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## CONTENTS

Volume 12, Issue 2, May 2020

### **Svetlana Anistratenko**

- CONSTRUCTION OF SYMBOLIC EQUALITY IN NORWEGIAN POLITICAL  
RITUALS.....4

### **Martina Plantak**

- COCA-COLA, MARLBORO, SUZUKI: TURBOFOLK MUSIC AS A TOOL OF  
POLITICAL PROPAGANDA DURING THE 1990S IN SERBIA.....26

### **Tobi Becky Ejumudo and Kelly Bryan Ovie Ejumudo**

- ORGANISATIONAL DESIGN AND ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS IN  
ECOBANK NIGERIA LIMITED IN DELTA STATE.....42

### **Maja Brešan**

- PRO-GAMBLING CULTURE.....58

### **Darka Podmenik and Maruša Gorišek**

- IS YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN EU COUNTRIES STRUCTURAL?.....80

## CONSTRUCTION OF SYMBOLIC EQUALITY IN NORWEGIAN POLITICAL RITUALS

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**Abstract:** *How is equality expressed in political rituals? How do we know whether we are witnessing equality? How is equality connoted symbolically? Such questions consider the appearance of a phenomenon that, probably, does not yet exist. This article aims at exploring symbolic constructions of equality in Norwegian political rituals from the theoretic standpoints of intersectionality and democratic equality. To achieve this aim, I analyze symbolism of three ritual dimensions: surroundings, participants' actions and time (use and division). The methodological tools are ethnographic observation and interpretation. My analysis indicates that, in the Norwegian political context, equality manifests in symbols of transparency, openness, availability, solidarity, care, love and access to power possessors for citizens. These symbols are embedded in habitual forms of punctuality, physical contact, singing and emotional expression.*

**Key words:** equality, ethnographic observation, intersectionality, Norway, politics, rituals.

### 1. Introduction

The development of equality in practice depends on political will (Norway 2015a). If the state and its politicians do not invest in equality at the foundation of social, political and economic development, progression to a more equal society may be hindered. When the state is involved in initiatives to promote equality, its society is strengthened and enhanced (*ibid.*).

Across the world, some states work purposefully towards developing and maintaining conditions associated with equality. Norway is one such state (Bendixsen et al. 2018). For several years, the country has been among the leaders in the development of equality, improving positions of women and minorities (UNDP 2018). The country combines the advanced welfare politics with protection and development of equality as a vital value (Bendixsen et al. 2018). The Norwegian legislation obliges Norwegian politicians to promote

equality in daily work, establishing it as one of the main working tasks (Norway 2015b).

Despite the elaborated legislative guidelines and remarkable achievements of the country, we know little about how the Norwegian top-politicians realize equality in actions (Neumann 2011; Norway 2015a; Norway 2015b). The lack of knowledge is related to the particularities of the Norwegian elite studies and political ethnography in terms of top politics in general, since these fields are little available for observations (Dargie 1998; Neumann 2011).

Nonetheless, there are vast challenges involved in seeking equality, even for egalitarian oriented countries. One such challenge is the ambiguous nature of equality. Voltaire (2010 [1764]) wrote: "Equality [...] is at the same time the most natural and the most chimerical thing possible." Two hundred years later, the British philosopher John Lucas repeated Voltaire's concerns: "The demand for equality obsesses all our political thought. We are not sure what it is [...] but we are sure that whatever it is, we want it" (1965, 138).

While equality is a well-elaborated topic, theoretically (Anderson 1999; Baker et al. 2004; Cantillon and Lynch 2017; Dahl 2006; Young 1990, 1997), only a few studies have examined equality in *practice* (Baker et al. 2004). In particular, ethnographic studies of the symbolism of equality in politics from an intersectional perspective seem absent for both the Norwegian and other national political contexts. Symbolic uncertainty of equality joined with the particularities of the Norwegian political aspiration for equality and social centrality of ritual performances frame the gap for the present research.

In order to analyze one side of symbolic constructions of equality; I turn to political rituals as a symbolic performative activity with multiple social functions (Turner 1969). Rituals are enriched with capacities to express and construct social reality by redefining and manipulating sociocultural codes and legitimizing, shaping new and supporting previous social norms (Bell 2009; Kertzer 1989). Specifically, the study seeks to address the following question: *How is equality constructed symbolically in rituals involving Norwegian top-politicians?* In answering this question, the article aims at raising awareness of the role symbols and ritual actions play in political processes geared towards equality.

To illuminate the research question, I begin with a description of previous studies of equality in politics, generally, and the Norwegian political context, specifically. Further, I elaborate on the analytical approaches, study design, data and methods used in the present research. Section two presents my analysis of the data. The concluding section provides a summary and final discussion.

## 2. Previous Studies

Studies of equality originate in fruitful and well-established studies of inequality and discrimination. I am particularly interested in researches, which take the perspective of intersectionality and focus on the Norwegian context. The number of studies has thus inquired in inequality from the perspective of intersectionality (see, i.e., Berg, Flemmen and Gullikstad 2010; Gullikstad 2013; Jarvis, Mthiyane, Lindhardt and Ruus 2018; Skjeie and Langvasbråten 2009). For example, Berg, Flemmen and Gullikstad (2010) inquired into questions like what does it mean to be (gender) equal in Norway? And, how are majority and minority positions and hierarchies created in family, working and political lives? The authors problematized ethnicity, class and gender intersections in Norwegian society, exploring ways in which Norwegian political and social ideas about equality might contribute to the development of inequality in society.

The symbolism of power and gender inequality is also relevant to the political context (Daloz 2010; Edelman 1964; Pitkin 1967; Rai 2011; Verge and Pastor 2017). Norwegian researchers agree about the crucial role of symbolism in politics in relation to the gender aspect (see, e.g., Bolsø and Mühleisen 2015, Frækhaug 2013; Krogstad 2013, 2015, 2017; Krogstad and Storvik 2010, 2012).

Baker and colleagues (2004) argued that studies of inequality are only one of at least six research areas that are relevant to equality studies. Specifically, they stated that equality studies must grow and develop into a distinct field of knowledge and include studies of egalitarian processes in practice. Examples of studies of equality in practice are Bendixsen, Bringslid and Vike 2018, Brighouse 2007, and Hanlon 2009.

The Norwegian anthropologist Marianne Gullestad argued that Norwegians associate equality with local community, nature and domestic realm, while they affiliate the state with hierarchy, formality and impersonality (1991, 1992). Gullestad developed the concepts of egalitarian individualism and equality as sameness (1984, 1991). Highly influential, Gullestad's works have been criticized by other researchers for dyschromic understanding of public and private and lack of insight of interrelations between the state and rest of society (Lo 2018). Trägård (1997) noticed that equality culture developed in the Scandinavian state politics can be understood as a result of generalizing egalitarian norms inherent to the local peasant assembly. Bendixsen, Bringslid and Vike (2018) made a major effort to map development and peculiarities of Scandinavian egalitarianism both historically and in its modern state. In this volume, Lo (2018) explores how municipal politicians and administrators conceive their roles as actors in

political processes. He argues that politicians operate within and produce their policy with the sense of egalitarian-rooted pragmatism. Ethnographic researches exploring constructions of egalitarian symbolism in the Norwegian and other contexts are seemed to be absent.

### **3. Theoretical Perspectives**

#### **3.1. Equality and Intersectionality**

This article understands equality in line with the elaboration of democratic and affective equality and social justice theory (Anderson 1999; 2007; Cantillon and Lynch 2017; Young 1990, 1997). Equality is a system of social relations based on mutual respect and the cosmopolitan recognition of individuals as equals in all their diversity (Anderson 1999). Every individual has a worth and dignity that is not conditional upon anyone else's desires or preferences. Equality abolishes all oppression in the form of marginalization, status hierarchy, domination, exploitation and cultural imperialism (Anderson 1999; Young 1997). It demands that people be respected as equals because they deserve to be treated as such. Both inequality and equality are socially constructed and points to the need for the construction of new egalitarian norms (Anderson 1999). Further, respect, love, care and solidarity are immanent to equality and necessary for equality development. Love, as an aspect of equality, is not only private, but a political matter because it is vital to creating caring infrastructures for democratic thinking and practice (Cantillon and Lynch 2017, 178). The production of respect, love, care and solidarity involves emotional work, physical work, commitment, time, trust, belongingness, presence, mutuality and other kind of resources (*ibid.*).

Recognition and respect for human diversity is a call to approach equality in terms of intersectionality (Collins 1998; Crenshaw 1991, 2017; Lykke 2006; Young 1997). The intersectionality theory is commonly used to conceptualize ways in which sociocultural hierarchies, power differentials and in/exclusions around discursively and institutionally constructed categories such as gender, ethnicity, race, class, sexuality, age/generation, nationality, etc. mutually co-construct each other (Lykke 2006, 151). I agree with Severs and Erzeel (2016) who point out that intersectionality is ingrained into political power and into political production of (in)equality accordingly. I hence apply intersectionality as a lens through which I analyse the appearance of symbols (Crenshaw 2017). I argue that equality can – and should – be constructed at the intersections of social axes, and assume that, intersectionally, equality is characterized by the same properties as

inequality. Thus, it has the capacity to strengthen itself by interlocking and intersecting on different axes. For example, if a society has a favourable gender climate, it may also have a better atmosphere for the rights of LGBTQ (UNDP 2018).

### **3.2. Symbols and Rituals**

Symbols may be as effective tools for constructing equality, as they have proven to be efficient in producing inequality, domination and power relations (Solheim 1998). The diversity of reality and the particularities of institutions define the variable nature of egalitarian symbolism. In this article, I seek for symbols, which express *overall equality* regardless of gender, class, ethnicity or other socially important characteristics in the context of political rituals.

To understand the ways in which equality is constructed and expressed symbolically, I apply ritual studies' theoretic perspective (Geertz 1973; Kertzer 1989; Ricoeur 1981; Solheim 1998; Turner 1969; Wilentz 1985). I use the definition of symbols coined by Clifford Geertz where symbols are "any object, act, event, quality, or relation which serves as a vehicle for a conception – the conception is the symbol's meaning" (Geertz 1973, 91).

In turn, I approach ritual as a symbolic act or, as David Kertzer put it, as "an action wrapped in a web of symbols" (1989, 9). This definition draws on at least three essentialities of rituals. First, their embeddedness in culture as a web of symbols in which all are situated (Geertz 1973, 5). Second, their performative nature, whereby meanings are produced through the dynamics of action and in interplay with the surroundings. And third, their layered character (i.e. "wrapped") where symbols continuously (re)produce *surplus of meanings* (Ricoeur 1981).

Further, ritual communication occupies tremendous space in the social reality and carries out multiple sociocultural functions. Among other roles, rituals allow constructing and manipulating cultural codes effectively, articulating social conflicts and power collisions in socially accepted forms and expressing unity of different powers (Turner 1969).

Ritual is grounded in preverbal forms of communication and therefore does not necessarily involve verbality (Erikson 1968). Yet, oral statements are regularly an essential part of rituals. The particularity of ritual verbality is that oral statements merge with non-verbal symbolic production, as they not only state something but also *do*. For example, the "I do" voiced by the man and woman at the proper moment in a wedding ceremony does not describe the deed; it is the deed (Bell 2009, 68). Due to the described, many theorists, including David Kertzer (1989), do not segregate between the

verbal and non-verbal elements of rituals and assert that visual, sensual and verbal symbolism creates meanings and functionality conjointly.

Despite their noticeable diversity, rituals are united by essential commonalities. It is a kind of ceremony characterized by rich symbolism, sequences of activities and established manipulations of artifacts, words and gestures (Bell 2009). Time is another central dimension of rituals. It is linked to an event's dedication as well as to active performance and timing of the happening (Turner 1969). Ritual performances involve location, which creates meanings and provides artifacts. In addition, the human body is a powerful source for ritual symbolism. Both the human body in ritual action (dancing, talking, and singing) and the symbolism of the body as such (for example, bodily production – human blood and tears and bodily shape, colour and particularities) is the source of symbols (Bell 2009).

Linking ritual theory and equality theories, I hypothesize that equality symbolism in rituals might be expressed in repetitive manifestations of respect, love, solidarity and care.

## 4. Design and Methods

### 4.1. Methods and Data Sources

The present research is a qualitative study based on ethnographic observation and interpretations (Geertz 1973; Marcus 1995). Specifically, for the present study I engaged in multi-sited observation. The implications of this are as follows: First, I did not limit the fieldwork to one geographic location; rather, I observed politicians across diverse sites. And second, I made observations in sites involving social institutions, including the media, markets and churches (Marcus 1995). Before, during and immediately after the rites were performed, I took pictures and videos and conducted ethnographic interviews with some of the Ministers involved.

I concentrated on Ministers in the Erna Solberg Cabinet, which was appointed on October 16, 2013 and re-shuffled in January 2019. In accordance with the official government webpage, at the moment of observations, the Cabinet consisted of 22 Ministers, of whom 12 were men and 10 were women (Norway 2019b).

### 4.2. Entrance to the Field

To obtain knowledge of rituals I could potentially observe, I consulted the webpage of the Norwegian government (Norway 2019a). The Ministers' online calendars provided information on their activities for seven to ten days

ahead. I expected access to the rituals to be problematic. Indeed, the challenge of gaining entry has been previously described as the chief obstacle for observation in political anthropology (Dargie 1998). In fact, entrance to the field was uncomplicated, at least on the national level. The day after my initial research, three rituals were scheduled in my local area with the participation of three Ministers. Without any organizational agreements, I was able to witness two of these ceremonies. Overall, during May and June 2019, I observed five political rituals involving three male and one female Ministers. There were two openings of socially important objects, two conferences and one public meeting.

## 5. Interpretations of the Results

### 5.1. Simplicity of Artifacts

#### 5.1.1. *Surroundings*

To gain a sense of the atmosphere of the ritual events, I arrived and observed the staging and surroundings of the rites prior to their beginning. I mapped artifacts – material objects produced by humans – and interpreted them in relation to the Norwegian cultural codes and values (Alvesson and Billing 2009, 124). The rituals took place in a diversity of surroundings, like conference rooms, a library, open air etc. Most of the rooms were decorated with furniture in a similar design, even though buildings' exteriors were done in different styles.

One of the sites was a hotel hall where the conference took place. That conference hall was equipped with black chairs for spectators, a stage, a digital screen, a piano and a pulpit. The interior colors combined white, dark blue, dark bordeaux, black and tree-colors and were deep, calm and modest. A few pictures in simple frames decorated the walls. Huge rectangular windows stretched from floor to ceiling, inviting the beautiful garden outside into the room as a natural decoration. Brought together, these elements narrated the officiality of the atmosphere yet restrained grandiosity and other cultural codes of upper class. Rather, they produced symbolism of upper middle-class with elements of puritan self-limitations typical for the Norwegian society (Bendixen et al. 2018).

The first row of chairs was marked with “Reserved” signs; these were printed on regular white paper with no further indication as to whom the reservations were for. Designating a place with a name is an old tradition that relates to the privilege of sitting in an honorable place. Typically, the reserved seat is relatively more comfortable, affording a better view and identifying higher status. Accordingly, the practice of reserving seats is often an expression of wealth and rank. Thus, historically, the rich and powerful purchased church pews and theatre boxes. Such place “tagging” allows persons to broadcast their titles and distinguish themselves by virtue of their class and social status.



**Figure 1:** The Minister waits to take the floor.  
Source: Svetlana Anistratenko

In my observations, the anonymized nature of the reservations and the simplicity of their appearance symbolized a voluntary refusal of privileges, blurring differentiations and making less visible the hierarchy of relations. Additionally, the anonymization of the signs minimized the distance. Yet, even anonymized, the reservation drew the line between the viewers and the participants. In other words, practically, anyone could end up sitting behind the Minister, but not next to him.

There were three tall chairs and two tall round tables on the stage. These were in a minimalist style formed by clean lines of wood and metal. Visually, the furniture suggested that the full body of the participating Minister would be observable during the entire rite, be s/he sitting, standing or walking. In this way, the furniture emphasized the symbolic elements of transparency, availability and openness, reducing barriers between the spectators and participants.

### 5.1.2. Outfit and Look

It is important to notice that the look-simplicity of artifacts, e.g. garments, has the symbolic capacity to reproduce notions of hierarchy and power (Bolsø and Mühleisen 2015). For that reason, this section inquiries into symbolism of clothes politicians wore.

In all the events, the Ministers dressed somewhat casually, despite wearing (in all cases but one) traditional office attire, such as a men’s suit. When the modern three-piece black suit was first designed more than 150 years ago, it aimed at releasing men from the extravagant garments worn by the aristocracy. In this respect, it represented a step towards democratization

(Krogstad 2017). As time passed, the suit became enriched with the opposite cultural codes and became a male symbol associated with authority, discipline and control (Bolsø and Mühleisen 2015).

The only observed female Minister wore a feminine version of the traditional male suit, with a white jacket and black trousers. Her jacket had a dense texture and was buttoned. Her short smoothly styled hair, lack of jewellery and a stack of papers in her hands emphasized her loyalty to the values of control and discipline. Somewhat ironically, this neat, black and white look was more laden with symbols of power and control than outfits of the Minister's male colleagues. Her strict, distancing expression remained intact throughout her ritual actions, which took place during a business conference at a private organization. The Minister arrived only just before her speech, which was scheduled at the end of the event. She did not take a seat at any point, and she left immediately after her presentation, demonstrating her rational use of time. During her speech, the Minister made jokes and smiled, but limited other emotional expressions. All things considered, her symbolic expressions were distant – representing rationality and de-emphasizing notions of solidarity.

Gender researchers Agnes Bolsø and Wencke Mühleisen studied the visual representations of female politicians in their manner of dress. Following the terminology of these scholars, I describe the female Minister's dress style as "passing to power" (2015). "Passing to power" refers to clothing worn by women to adapt to the style of powerful men while simultaneously retaining some signs of femininity. The passing to power image reinforces recognized power symbolism and, due to this association with hierarchy, refuses equal relations. Use of the "passing to power" symbolism relates to an insecure position of femininity in power where "authority and masculinity are often seen as connoted, while femininity holds a more ambivalent position related to formal and legitimate power" (Bolsø and Mühleisen 2015, 224). The visual researcher Anne Krogstad noted that female politicians stand at risk of being defeated as politicians if they do not appear powerful and domineering (2017).

The visual representations of the male Ministers were different. Despite the generally traditional look of the Ministers, I could observe some tendencies of breaking up with the disciplined rules associated with the three-piece suit. The majority of the Ministers did not wear ties; those who wore jackets left them unbuttoned. The Minister of Development went the furthest of all: he wore a button-down light blue shirt and dark blue jeans. The sleeves of his shirt were rolled up and the top buttons were undone. Finally, none of the male Ministers was clean-shaven, they had stubble or wore short beards.

In the case of my observations, the outfits of the politicians produced multiple symbolic allusions in terms of hierarchy and equality. The relaxed relations with outfits made the male Ministers appear less formal, thereby decreasing their symbolic expression of control. The mentioned look-modifications seemed to point toward democratization and symbolic annihilation of inequalities in outfits. Stubble on their faces made the Ministers look less disciplined, more earthly, human and, in this way, more available. They demonstrated tendencies toward democratization and humanity of their nature. Loyalty to bureaucracy and affiliation to a power position was generally restrained by the mentioned symbolism but presented more clearly in the case of the female Minister.

## **5.2. On the Junctions of Time and Actions**

The symbolism of artifacts is available to visual perception and intertwining with the symbolism of time and timing, which is less obvious yet a core of any ritual. Time is laden with symbolism even before the ritual begins. By referring to the date, length and sequence of a ritual, organizers and participants convey and gain ideas about the meanings of the event (Bell 2009).

In the rituals observed for this research, most rites shared a periodical structure of three sections: (1) arrival (20 to 3 minutes prior to the start), (2) official part and (3) post-ritual period, when anyone could communicate with the participating Ministers. In the following subsections, I discuss each of these segments. I shall also describe and analyse actions of the Ministers, which gain their symbolic senses, in many regards, due their relations with facets of time.

