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THE PRACTICE TURN CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIALISATION AND DECISION-MAKING RESEARCH IN EU STUDIES

Kamil ŁAWNICZAK, PhD

Faculty of Political Science and International Studies, University of Warsaw, Poland

k.lawniczak@uw.edu.pl

Abstract: "Practice turn" can potentially influence both the theory and methods applied in EU studies. This paper attempts to grasp the most important features of this approach, as they could prove relevant to the study of decision-making at the European level. The point of departure is a research project on the role of socialisation mechanisms in the Council of the European Union, which was rooted in constructivism and used process tracing type case studies as its main method. The paper explores the principles and promises of practice turn and, more generally, of interpretive social science. It describes methods and practical considerations of tracing practices and studying the understandings they contain. Showing the limitations of a more conventional approach to issues such as supranational socialisation and decision-making, the paper argues for practice-oriented research by describing the opportunities and advantages it offers.

Keywords: constructivism, interpretive methodology, interpretive methods, meaning-making, social practices.

Introduction

A new trend has recently become evident in EU studies. Dissatisfied with what "standard" theories and methodologies offer, researchers are turning towards alternative approaches which hold the promise that "another theory is possible" (Manners and Whitman, 2016). The current "boom in critical and reflexivist works on European integration" (Adler-Nissen and Kropp, 2015, p.157) is accompanied by methodological developments influenced by international relations scholarship which are known as 'the practice turn'. Rebecca Adler-Nissen (2016b) describes

practice turn as providing "the prospect of leaving the armchair and exploring the EU from the point of view of the people actually producing it 'from above' and 'from below'" (p. 87–88). However, practice turn is not just "a field research turn", but a more ambitious (and contested) proposition that promises to resolve old theoretical problems and help generate new knowledge based on solid empirical work, thereby fruitfully contributing to various fields of study. It is particularly relevant for EU studies localised within political science, which tends to focus on formal European institutions and organisations rather than on the people who act within them. Practice turn could therefore enrich such studies with greater sociological and anthropological awareness.

"Practices" or "social practices" are "ways of doing things" (Pouliot and Cornut, 2015, p.300), "competent performances" (Adler and Pouliot, 2011, p.4), or to put it in more elaborate terms, "socially meaningful and organised patterns of activities" (Pouliot, 2015, p.241). The concept of practice is relational and processual, and it involves doing something in "a socially recognisable way" (Pouliot and Cornut, 2015, pp.299–300), which means practices are enacted in social environments, including those of interest to researchers. By focusing on how things are done in a particular formal organisation or informal group, social scientists engage with the meanings these actions have within these communities. Thus, a practice turn is not only about conducting empirical, field research, but also about focusing on meaning-making, which is one of the principles of interpretive methodology (Yanow and Schwartz-Shea, 2014, p.XIV).

This paper presents an argument for the embrace of practice turn within socialisation and decision-making research in EU studies. The first section of the paper explores the principles and promises of practice turn and, more generally, of interpretive social science. In particular, I show what differentiates these approaches from others. The second section then moves towards the methods and practical considerations of tracing practices and studying the understandings they contain. Next, in the third section, the limitations of a more conventional approach to issues such as supranational socialisation and decision-making are discussed – before, in the final section, being compared with the opportunities and advantages which practice-oriented research offers.

Practice turn and practice theory

"Practice turns" take place in various areas of research, including international relations (Adler, 2008; Adler and Pouliot, 2011; Hay, 2011; Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011; Navari, 2011;

Ringmar, 2014; Bueger and Gadinger, 2015). "Practice" is unsurprisingly the most important concept of this movement, but there is no single definition on which all practice theorists would agree. Practice can be defined at different levels of generality and sophistication. For the purpose of this paper, I accept the definition proposed by Emmanuel Adler and Vincent Pouliot (2011, p.4): "practices are socially meaningful patterns of action, which, in being performed more or less competently, simultaneously embody, act out, and possibly reify background knowledge and discourse in and on the material world". The breadth of this and other definitions of practices provokes criticism against the proponents of practice turn – namely, that practices were often, if not always, well within the interest of scholars who have explored the politics of European integration and international relations. However, practices were rarely given a leading role in such inquiries and have remained undertheorised. The intention of practice turn is to bring practices to the fore, at the same time avoiding the mistake of analysing practices without a proper theoretical framework or seeing almost everything as practice (Ringmar, 2014, p.6; Bueger and Gadinger, 2015, p.450).

According to practice theorists, practices are patterned, iterative performances which exist only in their unfolding (Adler and Pouliot, 2011, p.6; cf. Ringmar, 2014, p.5). This patterned nature is what differentiates practices from the more general category of social action (any meaningful behaviour, cf. Adler and Pouliot 2011: 5). They also represent the third element in addition to structures and agents. Practices are neither manifestations of structural influence nor actor individualism, but combine the two in mutually constitutive relationships (Adler and Pouliot, 2011, pp.4–5).

Practices combine mental and bodily aspects, including background knowledge, emotions, motivations, interactions with things and the ways of using them (Bueger and Gadinger, 2015, p.451). Thus, practices weave together material and discursive elements of the social world. They exists through time and are a means of bringing the past into the present and conserving the present into the future (Adler and Pouliot, 2011, pp.3, 7, 12).

Particularly important for research on decision-making is the fact that practice theory departs from social theories of action which either focus on interest-based (rationalist) calculations, or are norm-oriented and consider decisions to be the results of evaluating relevant social norms. Instead, practice theories belong to the family of cultural/social theories that ask what in the first place sustains the social actors' belief in the ordering of the social world – in turn allowing them

to act upon this world. In this understanding, knowledge exists in the unfolding of practices, which means it is located in-between "the inside" (mental states) and the outside (texts of various kinds) (cf. Adler and Pouliot, 2011, p.14; Bueger and Gadinger, 2015, pp.449–451).

Performing a common practice produces and sustains social order – it is "performed into being" through practices (Bueger and Gadinger, 2015, p.451; Adler-Nissen, 2016a, p.37). At the same time, the practices themselves rest on background knowledge – a kind of knowledge which is oriented towards action and impossible to grasp outside the practice to which it relates. Background knowledge encompasses the non-intentional or pre-intentional abilities which allow the intentional mental states to emerge. Practices can be seen as a means of translating this ideational background into intentional and socially meaningful action. Knowledge is therefore not simply enabling practices, but is bound up within them. People who are engaged in a practice are socialised into such background knowledge. The concept of background knowledge emphasises the interdependence between practitioners. Any given practice (unlike e.g. a habit) is socially recognisable and can be practiced with varying degrees of competence. Practices can be performed correctly or incorrectly – which, of course, is a socially determined evaluation (Adler and Pouliot, 2011, pp.6–7, 16–17, 23).

There is an important point of contention in the literature regarding the nature of practice theory as either "a particularly fertile focal point for interparadigmatic dialogue" (Adler and Pouliot, 2011, p.3) or a more cohesive, "distinctive way of studying the world" (Bueger and Gadinger, 2015, p.449). Adler and Pouliot (2011) argue that "practices" can provide a common language for different strands of IR scholarship, making space for dialogue and bridge-building, which, according to them, is necessary for the advancement of scientific knowledge (cf. Ringmar, 2014, pp.3–4). On the other hand, Bueger and Gadinger (2015, p.450) insist that a research programme lacking solid and distinctive conceptual foundations is doomed to fail by becoming too vague to productively direct and support new research. This approach is also supported by Ringmar (2014), who proposes that the only way forward for any kind of "turn" in social science is to make explicit theoretical choices.

My approach here is more in line with the latter position, but it would be erroneous to conclude that this interpretation of practice theory envisions it as a uniform way of thinking about political phenomena. In fact, Bueger and Gadinger (2015, p.450), intending to propose a positive definition of practice theory, emphasise the diversity of practice turn: rather than listing any strict

principles or concrete hypotheses for the theory, they propose six commitments which practice theorists ought to share in order to retain the distinctiveness of their approach. These commitments are: 1) focusing on process rather than stasis; 2) situating knowledge in practice; 3) considering "knowing" to be collective in character; 4) emphasising the materiality of practices; 5) perceiving social order as a multiplicity; and 6) understanding the social world as performed into being (Bueger and Gadinger, 2015, pp.452–454).

Further theorisation of practices requires, on the one hand, appreciation of the influence that philosophy has on practice-oriented approaches in social science (cf. Ringmar, 2014, pp.4–5), and, on the other hand, awareness that the way practices are understood and conceptualised in IR is not necessarily congruent with the practice theories developed by sociologists, critical theorists or philosophers. Bueger and Gadinger (2015, p.454) note the prevalence of Bourdieu-inspired theories in IR's practice turn and point toward several different approaches, including Deleuze's "assemblage", critical theoretical approaches (including global governmentality and other approaches which focus on power, domination and resistance, all drawing on Foucault), Wenger's "community of practice", Latour's "actor-network", as well as some varieties of pragmatism. These philosophical routes serve different purposes in empirical, social scientific research. For example, the critical theory of practice emphasises how practices stabilise the social order, while the pragmatist practice theory helps to show how practices, as practical reasoning (*phronesis*), can become the means of change (Bueger and Gadinger, 2015, pp.455–456). It can therefore be valuable for researchers working in IR and European studies to continually engage in multidisciplinary dialogue regarding practice theory, rather than to restrict themselves to the practice-oriented approaches already familiar in their own disciplines.

Proponents of practice turn in IR argue that practices offer a better way of looking at international politics as it unfolds in action – as "doing". For example, practice theory can provide a new outlook on international socialisation, which, rather than conditioning action, is preceded by practice or unfolds in tandem with it (Adler and Pouliot, 2011, p.23).

The meaning behind concepts is constructed in practice. Definitions detached from practice can obscure the ways in which e.g. certain policies affect people and societies (cf. Shore, 2011). This observation emphasises the critical potential of practice turn. In fact, practice turn can help the study of power, asymmetry and conflict hidden behind the apparent stability of constitutive relations present in various socio-political contexts (Adler-Nissen 2016: 95).

Practices are conceptually versatile regarding different levels of aggregation – from the very detailed micro-practices to more general "bundles" of social practice like "international summitry" (Adler and Pouliot, 2011, p.8; Bueger and Gadinger, 2015, p.456).

Practice turn can also help bridge, transcend or at least justifiably bracket out certain entrenched theoretical dichotomies. First, social practices contain meaningful aspects that are both material and ideational. Second, they can be a force of continuity, because of their recursiveness, and also of change, because they can evolve, e.g. thought failures in their practicing (Adler and Pouliot, 2011, pp.15, 18; Ringmar, 2014, p.19). This argument is criticised (cf. Ringmar, 2014, pp.14–18), but the question of whether any given practice is contributing to continuity or change in a social order is ultimately not a theoretical, but an analytical one, to be answered through empirical inquiry (Bueger and Gadinger, 2015, p.456).

Arguably, practices are particularly important regarding a third dichotomy, playing their part opposite agents and structures. Practices are neither individual nor structural, but are simultaneously constituted by agents and structures and they themselves constitute both individual agents and social structures. In such a view of the social order, agents and structures emerge as truly social from the unfolding of practices (Adler and Pouliot, 2011, p.16; Ringmar, 2014, pp.15–17).

This section began with a general criticism of practice-oriented research as not being truly novel in any meaningful way, because practices of some kind were always central to the study of international politics. This criticism is justified to the extent that practice turn is often defined mostly by what it is not, rather than what it is. The set of commitments quoted above goes towards building a more cohesive, positive programme of practice turn. However, one element is still missing – the methodology, including concrete research methods, which researchers who welcome practice turn could use – in other words, the "how" of practice turn (Bueger and Gadinger, 2015, pp.452, 457). In the next section I propose that practice turn should embrace interpretivism as its leading methodological approach.

Interpretive methodology and methods

The current practice turn in IR and European studies has important links with interpretive methodology (Pouliot and Cornut, 2015, p.302). Adler and Pouliot (2011, p.8) emphasise the importance of sense-making and situatedness for the practice-oriented study of international

politics. This assertion points towards an array of approaches which can be called interpretive. Interpretive social science puts meaning-making at the centre of researchers' interest and emphasises the importance of contextuality. At the same time, it rests its claims on science, referring to the basic tenets of "systematicity coupled with an attitude of doubt" (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012; Schwartz-Shea, 2015, p.4) and (in contrast with positivism) insisting that natural science it not the only source of scientific standards (Yanow and Schwartz-Shea, 2014, p.XVII). Rather than searching for universally applicable "objective truths", interpretive methodology tends towards more pragmatist conceptions of scientific enterprise (cf. Rorty, 1989, p.4) and attempts to grasp the highly contextual ways in which social reality is constructed.

Meaning-making is important for understanding "situated" or "constitutive" causality (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012, pp.51–53; Yanow and Schwartz-Shea, 2014, p.XIV). More generally, understanding the way people do different things and what meaning they associate with their actions is necessary to make sense of many social phenomena, both micro- and macro-scale (Pouliot and Cornut, 2015, p.300). Practice-oriented researchers claim that macro-scale phenomena emerge from everyday social interactions (Adler-Nissen 2016: 99). Interpretive methodology assumes that various "interpretations" shape actors' actions in the social context, including in the form of social practices (Hay, 2011, pp.168–169). Both interpretivism and practice turn prefer an ontological position which attempts to reconcile individual agency *and* the importance of social structures without falling into the traps of methodological individualism or structuralism (Adler-Nissen, 2016b, p.88).

For example, language is used by individuals, but studying words by themselves is not sufficient to understand social processes – it is necessary to take into account how these words are used, i.e. their social context. On a larger scale, this approach shows how the apparent stability of social systems is always dependent on agents' practices and thus contingent (Adler-Nissen, 2016b, p.92). On the other hand, Colin Hay suggests that interpretive approaches better explain continuity than change and proposes to include non-ideational institutional factors to remedy this (Hay, 2011).

The other "interpretation" that interpretive approaches emphasise is the one made by the researcher. Because they are always situated in a social context of some kind, the knowledge produced is inevitably "shaped by local conditions in which is it practiced and institutionalised" (Adler-Nissen and Kropp, 2015, p.163). This way both interpretivism and practice turn reject the

aim of building sweeping generalisations in the form of social laws or grand theories. Instead, their followers focus on case-specific explanations and attempts at understanding the complex meanings and beliefs of actors involved in the parts of the social world under study (Hay, 2011, p.171). More generally, all social life is seen by both interpretivism and practice theory as "deeply situated" (Adler-Nissen, 2016a, p.28).

Interpretivism highlights the difference between experience-near concepts (i.e. concepts as used by practitioners) and experience-distant concepts (i.e. concepts used by the scientific community). The aim of interpretive social science is to bridge this distinction and make a connection between these two sets of concepts (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012, pp.49–50), which necessitates the adoption of relevant research methods and techniques, enabling a scholar to generate and successfully analyse empirical material.

Practice turn points towards the need of more empirical, thorough and descriptive research, in which any "theory of practice" is primarily a sensitising framework or heuristic aid rather than the focus of researcher's attention (Bueger and Gadinger, 2015, p.457). Interpretivism is suitable to such an approach, with its "high and demanding methodological standard" regarding empirical material breadth and depth (Hay, 2011, p.173).

Interpretive social science emphasises the links between methodology and methods. Interpretivist research uses "standard" methods, but with "interpretive sensibility" (Schwartz-Shea, 2015). The empirical focus of interpretive studies means they are often based on abundant empirical material. However, knowing cannot proceed from observation alone, as "evidence is not manifest in the observational world" (Yanow and Schwartz-Shea, 2014, pp.10–11).

Evidence in social science is generated, it is not an objective measure of the world. Interpretivists thus prefer to talk about generating material rather than collecting data (Yanow and Schwartz-Shea, 2014, p.XXI). Regardless of the naming convention, practice-oriented and interpretive research requires variety within empirical material. The researcher needs to achieve a sufficient exposure to an assortment of different meanings present in the studied social context, ever learning as they conduct their research (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012, p.34).

Evidence takes various forms, each has specific advantages and limitations from the perspective of practice-oriented or interpretive research. For example, documents are convenient to access, but their usefulness is limited by factors which determine what is recorded in them, and what is omitted. On the other hand, interviews are flexible and close to social actors, but their self-

reported character can distort researcher's conclusions if interviewees follow their preconceived "script". Conducting interpretive interviews might then require more skill, but should also be more rewarding in bringing the researcher closer to the understanding they seek. Observation could also be a useful method in such research projects, but in political science it often proves to be difficult to conduct because of limited access (Bueger and Gadinger, 2015, p.457; Adler-Nissen, 2016b, pp.97–98).

Interpretive research is related to the abductive mode of reasoning (cf. Friedrichs and Kratochwil, 2009; Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012, pp.26–34). Its point of departure is a puzzle, a question regarding some element of the social world. The researcher applying this mode of reasoning attempts to determine under what conditions would this puzzling phenomenon be more "normal". Abduction is iterative, recursive, it follows the principles of hermeneutic circle and the explanations it provides are situated.

One of the important aspects of interpretive research is achieving scientific trustworthiness. According to Peregrine Schwartz-Shea and Dvora Yanow (2009; 2012) this can be achieved by following six principles:

- thick description (enough details to warrant sense-making);

- reflexivity (how positionality affects knowledge claims);

- intertextuality/triangulation (across evidentiary sources), which is also linked to the notion of exposure to varied understanding during fieldwork;

- detailed record of research and rationale for diversions from research design;

- negative case analysis (checking one's sense-making against alternative understandings, continuous re-evaluation of evidence);

- member checking/revision (letting participants check and provide their comments to transcripts, drafts or finishes manuscripts) (see: Locke and Velamuri, 2009).

While interpretive research designs might appear underdeveloped because of their flexibility (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012, p.55), they offer avenues for problematising in different research areas (Sandberg and Alvesson, 2011). Interpretive practice-oriented studies require openness, willingness to revise researcher's preconceptions and tolerance for ambiguity (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012, pp.74–75). A practice turn could bring ethnographic and sociological sensitivity to European studies (cf. Bellier, 2002; Zwolski, 2014). For example, it

could favour the observation that international organisations, including the EU, are bureaucracies in the sociological sense and can be studied as such (Zwolski, 2014, pp.948–949).

In order to illustrate the potential of practice turn, in the next section I will briefly describe a research project I was recently engaged in, one which was qualitative, but not interpretive. Although the project brought valuable findings, I will focus on the methodological limitations that became apparent in the course of its implementation.

Constructivist process tracing and its limitations

The Council of the European Union is a complex structure, and its decision-making processes are complex and varied depending on the segment and layer. However, there are some common characteristics of this process, like reliance on bureaucratic decision-making (genuine ministerial participation is limited, cf. Fouilleux *et al.* 2005; Häge 2008; Grøn and Salomonsen 2015), the strength of informal norms (Lewis, 2003; Lewis, 2010; Reh et al., 2013), and the culture of consensus (Heisenberg, 2005; Lempp and Altenschmidt, 2008; Häge, 2013; Ławniczak, 2018). Constructivist scholarship often links these features with socialisation taking place between national officials, who work together in the Council's many working parties and committees (cf. Ławniczak, 2015). With the help of process tracing (Beach and Pedersen, 2013), a constructivist scholar can search for causal mechanisms linking socialisation to the course and outcomes of the decision-making process in the Council of the EU and shed some light on their significance.

Such an approach, because of its scientific realist epistemology, can employ the potential of constructivism while taking into account and engaging the rationalist position, looking for the prospects for dialogue and mutual complementarity at the frontier of both paradigms. The main rational-choice assumption here would be that actors make decisions by calculating the costs and benefits of possible actions. The constructivist position would be given credence by describing other mechanisms that do not fit this instrumental logic, but instead rely on the socialisation of certain behaviours, beliefs or even identities, and showing how they affect the process of decision-making. In this section, I will explore the lessons which could be drawn from a research project in which I have attempted to do just that.

Like most constructivist work in IR and European studies, the inquiry described here used qualitative methodology, but not of a qualitative interpretive kind (cf. Yanow and Schwartz-Shea, 2014, pp.XVII–XXI). However, the techniques applied for the generation of empirical material

are similar in both kinds of qualitative research, at least on the surface level. In the case of my project, these were in-depth, semi-structured interviews with officials who had considerable work experience in the Council's preparatory bodies.

As mentioned above, the most important method of data analysis used in the project was process tracing (Bennett and George, 2005; Beach and Pedersen, 2013; Bennett and Checkel, 2015a). It was used to develop and test the hypothesised influence of socialisation on decision-making. Process tracing is "the analysis of evidence on processes, sequences, and conjunctures of events within a case for the purposes of either developing or testing hypotheses about causal mechanisms that might causally explain the case" (Bennett and Checkel, 2015b, p.7). The method attempts to specify the causal process, it is concerned with the micro-foundations of observed processes and relations, and allows us to look inside the "black box" of causality (Bennett and George, 2005; Beach and Pedersen, 2013). Colin Hay calls the ambition of process tracing "laudable"; however, he accuses it of being not really new, because "all good social science traces processes and always has" (Hay, 2016, pp.500–501). This attitude mirrors similar criticism of practice turn.

In the project, process tracing was used in both its inductive and deductive variants, both constructivist and rationalist explanations were first conceptualised and then tested. Despite claims that process tracing is gaining popularity, its application is often shallow or purely declaratory. The research described in this section adhered to all constitutive elements of the method, which contrasts with studies only applying selected features of the method (e.g. Smeets, 2015).

The research results supported the existence of constructivist mechanisms, although at the same time the alternative explanations could not be ruled out. I concluded that socialisation influences the course (and potentially the results) of the decision-making process, but does not fully explain the specific features of decision-making in the Council listed above. Its effects vary, especially because of the complexity of the internal organisation of the Council. It can also be seen that the linear perception of socialisation as a transition from national loyalty and government-oriented behaviour to transnational loyalty and the attitude towards agreeing on a common position is often inaccurate. I have not documented significant changes in preferences or some sort of redefinition of identity. However, new elements of group loyalty and the sense of community at the supranational level seemed to supplement national loyalty and identity. The study showed that both kinds of behaviours and loyalties can coexist. Officials are socialised not only to the norms

that favour supranational compromises, but also to the particular perceptions (or performances) of their role as responsible for effective representation of national interests and the success of decision-making at the supranational level. Moreover, socialisation does not happen evenly among all, be they even from the same country and share similarly lengthy work experience (Ławniczak, 2017).

Altogether, while the results of the project contained many helpful insights, they did not conclusively answer important parts of the research problem. In particular, the deficiencies of the competitive theorising approach became evident and process tracing, while providing a rich and systematic overview of contending causal mechanism, did not prove effective at comparing them (cf. Hay, 2016, p.501). Many of the dualisms this approach favours proved to be of limited use when confronted with empirical material, including such apparently important theoretical distinctions as interest vs identities, agents vs structures, causation vs constitution, or changes in behaviour vs changes in properties.

The way from these conclusions to the practice-oriented approach leads through the different varieties of constructivism. In fact, IR constructivism as such is not far from practice turn regarding fundamental ontological and methodological assumptions. The approach in the project was derived mostly from the writings of Alexander Wendt (1999)[1]. As Friedrich Kratochwil (2006) argues, this kind of constructivism ("a reasonable middle ground") focuses on ontological distinctiveness, but accepts epistemological positions which are close to positivist social science. Mainstream IR constructivism compromised its sociological and philosophical roots to better fit into contemporary positivist political science (cf. Adler-Nissen, 2016a, p.29).

The methodological approach which followed proved to be ill-suited to grasping the often unsaid and taken for granted parts of the processes which take place in the Council's preparatory bodies, especially the "tacit knowledge" of their officials. Dual distinctions which guided the conceptualisation of causal mechanisms and effects of socialisation were of limited use when confronted with empirical material, which proved to be much more nuanced and often seemed contradictory (cf. Adler-Nissen, 2016b, p.93).

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[1] I am grateful to Xymena Kurowska, whose guest lecture in Warsaw in March 2016 proved to be an important inspiration for the theoretical and methodological explorations described here.

What was perhaps the biggest mistake of that approach was the assumption – explicit in the case of rationalist approach, but also implicitly accepted by the kind of constructivism applied in the project – that decisions by social actors are typically subject to their critical reflection, while in fact they often might not be so (Ringmar, 2014, p.13). By moving the focus from what happens in people's heads (calculation? norm evaluation? etc.) to what goes on between them, practice turn might help overcome this problem (Adler-Nissen, 2016a, p.37). Below is a more extensive discussion of potential contributions of practice turn in EU decision-making research, with some helpful illustrations from the empirical material gathered for the project described above.

How can interpretive practice-oriented research contribute?

