



School of Advanced Social Studies

“Book of Abstracts”

Slovenian Social Science Conference 2020

**“Observing Social Transformations:
European Democracy and Development”**

Organizing institutions:

- Slovenian National Committee of the UNESCO Management of Social Transformations Programme (MOST)
- School of Advanced Social Studies / Fakulteta za uporabne družbene študije v Novi Gorici
- International Sociological Association: Junior Sociologists Network
- Slovenian Social Science Association

7 December 2020

TABLE OF CONTENT

Scope of the Conference	2
The Agenda	4
1 Aida Goga and Jetmira Fekolli:	7
<i>A Philosophical View of Human Nature and Selfishness according to the XVII-XVIII Century Philosophical Perspective</i>	
2 Andrej Raspor:	8
<i>Impact of tipping on workers' motivation: comparison between the slovenia and montenegro</i>	
3 Ardita Prendi:	9
<i>Ability of juvenile to cope stressful situations in force environment (prison)</i>	
4 Blerina Hamzallari:	10
<i>Attitudes towards marriage and family among students of the University of Tirana: How does the social context in Albania affect youth behavior?</i>	
5 Bledar Kryemadhi:	11
<i>Criticism of the Sovereign and the nature of political power by M.Fuko</i>	
6 Debrata Baral:	12
<i>Resisting neoliberal (re)structuring: a study on the local resistances against mining sector in contemporary India</i>	
7 Jerneja Penca:	13
<i>Summer school on Blue Economy and Sustainability: the EU and the Mediterranean</i>	
8 Koyal Verma:	14
<i>African migrants in India: mapping social morphogenesis and contradictions</i>	
9 Marina Makarova:	15
<i>"Hate Speech" in Russian Domestic Policy</i>	
10 Maruša Gorišek:	16
<i>Is there a place for meritocracy in the good society? Reconsidering merit for greater social responsibility</i>	
11 Mateja Rek:	17
<i>Media literacy and active citizenship in the EU</i>	
12 Maya FarrHenderson:	18
<i>Choosing One's Own Demise: Autopsy of a Student-Led International Alternative Break</i>	
13 Ortenca Kotherja:	19
<i>Bullism and its impact on pupils' psychological aspect</i>	
14 Paola Menepace:	20
<i>Effectiveness of policies for innovation on a local level. A comparative study of social networks</i>	

Slovenian National Committee of the UNESCO Management of Social Transformations Program (MOST),
and
School of Advanced Social Studies, Nova Gorica, Slovenia
in cooperation with
Slovenian Social Science Association and ISA Junior Sociologists Network

12TH SLOVENIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE CONFERENCE
**“Observing Social Transformations:
European Democracy and Development”**
and
1ST SLOVENIAN JEAN MONNET DAY

Scope of the Conference

Since the Enlightenment onwards, there has been a strong – perhaps the dominant belief about the human society heading towards the better. Industrialisation, technological development and increased complexity of the social order are seen to enable better conditions for individuals and communities in terms of having more freedom, better living standards, and more leisure, all based on the anticipated better developmental performances on a local, national and global level. The question remains however, for whom and when exactly? In the 19th century, industrial workers in the Western Europe could hardly be aware of overall societal progress that had been occurring by then. Nowadays, despite the opportunities linked to globalisation and technological development, huge gaps between the developed and the underdeveloped parts of the world have persisted, individual inequalities in terms of wealth distribution have increased and enormous numbers of people – both in the developed West and in the developing countries feel to be excluded and left behind. Moreover, tremendous ecological pressures have generated additional challenges.

Due to global connections in economic, political and cultural terms, we are supposed to live with the global social transformations – but are they really a way towards a Good Society? While addressing such questions, we need to be aware that the older, more static social patterns have been clearly replaced by accelerated morphogenesis and extended reflexivity. The social transformations are thus even faster, more unpredictable and often unconceivable. In addition, there is an unprecedented role of digital technology, especially in terms of artificial intelligence and its potential uses, changing not just what is social, but also what is human. On the other hand, the controversial nature of the accelerating social transformations has not provoked only the consideration of various alternatives that might better contribute toward a Good Society but also the tendencies to reverse (or isolate from) the existing trends in terms of steering our society backwards.

