low-paying jobs through these programs is only a step towards sustainable growth. Public investments for green infrastructure and innovation are a key component for strengthening the private sector while at the same time addressing the environmental challenges of our times. The generation of flows of income towards the private sector by the public investments will not only boost aggregate demand, thus creating more jobs in the private sector, but it would also

help stabilize the financial system by providing firms and households the resources to meet their debt obligations.

Conclusions

The economic architecture of the EU was based on a theoretical blueprint that stemmed from the dominant economic theory of the time. The international status quo at the time created the impression of a functional system, only for the global financial crisis to show the vulnerabilities and inefficiencies of said system. Due to its inflexible nature, the response of the Eurozone to the global financial crisis proved inadequate; although the Euro survived, the measures that were implemented severely hurt some economies, in greater degree that the crisis itself did. The pandemic offers the chance for reconsideration of the way the EU operates and legitimizes the radical reforms that are long overdue, for a sustainable economic integration in the EMU.

References

Alvarez, N., Feigl, G., Koratzanis, N., Marterbauer, M., Mathieu, C., McDonnell, T., Pennacchi, L., Pierros, C., Sterdyniak, H. and Truger, A. and Uxó, J. (2019). Towards a progressive EMU fiscal governance. *The European Trade Union Institute*, Working Paper no. 2019.13.

Anastasakis, N. (2020). Fiscal Policies to Counter Climate Change and Economic Depression in the Post Covid-19 European Union. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 1(2): 295-300.

Argitis, G. and Koratzanis, N. (2021). A European Job Guarantee to foster wellbeing. *Social Europe*. Available at: https://socialeurope.eu/a-european-job-guarantee-to-foster-wellbeing (Accessed: 10/05/2021).

Bhaduri, A. & Marglin, S. (1990). Unemployment and the real wage: the economic basis for contesting political ideologies. *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 14: 375–93.

Bini Smaghi, L. (2011). Policy rules and institutions in times of crisis. Speech at the Forum for EU-US Legal-Economic Affairs, *Bank for International Settlements*. Available at: http://www.bis.org/review/r110916b.pdf (Accessed: November 16, 2020).

Emmanouil-Kalos, A. (2020). Revisiting the "Keynes Plan" for an International Clearing Union in a Eurozone Perspective. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 1(2), 287-294.

Epstein, G. A. (ed.) (2005). *Financialization and the World Economy*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar

Harrison, A. (2002). Has globalization eroded labor's share? Some cross-country evidence. *Munich Personal RePEc Archive*, MPRA Paper No. 39649.

Hein, E. (2015). Finance-dominated capitalism and re-distribution of income – a Kaleckian perspective. *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 39(3): 907–934.

Hein, E. & Vogel, L. (2008). Distribution and growth reconsidered – empirical results for six OECD countries. *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 32(3): 479–511.

ILO (2013). *Global Wage Report 2012/13: Wages and equitable growth*. Geneva: International Labour Organization.

IMF (2007). *Globalization and Inequality*. World Economic Outlook Series. Washington, DC: IMF.

Jayadev, A. (2007). Capital account openness and the labour share of income. *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 31: 423–443.

Katsigianni, M. (2020). The Differentiated EU Policy on Facing Economic Crises: Prospects for EU to Anticipate the Financial and Fiscal Crises of its Member States. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 1(2): 301-307.

Keynes, J. M. (2018/1936). *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Kohler, K., Guschanski, A. & Stockhammer, E. (2019). The impact of financialisation on the wage share: a theoretical clarification and empirical test. *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 43(4): 937–974.

Kotroyannos, D., Lavdas, K. A., Papadakis, N., Kyridis, A., Theodorikakos, P., Tzagkarakis, S. I. & Drakaki, M. (2015). An Individuality in Parenthesis? Social Vulnerability, Youth and the Welfare State in Crisis: On the Case of NEETs, in Greece, within the European Context, *Studies in Social Sciences and Humanities (SSSH)*, 3(5): 268-279.

Kotroyannos, D., Lavdas, K. A., Tzagkarakis, S., Kamekis, A. & Chourdakis, M. (2013). "olidarity and Welfare State in Greece. GSTF International Journal of Law and Social Sciences (JLSS), 2(2): 7-11.