### **5.2.1. Arrival**

It was typical that a ceremonial site would start to fill with people approximately 15 minutes before the beginning. All Ministers arrived early or on time. One of the male Ministers came 20 minutes prior and had a coffee outside of the location, greeting arriving spectators. The other one came three minutes prior, went to his place at the first row, and chatted the rest of the time with people around. Others were precise and arrived the minute, the ceremonies started.

Symbolism of punctuality at the arrival moment is an important commonality between all observed happenings. The English social theorist Richard Lewis (2006) discussed the diversity of time understanding across cultures. In accordance with Lewis' framework, Norway is a linear time-culture, where time is a valuable commodity that can be spent, wasted, saved

and given. In such cultures, schedules are critical because they enable planning and prevent uncertainty. Willingness to wait is low and, punctuality is an expression of respect and determination to make effective use of time (*ibid.*).

Further, in linear cultures, symbolic punctuality may prevent aggression and power domination, while tardiness may have an opposite effect. Accordingly, time is an instrument of diplomacy in international politics (Faizullaev 2013). In some cases, politicians use tardiness to demonstrate influence, point to a colleague's dependable position or weaken and manipulate others (Batchelor 2017). A known example of a politician who repeatedly arrives late is the Russian President Vladimir Putin. Due to delays, the media suspect Putin of playing psychological games with the purpose of dominating his colleagues. He is accused of being disrespectful, snobbish and of attempting to create a hostile atmosphere (*ibid.*).

The aggression of participants left waiting can be triggered by physical and psychological conditions, since willingness to wait depends on one's situation. Commonly, public rituals involve a significant number of spectators, characterized by a wide range of ages, social positions and health conditions. Politicians, who make a crowd wait, demonstrate a lack of consideration of these factors. In contrast, those who are on time symbolically verify spectators' importance and show care about others time commodity. Further, delays might generate conflicts between the intended meanings and the actual meanings. For example, if a ritual's aim is to demonstrate solidarity in a group but part of the group is late, the result may be a sense of disagreement.

In sum, the symbolism of punctuality in the arrival point is conjoined with the symbolism of solidarity, care, interest to the public and respect. By being on time and prior, the Norwegian Ministers emphasized that they share an interest with the spectators in participating in the ceremonies.

### ***5.2.2. Official Part***

The second part of the observed rites was the official performance. The timing of this part was frequently guided by programs published in advance. The programs indicated that a similar amount of time would be allocated to each speaker. It was common for the performances to be opened by hosts. In four out of the five observed rituals, the Ministers were present in the room at the beginning of the event. During each ceremony, the Ministers took the stage as second and third participants or closers of the rite, but never openers. When they spoke, they followed the timing indicated in the programs. Each of participants was given the same amount of time for their presentation. After

their part performed alone or in dialog with other participants, the Ministers returned to their places and listened to the other contributors.

Subordination to the programs and their timelines – as well as secondary participation – provided several symbolic connotations. Passing right for the first act and speech to other contributors represented the idea of redistributing supremacy, flattening hierarchies and democratizing the process. In these rituals, the power possessor did not lead the ceremony, nor did he/she open socially important objects or initiate socially sore topics. Rather, they took a “one of many participants” role, becoming supporters but not leaders.

This role validated the opportunity for their non-appearance. In other words, once the ritual started, an object would be opened, and a conversation begun whether the Ministers were in the room or not. These initiating processes would be triggered by non-governmental powers. While the Ministers’ absence could potentially result in changes to the program, it would not spoil the special moment of the opening (Anistratenko 2017). Furthermore, as the Ministers were not first to take the floor, they were able to express respect and interest, waiting for their turn.

The regalement on stage produced an analogous symbolism as the Ministers’ punctuality, but with the added element that time was shared equally. Such distribution connoted the conversation as created and supported by all participants. Following the schedule, the politicians symbolically situated themselves as equals among equals, rejecting the privilege of using someone else’s time and, hence, misusing their position.

### ***5.2.3. After the Official Performance***

After the official performance ended, there was commonly with informal communication between the participants and spectators of the event. This part was so similar between all happenings that, I suggest, it has become a part of the performance.

During this period, the Ministers were active in social interaction, taking pictures with others, answering and asking questions, shaking hands and giving hugs. None of these activities was treated as insignificant or uninteresting for the politicians, including taking photos with spectators. At this stage of the event, informal communication and relaxed timing emphasized the importance of citizens and secured their effective access to those possessing governmental power. Considering time as currency, the Ministers’ behaviour testified that they preferred to spend it on citizens.



**Figure 2:** The Minister after the public meeting. Source: Svetlana Anistratenko.

In summary, it is possible to claim that, in the observed rituals, time was a tool for the symbolic expression of respect, emphasizing the availability of the politicians, the high value they placed on citizens and the equal role of all participants in the events. This symbolism was triggered in advance (through communication of the events), reflected in the programs and supported during the rituals. The post-official period was a natural part of the events and used to communicate openness and care for the interests of participants and spectators. Time and timing framed actions of the Ministers and verified symbolism of topics related to equality issues, which I discuss in the next section.

### 5.3. Symbolism of Actions

#### 5.3.1. *Involvement in Equality Topics*

Some topics of the rituals were directly related to equality issues, which connoted the act of participation as potentially supportive to equality. One of the observed ceremonies was the political-religious conference “Sexual Violence as a Weapon of War,” arranged by the Norwegian Church Aid organization. The program included a dialog by the Minister of International Development and the leader of the Norwegian Church Aid about a visit they had taken to the Panzi Hospital in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Panzi Hospital, headed by the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Dr. Denis Mukwege, specializes in helping survivors of sexual violence.

The conference started with a short film, in which a young white girl spoke about how she and her mother had been raped during the war. Her father had left them shortly after. It transpired that the film conveyed the true story of a Congolese girl who had been a patient at the Panzi Hospital and had met the Minister there. It seemed to be emotional for the Minister to talk about that meeting. In his part of the speech, he condemned both rape and victim blaming. He also described feeling sorry for the victims, and his anger with conditions at the hospital, where each bed would have two women and two

or three children. He contrasted the experiences of the patients at this hospital to those of his own children, emphasizing his terror at the thought of them experiencing such hospital conditions. During his talk, the Minister rolled his shirtsleeves up and down several times and repeatedly rubbed his face. These gestures complemented other symbolic expressions of his concern and involvement with the cause. After his time on stage, the Minister returned to his seat and the conference host announced that he would be leaving. The Minister objected, claiming that he would stay to the end.

Emotions demonstrated by the Minister, his body language, verbal statements and changes of plans produced the advanced symbolism of involvement with the cause and solidarity with the victims, as well as love and care for them. His descriptions of his thoughts about his own kids might be understood as his private emotional experience of imagining all children as equal and as his call for spectators to think of the same too. Inscribed in the topic of the conference, the Minister's performance maintained and reinforced symbolism of conviction and non-acceptance of sexual violence.

### **5.3.2. Creation of Symbolic Space for Equality**



**Figure 3:** The image of the Minister is demonstrating nail polish. Source: [instagram.com/p/Brvzoh\\_n72i/](https://instagram.com/p/Brvzoh_n72i/)

The other observed rituals had seemingly little space for the symbolism of equality, as their topics were not directly related to the theme. In one of the observed rituals, the Minister of Trade and Industry held an informal meeting with citizens. This so-called "Political Breakfast" was led by two journalists in front of an audience of approximately 100. The themes of the conversation generally concerned the Minister's tasks, which related to local businesses, the economy and logistics. However, the discussion explored private themes, including the Minister's life and public image as well. The Minister has a popular profile on

Instagram. He had recently received an intense response to an image he had posted there. There the Minister had displayed off his polished nails, which his child had painted.

The Minister was asked about his motives to post the image. He answered that he aimed at presenting a healthy image of fatherhood and free masculine

expressions. Describing in detail the abovementioned photograph, the Minister voluntarily involved himself with symbolic references to fatherhood, childcare and LGBTQ rights, since men's use of traditionally female products (such as nail polish) is frequently associated with LGBTQ minorities. The Minister verbally expressed solidarity with men who use nail polish (for any reason) and ignored the stigma associated with such body modifications, simultaneously enacting the symbolism of openness, care for children and freedom of expression.

Likewise, the Minister of Digital Affairs during the opening of a new scientific and information technology center involved the relevant symbolism. At the event, the auditorium was full of members from international scientific and business communities. The Minister began his speech by pointing out his lapel pin – a multi-colored circular ring. He accentuated similarities between the pin and LGBTQ rainbow symbolism, claiming that even if the pin had no direct link to the LGBTQ, he himself still supported LGBTQ rights and would be participating in the upcoming Pride events. Later in his performance, he argued that technological development should seek to remedy global injustices, fight racism, nationalism and improve quality of life. Thus, the Minister combined use of artifacts and oral statements to create the space for relevant symbols.

In sum, a noteworthy proportion of the politicians' actions in rituals was associated with their discussion of private affairs (in relation to, e.g., their children and family) and their demonstration of an emotional connection with LGBTQ rights, the fight against racism, nationalism and sexual violence. The politicians demonstrated their affection through their body, using gestures and mimicry and raising and lowering their voices. They also employed artifacts to produce symbolic diversity associated with support of oppressed groups.

### ***5.3.3. Proximity of the Human Body***

Distance and proximity are symbolic tools that have long been used by possessors of power (Krogstad 2017). The analysis would not be complete if these dimensions were left out. At one event, a Minister claimed: "It is a short way to power in Norway." At that moment, the Minister was sitting less than a meter away from the audience and in touching distance from the two journalists who were hosting the event. This proximity was not unique across the observed rituals. In fact, in three out of the five events, the Ministers shared the stage with one or several other people, with whom they communicated in dialog. They also used digital media to present the voices of others. Even the politicians who delivered a solo speech avoided the use of

the pulpit and stood in front of the public with their entire body on display. Following the ceremony, most Ministers made themselves available for physical contact sitting together with other attendees and demonstrating generosity in their willingness to hug, touch and shake hands with others after official parts.

Acting in the described way, the Ministers conveyed representations opposite to traditional symbolism of power, where distance is typically employed to emphasize authority and exclusivity, highlighting the right to rule. Symbolically, it can be expressed through gaze, clothing, accessories and elevation over others (Krogstad 2017). Similarly, proximity can also be used as an instrument of hierarchy. For example, if a power possessor extends his/her person and body to another person, she/he symbolically distributes power to that person and raises her/him over others. Thus, the link between proximity and hierarchy is constructed by the symbolism of exclusivity and privilege. In the observed rituals, proximity was used for a different kind of symbolism – one related to democracy, since anyone could be close to the powerful. Being available to physical contact, the Ministers signalled openness, transparency and the desire for closeness.

#### **5.3.4. Participation in Collective Actions**



**Figure 4:** The Minister is singing. Source: Svetlana Anistratenko

Finally, it is important to inquire into collective actions during the rite and ways of the Ministers' involvement in them. One of the symbolically bright moments of my observations was the communal singing by participants at the conference against sexual violence. When the conference host announced that singing would commence, audience members rose from their seats. The Minister stood up, as well. While singing, he swayed to the beat of the music, diligently and carefully articulating every word displayed on the screen.

Singing covers a wide spectrum of emotional expression, from gladness and joy to sorrow and worry. In communal singing, people experience attachment and unity. Singing is thus a powerful tool for vanishing boundaries and producing equal relations at the moment of the performance. In this particular ceremony, the Minister accepted the rules, which applied to everyone and performed the song on equal terms with others. By singing with others, he expressed his will to reduce the separation between power

possessors and the wider community, and his desire to be part of that community.

## 6. Conclusions

In modern society, elements of equality are less consistent and impactful and more fragmented and widespread than those of inequality. These elements of equality have not appeared independently, but as a result of will, obligation and effort. Accordingly, political will (reinforced by the drive of individual politicians) is needed for the continued production of such elements, in support of societal equality.

My analysis of the observed rituals demonstrated that Norwegian politicians use diverse strategies to construct equality symbolically, including the use of artifacts, physicality and verability, as well as including employment of known cultural codes and recognized sociocultural values.

In the Norwegian political context, the notion of equality, produced by the politicians, is embedded in symbols of transparency, inclusion, respect, redistribution of power, democracy, dignity, modesty, participation, openness, predictability and accessibility. This symbolism was employed to support the idea of equality that the state (and its representatives) guaranteed to its public, enabling citizens to participate in and communicate with political power possessors. On the opposite side, equality constructions rejected symbolism of protectionism, hierarchy paternalism, opaqueness, discrimination, oppression and domination.

In the observed rituals, symbols of expressed emotion, humanitarianism, care and love were also important for constructing equality by the politicians. These symbols were associated with domestic and private areas and effectively substituted the symbolism of rationality. Symbolic practices such as singing, laughing and even – paradoxically – expressing anger were effective for deconstructing hierarchies and eliminating barriers. These practices were activated at the intersections of social axes, emphasizing the universality of human nature, irrespective of group divisions.

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## **COCA-COLA, MARLBORO, SUZUKI: TURBOFOLK MUSIC AS A TOOL OF POLITICAL PROPAGANDA DURING THE 1990S IN SERBIA**

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**Abstract:** *This paper analyzes the relationship and correlation between propaganda and the mass media on the example of turbo-folk music as the most influential cultural model in the 1990s in Serbia. The purpose of this paper is to examine the influence and spread of turbo-folk music through various propaganda techniques and through the mass media. The primary aim of the research is to understand the related propaganda and the media, while the starting hypothesis is that turbo-folk music served the political interests of the ruling elites as a distraction from the gloomy political and economic situation in which Serbia was. My intention is that turbo-folk music could be considered as the primary cultural model of that age, just as much as the culture of escapism.*

**Key words:** propaganda, mass media, turbo-folk, culture, political communication, Serbia

### **1. Introduction**

The image of Serbia in the 1990s was far from desirable. With the breakup of Yugoslavia and the war in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia was subject to sanctions, hyperinflation, poverty, and crime. In material and moral hopelessness and with the change of the ruling elite, a new culture emerged. What was previously a marginal subculture from the largely rural areas of the country in the 1990s fiercely entered into the mainstream and became the dominant cultural model of Serbia.

When many Serbs were mobilized and forced to fight on the Croatian and Bosnian fronts; while rock and other alternative subcultures were pushed out of the scene, turbo-folk, with its distorted moral values, and the kitsch it offered, needed to animate the public and to become a distraction from the harsh reality they were in. Although considered apolitical, especially because of the content it offered, turbo-folk music served the political interests of the

ruling elites as a distraction from the gloomy political and economic situation in which Serbia was and therefore could be considered as the primary cultural model of that age, just as much as the culture of escapism.

The first part of the paper will define the term “turbo-folk,” while the second part aims to define the relationship and mutual correlation of propaganda and the mass media. The third part of the paper analyzes turbo-folk as a cultural pattern of that time, while the last part is devoted to music and its influence on the wider mass with the two given examples. From these examples, it will be shown that turbo-folk music opposed to other music genres, held a privileged position, respectively, was working for the ruling elite.

## **2. The Definition of Turbo-folk**

Turbo-folk can be described as a genre of music with the elements of both western and eastern music. It can be seen as a combination of two words with completely different meaning, where, according to Kronja (2004, 103) “figuratively, ‘turbo’ referred to a challenge, speed, fearlessness and participation in the upcoming, fashionable trends, ascribed to turbo-folk artists and audience, while ‘folk’ signified that ‘turbo-folk’ represents one of the genres of Serbian popular, folk music.”

Uroš Čvoro (2014, 56) gives a similar explanation, stating that “turbo-folk is high-energy pop mixed with traditional folk music. It borrows elements of oriental and Mediterranean melodies that are channeled through electronic dance rhythms and fused with MTV-style video presentation. The music’s performers are predominantly scantily clad, sexually provocative women singing about love, passion, death, sex and money.” Turbo-folk can also be described “more as a conceptual category that aggregates connotations of banality, foreignness, violence and kitsch in order to provide a critical apparatus with a ready-made strategy of distancing.” (Baker 2007, 139) Eric Gordy, in his study of culture in Serbia in the 1990s, stated that turbo-folk played an important role in legitimizing the Milošević regime, deriving his genealogy from a “return” to a rural socio-cultural context contrasted with urban rock music (Gordy, 1999). Katerina Luketić (2013, 400) states, that “from the beginning of the nineties’ neo-folk scene began to promote herself as a hidden state project – into a most massive Serbian cultural model. Milošević and his politicians were trying with all sorts of strategies, especially with the control of their media, in order to eliminate all other cultural models, which could cause anti-regime critics or individually, by opening the door to turbo-folk, the culture of oblivion, emotional emptying, and a celebration of

populism and crazy parties.” For this reason, turbo-folk is seen as escapist, mass, and entertainment culture – in the first hand, paradoxically assimilated and later promoted nationalism, and patriotism and became the most powerful subculture of war. Because of the so-called political disengagement, turbo-folk was a culture that accepted everybody, from war criminals and profiteers to murderers and nationalist. “Therefore, turbofolk is a culture of retardation, extremely populistic and socially unengaged.” (Luketić 2013, 400–404)

Đurković (2003, 2) highlights two processes that were relevant to the formation of the turbo-folk:

- a) the country lost a dictator of cultural policy and since then the market has been one that dictated the musical taste. Thus, “the new mainstream was created on a low budget system”;
- b) process of simultaneous physical isolation of the country from the outside and internal musical opening – people could not physically enter or leave the country, but they could use the new technological revolution (Internet, satellite television) to get closer to the patterns of Western popular culture.

Besides that, Đurković (2003, 3) distinguishes three positions that have emerged about the turbo-folk:

- a) The view of traditionalists, cultural conservatives and self-proclaimed nationalists who see in turbo-folk and in its oriental rhythms the attack of Islam on the Serbian spiritual tradition and consider that the communist authorities deliberately introduced “Asian rhythms” into the Serbian music scene.
- b) The viewpoint of globalists and cosmopolitans who see a great danger in the turbo-folk and see it as “a nationalist product by which Milošević deliberately destroyed rock 'n' roll, which by them is an urban matrix of music that everyone in Serbia should listen to.”
- c) The position of the new Trotskyist left, which is contrary to the first two and treats their members as cultural racists because they oppose the oriental elements in the turbo-folk. Members of the new Trotskyist, left approve of the turbo-folk as they see it as a fusion of everything that globalization and progress in Serbia represent.

As already stated, turbo-folk is also very often viewed as a covert machine of Milošević’s propaganda system, which was supposed to be a distraction from the overall bad state of the country. As Kronja highlights:

*“Moreover, these musical genres and their total media presentation proved themselves to be one of the most powerful ideological weapons of Milošević’s regime. Forming a popular culture counterpart to the unscrupulous ideological*

*propaganda of RTS (RadioTelevision of Serbia), which used nationalist and chauvinist rhetorics to justify and support involvement of Serbia in civil wars in Croatia and Bosnia, and later in Kosovo, turbofolk and dance music promoted the life-style and system of values of the new Serbian elite formed during the nineties: regime politicians, war-profiteers, criminal bosses turned into "businessmen" and glamorous turbo-folk stars, mainly highly eroticised female singers. This system of values aimed to establish the cult of crime and violence, war-profiteering, national-chauvinism and provincialism, with the abandonment of morals, education, legality, and other civic values." (Kronja 2004, 103)*

### **3. Social and Political Context of the Rise of Turbofolk**

*"Folk is people, a turbo is a pressurized injection system into an internal combustion engine cylinder. Turbofolk is a burning nation. Any enhancement of this combustion is turbofolk, stirring up the lowest passions in Homo sapiens,"* emphasizes in his song "Turbofolk" the famous Montenegrin singer Antonije Pušić, known to the wider audience as Rambo Amadeus, who is also the creator of this term.

With the death of Josip Broz Tito, already in the early 1980s, there were intensified national and ethnic turmoil in Yugoslavia, a weakening of the economy and, consequently, an increasing opening to the West and the culture it promoted. The former Yugoslav socialist society was increasingly beginning to open to Western media and Western values, thereby becoming an active consumer of the above-mentioned culture.

Television, as the primary medium of that period, was given the role of political-social center of power, and therefore a medium used for propaganda purposes. Hence, the very beginning of turbo folk music is closely linked to the process of transition of a socialist society to the capitalist. With the change of the economic system and the turning of the Yugoslav society, there were increasing ethnic conflicts and strengthening of national issues and identities in the territory of the Yugoslav republics, which have been reflected in all spheres of Yugoslav political culture, including in the popular culture and media.