First and most obviously, focusing on practices can help avoid (if not solve) some difficult and probably otherwise unresolvable issues regarding agent-structure relations. This is important for any research on topics related to socialisation. For example, Zürn and Checkel (2007) suggest classifying socialisation mechanisms as emerging from agents or structures. However, deciding whether a particular piece of empirical material fits one or the other category is often problematic. In interview material, it is often the case that the interviewees mention beliefs or actions with the implication of them being shared among their peers. They phrase such statements avoiding "me" or "them", simply describing the way things are, for example: "One can always get along" (Interview 5) or "When it is known that something is very important for someone, it is necessary to address this" (Interview 9). However, it is usually impossible to determine whether such behaviours and beliefs result from individual-level persuasion or structurally-upheld social roles, because such differences have not been registered on the conscious level by the interviewees themselves.

Official often speak about their work in the Council in a way that is easier to analyse by turning away from another dual opposition, which is often seen as central for socialisation – between the behaviour of social actors and their internal characteristics, including beliefs and identities. For example, when interviewees say that things are done in particular way ("one typically argues for rather than against something", Interview 8; "consensus is being sought", Interview 10) or that everyone thinks so and so ("everyone understands that", Interview 4; "everyone knows how instructions are sometimes", Interview 5), they are in fact speaking about what they do and, at the same time, how it is understood, hinting at their agreement, perhaps belief.

Practice turn provides tools to analyse the ways in which norms can be performed (practiced) without becoming integral part of individuals' characteristics and still be important for the political processes in which such individuals takes part (Adler-Nissen 2016: 93).

Within the approach described in the previous section, this kind of empirical material would require determining in what way the officials believe or agree that a certain way of doing things is right – e.g. by trying to apply a rationalist or norm-oriented logic of action. Practice-oriented research eschews such questions, instead sticking to data and describing "what is done" as practices. It does not attempt to test some theoretical expectation, but pursues an understanding of the variety of ways those practices can be performed. Moreover, focusing on social practices reveals other logics of action, like the logic of habit (Hopf, 2010) in a taken-for-granted lifeworld, or the logic of practicality (Pouliot, 2008), which denotes commonsensical action.

In fact, research on socialisation and consensus-seeking can encounter contradictions in the empirical material regarding how the officials speak about their work (e.g. stating that something "happens sometimes (…) but it is unprofessional", Interview 7). This might show tensions which could provide valuable avenues for more in-depth empirical inquiry characteristic for interpretive research. People can be engaged in a common practice, but understand it differently. To some extent, practices can be seen as tools – we cannot be sure why they are practiced without studying intentions (Ringmar, 2014, pp.11–13).

It is necessary to closely read interview transcripts, inferring from missing information or from how certain statements are phrased. For example, when an interviewee says that something is done "occasionally" (Interview 2) it is probably not an established practice, or if an interviewee states "we deal with problems at informal meetings" (Interview 7), it suggests formal meetings are not for solving problems.

Interviewees can describe how a certain practice has several different meanings associated with it (e.g. "Information sharing has a somewhat friendly and somewhat interest-based dimension", Interview 9). Sometimes they try to justify what they do by referencing a wider context, in particular the goals of the institutions ("we are a part of the Council, we constitute it, we constitute an EU institution together", Interview 2) or the legitimacy of the whole process ("achieving an overwhelming majority ensures the greater legitimacy of decisions", Interview 9).

Finally, interpretivism and (some variants of) constructivism can go hand in hand (Hay, 2011) and process tracing might not be the only way of tracing social processes in the black box

of causality (Hay, 2016, p.502). Practice tracing (Pouliot, 2015) is an interpretive rendition of process tracing (the single case study method concerned with tracing causal mechanisms), which focuses on social practices (the patterned and socially meaningful human action). It is a way of sense-making, aiming at capturing the logic of practicality and establish "localised causality" – that is, at saying why and how given practices, as understood and practiced by human actors, produce the outcome of interest. Practice tracing also serves to conceptualise mechanisms (not *causal mechanisms*), but sees them differently than process tracing – as analytic constructs (or "analytic generalities") belonging to the realm of social science. In this sense, mechanisms serve to theoretically communicate the typical aspects of unique, localised social practices. The aims of practice tracing require an analysis of not only what happens (in the case of observation) and what is said (in case of both observation and interviewing), but also of the unsaid – the unarticulated assumptions or "tacit knowledge" of the members of a community of practice.

Conclusion

This paper has argued for the embracing of practice turn in the study of decision-making in the Council of the European Union. It has presented the main commitments of practice theory, as well as some of the criticism it receives. The interpretive approach has been shown to be the appropriate methodological counterpart for practice-oriented research, offering methods most useful for studying the way practices are performed and understood. The paper has compared this approach with a more conventional way of dealing with issues such as supranational socialisation and decision making. The last section has reviewed the opportunities and advantages which practice-oriented research offers.

One specific area in which practice turn could prove highly relevant is the consensual decision-making in the Council of the European Union. The puzzle(s) of consensus has received considerable attention and a number of explanations underpinned by various theoretical standpoints. However, most of these explanations focus on some sort of general logic or mechanism, in which the participants of the negotiation process play their prescribed roles (either of national representatives of norm-driven group members). In this way, the officials in the Council are, one way or another, deprived of agency and are not really of interest to researchers (other than as sources of information).

Practice-oriented research could help face with these deficiencies. By producing rich empirical material, it could substantiate the diverse explanations of consensus and serve to show how they relate to the experiences and understandings of those who practice consensus within the institution. Moreover, studying practices can reveal hierarchies hidden in the social order. Socialisation does also not always produce harmonious, conflict-free groups. Practices can sustain privilege, exclusion, and different forms of hierarchy (Beyers, 2010). This can also be relevant to the ways in which the practice of consensus is performed in the Council.

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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EU OPERATIONAL PROGRAM EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IN THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC IN THE CONTEXT OF SELECTED SOCIAL INDICATORS

Vladimír KOVÁČIK, PhD

Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Slovakia

vladimir.kovacik@ucm.sk

Michal IMROVIČ, PhD

Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Slovakia

michal.imrovic@ucm.sk

Abstract: The Operational program Employment and social inclusion was implemented in the programming period 2007-2013 by the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic. The aim of the operational program was to increase employment, social inclusion and capacity building. Due to the low flexibility and efficiency of the staff in various areas of public administration, as well as the need to improve policy-making, the operational program supported activities aimed at improving human capital and activities oriented towards quality policy making. This paper analyses selected key social indicators such as employment rate, unemployment rate and people at risk of poverty or social exclusion rate in the context of the implementation. Active labor market measures are among the most effective instruments the state has to support employment and deal with the threat of poverty and social exclusion. The implementation of the operational program can be considered successful on the basis of results of realized projects and objectives achieved. The operational program helped mitigate the impact of the crisis on employment and started community-wide social and community work. As a result of the analysis, the implementation of the operational program significantly helped to increase employment, reduce unemployment rate and people at risk of poverty or social exclusion rate in Slovakia in the period of 2007-2017.

Keywords: Regional policy, EU Structural Funds, European Social Fund, Active labor market policy, Operational Program, Unemployment.

Introduction

The support of employment, job creation and competitiveness is one of the main challenges of the European Union in order to ensure the progress of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth of the Member

States (Brzeszczak and Imiołczyk, 2016; Balcerzak, 2016). The financial and economic crisis revealed weaknesses in Member States labour markets and influenced key social and socioeconomic indicators such as employment or people at risk of poverty significantly. Social indicators are defined as statistical measures that describe social trends and conditions impacting on human well-being (OECD, 1976).

Member States and the Union are to work towards developing a coordinated strategy for employment and particularly for promoting a skilled, trained and adaptable workforce and labour markets responsive to economic change with a view to achieving the objectives of full employment and social progress set out in Article 3 of the Treaty on European Union (European Union, 2015; Nagy, 2016).

To prevent another economic crisis to significantly influence labour markets, the EU Member States have taken the employment policy as one of the highest priorities with the common concern approach that coordinates this matter with the EU Council. To be able to exercise the measures of the effective employment policy of the EU, it is necessary to adopt the relevant legislation and define the financial resources to cover the investments. In addition to state budget funding, the EU funding is the largest financial source to cover the employment policy expenditures in EU Member States.

In Slovakia, the programming period 2007-2013 was the second programming period in which the country was eligible to draw EU funds after becoming the full member of the EU. The area of employment policy in the programming period 2007-2013 was supported by the Operational Program Employment and Social Inclusion.

The Operational Program Employment and Social Inclusion (OP EaSI) is a reference document that provided support for human resources development, employment growth, social inclusion and capacity building in the 2007-2013 programming period. The aim of the operational program is to increase employment, social inclusion and capacity building. Due to the low flexibility and efficiency of the staff in various areas of public administration, as well as the need to improve policy-making, the Operational Program supported activities aimed at improving human capital and activities oriented towards quality policy making.

With its priority axes, the OP EaSI was linked to the activities of the Regional Operational Program, OP Education, OP Research and Development and OP Health Service as described in the description of the individual priority axes. The OP EaSI has implemented activities through which the employment policy objectives of the National Reform Program have been fulfilled. Through its priority axes, it has concentrated on contributing to achieving a high level of employment, reducing long-term unemployment, dealing with demographic changes and social inclusion. Contributions in these areas were directed to strengthen the processes aimed at ensuring the competitiveness of the Slovak Republic (SR) in the European and global

framework. The OP EaSI was approved by the EC on 26 October 2007. The Managing Authority of the OP EaSI is the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family of SR.

Materials and Methods

The objective of this paper is to analyse the impact of implementation of OP EaSI on the selected social indicators in Slovakia during 10 years period 2007-2017. In this paper, we were working with secondary data. The secondary data regarding the implementation of the OP EaSI, including achieved drawdown and the indicators used for the analysis in this paper were obtained from Annual Reports of the Implementation of the OP EaSI for 2007-2015, websites of the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, and Family of the SR, Implementation agency of Slovak Ministry of Employment, Social Affairs and Family and Ministry of finance of the SR. The secondary data regarding the employment and unemployment rate, people at risk of poverty or social exclusion rate in Slovakia in 2007-2017 were obtained from Eurostat and Statista websites. The data we used in this paper were quantitative.

The main aim of the contribution is to analyse the relation between the results of the implementation of the OP EaSI through the results achieved by drawing the individual priority axes as well as selected measurable indicators (such as the number of jobs created, the number of persons in the target groups involved in the projects) and selected socioeconomic indicators (development of employment and unemployment, poverty and social inclusion).

For research, we were analysing the impact of implementation on the trend in employment rates, poverty and social inclusion. We focused on the relation of the unemployment and employment development in individual years to the number of jobs created and the number of persons involved in the project. We were also interested in the rate of poverty and social inclusion in individual years in relation to the pre-invested funds of the operational program during the reference period. To achieve the objective, the methods of analysis, synthesis, deduction and induction have been used. Another key method that has been used was the descriptive statistics, and for better visualization, we used a graphical representation of the identified values.

Results and Discussion

1. Employment and Social Inclusion

Employment and productive work are key components of social and economic development as well as decisive determinants of human identity. Economic growth, sustainable development and the expansion of

productive employment are closely linked. Effective employment is also an effective method of dealing with poverty and promoting social integration of citizens.

„The biggest challenges of the economic policy in Slovakia are solutions that align the consolidation objectives with the goals of growth, employment and quality of life. That is why the costs encouraging the economic growth and employment are preferred. This will create the preconditions for faster and sustainable economic growth and achieve a higher level of employment and improve the quality of life"(Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family of the SR, 2014). A necessary condition for further development of the Slovak economy and raising the standard of living of the population is the solution of employment, which will lead to the creation of sustainable jobs.

In every society, the state has an irreplaceable role in the implementation of employment policy. The role of employment policy at the national level is, in coordination with other policies, to create the conditions for entering the labor market for all who can work (Kubík, Zůvala, 2018), want to work and seek work, and for sustainable employment. Increasing the participation of the population in the productive age on employment, or increasing employment rates and particularly for disadvantaged people, and their remaining in the labor market is also one of the main policy instruments against the spread of poverty and social exclusion.

In the demographic aging of the population, job cuts and rising unemployment (Lewandowska-Gwarda, 2018), a higher degree of economic policy coordination, employment policy for both the EU and national policy is needed. Such an approach should contribute to the promotion of economic growth, job creation in the future and overall improvement in the quality of life. At the same time, it supports and encourages efforts by states to ensure the financial and social sustainability of applied social protection systems.

"The labor market has long been one of the main challenges of the Slovak economy. Compared to other EU countries, Slovakia has relatively low employment rates, especially among young people, but also elderly and women, and high unemployment, which is dominated by long-term unemployment. Long-term unemployed are the largest group of unemployed in Slovakia. The long-term unemployment rate in Slovakia is among the highest in the EU 28" (National reform program, 2014). It is mainly due to the high unemployment rate of the young people and the long-term unemployed low-skilled labor force (Mura et. Al., 2019). Unemployment in Slovakia as well as in the European Union has come to the forefront of the perception of the society, politicians and the professional public.

The negative effects of unemployment are visible across the whole society, not just the unemployed. "As a result of unemployment, incomplete exploitation of the working population is achieved and the economy cannot work at the level of its potential, it even loses its potential" (Páleník et al., 2014; Chocholatá, Furková 2018; Mészáros, 2018). One of the reasons for the persistence of high unemployment in Slovakia is the absence of an approach that would address in a comprehensive way the problems of employment and unemployment in their mutual relations and taking into account the factors influencing the solution of these problems.

Unemployment is a situation in which part of the working-age population does not participate in the workforce, and this phenomenon contributes significantly to the unfavourable development of public finances (Kargol-wasiluk,, Wildowicz-giegiel, 2018; Androniceanu et al., 2019), but also reflects the potential underutilisation of production capacity in the economy (Workie Tiruneh – Štefánik et al., 2014). However, the high unemployment rate is not only associated with a lack of demand for labour, but is also the result of a mismatch between them (Workie Tiruneh et al., 2013).

Searching for solutions, that will lead to the creation of sustainable jobs for further development of the Slovak economy and raising the living standards of the population, is the main challenge. By promoting employment, it is necessary to focus on measures aimed at removing employment barriers and allowing flexible forms of employment as well as reform changes in active labor market policies and changes in the field of labor protection. Recently, there is a growing problem with the lack of skilled labor in some sectors of the economy.

Considering the facts mentioned above, it is very important and necessary to implement effectively active and passive labor market measures in the SR. Under the notion of labor market policy, we include a system of support and assistance that helps citizens adapt to jobs in the labor market. "A traditional rationale for active labor market policy has been to facilitate the matching process in the labor market" (Calmfors, 1994). Labor market policies include different forms, actions, measures or instruments that should be applied to employment services. The role of the active labor market policy (ALMP) is not only to help the individuals but also to motivate them (Mura, Vlacseková, 2018) and bundle them to their own efforts, which would improve their situation. On the other hand, Hotz, Imbens, and Klerman (2006) find that while active labor market programs that promote a quick return to work can look relatively more favorable over shorter time horizons, programs that invest in human capital development look relatively better over longer horizons.

Active labour market measures are among the most effective instruments the state has to support employment and deal with the threat of poverty and social exclusion. An ALMP is a historically younger

form of labor market policy; it started to develop in Europe after the Second World War and more pronounced in the 1970s, when passive policy measures stopped taking action, unemployment support started demoralizing people's attitudes towards work, and expenditures for spending on them expeditiously increased, therefore the focus of policy has begun to shift to its active measures (Hetteš, 2013). An ALMP aims to help those people, who are at risk of unemployment as well as helping the unemployed to get to work before they become long-term unemployed. Today, academic analysis of ALMPs is associated with economists such as Calmfors (1994), Layard (1991), Manová et al. (2018), Horecký (2018).

Active labor market measures should meet multiple objectives. The first is to help people who are at risk of unemployment. The second objective is to help unemployed people who are at risk of long-term unemployment. Third is to be effective in helping the long-term unemployed. Active measures are implemented, for example, through job mediation, providing professional counselling services, education and training for the labour market. ALMP are used to combat labour shortages and mobilize labour by reducing the overall level of unemployment (Greeve, 2018).

For the market economy, it is typical that the product and service markets operate in parallel and therefore also the labor market where the wage-earning work is being bought and sold. However, the labor market is a very specific market, its specificities result from the fact that work is a function of labor and is closely linked to a person's personality. "Labor force, although it is carried out via the labor market, is not to be considered as a product either in a legal or ethical sense" (Kováčová, 1995).

Social inclusion requires a comprehensive, multidimensional and especially unified approach in different policy areas. Their main objectives are to promote the social inclusion of disadvantaged or excluded people, to promote equal opportunities, to meet the social needs of people through active and preventive social inclusion measures, and overall to boost employment growth, social cohesion and sustainable development. "Fast growth in some large emerging economies has led to a partial convergence in living standards, which exists side by side with abject poverty and a persistence of inequalities. Inequality undermines prospects for inclusive growth, equal access to social protection, and broader sustainable development" (United Nations, 2013).

Social inclusion is a process that ensures that those at risk of poverty and social exclusion are given opportunities and the necessary resources to be able to participate fully in economic, social and cultural life and have the same standard of living and well-being that is considered to be commonplace in the society in which they live. It provides them with greater participation in decision-making, which affects their lives and access to fundamental rights.

Reducing poverty and social exclusion is one of the main challenges for ensuring social cohesion in Europe. "Being socially excluded means having unequal access to the five basic sources of society (education, employment, housing, social protection, health care), difficult access to the main social institutions responsible for the distribution of life opportunities, and, last but not least, the separation from important areas of life integration in a given community or society "(Gerbery and Džambazovič, 2011). The main causes of social exclusion are poverty, ethnicity, nationality, religion, health, sexual orientation and many other factors. "Socially excluded from society are those who, for reasons beyond their control, cannot participate in the normal activities of their fellow citizens" (Mareš and Sirovátka, 2008).

2. Operational Program Employment and Social Inclusion

The global objective of the OP EaSI was defined as "employment growth, decrease in unemployment, social inclusion and capacity building". The ambition of the global objective was to move towards a balance in the labor market, i.e. full employment of the economically active population and the occupancy of the jobs created. From the European social fund (ESF) source, € 941,301,578 was allocated for the implementation of OP EaSI activities for 2007 – 2013 programming period.

The main objectives of the OP EaSI linked to the global objective were to:

1. Increasing employment and adaptability and reducing unemployment;

2. Strengthen the integration of people at risk of social exclusion or social exclusion and promote reconciliation of work and family life;

3. Improving the quality of human resources and management in the field of public policy.

OP EaSI was implemented in the period from 01.01.2007 to 31.12.2015, within the Convergence objective (Western, Eastern and Central Slovakia) where the 98,11% of the allocation was concentrated, and also under the Regional Competitiveness and Employment objective (the Bratislava Self-Government region) where 1,89% of the program allocation was concentrated. The Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and the Family of the SR was, according to Government Resolution of the SR no. 832 dated October 8, 2006 designated as the Managing authority for OP EaSI. Intermediate Bodies under the Managing Authority were, according to Government Resolution no. 1023 dated December 6, 2006 designated: the Social Implementation

Agency; Social Development Fund; Implementing Agency for the Operational Program Employment and Social Inclusion.

OP EaSI was implemented through five priority axes from the ESF. The ESF contributes to the EU's priorities in terms of strengthening economic and social cohesion by improving the opportunities for employment and employment, promoting a high level of employment and increasing the number and quality of jobs. It does so by supporting Member State policies aimed at achieving full employment and quality and productivity at work, promoting social inclusion, including access for disadvantaged people to employment, and reducing national, regional and local employment disparities.

Table 1: Priority axes of OP EaSI with allocations

Priority axis	Priority axis	Priority axis allocation
Priority axis 1	Supporting employment growth	654 887 200
Priority axis 2	Supporting social inclusion	174 200 000
Priority axis 3	Supporting employment, social inclusion and capacity building in BSR	17 801 578
Priority axis 4	Building capacities and improving the quality of public administration	57 472 800
Priority axis 5	Technical Assistance	36 940 000

Source: Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family of the SR. (2013). The Operational Program Employment and Social Inclusion

3. Results of the implementation of the OP EaSI in 2007-2013 period

Within the OP EaSI, based on information from Annual reports of the implementation of the OP EaSI overall 4,439 grant applications were submitted, but due do the cancellation of some calls only 4,161 grant applications were further processed. Overall, there were 1,906 projects contracted, i.e. 45.81% of the grant applications were converted into projects (Lietava, Fáziková, 2017). This is caused by the long-term high interest in ESF projects by the project applicants.

The ESF focuses on four key areas: increasing the adaptability of workers and enterprises, enhancing access to employment and participation in the labor market, reinforcing social inclusion

by combating discrimination and facilitating access to the labor market for disadvantaged people, and promoting partnership for reform in the fields of employment and inclusion. Out of 1,906 OP EaSI contracted projects, only 1,546 of them were properly finished.

Within the OP EaSI, 1,906 projects were contracted in the total sum of 1 430 007 471.96 EUR. After deducting prematurely terminated projects, the final figure is 1,546 projects in the total contract sum of 1 286 504 896.96 EUR (EUR 1 095 656 969.33 from EU source).

Table 2: Implementation of OP EaSI for the programming period 2007-2013

OP EaSI	Submitted grant applications	Approved grant applications	Contracted projects	Contracted projects without prematurely terminated projects	Prematurely terminated projects
Measure 1.1	47	45	44	43	1
Measure 1.2	1,646	620	612	470	142
Priority axis 1	1,693	665	656	513	143
Measure 2.1	1,286	707	707	602	105
Measure 2.2	444	168	168	132	36
Measure 2.3	145	19	19	17	2
Priority axis 2	1,875	894	894	751	143
Measure 3.1	100	38	38	32	6
Measure 3.2	45	24	24	21	3
Measure 3.3	36	35	33	20	13
Measure 3.4	16	16	16	16	0
Priority axis 3	197	113	111	89	22
Measure 4.1	627	202	201	152	49
Measure 4.2	3	1	1	1	0
Priority axis 4	630	203	202	153	49
Measure 5.1	44	43	43	40	3
Priority axis 5	44	43	43	40	3
Total	4,439	1,918	1,906	1,546	360

Source: Implementation agency of Slovak Ministry of Employment, Social Affairs and Family (2018) Annual reports of OP EaSI.

The final drawdown after the implementation of the OP EaSI represents, for all projects without irregularities, the amount of funds of EUR 905 348 123.34 from the EU budget and EUR 157 927 421.69 from the state budget. The total drawdown of the OP EaSI in the amount of EUR 1 063 275 545.05 represents the level of 96.18% of the total allocation for the programming period 2007-2013.

Table 3: Financial implementation of OP EaSI for the period 2007-2013

OP EaSI	Allocation of the priority axis/measure	Total sum of requested grants	Total sum of approved grants	Total sum of contracted projects	Total sum of drawing for all projects
Measure 1.1	570,188,871	976,070,511	951,969,627	857,520,387	755,341,283
Measure 1.2	200,266,659	363,801,753	149,905,627	125,517,928	57,482,388
Priority axis 1	770,455,530	1,339,872,263	1,101,875,254	983,038,315	812,823,671
Measure 2.1	84,083,530	219,603,170	159,332,830	155,907,863	102,715,610
Measure 2.2	67,910,588	146,354,070	84,164,710	78,288,742	20,133,966
Measure 2.3	52,947,059	80,718,821	69,493,588	43,829,704	25,462,021
Priority axis 2	204,941,177	446,676,061	312,991,128	278,026,309	148,311,597
Measure 3.1	8,052,656	21,477,254	12,662,400	12,101,599	9,756,066
Measure 3.2	8,031,593	11,788,123	9,927,701	9,539,893	6,426,390
Measure 3.3	4,021,063	5,511,315	5,311,451	4,789,593	2,181,853
Measure 3.4	837,721	985,006	957,632	927,632	906,446
Priority axis 3	20,943,033	39,761,698	28,859,184	27,358,717	19,270,755
Measure 4.1	66,842,518	172,988,357	92,316,343	86,821,437	39,278,253
Measure 4.2	772,541	3,639,652	489,636	489,636	337,910
Priority axis 4	67,615,059	176,628,008	92,805,979	87,311,073	39,616,163
Measure 5.1	43,458,824	55,608,451	54,278,834	54,273,057	43,253,359
Priority axis 5	43,458,824	55,608,451	54,278,834	54,273,057	43,253,359
Total	1,107,413,623	2,058,546,481	1,590,810,378	1,430,007,472	1,063,275,545

Source: Implementation agency of Slovak Ministry of Employment, Social Affairs and Family (2018) Annual reports of OP EaSI.

4. Selected social indicators rate in Slovakia in the context of the implementation of the OP EaSI in 2007-2013 period

Generally, social indicators perform one or more of three functions: providing information for decision-making; monitoring and evaluating policies and/or searching for a common good and deciding how to reach it. In this paper, we have selected employment rate, unemployment rate and people at risk of poverty or social exclusion rate as key social indicators.