Lambovska, M., Sardinha, B., & Belas, J. (2021). Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on the Youth Unemployment in the European Union. *Ekonomicko-manazerske spektrum*, 15(1): 55-63.

Lavoie, M. & Stockhammer, E. (2013). Wage-led Growth: Concept, Theories and Policies. In: Lavoie, M. & Stockhammer, E. (eds). *Wage-led Growth: An Equitable Strategy for Economic Recovery*, Palgrave Macmillan

Naastepad, C. W. M. & Storm, S. (2007). OECD demand regimes (1960–2000). *Journal of Post-Keynesian Economics*, 29: 213-248.

OECD (2012). *Employment Outlook 2012*. Paris.

OECD (2015). *The Labour Share in G20 Economies*. Report prepared for the G20 Employment Working Group Antalya, Turkey, 26-27 February 2015.

Onaran, O. & Galanis, G. (2013). Is Aggregate Demand Wage-led or Profit-led? A Global Model. In: Lavoie, M. & Stockhammer, E. (eds.). *Wage-led Growth: An Equitable Strategy for Economic Recovery*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Pastone, F. (2018). Why is youth unemployment so high and different across countries?. *IZA World of Labor 2018.*

Reissl, S. and Stockhammer, E. (2016). The Euro Crisis and the Neoliberal EU Policy Regime: Signs of Change or More of the Same?. *Near Futures Online*, 1. Available at: http://nearfuturesonline.org/the-euro-crisis-and-the-neoliberal-eu-policy-regime-signs-of-change-or-more-of-the-same/ (Accessed: 15/05/2021).

Rodrik, D. (1997). *Has Globalization Gone Too Far?*. Washington, DC: Institute of International Economics.

Sbarouni, V., Petelos, E., Kamekis, A., Tzagkarakis, S. I., Symvoulakis, E. K., Lionis, C. (2020). "Discussing issues of health promotion and research in the context of primary care during the ongoing austerity period: an exploratory analysis from two regions in Greece", Medicine and Pharmacy Reports, 93(1): 69-74.

Stockhammer, E., Onaran, O., & Ederer, S. (2009). Functional income distribution and aggregate demand in the Euro area. Cambridge Journal of Economics, 33(1): 139-159.

Stockhammer, E., Hein, E. & Grafl, L. (2011). Globalization and the effects of changes in functional income distribution on aggregate demand in Germany. *International Review of Applied Economics*, 25(1): 1–23.

Stockhammer, E. (2011). Wage-led Growth: An Introduction. *International Journal of Labour Research*, 3(2): 167-188.

Stockhammer, E. (2013). Why Have Wage Shares Fallen? An Analysis of the Determinants of Functional Income Distribution. In: Lavoie, M. & Stockhammer, E. (eds.). *Wage-led Growth: An Equitable Strategy for Economic Recovery*, Palgrave Macmillan

Stockhammer, E. (2021). Post-Keynesian Macroeconomic Foundations for Comparative Political Economy. *Politics & Society*, 003232922110065. https://doi.org/10.1177/00323292211006562

Stolper, W. & Samuelson, P. (1941). Protection and real wages. *Review of Economic Studies*, 9: 58-73.

Tzagkarakis, S. I., Pappas, I., & Kritas, D. (2021). Aspects of social vulnerability in Greece during the protracted, multifaceted crisis. In: Pantazis, S. et al. (eds.), Proceeding of the 7th Scientific Conference of IAKE: Social vulnerability and development: Challenges for education, economy and culture. Heraklion. IAKE. In Greek: Τζαγκαράκης, Σ. Ι., Παππάς, Η. & Κρήτας, Δ. (2021). Πτυχές της κοινωνικής ευπάθειας-ευαλωτότητας στην Ελλάδα την περίοδο της παρατεταμένης, πολυδιάστατης κρίσης. Στο: Πανταζής, Σ., Μαράκη, Ε., Στριλιγκάς, Γ. Μπελαδάκης, Ε., Τζωρτζάκης, Ι., Μαρκάκη, Ε. κ.α. (επιμ.). Πρακτικά 7ου Διεθνούς Επιστημονικού Συνεδρίου ΙΑΚΕ: Κοινωνική ευαλωτότητα και ανάπτυξη: προκλήσεις στην εκπαίδευση, την οικονομία και τον πολιτισμό. Ηράκλειο: Ινστιτούτο Ανθρωπιστικών και Κοινωνικών Επιστημών (ΙΑΚΕ).