The role of social scientists in this regard is to observe, interpret and evaluate these phenomena – and

to add the perspectives of their own – well supported, of course, by relevant social theories and rigorous empirical observations.

Within the Conference we will thus deal with these challenges observing them in the interplay among structure, culture and individuals opening a variety of burning issues to be explored. Based on this, our conference shall primarily but not exclusively focus on:

- The Transformations of governance: The rise of populism, nationalism and anti-globalism vs. global citizenship and governance. We may also address and the re-distribution of the global political power and the transforming geopolitical situations.
- The economic transformations: Neoliberal economic practices vs. sustainable production. We will address the exclusive reliance on the market forces as well as the challenges of environmental and social sustainability, their interplays and clashes.
- The cultural transformations: Thick culture vs. thin culture. How have any of them manifested recently? Has instrumental, thin culture prevailed due to accelerated transformations? Do the rooted, thick cultural elements persist and where?
- The individual transformations: Empowered vs. impoverished individuals. How do individuals trigger social transformations and how social transformations have transformed individuals? Are they more reflexive, liberated, active, empowered agents contributing to a Good Society? Or mostly objects or even victims of social transformations?

Contributions addressing these and similar aspects of social transformations are welcome. You may address both Eastern and Western societies, global North or global South, deal with broad comparative perspective, individual case studies, and apply a broad variety of theories and research methods.

The Agenda

09:00 – 09:30 Welcoming addresses

- Dr. Milan Zver, Member of European Parliament
- Dr. Zoran Stančič, Head of Representation of European Commission in Slovenia
- Ms. Monika Bochanek, Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency
- Prof. Matej Makarovič, Jean Monnet Chair and chairman of the national UNESCO MOST programme

9:30 – 12:00 Keynote session

- Dr. Jana Suklan, Newcastle University, United Kingdom and Prof. Borut Rončević, School of Advanced Social Studies, Slovenia: Developmental performance of European countries revisited: what has changed and how?
- Prof. Matevž Tomšič, Faculty of Media, Slovenia: The role of intellectuals in transformations in East Central Europe.
- Prof. Marina Makarova, Udmurt State University, Russia: “Hate Speech” in Russian Domestic Policy.
- Mgr. Kristina Papcunova, Charles University, Czech Republic: Revisiting Feminist Consciousness: Between Solidarity and Injustice
- Dr. Janja Mikulan Kildi, School of Advanced Social Studies, Slovenia: Migrant Entrepreneurship in CE

12:00 – 12:30 Break

12:30 – 14:00 Jean Monnet special sessions – Parallel sessions 1

“Technologies and Innovations in Regional Development for Europe 2020”.

Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence

Session chair: Dr. Tamara Besednjak Valič

- Prof. Henrik Halkier, Aalborg University, Denmark
- Prof. Tatjana Volkova, BA School of Business and Finance, Latvia
- Dr. Peter Wostner, Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development, Slovenia

This session was financially co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union, Key Action: Erasmus+, Jean Monnet, Action Type: Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence, Project Reference: 587540-EPP-1-2017-1-SIEPPJMO-CoE

“Strategic Observatory for Europe 2030”.

Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence

Session chair: Prof. Borut Rončević

- Prof. Nikolai Genov, FU Berlin, Germany
- Prof. Janez Šušteršič, RE-FORMA, Slovenia
- Prof. Leslie Budd, Open University, United Kingdom

This session was financially co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union, Key Action: Erasmus+, Jean Monnet, Action Type: Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence, Project Reference: 611564-EPP-1-2019-1-SI-EPPJMO-CoE

“Populism and the Future of European Democracy”.

Roundtable: Varieties of populism and its impact in the European transnational sphere.

Jean Monnet Chair

Session chair: Dr. Petra Kleindienst

- Prof. Matej Avbelj, New University, Slovenia
- Prof. Gabriel Badescu, Babes-Bolyai University, Romania
- Prof. Ladislav Cabada, Metropolitan University Prague, Czech Republic
- Prof. Matevž Tomšič, Faculty of Media, Ljubljana

This session was financially co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union, Key Action: Erasmus+, Jean Monnet, Action Type: Jean Monnet Chair, Project Reference: 620053-EPP-1-2020-1-SI-EPPJMO-CHAIR

14:00 – 14:15 Break

14:15 – 15:45 Jean Monnet special sessions – Parallel sessions 2

“Strategic Observatory for Europe 2030”.

Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence

Session chair: Prof. Borut Rončević

- Prof. Mojmir Mrak, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
- Prof. Nada Trunk Širca, International School for Social and Business Studies, Slovenia
- Dr. Ana Grdović Gnip, University of Primorska, Slovenia

This session was financially co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union, Key Action: Erasmus+, Jean Monnet, Action Type: Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence, Project Reference: 611564-EPP-1-2019-1-SI-EPPJMO-CoE

“Cultural Political Economy of Europe 2030 and Its Global Impact”.

Jean Monnet Chair

Session chair: Dr. Erika Džajić Uršič

- Dr. Dolores Modic, NORD University, Norway
- Jasminka Lažnjak (University of Zagreb, Croatia)
- Prof. Bill O’Gorman (Waterford Institute of Technology, Ireland)

This session was financially co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union, Key Action: Erasmus+, Jean Monnet, Action Type: Jean Monnet Chair, Project Reference: 620793-EPP-1-2020-1-SI-EPPJMO-CHAIR

“European Transnational Governance for Sustainable Development”.

Jean Monnet Chair

Session chair: Prof. Matej Makarovič

- Dr. Jerneja Penca, Euro-Mediterranean University, Slovenia
- Dr. Paola Menapace, Provincia Autonoma di Trento
- Dr. Debabrata Baral, Bennet University, India
- Dr. Urška Fric, Faculty of Information Studies, Slovenia

This session was financially co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union, Key Action: Erasmus+, Jean Monnet, Action Type: Jean Monnet Chair, Project Reference: 610933-EPP-1-2019-1-SI-EPPJMO-CHAIR

”Enhancing European Civic Practices and Sustainability (Sustain4EU)”.

Jean Monnet Module.

Session chair: Dr. Tea Golob

- Dr. Tea Golob, School of Advanced Social Studies, Nova Gorica: Relation reflexivity and Slovenian youth as an aspect of responsible behaviour
- Prof. Mateja Rek, Faculty of Media, Slovenia: Media literacy and active citizenship in the EU
- Maya FarrHenderson: Choosing One’s Own Demise: Autopsy of a Student-Led International Alternative Break
- Maruša Gorišek: Is there a place for meritocracy in the good society? Reconsidering merit for greater social responsibility
- Koyal Verma: African Migrants In India: Mapping Social Morphogenesis And Contradictions

This session was financially co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union, Key Action: Erasmus+, Jean Monnet, Action Type: Jean Monnet Module, Project Reference: 620202-EPP-1-2020-1-SI-EPPJMO-MODULE

14:15 – 15:45 Open presentations

- Dr. Andrej Raspor, School of Advanced Social Studies, Slovenia: Impact of tipping on workers’ motivation: Comparison between Slovenia and Montenegro
- Dr. Blerina Hamzallari, Tirana University, Albania: Attitudes towards marriage and family among students of the University of Tirana: How does the social context in Albania affect youth behavior?
- Msc. Bledar Kryemadhi, University of Elbasan, Albania: Criticism of the Sovereign and the nature of political power by M. Fuko
- Dr. Aida Goga and dr. Jetmira Fekolli, University of Tirana, Albania: A Philosophical View of Human Nature and Selfishness according to the XVII-XVIII Century Philosophical Perspective
- Dr. Ardita Prendi, University of Tirana, Albania: Ability of Juvenile to Cope Stressful Situations in Force Environment
- Dr. Ortenca Kotherja, University of Tirana, Albania: Bullism and its impact on pupils’ psychological aspect affect youth behavior?

This event was co-funded and supported by the National Committee of the Management of Social Transformations Programme at the Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO and by the Slovenian Research Agency, grant number 5–1788.

“The European Commission’s support for this event does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.”

