

CULTURAL POLITICAL ECONOMY OF EUROPE 2020: JEAN MONNET CHAIR CPE 2020 AND ITS IMPACT

Borut Rončević

Faculty of Information Studies in Novo mesto, Slovenia

E-mail: borut.roncevic@fis.unm.si

Abstract: *The main goal of the grand strategy Europe 2020 is to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Implementation of such grand strategy is an arduous process, which has so far more often than not resulted in implementation deficit. The article follows the Cultural Political Economy approach and is based on a premise that to successfully implement a grand strategy of Europe 2020 and its successor strategies, we need to construe the strategy as a hegemonic discourse that needs to pass the evolutionary mechanisms of variation, selection and retention. Possible mechanism of retention of Europe 2020 is the innovative educational that was developed and tested in Jean Monnet Chair project Cultural Political Economy of Europe 2020. The approach can contribute to awareness of EU grand strategies and their implementation through other programmatic documents and advance interdisciplinary EU studies dealing with the phenomenon of EU implementation deficit.*

Key-words: *Jean Monnet Chair, Cultural Political Economy, Europe 2020, methodology, policy impact*

1. Introduction

The European Union implementation deficit has since long been the subject of intense interest by both researchers and policy-makers. This is also the case for its ambitious grand strategies. The Lisbon strategy has generally been perceived as having failed to reach its objectives (Makarovič et al. 2014). Implementation deficit has been attributed to a variety of factors such as the lack of focus in setting the goals, inefficient governance structures and many more (Haverland and Romeijn 2007; Borghetto and Franchino 2010; Tomšič and Vehovar 2012). A research based on the Cultural Political Economy approach, based on evolutionary mechanisms of variation, selection and retention of dominant discourses (Jessop 2004; Jessop 2010; Jessop and Oosterlynck 2008), as well as on mechanisms of selectivities (Ngai-Ling and Jessop 2014) has concluded that it the EU is to successfully meet its

developmental challenges, it is vital to develop more efficient mechanisms of retention of selected discourses (Makarovič 2014, 624).

The relevance of the mechanisms of variation, selection and retention of dominant discourse of *Europe 2020* is implied by all contributions to this special issue. In their separate contributions, Cepoi, Gangaliuc and Pandiloska Jurak deal with the “smart” growth, tackling the issues of research (Pandiloska Jurak and Gangaliuc) and digital transformation (Cepoi). In her case study on social entrepreneurship Klindienst deals with the “inclusive” growth by showing that the use of those three mechanisms can result in the integration of the developed solutions into institutional rules. Fric presents the case for “sustainable” growth in her contribution on circular economy.

Hence the development of Jean Monnet Chair titled *Cultural Political Economy of Europe 2020 (CPE2020)*. The Chair, held by the author of this paper, is dedicated to *testing innovative educational approach* and related materials as a mechanism for improving implementation of the EU grand strategy, *Europe 2020*. By doing that it also advances interdisciplinary EU studies dealing with the phenomenon of EU implementation deficit, with a view to offer *educational tools* that could be *utilised in other environments throughout Europe*, to contribute to awareness of EU grand strategies and their implementation through other programmatic documents.

To achieve this, *CPE2020* is based on i.) *student-centred learning*, shifting the focus from teacher to the learner, aiming to develop autonomy, independence and critical thinking of the learner, ii.) *the key elements of Open Innovation 2.0*, a new paradigm where not only academia and policy-makers, but also industry and civil participants work together to co-create the future and drive structural changes far beyond the scope of what any one organization or person could do alone, and iii.) takes into account the *Cultural Political Economy*, analytical approach that not only explains the mechanisms behind successful implementation of grand EU strategies, but can also be instrumental in providing the relevant tools.

CPE2020 thus incorporates principles of integrated collaboration, co-created shared value and rapid adoption of dominant discourse, in this case the *Europe 2020*. This includes teaching activities, interactive events and research. These activities include not only future professionals and practitioners undertaking degree-awarding studies in all levels of study, but all relevant stakeholders. It is following the well-established principle that in research on the implementation of EU (grand) strategies by national states we also need to take into the account their complexity, coordination, networks and actors (see Pandiloska Jurak 2010, Pandiloska Jurak and Pinterič 2009).