Tzagkarakis, S., Pappas, I., & Kritas, D. (2020). Covid-19 has brought back the necessity of the welfare state: The Greek case. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 1(1): 67-73.

ISSN: 2732-6578 (print version) 2732-6586 (online)

Topic 9

Health Politics and Policies after the Pandemic

The Anti-Vaccination Movement: A Serious Threat to Public Health[1]

Nikolaos Spiliotopoulos[2] & Marina Spiliotopoulou[3]

Abstract

The accomplishment of the ''herd immunity'' is the most important challenge in the Early Post Covid World. However, the challenge becomes even more complicated when a large amount of the general population refuses to get vaccinated because of various fears and concerns. Although the digital age has numerous benefits, social media platforms can create a gap between pro-vaccination supporters and anti-vaccination supporters. The strong presence of the latter on social media can be worryingly harmful for each country's vaccination procedure. Despite the indisputable efforts of every country to limit the spread of the vaccine hesitancy, we observe that the number of the anti-vaccination supporters has increased. As a result, this urgent and dangerous situation demands decisive actions, in order to secure public health. It is true that a lot of countries are making efforts to encourage vaccination and to combat anti-vaccination campaigns. Information about the risks and benefits, research for new vaccines, improvement of vaccine supplies are some of the strategies that the states are practicing. But are they enough? The strategies for the resolution of the problem should be more specific and more focused on the real problem. In this policy brief we suggest a number of measures that would be able to contribute to a stronger Immunization System. Some of the recommendations are the association between the WHO and vaccine manufacturers, the collaboration between public and private field, organized campaigns for vaccination, powerful online pro-vaccination campaigns, the contribution of certain specialists, the possibility to get vaccinated by other channels, simpler supply and transporting, penalties to health personnel who refuse to get vaccinated, stricter laws for ''herd immunity'', assessment reports by the WHO in case of insufficient supplies.

Keywords: vaccination; anti-vaccination movement; herd immunity; Covid-19; public health; social media platforms; misinformation; WHO; pandemic; pro-vaccination.

Introduction

Vaccination of the general population is the only way to fight a pandemic, but what happens when part of the population refuses to get vaccinated? The COVID-19 pandemic poses a very serious global threat, making the appliance of drastic measures urgent for every country. Each government, each society, each administrative unit has to take care of its own members, so as to make a universal impact. Therefore, the international community, adhering to the instructions given by the World Health Organization (WHO), attempts to achieve the much-discussed ''herd-immunity'' through mass vaccination. However, we observe an aggressively developing campaign referred as the ''Anti-vaccination Movement''. This phenomenon is related to the trend of opposition to vaccines because

[1] To cite this paper in APA style: Spiliotopoulos, N. & Spiliotopoulou, M. (2021). The Anti-Vaccination Movement: A Serious Threat to Public Health. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 2(1): 208-213. DOI: 10.12681/hapscpbs.27677
[2] Internal Medicine Resident Doctor in 417 Army Equity Fund Hospital (NIMTS).
[3] Department of International and European Studies, University of Piraeus.

of various fears or notions. A concerning amount of population spreads the idea of refusing vaccination against COVID-19 through books, documentaries, and social media. Consequently, this movement hampers the progression towards immunity and stands in the way of hope that our lives will someday return to regularity. It is necessary to confront decisively the anti-vaccination hesitancy and publicly expose the dangers of refusing to get immunized for such a contagious virus, as SARS-COV2.