With the support of the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



1 Aida Goga and Jetmira Fekolli:

A Philosophical View of Human Nature and Selfishness according to the XVII-XVIII Century Philosophical Perspective

Abstract

By defining egoism as an excessive preoccupation on our own personal interest regardless of other people's interest, or if we were about to be in a higher level, the familiar one, as a matter of concern for our family interest, long ago, philosophers and thinkers have spread the dilemma of what drives human behavior to go towards this kind of egoism that pays attention more to the immaterial rather than the material, the invisible rather than the vulnerability, the soul rather than the matter.

This definition shows us that we have the egotism that is placed between the material-soul segment, that is, on the one hand, of the rich and that can then be overwhelmed in material wealth, that is, ownership, and on the other hand the preoccupation not to lose the spirit in this world. The first one has been treated by economic, legal, and political philosophy, whereas the second one has been treated by religious philosophy and theology. we have the science in front of metaphysics.

In fact, the history of human society tells us that the structure and functioning of its constituent parts has had an evolution that has undoubtedly directly influenced egoism as a man's behavior in relation to himself and the surrounding environment. This has happened to politicians and more specifically to today's politicians who often present egoistic images in the relationship they create in politics.

This scientific research seeks to give a philosophical explanation to the big questions that the society today poses about social, economic, political and environmental problems. In this study, emphasis will be placed on the methods of Montesquieu,, Rousseau, and Hobbes on the understanding of human nature and selfishness.

2 Andrej Raspor:

Impact of tipping on workers' motivation: comparison between the slovenia and montenegro

Abstract

The main goal of the article is to explore the impact of various types of tipping on the motivation of workers, and to develop a model – on the basis of the findings – for distributing tips among workers in order to increase their motivation. The research we present was designed on the basis of survey results gathered from Slovenian and Montenegrin company in 2019 and 2020.

The main finding of the research is that employees in the Slovenian and Montenegrin companies with a regulated system of tip distribution tend to be better motivated and treat their guests better than their colleagues in unregulated environments. On the other hand, employees in the hospitality industry are less motivated by tips than their colleagues in the gaming industry, despite receiving individual tips directly. The underlying reason for this difference is that companies in the hospitality industry generally do not apply distribution methods for tips, and employees are directly entitled to each tip. Tips are received in small (daily) amounts. Meanwhile, employees in the gaming industry receive their tips together with their monthly salaries. Therefore, we state that the model and the process of tips distribution greatly influence the motivation of the employees.

3 Ardita Prendi:

Ability of juvenile to cope stressful situations in force environment (prison)

Abstract

Background: Because our country (Albania) is in continuous development for several years, we face not only with social phenomena about also with elements that are part of the change.

A deeply affected population by the changes is the group of minors in conflict with law. Given the importance of adolescence as a period for developing coping skills and the at-risk nature of youthful offenders, it is critical to improve our understanding of adolescents' efforts to cope while incarcerated. The present study investigates the impact of coping strategies on incarcerated adolescents' emotional and behavioral adjustment during the incarceration. These individuals go to extreme stressful phases, which directly influence their psycho-social development.

Objective: This study aims to examine and analyze the psychology of minor in conflict with law, the dynamics between psychological wellbeing and coping strategies in forced environment, prison.

Methodology: Such interviewing of 118 minors is conducted during 16 months and is divided into 4 phases of interview to have the opportunity to review the change of the circumstances or re-drop in delinquent behavior.

For this are used a variety of instruments like Cooping Strategies and the Psychological Wellbeing.

Results: Based on our statistical results we can say that we have a direct relation to how these people operate with the crime committed and how they develop their psychological condition so that they remain functional and in many cases re-enact the crime committed and after they have finished the sentence.

Conclusions: Minors who are in conflict with the law and experience in the state of detention or imprisonment a stress related to the environment in which they find themselves, develop adaptive psychological skills in appropriate to their style of living within the required environment.

4 Blerina Hamzallari:

Attitudes towards marriage and family among students of the University of Tirana: How does the social context in Albania affect youth behavior?