Employment rate and unemployment rate

We consider employment rate and unemployment rate as key social indicators to measure the impact of implementation of OP EaSI. The measures of active labor market policy contributed mostly to the increase of the employment rate and the decrease of the unemployment rate in Slovakia. Within the OP EaSI, the most significant part of the funds was allocated up to 70% in Priority Axis 1 - Support for Employment Growth, which, through its focusing activities and the nature of implemented projects, contributed mostly of all priority axes to the support of active labor market policy.

Graph 1: Employment rate in Slovakia from 2007 to 2017
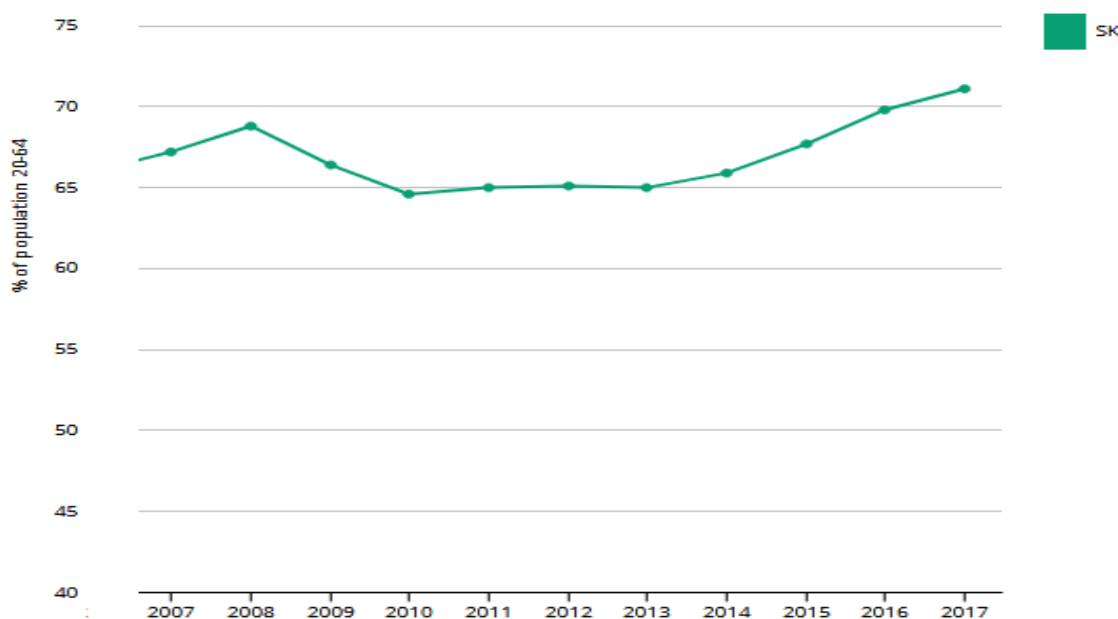
Source: Eurostat (2017)

Graph 2: Unemployment rate in Slovakia from 2007 to 2017 in %
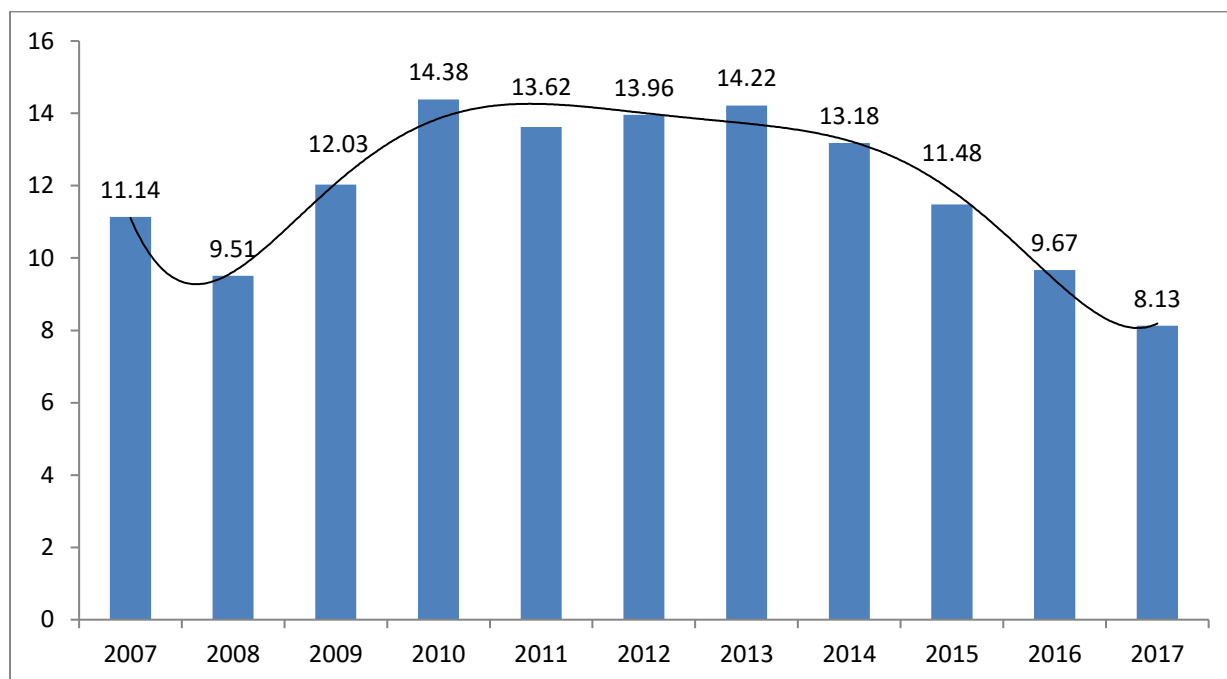
Source: own processing based on Statista (2017)

We have selected several indicators to demonstrate the success of these implemented measures. Indicator "The number of persons in the target group involved in the supported projects" managed to reach 254.65% when in total, 1 509 852 persons of the target groups were involved in the projects. Also the indicator "Number of successfully placed persons related to projects aimed at the placement of persons, people who are at risk of being dismissed from vacancies for job vacancies" reached above average level. This indicator was filled to almost 290.30%, which represents 425 243 people.

Table 4: Priority Axis 1: Fulfilment of physical indicators of contracted projects

Indicators			2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
The number of people in the target	Achieved result	0	5,119	210,476	254,302	881,045	1,210,605	1,303,997	1,355,584	1,509,852	1,509,852
	Goal	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	592,909	N/A	N/A	592,909

group involved in the supported projects (number, output)											
Number of jobs created (number, result)	Achieved result	0	1,857	31,413	22,899	42,429	54,191	69,781	77,906	82,553	82,553
	Goal	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	110,713	N/A	N/A	110,713

Source: Implementation agency of Slovak Ministry of Employment, Social Affairs and Family (2018) Annual reports of OP EaSI.

During the implementation of the OP EaSI, more than 82,000 new jobs have been created; most of them are sustainable, meaning that those who have been supported have retained their job for more than one year. With these contributions, more than 108,000 vacant or unoccupied jobs were filled. From the point of view of meeting the OP EaSI global target, the projected values of the indicators were set in the pre-crisis years, meaning that the measures were directed to areas with sufficient absorption capacity.

The implementation process has been heavily influenced by the crisis developments in the global economy and the need to prefer, in particular, the active labor market measures to promote employment. These measures taken as a reaction to the crisis can be considered successful, since the rate of employment has increased every year since 2010 after the temporary depression in 2008 and 2009.

Especially projects of the OP EaSI that support the employment of young people under the age of 29 can be considered very successful. By implementing these projects, nearly 13,000 new jobs were created for young people in different areas. Based on these contributions, the most significant achievements have been reached in the categories of helping employing young people under the age of 25 in the SR since 2012. According to European statistics, by 2016, unemployment in this category fell from 34.9% to 23.7%, a decrease of 11.2% point. It has also created mostly sustainable jobs, with 86% of young people still remaining in permanent

employment at the end of the project for those employers who received funding from the operational program.

Five of the projects aimed at supporting the employment of young people under the age of 29 have invested a total of nearly EUR 70 million, which helped young unemployed in different ways by creating a new job, gaining experience or retraining them. In the fields of support of the so-called more public employment, more than 7,200 unemployed have been employed. By financing retraining courses, more than 15,000 people were supported.

To achieve the main objective of the OP EaSI - Increasing employment and adaptability and reduction of unemployment, active labor market measures have contributed to in a major way by implemented national projects. In the 2007-13 programming period, active labor market policy measures and reform reforms were adopted to increase employment, mitigate regional disparities, reduce long-term unemployment, youth unemployment, and support the creation of new jobs.

Better account was taken of the situation in regional labor markets, increased targeting to a target group of particularly disadvantaged job seekers, long-term unemployed citizens, young people, people over 50 years of age and job seekers with low or no education.

People at risk of poverty or social exclusion rate

In line with the goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy (Duľová Spišáková et al., 2017), the SR has defined a specific objective in the area of poverty eradication, namely: "To extract at least 170,000 people from the risk of poverty and exclusion by 2020". The SR seeks to reduce the risk of poverty and social exclusion by strengthening and by promoting social inclusion measures. It is primarily about streamlining the current and introducing new measures to assist people in material need, as well as other measures aimed at adequate income, improving the quality of social services, measures for the social and legal protection of children, support for families, especially when reconciling their family and working lives etc.

Implementation of OP EaSI contributed significantly to the fulfillment of objective no. 5 of the Europe 2020 Strategy - Combating poverty and social exclusion, enabling socially excluded people to participate actively in the life of society as well as supporting the fight against discrimination and addressing the particular circumstances of particularly vulnerable groups, in particular by meeting the objectives of the implemented National projects.

Table 5 People at risk of poverty or social exclusion rate in SR 2007-2017 in %

	007	008	009	010	011	012	013	014	015	016	017
Slovakia	1,4	0,6	9,6	0,6	0,6	0,5	9,8	8,4	8,4	8,1	6,3

Source: Eurostat (2017)

Conclusion

The OP EaSI was implemented in the programming period 2007-2013 by the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family of the SR. The aim of the operational program was to increase employment, social inclusion and capacity building. Due to the low flexibility and efficiency of the staff in various areas of public administration, as well as the need to improve policy-making, the OP EaSI supported activities aimed at improving human capital and activities oriented towards quality policy making. OP EaSI was financed from the ESF and was implemented through five priority axes.

The implementation of the OP EaSI can be considered successful on the basis of results of realized projects and objectives achieved. The OP EaSI helped mitigate the impact of the crisis on employment, started community-wide social and community work, several other innovative national projects in the field of social inclusion helped in particular by supporting capacity building education. The OP EaSI belonged undoubtedly among the most successful programs in 2007-2013 in terms of the achieved level of drawing, but also in the scope of concrete socio-economic results achieved. The funds allocated for this program were used at the level of 96.18%. The overwhelming majority of indicators have been fulfilled at the requested level. The total number of regularly completed projects was 1,546 out of 1,906 overall contracted projects for the period 2007-2013.

The main objective of this paper was to analyze the impact of implementation of OP EaSI on the selected social indicators such as employment rate, unemployment rate and people at risk of poverty or social exclusion rate in Slovakia during 10 years period 2007-2017. When we consider the course of development of the unemployment rate in Slovakia in the 10 year period from 2007 to 2017 in the context of above mentioned indicators, we came to a conclusion that

there was a significant impact of the Implementation of the OP EaSI. The unemployment rate in Slovakia in 2007 was 11.14%. With the contribution of OP EaSI, Slovakia was able to reduce unemployment in the long term. With the unemployment rate at 8.13% in 2017, Slovakia reached the historical minimum.

Regarding the employment rate, it was heavily influenced by the crisis in 2008 and 2009, but thanks to measures taken, especially active labor market measures supported mostly by Priority Axes 1, the rate increased every year since 2010. The employment rate in Slovakia in 2007 was 63.6%. During the implementation of the OP EaSI, more than 82,000 new jobs were created; most of them are sustainable, meaning that those who had been supported had retained their job for more than one year. With these contributions, more than 108,000 vacant or unoccupied jobs were filled. In 2017, the employment rate in the SR was 71.1%, which was also the historical record.

In the field of combating poverty and social exclusion, the OP EaSI had a strong contribution to the people at risk of poverty or social exclusion rate in the SR 2007-2017, which decreased every year during that period, except 2009 as a consequence of the crisis. In 2007, it was 21.4% and in 2017 it was at the historical minimum of 16.3%.

Every year, the ESF is helping approximately one million European citizens to get new jobs, education or qualifications. A successful implementation of OP EaSI was a good starting point for the preparation of the implementation of the current 2014-2020 programming period in which the SR, through the implementation of projects of the OP Human Resources according to EU recommendations, focuses mainly on long-term unemployment, youth unemployment, support for inclusive education and integration of marginalized groups.

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THE CRISIS OF LIBERAL DEMOCRACY AND THE NATIONALIST COUNTER-PROJECT. THE PROBLEM OF THE RELATIONALITY BETWEEN AN INDIVIDUAL, THE SOCIETY AND THE AUTHORITY

Krzysztof CEBUL, PhD hab.

Institute of Political Science, Faculty of Historical and Social Sciences

Cardinal Stefan Wyszynski University in Warsaw, Poland

krzysztofcebul@wp.pl

Abstract: At the root of the article, there is an argument on the crisis of liberal democracy, which manifests itself in the atomisation of society, exacerbated by consumerism(among other things), and consequently, withdrawal of individuals from the public space, as well as an unwitting resignation from, for example, the rights of scrutiny over authority. It needs to be noticed that the above diagnosis may stem both from the concern about liberal democracy, the belief that there is no alternative to it, but it may also be derived from the conviction that it is necessary to reject liberal democracy and replace it with some other, allegedly better project. One of such counter-projects is nationalism. Every project of social organization, including liberal democracy, just like nationalism, adopts a certain catalogue of obligations or expectations towards individuals, citizens, members of the nation (the obligatory aspect). The aim of this paper is to analyze the connections between an individual, the society and the state, that is the scope of relationships determining certain obligatory aspects, namely the contents of obligations corresponding to the requirements of liberal democracy efficiency and the contents of obligations necessary to preserve the coherence of the nationalist counter-project, as well as specific costs (some kinds of hardships) necessary to achieve the efficiency of each of these systems. The subjects of reference in the text, despite the generalized character of some of the arguments mentioned in the text, are the Polish society and state.

Keywords: crisis of liberal democracy, liberal democracy, nationalism, individual, society, authority, state, atomisation, community, nation, civic duties, civic preparation.

Introduction

The provenance of the thesis claiming that liberal democracy is in crisis may have two sources. Firstly, this diagnosis may stem from the concern about liberal democracy, acknowledged, for a reason, to be the best system invented by people (in spite of its various deficits), in which

individuals are given significant space of freedom while they are subjected to some slight, not particularly oppressive and generally predictable scope of constraint (compared to other social inventions in which people experienced or are still experiencing oppression in a greater and considerably less predictable scope). Secondly, its criticism may be due to the belief that liberal democracy has some genetic flaws, leading, as some believe, to the breaking down of the society and the destruction of the community. On one hand thus we basically have the belief that there is no alternative to liberal democracy which, after all, must be taken care of. On the other hand, we have a categorical demand that we reject liberal democracy and the consecutive demand that it be replaced with another project. One of such counter-projects is nationalism.

The fundamental problem for both of these directions boils down to the determination of the obligatory aspect, that is to the determination of obligations or expectations towards individuals, citizens, members of the nation. Although social inventions undoubtedly reflect human nature, they require, due to the vagueness of this category, a certain way of behavior, not necessarily an obvious one and not particularly comfortable one. They require that we follow certain rules determining the efficiency of a given system.

The aim of this article is to analyze the connections between an individual, the society and the state, that is the scopes of the title relationship determining obligatory aspects and thus the content of obligations corresponding to the requirements of the efficiency of liberal democracy and the content of obligations necessary to maintain the coherence of the nationalist counter-project, as well as specific costs (hardships) necessary to achieve the efficiency of each of these systems.

The whole political sphere is permeated and determined by planned and organized efforts made by people to in and hold power (Ryszka, 1984, p. 18). In every organizational form of the society we can distinguish power and many dependencies related to it and generated by it. Power permeates social life, constituting in fact a multi-subject social relationship, shaped by the authority's power of influence (Murawski, 1993, pp. 34-35). The variable determining the activity of the power subject is the field and the scope. This term covers a collection of various human activities which depend directly on the power or should depend on it if a person is in the scope of the power influence and the authority possesses relevant force. Each element of this collection reflects the relationship between power and every dependent subject (Ryszka, 1984, pp. 30-31). In the case of the term relationality, it is a kind of a relationship (in the formalised and non-formalised

dimensions combined), i.e. the bonds connecting: 1) the individual (citizen) with 2) society and also with 3) authority which, according to Rudolf Smend, create the national space (Kaczorowski, 2005, p. 231). These ties determine the level of individuals' motivation to be loyal, to act and, above all, they determine the scope of distinctive responsibility (care, reflection) in the public sphere – they determine the degree of identification of an individual, a citizen with the state, i.e. as Paweł Kaczorowski called it – the ethical substance of state life (Kaczorowski, 2005, p. 236), i.e. both materialised and non-materialised imperatives. At this point, it should also be indicated, that the main point of reference in the text will be the contemporary Polish society and state, despite the references to significantly generalized images of the individual, the society and the state.

The text by no means claims to be an in-depth and complete analysis of the subject issue as it is impossible to conduct a careful synthesis of liberal democracy and nationalism on several pages. Therefore, faced with their complexity, the author cannot present the issue of relationality at length. The aim of this paper is to draw the reader's attention to the obligation aspect outlined in the above-described relationality. The obligation situation reproduces a dilemma which, it seems, particularly a contemporary individual in their existential dimension. And even more so, or above all, when the individual does not notice that. Undoubtedly, the renaissance of the nationalist narration, observed also now in the public discourse, makes us inclined to reflect on this area, too. However, we should emphasize that in spite of the thesis on the crisis of liberal democracy, so visible in the text, the author treats the nationalism only as one of many ideas for organizing social life.

The network of concepts

Before carrying out the tasks outlined above, it is necessary to define the scope of meaning of the terms: liberal democracy and nationalism. Due to their ambiguity, defining these concepts creates some fairly significant problems. We may find some reasonably coherent concepts and assumptions here, but at the same time we are also entering the area of political practice, where these projects come to life. As a consequence, things which are identified at both levels in the same categories, usually significantly differ from each other. An attempt to reduce the observed diversity with the use of one term, in consequence, not only introduces considerable confusion, but also often constitutes a rather simple explanation that the experienced consequences of the implementation of one or another idea, is not what the creator had in mind when making his

project. Jerzy Szacki once aptly (as it seems) expressed the important reason for this gap, by writing that every ideology is applied in a certain historical context and by "taking root" in specific social circumstances, undergoes greater or lesser changes (Szacki, 1991, p. 232).

When writing about liberal democracy, it is necessary to note that the essence of the modern democratic revolution, as Tomasz Żyro emphasizes, is a clash of the ideas of equality and freedom. Liberal democracy seems to be organised primarily by formal principles. The state and government are instruments created by the people for their own purposes. Thus, for example, the people delegate their representatives to rule, and all matters are settled by the will of the majority, which is, in turn, limited by minority rights, while the condition for a democracy described in this way is a strict rule of law, through which the principle of total equality is implemented, which is only the foundation for perfect freedom. At the same time, the prerequisite for safeguarding this freedom is the participation of citizens, and the guarantee of free choice is the freedom of speech and expression of opinion. The legal order, but also the procedures for preventing decisions from being made, and ultimately the right to civil disobedience, are the limits to the decisions of the political authority. The relations between the individual, the society and authority are determined by a triad, which comprises of: 1) standards of moderation, 2) the art of compromise and 3) transparency of political decisions, while its shape is determined by openness to change (Żyro, 2004, pp. 205-208).

As Jacob Leib Talmon argues, liberal democrats themselves are deeply convinced that if people and societies are not subject to oppression, they can reach the state of perfect harmony through experimental means (Talmon, 1992, p. 68). It is often pointed out that liberal democracy has not been called this way, because it appeals only to liberals and nobody else (Szacki, 1994, p. 25). It is therefore not unreasonable that liberal democracy claims to be a universal system. However, it also means that one does not have to be a liberal to live in a liberal democracy. The same applies to nation states, which were not and are not intended only for nationalists. In general, both as ideas and as real beings, they are a consequence of social processes and the experience of the societies that have to live in them.

As J. L. Talmon writes, political systems are nothing more than pragmatic inventions of human creativity and spontaneity. Political forms are therefore secondary to the social space-creating, rational and sensible individuals. Liberal democracy, therefore, means acceptance of the diversity of individual levels and collective aspirations that go completely beyond the sphere of politics (Talmon, 1992, p. 67). It can be observed here that in the perspective offered by liberal

democracy the political sphere is somehow narrowed. This exclusion serves the minimization of conflict situations, as it moves certain fields outside the sphere of politics, thus making political negotiations unnecessary. From the perspective of the efficiency of the system, this treatment seems beneficial (although only seemingly) since it considerably decreases the scope of responsibility. However, it simultaneously evokes the rather untrue conviction that some fields are independent of the sphere of politics. Moreover, the weakening of the possibility of conflicts takes place in liberal democracy via guaranteeing individuals participation in politics and the possibility of taking part in competition for power, while guaranteeing everyone who is not interested that they will not have to take part in this competition. Through this action the actual level of participation becomes insignificant and democracy is guaranteed only through the right to participate (Etzioni-Halevy, 2005, p. 119). Therefore, looking at the contemporary Polish state from the perspective of this approach, it is worth paying attention to certain deficiencies and related dysfunctions conditioned by specific experiences. Remembering what John Gray points out, that we practice historically random and peculiar forms of life that we inherit or adopt (Gray, 2001b, p. 49), and therefore, in relation to the sphere of an imperative aspect, we use those models of moral and political life which are available to us (Gray, 2001b, p. 47).

The ideological foundations of Polish nationalism were laid out by Roman Dmowski[2] in the *Thoughts of a modern Pole* [*Myśli nowoczesnego Polaka*] (Wapiński, 1989, pp. 99-100), although it should also be remembered that the National Democratic camp was only a part of a rather diverse nationalist trend (see on this subject: Wapiński, 1980; Rudnicki, 1985; Majchrowski, 1986; Grott, 2014). The issue of continuation and references to his heritage remains complex and sometimes quite problematic (see on this subject: Tomasiewicz, 2003).

Taking into account the fact that the nations of Western Europe formed in the process of ideological confrontation with other communities, their modernization power stemmed from their willingness to keep up with others or even to exceed them, and this goal motivated the societies and encouraged them to sacrifices (Radzik, 1997, p. 89). Thus the program written down by Roman Dmowski was nothing new to German, English or French people. For the Poles at that time, however, it was a novelty (Studnicki, 2001, p. 132). These different experiences determining the

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[2] Roman Stanisław Dmowski (1864-1939) – Polish politician, political writer and ideologist of National Democracy, co-creator of the National Democratic Party, member of the Russian Duma (legislative assembly), Poland's delegate to the peace conference in Paris, in the Second Republic of Poland he was minister of foreign affairs, founder of the Camp of Great Poland and the National Party.

specific development of Poland were due to the fact that Central and Eastern Europe in which Poland lies, was shaped as a result of historical experiences different to those of Western Europe. Its civilization is younger and its economy weaker. We can also see the differences in the "intuitively" adopted hierarchy of values, which is less concentrated on material goods (Cywiński, 1985, pp. 15-16). Poles were the only nation which not only lost its own state, but was partitioned among three invaders. For a very long time this situation could not be changed. One could add here the Nazi and the Stalinist occupation and, to some extent, a period of nearly half a century when ur country was dependent on the Soviet Union. It should also be mentioned that the nationalistic awakening in Poland in 1989, as well as in other post-communist countries, manifested in regaining the ability of self-determination, was soon subjected to hard ordeal which, in the internal dimension, consisted in learning the positive role of compromise, and externally, due to the dominant potential of foreign partners and the need to seek their support, the acceptance of the necessity to adjust. In both dimensions it was also important to learn to reduce one's expectations.

While looking for a definition of nationalism, it is worth noting from Joanna Kurczewska, that the consequence of nationalism, which grows out of extreme cognitive and emotional monocentrism is a "system of culture of the nationalized individual" concentrated on its own nation, whose differentiating power divides social space into "foreign social worlds", where one of them is always better than the other (Kurczewska, 1988, p. 69). This explanation, however, must be considered insufficient, because the genesis of nationalism cannot be ignored when searching for its essence. It is worth to mention here the observation of Leszek Kołakowski, who, when writing about the natural resistance of human institutions created spontaneously against democracy as a planned form, stated that a nation as an ethnic being, like every natural creation, carries in itself a specific form of self-preservation drive. It simply wants to last and wants to be strong. In almost all countries, says L. Kołakowski, there are, after all, extreme nationalist movements and although they may not express the proper sense of national being, they are not, however, a pathology but a true product of the nation in the moments when it feels threatened, whether by democracy or by other circumstances (Kołakowski, 1999, pp. 72-76). At the same time, regardless of the claims made by the nationalists themselves, it seems necessary to make a stipulation here that the nation, as Antonina Kłoskowska points out, is not, in reality, a community so "full",

"uniform" and "continuous" (Kłoskowska, 1997, p. 73). Besides, national awareness is always a function of confrontation with some different awareness (Kwaśniewski, 1996, p. 76).