Current situation regarding the anti-vaccination movement

To bring this pandemic to an end, a high percentage of the population needs to be immune to the virus. The importance of vaccines should be undeniable as they can prevent diseases and infections, to prolong progressively life expectancy. For example, children's diseases such as smallpox and rubella have been greatly reduced through vaccines and polio has been nearly eradicated. Within less than 12 months after the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, various research teams responded decisively to this threat and developed vaccines that protect from SARS-CoV-2. However, the negative attitude of an amount of people to vaccines can, unsurprisingly, be a limiting factor to the vaccination process. Mercury content, autism association, possible side effects and even the new conspiracy theory of microchip injection via the vaccine have been commonly found in anti-vaccination messages (Pullan & Dey, 2021). In some cases, anti-vaccine activists are fabricating stories of deaths that never occurred (Szabo, 2021). Many Europeans, for example, have doubts because of the fast rate at which the vaccines were tested and approved, and the latest fears over the AstraZeneca vaccine have added to their concerns. There is no doubt that in the digital age, the social media platforms have a major impact to this anti-vaccination trend. According to the survey of the Center for Countering Digital Hate, 409 Anti-Vaxx social media accounts with a total of 58 million followers have been found. The 147 most popular accounts had gained at least 7.8 million followers since 2019, an increase of 19% (Burki, 2020). For example, a research from BBC found that the number of followers of pages sharing extreme anti-vaccine content in French grew in 2020, from 3.2m to nearly 4.1m like. (BBC, 2021). A US poll in May showed only about half of Americans were committed to taking a vaccine (Kuchler, 2020).

In addition, nowadays, Google is a very useful tool to demonstrate the public opinion regarding vaccines. Google Trends display population-adjusted data reflecting the popularity of the search at a given time. A recent research about Google searches relating to anti-vaccination terminology in association with COVID-19 showed that the terminology frequently used by anti-vaxxers includes terms such as "mercury", "autism" and other specific words, which depict various other worries, in

combination with the words “Covid-19” and “vaccines”. Furthermore, a different Google Trends search was conducted about sentences including the terms “coronavirus vaccine” and “safe” or “dangerous”. These specific words were chosen to cover a wide range of possible anti-vaccination search terms. They are the ones most frequently used by the anti-vaccine claims. The results of the research illustrate that the interest in anti-vaccination search terms in relation to COVID-19 vaccines peaks in early-mid March 2020. At the same time in the USA, where these search terms are most prevalent, human vaccine trials start. The interest remains intense, especially in autism-related search terms, and those including the terms “safe” or “dangerous” (Pullan & Dey, 2021).

Anti-vaccination social and online messages, according to several research surveys, will include emotional propaganda, false allegations, story recounts and intense concerns about vaccine safety. On the other hand, pro-vaccination posts, in general, aim to address their reports with facts, statistics and various evidence-based documents (Pullan & Dey, 2021).

A paper published in Nature in 2020 mapped online views on vaccination. Anti-vaccination clusters, despite their smaller overall scale, manage to get deeply involved with undecided groups of people in the main online network, whereas pro-vaccination clusters are more passive, according to the writers. They anticipated that the anti-vaccination campaign will overwhelm pro-vaccination supporters online in ten years (Johnson, et al., 2020). It is true that anti-vaccination groups have a much larger social media presence than pro-vaccination groups. If a person is in doubt about vaccines and decides to do an online research, websites and document regarding the anti-vaccination claims may appear first in the list of results. This is reasonable, as these websites and documents are more ‘’user-friendly’’, in comparison to scientific- based pro-vaccine websites. As a consequence, this may discourage more individuals to proceed to vaccination (Burki, 2020).

Global anti-vaccine messaging is threatening to prolong the pandemic. Some extremely rare cases of blood clots caused the United States to pause roll-out of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, and many European states have stopped or restricted use of the AstraZeneca vaccine for similar reasons. However, those communities have other vaccine alternatives, which is not the case for many other countries. In March, Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of the Congo halted use of the Oxford–AstraZeneca vaccine, and the African Union has stopped procurement (Hotez, 2021).

Recommendations

A passive reaction is not anymore acceptable in order to eliminate the problem of the anti-vaccination trend and as a result, encourage the vaccination progress. Consequently, a common, coordinated communication and collaboration at global level is needed. Therefore, it is reasonable to propose

some recommendations which may contribute to a more effective vaccination and immunization policy.