Abstract

Albanian society has developed through numerous controversies in the historical, political, cultural and economic fields. The developments that followed the 1990 s would mark an important turning point in the history of Albanian society and the Albanian state. Democratization processes in Albania have been accompanied by a series of radical changes in the institutional structure, economic form, political attitudes and cultural system. After 30 years, Albanian society still faces specific challenges of the transition still unfinished. And yet many of the social traits and problems that Albanian society today reflects are similar to the dilemmas of development in many other societies.

This article focuses on the changes of one of the most important social institutions such as the family. Traditionally marriage has been seen as the first step towards family life, while in contemporary Albanian society statistical indicators reflect the decline in the number of marriages and consequently new families. The purpose of this article is to highlight some of the main attitudes of University of Tirana students on marriage and family. Throughout the analysis and interpretation of the data the focus will be mainly on the students' understanding of marriage, the age of engagement in marriage, the importance or not of civil marriage, their attitudes towards cohabitation, the prerequisites for creating a family, the time of family creation, family structure, number of children in the family, child birth or adoption, students' understanding of the family.

The data in this article are part of a larger study conducted with students of the University of Tirana to understand their attitudes toward marriage and family. This article will present some quantitative data collected through surveys conducted with a random sample of Tirana University students. In conclusion we can say that the social changes in Albanian society have brought about a number of changes in the youth's approach to marriage and family. It is important to note that young people recognize alternative forms of family and marriage, but in their projections of the future stands the traditional meaning of family and marriage. Among the students there is a clear tendency to meet certain economic preconditions, affirmation as professionals can delay marriage, family creation and reduce the number of children born, but at some point in their lives they are certain they will create their stable families. The analyzed data reflect that the demographic crisis that Albanian society is reflecting is due to a number of complex factors in seeking standards for living and creating a family, but not as an alarm for the decline of the Albanian family.

5 Bledar Kryemadhi:

Criticism of the Sovereign and the nature of political power by M.Fuko

Abstract

In this paper will be discussed the ratio between Sovereign and The nature of political power by M.Fuko. Criticism in principle, to the traditional philosophy will be the premise for criticizing the conception of sovereign power. Expression of society as heterogeneous and dynamic in relation to the objectivity of sovereign power will be a discourse that will lead us to the nature of socio-political power. Inside the context of legal and institutional objectivity of the state with sovereign power, it would be beneficial recognizing with the ways (mechanisms) of the power actions as an element of human interaction.

The focus will be on understanding of society as a political body, to forms of organization and expression of power in the real report-the right (law), expression of power in peripheral levels (community), in recognition of the historical and cultural context, where the forms of government are expressed more directly. The direct problem of persons on the condition and the fact is objectified on the principle of creation. A philosophical way which in concrete terms would create a false premise, would justify the continuation on a peaceful basis of sovereign authority.

6 Debrata Baral:

Resisting neoliberal (re)structuring: a study on the local resistances against mining sector in contemporary India

Abstract

How do marginalized communities negotiate with larger political and economic structures and frameworks? Do these communities “step-away” or “step-up” challenging the larger economic political (re) structuring processes that impacts their habitus? In contemporary India, on one side various state government and central government are facilitating the establishment of multi-billion development projects within the mining sector. While on the other side, there has been an increase of aggressive resistances to the establishment of mining projects by the local community members. This paper takes into account three the local resistances that have emerged within the rural community of Odisha resisting the mining industry of TATA in Kalinga-Nagar, POSCO in Jagatsinghpur and VEDANTA in Niyamgiri. It is in this context, this paper will first, outline the contexts of classes between the local community members against the mining industry in Odisha, Second, it will outline why is the indian government oriented and mobilizing the mining industry projects. The paper argues that, the idea of development based on economic growth has reconfigured the social order of the society. This results in the justification of the repression of large-scale social movements. Due to this alternative narrative or critical views on development gets repressed or de-legitimized. Data for this paper was collected using both primary and secondary methods. Semi-structured interview, focused group discussion and narratives were collected using snowball, random and purposive sampling. Primary methods were employed to outline the issues and concerns of people resisting POSCO in Jagatsinghpur and secondary methods were used to outline the cause of resistance against TATA in Kalinganagar and VEDANTA respectively. Moreover various government records, policies and committee reports were furthered reviewed.