This is precisely what served the then president of Serbia, Slobodan Milošević, to promote his repressive regime through media that was mostly owned and controlled by his immediate family members or close relatives from the Serbian elite. (Kronja 2004, 105)

According to Rasmussen (in Dumančić and Krolo 2017, 159), this genre was created to meet the cultural needs of rural populations that came to

urban areas and to address the impact of the rural environment while at the same time lacking the willingness to embrace the urban cultural model. The precursor of the turbo folk was the newly composed folk music that could be heard most often in rural parts of Serbia, while the turbo folk, as its successor, with its elements of simplicity of text and fun character, and yet with its modern western production, could serve as an excellent screen for the society in transition and consequently to Milošević's regime.

Gordy (2004, 560) states that turbo folk became a dominant culture which, in addition to the entertaining character that would remove the social and political problems of the Serbian public, promoted the elitist values of the Serbian elite and the ideas of national unity, warrior culture and patriotism. With media such as "Radio Ponos", "Palma TV", or the much popular and profiled "PINK TV", neofolk culture with turbo folk as its primary product was slowly and surely gaining in importance and has eventually become a major political culture model in Serbia. Kronja cites as an example that TV Pink, in addition to production companies ZAM (Zabava miliona) and Grand, all owned by Serbian oligarchs, monopolized the media space and squeezed rock and pop music to the margins of culture (Kronja 2004, 106). Furthermore, according to Gordy (2004, 572) TV Pink's entertainment program promoted the rich Western lifestyle enjoyed at the time by people close to the regime, criminals and war profiteers who privatized state property and blamed poverty and the collapsed economy western powers and domestic traitors.

#### **4. The Cohesion of Propaganda and Mass Media**

The role, the power, and the influence of mass media are needed. Splichal (1975, 3) emphasizes that "economic and social development and industrial revolutions had the greatest impact on propaganda, and its greatest role was played by the mass media and the mass public." Quite similar, and bearing in mind that one of the basic features of propaganda are intent, communication and attempt to influence people (Qualter, 1962), propaganda can also be seen as one of the ways of usage of political communication.

Following Vreg (2000, 18–20), political communication is an interaction that takes place within the area of political action between two or more political actors. The basic interaction involves more straightforward media sphere and political publicity. By this, political communication enables the expression of the opinions, attitudes, needs and interests of different social groups, and justifies the political correlation function. Habermas (2006, 415) states that political communication goes from the bottom up and from the top down through the multi-level system that occurs in various forms and spaces.

It includes everything from everyday conversations in society, public discourse and mediated communication in the public to institutionalized discourses in the center of the political system. It is through the development of mass media in the 20th century that they become the main communication channel of political communication.

According to Ivan Šiber (1992, 9), the concept of propaganda is again found at the beginning of the 20th century, with the development of market production and consumption, or the development of parliamentary democracy and mass communication. Today, the author continues, "has become an integral part of every thoughtful action in all areas of social life." (Šiber 1992, 9) The use of mass media, public addressing of political actors, the use, and exposure of slogans, posters and other features can be attributed to both political propaganda and modern pre-election campaigns. Both forms of political communication try to change the views and behaviors of the electorate through pressures or convictions through the media, but only political propaganda starts with more aggressive psychological manipulation. Because of this, communication is based on an unequal and one-sided basis. (Spahić 2000, 61).

Propaganda can also be divided by our attitude to reality, namely white, black and gray propaganda. The white propaganda data are real. Especially in crises, this form is rare as it can have the opposite effect. Black propaganda data can be fabricated. It generally has a great effect, but if the lie is revealed, the effect is negative. Gray propaganda selects otherwise true information that is most relevant in a given situation. She suppresses the unfavorable information, while exaggerated with the positive ones. Although the source of the information is concealed, people are more likely to believe in this propaganda than the white one. (Pečjak 1995, 135–140). Given the openness of goals and the directness of action, we distinguish open, delayed and indirect propaganda. With open propaganda, the goals are known. Delayed propaganda creates the right atmosphere for the upcoming propaganda campaign (Vreg 2000, 120).

According to Splichal, for its subject matter, what propagandists are propagating and what real social processes are propaganda matching or trying to transcend, propaganda can be classified into three basic categories:

1. political
2. economic
3. cultural (propaganda of a particular type of culture) (Splichal 1975, 62). Therewithal, mass media can also be a means of manipulation or propaganda. As Reiner Geißler highlights, media can also have a rather stabilizing effect on the audience, especially in the terms of "depoliticisation" of the content.

According to him, this depoliticisation can be seen through two types of manipulation: first, certain elite occupies the mass media, and second, market economy mechanisms (maximization of recipients) produce a non-political mass culture. Here he distinguishes five types of manipulative content:

1. Integrative content without critique of existing social and political circumstances;
2. Lack of placement of individual destinies in the social framework;
3. Politically relevant information is quantitatively irrelevant in relation to the entertainment;
4. The boundaries between information and entertainment have been deleted;
5. Qualitative depoliticisation by if unrelated detailed information without context. (Geißler 1973, 92–93)

There are many other different definitions and stages how propaganda can be described or explained. For example, propaganda can be broken into ten stages when analyzing it in detail. These stages are:

1. the ideology and purpose of the propaganda campaign,
2. the context in which the propaganda occurs,
3. identification of the propagandist,
4. the structure of the propaganda organization,
5. the target audience,
6. media utilization techniques,
7. special various techniques,
8. audience reaction to various techniques,
9. counterpropaganda, if present, and
10. effects and evaluation (Jowett and O'Donnell 2013).

From all the ten above mentioned stages it can be seen that turbo-folk music was a successful tool of political propaganda. Šiber offers similar explanations. According to him, there are certain principles that propaganda, in order to be successful, must be adhered to.

Firstly, the principle which is explaining that the message must be noticed. The task is to isolate the propaganda content from the stimulus context. At least, three elements should be taken into account:

1. Availability of the message, which means that message must reach the recipient. To achieve this, the message should be marketed through many media; to adapt it to the specific conditions of the space, it should be imposed on the viewer with intense colors, sound and movement.
2. Attraction of the message – to attract attention so that the message is accepted.

3. Intelligibility of the message – every recipient should understand the meaning of a particular message.

Second is the principle of needs, which is divided into biological, material, social and psychological benefits. Principle of value refers to the relation of the message to the value system of the individual, groups and society in general, which directs its behavior, creates the criteria of the desirable and undesirable, while the principle of unpredictable can be divided into:

1. Each propaganda is a kind of action in time, and it is precisely this temporal dimension of propaganda that opens the possibility for significant changes beyond the immediate control of the propagator.
2. Each propaganda is carried out in a competitive situation, which means that it acts side-by-side and often against the propaganda activity of others. (Šiber 1992.)

Šiber also points out some of the propaganda techniques which mostly closely connect with the emotions. The significance of emotions in propaganda activity is enormous. It is the aspect of the human psyche that is most sensitive and appropriate to act. /.../ By provoking certain emotions, prerequisites are created to facilitate the propaganda content, reduce eventual resistance and suppress criticality. Therefore, there are numerous techniques and mechanisms focused on the emotional component of attitude to achieve a faster and more disproportionate propaganda effect (Šiber 1992, 31). The frequent occurrence of some content that is initially neutral to the recipient, along with content to which there is a positive emotional relationship, will lead to a positive attitude towards the neutral content after a certain time. For example, if you hear some song that you do not like on the radio in the morning, after frequently hearing it for the whole day on different media sources, there is a big chance you will be at least whistling it in the evening.

If we skip some other techniques, when it comes to using a turbofolk music as a tool of political propaganda, probably the most powerful one was and still is the use of sexuality and erotica. According to Šiber (Šiber 1992, 32), everything that is attractive is mostly always forbidden and by manipulating differently the need for people to see, hear, feel, at least as a disguised promise, effectively attracts attention, which increases the likelihood of acceptance of the underlying message. "We must not forget about another large group of techniques that Šiber calls techniques that manipulate feelings of vulnerability and insecurity. For instance, the popularity of certain people is also a convenient mechanism for directing and attracting people. Such popular names often lend support to a program, party, or specific candidate."

If we call turbo folk music an aggressive imposition of politics through propaganda, it should not surprise us why and how easily it came about. According to Šiber, for propaganda to be successful, she must meet these conditions:

1. The situation of social crisis – when there is a gap between the level of aspirations and the possibilities of achievement, and on the other hand, when it is shown that the existing mechanisms of social regulation cannot resolve the crisis and indicate possible solutions and perspective of development.
2. Crisis of the value system – the breakdown of the existing mental circuit, when there is a cognitive inconsistency between the experience of social reality and the essential internalized value strongholds of the social mechanisms of society.
3. Lack of democratically designed political system – which by its normative solutions enables the formation and expression of different interests and perceptions of social development, which could direct dissatisfaction with social development into the creative search for alternative solutions to the crisis.

Lack of political culture appropriate to a democratic system, which should represent the implicit connective tissue of social relations and tolerant confrontation of different visions of social development. (Šiber 1992, 44) Traditional society, with no experience of democratic order, a distinct dominance of the authoritarian personality structure in the population, was a grateful object of propaganda-directed dissatisfaction (Šiber 1992, 45).

The importance of the media in the propaganda manifestation is precisely on transmitting messages to the masses of people because, as Bennett states, "the media are not separated from social reality, passively reflecting and returning to the world its own image, 'but just supposedly', they are part of social reality, contributing to its contours, logic and direction of its development through the socially articulated way through which media shape our perceptions" (Bennett in Hromadžić 2014, 19).

The most important functions of mass media are that, firstly, the media increase the reputation and authority of individuals or groups by legitimizing their status (status conferral function), secondly, they are reinforcing social norms ("ethicizing function") and lastly, sometimes in certain circumstances, they function dysfunctionally as well that they can cause non-negligence and passivity ("narcotization") (Lazarsfeld and Merton, 1948). Precisely in this passivity, one can see the escapist and, consequently, the entertainment role of the media. Hromandžić (2014) notes that the media are increasingly

turning to spectacularization and, consequently, the depoliticization of society, devoting more and more to the so-called “celebrity culture.”

## **5. Turbo-folk as a Product of Popular Culture**

Drawing certain parallels, we conclude that turbo-folk could also be called a culture of spectacle, which can provide the consumer with a certain dose of satisfaction, emotionality and social change along with changing social values. In support of the claim that turbo folk music and lifestyles can be considered as a kind of (sub)culture, Danesi understands culture as a “system that includes beliefs, rituals, performances, art forms, lifestyles, symbols, language, clothing, music, dance and any form of human expressive, intellectual and communicative behavior that is associated with the community over a period of time” (Danesi 2008, 2). Similar, culture can indicate all those activities in which life is realized. And yet, these are also the activities where this happens in the aforementioned forms. Cultural products, therefore, are forms that make life meaningful; they encompass the life course and give it content and form, freedom and order (Simmel 1971, 375).

The primary question that arises here is, why was turbofolk music such a great means of propaganda and manipulation through the mass media, and second, how did it become and remain so successful?

According to Kronja (Kronja 2004, 106), it was a “massive, overwhelming spectacle which included intended ideological messages into style, iconography and visual presentation of turbo-folk music, as well as into its lyrics.” The main channel of promotion of the turbo-folk and dance image, which contributed to the creation and establishment of turbo-folk style as a dominant mass culture and popular culture style in Serbian media during the 1990s, was the music video. Eerotically provocative photographs of turbo-folk female stars in magazines and the tabloid press, as well as all the entertainment TV-shows, many of them going “live”, also established and celebrated the style which was widely accepted and imitated among Serbian youth but also among representatives of the new “business” class and ruling politicians (Kronja 2004, 107).

The primary task of the mass media was to distract the audience from the daily monotony and grayness of Serbia at that time, which was sinking in sanctions, poverty and inflation. In other words, political and economical situation back then in Serbia, could be described as situation of social crisis, without a democratically designed political system and with a complete decay of cultural and moral values. In these terms, it was quite easy for propaganda machinery to impose turbo-folk music together with all its values to become

a dominant cultural model. Guided by the slogan “panem et circenses”, kitsch as a concealed nationalism became the main path of popular culture in Serbia. From a rural deprived cultural direction which came from primarily peripheral and rural parts, with the change of the ruling elite, this culture became the dominant cultural model of Serbia. Or, how Kronja describes it: “a new militant subculture of criminal youth, drug-dealers, war-veterans, thugs, ‘dieselmen’ (macho guys in diesel jeans, wearing large golden chains and tracksuits), ‘sponsored girls’, another desperate youngsters, were the main protagonists and the audience for production and consumption of turbo-folk sound, as, for them, a perfectly suitable combination of nationalist ideas, due to its national folk musical origins, and aggressive, macho and criminal attitudes, found in rap and hip-hop rhythm and its visual presentation.” (Kronja 2004, 106)

According to the representatives of theories of popular and mass culture, this culture cannot be in a positive context, while her only purpose is to distract attention from the problem. “Mass culture is a popular culture that is produced with mass-produced industrial techniques and marketed to the mass market for profit” (Strinati 1995, 10). Namely, it is defined by the hierarchical pinnacle of political power and capital, while individuals are viewed as ordinary consumers and passive consumers of that same culture. “From the point of view of producers of popular culture, there is no mass audience, but only segments of the differentiated and stratified market are expressed in tastes, values and preferences, as well as money and power” (Strinati 1995, 49).

Turbo-folk with its glamorous erotic-charged videos, in which eroticised women in tight-fitting dresses and with lots of make-up sing mostly about love and having fun, definitely attract the attention of a wider audience, especially when these videos can be seen on almost all national programs. In fact, on certain television channels such as PINK TV or Palma TV, information programs have not existed at all; between glittering and kitschy turbo-folk videos, occasionally one could find some Mexican soap operas or so-called “clairvoyants” who lively predicted the future of viewers. Also, with simple and memorable song verses, the message was much easier to reach a wider audience. Singing about the “turbo” fast, modern and western way of life where everything is allowed and in which entertainment does not stop, the audience was distracted by the harsh reality and was impeded of a critical reflection on the economic and political situation of the country.

Another reason why turbo-folk was so popular was because it could be characterized as a hybrid of foreign and domestic, that is, both mass and folk culture. Following Adorno and Horkmeier, mass culture is produced by

political and banking lobbies that alienate consumers from their real needs and mold them to deprive them of their individuality. With the help of the mass media, the powerful elite create and distribute cultural products to achieve their own interests. Consumers are perceived as passive, alienated mass audiences who, without thinking and critical retreat, accept whatever is imposed on them (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1979). But even though it was produced and imposed from the political and state elite, turbo-folk music, as the name says, also had its folk part, which has greatly helped in embracing this type of music, especially among the rural population. Folk culture comes from the people and is the culture that the people create by their own needs, without the influence of high culture. "Folk culture, unlike popular culture, is the product of a relatively stable, traditional social order, in which social differences are not a conflict of nature, and therefore distinguished by social consensus rather than social conflict" (Fiske 2001, 236). Turbo-folk, music seen as a hybrid of popular and folk music, evolved mostly from folk music and with time has taken on modern western music patterns. For this reason, turbo-folk can still satisfy so-called basic instincts of audience, while, it can offer them eroticised western and modern production.

### **5.1. The Role of Turbo-folk Music**

As Muršić stresses, "music is arena of constant political struggle in the cultural sphere" (Muršić 1999, 178–185), while also adverting that we should be aware that every music is political as well as public activity. Music is a medium that unites like-minded and for this reason, music can be dangerous to regimes that do not tolerate differences; adding that music embodies the spirit of some group, but can also awaken national and nationalistic feelings (Muršić 1999, 178–185). Music can reach out to different types of people and groups and allow them not only to listen, but also to be heard. This statement can be better illustrated in the example below.

During the war in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, in Serbia was formed a project called Rimtutituki, with which a few popular rock groups have openly opposed the Serbian government. In a time when Serbia was transforming in the neofolk empire of Milošević's propaganda apparatus, this project should have alerted on newly – formed war situations, disapproved by many citizens.

In the lobby of the Student Cultural Center (SKC), in Belgrade, this groups have decided to make a single that will be spreading anti-war propaganda. They have composed a song called "Listen here (peace brother, peace)<sup>1</sup>",

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<sup>1</sup> Slušaj vamo (mir brate, mir).

which should, with anti-war lyrics, invite the general public to commit against the war. The Milošević's government immediately banned the public gathering and the performance of this song. While this anti-war project was banned, turbo-folk songs and videos could be seen in almost every state media.

The dominance of turbo-folk over other musical genres, can be seen in another example. During the NATO bombing of Belgrade and Serbia, the political propaganda was at its highest. With the patriotic songs made especially for the occasion, the song that stood out the most was surely "we love you our fatherland"<sup>2</sup>. With the patriotic lyrics such as your name is within our hearts, and the army marches, it was quite easy to raise the moral and to awake the national feeling in the people.

A second strategy from a well-organized state propaganda was in holding concerts on squares and bridges during the bombing. In the first few days, the squares were crowded with thousands of people soundly opposing and protesting the NATO bombing. Different musicians alternated on the stage, from pop and turbo-folk singers to rock musicians. And for instance, while some of the artists were singing in English, with the intention of clarifying the situation to people abroad, turbo-folk musicians have been there mostly simply to entertain the crowd and to distract them. After only two days, the only performers on the stages were turbo-folk singers, who, mostly apolitical, singing about luxury, passion, and love to their homeland, were not considered to be a political threat. Likewise, even though the number of people protesting has shrunken greatly over the days, national television still only aired the footage of the first few days so as to mislead the masses into believing that the protest is even stronger than it was before. The situation in which NATO forces are bombing Belgrade, while the nation is singing famous Serbian song "No one can harm us, we are stronger than the fate", can at least be considered ironic. A lot of people really believed that no harm can be done to them, if they proudly protest by singing and that they can honestly, again, just by singing, win the war. The irrationality of this protest, which was under the influence of state media was visible, but still inexplicable.

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<sup>2</sup> Volimo te otadžbino naša.

## 6. Conclusion

Propaganda is always closely linked to the media, while political propaganda can often be called political communication through the mass media. The aim of this research was to determine whether the turbo-folk musical direction, with the cultural and moral values it propagates, was the product of political propaganda by the ruling elites.

Through Geißler's five directions of media manipulation, it was established that turbo-folk served to entertain and distract the public from the political and economic situation in the country. Information programs have been replaced with entertainment channels, the boundaries between information and entertainment have been blurred, while politically relevant information has become irrelevant to entertainment.

Šibers conditions were also fulfilled, because there was a situation of social crisis, a decline in moral values, and political cultures and democracies. In such an environment, with the help of a state apparatus, turbo-folk music easily becomes the dominant cultural model. As a means of sedation and distraction, turbo-folk, through their values, completely turn the cultural image of Serbia and represent war, crime, luxury, and a fast way of living as the new cultural dominant. Immersed in such a lifestyle, surrounded by censorship and blockade of foreign media, Serbian society embraced this lifestyle and integrated easily with it. Turbo-folk, while inherently apolitical, becomes subject to political propaganda and mass manipulation by the state leadership. With its simple and catchy lyrics and erotic videos, promoting fast and luxurious lifestyles, turbofolk can also be understood as a culture of spectacle and culture of escapism.

We can state that turbo-folk has fulfilled its default role as a distraction from social and economic situation in the country, but that would not be possible without the interference of propaganda through mass media. At that time in Serbia, turbo-folk has fulfilled all three categories of propaganda, respectively, political, economic and cultural.