2. The Ambition of CPE 2020

CPE2020 tackles an important policy issue and at the same time provides academic value added. The European Union has been continuously rethinking its global position amidst emerging economic and geopolitical challenges and attempting to formulate strategies to increase its competitiveness (Makarovič et al. 2014). *Europe 2020* provides a number of good guidelines on how to meet the challenges, especially *its focus on successful, smart and inclusive growth*. For example, one of the solutions for achieving these ambitious guidelines is a paradigmatic shift towards a circular economy, where the waste – materials, waste water or energy – from one organization becomes input for another (Fric and Roncevic 2018). This paradigm is a response to the pressures of growing consumption of the limited resources and environmental capacity and it is one of the most developed waste handling concepts of modern time (Ellen MacArthur Foundation 2017 in Fric and Roncevic 2018). However, long-standing policy implementation deficit of the European Union is also recognised for its grand strategies, including the initially ambitious Lisbon Strategy. Hence the relevant question: is *Europe 2020* set to fail as well (Makarovic et al. 2014)? Implementation deficit of the *Lisbon Strategy* was not due to the changed economic circumstances after 2008 which could hardly have been foreseen when the initial document was adopted. CPE analysis reveals that although this document was produced and selected as a dominant type of discourse, it failed to establish itself as a new successful economic imaginary and did not become part of EU citizens' habitus, of organisational routines and did not become sufficiently influential in shaping local, regional and national policy paradigms, strategies and policies. This is also the main obstacle to success of *Europe 2020* and the key solution is to develop mechanisms for its retention and subsequent reinforcement. Only in this case will it have the power to become influential in shaping policy paradigms, strategies, and policies in and across many different fields of social practice. Additionally, when building policies and strategies it is important to acknowledge the relevance of cultural foundations. As some authors show (Kleindienst 2017; Kleindienst and Tomšič 2017; Kleindienst and Tomšič 2018), the relationship between institutional system and cultural platform of society is mutually reinforcing.

CPE2020 was planned to achieve maximum impact with available resources by utilising the existing host institution's infrastructure and activities. This is not only economically efficient, but also allows avoiding unnecessary new content loading in addition to already existing one. Therefore, relevant fields of EU studies were integrated where appropriate in the existing curricula and events, thereby i.) providing increased visibility of

highly relevant EU topics at a host institution where teaching on EU topics is at a nascent phase of development and which has so far not received Jean Monnet funding; ii.) improving the relevance of courses which have not been specifically designed to deliver EU studies; and iii.) responding to an identified institutional need to develop this field of study.

Furthermore, *CPE2020* was designed to achieve the maximum benefit per available resources. This also includes maximisation of the relevance of proposal for the specific objectives of Jean Monnet Chairs. We blended activities of the Chair with already existing events at host institution to the greatest possible extent and by providing a 'clever' combination of educational activities, events and research activities.

As a result, we achieve 'more with less' and were able to note synergistic effects.

Firstly, Jean Monnet Chair *CPE2020* deepened teaching in EU studies embodied in an official curriculum of host institution's study programmes. Important proportion of planned teaching takes place as a part of three courses which are conducted on the level of undergraduate, MA and Ph.D studies. At BA level we delivered course *Theories of Information Society*, at MA level we will delivered relevant topics in the framework of a course *Qualitative Research Methods* and at Ph.D level we will delivered course *Contemporary Theories in Economic Sociology*. These courses are not specifically dedicated to the EU studies and we were not planning to completely reformulate them for the purpose of Jean Monnet Chair. However, we will actively integrated relevant EU topics in these courses either as specific cases or materials to achieve requested learning aims, thereby offering them not only to students who are specifically interested in EU studies, but also to students who are keen to pursue other fields.

Secondly, *CPE2020* provided in-depth teaching on European Union matters for future professionals in fields that are in increasing demand on the labour market. Here we should emphasise that students in the field of Social Science Informatics attended courses in the framework of *CPE2020*, who are in high demand on the labour market. However, one should not assume that this only due to their IT expertize. They are studying to become interdisciplinary experts combining competencies in IT, in management and social sciences and research methods. Anecdotal as well as more systematic evidence proves that ascent of IT and social networking, which has entered everyday as well as the working life, does not only require engineers, but also a wide array of other profiles, which are essential for smooth functioning of a variety of organisations. Host institution prides itself for not being a 'typical' computer science HEI, but one that educates future professionals with applied

knowledge who have found employment in a variety of organisations in all spheres of life, both in Slovenia and internationally. Through our summer schools we provide in-depth teaching on EU matters, which includes expertise on managing innovation in delivering smart inclusive growth as well as the knowledge of relevant administrative environments – increasingly complex environment.