The crisis of modern liberal democracy in the face of nationalism and political liberalism

A citizen in the modern liberal democratic state does not, in principle, co-create the public space. He neither concludes the agreement, nor renegotiates the contract. He seems to be forced into a system that surrounds him with not necessarily understandable orders and prohibitions, but requires his obedience. Therefore, it can be assumed that liberal democracy is in crisis, but it can also be said quite legitimately that what sustains liberal democracy is paradoxically a lack of interest in it, on the part of the society and, ultimately, a rather passive submission to sometimes even unreasonable rules. Societies do not show any particular concern for this system, and yet, as if in spite of these tendencies, liberal democracy continues to exist for the time being. Quite contrary to the fundamental assumption that in a democracy the collective order is created by all those, who at the same time are submitted to it (Kelsen, 1936, pp. 20-21), and therefore the most important part of a democratic political system does not fall within the constitution, but is located in experience and the notions resulting from it (Wasiutyński, 1986, p. 54). Democracy, writes T. Żyro, like no other political system, testifies to ideocracy, i.e. to the unprecedented reign of ideas in the public discourse (Żyro, 2004, p. 205). However, if democracy has to irrevocably fail in the absence of such a suitable environment (Baszkiewicz, 2002, p. 276), then perhaps the system which we live in, is only mistakenly described as a liberal democracy?

Starting from the formal and informal dimensions of democracy, it must be assumed that the first level is sufficient for the system to last, although it is highly questionable, whether it is still justified to call it a liberal democracy. If this is the case, the citizens must have a guaranteed possibility of choice, but they must also have the capacity to make choices. This ability, which is expressed in knowledge, is essential for exercising control. So, whoever wants to be left alone and not to be tormented by politics, this way puts his will in the hands of others (Crick, 2004, p. 20). Yet, in spite of this, it turns out that in the modern democracy subjective relations occur only, as Adam Karpiński believes, on a formal and logical level. Perhaps liberal democracy is necessarily formal and, thus, limited to one side of social life, because the other side of social life escapes the framework of formal order (Karpiński, 2001, p. 245). Such a diagnosis seems quite probable, if

one adopts A. Karpiński's argument that in the consumer society, the human spirit is "seduced" by biologicality, and in fact by the owners of the capital (Karpiński, 2001, p. 247). In Poland, for example, the structure of a system which is under development, the structure resulting from certain circumstances, turned out to be quite sufficient in the dimension necessary for its endurance. At the same time, however, it is worth noting that it was the reception of liberal ideas in Poland after 1989, that constituted in the past and still constitutes an extremely important factor in the development of democratic awareness. And it happened despite the fact, that liberalism was treated "selectively" and "instrumentally" in Poland. (Krasnodębski, 2003, p. 273).

Looking for an answer to the question about the relationality of nationalism and liberal democracy (or, in fact, looking for the roots of tension between them), one could say that the matter is quite obvious and the opposition of these two projects is inevitable. Since nationalism manifests concern for the collective; not every collective, however, but only for this particular national collective, while liberalism defends individuals against the pressure from not only all collectives, but also from other individuals, from the perspective of liberal democracy, nationalism must simply be considered a threat to equality and, as a consequence, to the freedom of individuals. Adoption of this approach is usually facilitated by those who consider themselves nationalists, without hiding the fact that they reject liberal democracy (although not necessarily all those who are referred to as nationalists).

Nationalists, however, do not seem to notice that liberal democracy does not necessarily have to be just what they are currently observing and what they often, quite rightly so, do not particularly like. Their counter-project, through a rather strongly articulated argument about the need to reject liberal democracy, seems to be its opposite and, as a result, a threat to the values to which the general public is rather accustomed (which will be discussed further). Although this does not mean at all that the general public is aware of their functions and, above all, that these values require constant efforts to uphold and confirm their relevance (validity). However, this is not at all an accusation against the abovementioned general public. If anything, one could say that we have to live in the conditions that make it quite difficult to care for our own consciousness - perceived as the independence of courts, because, as T. Żyro writes, in the situation of "a deep atomisation of potential voters, due to torn or even broken civil bonds, the voter is dependent on manipulation and psychomanipulation provided by the instruments of political marketing". In addition, this atomized citizen is subject to "a pressure from an organized electoral machine which

political parties nowadays are" (Żyro, 2013, p. 79). Finally, as Stanisław Filipowicz observes, the dominance of television, signalling the return of the "pictographic script" makes the word redundant. The media are an "anthropogenic" tool, which is a tool of authority, where everything that is presented becomes true (Filipowicz, 2011, pp. 172-174).

Moreover, it should also be pointed out that the reception of nationalists' arguments is also not facilitated by the fact that they usually make it quite clear to the opposing side of the discussion that only they are right, and this at the least hinders the discussion, if it does not end it altogether. While political liberals are also not free from this "sin", their situation is easier, because their conviction of their own exclusive righteousness, perceived as a kind of monopoly, is hidden behind the slogans on defending the individual, i.e. in principle, everyone (maybe with the exception of nationalists?). Therefore, liberals are sometimes also susceptible to exclusion, they reject those "maladapted" in their opinion, and do not even allow them the possibility to undergo a kind of "re-education". Proponents and defenders of liberal democracy seem to live in fear of nationalists. These defenders, however, are not necessarily pure liberals. In this context, it is worth mentioning a category of Polish left-wing liberalism used by Zdzisław Krasnodębski (Krasnodębski, 2003, p. 273). In any case, this fear is sometimes felt so strongly, that they remove the word nation from the public debate, and label anyone who carelessly uses it, a nationalist. As it seems, in the opinion of political liberals, it is already dangerous that nationalism considers the nation to be of paramount value, and not every nation at that, because nationalists are concerned only with their own nation and not with others. Nationalism, with its proclivity for a dichotomous perception of the world, is therefore, in their opinion, a source of creation and exacerbation of divisions. They, therefore, consider it to be the opposite of peaceful coexistence. It seems, however, that such an approach is not entirely legitimate. If we take into account that in the history of mankind peace has been a rarity, if such peaceful moments may be indicated at all. It can be assumed that nationalism can, in certain situations, hinder peaceful coexistence at most, however, it must also be noted that peaceful coexistence of societies is more of a dream than a reality (and finally, nationalism is not as much the source of conflicts, as is often their tool).

Following this lead, it should be noted that nationalism seems to have two essential demands. The first demand is absolute loyalty from the group, and the second is the duty to maintain cultural specificity. Based on the anti-nationalist discourse, one would have to acknowledge the advantage of liberalism, which results from its openness. However, the point is

that these two features apply also to the description of liberalism and it is not only because of their rather general character. While, as J. Gray noted, liberalism, whose aims are tolerance and pluralism in relation to the behaviour of individuals, in the sphere of its political demands is, however, an expression of intolerance. This is because it rejects the argument that various forms of government can, each in its own way, contribute to the achievement of genuine human well-being. Liberalism, according to J. Gray, rejected this argument because it undermined its claims as a political religion to a universal rule (and therefore the claims, which show the structural similarity of liberalism to evangelizing Christianity) (Gray, 2001b, p. 5).

Difficulties with the reception of nationalist thought from the standpoint of liberal democracy may also be considered a consequence of the progressive atomisation of society. The same point of reference may also be successfully used to explain nationalism's dislike for liberalism. However, it seems that this process of atomisation is rather inevitable. It is worth to recall in this context the opinion of P. Kaczorowski, who noted that the idea of democracy as a community, functions only in relation to its initial period. It comes from the uniqueness of the moment, in which the "universal sense of participation" is a consequence of the "revolutionary activity" that is necessary at a given moment. It is short-lived, however, because very quickly this goal of connecting "all" ceases to be visible and in its stead, conflicts of interest appear. This "new world" quite quickly "stops being a community of all and disintegrates into at least many different, particular communities", which, in turn, makes cooperation incomprehensible, and in many cases impossible, for people (Kaczorowski, 1998, pp. 11-12). It is a process of disintegration of community egoism into individual egoisms. Anyway, the requirement of social unity is generally quite problematic when faced with significant social diversity.

Another problem is related to the origin of nation states. As Marcin Król points out, they would not have arisen without the existence of "external pressure". However, if the origin of the nation state is not positive, but has a negative and reactive character, from the perspective of liberal democracy, the nation state can be "neither a particularly civilized, nor valuable creation". Nevertheless, it remains a fact (Król, 2004, p. 17). This is where the aforementioned tension appears. Nationalism, which means that certain groups of people may be required to have a sense of solidarity with regard to other groups (Weber, 2002, p. 667), leads directly to the recognition of "predominance" or at least "nonreplaceability" of cultural goods, which can only be preserved and developed by "cultivating its specificity". (Weber, 2002, p. 670). Meanwhile, the attention of

atomized individuals in today's liberal democracy is directed primarily at consumption (although this does not seem to be a consequence of the pressure of political liberalism on these individuals, in the least), because it gives them the opportunity for fulfilment. Probably even when it remains only a desire, something unattainable. In the face of this preference, all other problems seem to be of little importance to these individuals. However, this should not prompt anyone to form a rather naïve demand, that it ought to be different. Consumption simply confirms the status of individuals, it is a motivator and often constitutes the meaning of their actions, and this is not likely to change. To put it a bit differently; the majority of the society is willing to deal with the dilemmas that everyday life brings them first, instead of debating political ideas which, in the face of everyday problems, must seem simply unimportant to them. One can simply say that the particular is always more important.

However, as José Ortega y Gasset writes, one may recall here the image of the mass-man described by him and list two of his traits: 1) uninhibited expansion of life's demands and needs in relation to oneself and 2) a strong lack of gratitude to those who made this comfortable life possible (Gasset, 2002, p. 60). Regardless of the adopted interpretation, the point is that firstly (even if it sounds grandiose), human life is not locked in the circle of consumption and possession, which quite strongly overshadow other fundamental, though immaterial aspects of human existence, including the presence of the community element, and what is more, are conditioned by them. Unfortunately, this veil is sometimes so tightly drawn that an individual may not even be aware of its existence. Secondly, the inability to satisfy the desires associated with material goods only exacerbates disintegration, and the atomized citizen easily succumbs to various pressures, including those of the state machinery. Perhaps it is precisely, as Piotr Nowak points out, that the modern state "penetrates the life of individuals, permeates them, controls and regulates", directing inward its political activity, consisting in the ability to distinguish the enemy from a friend (Nowak, 2008, p. 182). Therefore, is this one of the mechanisms that sustains the system called liberal democracy? Especially when one takes into account that the common good is more and more often a notion poorly adapted to reality, because, as Maria Jarosz observes, an extremely party-dependent and ineffective state is more of an arena for conflicting group interests than for common interests and values (Jarosz, 2004, p. 23). The described situation can be explained as an outcome of the expansion of economic liberalism, which led to the marginalization of its political foundations. These two separate directions, as it might have seemed, at least up to a certain

moment, merged or, to be precise, the latter was incorporated by the former. Moreover, they were strengthened by the dynamics of globalization processes, which led to the shaping of political relations based only and exclusively on effective dominance of the political sphere (Laska, 2006, p.8). To put it simply, transformation "omitted" the sphere of political awareness. As a result, not many people know what liberalism, the foundation of the new system, is (Olszewska-Dyoniziak, 2003, p. 96).

Even if the foregoing was untrue, the weakness of liberal democracy seems to include the very conviction that it is the best solution for the society. This criticism is by no means intended to undermine the validity of this statement, but only to show its weak point. If a value becomes so obvious that it is trivial, the drive to care for it disappears fairly quickly (J. S. Mill, 2002, p. 68). Then the imperative to constantly strive for such a value, to nurture it, usually disappears.

The coherence conditions of the nationalist counter-project and its limitations

If one assumes that nationalism is, generally speaking, an expression of dissatisfaction with the current political situation and the condition of society in such a system, it is worth noting that the propagation of nationalistic views requires from individuals a certain mobilisation, expressed through the possibility and ability to formulate assessments and the capacity for making choices, and thus also the rejection of certain values and (excluding pure negation) proposing other ones, considered to be better, instead. In order for such a critical reflection to emerge, there is undoubtedly a need for sensitivity, intellectual activity, reflection, critical thinking or at least a simple objection. After all, acceptance, or involuntary acceptance, has consequences for the individual, but it does not exert systemic pressure on the individual, because they are not treated by the system as dysfunctions.

The presence of the nationalistic paradigm in the public discourse is worth treating, most of all, as a voice in the dispute concerning the subjectivity and the obligations of an individual, society and state resulting from a particular concept. This might be a destructive force, but we cannot help noticing that this situation, in some aspects, seems quite beneficial for democracy itself. Although the dispute concerning fundamental issues puts axioms at risk, the ideas may have a new life through the necessity of confrontation. In the presence of a dispute, the depressing monotony may disappear, the monotony expressed in thoughtless reproduction of norms, which shows the taming of the will rather than its conscious activity. Questions may arise in return.

Obviously, the situation may sometimes become uncontrollable, as sometimes the destruction in certain circumstances may turn out to be the simplest road and the simplest goal. Especially, as responsibility is in deficit, when the participants of the dispute are ready to lead it on various levels, having forgotten to define first what needs particular protection and what is the goal of their endeavors.

It is quite difficult for the nationalist discourse to break through as a sensible project into the public space. This is not only due to liberal criticism, or the criticism stemming from the freedom-related liberal foundations of a democratic state. The problem with nationalism is that nationalists themselves often consider members of their society to be quite "unruly". However, this dominant view that nationalism should only be seen as a threat to liberal democracy, effectively draws people's attention away from its structural problems and actual threats, which nationalism and nationalists are unlikely to be the source of.

M. Król points it out in his writing, that the persisting "anti-nationalistic nature of political correctness" leads to the fact that "the true face of possible contemporary nationalism, which develops freely and enjoys power, is simply unknown to us" (Król, 2004, pp. 56-57). In Poland, nationalism has not yet had the opportunity to materialise its ideas, although it should be added that nationalism has nowadays become more visible (manifested) in the public space.

In order to determine the conditions of coherence of the nationalist counter-project and its limitations, it is worth to refer to the ideas of R. Dmowski and to discuss the elements related to the analyzed issue. R. Dmowski described the national interest as a moral relationship with the nation, independent of the individual's will (Dmowski, 1907, pp. 235). At the same pointing out that a given nation, in order to become a nation, first had to have a state, because a state by its very existence produces a nation (Dmowski, 1907, p. 250). Thus, if the nation did not break the moral connection with the state tradition, if it did not lose its national interest, it would not lose both the conscious and, as it were, intuitive (spontaneous) aspiration to regain its politically independent being (Dmowski, 1907, p. 251). According to R. Dmowski, in a certain sphere of actions, an individual connected through past generations to its nation, has no free will, but must obey the collective will of the nation, i.e. the will of all of its past generations, understood as inherited, relatively stable instincts (Dmowski, 1907, pp. 235-236). This moral sanction, i.e. national ethics, as he wrote, determines the direction and scope of conduct in national matters (Dmowski, 1907, p. 237). However, R. Dmowski did not really mean the far-reaching limitations of the individual.

As it seems, he only assumed that the social being was based on a fairly rational reflection, arising in the process of participation, that individuals, in order to maintain its duration, should sacrifice a part of their personal interests (Dmowski, 1907, p. 175). At the same time, as a negative example, he pointed to politically passive societies, which usually leave it to a small handful of people to direct the fate of the country, and then they blame them for failures (Dmowski, 1907, p. 197). At the same time, however, he stipulated that it was not a matter of every citizen being a politician (Dmowski, 1907, p. 220). By this civic duty he understood primarily, that citizens should be in tune with the condition and the elementary needs of the country (Dmowski, 1907, p. 220).

While comparing the nations of Western Europe with the Polish nation, he noticed that both the spiritual resources (that instinct), as well as the material resources of the Polish nation inherited from previous generations, due to the fact that the Poles are a younger nation, which lags behind civilization-wise, are much more modest (Dmowski, 1936, p. 31). Therefore, he probably did not attribute the ability to properly recognize the national interest to all members of the Polish nation, recognizing that national ethics also allows us to oppose the contemporary generation, if this generation fails to perform the national duties. It also allows us to destroy the prosperity, peace and happiness of the present generation in certain situations, where sacrificing them is necessary to maintain the continuity of the national being. He also pointed out, that this ethic does not oblige us to think in the same way as our ancestors did, but to think and act as it is necessary in the given conditions for the preservation and development of the national being (Dmowski, 1907, p. 237; 1925, p. 10). Admittedly, one may assume that in the times when R. Dmowski formed his thoughts, under a foreign yoke, it was much more difficult to "become a nation" and the sense of responsibility for Poland was often "extinguished" (Konopczyński, 1989, p. 19). However, there is no doubt that the national interest, within the meaning which R. Dmowski ascribed to it, is not tantamount to a consent to what the majority currently thinks about it (Walicki, 2000, p. 263).

It should also be pointed out, that democracy as the National Democrats understood it, did not mean striving for formal equality among atomized individuals, but was first and foremost a tool, whose function was to sensitize individuals to the problems of the nation and their citizenship (Grott, 2004, p. 426). The disappearance of national loyalty, as W. Wasiutyński argues, leads to the annihilation of the nation. In the situation of a conflict of loyalty, especially in the case of external oppression, a nation without national loyalty (if it is still possible to speak of a nation in such a case) becomes defenceless (cf. Wasiutyński, 1961, p. 25). R. Dmowski wrote that in such

a situation, human communities become inert, anarchic masses, which are no longer bound by a moral coercion, but by a physical one (Dmowski, 1907, p. 241).

It is worth mentioning here the specific origin of nation states, which would probably not have emerged if there had not been an external pressure (Król, 2004, p. 17). It seems, therefore, that National Democracy, similarly to nationalists in other underdeveloped countries, was doomed to chauvinism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism. In M. Król's assessment, anti-Semitism, which could be regarded as an unnecessary addition to otherwise fairly reasonable nation-forming requirements, is not an unnecessary addition or a negative fantasy after all, because it "creates a form of expression and a type of social bond, absolutely necessary for the national project". When one wants to achieve transformations, one simply has to build from what is available. This is the structure of nationalist thinking, also of the contemporary kind, although today it is hidden behind the veil of political correctness (Król, 2004, pp. 31-32). However, it is worth to reiterate the concept of Bogumił Grott, that the concept of a nation state, i.e. a state of a given nation (the ruling nation), as opposed to a state of all citizens living within its borders, a concept with its own anti-democratic and anti-liberal "blade" is rather invisible today, but the focus of political discussion is shifted toward the fact of the existence of a nation (Grott, 2004, p. 435).

As J. Gray argues, there are no criteria of legitimacy of political systems, which would apply in all historical contexts. Although some forms of good and evil are typically human, the historical conditions which people live in are too complex and changeable to translate universal values into a universal theory of political legitimacy (Gray, 2001a, p. 171). J. Gray also points out that today's systems, which are considered legitimate, include: the rule of law, effective representative institutions, authorities removable by citizens without the need to resort to violence, the ability to satisfy the basic needs of all and the ability to protect minorities from discrimination, but be also recognizes that apart from fulfilling these conditions, they must also reflect the ways of their citizens' lives and their identities (Gray, 2001a, p. 171). May a nation "fetter" individuals, then? Undoubtedly, nationalism was a system of legitimate authority, which filled a certain void at a certain historical moment (Crick, 2004, p. 107). But why should people still think that, for example, an island, a plain or a valley should necessarily constitute a nation state (Crick, 2004, p. 109)? B. Crick does not contradict or deny such a sense of national belonging. However, he sees a danger in deriving the national feeling from objective and rational criteria. He does not reject it, as long as it is a matter of will and consciousness (Crick, 2004, p. 109) and as long as the national

feeling recognises the equality of the national freedom and political freedom (Crick, 2004, p. 122). and does not concern mainly nationalism.

Pluralism probably has its "limits", drawn each time by the tradition "shared" in a given society (Krasnodębski, 2003, p. 152). Whereas this problem did not exist in traditional societies, possessing the unchanged, fixed canon of values with the obligation to implement them without the need to justify them, as well as the sanctions included in mechanisms of socialization and social control, contemporary Western societies, characterized with wide social and cultural pluralism on all levels of life, this problem is becoming particularly noticeable (Budzyńska, 2008, pp. 36-37), since all attempts at shaping collective identity and awareness are often perceived as one of forms of oppression and compulsion.

Conclusion

The starting point for the analyses conducted in this article was the thesis that liberal democracy is in crisis. It should be pointed out that liberal democracy is a model solution. Its attractiveness is attributed to the extremely vast sphere of freedom offered to individuals or, to be more precise, to each of these individuals. As the author demonstrated, the essence of liberal democracy lies in the combination of the idea of equality and freedom, which consists in the statement that the requirement for freedom is equality in law. In the light of the conducted analyses it is worth considering, however, whether the above relationship has not been reversed, so that through freedom each individual gains the feeling of equality with other individuals. A small difference, it might seem, but is we assume that it is possible to direct effectively freedom of choice into some insignificant, façade areas, a serious problem emerges here. The belief in equality obtained in this way would probably turn out to be delusion. It should be observed here, however, that this issue was not analyzed in detail in this paper.

Another issue is the attachment of liberal democracy to formal rules. They help define its conformity – legal validity, but to a rather limited extent, since, as it seems, liberal democracy is pleased with the quantitative diagnosis rather that qualitative one. In this context the problem of election absenteeism of individuals was signaled.

The author also points at the marginalization of political liberalism to the advantage of economic liberalism. The symptoms of this preference were found in the atomization of the society, heightened, inter alia, by consumerism which for them is becoming the only – closed

world, which, in turn, leads to the withdrawal of individuals from the public sphere and their involuntary resignation from, for example, the controlling rights they have over the authority. The pessimistic vision of liberal democracy is completed with the description of the possibilities offered by the instruments possessed by those in power, who can model and control in an invisible way such "seduced" individuals. Nevertheless, liberal democracy as a social system still seems to have some attributes that make it incredibly attractive. The problem seems to lie in the lack of political insight shown by system members. The reduction of the political sphere in liberal democracy to the absolute minimum led to the situation in which it is considered unnecessary to prepare to participate in this system. Liberal democracy thus become exclusive but at the same time it eludes any form of control.

Perhaps, as Karl Raimund Popper noted, the issue of freedom carries with it a naive and, at the same time, dangerous belief that by removing all forms of oppression and all other obstacles, it must inevitably lead to an unrestricted rule of truth and law (Popper, 1997, p. 177).Perhaps this is why any counter-project to liberal democracy causes concerns and is presented as a threat to the freedom of individuals, even when the individuals living in a liberal democracy are experiencing significant deficits in the area of this freedom. It is worth noting at this point, that nationalism is not the only threat to the freedom of individuals, given that a liberal democratic state, which has a monopoly on coercion, forces citizens every day, often in a subtle, imperceptible way, to do many incomprehensible things, which even sensible people are ultimately willing to do. The threat to the apparently sanctioning power of rational and objective criteria, however, seems to be a much wider problem.

As far as the nationalist counter-project is concerned, it should be noticed, first of all, that it operates only on the level of ideas. As there is no practical experience in the implementation of these ideas, it can only remain a set of postulates. Therefore we cannot answer whether and how they would work in practice and what evolution they would undergo. The comparison between the nationalist concept and the liberal democracy practice is impossible due to this incompatibility of levels. While the liberal democracy practice seems, out of its certain helplessness, to tolerate civic unpreparedness and passivity, it should be noticed that in the model concept, civic awareness in liberal democracy is presented as the foundation of individuals' security. As for nationalism, it rejects the policy of passivity, but this does not mean that nationalism prefers free, unhindered will. It is an individual's obligation to obey the collective will of the nation (specific loyalty), while

the category of collective will of the nation or national interest does not belong to democratic standards as it is not determined by the majority. In nationalism, the tendency to exclude is manifested through such preference for unity. Thus specific citizenship from the nationalist point of view, taking into account the fact that the state generates the nation, would have to lead towards reduction of pluralism in the society.