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## **ORGANISATIONAL DESIGN AND ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS IN ECOBANK NIGERIA LIMITED IN DELTA STATE**

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**Abstract:** *The study examines the organisational design and organisational effectiveness in Ecobank Nigeria Limited in Delta State. The instrument used for data collection was organisational design questionnaire and the data were analyzed using chi-square. The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between poor technology, inappropriate organisational size and staff mix as well as poor responsive and adaptive organisational (internal) environment and organisational effectiveness in Ecobank Nigeria Limited in Delta state. The study recommended that organisation should increase the level of their technology, organisational size, staff mix as well as imbibing the culture and practice of anticipating, scanning, monitoring of internal and external environments with an eye to responding and adapting to appropriate changes and trends to actualize their organisational set goals.*

**Key words:** organisational, design, effectiveness, ecobank, Delta State and Nigeria

### **1. Introduction**

Organisational as social systems require a formal structure. This structure serves as a formal arrangement that allocates tasks and responsibilities among employees and departments. The structure also determines the relationships between the different employees and various departments and it is created to facilitate the coordination of organisational activities in an integrated fashion. It also controls the actions of its members through

effective communication in order to attain organisational goals. Organisational design which involves a set of structural elements and their relationships equally seek to implement strategies and plans for purpose of achieving organisational effectiveness. In so far as organisations are not expected to be static, especially as they must anticipate and take appropriate actions in order to take care of changes in their external and internal environments, organisational redesign is inevitably an on-going concern. In the absence of organisational design or the failure of organisations to redesign their structures in the face of changing environmental situations, demands and decisions are either delayed or they turn out to be of poor quality, employees go through unnecessarily high levels of stress, excessive conflict between employees and departments commonly erupt, the ability to cope with changing external conditions is sharply lowered and organisational effectiveness and survival may be threatened or undermined as (Baron 2016) rightly articulated.

Despite the recognized and acceptable need for organisations to create, maintain and redesign their formal structures to ensure that activities are grouped and tasks are assigned, the levels in the authority hierarchy are minimized, authority is decentralized to units and sub-units, functions are placed in the structures and relationships exist between units and functions in a co-ordinated and integrated manner in order to actualize organisational effectiveness (Armstrong 2012; Ekakitie 2017; Griffin 2016 & Robbins 2015), it is surprising to observe that several factors seem to be inhibiting the critical role that organisational design is expected to play in the attainment of organisational effectiveness. For instance, Ann, Nwankwere, Orga & Igwe (2015) investigated the impact of structure on organisational performance and the findings revealed that decentralisation enhanced better and more informed decision making in technical and service firms in Nigeria and task routine affected staff productivity both positively and negatively. In a similar vein, Laleh, Masoud and Aflatoon (2014) examined the relationship between organisational structure and effectiveness in Melat bank and the result indicated that the organisational structure negatively affected the organisation's status and conditions.

Latifi and shooshtarian (2014) also assessed the effects of organisational structure on organisational trust and effectiveness and the findings showed that while there is a significant relationship between organisational organic structure and effectiveness, there is no significant relationship between mechanistic structure and effectiveness dimensions. Masoud and Narges (2013) equally examined the relationship between organisational structure and organisational effectiveness at Rafsanjan public departments and the

results revealed that there is a relationship between organisational structure, formalisation and the organisational effectiveness. The contention in this study however, is that poor technology, inappropriate organisational size and staff mix as well as poor responsive and adaptive organisational (internal) environment appears to be affecting and constraining organisational effectiveness in Ecobank Nigeria Limited.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

While several studies have investigated the relationship between organisational structure and organisational effectiveness (Latifi and Shooshtarian 2014; Laleh, Masoud and Aflatoon 2014 and Ann et al. 2015), the relationship between poor technology, inappropriate organisational size and staff mix as well as poor responsive and adaptive (internal) environmental dimensions of organisational design and organisational effectiveness have not adequately engaged the attention of scholars and resultantly they have been relatively unstudied in the literature of management. This is the gap that this study seeks to fill.

### **2.1. Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of the study is to examine organisational design and organisational effectiveness in Ecobank Nigeria Limited, while the specific objectives are to:

1. Investigate the impact of poor technology on organisational effectiveness in Ecobank Nigeria Limited.
2. Examine the influence of inappropriate organisational size and staff mix on organisational effectiveness in Ecobank Nigeria Limited.
3. Assess the impact of poor responsive and adaptive organisational (internal) environment on organisational effectiveness in Ecobank Nigeria Limited.

### **2.2. Hypotheses of the Study**

1. There is no significant relationship between poor technology and organisational effectiveness in Ecobank Nigeria Limited.
2. There is no significant relationship between inappropriate organisational size and staff mix and organisational effectiveness in Ecobank Nigeria Limited.
3. There is no significant relationship between poor responsive and adaptive organisational (internal) environment and organisational effectiveness in Ecobank Nigeria Limited.

## 2.3 Literature Review

### 2.3.1. Meaning of Organisational Design

Griffin (2016) defined organisational design as the overall set of structural elements and the relationships that exist among those elements used to manage the total organisational. He also noted that it is a means to implement strategies and plans in order to achieve organisational goals. In his own thinking, Armstrong (2012) organisational design is the process of organising which may involve the grand design or redesign of the total structure, but most frequently it is concerned with the organisational of particular functions and activities and the basis upon which the relationships between them are managed and that organisations are not static. This view is based on the understanding that changes are constantly taking place in the organisational itself, in the environment in which the business operates, and in the people who work in the organisational.

In a similar vein, Ekakitie (2017) opined that organisational design is the decision-making process by which managers choose an organisational structure that is appropriate to the strategy for the organisational and the environment in which members of the organisational carry out that strategy. He added that organisational design implies that managers must look into two directions simultaneously: that is inside their organisational and outside their organisational. Mintzberg (2009) also posited that organisational structure defines how people are organised or how their jobs are divided and coordinated. Greenberg (2011) equally stressed that organisational structure is the formal configuration between individuals and groups concerning the responsibilities, allocation of tasks and authority in the organisational, while Damanpour (2002) emphasized that organisational structure includes the nature of formalization, layers of hierarchy, level of horizontal integration, centralization of authority and patterns of communication. Generally, there seems to be a convergence of opinion on the fact that organisational structure consists of job positions, their relationships to each other and accountabilities for the process and sub-process deliverables.

### 2.3.2. Organisational Design and Organisational Effectiveness

Anderson and Zbirenko (2014) emphasized that structure, communication and leadership affect productivity and efficiency. While structure explains how productive the operational processes are in the organisational, communication affects how things are done very fast and how willing and happy personnel are in the organisational and leadership affects every personnel and how they strive for the achievement of their goals. Long,

Perumal and Ajaagbe (2012) explained that organisational effectiveness and its relation to structure can be determined by the fit between information processing requirements in a way that people can have neither too little nor too much inappropriate information. The above understanding shows the inevitability of information flow in the accomplishment of organisational goals. He also suggested that the organisational structure should be designed in a manner that will enable departments and individuals that are involved in coordinating organisational efforts to have their lines of communication built into the structure. Walton (1996) also sketched the relationship between organisational structure and effectiveness when he stressed that the restructuring of organisations is designed to improve on both the efficiency and effectiveness of the management of organisations.

### ***2.3.3. Bureaucratic and Behavioural Models of Organisational Design***

#### ***2.3.3.1. Bureaucratic Model***

Ekakitie (2017) explained that bureaucratic approach has contributions from Henri Fayol who formulated the fourteen (14) principles of management in order to understand the organisational and its structure/design. He also explained that Max Weber (the doyen of bureaucracy) and Frederick Taylor (the leading exponent of the scientific management theory) laid a solid background of organisational design and formation. Max Weber and Frederick Taylor have a strong belief in the one best way of doing things and the link between efficiency, effectiveness and organisational design. Griffin (2016), in his own view, posited that bureaucracy is a type of organisational structure that is based on a legitimate and formal system of authority. In fact, most of the people relate bureaucracy with red-tape, rigidity and passing the buck.

According to Ekakitie (2017), bureaucratic theory states that good allowance should be given to experience, merit and the ability to perform or execute task rather than favouritism. He also observed that Taylor was emphatic about the exigency of scientific selection as well as training and development of workers and the bureaucratic model recommended the need for clear job responsibility and specialization so that evaluation of and reward for performance can be easily achieved. Griffin (2016) summarised the ideal bureaucratic approach into five ways:

1. Organisation should adopt a distinct division of labor and each position should be filled by an expert.
2. Organisation should develop a consistent set of rules to ensure that task effectiveness is uniform.

3. Organisation should establish a hierarchy of positions or offices that create a chain of command from the top to the bottom of the organisation.
4. That manager should conduct business in an impersonal way and maintain an appropriate social distance between themselves and their subordinates.
5. Employment and advancement should be based on technical expertise and employees should be protected from arbitrary dismissal.

#### *2.3.3.2. Behavioural Model*

This is a universally accepted approach of organization structure that involves the behaviourists and human relations schools. The best-known behavioural model was the Likert's system model of organisational (Ekakitie 2017). He carried out a research which he pioneered at the Michigan University in which he surveyed a large number of organisations also as to figure out the factors that make some organisational successful and others less successful. He opined that organisational that adopt and apply the bureaucratic model tend to be less effective than those organisational that largely emphasis group work development, behavioural as well as social processes in the organisational (Griffin 2016).

Likert (1967) identified system 1 form organisational that is related to an ideal bureaucracy. In this type of organisational, motivational processes are seen to be based on economic factors and interaction processes are restricted and closed. This means that communication is relatively formal and mainly job related. The system 1 is considered to be somewhat rigid and flexible. The behavioural model paralleled the emergence of human relations school of management thought. Likert equally developed a framework that classified organisational in terms of eight important processes: Leadership, communication, motivation, interactions, decision making, goal – setting, and control and performance goals.

#### *2.3.4. Situational Approach on OrganisationalDesign*

This approach is based on the assumption that the optimal design for any given organisational depends on a set of relevant situational factors and this implies that situational factors play a role in determining the best organisational design for any particular circumstance (Griffin 2016). For purpose of this study, four factors: technology, environment, size and organisational life cycle as (Griffin 2016) rightly articulated were discussed.

#### *2.3.4.1 Technology*

This is the conversion processes that is utilized to transform inputs like (materials/ information) into outputs like (products/services). Majority of the organisational use multiple technologies. The concept of technology is not limited to assembly lines and machinery, especially as it can also be applied to service organisational. Joan Woodward was the first woman to recognise the link between technology and organisational. She studied one hundred manufacturing companys in Southern England and gathered information about such things as the history of individual organisational, their production processes, their forms and procedures and their financial performance. Although, she assumed a relationship betwwen the size of an organisational and its effectiveness, but the finding of her study did not support such a relationship (Griffin 2016). In Woodward's sample, she also explained that as technology became more complex, especially as the number of management levels increased, executive span of management also increased, as the size of its staff component relatively did. The management supervisory span, first increased and then decreased as technology became more complex mainly because more of the work in continuous and fewer workers were needed but the skills needed in carrying out the job increased. This, technology seems to play a key role in determining organisational design.

#### *2.3.4.2. Environment*

Environmental elements and organisational design can be linked in different ways. According to (Griffin 2016) environment organisational linkages was widely recognized for the first time by Burns and Stalker. Their first assignment was to identify two extreme forms of organisational environment: stable and unstable. Thereafter, they studied the organisational design of each type of environment. Their findings revealed that organisational in stable environments (mechanistic) have a different environment than that of the unstable environments (organic). Mechanistic organisational is close to bureaucratic model, which was frequently found mostly in a stable environmentsand it is free from uncertainty. An organic organisational on the other hand was mainly found in unstable and unpredictable environments, characterised by a higher level of flexibility, constant change and uncertainty.

#### *2.3.4.3. Organisational Size*

Another factor that affects the design of an organisational is the size of the organisational. Organisational size is the total number of full-time or full-time equivalent workers. A team of researchers at the University of Aston in Birmingham, England is of the opinion that Woodward had failed to find a size

- structure relationship (which was her original expectation) because most of the organisational she studied were quite small. As a consequence, they decided to study wider organisational in order to know how size and technology respectively and jointly affect organisational design. Their findings revealed that technology influence small firms because their activities are centered on technology. While in large firms strong technology-design link broke down mainly because technology is not central to ongoing activities in large organisational (Griffin 2016).

#### *2.3.4.4. Organisational Life Cycle*

Organisational life cycle is a natural sequence of stages in which most organisational go through as they grow and mature. Griffin (2016) asserted that there is no clear pattern that explain changes in size, but most organisational pass through four distinct stages: the birth stage of the organisational, the youth stage of the organisational, that is the growth and expansion stage of all organisational resources, the midlife stage which is the stage where organizations experience gradual growth evolving eventually into stability and the final stage of an organisational life cycle is the maturity stage a period of stability. Managers must encounter a number of organisational design issues as the organisational progresses through these stages. In sum, as organisational passes from one stage to another, it gets bigger, more mechanistic and more decentralized. Thus, an organisational's size and design are clearly linked and this link changes because of the organisational life cycle.

#### *2.3.5. Components of Organisational Structure*

Organisational structure is comprised of several components. According to Robbins (2015), the components of organisational structure are:

##### *2.3.5.1. Organisational design*

Organisational create structure to facilitate the co-ordination of facilities and to control the actions of its members. The structure is comprised of three components. The first has to do with the degree to which activities within the organisational are broken up or differentiated and it is known as complexity. The second is the degree to which rules and procedures are utilized and it is this component is referred to as formalization, while the third component of structure is centralization where decision-making authority lies.

### *2.3.5.2. Complexity*

Complexity encompasses three forms of differentiation: horizontal, vertical, and spatial. Horizontal differentiation has to do with the degree of horizontal separation between units. The larger the number of different occupations within an organisational that require specialized knowledge and skills, the more horizontally complex that organisational is due to the fact that diverse orientations make it more difficult for organisational members to communicate and more difficult for management to coordinate their activities. Vertical differentiation, on the other hand, means the depth of the organisational hierarchy and the more levels that exist between top management and the operatives, the more complex the organisational is because there is a greater potential for communication distortion. It is equally harder for top management to oversee closely the actions of operatives where there are more vertical levels. Also, spatial differentiation implies the degree to which the location of an organisational's physical facilities and personnel are geographically dispersed and the higher the level of differentiation, the higher the level of complexity because communication, co-ordination, and control become more difficult.

### *2.3.5.3. Formalization*

Formalization refers to the degree to which jobs within the organisational are standardized. If a job is highly formalized, then the position occupier has a minimum amount of discretion over what is to be done, when it is to be done and how it should be done. Employees are therefore expected always to handle the same input in exactly the same way, resulting in a consistent and uniform output. There are explicit job descriptions, lots of organisational rules, and clearly defined procedures covering work processes in organisational where there is high formalization. Where formalization is low, job behaviors are relatively non-programmed and employees have a great deal of freedom to exercise initiative in their work. Besides, in so far as an individual's discretion on the job is inversely linked to the amount of behavior that is preprogrammed by the organisational, the greater the standardization, the less input the employee has into how his or her work is to be done. Standardization not only eliminates the possibility of employees engaging in alternative behaviors, but it even removes the need for employees to consider alternatives. The degree of formalization can also vary between organisational and within organisational. Certain jobs, for instance, are well known to have little formalization.

### 2.3.5.4. Centralization

In some organisational, top managers make all the decisions and lower-level managers simply execute top management's directives. At the other extreme, there are organisational where decision making is pushed down to those managers who are closest to the action. The former case is called centralization and the latter is referred to as decentralization.

The term centralization refers to the degree to which decision making is concentrated at a single point in the organisational. Specifically, it is said that if top management makes the organisational's key decisions with little or no input from lower-level personnel, then the organisational is seen as centralized. In contrast, the more that lower-level personnel provide input or are actually given the discretion to make decisions, the more decentralized the organisational.

## 3. Presentation of Results

### 3.1. Hypotheses

#### *Hypothesis 1 ( $H_0$ )*

There is no significant relationship between poor technology and organisational effectiveness in Ecobank Nigeria Limited in Delta state.

Table 1: Chi-square analysis of questionnaire for the relationship between poor technology and organisational effectiveness in Ecobank Nigeria Limited

Items	SA/A	D/SD	Total	Df	X <sup>2</sup> -cal.	X <sup>2</sup> -cri.	Decision
1	62	38	50	3	12.73	7.82	$H_0$ is Rejected
2	64	36	50				
3	70	30	50				
4	78	22	50				
5	78	22	50				

Source: Field Work 2019

P>0.05

In table 1 above, with alpha level of 0.05, the degree of freedom (DF) of 3, the critical value is 7.82, while calculated value is 12.73. Since the calculated value is greater than the critical value, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. This shows that there is a significant relationship between poor

technology and organisational effectiveness in Ecobank Nigeria Limited in Delta state.

#### *Hypothesis 2 ( $H_0_2$ )*

There is no significant relationship between inappropriate organisational size and staff mix and organisational effectiveness in Ecobank Nigeria Limited in Delta state.

Table 2: Chi-square analysis of questionnaire for the relationship between inappropriate organisational size and staff mix and organisational effectiveness in Ecobank Nigeria Limited.

Items	SA/A	D/SD	Total	Df	X <sup>2</sup> -cal.	X <sup>2</sup> -cri.	Decision
1	76	24	50	3	17.23	7.82	$H_0_1$ is Rejected
2	78	22	50				
3	70	30	50				
4	62	38	50				
5	72	28	50				

Source: Field Work 2019

P>0.05

In Table 2 above, showing the degree of freedom (Df) of 3, the critical value of 7.82 and the calculated value of 17.23. Since the critical value is less than the calculated value the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. It can be deduced that there is a significant relationship between inappropriate organisational size and staff mix and organisational effectiveness in Ecobank Nigeria Limited in Delta state.

#### *Hypothesis 3 ( $H_0_3$ )*

There is no significant relationship between poor responsive and adaptive organisational (internal) environment and organisational effectiveness in Ecobank Nigeria Limited in Delta state.

Table 3: Chi-square analysis of questionnaire for the relationship between poor responsive and adaptive organisational (internal) environment and organisational effectiveness in Ecobank Nigeria Limited.

Items	SA/A	D/SD	Total	Df	X <sup>2</sup> -cal.	X <sup>2</sup> -cri.	Decision
1	56	44	50				
2	76	24	50				

3	70	30	50	3	12.11	7.82	Ho <sub>1</sub> is Rejected
4	66	34	50				
5	74	26	50				

Source: Field Work 2019

P&gt; 0.05

In Table 3 above, with P> 0.05, the degree of freedom (Df) of 3, the critical value of 7.82 and the calculated value of 12.11. Since the calculated value is greater than the critical value the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. It can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between poor responsive and adaptive organisational (internal) environment and organisational effectiveness in Ecobank Nigeria Limited in Delta state.

### 3.2. Discussion of Results

The study revealed that there is a significant relationship between poor technology and organisational effectiveness in Ecobank Nigeria Limited in Delta state. This is because the findings of the study showed that poor technology (software platform) has impacted negatively on organizational effectiveness in the area of speed of banking operations and transactions, turn-around time for attending to customers and service delivery. This finding opposed Latifi and Shooshtarian (2014) who carried out a study on the effects of organisational structure on organisational trust and effectiveness and concluded that there is no significant relationship between mechanistic structure and effectiveness dimensions.

The finding also showed that there is a significant relationship between inappropriate organisational size and staff mix and organisational effectiveness in Ecobank Nigeria Limited in Delta state. This is largely because inadequate staff strength and the resultant poor staff capacity to cope with the volume of the banking operations, poor staff mix in the context of the very high percentage of contract or subsidiary employees and the very low percentage of core or mainstream employees and the accompanying poor staff morale and commitment have impacted negatively on the organizational effectiveness in Ecobank Nigeria Limited in Delta state. This result is in consonance with Laleh, Masoud and Aflatoon (2014) who opined that poor organisational structure negatively affects the organisational's status and conditions. They concluded that managers have to select a structure to have correlation with organisational's status and conditions that will culminate in the achievement of organisational goals and aspirations.

The study equally revealed that there is a significant relationship between poor responsive and adaptive organisational (internal) environment and organisational effectiveness in Ecobank Nigeria Limited in Delta state. This

finding is in accordance with Laleh, Masoud and Aflatoon (2014) who posited that the poor organisational structure negatively affected the organisational's status and conditions. They added that managers have to select a structure to have correlation with organisational's status and conditions that will result in the achievement of organisational goals and aspirations. The finding is also in accordance with Masoud and Narges (2013) who articulated that there is significant relationship between organisational internal environment and organisational effectiveness. They advised that managers should choose organisational structure that correlate with organisational situation and condition that will promote stability, resource acquisition as well as human resource satisfaction and development.