Finally, *CPE2020* fed the results of education activities into series of thematic events, where the participants have the opportunity to communicate with representatives of other target groups. These events were the three winter camps with participation of students, young professionals and academics, three multi-day joint international field trips with participation of all target groups, three special thematic sessions at a conference will enable scientific scrutiny of the CPE results and nine round tables enable more applied scrutiny of *CPE2020* process by industry representatives and policy-makers. *CPE2020* also engages all target groups in research activity, intended to assess the effectiveness of retention and reinforcement of *Europe 2020*, i.e. of the *CPE2020* methods and tools. In this entire process, to achieve objectives and engage target groups *CPE2020* systematically incorporated principles of integrated collaboration, co-created shared value and rapid adoption.

3. Methodology

The methodology has been developed *to meet the overall envisaged objectives* of Jean Monnet Chair *CPE2020*, i.e. *to develop and test innovative educational approach* and related materials to advance *the acceptance of the EU grand strategies*, in this case the *Europe 2020*, and with a view to foster development and mainstreaming of interdisciplinary EU studies at the intersection of economic studies with comparative regionalism. At the same time, we are attentive to the need to offer *educational tools* that could be *utilised in other environments* with the goal to contribute to awareness of EU grand strategies and their implementation throughout Europe.

The working methodology is combining four interdisciplinary elements:

- i. The developed educational approach is based on *student-centred learning*, shifting the focus from professor to the student, aiming to develop autonomy and independence of the learner, which will substantially increase the quality of the teaching and assure better results.
- ii. We incorporated *the key elements of Open Innovation 2.0*, a new paradigm where academia, policy-makers, industry and civil society

work together to co-create structural changes far beyond the scope of individual actor. These elements guide the debating activities during the events organised by the Chair.

- iii. The methodology takes into account the *Cultural Political Economy*, analytical approach that not only explains the mechanisms behind successful implementation of grand EU strategies, but can also be instrumental in providing the relevant tools and provide inclusion of civil society members in the process.
- iv. This approach provides the basis for research activities, which will be qualitative regional audits intended to detect the effectiveness of the educational methods and assess the progress of the project activities against milestones and measurable indicators.

CPE2020 thus incorporated principles of integrated collaboration, co-created shared value and rapid adoption. Consequently, teaching activities include not only (future) professionals undertaking degree-awarding studies, but also industry representatives, policy-makers and civil society and .

4. Conclusion: The Evidence of Impact

Achieving sustained development is an overwhelming task. It needs to take into account a number of complex socio-cultural factors (see Adam et al. 2005; Rončević 2008; Rončević et al. 2010). Also, it is a process involving at least a partial restructuring of society (Rončević and Makarović 2010; Rončević and Makarović 2011) and on the policy-makers, public administration, industry representatives and civil society, i.e. the relevant stakeholders (Cepoi 2016).

CPE2020 reached them by utilization of well-developed regional networks, where FIS often acts as a moderator in various initiatives. As a part of *CPE2020*, we systematically observed impact of the activities of *CPE2020* on relevant groups either through surveys (students) or through participant observations (all events). The results of this were not extremely surprising, albeit quite informative. Aside from a very select group of participants, who were familiar with Europe 2020 through professional activities, no other actors were aware of the relevance of this grand strategy through national and regional strategies. This observations includes not only the students, but even advanced professionals in their respective fields. However, after having actively participated in *CPE2020* in line with *Open Innovation 2.0* paradigm, we observed the impact of the knowledge transfer. Teaching and events materials influenced their level of internalisation of semiotic elements of Europe 2020 in internal habitus. More research would be needed whether these activities were transferred to their organizations' routines and if not,

what would be needed to achieve this. The active participation of policy-makers, businesses and civil society strengthened intra-regional cooperation and contributed to increase in mutual trust, which has the potential to spark further joint innovative efforts. How did we achieve this?

The academic community at the Host institution was approached directly and actively participated at most *CPE2020* events and not only contributed, but also benefit from them. This benefit was both academic, i.e. discovering scientifically relevant EU topics, as well as pedagogic-didactical, i.e. contributing to development and testing new teaching method bringing greater teacher-student communication and achieving better learning outcomes. Students benefited from close communication with their professors, developing their autonomy and independent thinking, which will substantially increase the quality of the teaching and assure better results. The spill-over effects of the discussions bring about innovative approaches to understanding and spreading other relevant topics as well. The activities provided by *CPE2020* also strengthen the academia – policy-makers communication, thereby providing them with new opportunities for future cooperation.