An effective policy could be the establishment of a clear framework for helpful collaboration between the WHO and the vaccine manufacturers, to encourage data sharing and deep research of possible vaccination needs. Every country should inform regularly the WHO about the procedure, the progress or the obstacles that might occur. The WHO, in turn, should be available and take into consideration the data shared by each country. After the estimation of the situation, the Organization should take suitable measures in order to protect each country.

When supplies are insufficient, the WHO should directly and rapidly inform the countries by assessment reports about the risks of a group of population not being vaccinated. As a result, the doses will be provided to the group who needs to be vaccinated, even with some delay.

In addition, information and communication is very important in modern society. The vaccination campaigns addressed to different groups such as, healthcare professionals, adolescents, parents, older adults, would be an essential tool. This demands, of course, the participation of local institutions (schools and universities, health insurance companies).

Attempting to convince a vocal vaccination denier to change their mind in a public debate is unlikely to succeed. The purpose of the public debate with the denier is not to persuade him to change his mind. Even if it is set up to look as such, a public discussion is not actually a dialogue between the participants. The audience is the public. The dialogue is an excellent opportunity to educate those audience members who are hesitant, convince sceptics and strengthen the knowledge and arguments of all against anti-vaccine rhetoric (WHO, 2016).

Online pro-vaccination campaigns should have a more significant presence on social media platforms. The websites can be more attractive and user-friendly. The information given should be simple and accessible, as they address to all the members of the society.

Online pro-vaccination campaigns will have more powerful impact in association with online seminars with specialists (infectious disease specialists, representatives of pharmaceutical companies etc.). The seminars should raise awareness to the general public, coordinate Q&As, Live Chats and encourage the participants to visit relevant sources.

Although social media platforms, such as Facebook, have started detecting fake news and misinformation, the algorithms should be more sensitive and identify fake news and as a result, limit their spread.

We may also take into consideration that vaccines should be accessible to other fields as well. For example, vaccination by pharmacists, onsite vaccination in hospitals ward etc. This will increase the vaccination rates.

Another idea in order to encourage people to get vaccinated, is the vaccination at home. Individuals can have the capability to apply via an online platform and schedule a vaccination date where Task Forces can arrive at their home and vaccinate them.

An effective way to reduce fear, concerns and psychological pressure that may emerge due to the vaccination, is the contribution of appropriate psychological support. Psychologists can be recruited by social, medical and educational structures to support the pro-vaccination campaigns.

Furthermore, simpler and not complicated regulations regarding the regional vaccine packaging and labeling should be practiced in order to transport supplies more easily in countries when there is shortage. It is necessary to organize properly the places that will host the pharmaceutics (European Commission Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety, 2020).

Activate a constant collaboration and communication network between individual sectors/ factors and public health authorities. In this way, these two essential sectors will be more able to monitor the progress of vaccine proposals and to correspond to vaccine demands.

Moreover, social services should play a more active role in cases such as incidents of health personnel refusing to comply with the obligatory vaccination programs of each State, and thus ensuring a much safer public health environment for everybody.

Governments should be stricter regarding ‘’herd immunity’’ by implementing the appropriate legal framework. When the majority of the population is immune, the society is less threatened by a virus or bacteria infecting its members. It is less possible for a disease to spread when the number of not vaccinated people is insignificant as the vaccinated ones create a ‘’wall’’ of immunity around them.

Regular analysis of epidemiological data and statistical predictive models is necessary, as priority will be given to population groups, who are either vulnerable or are most likely to spread the virus.

We ought to encourage innovative vaccine researches, new technologies that will definitely help the improvement of the vaccine industry. On the other hand, if we wish to improve the vaccine industry, we first have to identify the factors that pose an obstacle to its development and eliminate them successfully.

Conclusions

Vaccine hesitancy has existed since the appearance of the first vaccines in the late 18th century. Voltaire wrote that the English were ‘’fools and madmen’’ because of their adoption of vaccination. Opponents of immunization, once perceived as fairly marginal groups, now have a global influence and their numbers are growing (Kuchler, 2020). The World Health Organisation’s top ten threats to global health in 2019 included vaccine hesitancy, the reluctance or refusal to vaccination despite vaccine availability (World Health Organization, 2019). We might easily conclude that all these policies can, ideally, be implemented by the beneficial contribution of the WHO at an international level. It is time to take further action in order to ensure the preservation of high level of global public health immediately.