### **3.3. Methodology**

In this study, descriptive survey research design was employed. The use of descriptive survey design was based on the fact that the researcher used the questionnaire instrument to obtain information on the variables under study from the respondents. This design enables the researcher to collect detailed information from the research subjects. Descriptive survey research design is also used in the collection of quantitative information about items in a population survey of human populations and institutions (Gibson 2016).

The population of the study comprised all the 35 branches of Ecobank Nigeria Limited in Delta State. The total population of the 35 branches in the state are three hundred and sixty-three (363) staff. The sample of the study consists of fifty (50) staff that was drawn from eight branches (8) in Ecobank Nigeria Limited in Delta State. The eight branches and fifty sampled staff were selected using purposive sampling technique. The choice of this technique was because of easy accessibility to the respondents and the technique is less expensive. The instrument that was used for data collection was organisational design questionnaire. The organisational design questionnaire is made up of three sections and it contains sixteen (16) items which enabled the researcher to spread the questions/items across the independent/moderating variables. The various indicators used were based on poor technology, inappropriate organisational size and staff mix, poor responsive and adaptive organisational (internal) environment. The organisational design questionnaire was validated by three experts in the field of management and social science. The experts made useful corrections, recommendations and suggestions as appropriate and the corrections were affected by the researcher on the receipt of the comments. All the research hypotheses were tested for significant difference at 0.05 level of significance using Chi-Square.

#### **4. Conclusions and Recommendations**

Arguably, organisational design appears to have a significant relationship with effectiveness in organisational. This relationship can however be in the positive or negative directions. This assertion is essentially premised on the understanding that it is the presence or absence of the relevant variables or factors in the environment of organisational design or structure that will either enhance or undermine the effectiveness environment in organisational. Specifically, in so far as the findings of the study showed that poor technology, inappropriate organisational size and staff mix as well as poor responsive and adaptive organisational (internal) aspects of organisational design have negatively affected organisational effectiveness in Ecobank Nigeria Limited in Delta State, it is evident that poor technology particularly (software platform), inadequate staff strength and the resultant poor staff capacity to cope with the volume of the banking operations, poor staff mix in the context of the very high percentage of contract or subsidiary employees and the very low percentage of core or mainstream employees and the accompanying poor staff morale and commitment as well as poor responsive and adaptive organisational (internal) environment have constrained the organizational effectiveness in the area of speed of banking operations and transactions, turn-around time for attending to customers and service delivery in Ecobank Nigeria Limited in Delta state.

The study recommended that the organisation should increase the level of their technology, particularly its software platform as well as organisational size and staff mix to enable the organisation achieve their set goals and objectives. The study equally recommended that organisational should establish the structure and imbibe the practice of anticipating, scanning, monitoring their internal and external environments with an eye to responding and adapting to appropriate and relevant changes and trends in order to actualize their organisational goals and objectives.

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## PRO-GAMBLING CULTURE

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**Abstract:** This paper analyses gambling within the notion of culture. Examining its origins, we find out that gambling is strongly intertwined with culture. Due to human development and cultural complexity, the perceptions of luck, taking risk and chance change over time, but still have an important impact on gambling activity and detecting its codes. Historical evidence of gambling shows that gambling developed with different intensity, and has been mostly affected by European colonization. Gambling culture can be distinguished depending on the historical backgrounds, institutional structure and religious backgrounds (among other factors). The secondary analysis was prepared by taking raw data from the World Value Survey (2014) and analysing the correlations between gambling components. The selected components prove to be significantly correlated with the Taking Risk factor (secularization factor) and represent a significant contribution to the finalization of our findings. The final results propose four types of gambling culture present today, i.e. Simple Gambling Culture, Denied Gambling Culture, Transitioning Gambling Culture and Pro-Gambling Culture. Simple Gambling culture has the least gambling characteristic, whereas Pro-gambling Culture is a newly introduced term which represents the contemporary gambling cultural orientations.

**Key words:** gambling culture, pro-gambling culture, gambling codes, gambling regulations, gambling components

### 1. Introduction

According to G. Reith, one of the leading researchers of gambling, it is a living part of social life, the roots of which can be traced back to early civilizations. Summarizing Reith (2005), at the beginning, gambling was associated with divine powers and God's will. People made the most important decisions by considering the prophets' advice obtained during divine rituals. Growing civilization brought about a new era of chance and probability, mainly through the secularization of society. Gambling as we know today perceives probability to be synonymous with taking a risk with the intention of gaining profit from the initial input. The modern system of social structure is based

on “risk” and presents the complex view of interpretation of games of chance (Reith 2005).

Gambling is certainly becoming part of our ordinary lives if we consider lottery, scratch cards, slot machines, table and card games, sports betting, etc. as games of chance. Also, all of them can be accessed via internet and land-based casinos. Considering gambling as a cultural phenomenon represents a challenge for gambling studies, therefore, we are going to examine some facts about gambling, religion, and cultural background which are necessary for us to be able to explain its cultural adaptations. The cultural adaptations could also be seen as specific types of gambling culture, which will be presented in this paper. Gambling culture is constantly evolving, mostly because of the impact of online gambling. Even though it is well described by different authors, such as Jan McMillen (2005) and Gerda Reith (2005), it still remains without proper categorization – that is why this paper presents the following four types of gambling culture: i.e. Simple Gambling Culture, Denied Gambling Culture, Transitioning Gambling Culture and Pro-Gambling Culture. This paper begins with defining gambling to provide a broader understanding of gambling practices and cultural involvement. What follows is an overview of gambling studies regarding ethnographic and historical factors and the role of social complexity. The second part of the paper is focused on the formulation of Gambling Culture. The paper continues with examining gambling-related studies and cultural codes, outlining particular cultural codes typical for a specific region or country. Additional data are analysed and presented in the same chapter (taking-risk factor). After summarizing the main literature, the paper suggests four developing stages of Pro-Gambling culture. The paper proposes an extended answer to the development of a gambling society.

## **2. Categorizing Gambling at the Level of Culture**

The most common interpretation of culture, as defined by Hofstede (Hofstede et al. 2010), is that of an onion’s layers. The layers represent the manifestation of culture at different levels revealing five important elements of the cultural structure: Symbols, Heroes, Rituals, all under the term of Practice. The core of the “Onion” is formed of Values. Values are maintained by being practiced according to how they are interpreted by the members of different cultures. Considering this, we need to examine what gambling is and how we should understand it within the context of culture. Gambling can be interpreted in different ways. According to Per Binde, *“gambling is understood as the established practice of staking money or other valuables on games or events of*

*an uncertain outcome*" (Binde 2005, 2). On the other hand, Clark (1987) points out the value of the reward. He defines gambling as "*pertaining to risking of money or something of value on the outcome of a chance event such as a card or dice game*" (quoted in Thompson 2015, 12).

In his paper "*Gambling Across Cultures: Mapping Worldwide Occurrence and Learning from Ethnographic Comparison*" Binde underlines that gambling is not a universal phenomenon, but a pattern of ethnographic and historical developments of circumstances, where the culture embodies these patterns deeply in the human behaviour. Blinde defines gambling as "*a social, cultural and economic phenomenon, a remarkably flexible way of redistribution wealth, which is embedded in the socio-cultural systems of societies,...*" (Binde 2003, 22). Still, there are some other definitions which mostly define gambling as staking or wagering something valuable to gain profit. Thompson (2015) argues that Gambling is a taking-risk activity which has been transmitted through practices from generation to generation, first under the impact of the colonial era, and in the last decades under the impact of modernization, economics and globalization. On the other hand, Reith supports the idea "*that gambling is a mechanism for entering into and prolonging contact with the world of chance*"(Reith 2005, 18). We can conclude that gambling is linked to staking something precious or valuable with the hopes of gaining more than the initial input. The reasons why somebody is willing to take risks and stakes can be seen as an adventure, where you believe that you will be the one who was preselected to win, or as Gerda said, to beat the Gods or destiny.

Binde mentions that some factors like the presence of commercially used money, social inequality, social complexity, and the presence of certain kinds of competitive inter-tribal relations may affect the presence and intensity of gambling in societies. Games of chance are associated with the notions of fate, destiny and "the unknown", and they may exist in concord with religion or can, on the other hand, even be in severe conflict with it. Moreover, the author claims that gambling is in an association with societal complexity (Binde 2003, 22).

Townshend (1980) suggests that the more complex a society is, the more likely it is that games of strategy are present in a culture. Considering that, we differentiate between three types of games of chance that are those based on strategy, physical skill and chance, as presented by John Roberts Malcom Arth, and Robert Bush in Games in Cultures published in 1959 (quoted in Binde 2005, 13). In physical skill games, chance may be involved or not, whereas, strategy games do not include physical skill, but may or may not involve chance. In games of chance neither strategy nor skill should be present. Games of strategy appear to be the models of social interactive systems. Both

structure and terminology of such strategy games may offer clues to the nature of the interactive system. Games of chance appear to be associated with religious activities. It is commonly believed by many people that the winners of games of chance had received supernatural or magical aid (Roberts et al. 1959, 597–605). Binde (2005, 14) concludes that there exists a positive association between gambling and big settlements. In large settlements, gambling is more common. A plausible explanation of this could be that in complex societies, there are cultural codes that promote gambling.

Considering that gambling culture consists of different cultural layers, as described in the paragraph above, we must understand how Gambling Culture was formulated and how it has continued from its roots in old Egypt and developed into the Gambling we know today. In the next chapter, Gambling will be presented from the perspective of the birth of chance, taking risk, and probability, as well as in terms of cultural codes as described by Rapaille (2006).

### **3. Conceptualisation of Gambling Culture**

The birth of chance and probability, together with the evolution of taking-risk behaviour, are important notions when talking about gambling culture. Gambling usually has a negative connotation, since we most often deal with its negative influence on society and the psychological deprivations and social distortions it causes. Understanding gambling in a broader sense brings us to the main roots of the human being and cultural development. Gambling is something that has been popular since the times of Babylonia, old China, and India. From Egyptians playing “atep<sup>1</sup>”, the Chinese playing “wei-ch’l<sup>2</sup>”, to fortune telling “pessomancy<sup>3</sup>”, we can observe how society was strongly affected by the idea of predicting what the future holds. There were different objects used in this regard, like bones, dominoes, and pebbles, to the more well-known dice and playing cards (Arnold 1977).

Nowadays, gambling is spreading extremely fast, mostly via internet distribution, bringing gambling directly to our homes. The games’ availability

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<sup>1</sup> Atep is a game of Ancient Egyptians from which the modern game of spoof arose and which required no equipment other than the normal number of fingers (Arnold 1977, 8).

<sup>2</sup> Wei-ch’l is a traditional Chinese board game of territorial possession and capture ([en.oxforddictionaries.com](http://en.oxforddictionaries.com)).

<sup>3</sup> Pessomancy means divination by means of pebbles. Earliest use found in Nathan Bailey (d. 1742), lexicographer and schoolmaster. From ancient Greek πεσσός (Attic πεττός) oval pebble + -mancy ([en.oxforddictionaries.com](http://en.oxforddictionaries.com)).

allows visitors to choose among a variety of games of chance. The work of Gerda Reith *the Age of Chance: Gambling Western Culture* (2005) discusses the idea of “chance” through history. The age of faith became the origin of chance in early civilizations, developing the characteristics of taking risks and challenging gods. Random events were first seen as sacred signs from the gods, which could be interpreted to reveal a deep message from the transcendent “beyond”. The separation of “chance” from broadly religious beliefs began in the seventeenth century, indicating not the favour of the gods, but the absence of knowledge. The transformation was intimately connected with gambling. In ancient societies, divination had a decisive role in defining someone’s success or failure when taking a risk. Later in the process of foretelling the future, interested parties could entertain themselves by betting on the outcome of rituals, attempting to pre-empt the will of the gods (Reith 2005).

In order to understand the lack of taking risks, it is important to understand “Chance” and “Probability”. Plato stated that an individual would be lucky because of fated circumstances, experiencing the right time (Tyche), luck and timeliness (Kairos). On the other hand, Aristotle saw chance as an instance of coincidence or coincidental cause, which does not meet determinism as in Plato’s case. From the Christian perspective, chance is seen as fate, astrology, or the will of God, hence the explanation of divine intervention behind miracles (Reith 2005).

The word “probability” seems to appear in the seventeenth century when the numerical idea of randomness can be found. Denying the efficacy of divination and determinism with the law of large numbers can be evidenced in the Book II of “De Divinatione” (Cicero quoted in Reith, 2005). This particular secular understanding of the world gave rise to certain knowledge (mathematics and logic) and probability was now a new outcome of understanding chance from the secular view. *“It was the development of probability theory itself which made possible the birth of this age, for during its growth, chance began to emerge as a distinct entity in itself, separate from notions of fate or gods. The emergence of chance became visible for the first time parallel to theory of probability between the mid-seventeenth and nineteenth centuries”* (Reith 2005, 24).

Once determinism had been secularized, opportunity arose for chance to appear as a neutral phenomenon in its own right. While chance is neutral in this respect, “risk” represents danger and generally implies the possibility of loss. Risk now deals with the knowledge and expression of the calculation of possible outcomes based on the knowledge of the effect of chance on the world. Risk arose from a “secular risk culture” and appeared with modernity.

Giddens (1991) describes the risk as a transformed perception of society. The institutions of economic markets, labour power and investments are constituted by risk rather than risk being incidental to them (quoted in Reith 2005, 40). *"The risk society oversees the breakdown of certainty and the erosion of metaphysical meaning, for in the Age of Chance the pursuit of knowledge takes the form of the calculation of risk. With the erosion of certainty in knowledge comes the perennial insecurity of modern life"* described by Beck (1992) in Risk Society (quoted in Reith 2005, 40–41). There are many authors who deal with risk society and describe it as a part of the capitalist system of production – production of wealth seems to be an ingredient of the social production of "risks".

On the other hand, Binde argues that integration of gambling culture is linked with the global system of trade and communication. It is a shift typically associated with the decisive step in societal development from pre-capitalist to capitalist, from traditional to modern, and from local to national and then to global. The authors show that the connection with the West has a significant influence on the formulation of gambling. Ethnographic documentation of gambling is relatively well recorded by Americans, which is, however, not the case for middle Asian, African or Muslim countries. The presence of gambling in Europe and regions that had contact with European cultures is shown right before the colonial era (Binde 2005).

However, gambling culture differs from culture to culture and changes depending on its availability, monetary system (if existent), and social norms and social laws (social structure). The idea of restricting gambling in order to maintain social "health" is more fiction than reality. Prohibition does not necessarily mean that gambling activities will not continue being practiced at homes or other places (Binde 2005). *"History shows that gambling under such circumstances usually continues to be practiced illegally and only heavy moral pressure restrict enforcement of anti-gambling laws will eradicate it"* (Binde 2005, 19). We assume that tolerating gambling activity in a certain way is now the best option. What is more, regulating the players' activity seems to be a social comprehension. Cultural norms are there to advocate the problem of gambling, and are themselves a part of gambling culture. Religion is also an important indicator of social norms constraining gambling. For example, the Muslim world has strong rules against gambling activities, which for sure restrains gambling activity in these countries, when Christianity is more likely to give the "green light" for gambling activity (even the Bible includes gambling for Jesus' clothing, etc.) than other religions. In addition, in the East, we can find the Chinese religions, Hinduism and Buddhism (and others), as a major reflection of the East. These religions mostly restrain gambling,

however, after the strong impact colonization had on them, some of these countries have developed a strong gambling culture (World Casino Directory 2018).

From the institutional perspective, gambling as such has strong historical backgrounds in Great Britain and its colonies dating back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century – dog and horse racing in the USA was the first major expansion overseas. There are a lot of regulated markets/countries which allow gambling as such, but regulate the market in order to collect taxes, protect their own capital and even regulate gambling activities among their citizens (Thompson 2015).

In the next chapter, keys to understanding gambling culture are presented within compared and analysed factors that were retrieved from the World Value Survey, Wave 6 (Inglehart et al. 2014). The final conclusion will collect the challenges and findings about gambling cultures, defined in a model of four types of gambling cultures.

#### **4. Keys to Unlock the Cultural Codes**

Cultural beliefs and values are passed on to the members of a culture in a number of ways. Firstly, family members or other respected members from an individual's culture can often pass on values or beliefs regarding gambling to other family members directly through modelling their behaviour (Raylu and Oei 2004). Cultural codes as presented by Rapaille (2006) are therefore values, norms and practices which are accepted and welcomed in specific cultures. Cultural values and beliefs can have an influence on gambling patterns in a number of ways. Kassinove, Tsytsarev & Davionson (1998) and Walker (1992) pointed out two important factors which affect the culture to develop gambling tendencies, namely positive attitudes towards gambling related with the tendency to take risks, and Cultural acceptance – will gambling activity be punished or reinforced (Walker 1992, Kassinove, Tsytsarev & Davionson 1998, quoted in Raylu & Oei, 2004, 1096).

Table 1 combines and summarizes some authors' conclusions, from Cracking the Cultural Code (LaTour et al. 2009) of Gambling study to ethnographical facts together with Cultural zones (Inglehart and Welzel 2018) and types of societies (Inglehart, Welzel, and Inglehart and C. Welzel. 2005). To differentiate countries or regions among each other, we refer to cultural zones as defined by Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel. They clustered cultural areas into "zones": English-speaking, Latin America, Catholic Europe, Protestant Europe, African, Islamic, South Asian, Orthodox and Confucian ones (quoted in Westwood, 2014). Our observations are divided into specific zones defined by countries. That, however, does not

mean that all countries match the same gambling characteristics. Table 1 also provides the information about the Global igaming gross win by region share (IGaming Business 2018).

Table 1: Gambling cultures overview

Country or region	Culture Zone	Type of society	Global igaming gross win by region (2018) <sup>4</sup>	Cultural overview & Codes
South America <sup>5</sup>	Latin America	Traditional, self-expression values	Total for Latin A. and Oceania 1% GGW  Mostly loose gambling regulations; gambling laws in transformation <sup>7</sup>	Gambling culture is present
North America <sup>6</sup>	English Speaking	Secular, self-expression values	12% GGW  Tight gambling regulations <sup>7</sup>	(US) Winners – purchasing the American dream, mentality that all have the chance to win
Africa & Muslim World	African-Islamic	Traditional – Survival	1% GGW (value is significant just for Africa)	Forbidden by religion in the Muslim world. In West Africa,

<sup>4</sup> IGaming Business 2018.

<sup>5</sup> Countries of South America: Argentina, Ecuador, Suriname, Bolivia, Brazil, Guyana, Uruguay, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay, Peru, Venezuela, mostly express as Latin America.

<sup>6</sup> Countries of North America: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Canada, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, United States of America (USA).

<sup>7</sup> World Casino Directory 2018.

			Tight gambling regulations, the presence of religious prohibitions <sup>7</sup>	gambling is common.
Europe	Catholic Europe, Protestant Europe	Secular-rational values, self-expression values	53% GGW Tight gambling regulations <sup>7</sup>	(France) Mystery – associated with money in a negative way
Asia	Confucian, South Asia	Secular-rational values, Survival	27% GGW (value includes Asia and Middle East)  Combines loose and tight gambling regulations, depends on the area <sup>7</sup>	(China) Distinctions – Conflict between emerging capitalism and Confucianism, pressure to win is high.
Oceania <sup>8</sup>	English Speaking	Secular, self-expression values (depends on a specific country)	Total for Latin A. and Oceania 1% GGW  Well regulated gambling activites <sup>7</sup>	Firstly, there was no gambling at all, later it was implemented by Asian trading and European colonization.

Sources: Own adaptation; World Casino Directory; Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel (2018); Inglehart et al. (2014); iGaming Business (2018); LaTour et al. (2009).

As mentioned above, culture can consciously accept gambling activity as something good and pleasant. It can be introduced during primary socialization at home by families when spending time together playing cards, different games of chance, without making any stakes or stakes that do not

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<sup>8</sup> Countries of Oceania: Australia, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand, Fiji, Solomon Islands, etc.

have any value. On the other hand, culture can determine which activities will be “punished”. The output of the “*childhood memory elicitation*” method is a “code” for each culture that, in this instance, represents how that culture’s people approach their gambling experience. The code is formed by the cultural environment and remains relatively stable throughout adulthood (Rapaille 2006).