Nationalism, as indicated above, is only one of many proposals for organizing the social life. The fundamental problem, however, boils down to the issues of free will and conscience which are able to resist the power of rationality which reduces all doubts. But if this is so, then we need to regain the human being first (see Żyro, 2008, pp. 532-533). However, this quite simply defined goal may encounter quite serious difficulties when we try to accomplish it. It is by no means clear how we could regain the human being. If we assume that we shall regain human beings through specific awakening, a question arises here concerning not critical conditions which must appear for the change to take place, but concerning the direction of this potential change. Such direction is by no means obvious. If, on the other hand, we treat regaining as conscious activity, here we enter the tricky area of social engineering. And here the threat of oppressiveness looms.

However, perhaps we are essentially still dealing with the process of "conquering" (cf. Staniszkis, 2012, pp. 9-10). If so, the pressure of the state, the pressure of authority, is inevitable. It does not have an alternative in a situation, where politics is always perceived as a way of using the accumulated power, gaining more power and reducing the power of opponents. In such an approach, politics is only about techniques and mechanisms, not goals, values and ideals (cf. Król, 1989, p. 89). In such case, politics is only a struggle for authority, influence and opportunities to pursue particular interests. Perhaps ideals seem to be a necessary condition for political activity only for observers and novices, while this, in their opinion, highly important, essential perspective is, in fact, only a consequence of misunderstanding reality. But it might be that such evaluation only confirms the influence of the overwhelming power of monopoly. It might be, after all, that how we perceive the world and also how we would like to arrange it – is (only and at the same time as much as) the emanation of our existential situation, our experiences, our needs and related expectations. If this is so, then some possibilities of reducing the tension caused by the above-mentioned "conquering" and related incompatibility should be sought in the pluralism of the public discourse. Taking it out of the control of the authority. Maybe the implementation of the public

discourse as a space in which various ideas and views are confronted, may turn out to be the basic requirement for the rebirth of a human being and human community.

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ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS IN SUPPORTING EUROPEAN INTEGRATION IN THE CONTEXT OF ROMANIA

Jacques BAZEN, PhD

Saxion University of Applied Sciences, Enschede, The Netherlands

j.c.bazen@saxion.nl

Florin DUMA, PhD

Faculty of European Studies, Babeș-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca, Romania

florin.duma@ubbcluj.ro

Abstract: This study is about the effects of short exchange projects on students from higher education. The authors observe a low willingness among students from The Netherlands and Romania to spend longer term exchange periods in each other's country. Just 0.3% of Dutch ERASMUS+ scholarship recipients went to Romania in 2017, and vice versa 1.8%. Given the population sizes and higher education enrolment rates, the expected average would have been around 3% for both countries. Even though Romania's attractiveness of higher education is slowly increasing, the authors decided to try to help students with broadening their horizon by offering an educational intervention that consists of a short exchange project that consists of an actual business assignment for a client from either business or government. The results of the corresponding pre- and post-test indicates that students are probably a bit overly optimistic about their intercultural skills at the start, but at the end especially enjoy a lot the multidisciplinary approach of the exchange project.

Keywords: *education, internationalization, project management, European integration*.

Introduction

Romania acceded the European Union (EU) in 2007. This process of accession, and subsequent ever closer integration of Romania into the EU could not always be called smooth, as

in several instances Romania was criticized by the EU about not always following through necessary policy reforms to comply with European rules and regulations. In spite of these political and judicial issues, when looking at educational cooperation, Romanian universities are more and more integrated in European networks, as can be seen from data regarding international partnerships, student and staff exchanges and the general participation of Romanian higher education in different EU programs (European Commission, 2018). Also, looking from a business perspective, integration of Romania in the EU common market can be called successful. When looking at one of the often-used indicators, foreign direct investments (FDI) in the Romanian economy, these investments were growing to levels way above the levels of before the EU accession (Ludosean, 2012). The years following the global financial & economic crisis of 2008 brought a decrease in the flows of FDI to Romania, but followed by a steady recovery afterwards (National Bank of Romania, 2018). Arguably more importantly than the bare numbers, are the originating countries of these investments. In Romania's case, well over 90% of the FDI flows are from EU countries (National Bank of Romania, 2018), showing the strong connections of the Romanian economy with those from the EU. Also in terms of GDP growth, Romania is one of the fastest growing countries in the EU (Bayer, 2018) and the GINI coefficient of Romania is relatively high compared to Western European economies, but steadily falling (World Bank, 2019), indicating that income inequalities in society are becoming less extreme.

Still, notwithstanding the impressive economic performance of Romania as described in the previous paragraph and the growing participation of Romanian universities in EU networks, these developments do not yet show in the actual numbers of student mobility between Western European countries and Romania. At least not in the ERASMUS+ KA103 program, the largest and most well-known study mobility exchange program in Europe. In this study we did not look for other exchange programs, even though these do exist. Since the choice was made to focus on KA103, it also means that exchanges in vocational education as well as ERASMUS+ placement mobility are left out. The ERASMUS+ study mobility program is popularly seen as a measure of connectedness in terms of academic networks.

The overall picture is that there is less mobility of students from Western European countries to Romania and vice-versa than might be expected based on the number of mobile students in both countries. The authors took The Netherlands and Romania as example of two roughly equally sized EU member states in terms of population and determined the student

mobility flows between the two countries and compared it with what could be expected based on the population of both countries. Since both countries have a roughly equal population, it could be expected that in both countries around 3% of students would spend an exchange period in each other's country (see figure 1). The actual numbers as reported in the ERASMUS+ annual report for 2017, are for both countries not even close to this percentage, with a large gap especially from the Dutch side. Only 44 Dutch students spend an exchange period in Romania, out of a total of 13 783 ERASMUS+ participants (European Commission, 2018), no more than 0.3% of the total Dutch student mobility that year. From Romania 156 students went to the Netherlands, out of a total number of 9091 students (European Commission, 2018), or 1.7% of the total KA103 Romanian student mobility.
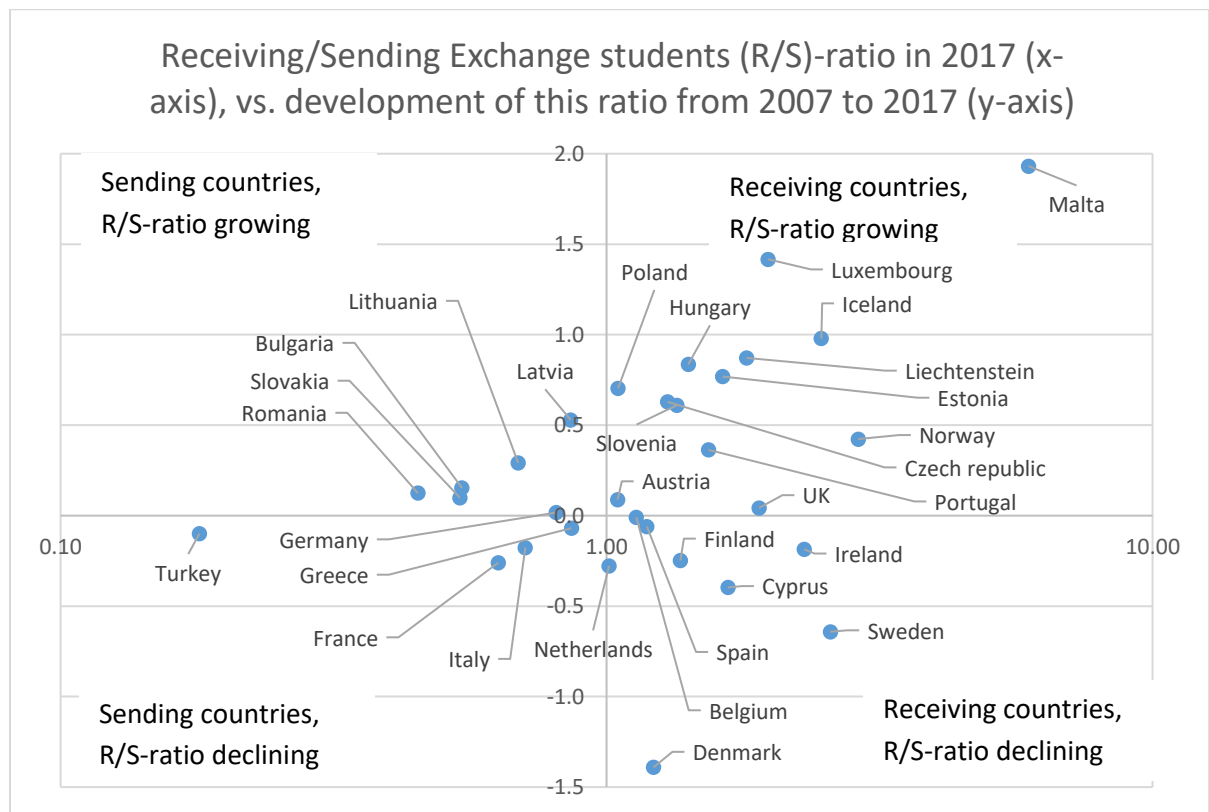
Figure 1
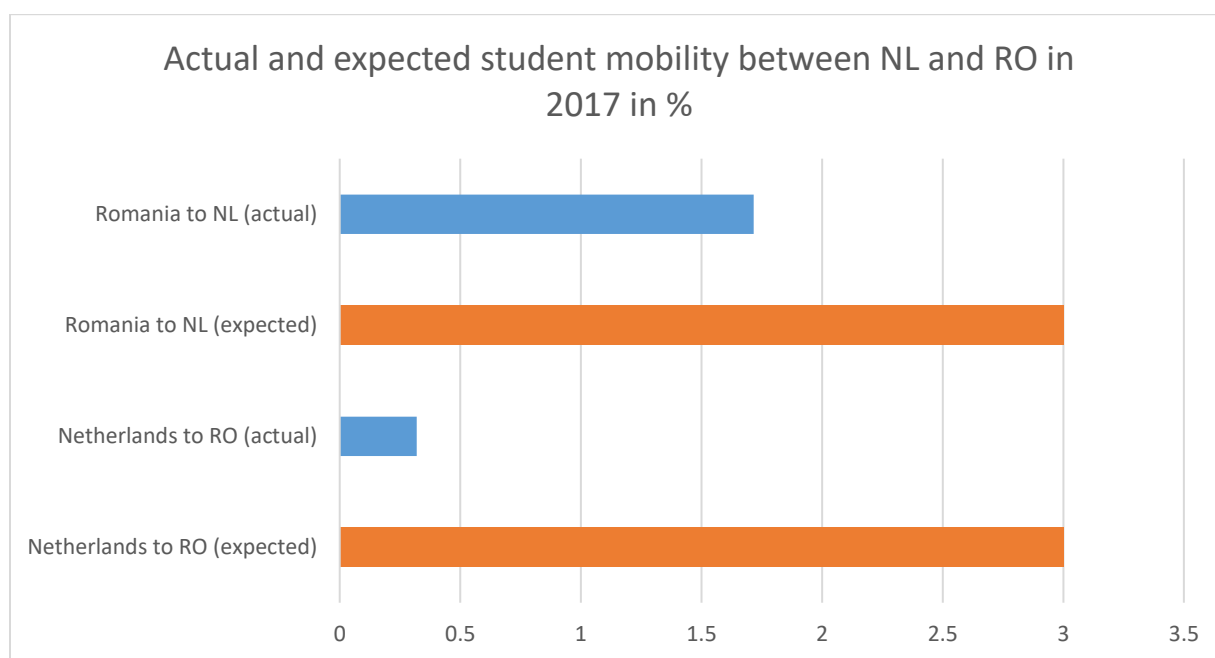
Source: The actual numbers are from ERASMUS+ Annual Report, European Commission, 2018

The same ERASMUS+ Annual Report shows that in general Romania is a net sender of students in the Erasmus program, meaning that Romanian universities are sending more students abroad than they attract foreign students to study in their institutions. When looking at the

developments over the years 2007 – 2017, there is however a growth in the ratio of receiving and sending ERASMUS+ KA103 exchange students. The Receiving/Sending ratio (R/S-ratio) is calculated by dividing the number of incoming exchange students by the number of outgoing exchange students. If there is an equal number of incoming and outgoing students, the ratio will be 1. The R/S-ratio for Romania in 2017 is 0.45, meaning that Romania roughly sends twice as many students out than the country receives incoming students. For 2007 the R/S-ratio was 0.33, meaning that the ratio was around three to one. It is therefore possible to conclude that the Romanian higher education has become relatively more attractive for foreign students. During this decade, the absolute numbers both of incoming and outgoing students have strongly increased. The number of outgoing students increased with 111% per year and the number of incoming students with no less than 192%, although it must be noted that increases in small numbers in general cause large percentual growth. When comparing Romania with the other ERASMUS+ programme countries in terms of development of R/S-ratio and the development of this ratio during the 2007-2017 decade, it becomes clear that Romanian higher education has a lot of similarities with Slovakian and Bulgarian higher education institutions in terms of R/S-ratio and development. Other countries from Central/Eastern Europe such as Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovenia all managed to move from net-sending countries into net-receiving countries, showing that these countries are seen by students as more attractive to spend an exchange period in. Gonzalez, Mesanza, and Mariel (2011) found in their study about student mobility flows that the cost of living, distance to the home country, university quality, the host country language and its climate are significant determinants for students to decide on where the spend their exchange period. Figure 2 shows the R/S-ratios of all ERASMUS+ KA103 programme countries and the development of this R/S-ratio over the decade 2007-2017. The R/S-ratio on the X-axis has a logarithmic scale, ranging from an R/S-ratio of 0.18 (Turkey), to 5.93 (Malta). Both Turkey and Malta are outliers, Turkey barely attracts incoming students and Malta receives almost 6 times more students than the country sends out. A positive value on the Y-axis means an increase in the R/S-ratio over the decade 2007 to 2017 and a negative value means a decrease. Decreases in R/S-ratios can occur when there are either less incoming students with a roughly similar number of outgoing students, or there are substantially more outgoing students with similar numbers of incoming students. The second case is happening for example in Denmark, the country that scores lowest on the R/S-ratio development.

Figure 2

Receiving/Sending Exchange students (R/S)-ratio in 2017 (x-axis), vs. development of this ratio from 2007 to 2017 (y-axis)

Source: ERASMUS+ Annual Report, European Commission, 2018

One of the other indicators to understand the development of Romanian integration in the European Union is the percentage of students that participate in student mobility periods. For all ERASMUS+ programme countries, this percentage is slightly above 1% per year. Given that a typical study period lasts for 4 to 5 years, it can be concluded that on average 4 – 5% of all students in the programme countries participate in a student mobility (European Commission, 2018). Figure 3 shows the yearly participation of students from all programme countries in the ERASMUS+ KA103 program. Romania scores slightly above average, and it can be expected that also in Romania 4 – 5% of the higher education students will have participated in an ERASMUS+ exchange period.

These data provide an insight in the matter of connectedness between Romania and other EU/ERASMUS+ programme countries. As can be seen from figure 1, especially the mobility flows from Western Europe, for example from a country like the Netherlands to Romania are very small,

but also vice versa, mobility flows are under average. There can and probably will be a myriad of reasons for this pattern, but the authors decided not to investigate in detail those reasons, but to take those as a given, yet unknown, fact of life and investigate from the available literature whether the popular idea that the ERASMUS+ study mobility is a measure of connectedness of universities internationally, holds. Furthermore, the authors decided to develop an educational intervention to try to connect Dutch and Romanian students in order to learn how to build effective international project cooperation within mixed teams of students from both countries. The goal of this project was to understand if students reported after a relatively short but intensive exchange project that their intercultural competences were increased and if they would like to pursue an exchange period or even career in the other country.

Figure 3

Yearly participation of students in ERASMUS+ student mobility from ERASMUS+ programme countries in %
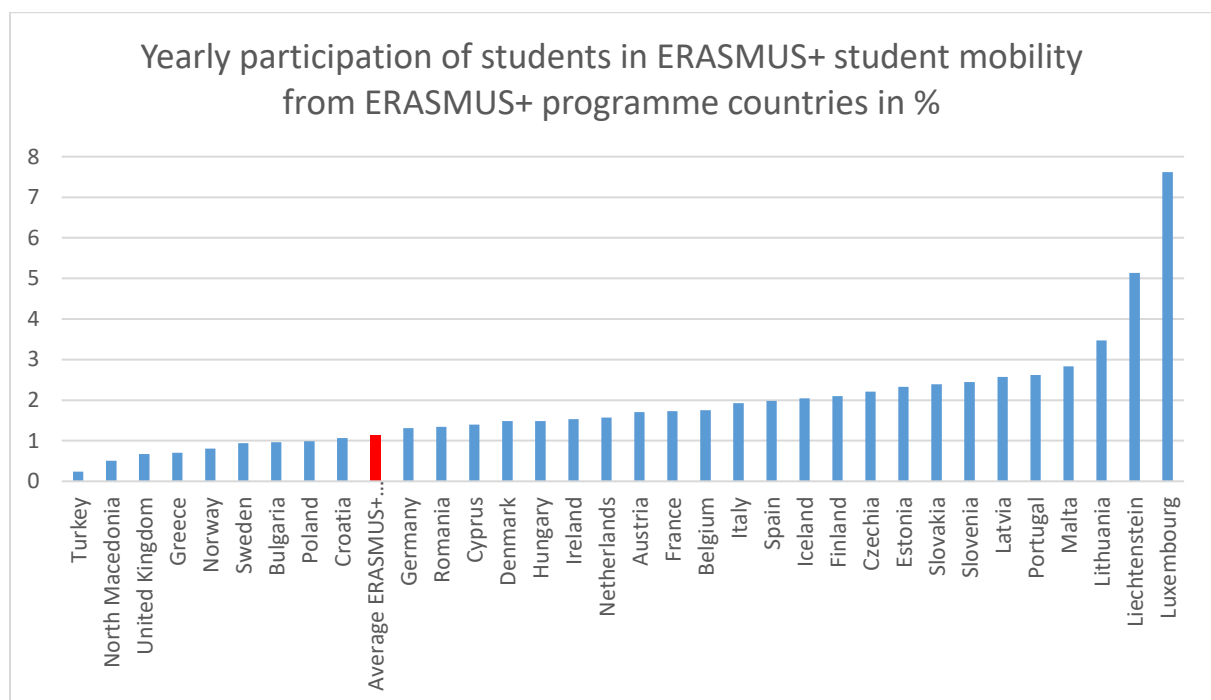
Source: Eurostat

Theoretical Framework

Study's into student exchanges are mostly limited to ERASMUS(+) exchanges, or other longer-term exchange periods. The European Commission already keeps track of statistics of the program, as could be seen in the introduction part of this paper. The idea behind the ERASMUS

program is the so-called international integration theory (Sigalas, 2010), which states that because of more international cross-border contacts, in the right context, international integration and community building can occur, leading to sustained peace (Deutsch, 1966, 2015). Some authors have argued that at least partly some of these developments can be seen in Europe, where especially higher educated and white-collar workers also identify themselves as Europeans next to their own national identity (Fligstein, 2008). At the same time, Fligstein argues that a large group is mostly left out in the current EU policies, namely lower educated people and potentially at least some part of the middle class, which could lead to an actual widening of the gap between the perceived national identity and European identity.

Sigalas (2010) argues that it is assumed, but never proved that ERASMUS exchange programs are broadening the horizons of young people and are therefore helping with raising a European identity. Sigalas even found in his study the contrary, namely that participation in such an exchange program may even have adverse effects on feelings of Europeanness. He also concludes that it is unlikely that shorter study trips or tourism visits have any result on the development of a European identity among students. Therefore, the authors of this paper decided to develop a short-term targeted exchange program between the Netherlands and Romania aimed at bringing students together by challenging them with a practical business assignment that needs the skills of students from both countries in order to be completed successfully and test whether some effects can be found. Other authors however, like King and Ruiz-Gelices (2003), Recchi and Favell (2009), Van Mol (2013) and Mitchell (2015) did find – albeit sometimes modest – positive developments on European identity among ERAMUS participants.

There is other criticism possible on the way the exchange program is organised, when looking at its goal of building a more European identity. Mitchell (2015) argues that cultural isolationism is detrimental for European identity building. This cultural isolation quite often happens in practice, as it is rather common that groups of students from one university study together in another country. Mitchell further argues that given that around 5% of EU students participate in an exchange program, no large developments among the general population of such programs can be expected. What is more, as Kuhn (2012) argues, the ERASMUS+ program misses its mark, as it appeals to the interest of those students who are already thinking internationally.

The effectiveness of short exchange programs and/or projects on "broadening the horizons of participants" of such projects seem to have been barely studied. A so-called ERASMUS

Intensive Program comes closest to what the authors have designed in terms of educational intervention, although any ERASMUS Intensive Program is by design multilateral instead of bilateral as is the intervention studied in this paper. A search on Google Scholar and Scopus on "effectiveness of ERASMUS Intensive Programs" yielded a plethora of (conference) papers. However, all these papers were mainly dealing with an evaluation of the program itself, and not providing measurable quantitative data on how and how much the participating students have "broadened their horizon". Other authors, such as Racolța-Paina (2016) studied the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs program or, more general, the effects of entrepreneurship in Romania (Pop A.M, 2018). Yet, the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs program is not close to our educational intervention project because it is based mostly on individual participation and it is designed for a period of minimum two months.

Educational intervention & Research design

Almost ten years ago the authors came with the idea to organize short term practice oriented international projects, for students from The Netherlands and Romania, particularly from Saxion University of Applied Sciences and Babes-Bolyai University. Our intention was to "broaden their horizon" and the solution we found was to mix up two groups of 12-15 students from each country, together with their teachers, in order to work on a specific assignment for one week, in smaller subgroups. This period might sound too short, but we thought of a one-week intensive work, with preparation in advance (couple of months in advance). At the end of that week the students had to present the results of their work to the client, either from a private company or from public institutions.

The content of these short-term international projects was related to structured problem solving suggested by businesses and/or societal organizations. Some examples of short-term projects that we organized for students along the years are:

- Courtyard development in the city of Cluj-Napoca (new functions for courtyards in the centre);
- Some embankment development project (river to the city), related to the preparation of the candidature for European cultural capital;
- Ethnographic park of Cluj-Napoca (solution for revitalization of the park and museum);

- Urban mobility in Cluj-Napoca (development of bicycle transport network);

- European cultural capital candidature of Cluj-Napoca project (several issues);

- Firemen's tower (renovating & finding a new use);

- Aegon Pensions Romania (comparative analysis of the Dutch and Romanian pension systems);

- Entrasol company NL, innovative nano-carbon tube heating (prospection and analysis of the Romanian market).

Among the involved partners and stakeholders were public or societal organizations (eg Cluj-Napoca City Hall, Dutch Consulate in Cluj, Asociația Cluj 2021-Capitală Culturală Europeană, The Ethnographic park etc.) and private companies from the Netherland or Romania (eg Entrasol, Aegon etc.) to whom the students presented their results in the last day of each project.

In order to measure the results of our educational intervention through these short-term projects, the authors decided to apply questionnaires to the students before the beginning and after the end of selected projects. Like this we measured the competences of the students before and after the project (pre-test + post-test) in an interval of time of 3 weeks between the two tests. The students were asked about their intentions to start their own international business, if they desire an international career, if they feel comfortable working with people from different cultures in international project management. Over the two years period of research we had 55 respondent students (n=55) organized in teams of mixed nationalities (mainly Dutch and Romanians, but also a few other nationalities) and mixed disciplines (urban planning, management, constructions, European studies, architectures etc). A few years ago we also conducted qualitative interviews with students about their participation in the projects at that time and the results and analysis are in an already published paper of Bazen, Duma, and Stamate (2015) with one conclusion clearly expressed by one the students : *"A lot of prejudices from both sides were busted during this week"*.

Analysis and results

The results of the questionnaires are summarized in the chart below, figure no.4. At a first glance, we can observe that most of the indicators show a slight decrease from the pre-test to post-test answers. We can explain this by the fact that the students were too optimistic in advance and they most probably realized during the projects that working in or with a different culture is more

complicated than it looks at the beginning. At the same time, when asked "Overlooking everything in terms of how you developed yourself, what grade would you give this project on a scale of 1-10?", they gave a good grade: average grade 8.4.

If we are looking at each indicator individually, both ways, in absolute value and in the dynamic, we can find some interesting results. The first indicator, related to the skills required to work in international projects, had the higher score in pre-test showing that the students tend to be well overconfident before starting the project, yet becoming more aware of what is necessary after the project was complete.