Although we are not able to reliably measure or observe this particular impact on broader academic community and knowledge on European integration, teaching materials and publications of the *CPE2020* are available on-line. Availability of the material will in the years to come i.) enhance the knowledge about innovative approaches in teaching on EU studies. The events provided an open forum for cross-disciplinary debates on the topic and enable cooperation with academic staff from other academic institutions and the anecdotal evidence suggests newly emerging relevant initiatives (i.e. Jean Monnet Chairs and Centres of Excellence proposals at other institutions). Scientific knowledge will benefit from intensive debates with the stakeholders in the years to come, providing unique insight and access to data on factors, bottlenecks and mechanisms of implementation deficits of the EU grand strategies.

References

Adam, Frane, Matej Makarovič, Borut Rončević and Matevž Tomšič. 2005. *The Challenges of Sustained Development: The Role of Socio-cultural Factors in East-Central Europe*. Budapest and New York: Central European University Press.

Borghetto, Enrico and Fabio Franchino. 2010. "The role of subnational

authorities in the implementation of EU directives." *Journal of European Public Policy* 17 (6): 759–780.

Cepoi, Victor. 2016. "Do social forces matter?: a model for innovation and development performance." *Research in social change* 8 (3): 4-27.

Fric, Urška and Borut Rončević. 2018. E-Simbioza: Leading the Way to a Circular Economy through Industrial Symbiosis in Slovenia. *Socijalna ekologija* 27 (2): 119–140.

Haverland, Markus and Marleen Romeijn. 2007 "Do member states make European policies work? Analysing the EU transposition deficit." *Public Administration* 85 (3): 757–78.

Jessop, Bob. 2004. "Critical semiotic analysis and cultural political economy." *Critical Discourse Studies* 1 (2): 159-174.

Jessop, Bob. 2010. "Cultural political economy and critical policy studies." *Critical Policy Studies* 3 (3-4): 336–356.

Jessop, Bob and Stijn Oosterlynck. 2008. "Cultural political economy: On making the cultural turn without falling into soft economic sociology." *Geoforum* 39 (3): 1155–1169.

Kleindienst, Petra. 2017. "Understanding the different dimensions of human dignity: analysis of the decision of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Slovenia on the "Tito street" case." *Danube: law and economics review* 8 (3): 117-147. Doi: 10.1515/danb-2017-0009.

Kleindienst, Petra and Matevž Tomšič. 2018. "Human Dignity as an Element of Political Culture in the New Democracies: the Case of the Post-Communist Slovenia." *Bogoslovni vestnik* 78 (1): 159—172.

Kleindienst, Petra and Matevž Tomšič. 2017. Human dignity as the foundation of democratic political culture: legal and philosophical perspective. *Law, culture and the humanities: a publication of the Association for the study of law, culture and humanities*, pp. 1-20. Doi: 10.1177/1743872117738229.

Makarovič, Matej, Janez Šušteršič and Borut Rončević. 2014. "Is Europe 2020 se to fail? The Cultural Political Economy of the EU Grand Strategies." *European Planning Studies* 22 (3): 610-626.

Ngai-Ling Sum and Bob Jessop. 2014. *Toward a Cultural Political Economy: Putting Culture in Its Place in Political Economy*. Edward Elgar: Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, USA.

Pandiloska Jurak, Alenka. 2010. "State: homogenous or heterogenous actor in policy networks." In Pandiloska Jurak, Alenka, Uroš Pinterič. *Contemporary world between freedom and security*. Ljubljana: Vega, 364-375.

Pandiloska Jurak, Alenka, Uroš Pinterič. 2009. Stakeholders in public sector at the local level in Slovenia. In: *L'azienda e i suoi stakeholder*. Udine: Università degli Studi.

Rončević, Borut. 2008. *Strateško usmerjanje v sodobni družbi. (Strategic Steering in Contemporary Society)*. Nova Gorica: Fakulteta za uporabne družbene študije.

Rončević, Borut, Matej Makarovič. 2011. "Societal Steering in Theoretical Perspective: Social Becoming as an Analytical Solution." *Polish Sociological Review* 176 (4): 461-472.

Rončević, Borut, Matej Makarovič. 2010. "Towards the Strategies of Modern Societies: Systems and Social Processes." *Innovation – The European Journal of Social Science Research* 23 (3): 223-239.

Rončević, Borut, Janez Šušteršič, Peter Wostner, Tamara Besednjak Valič. 2010. "Quo vadis Slovenia? Between framework conditions and internal capabilities." *Managing Global Transitions: International Research Journal* 8 (4): 353-380.

Tomšič, Matevž and Urban Vehovar. 2012. "Quality of governance in "old" and "new" EU member states in a comparative perspective." *Sociologia* 44 (3): 367-384.