Cracking the Cultural Code of Gambling is a cross-cultural study making a cultural comparison between China, France and the US in order to crack the culture's gambling myth. Using the childhood memory elicitation method, the study indicates that each culture has its own code for gambling. It was conducted in a Las Vegas resort casino with twenty-one gamblers from China, the U.S. and France. They conducted interviews and administered questionnaires in the native language of respondents. After reading and gearing the participants' memory stories, they discussed and developed a series of cultural codes (LaTour et al. 2009).

Based on other authors' findings, Whittington (2001) learnt that gambling in South America was not so common as gambling activity was reported just in Peru, Ecuador, and the Araucanian region (the present Chile). Cooper (1949) mentioned that gambling was present also among the Otomac (in Venezuela) and the Chincha (in Columbia), concluding that most of them took their gambling games very lightly. In Central America, there was no or little gambling, however, everywhere else, betting on rubber-ball games was common practice. In the Post-Classic Period (1000–1530 AD), betting was heavy, involving nobility and common people (Stevenson Day 2001). Culin (1899) stated that North America was a continent of gamblers as gambling was more frequent there. They often used to play with high stakes (quoted in Binde, 2005). Meanwhile in Africa, little or no gambling was present in the south and the southeast of Africa, while it was common in *West Africa* (the area of Congo, River). Gambling in Europe was spread practically among all people, with the exception of some minor areas of the Balkans. The Tibetans, influenced by the Chinese, were a gambling people and also Mongolians were said to have been heavy gamblers (Price 1972). The countries of Oceania had reported no gambling before Asian trading made them play cards. In Malesia, Australia and New Zealand, there was virtually no gambling (Cooper 1941; Kroeber 1948). In Micronesia and Polynesia, only a few peoples could be assumed to have gambled. The ancient Hawaiians were certainly heavy gamblers (Culin 1899). The Muslim ban on gambling was of greater importance in the regions where Islam had been established for centuries

with the status of the tribal or state religion<sup>9</sup> (Culin 1899; Cooper 1941, Kroeber 1948, Cooper 1949; Price 1972; Whittington 2001; Stevenson Day 2001; quoted in Binde 2005, 4–6).

Checking the final results from the study *Cracking the Cultural Code of Gambling* by LaTour et al. (2009), we can recognize that there exists a different mental setting for each country. In the United States, gambling is associated with the nation's western expansion. The Puritan-based culture attempted to control or ban gambling based on moral grounds, but could not withstand the attractiveness of easy money for both, individuals and the government. The authors labelled Americans as *Winners*. The reason for this is the notion of American dream where everyone has the chance to win and make it big. Even though gamblers understood that the odds were against them, they rationalized their decision to gamble by "Someone here is going to win, why not me?" The second reason hides behind beating the adults – a journey from childhood to adulthood. The third code is on the Catholic Church which supported and embraced gambling (church bingo and casino nights). The last code is *Boredom* – since people lacked change in their daily lives, winning in the casino gave them a feeling of control over their own destiny (LaTour et al. 2009).

From the author's perspective, the French are viewed as thinkers who see Americans as childish and naïve, but at the same time extremely powerful. The Cultural Code observed in France is *Mystery*. Gambling is automatically associated with money in a negative way, contrary to the US. Children are told to get a job and not that all is possible as in the US. The French respondent recalled gambling with marbles with siblings or classmates and referred to it as a "wise game". The focus is on not losing and using one's superior mind to crack the system. Mystery is a way of convincing themselves that they are doing nothing wrong. A good gambler is someone who can control the way he or she plays (LaTour et al. 2009).

China's Macau is the only region in the country where gambling is legal. Gambling activity is linked with violence and organized crime. The Chinese are riskier gamblers and show greater illusion of control when compared to the US gamblers (Lau and Ranyard 2005, quoted in Reptille 2006, 478). The Cultural code for China is *Distinctions*. Emerging capitalism is in conflict with Confucianism, which states "if one's action is guided by profit, one will incur much ill will". The Chinese take gambling seriously and the pressure to win is high. When they are losing, they will bet more because they believe that their luck will return. Money is not the goal of working. They are more focused on

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<sup>9</sup> North Africa, the Middle East, Persia, all the way to western India.

results than the process. Although gambling has a very negative connotation in Chinese society, many families gambled at home by playing cards and even in casinos – mostly in private spaces. Gambling with small amounts is considered acceptable and part of entertainment, whereas betting big amounts can lead to lack of control. The Chinese claimed no religious views – they believe in a type of providence, usually ghosts, spirits or luck. They prefer table games (social games) – social recognition where they can show off their gambling prowess (LaTour et al. 2009).

Pre-colonial time has impacted gambling culture differently around the world as seen in Whittington's study (2001, quoted in Binde 2005). The historical overview shows the macro-level of gambling development and recognizes different mentalities about gambling as such. Looking at Table 1, we can find the keys which lead us to the next step of our paper. Comparing the information, we can set up four leading gambling culture keys.

1. Key 1: Conceptualization of contemporary gambling culture. Secular-rational values are linked to a higher percentage of GGW which shows the aspects of emerging gambling culture in modern societies.
2. Key 2: Impact of religious/cultural restrictions (the Muslim world is a strong representative) – rejecting gambling activities within a culture.
3. Key 3: Transitioning (Oceania, Latin America) – after Asian trading and European colonization, transitioning culture from non-gambling to gambling culture.
4. Key 4: Transitioning values in collision with modernization (Asia) – Conflict between capitalism and religious norms, the strong presence of believing in luck.

In the next chapter, we are going to present the Gambling Key Factors which explain the presence of certain gambling behaviour among cultures, mostly the presence of taking-risk behaviour, the meaning of "having fun", and the importance of being rich. The Keys can distinguish gambling cultures among each other, depending on the extent to which something is present or not (e.g. the inclination to taking risks, having fun, etc.).

## **5. Gambling Key Factors**

Analysing gambling, per se, means understanding a player's mindset and the importance of certain behaviours marked as impulsive, risky and fun. At a higher level, gambling can be seen as something fun, entertaining and thrilling to people, but also as something forbidden and bad. What is more, gambling stands for taking risks, believing in a possible win, and much more. It is about making choices based on an individual's perception of the game. This

perception differs at the collective/individual levels, and can be perceived as believing in luck or believing in one's own skills. In this chapter, we are going to start with the selected components of gambling culture (took from World Values Survey data or WVS Wave Six), which are Taking risks, having fun and, the Importance of being rich (Inglehart et al. 2014).

The secondary analysis was made by taking raw data from WVS Wave Six and analysing the correlations between gambling factors. The WVS Wave Six data have been collected between the 2010 and 2014 waves from 60 countries and societies around the world and more than 85,000 respondents (Inglehart et al. 2014). The analyzed variables are Taking risks, Having a good time, Belonging, and Democracy & Religious values (see Table 2). The selected data are analyzed by using Regression and Correlations qualitative technique.

Table 2: Gambling factors

Gambling factors (variable)	Question
Taking risks	Adventure and taking risks are important to this person; having an exciting life.
Having a good time	Important in life: Leisure time. It is important to this person to have a good time; to "spoil" oneself. It is important to this person to be rich; to have a lot of money and expensive things.
Belonging	This person sees himself as a world citizen. This person sees himself as an autonomous individual.
Democracy & Religious	Democracy: Religious authorities interpret the laws (negative correlation)

Source: Own study

The Correlation shows that Taking risks & Adventure, the Importance of being rich, and Having fun are positively proportionally correlated to each other (Pearson Correlation is 0.28; **0.32**; and **0.30** – See Table 3). This explains that the more an individual has the need for adventure, wants to have fun and values money, the higher the prospect of taking risks.

Table 3: Correlation between gambling factors

<b>Correlations</b>					
		Schwartz: Adventure and taking risks are important to this person; to have an exciting life	Schwartz: It is important to this person to have a good time; to “spoil” oneself	Schwartz: It is important to this person to be rich; to have a lot of money and expensive things	
Spearman's rho	Schwartz: Adventure and taking risks are important to this person; to have an exciting life	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,285**	,323**
		Sig. (2- tailed)	.	,000	,000
		N	87312	86715	86674
	Schwartz: It is important to this person to have a good time; to “spoil” oneself	Correlation Coefficient	,285**	1,000	,300**
		Sig. (2- tailed)	,000	.	,000
		N	86715	87965	87192
	Schwartz: It is important to this person to be rich; to have a lot of money and expensive things	Correlation Coefficient	,323**	,300**	1,000
		Sig. (2- tailed)	,000	,000	.
		N	86674	87192	87863

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4: Regression of Dependent value – Adventure and taking risks are important to this person; to have an exciting life

<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>					
Model	Unstandardiz ed Coefficients	Standardiz ed Coefficients	t	Sig.	95,0% Confidence Interval for B

		B	Std. Errro r	Beta			Lowe r Boun d	Uppe r Boun d
1	(Constan t)	1,88 1	,019		101,26 6	,00 0	1,845	1,918
	Importa nt in life: Leisure time	,075	,006	,039	12,168	,00 0	,063	,087
	Schwartz : It is importa nt to this person to have a good time; to "spoil" oneself	,210	,004	,201	59,917	,00 0	,203	,217
	Schwartz : It is importa nt to this person to be rich; to have a lot of money and expensiv e things	,269	,003	,260	77,877	,00 0	,262	,276
a. Dependent Variable: Schwartz: Adventure and taking risks are important to this person; to have an exciting life								

Taking risks can be explained by seeking adventure, fun and money, as well as how an individual sees himself in the world. We found out that those individuals who view themselves as autonomous individuals are more likely to engage in risk-taking and adventure activities (see Table 3). This can be linked to individualistic point of view where the individual is not as strongly pressured by social norms regarding what is acceptable and what is not. The individual expresses his own will in order to please himself.

The second finding suggests that individuals who see themselves as world citizens are more likely to engage in adventure and risk-taking. This can be explained in the way that a person with higher income can travel more and have a higher standard of living than others. The usage of the internet is also a good that should not be taken for granted. Feeling as a world citizen has a strong impact on diffusing the feeling of belonging.

Last but not least, individuals who see that in Democracy religious authorities interpret the laws live their lives with more perseverance and are not likely to engage in adventurous and risky situations. Therefore, we may conclude that people who perceive democracy as a secularized process are more engaged in adventures and taking risks than those individuals who see religion as a part of governance.

Table 5: Regression of Dependent value – Adventure and taking risks are important to this person; to have an exciting life

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>							
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95,0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	3,265	,019	171,611	,000	3,228	3,303
	Democracy: Religious authorities interpret the laws.	-,057	,002	-,106	-,29,780	,000	-,061
	I see myself as a world citizen	,195	,007	,107	28,809	,000	,182
	I see myself as an autonomous individual	,125	,006	,075	20,316	,000	,113

a. Dependent Variable: Schwartz: Adventure and taking risks are important to this person; to have an exciting life

In Table 5, we can see that the three most recognized gambling factors correlated with taking risk are: having a good time; belonging (mostly referring to collectivism and individualism); and the importance of democracy in terms of the development and involvement of religion. All these factors are partially involved in the gambling culture as an important line between different types of gambling cultures described in the next chapter and represent an additional insight into gambling culture.

## 6. Development of the Pro-Gambling Culture

The paper examines the main characteristics of gambling culture along with other significant factors like the taking-risk factor, regulation, religion, etc. The following chapter presents four types of gambling culture: Simple Gambling Culture, Transitioning Gambling Culture, Denied Gambling Culture, and Pro-Gambling Culture. The conclusions are based on the reviewed literature and qualitative analysis. We basically assembled the examined gambling characteristics into one model. Still, the model is open for additional evaluations and upgrades.

Figure 1: Four types of Gambling cultures

	PRO-GAMBLING CULTURES	DENIED GAMBLING CULTURES
Strong Gambling Regulatory		
Missing Gambling Regulatory	SIMPLE CULTURES	TRANSITIONING CULTURES
	No or very little Cultural restrictions	Strong Cultural restriction

Source: Own conclusions

### **6.1. Simple Gambling Culture**

Gambling cultures which represent the Simple Gambling Culture type are mostly “simple” regarding their social structures. Simple Gambling cultures in this context may have integrated all social and economic institutions and activities, but are still struggling with social stability (welfare, politics, and internal conflicts). The primary family structure is still flexible, so nobody serious labels gambling activities as good or bad. Games of chance are played in homes or common spaces at low stakes if they are, of course, present in the community as an indigenous cultural activity. The most common cultures are the traditional cultures with survival values. Gambling can be seen as a means of having a good time or just a way to trade goods. Usually they play games of chance based on “chance” and believe in God’s will (depends on the religion).

The main factors which reinforce gambling activity are the development of the state and community, the presence of foreign investors, and the impact of modernization. Introducing the monetary system or just reinforcing the meaning of money can affect individuals to such an extent that they will start looking for the answers to these inequalities at gambling places. Gambling key factors are not specifically high represented among this type of gambling culture. This type of gambling culture can be applied to some of the least developed countries (for example, some less developed parts of Africa).

### **6.2. Denied Gambling Culture**

These are cultures with strong religious or cultural backgrounds which do not allow any gambling activity. The state or religion condemns all individuals who try to play games of chance. Gambling is usually a parable for losing money, violence, and everything evil on earth. We can define these cultures as traditional because the limitation is usually set by religion or strong cultural norms. The social structure can be strongly defined and laws mostly just support the cultural norms and values. The present values are specifically dictated by religious beliefs. Otherwise, if anyone is to gamble, the person is usually from the upper class or from the modernized parts of the country or region. Gambling key factors are expressed but just within a specific group of people which is part of the described type of gambling culture. The Muslim World and some Asian countries can be categorised as Denied gambling culture type.

### **6.3 Pro-gambling Culture**

These cultures have a strong gambling cultural background and the only restriction is represented by the high-level structure of institutional regulatory. Usually, they are very secular with no strong religious beliefs and

they tend to demonstrate more self-expression values. The social construct is highly complex, there are many interactions using mostly new technologies. The primary socialization accepts games of chance from the early beginnings and can perceive gambling as part of social life. Games of strategy, where the player is involved in and swamped by interactions with other players in order to make his strategic move, are more popular games than others with the Pro-gambling culture type. At this level, we can find players transitioning from one level to another, depending on which cultural background they come from and whether they can, at this point, integrate gambling activity in their lives as something acceptable from the perspective of the society they belong to. Gambling key factors are highly expressed within this type of gambling culture. The corresponding regions are Europe, and the English-speaking ones.

#### **6.4. Transitioning Gambling Culture**

The main reason to transition from simple or denied gambling culture types to the pro-gambling culture type is developing a wide range of gambling characteristic. These gambling characteristics are gambling regulations, cultural acceptance, gambling infrastructure (landbased casinos, online software, etc.), and other inclinations. However, when these characteristics are not fully developed but are in the middle of the process, we understand this position as transition. This is why we define them with the term Transitioning Gambling Culture type.

Developing countries and those already developed still have strong cultural backgrounds and struggle to accept gambling as something acceptable. They can be categorized as the Transitioning Gambling Cultures type. Moving around the world together with massive tourism open all cultures to multiculturalism introducing a new badge of norms and values, which can be in strong conflict with their native culture and identity. Considering game preferences, we can conclude that transitioning cultures prefer games with less strategy, they mostly rely on chance, also in combination with physical-skill games. Secularization is either not finished yet, it will never conclude, or the political influence denying gambling is stronger than gambling trends within the gambling culture. The corresponding regions where the trend is observed are some parts of Asia (for example China), the Middle East, some parts of Latin America, and others.

Countries in transition are mostly in the middle of a regulating process, meaning that their laws may be lenient or not defined properly, but can, however, be very strict. This depends on whether they are transitioning from Simple countries or Denied countries.

## 7. Discussion

For its development, gambling activity undergoes an intense social and cultural transformation linear with modernization and social development. It is the culture together with social adaptation that plays the key role in interpreting gambling. The Pro-Gambling Culture type, as defined in this paper – the new era of gambling co-existing with the society through regulatory – brings a new aspect of gambling at the level of development of the gambling culture in modern societies. The association between societal complexity and gambling is explained by the type of social structures and interactions. Moreover, global technologies take over all aspects of social life and gambling sites are not an exception. Gambling gives them pleasure and excitement to fulfil either their self-expression values or just the need for competitiveness and leisure. At this point, gambling unites different parts, what was artificially created by modernization, the collectivistic and individualistic worlds, traditional and modern worlds. Gambling activities can be accepted over time, hence concluding that any culture can develop Pro-Gambling culture and is either transitioning from Simple Gambling Culture, Denied Gambling Culture or Transitioning Gambling Culture types.

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## IS YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN EU COUNTRIES STRUCTURAL?

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**Abstract:** *This paper's main aim is to observe and confirm youth unemployment as a structural phenomenon in certain EU countries, including Slovenia. An innovative contribution is that it complements the prevailing economicistic discourse with a sociological one. In the introduction, a brief history and overview of youth unemployment is presented. Slovenia is only briefly mentioned as having one of the relatively longest-lasting youth unemployment rates in the EU. In sections 2 and 3, approaches from economics and sociology are relied on while discussing three 'types' of EU countries with regard to different structural unemployment rates. From a sociological view, the long-term nature of youth unemployment is described, together with its impact on the social structure and (possible) socially destructive and economically destabilizing consequences. In section 4, analysis of "every-day life" indicators, namely, young people's perceptions of work and life, reveals some surprising facts that depart from previous findings. In short: young people are more satisfied with their work and lives than older generations.*

**Key words:** youth (un)employment, structural unemployment, (youth) labor market(s), employers, economicistic approaches and indicators, sociological approaches and indicators, EU member countries, Slovenia, young first jobseekers; opinions and values of young generation

## 1. Introduction

Ever since the “oil crises” of the 1970s, labor markets have not recovered in many European countries, with the average EU unemployment rate persistently increasing to reach a peak in the 1990s (Podmenik and Ivančič 2017). Data (OECD 1977; OECD 1994) for that period show that the rapid technological, economic, and employment shifts for higher educational and vocational levels of the labor force were not accompanied by an expansion in the number of adequate workplaces (OECD 1994; Hannan and Werquin 2001, 101). At the same time, certain authors assess that a surplus of some 30% of over-educated youth came into being and started to be marginalized (Coleman 1991; Sprangers 1992; Teichler 2000). It has been shown that the average youth unemployment rate has not dropped since the mid 1990s compared to the general unemployment rate (Noelke and Mueller 2011; Leuven and Oosterbeek 2011 in Podmenik and Ivančič 2017, 187).

Between 1995 and 2000, over 60% of all newly created jobs in Europe were found in knowledge-intensive and technologically demanding sectors and those requiring higher cognitive skills (Greenwood and Stuart 2003). The creation of “net” jobs in the EU has been shown to be lagging behind the increase in the active population, as clearly revealed by unemployment rates for particular social groups, women, immigrants, the elderly and especially young people seeking their first job (*ibid.*). Labor market research studies highlight significant changes in these areas (Brauns, Gangl, and Scherer 2001). (Youth) labor markets started to become more flexible and fluid in developed and transition countries.

At the turn of the millennium, the development of highly innovative and creative knowledge and knowledge-based economies was ever more strongly seen as the “key” to opening the door to competitiveness, employability, and social inclusion (following Becker 1962). Yet, at the same time, it was observed that education and knowledge, recognized as two crucial factors for developing knowledge-based societies (Bell 1974; Stehr 2005), were being hindered in exercising this function. The role of knowledge and education in solving socio-economic problems has decreased, while more and more national economies seem unable to fully utilize their current human resources. Even during the 1970s, American researchers warned of the problem of over-education, namely, that the number of highly educated young people would exceed the demand for them in labor markets. They compared the USA and the EU and suggested the problem of over-education might be more considerable for EU states due to the wider and larger state investments made in education and the thereby limited freedom of labor markets (Leuven and Oosterbeek 2011, v Podmenik and Ivančič 2017). The massification of

higher education, which has not been accompanied by an increased number of workplaces, led to some 30% of young people being over-educated at the start of the millennium. However, this obvious trend did not see a reduction in private and public investments for achieving the highest levels of education (Wolbers 2003).