Figure 4
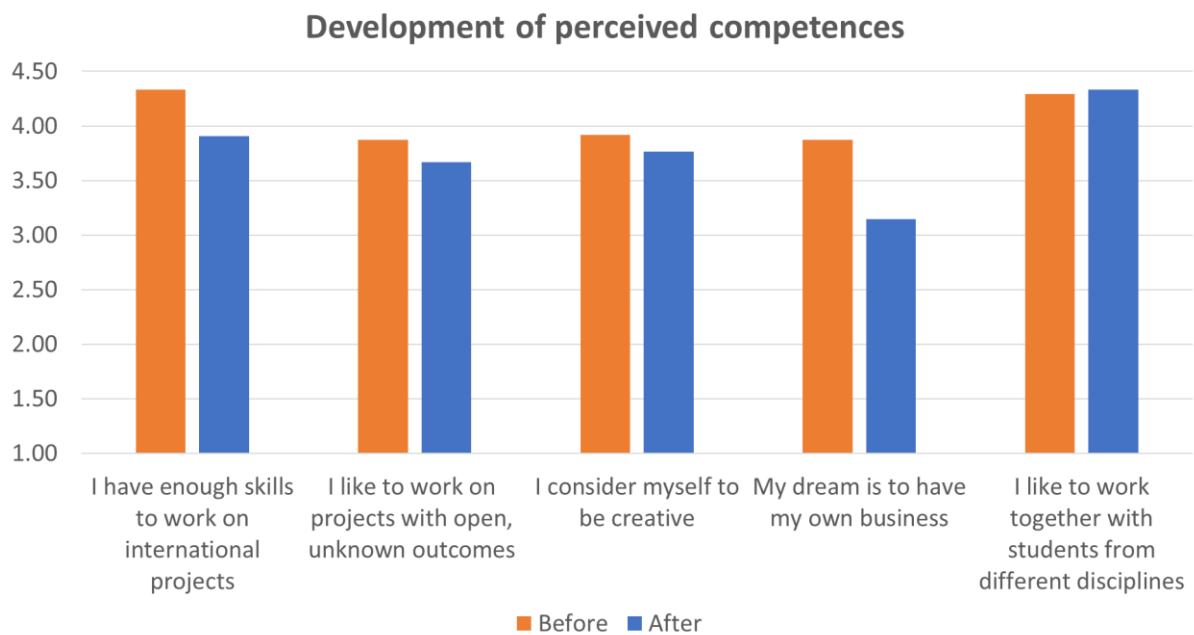
Source: authors' calculations.

When they are asked if they like to work on projects with open and unknown outcomes, the students are less confident already from the pre-test compared to the previous question. Faced with uncertainty during the project and its outcomes, their confidence is decreasing even more, showing a fading uncertainty tolerance.

Regarding their own creativity there is not much change in the student's perception, before and after the project, probably because the students were constantly encouraged to come with ideas

and proposal at all stages of the project. Though, the largest drop between pre-test and post-test is registered at the question related to their dream to start a business, when the students become more realistic after they worked in an international project with a real assignment for a real client and they realize all the complexity of it.

Concerning the last indicator, we can observe that students are very comfortable working in multi-disciplinary teams (architects, management, archaeology, European studies, entrepreneurship, civil engineers, urban planners, tourism). This fact is demonstrated not just by the high score (close to 4.5), but especially by the fact that this the only indicator that registered an increase in value from the pre-test to post-test.

Conclusions

It is well known that for many people it is difficult to adapt or to work in or with a different culture, but due to globalization, that is already a fact for many years now - not just a premise, we all have to learn how to improve the necessary skills for this. The same is true for the 'Millennials' or the 'iGeneration', that are currently our students. Apparently, there is a paradox here. On the one hand, due to the internet and the social networks, the Millennials think that they understand very well other cultures, they have many friends abroad (usually, e-friends) and they will have no difficulties to study or to work in another country. On the other hand, they are not really prepared or willing to leave their comfort zone in order to go to study abroad and for this we can just take a look at the low numbers related to the yearly participation of students in ERASMUS+ student mobility from programme countries (see figure no.3), despite the fact that this program is very accessible and generous. Our research tends to confirm this, by showing a decrease in almost all the indicators related to how the students perceive themselves in the pre-test and post-test.

We believe that this type of educational intervention, in the form of short-term international projects, is helping the students to fill the gap between what they think and what is the reality 'in the field' and, before anything else, to break the ice. As a matter of fact, being involved in the Erasmus departments at our faculties, we observed that the students who went once in Erasmus, very often they want, and they do return for another semester or/and later at the master or during their PhD. Same was true after our projects, most of the students reported being very interested to come again and work on short term international projects or to do an internship abroad. Moreover, we think that we managed to bridge between foreign and local companies/organizations and

students in order to fill the gap between theory and practice in an international context. In fact, we have always received positive feedback from the companies or organizations that were involved in our projects and students were invited for (paid) internships and some of them got hired later on (e.g. at Aegon).

Our intention is to continue these short-term projects in the future and maybe to develop it in new directions, for example to see what happens if this type of educational intervention would be compulsory. For the research purpose, would be interesting to further investigate if there is a selection bias in participants and the long-term effects of these collaborations.

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GEORGIAN DEFENCE POLICY PLANNING MODEL: PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND LEGAL ASPECTS

Vephkhvia GRIGALASHVILI, PhD Candidate

Faculty of Business Technology, Georgian Technical University, Georgia

grigalashviliv@gmail.com

Abstract: This article discusses the main tenets of Georgian national defence policy planning, as well as the institutional mechanisms that are essential for the management and governance of Georgian state defence. The scope of this article references the policy planning documentation at both the national level (via the Parliament or the Cabinet of Ministers, of the Government) and agency level (via the Cabinet of Ministers, or other heads of administrative entities), which pertain to the structure and hierarchy of state institutions as well as the peculiarities of their interaction. Additionally, a discussion of the competencies involved in defence policy planning, with respect to the separation of powers among state institutions, policy planning horizons, characteristics of intermediate stage plans, as well as the methodology involved in defence policy planning. In terms of the overall extent of defence policy planning, the objective of this article is to analyse concepts and factors, which from past observation can be identified as being constructive, or obstructive. Such analysis may help to formulate a more effective way forwards, firstly in terms of recommendations for reshaping the existing national defence policy planning model and ultimately in terms of the realisation of a more effective state governance model.

Keywords: Defence Policy Planning, Competencies in Defence Policy Planning, Mechanisms of Defence Policy Planning, Defence Policy Planning Documentation, Horizons of Defence Policy Planning, Methodology of Defence Policy Planning.

Introduction

The Georgian state's defence management systems, governance systems and defence policy planning systems are better understood in terms of their interrelated whole. Aspects of this interrelated whole include the objectives of the state, the functions and methods of strategic

planning and management, management structures and personnel within the interrelated parts, as well as resources both financial and material. In addition, it is necessary to consider the processes involved with planning, together with the overall processes associated with the state's defence management and governance.

In view of the above, the effective implementation of Georgian state defence capability (one of the significant parts of Georgian national security) essentially depends upon well-designed defence policy planning. Defence policy planning is considered to be: "a very complex area that influences future defence effectiveness / efficiency and seeks to ensure that a nation has the necessary forces, assets, facilities and capabilities to fulfil its tasks throughout the full spectrum of its missions" (Stojkovic and Dahl, 2007).

It should be noted that the country of Georgia has already implemented reforms in the institutionalisation of national defence (in the areas of management, governance and policy planning). However, with an analysis of the existing model of national defence policy planning, it becomes clear that there is room for improvement in the individual institutional components that comprise the existing model. In particular, in the medium term, it is important to implement certain reforms, so that shortcomings do not lead to a crisis of management at both the national and the agency levels of Georgian state defence.

Methodology

The methodological approach in this article is based on both a normative and empirical analysis of state defence policy planning in general, and the overall evolution and governance of Georgian national defense, in particular. In other words, a systemic analysis of all the multisegmented parts that relate to Georgian defence policy planning, in terms of the existing situation (empirical), which allows for the identification of institutional flaws in the functioning of the existing system, as well as allows for recommendations to be made about how the overall governance of Georgian national defence could be improved (normative).

The normative and empirical analysis approach in this article pertains to normative acts, policy documents and doctrines (stated principles of government policy in military affairs) which are relevant to the institutionalisation of defence in Georgia, together with an in-depth analysis of national defence policy planning, a functional analysis of government entities participating in this process, and the application of other scientific methods.

The concept of national defence policy planning

With reference to the term defence policy planning, and in terms of understanding its precepts, it includes both its ways and means, in other words how the state should act to achieve its goals (methods), and by what means the state intends to achieve its goals (resources) (Tagarev, 2009).

In the context of the concept of defence policy planning from a Georgian perspective, it is important to highlight a difference in the meaning of the words 'policy' and 'politics', which in English are understood mean "the course of actions" (policy) and "the political process" (politics). In Georgian, however, there is only one word 'პოლიტიკა' (politica), which strongly identifies with the political and leads to the common misconception that defence policy is in the realm of the politicians. Moreover, in terms of means and ends, the term 'პოლიტიკა' (politica) is understood narrowly as decisions on the ends, i.e. setting the objectives the Armed Forces must be able to attain (Tagarev, 2009).

Despite the above, in analysing the normative acts of the Georgian state, policy documents and doctrines, it turns out that:

a. The term policy is defined as: "a: Definite course or method of action selected from among alternatives and in light of given conditions to guide and determine present and future decisions; b: a high-level overall plan embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures especially of a governmental body" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2019);

b. The term defence policy is defined as: "a series of guidelines, principles and frameworks that link theory (National Security Policy) to action (Defence Planning, Management and Implementation). Just like an instruction manual, the purpose of defence policy is to ensure things are done in a certain manner in order to attain certain objectives all the while respecting certain rules" (DCAF Security Sector Integrity, 2018);

c. The term defence policy planning is defined as: "consecutive steps towards practical implementation of defence policy, down to actual command and control" (Defence Policy – Security Sector Integrity, 2018).

The existence of the two terms the state defence policy planning and the defence planning, in the normative regulations of the Georgian defence organisation, can be considered as a

hindrance to a homogeneous vision for planning, in the context of the overall national defence policy.

According to the Georgian law on National Security Policy Planning and Coordination, the state's defence policy planning includes the following directives: Detection, identification, assessment and forecasting of military threats; provision of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the country with armed forces in case of an armed attack; development, preparation and combat readiness of military forces; ensuring the compatibility of the defensive goals with the country's infrastructure and communications; preparation for and carrying out mobilisation measures for the country's economy, central and local authorities, enterprises, organisations and the population; creation of material reserves for defensive purposes; development of a military educational system, as well as military related science and industry; development of international cooperation in security and technical military issues (Law on National Security Policy Planning and Coordination 2015).

According to the Georgian law on Defence Planning, defense planning is part of Georgian defence policy, and an essential element of the overall defence organisation. The law involves targeted measures designed to ensure Georgian national interests and security (including measures that support the country's integration into the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation), and includes the planning of forces, armaments, resources, logistics, management and control, as well as planning for crises and emergencies, and/or state of war and other special situations pertaining to defence planning (Law on Defence Planning 2006).

One point of note concerning the Georgian concept of national defence policy planning is that there is some confusion about the normative scope two terms, namely state defence policy planning and defence planning. According to the normative meaning and scope of these terms, the scope of defence planning is a subset of state defence policy planning. However, with reference to the Georgian law on National Security Policy Planning and Coordination and the Georgian law on Defence Planning, both terms are used synonymously: defence policy planning is a tool for the practical realisation of political and managerial decisions, as well as the ways and means by which the government's goals and plans for the defence of the country are fulfilled. The purpose of state defence policy planning is to achieve: The protection of national interests and the national security of the country; the progressive and planned restructuring of the country's defence capabilities; the effective administrative-state management of state defence; the realisation of good governance

principles in the defence sector; as well as a proper implementation of the process of integration into the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).

The format and hierarchy of conceptual and organisational documentation for defence policy planning at both the national level and the agency level

In general, a defence policy planning document is considered as a normative-political type of document in which the defence policy defined by the government is materialised, and this document represents the action plan for enforcement of this policy (Bucur-Marcu, 2009).

Defence policy planning documents, their format tends to differ considerably from country to country. This is due to the country specific complexities and planning methodologies of defence policy planning, as well as the political culture of individual countries.

Despite the fact that defence policy planning documentation differs considerably from country to country, it is nevertheless possible to categorise and subcategorise these documents. The top level categories include documents with a legal status, which are usually issued by top executive officials and endorsed by the legislature, and documents with executive/organisational status, which are usually issued by the Ministry of Defence and endorsed at executive levels. In terms of subcategories of documents with a legal status, these include: Main policy documents (National Security Strategy, National Defence Strategy, Strategic Concept, Long-term strategic vision), Guidance (Strategic Political Guidance) and Reviews (White Paper on Defence, Defence-Strategic Review). In terms of subcategories of documents with an executive/organisational status, these comprise: Concepts and Strategies (Military Strategy, Procurement Strategy), Plans and Directives (Strategic Capabilities Plan, Defence Planning Directive), Executive policies (Personnel policy, Public Information policy) (Bucur-Marcu, 2009).

Georgian national defence policy planning documentation is regulated by two laws. Firstly, the Georgian law on National Security Policy Planning and Coordination, and secondly the Georgian law of Defence Planning. Together, these two legal acts define the national defence policy planning documentation in terms of its composition and format. Additionally, according to these two laws, conceptual and organisational documents that relate to national defence policy planning are managed at both the national level (where the decision makers are either the Parliament or the Government) and the agency level (where the decision makers are Ministers).

National defence policy planning documentation at the national level

The set of conceptual documents that are managed at the national level can be ascertained from an analysis of the Georgian law on National Security Policy Planning and Coordination, and the Georgian law of Defence Planning. This analysis identifies the following conceptual document (which have a legal force) titles: the National Security Concept (which is approved by the Parliament), the Threat Assessment Document, the National Defence Staretgy (which are approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Government), as well as the National Military Starategy operating in the transition period and the Defence-Strategic Review (which are approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Government), which will be terminated after the National Defence Staretgy development and entry into force.

With reference to the conceptual document entitled National Security Concept, this document is fundamental to both Georgian national security policy and to the organisation of Georgian state defence. Moreover, this document applies to multiple sectors and all national defence policy planning documents must comply with its directives. It defines the national values and interests; establishes a vision for the country's safe development; determines the threats, risks and challenges facing the state; as well as establishes the main objectives of national security policy (National Security Concept 2011).

In terms of how closely Georgia's National Security Concept aligns with the standard pattern, it is clear from the above that it aligns very closely, and one can also quote MacFarlane's assessment as follows: "Georgia's National Security Concept follows the standard pattern closely. A description of the country's security environment is followed by a discussion of national values and interests. It then turns to threats, challenges and opportunities, before concluding with a list of priorities" (MacFarlane, 2012). Alignment of the National Security Concept document with the standard pattern is a positive, however weaknesses have been identified, such as: An over-emphasis on political positions/statements, weak strategic analysis, neglecting important risks, a failure to understand threats and promoting unrealistic expectations. With respect to strengths, we can again quote MacFarlane: "One strength of Georgia's National Security Concept is the clear recognition that security is not only about military and diplomatic affairs (high politics). The Concept embeds discussion of military and conventional strategic threats in a wider context of economic development and interdependence, energy vulnerability and modes of domestic governance" (MacFarlane, 2012).

Military security is an important objective and function of the national defence organisation, the main purpose of which is to prevent, localise and neutralise military threats. Consequently, the Threat Assessment Document of Georgia has a special institutional importance in the planning of national defence policy. The composition of the Threat Assessment Document is regulated by the Georgian law on National Security Policy Planning and Coordination, and must also comply with the directives of the National Security Concept. One of the directives obliges the government to review the strategic environment with a long-term horizon, and to determine: military, foreign policy, domestic policy, transnational, social and economic, natural and technogenic threats and challenges that pose a significant danger to the national security of the country.

Before legislative amendments in 2018, in the field of defence at the national level, there were a set of conceptual documents (the National Defence Strategy, the Defence Strategy Review and other security (including defence) strategies) collectively called: National Security Strategies, which (the National Defence Strategy, the Defence Strategy Review and other strategies related to national defence) have since been consolidated and amended into one set of documentation known as the National Defence Strategy. This documentation is of an executive nature (as it was prior to 2018) and makes recommendations about how national security strategies should be implemented. It also contains action plans and timetables, which determines the time, means and responsible agencies for the execution of specific tasks. The executive nature of above mentioned strategies is in contrast to other conceptual documents at the national level, such as the National Security Concept and the Threat Assessment Document, which are about political positions and declarations.

Prior to the legislative amendments of 2018, as mentioned above, there were actually three documents which comprised the group of the National Security Strategies for defence policy planning. These documents were the National Military Strategy, the Defence Strategic Review and so called "Other Security Strategies" related to national defence:

The National Military Strategy document constituted the country's primary military-political document, which specifically defined the multi-year national military objectives and requirements, general ways of their implementation, structure and future vision. Additionally, the document contained a definition of the abilities required of the Armed Forces, such that they could fulfil their missions effectively (Military Strategy of Georgia 2014);

The Defence Strategy Review document determined the basic areas of development vis-à-vis the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces, the future structure (for a definite period of time) of the armed forces, as well as the means and mechanisms for improving the compatibility of the Armed Forces of Georgia, with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) (Security Defence Review of Georgia 2017)

The reason for transitioning from the National Security Strategies (the National Military Strategy, the Defence Strategy Review and so called "Other Security Strategies" related to national defence) model, to the National Defence Strategy model, and for the legislative amendments of 2018, was Georgia's decision to implement a new paradigm known as Total Defence that compromises the five pillars of: Psychological Defense, Social Defence, Economic Defence, Civil Defence and Military Defence. This necessitated the replacement of the above named strategic documents, as well as consolidating the principles of the Total Defence paradigm into the new National Defence Strategy. The essence of the new strategy is the total mobilisation of both military and civilian resources, so as to maximise Georgia's national defence capability, given the existing threats and limited resources.

The reformed National Defence Strategy model came into force in 2018, with amendments to the Georgian law on Defence Planning. In summary, the directives of the law are as follows: Review and evaluate the threats and challenges in the field of defence; determine the objectives of the country's defence policy and international cooperation, determine national military objectives and tasks, as well as the ways, principles and means of their fulfilment; assess the country's defence capabilities, assess the requirements of the Defence Forces, establish the future development vision and determine the future structure of the Defence Forces, determine the strategic objectives and principles related to the organisation of the defence of the country; define the defence tasks of the state agencies in accordance with the relevant areas; define civil involvement in national defence; establish the framework of the Georgian Defence Force resources for a specific period (Law on Defence Planning 2006). However, it is reasonable to note that the National Military Strategy, the Defense Strategic Review Document, and the "Other Security Strategies" have been remaining the legal power before the National Defense Strategy is elaborated.

One important innovation related to the 2018 amendments to the Georgian law on Defence Planning is a new organisational document entitled National Defence Preparedness Plan, which is now part of state defence policy planning at the national level. The document is closely related to

the National Defence Strategy. The way that it works is that through the national level conceptual documents, agencies are tasked with implementing certain aspects of the national defence strategy. It then becomes the responsibility of these agencies to develop an action plan, which is then appended to the National Defence Preparedness Plan. It should be noted that multiple different agencies may be tasked in this way, and each will make their own individual contribution (Action Plan) to the National Defence Preparedness Plan (Law on Defence Planning 2006). However, the Agency's Action Plan status in the hierarchy of defense policy planning documents is legally uncertain.

Figure 1: National defence policy planning documentation at the national level
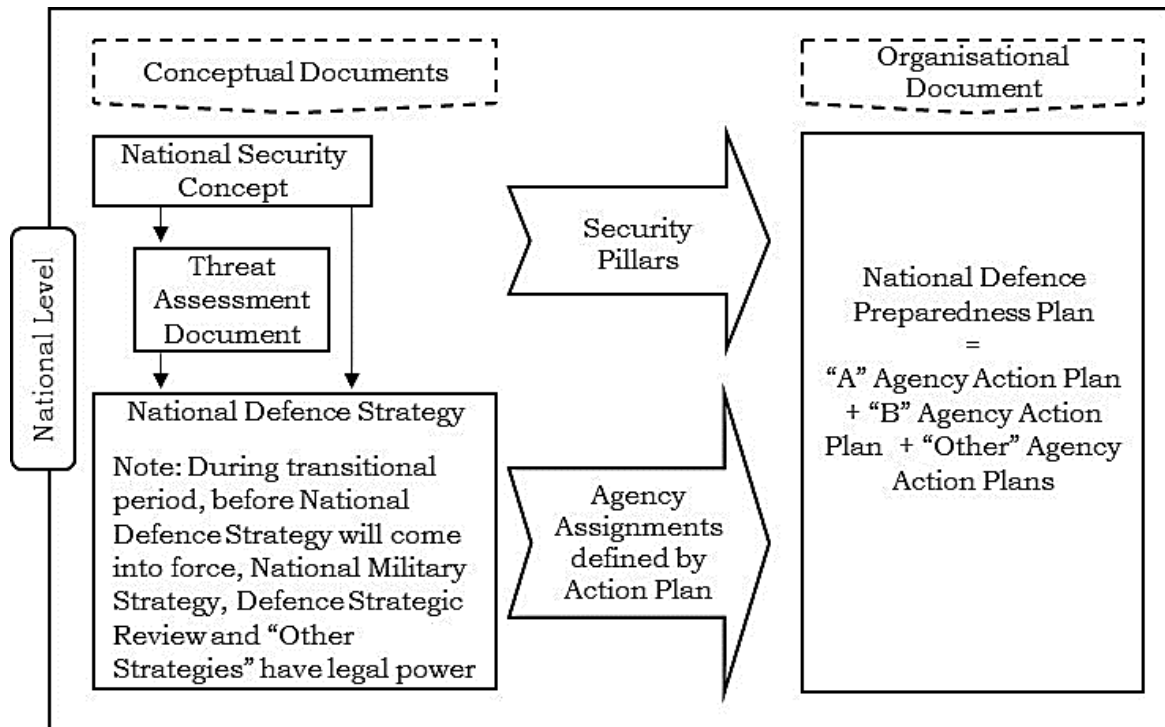
Source: Grigalashvili (2018a)

National defence policy planning documentation at the agency level

In terms of the overall national defence policy planning process in Georgia, there are a set of conceptual documents at both the national level, and at the agency level. Furthermore,

conceptual documents at the agency level are derived from conceptual and organisational documents at the national level.

The purpose of the conceptual documentation at the agency level is to define how the objectives and goals set at the national level are to be implemented and realised in actuality. At the same time, given that many entities are likely be involved in the implementation and realisation of state defence, the documentation at the agency level must also provide a framework for their management. Moreover, this will be the case for all subjects addressed by the conceptual documentation at the agency level.

Prior to the 2018 legislative reforms, there were two legislative acts that applied to planning at the agency level. These two legislative acts were the Georgian law on Defence Planning and the Georgian law on National Security Policy Planning and Coordination. Unfortunately, these two legislative acts applied different systems for agency level planning, which resulted in conflicts and confusion for the policy community within the executive authorities involved in the defence policy process. Moreover, there was little correlation between the two planning systems, and it was often unclear as to which planning system should apply, in a particular case. Consequently, this led to shortcomings in the planning process at the agency level.

For the purposes of elucidating the pre-2018 and post-2018 legislative reforms that pertain to agency level planning, and thus explain their transformation/development, it is useful to list the agency level documentation requirements in the Georgian law on Defence Planning, before those reforms. The prior list of documentation was as follows (with a final note on the budget calculation):

a. The Defence Planning Guidance, which was based on documents at national level, reflected the priority objectives and planned measures for the state's defence by the Armed Forces of the Ministry of Defence of Georgia over a long-term timeframe;

b. The Main Programmes of military development, which was based on the Defence Planning Guidance, and detailed all of the planned events over a long-term timeframe, and was also aimed at the modernisation of the Georgian Armed Forces, equipping the Armed Forces, training, maintenance of subdivisions, logistics, upkeep and improvement of the reserve infrastructure, as well as ensuring implementation of cooperation plans with NATO;

c. The drawing up of the Annual Programmes represented the final stage of defence planning and the annual steps of major programmes for military development. Finally, as a result

of the review and summation of programmes by their annual cost basis, a defence budget was drawn up, which was then reflected in the State Budget (Law on Defence Planning 2006).

It should also be noted, with reference to the above, that the three key sets of documentation (the Defence Planning Guidance, the Main Programmes of Military Development and the Annual Programmes) formed a strict hierarchy. In other words, the Defence Planning Guidance fed into the Main Programmes, which fed into the Annual Programmes. There was also an additional document called the Defence Planning Regulation. This document did not belong to other groups, such as conceptual or organisational documents, and its main purpose was for the organisational provision of planning at the agency level, such as the procedures, responsible institutions, terms of reference and deadlines.

To expand upon an earlier point about the two legislative acts that applied to agency level planning, before the reforms of 2018, it is useful to list some of the legislative aspects of the then Georgian law on National Security Policy Planning and Coordination. This law applied to various aspects of planning at the agency level, such as standardised documentation formats/structure intended for multi-agency use, general frameworks and a wide range of regulatory documents. It also defined a relatively flat (vs hierarchical) organisational structure for documentation (in terms of the interdependence of documents).