“The greatest enemy of knowledge is not ignorance, it is the illusion of knowledge”.

-Stephen Hawking.

References

BBC (2021). The vaccine misinformation battle raging in France. Available at: https://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-trending-56526265 (Accessed: 29/05/2021).

Burki, T. (2020). The online anti-vaccine movement in the age of COVID-19. *The Lancet Digital Health*, 2(10), e504–e505.

European Commission Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (2020). EU Vaccine. Strategy - Regulatory flexibility – Labelling and packaging flexibilities [Ebook] (p. 2). Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/default/files/human-use/docs/vaccinesstrategy_labellingpackaging_en.pdf (Accessed: 10/05/2021).

Hotez, P. (2021). COVID vaccines: time to confront anti-vax aggression. *Nature*, April 27. Available at: https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-01084-x?error=cookies_not_supported&code=c6d8f13c-11e2-4d79-ade4-85c3312fb1c0 (Accessed: 10/05/2021).

Johnson, N.F., Velásquez, N., Restrepo, N.J. et al. (2020). The online competition between pro- and anti-vaccination views. *Nature* 582: 230–233.

Kuchler, H. (2020). Anti-vaxxers: How to Challenge a Misinformed Movement. Financial Times, September 8. Available at: https://www.ft.com/content/4739e748-a648-480d-a4ba-d2057e3b95de (Accessed: 11/05/2021).

Pullan Dey, S. M. (2021). Vaccine hesitancy and anti-vaccination in the time of COVID-19: A Google Trends analysis. *ScienceDirect*, April 1. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.vaccine.2021.03.019 (Accessed: 09/05/2021).

Szabo, L. (2021). Anti-Vaccine Activists Peddle Theories That Covid Shots Are Deadly, Undermining Vaccination. *Kaiser Health News*, January 26. Available at: https://khn.org/news/article/anti-vaccine-activists-peddle-theories-that-covid-shots-are-deadly-undermining-vaccination/ (Accessed: 14/05/2021).

World Health Organization (2016). How to respond to vocal vaccine deniers in public [Ebook] (1st ed., pp. 13-14). Copenhagen, Denmark. Available at: https://www.who.int/immunization/sage/meetings/2016/october/8_Best-practice-guidance-respond-vocal-vaccine-deniers-public.pdf (Accessed: 15/05/2021).

World Health Organization. (2019). Ten threats to global health in 2019. Available at: https://www.who.int/news-room/spotlight/ten-threats-to-global-health-in-2019 (Accessed: 11/05/2021).

 ISSN: 2732-6578 (print version) 2732-6586 (online)

Information about the Publisher

The **Hellenic Association of Political Scientists (HAPSc)** is a Scientific Nonprofit Civil Society Association and it functions according to the principles of democracy, relying on and respecting the Greek Constitution and the Laws of the Greek State. Furthermore, HAPSc embraces the principles of the United Nations – as outlined in the UN Charter, the European Convention of Human Rights, as well as those of International Humanitarian Law as a whole.

HAPSc has developed a broad network of activities and collaborations.

More specifically, HAPSc is:

a) Member of the United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI)

b) in Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

c) Associated with the United Nations Department of Global Communications (DGC)

d) Member of the International Political Science Association (IPSA)

e) Partner organization in the annual Peace Week conference held in Geneva at the UN facilities (Geneva Peace Week – Palais des Nations). The main organizers of the conference are the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform, the Graduate Institute of Geneva, the United Nations (United Nations Geneva Office) supported by the Government of Switzerland.

CONTACT DETAILS:

url: www.hapsc.org

e-mail: sec@hapsc.org

tel., fax: +30 210 3645390

Offices - Mailing Address: 38 Voukourestiou st., Athens 10673

Hellenic Association of Political Scientists
(ΕΟΠΕ - HAPSc)
Athens, 2021
www.hapsc.org