Goldthorpe (1996) highlights the fact that comparative empirical data offer little basis for the claim that firms and enterprises in modern societies chiefly rely on formal qualifications obtained from the education system as a typical form of worker selection. Other authors state that as the general education level rises the information value of higher levels of education decreases (Freeman 1976; Jonsson 1987). Employers might also downplay the importance of educational qualifications by choosing individuals they trust or know personally. Goldthorpe (1996, 276) and Coleman (1988) stress that in the eyes of management merit is often conceived through attitudinal and behavioural attributes, aspects that bear little relation to education. In advanced post-industrial enterprises, workers' selection of a wide range of positions is guided by more or less elaborate techniques of personality and lifestyle assessment mainly aimed at identifying qualities such as loyalty, commitment, adaptability, capacity for teamwork and the like. Employers may thus intensify their selection processes in the case of more demanding positions.

Despite findings showing that the economic stability in the first half of 2010 was reflected in the labor markets of 27 EU countries in lower unemployment, the 2008 economic crisis still affected over half the EU member states, which were then in recession or on the path to it (Singh 2010, 29). Labor markets became too fluid and flexible and were unable to cope with the growing demand and supply pressures. Moreover, in many EU countries while the demands of employers had grown to such an extent that some national employment legislation had been amended to them. At the same time, part-time and other "insecure jobs" were actively being promoted in the EU as a way of increasing employment rates to meet the Lisbon Strategy's employment goals (Lesche and Watt 2011). These new "precarious" employment forms have led to lower wages, reduced social security, and a lack of career opportunities, social stress, lower fertility, brain drain, and certain other collective and personal distractions. However, while adapting national labor laws to employers' requirements various forms of unlawful employment went unpunished. So-called non-normal employment

(Boltanski and Chiapello 2007)<sup>1</sup> has become widespread in many EU countries, especially for marginalized groups, including young first jobseekers.

Like other European countries, Slovenia has seen considerable improvement in the educational attainment of its population in the last 20 years, especially among younger generations. Slovenia's education system, labor market, and employment policy underwent major changes and challenges in the transition from the former socialist system to a capitalist one. Slovenia may be characterized (with regard to other transitional countries) by its relatively high investment in education and relatively high education levels of the population,<sup>2</sup> yet the education system is rigid and a significant disproportion exists between professional/vocational secondary and tertiary study programs and non-vocational ones in favor of the latter (Podmenik and Ivančič 2017, 192). In the employment area, the Slovenian labor market was quite rigid compared with other transition countries up until 2002 when amended labor legislation loosened up the protection of employees and enabled a wide range of uncertain forms of employment. The labor market has since gradually become more flexible and deregulated, while employers have achieved greater independence and influence. Employers' greater freedom has led to the gradual yet intense introduction of various forms of atypical employment, especially for young first-time jobseekers. In 2018, the part-time employment of young Slovenians (15–29 years) was above the average in the EU (34% in Slovenia; EU average of 32%). There is a bigger difference in temporary contracts; 62% young people were working under such contracts in Slovenia in 2018, although the EU average was 41% (Eurostat 2020). The altered relationships between young jobseekers and job providers are also changing young people's attitudes to work. One Slovenian author (Dragoš 2020) notes that the share of Slovenian youth (20–24 years) holding at least a high school education has exceeded the European average for years. At the same time, the share of young people (15–29 years) afraid of becoming unemployed doubled between 2000 and 2018. In 2000, 53% of

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<sup>1</sup> In an extensive analysis of unemployment in France, the authors introduce the notion of non-normal employment for all those new, inventive types of employment, which in many different ways violate the national labor legislation. As a side note, they could be called illegal, but legitimate in terms of unsanctioned occurrence (which is different across EU countries, of course).

<sup>2</sup> In 2017, total public expenditure on education was 4.49% of GDP, while the EU average was 4.7% (UMAR 2019, Eurostat 2019).

young Slovenians were not afraid of becoming unemployed, whereas in 2018 this share was just 19.2% (Klanjšek and Kobše 2019 in: Dragoš 2020, 2).

## **2. Economic Indicators of Structural Youth Unemployment**

Structural unemployment is generally defined using economists' terms and indicators. Here it is seen as the mismatch between the supply of labor in terms of workforce skills and the demand for labor in terms of employers' skill requirements (Valletta and Kuang 2010). Its chief characteristic is lacking work for a longer period of time due to the shifts in the economy, producing the marginalization of certain workers and their jobs. In modern economies, such shifts are mostly triggered by the introduction of new technologies. Structural unemployment is accompanied by several negative processes like: the growing migration of well-paid jobs to those with lower personal costs; temporary employments with little chance of promotion to long-term ones; the lack of job flexibility; low work mobility and deficient opportunities for acquiring the new tasks and skills (*ibid.*). Structural unemployment is long lasting because it is influenced by more than one business cycle. It is also expanding since work mismatches in one industry can overwhelm the entire employment system. Moving workers from old jobs to new jobs is very costly in economic and social terms (What is "structural unemployment?" 2019). Structural unemployment often hurts certain regions more than others and forces local people to move away to find new opportunities in other regions, even abroad. Migration, regardless of destination, leaves disrupted communities behind. (*ibid.*)

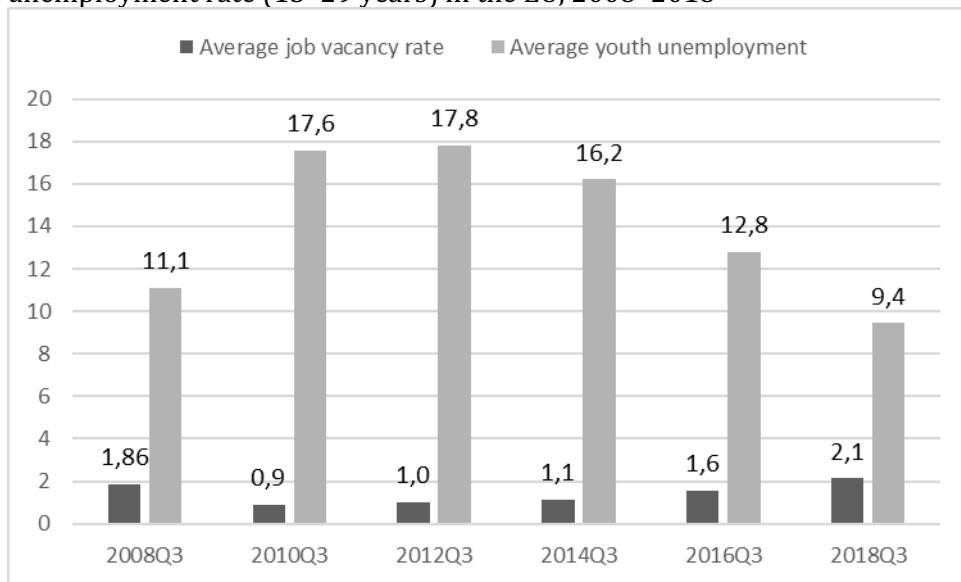
Structural unemployment is also the subject of an entire field of macroeconomic research on the relationships among macroeconomic conditions like inflation and income distribution (Mocan, 1999). In this framework, structural unemployment is exposed as a factor of social stratification. One author states that the increase in structural unemployment increases the income share of the highest quintile, and decreases the shares of the bottom sixty percent of the population (*ibid.*, 32).

All of the economists dealing with structural unemployment mentioned above also included social parameters, even though indicators and measures of structural unemployment are purely economicistic. As one critical author notes, policymakers and economists have largely been focused on the relationship between unemployment and job vacancy rates, meanwhile in the case of the long run additional actors and social circumstances must be taken into account (Valletta and Kuang 2010, 1). If structural unemployment is actually rising or its duration is beyond the medium term (from 1 to 2 years),

it cannot be eased by conventional monetary and fiscal policy and becomes a dilemma for policymakers. Economic studies of structural unemployment typically focus on the average working population and thereby leave out young people as a specific population of interest. Still, this brief overview of the economist's view of structural unemployment reveals the subject's complexity and how it intertwines with social, institutional, and political phenomena.

The most commonly used measures in economist comparisons of structural unemployment (in inter/national or segmented labor markets) is the structural unemployment index (the ratio between job vacancies and the number of unemployed). To present the long-term trend, EU databases were analyzed, although unfortunately the data were missing for several EU members.

Figure 1: Comparison of the average job vacancy rate and youth unemployment rate (15–29 years) in the EU, 2008–2018



Source: Eurostat database 2020

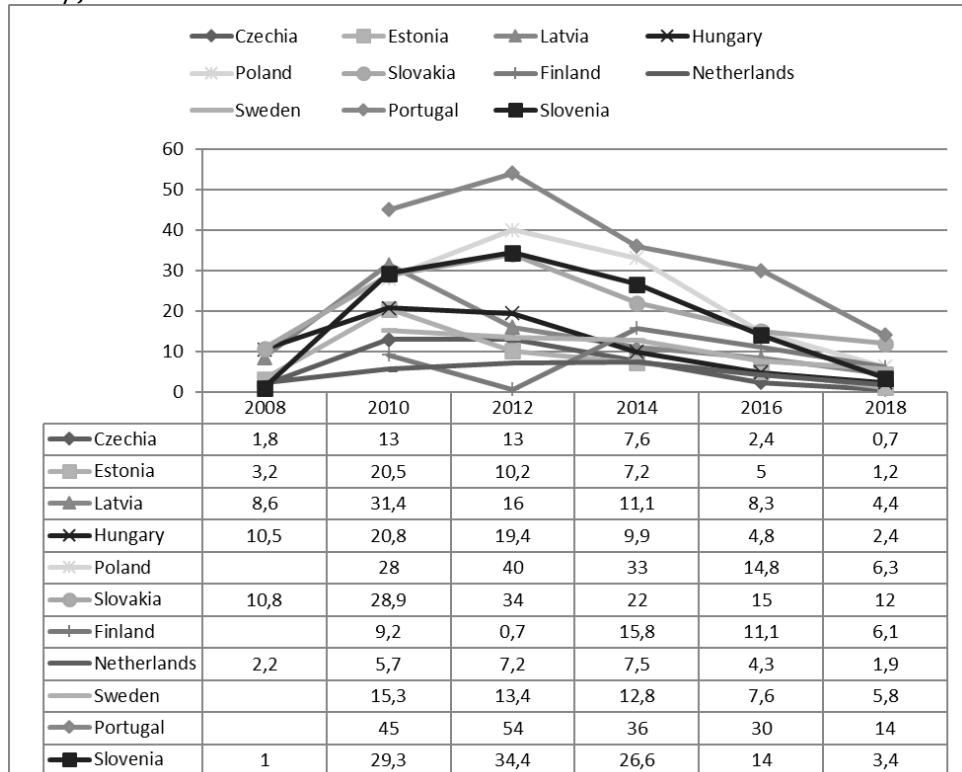
The long-term data in Figure 1 show, as expected, that average job vacancy rates declined in the EU during the crisis; they recovered after it and were higher than the pre-crisis state in 2018. Also expected, the average youth unemployment rate rose during the crisis and fell between 2012 and 2018 below the level for 2008. Both of these trends were predictable, whereas the

economic growth and rise in social conditions have led to greater employment, including for young jobseekers. However, the way the job vacancy and unemployment rates have been reconciled during and after the economic crises is not so clear and typical of all EU members.

The structural youth unemployment movement may be described as very diverse; from the Netherlands with a very moderate increase in the post-crisis period to Portugal with the highest youth unemployment and lowest job vacancy rates. Examples of countries with the highest, namely over 20%, post-crisis unemployment and the least jobs available (around 1%) also include Latvia, Slovakia, and Estonia. Yet, in the case of Estonia, the post-crisis unemployment was rapidly eased, whereas in the other two cases this took nearly a decade (see the data in Figure 2). A striking example is Slovenia where the youth unemployment rate has not reached 20% since the crisis, but has a low rate of vacancies and where the rates were aligned in 2018. All of the other examples shown, except for Finland, see a significant rise in youth unemployment immediately after the crisis, which also falls relatively quickly and is matched by a rise to pre-crisis vacancy levels.

In order to make the comparisons more transparent, we created a composite index comprising the youth unemployment (YUR) and job vacancy (JVR) rate (Index = YUR/JVR). For all selected countries, the data presented in the Figure 2 show that youth structural unemployment has not decreased in the 10 years since the crisis, but only returned to the pre-crisis state.

Figure 2: Structural youth unemployment trend in selected EU countries (for which long-term data are available), 2008–2018, %, Comparison of the Job Vacancy Rate<sup>3</sup> (JVR) and Youth Unemployment Rate<sup>4</sup> (YUR) in Index=YUR/JVR



Source: Eurostat database 2020

This index could only be prepared for those countries for which data was available. The graph shows that the ratio between youth unemployment and the job vacancy rate is very similar in 2018 to what it was 10 years before. This reveals that even in times of economic growth youth unemployment persists. There are some positive exceptions like the Czech Republic where

<sup>3</sup> The job vacancy rate (JVR) is the number of job vacancies expressed as a percentage of the sum of the number of occupied posts and the number of job vacancies.

<sup>4</sup> The unemployment rate (YU) is the number of unemployed persons as a percentage of the economically active population (the total number of people employed and unemployed = the labor force) based on the International Labor Office (ILO) definition.

data for 2018 show a surplus of job vacancies compared to the youth unemployment rate for the first time in the previous 10 years. A significant drop in the ratio between the youth unemployment rate and the job vacancy rate is also seen in Hungary (Index 2008=10.5; 2018=2.4) and Latvia (2008=8.6; 2018=4.4). The opposite is revealed in Slovenia (2008=1; 2018=3.4) where data show that the surplus of unemployed youth compared to the job vacancy rate is bigger in 2018 than it was in 2008. We may observe that other countries arrived at the same rate after the turbulent decade in between. Sweden and the Netherlands show small movements in the ratio, indicating quite a stable economy. In the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, and Slovenia, big cleavages appeared between the youth unemployment rate and job vacancy rate, which may be an indication of less stable economic growth.

## **2.1. Duration of the Youth Unemployment as an Indicator of its Structural Significance**

The long-lasting trend of the youth unemployment rate indicates (youth) unemployment crisis and in certain circumstances as well the social one. On one hand, it points to dysfunctions in certain social segments (educational, employment policy, etc.) while, on the other, it exacerbates social dysfunctions (family lives, birth rate, implementation of knowledge, etc.). As such, economists and sociologists use it as a measure of structural unemployment. Its measurement is also non-demanding and has been regularly conducted by countries around the world for a long time, enabling comparisons of different national countries as an advantage.<sup>5</sup>

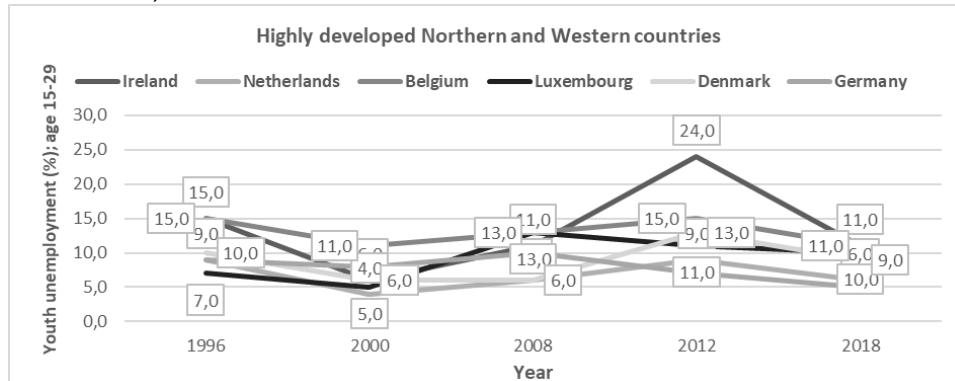
When looking at the long-term data on the unemployment of youth (aged 15 to 29 years) some clusters are revealed across EU countries: a generally high long-term rate is mostly found in Eastern and Southern European countries, and from the northern ones in Finland and Sweden before the 2008 crisis. Most of these countries have significantly reduced their youth unemployment levels in the post-crisis years, except for Portugal, Romania, and Sweden. Countries with low long-term young unemployment rates are Denmark, Germany, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. Slovenia stands out for its noticeable fluctuations in youth unemployment; it is low both before and during the crisis, only to increase significantly by 2012 and decline rapidly by 2018. Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and Croatia reveal a

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<sup>5</sup> Documented in the EUROSTAT database, it continues to contain some insufficiencies and does not allow a precise comparison of all EU countries, although it can still be used for descriptive purposes.

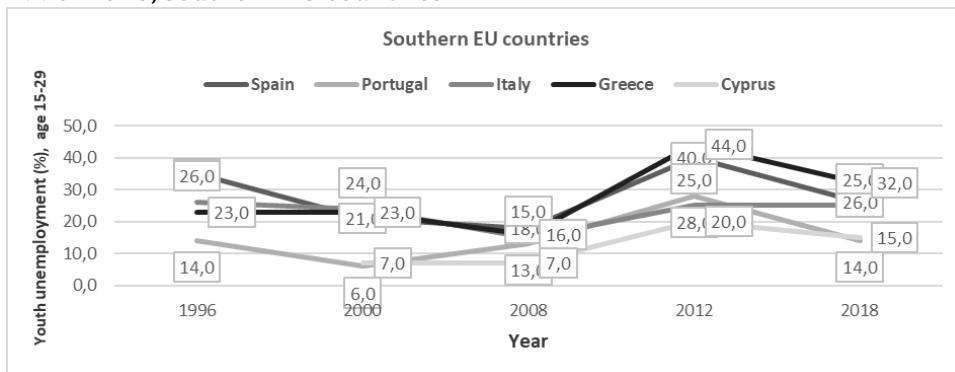
similar trend. According to their long-term youth unemployment rates, EU countries (for which such long-term data were available) are placed in three main groups: Northern/Western, Southern, and Eastern. Shown by groups of countries, these data are presented in Figures 3/1, 3/2, and 3/3.<sup>6</sup>

Figure 3/1: Youth unemployment (15–29 years), unemployment rates (in %), 1996–2018, six Northern and Western EU countries



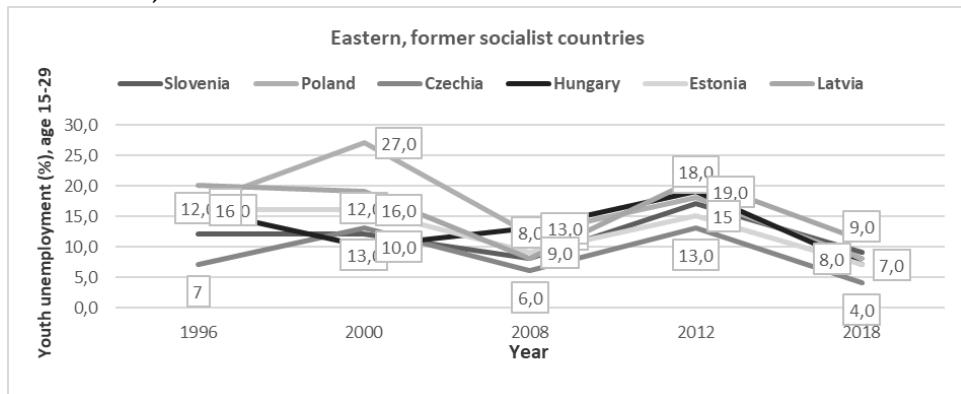
<sup>6</sup> The fourth year student of the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana, Maša Gomilar participated in collecting this data.

Figure 3/2: Youth unemployment (15–29 years), unemployment rates (in %), 1996–2018, southern EU countries



In the first group, the average youth unemployment rate was 10% in 1996, 18% in 2018; in the second group 21% in 1996 and 22% in 2018. Differences between these two groups are not only visible in the extent of unemployment; in the developed countries the unemployment rate is half that in the southern ones, but also in the degree of adaptability shown by the unemployed to economic trends. Namely in countries of the first group, unemployment rates were rising in the crisis periods and falling during times of economic recovery (except for Ireland), while rates in the second group show a fall in unemployment during the “2008 crisis” and a rise during the post-crisis recovery that continues today. An exception among Western European countries is France with its structurally high and non-adaptable youth unemployment rate (21% in 1996, 16% in 2000, 13% in 2008, 18% in 2012, and 17% in 2018) which, according to this indicator, may be classified in the group of Southern countries.