In terms of the conceptual documents that were defined by the then Georgian law on National Security Policy Planning and Coordination, they comprised:

a.   The Agency Concept. The Agency Concept document set out the vision, values, approach, ideas, intentions and general principles (all of which were to adhere to the appropriate circumstances and requirements) of the relevant agencies, in the sphere of national defence. The concept was also required to include the vision of the head of the relevant agency about the specific objectives, tasks and activities, as well as how these were to be carried out;

b.   The Agency Strategy. The Agency Strategy document was based on documents at the national level pertaining to objectives in the area of state defence, and its purpose was to define how these goals and objectives would be carried out and achieved. Also, it was necessary for the documentation to contain a detailed analysis of documents at the national level that pertained to the area of state defence and identify any problems/issues with them, as well as to propose ways to resolve these issues/problems. The strategy document was also required to include an action

plan and timetable for determining the time, means and the structural units responsible for the execution of specific tasks;

c.   The Doctrine. The Doctrine document detailed how the resources of a particular agency were to be effectively used to carry out specific task(s) in the area of state defence;

d.   The Programme. The programme determines special measures to be taken depending on the areas and/or fields that pertain to military defence, in this law and the mechanisms for the implementation of those measures. The programme does not identify the plans for the implementation of the above measures (Law on National Security Policy Planning and Coordination 2015).

The legislative reforms of 2018 radically and fundamentally changed the composition, format and hierarchy of both the conceptual documentation and organisational documentation at the agency level, for national defence policy planning. Consequently, two groups of documents were defined and organised in a hierarchical manner as follows:

a. The first and top-level group of conceptual documentation determines the vision, values, intentions and principles of the relevant agency. It also determines the goals and objectives of this relevant agency, which specifically pertain to the state defence area, as well as other objectives and issues it might have;

b. The second-level group of conceptual documentation (subordinate to the top-level group) deals with the executive strategy, in other words how the goals and objectives of the top-level strategy are transposed into a set of strategic projects and tasks. The relevant agency is then required to detail the timeframe, ways, means and resources that are necessary to accomplish these strategic projects and tasks, within its authority, and to identify the responsible structural unit(s), as well. Additionally, the relevant agency may also provide an action plan and timetable (Law on Defence Planning 2006).

In addition to the above, with respect to the legislative reforms of 2018, there is also a set of organisational documentation at the agency level. These are known as the executive documents, and comprise detailed information about how strategic projects and tasks are to be carried out, by the relevant agency. This documentation is based on conceptual documentation at the agency level, and/or documents at the national level.

Figure 2: National defence policy planning documentation at the agency level
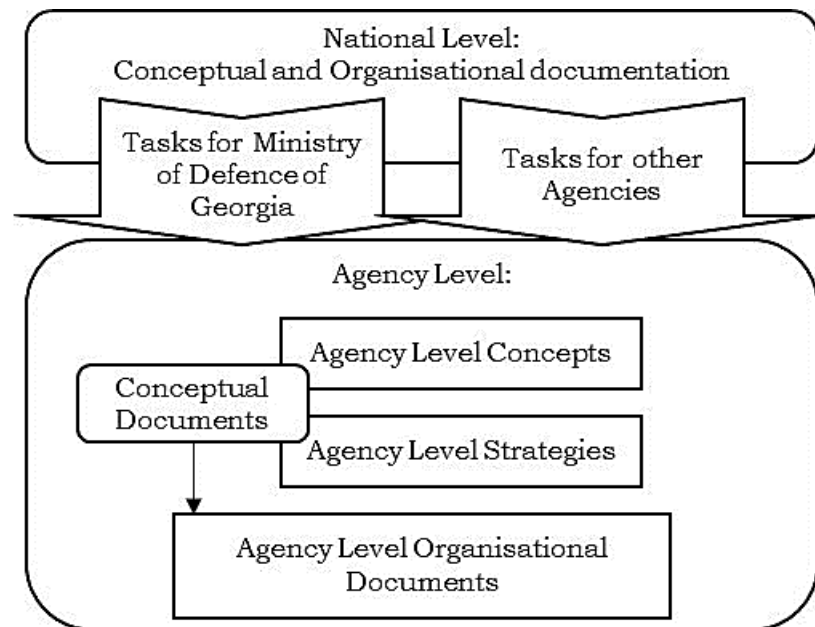
Source: Grigalashvili (2018b)

Legal competence and authority in national defence policy planning

In general, national defence policy planning is understood to be the product of inter-agency activities, in various formats, carried out by state agencies. This planning must be carried out according to the principles of legality, the protection and respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The inter-agency activities should also be part of a unified governmental approach which involves transparency, as well as consistency, advance planning and civic engagement.

The Constitution of Georgia assigns the governance of state defence to the highest state bodies. Accordingly, the legal competence/authority of determining national defence policy is split between the Parliament of Georgia and the executive authorities of the country, the highest governing body of which is the Georgian Government (the Cabinet of Minister as the collegial executive body and Ministries as executive organs). As for the President of Georgia, according to the existing parliamentary governance model, the executive power concerned with national defence policy planning has been disassociated with the institution of the President (Constitution 1995).

Again, according to the Constitution, the Parliament of Georgia makes the primary decisions on the objectives of both the state's foreign and domestic defence policy. However, the Government has the exclusive authority for formulating state defence policy, so that it can be submitted to the Parliament for consideration. Additionally, the Government of Georgia is responsible for formulating the National Security Concept, which represents the primary political statement in the realm of state defence planning. The Government must submit a draft version of the National Security Concept to the Parliament of Georgia, for approval.

According to the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament of Georgia, there are certain restrictions that relate specifically to the National Security Concept. Specifically, in contrast to other areas of legislation, the Parliament of Georgia does not have the legislative competence/authority to amend the National Security Concept. In short, no amendment can be made to the document without prior consultation with and the agreement of the Government of Georgia. In the event that the Government of Georgia submits a draft version of the National Security Concept to the Parliament of Georgia for consideration, and no consensus can be achieved because of controversial provisions in the document, then the Parliament of Georgia is authorised to return the document to the Government of Georgia, with remarks. In light of these remarks, the Government of Georgia may resubmit a compromise a draft version of the National Security Concept to the Parliament of Georgia for their reconsideration (Rules of Procedure of the Parliament 2018).

As previously mentioned, the Parliament of Georgia is assigned the right to determine the primary objectives of national defence policy, specifically in terms of approving a draft version of the National Security Concept. Additionally, at the same time as approving this document, the Parliament of Georgia delegates the responsibility for the formulation (detailed policy) and implementation of national defence policy to the Government of Georgia. This works, under supervision of the Georgian National Security Council, primarily through the Standing Inter-Agency Commission (which came into being as a result of the 2018 legislative reforms) who manage the creation and refinement of both conceptual and organisational documentation at the national level, in the field of national defence. This Commission creates draft documents for the approval of the Cabinet of Ministers, of the Government, and the approval of these draft versions of national defence policy planning documents (the Threat Assessment Document, the National Defence Strategy and the National Preparedness Plan) confers legal status to them.

In terms of the legal competence/authority for the defence policy planning process and documentation at the agency level, this legal competence/authority is assigned to the head of the relevant agency (mostly to relevant Ministry).

The Standing Inter-Agency Commission, as previously mentioned, was brought into being in the 2018 legislative reforms. There were predecessor commissions, but a key change with the new Standing Inter-Agency Commission is that the Deputy Minister of Defence now heads the commission. This change means that the Ministry of Defence has gained a more prominent role in the overall coordination of national defence policy planning at the national level.

National defence policy planning process and horizons

National defence policy planning is a complex, multi-stage and iterative process. Defence planning is also an interdisciplinary process that comprises many various activities. Activities are mutually dependent and precise coordination is paramount. However, there is no consensus about the number of stages, or even about the institutional framework that should apply.

With reference to the multi-stage defence policy planning process in the paragraph above, and in terms of a consensus approach, it is possible to identify differences even between NATO documents. For example, in the NATO Handbook on Long-Term Defence Planning, the eight main stages of the process outlined in this document are as follows: Political guidance analysis; Environmental assessment; Mission analysis, Planning situations development; Capability requirements determinationl Capability assessment; Options development and solution selection. In contrast, on the NATO website detailing the NATO Defence Planning Stages, there is an alternate approach: Establish political guidance; Determine requirements; Apportion requirements and set targets; Facilitate implementation; Review results.

The defence policy planning process in Georgia is based on disciplined approaches to the creation of force structure and force development plans, within an iterative framework. This overall approach is broken down into multiple stages, as follows: Determining the primary objectives of defence policy in terms of national security values and interests, as well as the domestic and external threats to the country; defining the goals, tasks and ambitions of national defence and detailing the appropriate strategies for their achievement; design of plausible scenarios; decomposition of the scenarios into goals, and then from these goals formulate a set of tasks, and ensure that there is no duplication of these tasks; determining the resources required to

carry out the set of tasks; considering the tasks and scenarios, detail the structure of the Defence Forces and planning for those forces; operational planning.

The Georgian law on Defence Planning requires that state defence planning is carried out over short-term timescales (up to two years), over medium-term timescales (up to five years) and over long-term timescales (five and more years). However, the law does not specify any scope for state defence planning over short, medium or long-term timescales. Nevertheless, based on scientific literature and analyzing defence policy planning documents, the institutional characteristics of each period of planning can be determined.

Long-term defence planning is a specific planning discipline that is related to the relatively distant future. It involves a process that investigates possible future operating environments and develops a force structure development plan to best adapt the defence organisation to those environments given a host of constraints (RTO Technical Report 69, 2003). The purpose of defence planning, particularly long-term defence planning, is to define the means, including the future force structure (Tagarev, 2006), that would allow defence institutions to deal effectively with likely future challenges. Long-term planning is often referred to as strategic planning, and strategic planning is synonymously used in defence policy planning (Stojkovic and Dahl, 2007).

Long-term defence planning also involves a continuous analysis of the strategic environment. In particular, it is important for defence planners to identify changes or trends in the strategic environment that pertain to threats, potential risks or challenges. It is also important to consider changes or trends in the role of military-political alliances, as well as in the defence strategies of neighbouring countries. For example, a change in the defence strategy of a neighbour may be indicative of an increasing regional threat, which might warrant a reconsideration of one's own defence strategy. Additionally, defence planners must analyse the role of new technologies vis-à-vis the capabilities of the Armed Forces, and based on this analysis, determine the priorities of the country's defence policy, as well as the future structure of the Defence Forces and planning for those forces.

Therefore, the general purpose of long-term defense planning is to (re)consider the mission of the defence and to establish realistic long term goals and objectives consistent with that mission, as well as to define strategies for their fulfillment (Stojkovic and Dahl, 2007).

In addition to the above, the effective management of defence involves a consideration of capability, which is somewhat of an abstract concept. In ordinary usage, the term donates the

capacity to be or do or affect something. The planning community therefore needs a capability model, or framework, that presents all capability components in a commonly understood manner. Initially, we can first look to the definitions that defence planners give to the word capability in various countries. For example, Australian defence planners define capability as: "The power to achieve a desired operational effect in a nominated environment, within a specified time, and to sustain that effect for a designated period" In the United States, the Homeland Security community uses the following definition: "A capability provides a means to perform one or more critical task(s) under specified conditions and to specific performance standards" (Tagarev, 2006).

In terms of capability models, one can look to the Canadian model known by the acronym PRICIE (P - Personnel; R - Research and Development / Operations Research; I - Infrastructure and Organisation; C - Concept, Doctrine, Collective Training; I - IT infrastructure; E - Equipment, Supplies and Services). In the United States, their capability model is known by the acronym DOTMLP (D - Doctrine; O - Organisation; T - Training and Education; M - Material; L - Leadership; P - People). NATO uses the following acronym DOTMLPFI (D - Doctrine; O - Organisation; T - Training; M - Material; L - Leadership; P - Personnel; F - Facilities; I - Interoperability) (Tagarev, 2006). Finally, as for Georgia, in accordance with the Defence Strategic Review of 2017-2020, the defence capabilities model is known by the acronym DOTLMPF (D - Doctrine; O - Organisation; T - Training; L - Leadership; M - Materiel; P - Personnel; F - Facilities).

Despite the diverse approach to capability models, as listed above, all of them share a common objective, namely the ability of a country (or alliance), both qualitatively and quantitatively, to achieve measurable outcomes vis-à-vis their defence goals, according to a specified set of circumstances and to specific performance standards.

It is important to note that the design of Georgian national defence policy planning documentation (adopted by the Cabinets of Ministers of the Government) at the national level corresponds to the requirements of long-term defence policy planning. For example, the Threat Assessment Document covers a multi-year timeframe, and outlines the existing strategic environment, as well as identifies the threats and challenges facing the country. Based on this, the National Military Strategy of Georgia defines the military objectives and tasks (as well as the principles etc.) that pertain to national security. However, in contrast to the above mentioned documentation at the national level, the National Security Concept does not contain any long-term

defence planning timeframes, or only refers to periods of time in an abstract way. Therefore, it can be argued that this is a deficiency in the overall national defence planning model of Georgia.

In a practical sense, the main purpose of mid-term planning is to guarantee that the actual defence management activities, e.g., reorganisation, recruitment, procurement, training, spending money, etc., serve to achieve defence policy objectives and to build the respective future force. Policy makers (at the national and agency levels) typically develop multiple mid-term plans / programmes which provides for the development, or at least for a qualitative change, of force capabilities (Tagarev, 2006). The process of creating these programmes is therefore called programming and the ongoing process as - programmatic planning. For example, the interim planning of national defence policy in Georgia is served by the documents at the national level, such as the National Military Strategy and the Defence Strategic Review 2017-2020, as well as the White Book at the agency level of 2017-2020, and the Defence Planning Guide 2018-2021.

Short-term plans are an integral part of programmes, and programmes are a set of mid-term plans with varying start dates, timeframes and in some cases dependencies. Budgeting is based on programmes, but on an annual basis, and is carried out according to the Georgian law on the Budget Code of Georgia. According to the requirements of this law, programmes must have a well-defined set of goals/outcomes for measures that are funded on an annual basis. This then feeds into the annual budget, according to the Georgian law on the Annual Budget, which lists the programmes to be funded for a particular year, and the total GEL (Georgian Lari) amount allocated. The measures to be carried out are then assigned to the appropriate budgetary institutions, which are then responsible for their implementation.

One of the characteristics of long-term defence planning is that in planning for hypothetical scenarios into the future, over time, geopolitical or other factors can make such eventualities more, or less, likely. Consequently, programmatic planning involves adapting the directions of medium-term and short-term planning, such that they are more closely aligned with the evolving reality of the current situation. Moreover, decision makers and planners must, on an ongoing basis, ensure that the Armed Forces are structured in such a way as to maximise their effectiveness according to anticipated financial resources, technological developments, demographics and strategic environment, as well as other significant variables/constraints. So, it is clear that unforeseen events, or unexpected changes in the strategic environment can impact upon every level of defence planning (long-term, mid-term and short-term), which in many cases invalidates existing medium-

term and short-term planning. As a result, a regular re-evaluation of medium-term defence policy planning is required, in order to effectively respond to these unforeseen events and changes. This can lead to new programming, or in other words the development of new programmes, on an annual or biannual basis, which in turn results in the updating of short-term plans (Tagarev, 2006).

A programme, in the context of defence policy planning, is a comprehensive plan for the purpose of developing certain capabilities that a defence organisation can possess and implement, if and when necessary (Tagarev, 2006). These plans detail how a capability is to be achieved, with new and/or existing resources, how the capability will be maintained and the specification/characteristics of the product (outcome of the programme). Moreover, one major aspect of developing a programme is to support the decision-making process in terms of the procurement, or allocation, of resources for the product, as well as to ensure a results-oriented policy or plan that maximises capabilities. Besides the above, programmes help to reconcile the policy objectives with the budget. Furthermore, they are the means by which the future vision of defence planning is transformed into short-term plans, which results in the reorientation and direction of force structure. Finally, a programme provides transparency in terms of the budget, so that the financing is more understandable to the managing bodies, as well as to other interested parties (Tagarev, 2006).

In defence planning policy, so as to support the full realisation of products (outcomes of programmes), it is recommended that planners adhere to few key principles in the design of programme structure. Firstly, programmes should detail, in as clear a way as possible, the relationship between spending and the final product i.e. capabilities. The next key principle is that it should be comprehensive: No monies may be spent outside the programme and no work may be undertaken on anything outside the programme; it shall account for all monies that will be spent on defence; final decisions need to be made about all programmes at the same time, with objective analysis of the trade-offs. Another key principle is that it should provide for a realistic distribution of responsibilities among programme managers. The final key principle is that it should be manageable, in other words that the programme structure and procedures should provide opportunities to objectively assess and search for trade-offs in resource allocation (Tagarev, 2006).

Approaches to national defence policy planning – methodology

Institutional regulation of the methodology associated with defence policy planning is absent in Georgian national legislation, policy documentation and doctrines. However, an analysis of the state's planning policy documentation, both at the national level and at the agency level (as well as an analysis of the planning process), reveals that the general approaches (methodology) to defence policy planning, as listed in the NATO Handbook on Long-Term Defence Planning, are indeed an integral part of defence policy planning in Georgia:

1. Focus: The planning process:

a. Top-down planning.

1.   "This is a "strategy to tasks" approach to planning. The process begins with the specification of top-level policy, interests and objectives. Strategies are developed that support overall policy and objectives. This approach is then cascaded down through lower levels" (RTO Technical Report 69, 2003). "The hierarchy continues through roles and tasks to concepts and force elements. The process examines capability requirements from a conceptual basis linked through the framework, to national goals" (Stojkovic and Dahl, 2007).

It is noteworthy, that the so-called 'bottom-up' approach is also actively used in national defence policy planning, during which: "the focus is on improvement of existing defence capabilities and related weapons systems – improvement aimed above all at meeting the requirements of current operations and operational plans" (Henry et al. 1995);

b. Resource-constrained planning.

"The objective of this planning approach is to provide a viable capability that is sustainable within the provided budget. No effort is made to investigate force structure options that are more expensive, regardless of the potential performance jumps such budget violations might incur" (RTO Technical Report 69, 2003). This approach is also called Budget-Based Planning that attempts to maximise defence capability for the funds available;

2. Focus: Degree of technology optimism versus historically proven facts:

a. Technology optimism.

"A key development goal is to obtain operational and strategic superiority through technology. Force structure development is carried out so as to fully exploit technology" (RTO Technical Report 69, 2003). This approach is also called Technology-Driven Solutions;

b. Risk avoidance.

"Proven concepts and structures are extrapolated and extended. This conservative approach continues current ways as long as they are deemed successful. Defence development adheres to current strategy, doctrine, tactics and structure and incorporates new technology, when proven available and appropriate. This method tries to maintain the status quo in defence capability in a relative sense" (RTO Technical Report 69, 2003);

c. Incremental planning.

"This approach seeks in an evolutionary manner to improve the existing inventory of defence capabilities. Existing capabilities form the foundation of new capabilities. The approach focuses on the assured enhancement of current capabilities and, as such, tends to concentrate on the near-term developments and options. Incremental planning is an instance of a risk avoidance approach" (RTO Technical Report 69, 2003);

d. Historical extension.

"Similar to incremental planning, the basic premise is that what worked in the past will work again in the future. Analysis of future operational effectiveness of various options is based on a historical analysis. Past operations are evaluated to identify the factors that most significantly contributed to success and/or failure. The future force structure is then designed to take greatest advantage of the positive factors while avoiding the negative ones" (RTO Technical Report 69, 2003);

3. Focus: Functions or concrete scenarios as the driver for measuring performance:

a. Capability-based planning.

"This method involves a functional analysis of expected future operations. The future operations themselves do not enter the performance evaluations. The outcome of such planning is not concrete weapons systems and manning levels, but a description of the tasks force structure units should be able to perform expressed in capability terms. Once the capability inventory is defined, the most cost-effective and efficient physical force unit options to implement these capabilities are derived" (RTO Technical Report 69, 2003);

b. Scenario-based planning.

"This approach utilises a representative set of hypothetical situations for the employment of Defence Forces. The situations are specified in terms of environmental and operational parameters. Defence capability requirements are determined from assessments of the ability to achieve formulated mission objectives" (RTO Technical Report 69, 2003);

c. Threat-based planning.

"The threat-based approach involves identifying potential adversaries and evaluating their capabilities. Capability or system requirements are based on the criterion of outperforming the opposition. Quantitative and qualitative solutions are explored". (RTO Technical Report 69, 2003).

Conclusion

Based on the analysis, we can conclude that planning of Georgian national defense policy is a multidimensional system process (Fig.3). The national defence planning system is based on the following values: a) sovereignty and territorial integrity; b) freedom; c) democracy and supremacy of law; d) safety; e) well-being; f) peace, and the national defence planning and its coordination principles are as follows: a) legality; b) exclusive protection and respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms; d) unified government approach; d) continuity; e) planning; f) publicity and civic engagement.

Figure 3: National defence policy planning system
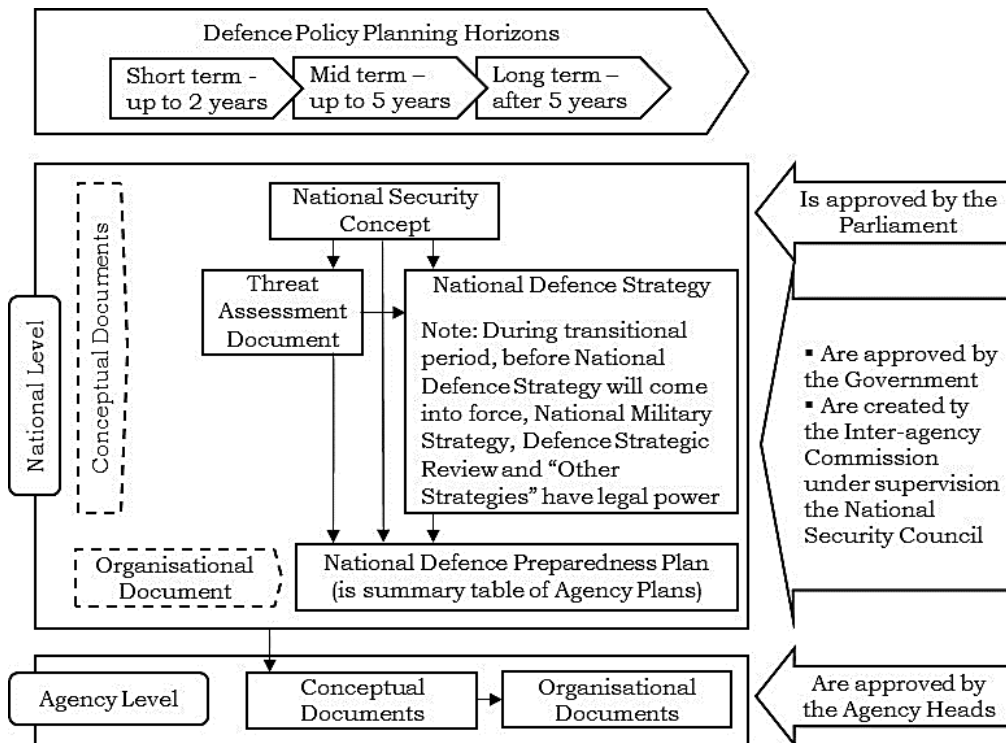
Source: Grigalashvili (2018a)

In the defence planning process the executive branch - the Government of Georgia (The Cabinet of Minister's), has the leading role, respectively, powers of the Parliament are limited proportionally, which is somewhat incompatible with parliamentary governance model, as it hinders effective parliamentary control, it also creates a danger of breaking the governmental balance between legislative and executive branches.

Consequently, it is advisable to implement legislative amendments which will, at least, allow the Parliament to initiate amendments, based on prior acceptance with the executive branch, to the National Security Concept.

Analysis of the defence policy planning system shows that, despite the carried out reforms, there are still institutional deficiencies in the defense policy planning mechanism that need further development.

This research has shown that a methodology of defence policy planning is not institutionalised at both the national and the agency level, which makes it more difficult to introduce uniform approaches in the planning process.

Consequently, it is advisable that the government adopt a normative document (for example, considering NATO's experience), which will define general methodological approaches to planning defence policy.

Compared to the defence policy planning at the national level, the planning process at the agency level still requires further institutional improvement, despite prior reforms. Specifically, the uniform rule of planning is not normally defined, at the state level, according to which the institutions involved in the national defense planning process will be guided. Also, the names of the departmental documents and their regulation sphere are not defined by the name, which negatively affects the standard procedures of the process.

Therefore, it is recommended that the government adopt a normative document, forming the format of the uniform planning model and regulating the planning process, it is also recommended that it systematically integrate average and short-term planning documents format, as well as assessment and monitoring mechanisms.