Figure 3/3: Youth unemployment (15–29 years), unemployment rates (in %), 1996–2018, Eastern EU countries



Source: Eurostat database 2020

Data for the third group *Eastern, former socialist* countries reveal significant deviations from the structural unemployment criteria: youth unemployment rates were considerably reduced in the last two decades, from the general rate of 15% in 1996 to 8% in 2018. Moreover, the rates did not follow the national economic trends and were the lowest solely in the period of the “2008 crisis.”

Comparing the three groups of EU countries also shows significant differences in youth unemployment at the end (2018) of the long-term period under analysis; in the first two groups (Northern & Western and Southern), it was on average on the same level as at the beginning in 1996; while in the third group (Eastern, post-transitional) it was lower than in 1996. This information calls for serious reflection on what has been happening to the young unemployed people in these countries. It questions the hypothesis that structural youth unemployment is especially characteristic for these countries and opens up some fresh issues, like why in the last ten years the rates in the Eastern European group have deviated so greatly from the EU average.

Looking at Slovenia as an example of this group, it is seen that the health of the national economy has played at least some role in the lower youth unemployment rate over the last few years. While GDP growth in 2019 was similar to the level in 2004, 20,000 more companies were registered in 2019 than in 2004 and the number of job vacancies in 2019 is considerably higher as is GDP per capita (SURS 2020).

To what extent this deviation can also be attributed to other reasons, such as the migration of youth labor; the active youth employment policies introduced by the EU; changes in data-gathering rules; national statistical adaptations to the EU's guidelines; or other, more nation-specific features, remains open for future analysis. Regardless of youth unemployment rates having dropped in the last few years in the EU, they continue to be much higher than the general average unemployment rates in the EU.

### **3. Sociological Definition of (Youth) Structural Unemployment**

As mentioned in an earlier section, several authors claim that structural unemployment's broader socio-political implications must be addressed interdisciplinary. This is especially true of the young people whose long-term unemployment and/or inadequate employment has gradually become generally acceptable.

In this context, it is worth drawing attention to the non-economic, social, community, and individual characteristics of the youth unemployment crises, unfolding more or less frequently or intensively occurring in many EU countries. Following the definitions, besides the indicators that intertwine with the economic ones (long-lasting unemployment, under-skilled workforce; educational mismatch) there are others which play an important role in and leave behind consequences that are difficult to repair. Namely, all insecure forms of employment have deep and irreparable impacts on the social stability and well-being of young people. Employers' growing requirements for extra competencies creates considerable pressure for first-time jobseekers. Some data shows the great majority of EU students complete study programs that were "theoretically based" (Education and Culture DG, 2007) and do not meet the altered conditions in the labor markets. Some experts argue that any job is better than unemployment, while others assume that insecure employment forms like temping, occasional, project, and part-time work are inappropriate substitutes for unemployment. Namely, they fail to offer opportunities for social stability, establishing a family, developing roots in the local and professional environment, personal career-building with professional satisfaction and, finally, for facilitating the flow of knowledge from young holders into production, society, and the economy. In social terms, these young resources are lost; moreover, from economic and financial points of view, huge investments in education and training are being lost. It may be expected that such discrepancies cause professional and personal dissatisfaction, which in the long term will manifest as various forms

of personal and micro-social crises (personal depression which may affects entire families,, a “no child lifestyle”, drop of natality rate, etc.).

### 3.1. Effects of Structural Unemployment on Social (Sub)Systems

Considering society as being made up of sub-systems, (Parsons 1977) makes it possible to overlook the structural obstructions that may occur due to wrongly anticipated relationships between the education, employment, and (youth) labor markets.<sup>7</sup> Individuals as the smallest entities in systems, in our case unemployed youth, are not only connected with each other but with different communities and associations, various institutions, and society as a whole with a certain type and level of mutual solidarity.

Figure 4: Long-term youth (un)employment's interconnectedness with social sub-systems

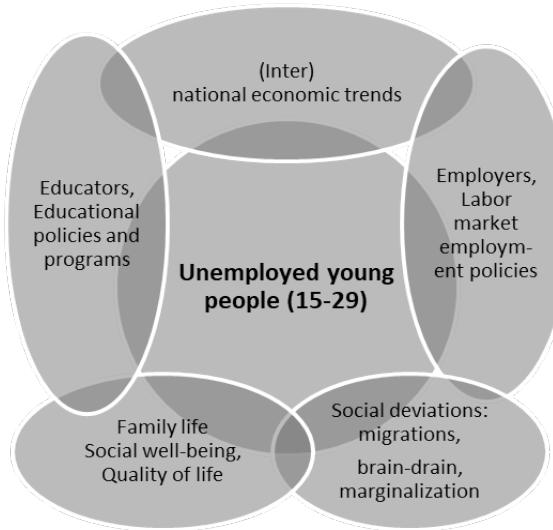


Figure 4 shows those sub-systems directly affected by youth (non)employment and in which dysfunctional changes may be observed in the long run. The social environment should be safe with a high level of trust between the newcomers to the labor market and employers. However, the

<sup>7</sup> Due to Parson's system theory, the social system as an open and adaptable mechanism tends towards achieving a time-limited balance. The same characteristics are attributed to its structural constructs: institutions, social sectors, and subsystems (economic, political, legal-legislative, social). Altogether, these work interactively and functionally to achieve common goals.

educational, social, and work environments in several EU countries generally do not guarantee such basic conditions that allow appropriate youth employment and indirectly safe exits from schooling to employment (Podmenik, Ivančič 2017). Sociological debates largely consider the educational sub-systems independently of how they intertwine with the others.

The changes occurring in youth labor markets have already been mentioned. They have gradually transformed from signaling and balancing to become flexible and fluid yet they are ever more susceptible to the current needs of employers (Kramberger 1999). Due to inadequate signals from labor markets, certain education systems and programs have become increasingly self-sufficient and inefficient. The new education and employment conditions are directly linked with young people's social status and way of life, influencing their quality of life and lifestyles. Traditional definitions of a career are being replaced by a new, individualistic concept that places greater responsibility on the shoulders of young jobseekers. Individual careers should be planned in line with labor market demands, but independently of those of potential employer's as much as possible (Arthur and Rousseau 1996). The discourse has been reoriented to multiple careers, lateral (and not vertical) career shifts, lifelong individual career redesigns, ongoing individual accumulation of human capital, etc. Besides this, young highly educated jobseekers should adapt to the inappropriate, horizontal and/or vertical job mismatches.

Already the brief consideration thus far of the structural dysfunctions of social subsystems directly linked to youth unemployment suggests it is possible that structural youth unemployment trends will continue in the near future. With respect to the current deadlock in all national economies, one can also anticipate social crises that would more deeply affect young people in the labor market and in employment relations.

### **3.2. Young Europeans' Personal (Dis)Satisfaction and Perception of Life**

The analysis of young people's attitudes to their social environment proceeds from the assumption that youth (un)employment affects individuals themselves as well as their nearest social sub-systems, and that young people's perceptions, behaviour, values and orientations should be viewed as indicating ongoing social shifts.

It could be argued that such a theoretical starting point is closer to Giddens' structuration theory<sup>8</sup> than Parsons' structural functionalism, cited above. Such association is unavoidable since Parsons' attempt to develop a social theory of purposive individual action (Parsons 1937) was strongly criticised and also rejected by most sociological authors with non-functional orientations (e.g. Homans, 1958; Berger and Pullberg, 1966; Giddens 1976). Besides, as Colleman (1986) warns, empirical research has developed in the opposite direction, even at a time when functional theory was dominant: "the statistical association basis for inference of survey analysis seemed to have little natural affinity for the intentions of purposes of individuals" (*ibid.*, 1314). Vice versa, Coleman argues that neither Parsons nor Giddens paid sufficient attention to empirical research to confirm their "grand theories" (*ibid.*).

While structural unemployment affects social subsystems in one's (closest) surroundings, the individual as the micro unit in society and all related processes must be taken into account. And vice versa, their perceptions, behavior, values, and orientations should be viewed as indicating ongoing social shifts. In this framework how young people view their employment, their satisfaction and evaluation of everyday life may indicate different aspects of structural unemployment.

One can assume that young people's views, values, and attitudes to work, satisfaction with life, and life perspectives change when they are unemployed for a long time. Further, a comparison of the different views and opinions held by young and older generations reveal the possibility of social deprivation of the youngest in the long term. As the third aspect worthy of being compared are the differences in opinions and values among EU countries.

Data for EU<sup>9</sup> countries (from the latest European Values Study database) were analyzed. A comparison of the views and values held by younger (15–29 years) and older people (30–49 years and over 50 years) regarding their happiness and satisfaction in life as well as control over their own lives is shown in Figure 5.

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<sup>8</sup> From a critical point of view on Parsons and structural functionalism, Giddens introduces the so called duality of structures. He envisions an interactive relationship between structures and individuals' voluntary action; voluntary activities take place within the institutional framework that mediates them and thus it itself becomes the result of such interaction.

<sup>9</sup> The study for this article began in 2019, therefore the United Kingdom is still counted as an EU country. Not all EU countries are included in the available EVS 2017 data.

Figure 5: Perception of people's lives by age group<sup>10</sup>

Source: European Values Survey 2017

Despite challenges when transitioning to the labor market and the higher unemployment levels, young people are still more happy and satisfied with their lives than older generations. Interestingly, they also have a greater feeling of being in control of their own lives. Majority of young people who report being very or relatively happy are from Poland, Estonia, Lithuania, Spain, and the Czech Republic, while the biggest shares of young people who report not being very happy are from Germany, Finland, and Hungary. It is interesting to note that youth in Spain, the country with the highest youth unemployment levels in Europe, report being among the happiest and most satisfied in Europe. Is it possible that, in contrast with older people, young people value work as being less important? However, it is important to mention that the average levels of life satisfaction among the younger generation rose significantly from 2008 when 70.6% of young people expressed being satisfied with their lives and 87.8% felt happy or very happy with their lives. In any case, even in 2008 the youngest generation was the happiest and most satisfied with their lives. One explanation may be that there are some differences in understanding happiness and satisfaction and the importance ascribed to the work situation within this.

Still, the vast majority of people from all generations value work as important or very important. There is only a slight difference in the youngest

<sup>10</sup> Percentage of people noting they are happy or very happy in their lives and percentage of people who evaluated their life satisfaction and control over their own lives with numbers 7, 8, 9, or 10 (on a scale 1–10 where 1 means dissatisfied/no control at all and 10 means satisfied/a great deal of control).

group's values about work; it is (non-significantly) less important for youngest than for other age groups. This may be partly attributed to the fact that for young people leisure time, friends, and acquaintances are considerably more important than work.

The above comparisons reveal certain aspects of young people in relation to work and leisure time. It may be assumed that the young are happier than the elderly despite their higher unemployment rate and the difficulties they face in the labor market. It is reasonable to say that the perception of life held by young people differs slightly from that of older generations regarding the importance of work in their lives. Young people generally think that work is important in life, especially for developing the individual's talents, because it represents a duty to society and the notion that people who do not work become lazy. An increasing majority of young people feel that work is a human duty to society, but they do not agree that work always comes first. At the same time, they believe that reducing the importance of work would be a bad thing, again expressing a sympathetic attitude for the importance of work. They also express concern about unemployed people. Therefore, it may be summarized that the majority of young people are fond of work and believe it is important in their lives. Yet, it is interesting to observe that the share of young people who think work is very important in their lives has dropped significantly in the last 18 years.

Younger generations tend to notably disagree more than older generations with the statement that work should always come first, even if that means less spare time. They also tend to agree slightly less with the statements that work is a duty to society and people turn lazy if they do not work. It is important to see if differences also emerge in the job expectations held by younger and older generations.

Young people expect and want more in terms of accomplishing something at work, especially when compared to older age groups, which might pose a barrier for them to enter the labor market or find a job. (Too) high expectations could create an unrealistic picture that would lead to having no job completely satisfy them, hence no job is "good enough" for them. Of course, these are more extreme cases; in the authors' opinion, most young people would be willing to ignore a smaller shortfall in their expectations and accept work that does not fully meet their requirements and expectations.

There has been much discussion in recent years about younger generations' changing perspective on work, the labor market, and their attitudes to work (e.g. Twenge 2010). The perception of work being something one is passionate about, achieving something, and improving oneself influences the way young people view traditional work conditions.

Younger generations often wish to have greater flexibility, develop their careers in several positions and companies, and not stay in just company for life. In the minds of many younger people, a 5-year contract gives the same feeling of security and accomplishment as an indefinite contract did for young people a few generations ago. The understanding of work has shifted from work as a means to survive to work as a means to find new, better-paid work (Bauman 2018). To what extent this is the result of a value change or simply adapting to alterations in the labor market remains unanswered. Berry and McDaniel (2020), on the other hand, talk about precarious work becoming "a new normality" for young people and see it as immutable, a changed economic environment where the key challenge is to navigate through it as an individual worker. It is also important to take account of the context of structural and cultural transformations that enable individuals to make reflexive deliberations about their life goals and paths, including career decisions. Whether young individuals will orient themselves well in these situations depends on several different factors like their personal characteristics, family conditions, etc. In times of educational inflation, informal education, networking and especially international mobility play a big role in an individual's success in the labor market (see Golob and Makarović 2018). Younger generations have been growing up in the belief that higher education is the key to a better life and higher social status. Bauman (2018) states that many younger people who are highly educated think others are responsible for providing them with a good and well-paid job because they have studied for many years.

However, some important differences exist among countries. Young people's expectations of society and other external actors with regard to their expectations of life and work are not equally high across the EU. European Values Study data from 2017 show there are some important differences between countries.

When it comes to life satisfaction, people in Northern and Western Europe seem to be generally more satisfied with their lives than those in other parts of Europe. Yet, this is mainly the case among older generations. Young people in Southern and Eastern-Central Europe are slightly more satisfied with their lives than in Northern and Western Europe. The biggest difference is seen in the oldest generation, which is significantly more satisfied with their lives in the Northern and Western Europe. It is interesting to note that the highest number of young people satisfied with their lives is found in Slovenia, while the lowest numbers are in France, Sweden, and Great Britain.

It is noteworthy that in countries with higher youth unemployment levels such as Spain, Italy, and France, more young people think that work is

important than in some other countries. For example, in the Czech Republic, a country with the lowest (youth) unemployment, there is also the biggest share of young people who think that work is not at all important in their lives. Despite life satisfaction being very high among young people in Southern Europe, the above-mentioned data indicate that youth unemployment is an important problem in young people's lives.

Other differences are seen in the perception of work. Young people in Northern and Western Europe are less likely to think that work should always come first and find good pay less important in a job compared to their peers in most countries from Southern, Eastern, and Central Europe.

We expected younger people's attitudes to their lives, life perspectives, and work to be more negative than those held by older generations and to be changing based on periods of crisis, which would serve as an additional indicator of structural unemployment in Europe. Based on the economic indicators of structural unemployment, differences between individual EU member states were also expected. The data analyzed in this chapter show that younger people do not express any sort of "crisis attitude", either compared to older generations or in a longitudinal perspective. Younger people generally seem to be happier than older people and feel more satisfied with and in control of their lives, even in times of crisis. It is, however, notable that their level of happiness and life satisfaction is higher in 2017 than it was in 2008. Compared to the older generations, young people value friends and leisure time above work. Their attitudes to work do not tend to alter based on a crisis situation, although several differences emerge among the perception of work. More and more young people perceive work as a social duty and more often than older people they want a job in which they feel like they have achieved something. As presumed, there are differences among member states, especially regarding the feeling of preparedness for the labor market, where students from countries like the Netherlands, Finland, and the Czech Republic feel significantly better prepared for the labor market than students from Slovenia, Slovakia, or Romania.

It is interesting to observe that young people in Slovenia are the most satisfied with their lives despite the persistent long-term trend in youth unemployment. One possible explanation is that other mechanisms and areas give a sense of security and life satisfaction to young people in Slovenia, who are increasingly enrolling in higher education institutions, not always to follow their academic aspirations, but in response to pressure from their parents and the environment. Such pressures are often based on the promise of a better job and life if one is well educated. A growing share of young people hold student status which brings particular social security, such as free health

insurance, lower living costs, food vouchers, and the possibility for flexible, off-contract and low-taxed work. The housing situation adds immensely to the financial, social and material security of the young in Slovenia. Slovenia has one of the biggest shares of young adults living with their parents. Eurofound data (2017) show that 63% of people aged 25–29 live with at least one of their parents. Other countries with a high percentage of youth living at home, like Slovakia, Spain and Romania, similarly record high shares of young people who are satisfied with their lives notwithstanding they face higher youth unemployment levels.

#### **4. Conclusion**

By observing the long-term youth unemployment on a general level (regardless of national differences in the EU) it rises during a time of recession and poor economic growth similarly as the unemployment level for older generations and they both fall in periods of economic recovery. However, we argue that the structural nature of youth unemployment becomes obvious when during the cycle of an economic prosperity youth unemployment does not fall below the rate recorded in the previous conjuncture period, or if employment levels after the period of economic stress do not exceed those during the preceding period of economic growth. Namely, for societies long-term periods for which the paradigm of a modern knowledge society has been applied (and politically used), unemployment should be gradually declining while new jobs should be growing. This suggests that structural unemployment is indicated where both rates remain at the same level or where the level of unemployment is rising over a (very) long period of time. Observation of the available data presented in this paper shows that youth unemployment may be defined as structural, but differently with regard to three ‘types’ of EU member countries (that could be sampled for the needs of our investigation).<sup>11</sup> In the group of Western and Northern, highly developed EU countries, the relatively low unemployment rates were rising in harmony during periods of crisis and falling in times of economic recovery. Yet, data for the group of Southern countries show an adaptation of unemployment to

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<sup>11</sup> We again highlight the data problem in the Conclusions. Changes in data gathering and classifying methods; the negligence of some countries; the inconsistencies and inefficient control of the collectors lead to the absence of long-term consistent databases needed to analyze past and existing socio-economic conditions, and in the current pandemic, even more for urgently needed predictions.

economic trends that is not in harmony: during the “2008 crisis”, unemployment rates fell and even today have not returned to their post-crisis levels. The most striking results are seen in the third, Eastern – former socialist – group where unemployment rates were lowest in 2008 when the crisis was announced, but rapidly grew to become the highest in 2012 only to fall again until 2018. In addition, unemployment rates in these countries did not follow the national economic trends and were lowest in the crisis period, seeing an incomparable fall between 2012 and 2018 between theirs and those of other groups or countries. This fall may be explained as an interruption in the long-term youth unemployment of this group and thus raises doubts about the structural nature of youth unemployment, calling for further research to be conducted. But in today's circumstances of the crisis of a pandemic and with regard to the forecasts of a deep economic recession, young people will again be hit by unemployment and the re-cycling of youth structural unemployment will continue.

The present article gave multiple emphases to the problem of youth unemployment being a multidimensional subject of research. In this framework, in the final section young people's statements and values about work and life are analyzed. The starting hypothesis was that, building on the data and evidence outlined in earlier sections, young people's views on employment and life will deviate from those of the elderly in a negative direction. However, not much evidence was found about the connection between youth structural unemployment and the negative general perception of life held by young people. Younger people generally seem to be happier than older ones and feel more satisfied with and in control of their lives, even in times of crisis. However, their level of happiness and life satisfaction was higher in 2017 than it was in 2008 when the economic situation started to decline and the youth unemployment rate to rise. This suggests that unemployment still plays a big role in young people's lives and is hindering their attitudes to both their lives and their quality of life. The differences between young people's attitudes to their life and work found in different countries confirm the notion, mentioned in the introduction, that youth unemployment is a very multidimensional problem that concerns many parts of societies.

Based on both economic and sociological indicators, it is clear that young people continue to be one of the most vulnerable groups during economic crisis. While their situation in society and the labor market has improved in the last few years, they have less reason for optimism today. The global Covid-19 pandemic that froze economies all over the world heralds an economic crisis that will definitely impact youth unemployment again. However, given

the current state of the pandemic in the EU, which is still expanding, one cannot predict the severity of the anticipated (national and EU) economic and social crisis and which dimensions will be most impacted.

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