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THE SOCIAL BRANCH: A NEW MECHANISM FOR ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Rareş Vlad BUNEA

Financial Services Institute Fellow, Life Management Institute Fellow, Toronto, Canada

bunea@protonmail.com

Lucian T. BUTARU, PhD

Faculty of European Studies, Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca, Romania

lucian.butaru@ubbcluj.ro

Abstract: "The neoliberal policies activated since the 1970s have created unprecedented levels of wealth and income inequality, stagnating social mobility, aggravating effects that compound the climate crisis, and especially little prospects for an improvement of the general welfare of all citizens, not just the ruling wealthy. Many theoretical mechanisms have been proposed to fix the ailments of capitalism, Universal Basic Income (UBI) being amongst the most transformative and cutting-edge. These policy proposals all suffer a great shortcoming: they must be political. Leftwing and rightwing governments take turns at running UBI pilots then cutting them immediately after winning elections (Forget, 2018). The challenge to a solid long-term solution that brings economic justice for the many, not just the few, is to overcome the politics. This means deploying broad-spectrum and reasonable (re)distribution models that satisfy both the laissez-faire desires of the libertarian enthusiasts and the sentiments of solidarity of left-leaning activists. A transformative (re)distribution paradigm must become apolitical and must transcend the traditional separations of power in the state. This paper outlines the high-level attributes of this new mechanism: what it would look like, why it is so necessary, and how can be realized given the tremendous pressures imposed by the climate crisis.

Introduction

Present social insurance systems that have evolved through historical negotiation between the left and the right are full of cracks. On one hand, according to the right, they are an impediment against growth and must be *flexibilized*. On the other hand, according to the left, they do not cover

well enough the needs of society. It may as well be possible that both sides are correct and wrong at the same time since the problems are generated by the paternalist language in which the current economic system has been conceived: based on needy social groups and on a work ethic in which equitable redistribution is focused on excluding the lazy free rider. Such a system based on citizens who need social protection cannot cover all possible scenarios so governments should arbitrarily draw lines and then employ a lot of energy, imagination and resources determining on what side of the line a person falls (Widerquist, 2013). Scandals immediately erupt: this individual has taken advantage of the system, that individual was left unjustly on the outside. Development traps also pop up for folks who do not want to lose their social benefits and for the nation's competitivity which is hurt by the global race to the bottom on social issues. These problems and inconsistencies accumulate with the alternation at power between the left, the right, and the in-betweens.

Therefore, there is a need for a radical revision of the ways we understand, conceptualize and solve the social problem. Breaking the ideological divide begins with how one navigates the semantics of (re)distribution. What is wealth? What is value? Are there built-in rules of nature that allow some to navigate on rafts and others on speedboats? From the left ideological spectrum to the right, the contention about who deserves this wealth and in what proportion to their effort has become so divisive, so pernicious, it has led to dangerous short-termism in thinking, terrible frustration of dispossessed workers, rise of racism, nationalism and extremism.

Moreover, there is a need for visionary ideas that can plant the seeds for "utopias for realists" (Bregman 2016), "save capitalism from itself" (Collier 2018, Reich 2015, Yang 2018), find alternatives to capitalism (Hahnel & Wright, 2016), reconsider what truly matters in life (Hägglund, 2019) and finally "play for team human" (Rushkoff, 2019). We have made significant theoretical progress, while numerous grassroots movements sprung in unlikely corners to utter words of foundational change, from the Occupy Movement to the Extinction Rebellion. Perhaps there is a way to navigate the thick ideological web and travel on a plain of economic justice.

Do nations fail because of this never-ending left vs. right bickering? Acemoğlu and Robinson (2012) make a compelling case that prosperity rises on the shoulders of political institutions that must be *inclusive* and *centralized*. It is the political struggle against privilege that makes prosperity possible, not geography, not culture, not race, not disease. Inequality is a feral beast that comes at a hefty price (Stiglitz, 2012), and allows rentier capitalists to take over the status-quo narrative (Standing, 2017). To counter them, regulation is paramount, reaffirming the separation of powers

is essential (Stiglitz, 2019). There is a big need for collective action, and for legitimate institutions that inspire public trust.

The world sat on a GDP of $85 trillion in 2018 (World Bank), while in 2016 the top 10% earners took in 37% of national income in Europe, 41% in China, 46% in Russia, 47% in US-Canada, 54% in Sub-Saharan Africa, 55% in Brazil and India, 61% in the Middle East (World Inequality Report 2018). While the top earners have taken the lion's share of total growth since 1980, net public capital (public assets minus public debts) has declined sharply from 60-70% to 20-30% in Russia and China, and even became negative in the US and the UK. Personal wealth inequality has also increased. In the US the top 1% wealth share rose from 22% in 1980 to 39% in 2014. Abundant data show how wealth and income inequalities are at historical heights.

As if these problems were not enough, we face the deleterious effects of "bullshit jobs" (Graeber, 2018), automation, and artificial intelligence (Bostrom, 2014). Amazon already delivers parcels by drones, Tesla is making driverless trucks, retail at large is pushed into extinction. Bill Gates talks about taxing the robots in the context where the American economy, among others, is under way to automate away 43% of jobs (Frey & Osborne, 2017: 254). How we look at work and its value translated into products is more outdated by the day. Automation will accelerate this trend by taking over most tasks that are easily measured and financialized. Already we can see a significant decoupling between income and labor, while chance and luck produce more wealth than before (Butaru, 2017: 93-94).

Wise policies *can* make a difference if they tackle the substance of what matters. We ought to preserve employability while the wave of technological innovation continues to grow implacably, increase the minimum wage, deploy progressive taxation, create a national wealth fund (Atkinson, 2015). Even ideas that may look eccentric at first glace, such as radical markets[3] (Weyl & Posner, 2018) have the potential to become mainstream.

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[3] Take for example Weyl & Posner's idea for quadratic voting (QV). QV "would allow people to express the relative strength of their preferences in the democratic process. No longer would 51 people who support a proposal, but barely care about the issue, outvote 49 incredibly passionate opponents, predictably making society worse in the process. Instead everyone would be given 'voice credits' which they could spread across elections as they chose. QV follows a square root rule: 1 voice credit gets you 1 vote, 4 voice credits gets you 2 votes, 9 voice credits gives you 3 votes, and so on. It's not immediately apparent, but this method is on average the ideal way of allowing people to more and more impose their desires on the rest of society, but at an ever-escalating cost. To economists it's an idea that's obvious, though only in retrospect, and is already being taken up by business. Weyl points to studies showing that people are more likely to vote strongly not only about issues they care more about, but issues they know more about. He expects that allowing people to specialise and indicate when they know what they're talking about will create a democracy that does more to aggregate careful judgement, rather than just passionate ignorance." From: https://80000hours.org/podcast/episodes/glen-weyl-radically-reforming-capitalism-and-democracy.

While a detailed discussion over the semantics of (re)distribution is essential, we skip it here and fast-forward to the key points of this proposal: it is essential to redefine value; redefine economic indices; *libertarianize* the redistribution of wealth; depoliticize the bulk of fiscal policies; accelerate the transition of growth-based economies into Green New Deal-like systems. This transformation requires institutional change which can be facilitated by the *social branch.*

What Is the Social Branch?

The social branch is an institution whose mission will be the administration of the (re)distribution of socialized national and international wealth. Its foundation will be a Universal Basic Income (UBI). The social branch is a trans-political institution, short of becoming the fourth power in the government. Its staff and administrators, while being elected or appointed through deliberation and consensus, will have no political affiliation. The social branch will not issue fiscal policy[4] and will administer by charter amendable through public forums. Some executive fiscal policies will be converted into algorithmic rules. The social branch will make direct cash payments through an operational arm, the *National Account of Wealth (NAW)*, and will operate under the assumption that no means testing is required to participate in foundational wealth distribution. The aim of the social branch is to shift fiscal power from the executive and legislative and transform it into a catalog of algorithmic rules of (re)distribution based on dynamic input from real-life economic data[5]. The catalogue will be updated regularly by popular ballots and forums, while the executive and legislative will not have veto-power. In this sense, the social branch may be a broadening of the separation of powers and will not fall at the mercy of electoral cycles.

While the foundation of the social branch is an UBI, its body will be comprised of *social shares*. The new mechanism saves the concepts of private property, entrepreneurship, capital-based market economy, and recognizes the need to rebalance nature with material output, effort with reward, labor income with capital income. The social shares are capital-like participation shares in all private ventures that operate in the nation. Unlike regular stock, the social shares will

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[4] Worth mentioning the Commitment to Equity Handbook - Estimating the Impact of Fiscal Policy on Inequality and Poverty edited by Nora Lusting (2018) of CEQ Institute, Tulane University. The main message is that one must look at both the tax and spending sides simultaneously. Taxes can be regressive, but when combined with transfers make the system more equalizing, while redistribution is quite heterogeneous and fiscal systems are not always poverty reducing.

[5] A report from the Complex Systems Institute justifies wealth redistribution with mathematics. https://necsi.edu/preliminary-steps-toward-a-universal-economic-dynamics-for-monetary-and-fiscal-policy.

have a non-voting, mandatory distributary function that will mimic the global capital taxation proposed by Piketty (2013). Social shares will be owned by the citizenry through the mediation of the social branch.

The institution can be scaled to a supranational level under the umbrella of ECOSOC (United Nations Economic and Social Council). A primary source of financing can be the value added tax (VAT) collected at national level. The secondary source can be a portion of social shares issued by multinational corporations that generate global economies of scale. Several advantages immediately ensue.

First, this method of reframing sovereignty seems to be the easiest that can be integrated with the current political arena. The European technocratic experiment shows that political roadblocks that appeared during attempts to redefine the exercises of sovereignty can be overcome more easily at supranational level. While at national level, political games and talks about redefining sovereignty fall under the heavy hammer of tradition and status quo vocabulary, especially when the subject is the transfer of a significant portion of fiscal policy outside the national boundaries.

Second, expanding the mechanism to a supranational level would address a problem of equity. Through an international redistribution (UBI-style) of a chunk of national VAT, the mechanism would impose a non-negligible sanction over those who, for various reasons, consume most of the global production and subsequently deliver the highest carbon footprint.

Third, maneuvering carefully the rate of VAT collected and through commensurate currency policy, this global social branch could serve as an instrument of economic macrostability in partnership with institutions like IMF and World Bank. This global redistribution mechanism would subsidize the global production while enhancing economic justice and safeguarding the competitive market space.

Many authors have proposed valid calculations for UBI funding (Smith-Carrier, Green, Forget, Standing, etc.). We hold these facts to be self-evident, that there is enough money to fund UBI projects in all advanced nations. However, this is not enough, yet it lays at the foundation of the social branch. The swaths of capital laying both in economies of scale (see Amazon, Big Tech, etc.) and in the underground fiscal paradises (see Panama Papers) can be tapped into carefully with pragmatic solutions (Collier, 2018) which will allow all citizens to participate in this enormous wealth of nations.

Income taxation will be reformed to create separate streams of funding that will feed partially into the standard national revenue agencies, and partially into the NAW, more so into the latter[6]. At the same time the burden of social spending will be drastically lifted from the shoulders of the government, hence the libertarian framing. Certain social protection programs that require demographic customization and means testing will remain outside the purview of the social branch.

Fine-tuning the social branch, following a simple philosophy of *collect-and-pay*, can allow the mechanism to radiate transformational change into society at large. Capital creation, market forces, labor rights, effort-to-pay ratios, monopolies, unfair extraction of values from the commons, the destruction of the environment by private capital interest, will find their way into the algorithms behind the amounts NAW will collect and then pay monthly to all citizens.

Why the Social Branch?

Any serious attempt at proposing foundational new economic mechanisms must build its legitimacy on strong, universally accepted moral precepts. Such as free market liberalism is grounded on the principle *to each according to their effort*, which has been hijacked by neoliberalism and morphed into *to each according to their gluttonous audacity*. While social democracy, where often Marx is present in "homeopathic quantities" (Bunea, 2019), is grounded on the principle *to each according to their needs*, which has morphed into *to each according to minimizing the total general dissatisfaction.* Half-baked policies on the left have pushed the population into corners of apathy when it comes to social democracy, leaving the job of revival to populist grassroots movements who now have the difficult task to take on the establishment on the battlefield of moral principles. The grand battle of our times is *moral*.

Formulating the UBI question in moral terms allows us to deliver the necessary consensus for creating such an institution since this consensus is not *beyond* ideological divisions, but *beside* (Butaru, 2015). Consensus can be found in the meditations on fixing the shortcomings of industrial civilization, formulated by Thomas Paine, Joseph Charlier, Allen Davenport etc. (Cunliffe & Erreygers, 2004). This consensus, from the times when the old left had not divided yet into liberals

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[6] Personal income tax can be separated into two streams, both progressive. One stream would flow into government coffers, the other stream (steeper) into the social branch. This does not mean, however, a higher tax burden for lower and medium-income people.

and socialists, can be rebuilt easily in the present, since on moral territory "real-libertarians can side with the old critics of alienation" (Van Parijs, 1998: 34). By reducing both poverty and excessive affluence (Frankfurt, 2015) we can reduce inequality, as a side effect. By taking a pragmatic position (Collier, 2018) we can replace state paternalism with *social maternalism*, where the state would not empower itself excessively but remains active in both the economic and social spheres.

Moral philosophers and legal scholars have debated for centuries the source of human rights. More recently, even President Franklin D. Roosevelt proposed a second bill of economic rights in 1944 because the historical bill of rights, comprised of the first ten amendments to the United States Constitution, had "proved inadequate to assure us equality in the pursuit of happiness". Indeed, the moral landscape of human experience can have a bottom line, whether it is the *pursuit of happiness*, or the *pursuit of wellbeing,* or the *pursuit of prosperity*. Regardless of how they are encoded into human rights charters, all these pursuits are inextricably anchored in what nature can offer: the lands, the waters, the air, the resources. This is the defining nucleus of human existence on Earth, the starting point on which any battle over guiding moral principles takes place. IPCC reports and many other studies flood the polarized media with harsher and harsher estimations about the future of the climate. We have until 2030 to turn things around. We are past climate change. We are in climate *crisis*.

So, how can we tame the impetus of economic growth that causes this inertia of mass waste? How can we break the mindset at the core of neoliberal capitalism, that markets will correct the relation of humans with nature? And how can we bring the left, (under whatever label now operates) down to Earth, so people can leapfrog over ideologies and bad memories of communist-style regimes?

We must talk about *new economic rights*, in the spirit of Roosevelt, while carefully incorporating talking points from the right and the left. We can talk about market economy, capital-driven enterprise, Green New Deal, and socializing wealth. The climate crisis demands this new expanded and inclusive narrative. We can gently force the hand of the right and the left to think in a cooperative fashion if we move the stakes to the lowest possible common denominator. Which is, clearly: keeping homo sapiens alive on Earth, and raising the standard of living for all, not just the few.

Then, we need to deal with politics. Democracies have created these convoluted systems of balance of power, that for good reasons are in deadlock when it comes to breaking with the orthodoxy. Simple, effective, data-driven mechanisms that have the propensity to bring about more *economic justice*, while pleading the case of the entire political spectrum, have more chances of earning political support and inspire the electorate.

How to Create the Social Branch?

If we are to borrow a term from philosopher David Chalmers, this is the *hard problem*. The point of emergence where the economy has a qualia-like moment: it aggregates instances of subjective, conscious experience and attempts to formulate from within a new transformative meta-identity, one that acknowledges itself from outside. Imagine the aerial photographs of Johnny Miller (TEDex Talks, 2017). Seen from the sky, slums are separated by affluent neighborhoods with distinct, hard barriers. Inequality is stark, brutal, visceral. The self-conscious economy ought to think *I know what I can become*.

The social branch might as well begin with a proclamation by the national government, in the name of its people, after its charter has been vetted through a referendum. The National Account of Wealth will be set up to operate deposits and disbursements immediately. The revenue agencies will transfer their jurisdiction of collecting the agreed upon portion of income taxation to the NAW. Capital taxation, in all its complexity, will also begin partial transfers into the NAW. VAT collection will also be transferred to the NAW by the same ratios agreed in the charter. In its first payment cycle, the social branch should be able to handle monthly equal payments to all citizens to start off the new mechanism at a level of an UBI deemed feasible by many writers and researchers: $1000 in the US (Yang, 2018), $1415 in Canada (Forget, 2018), 2555 francs in Switzerland, 192 £ in the UK (Standing, 2017).

At the same time ECOSOC can establish its own social branch with an *international account of wealth* (IAW) that will handle similar disbursements to all its members with the caveat that the IAW will have a different charter and different algorithms that will focus more on capital capture, and consumption taxation (VAT) than income taxation[7]. Wealth taxation will have a two-tier

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[7] Kuypers, Figari, Verbist (2018) showed that if wealth is considered together with income in ranking redistribution, European countries are less redistributive than if considered by the income alone. To which we add that if wealth is progressively *socialized* through social shares, a much equitable redistribution can be attained.

dynamic distribution: an inverse proportion will be transferred into the NAW and a direct proportion into the IAW, by an aggregated formula that would need to consider at least national GINI coefficients, and other inequality metrics. The scope of the fine balance between the NAW and the IAW is to address both national inequalities and inequalities between countries.

Next come the *social shares*. Foreseeably, the capital owning lobby will push back the hardest here. The main challenge is to navigate the moral narrative of what the social shares actually represent. They are, not more not less, not communist-style nationalization by the state, but a *socialization of wealth* that separates executive decision-making from capital creation. All citizens will become owners of the fruits of capital through the mediation of the social branch, but not all citizens will become corporation executives.

All corporations, whether publicly owned or private, will issue mandatory social shares according to the regulations of the social branch charter. The social shares will be instituted in a distinct share class and will have universal rights. The structure and attributes of the social shares are in themselves a grand subject that deserves separate attention. For the purpose of this paper, the social shares must at a minimum preserve these rights: (1) The right of capital owners to determine the course of the enterprise and dispose of investment capital for the purpose of sustainable growth. (2) The right to generate and appropriate profit. (3) The right to establish various forms of property. And the following obligations: (1) Maintain an acceptable ratio of executive-to-worker income. (2) Pay mandatory dividends to the NAW and IAW according to the charter. (3) Make regular disbursements to citizens irrespective of political cycles, from capital that must be allocated from net profits.

Social shares can have a punitive function. In this sense, the social branch will be a disposal of fiscal policy albeit by prescriptive charter instead of government or legislative initiatives. In this sense, the social branch is *not the government*, it is a citizens-sanctioned administrator. Punitive functions may include: (1) Aberration of pay disparities between executives and workers can be captured by forcing the company to issue progressive number of social shares for each additional increment in executive pay, whether it's salary or pay in stock or other assets. (2) Tax evasion, whether legal or illegal, whether aided by fiscal paradises or financial engineering can be converted into social shares. This requires collaboration with the traditional branches of government to close tax loopholes. Capital flight will become much harder under the new mechanism, since all nations will eventually implement a social branch, being highly incentivized to do so, since the IAW will

serve as unconditional economic aid especially for developing countries. (3) Corporations will not have much incentives to run away from obligations to the social branch, since the charter can mandate that any indirect presence of said corporation (e.g. convoluted ownership structure, plethora of brands and names etc.) in a national territory makes the corporation subject to the social branch charter. Moreover, their economic activity will be captured by VAT, that will stamp the presence of the capital behind the respective goods and services. (4) Economic activity that damages the environment must be punished. If the fossil fuel industry was forced to issue social shares commensurate to the subsidies they received (which must be terminated immediately) their destructive activity will be curtailed, however they will retain capital which can be used for innovation into renewable energy. The new mechanism is designed to modify behavior and must be presented and perceived as such. Capital is not stolen from the capitalist; it remains with the capital owner.

Social shares will also need to maintain the following attributes, later to be fine-tuned: (1) They cannot be bought or sold. Can only be created by capital-driven corporations and be registered with the social branch. They can be dissolved by the social branch at the request of the corporation in harmony with bankruptcy provisions. (2) Their number must maintain a stable proportion with the rest of shares issued by the corporation. (3) Will be subject to the social branch charter and its prescribed formulas that can be revised by the social branch staff and approved by popular consultation. The UN-administered social branch will have a similar process of adjustment with approval through consultation between nations.

The institutions and instruments thusly created can be used immediately as means to combat overproduction crises or surgically soften the temporary regional disequilibria that can affect global macrostability. Under the guidance of institutions whose mandate is to tackle stability (IMF) and global development (World Bank), funding can increase through intergovernmental issue of fiat currency.[8] This translates into temporary increasing the UBI in affected regions. In this fashion,

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[8] Inflation concerns? Somewhat justified but offset by the collection of VAT and simultaneous increases in disbursements to maintain the purchasing power. The algorithm should and must include inflation rates. At the same time, in the background, the presence of crypto currencies also lingers. While at present they are not a major concern for public policy, the cryptos can indeed be leveraged to increase the basket of currencies at the disposal of the new mechanism. Disbursements can include national currency and borderless digital currencies. It may seem a paradox that the social branch leads to the loosening of the status quo, but that is precisely the vision at its core: to relax state power and to empower the citizens much more through the socialization of wealth. Also, the upside of block chain

global economy will be *subsidized* and *stimulated* as needed in a transparent and competitive way without affecting deals made from negotiations made within the World Trade Organization. The creative character of crises is salvaged, if such "creative destruction" actually existed (Schumpeter, 1975: 82-85).

Conclusion

The idea of wealth and income redistribution has wide popular support, when the right questions are asked. Standing like a dormant volcano that has accumulated material under pressure and only needs for the crust to break, the voices of the people only wait for the proper channel and narrative to be heard. In a series or surveys, scientists Michael Norton and Dan Ariely (2011) have showed that the US population, regardless of political orientation, held an ideal of wealth and income inequality at a much lower levels than the reality, while at the same time their estimate of the levels of these inequalities lay somewhat between reality and ideal. Respondents across gender, education levels, political orientation, *estimated* that the top 20% richest citizens owed between 50%-60% and stated the *ideal* ought to be between 30%-40%, while in *reality* the top 20% owed 85% of the private wealth. Similarly, when it came to CEO-to-worker income ratio, respondents from 40 countries *estimated* a ratio of 6-41:1, an *ideal* ratio of 4-6:1, while the *reality* is 40-351:1 (the high outlier is the United States). People across the globe do not say they want perfect equality, but they do wish inequalities were much lower.

On data like this, we can build a *strong consensus* for designing a new mechanism for economic justice. Realistic, non-ideologic, pragmatic proposals such as the one presented in this paper are long due.

UBI is not an instrument that would solve the problem of inequality, but it is good enough to fix a good chunk of the problems caused by inequality. If the amount of UBI ensures decent living, UBI would make inequality less relevant because the blackmail power over workers would

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technologies must be taken into consideration, since the algorithms behind the social branch will use, heavily, data systems based on socially-focused artificial intelligence, unlike A.I. that is deployed to harvest personal data and enhance surveillance capitalism driven by advertising, manufacturing consent, behavior modification, electoral fraud, all which essentially undermine democracy at its roots. This is a huge topic which may be expanded in later papers. For more see: *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power* (2018) by Shoshana Zuboff.

disappear. This is the power given by inequality. Workers would not live with the threat of being discarded at the mercy of the market. Moreover, when we disconnect the UBI redistribution mechanism from the short-term political games, we get the guarantee of a status quo that offsets the damaging effects of inequality. Politics and policy tend to deliver solutions with a deep sense of subjective arbitrariness to which voters rarely subscribe wholeheartedly.

We could say that the leftovers of feudalism would be largely exorcized from capitalism. Remaining inequality would be more an inequality of consumption, making it more tolerable and widely more *popular*. We would be left also with a diversity of strategies and development processes (where to invest first, how to manage access to natural resources etc.) that can be easier to handle than letting politics alone to deal with these questions. The resulting system may become one quite familiar and much closer to human nature, notwithstanding radical changes in work ethic and incentives.

The sweetest part of the new deal is that we would satisfy the right-leaning enthusiasts because they will enjoy more peace of mind and predictability that no authoritarian regime could match. We would also give satisfaction to the left-leaning *solidaritarians* because they will see many of their visions come to life without the power that some leaders dream about. For all other spectra of visions, from global policy to education and health, we can still enjoy our traditional electoral games.

UBI won't solve the problems caused by automation or economic crises but it will make the transition smoother and will help with softening the adverse effects.

We propose nothing less than a nation-wide and global socialization of wealth. Immediately this flies right in the face of venture capitalists and the like, who continue to ride the wave of neoliberalism with impunity. When trillions of dollars are stashed in fiscal paradises and fake foundations, when democracy is up for sale, when the entire narrative of fair markets has been hijacked by the self-anointed enlightened elites, when masses rise in protest on the verge of climate catastrophe, we believe humanity deserves a new mechanism for economic justice.

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