7 Jerneja Penca:

Summer school on Blue Economy and Sustainability: the EU and the Mediterranean

Abstract

Seas and oceans are gaining more attention in global and regional policies, both for their environmental function and as sites of socio-economic development. At the global level, this is evident since at least 2012, when the discourse about “blue economy” was born, and the interest has been crucially reaffirmed with the proclamation of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030). The EU's ambition with regards to seas and oceans is evident both in the launch of its blue growth strategy and in the ongoing international negotiations relating to the conservation and the use of marine resources. Yet, limited academic effort is devoted to studying the notion of “blue economy” as an overarching approach, including its implementational aspects on the transformation of coastal areas and seas. Also, while the EU promotes the blue economy as a vision, limited systematic effort exists to build capacity of the young graduates to prepare them to the jobs of the future.

The summer school on blue economy in the Mediterranean run by the EMUNI University offers a state-of-the-art training for young graduates and early career researchers (master degree graduates, PhD students or postdoctoral fellows) from across the Euro-Mediterranean region (EU and non-EU countries). Through lectures, discussions, field trips and team work themes that present a high potential for innovation, jobs and sustainability of the region as a whole are explored, paying particular attention to inter-disciplinary and cross-sectoral approach, and proactive and innovative thinking among participants. The summer school is envisaged as a combination of distance learning and a 5-day face to face period to take place in June in Piran. All participants will be encouraged to develop research papers, start cooperative projects for blue economy or set off their own entrepreneurial projects.

8 Koyal Verma:

African migrants in India: mapping social morphogenesis and contradictions

Abstract

How do individuals trigger social transformation? This paper is a study on African migrants residing in India. It studies social transformation particularly through the context of the global south. In the era of globalization and accelerated migration, it maps the movement of individuals from Africa to India to observe social morphogenesis (Archer 2013). This paper will first, reflect upon the interconnection and interrelation between the empowered vs. impoverished individuals. Second, Empirically it draws from the lived experiences of African migrants in India to examine how individuals trigger social transformations and how social transformations have transformed individuals? Third, it brings out the interactions between the African migrants and the host society to understand how cultural processes contribute towards change in society and whether these processes contribute to Good society? Are the individuals more reflexive liberated and active agents or victims of transformative processes such as globalization and migration? This paper explores these contestations, contradictions, and dynamics in the context of African migrants residing in India. This research paper is qualitative in nature and uses ethnography as its primary method.

9 Marina Makarova:

“Hate Speech” in Russian Domestic Policy

Abstract

Last years, Russian domestic policy has led to Russian citizens’ dissatisfaction and to protest activity. As a result, the control from the government has been strengthening. At the same time, hate language from Russian elite directed to ordinary Russian people becomes regular practice. The aim of this paper is to analyze directions, objects, and instruments of hate speech in Russian domestic political discourse.

The “grounded theory” method was chosen to analyze 54 publications in the media that have been identified as authorities’ hate speech. For estimation of reactions on them, the method of content analysis of 212 comments in news websites and in social media has been used.

The main goal for hate speech is the criticism of oppositional and protest movements and voices.

The “domestic hate speech” is directed to the following main objects: supporters of political opposition; LGBT communities; ordinary people.

The first significant case was a Russian prime minister Dmitry Medvedev’s expression in 2016. He explained pensioner why pensions had not been raised, and said: “There’s just no money. Cheers!..” It activated mechanism of different sorts of social reactions.

The main mechanisms of authorities’ hateful language is “stigmatization”. Other tool is “denial”. Authorities prefer to deny that problems or protests exist or anonymize dissidents.

The third type of statements includes clear humiliating characteristics of citizens. The most active outrage was caused by Igor Orlov, the Governor of Archangelsk region, about the protestors against the construction of a landfill. He has called them “shelupon (trash), who are nobody here and their names are nothing....”

According to our content analysis, statements that include insults to ordinary or poor people caused only negative reactions. However, homophobic statements have been condemned only in 70 percent of cases.

Hate speech is intended to the neutralising protest behaviour and support of subordination and intolerance for diversity. In most cases, it reduces confidence in governmental actions, justifies hatred towards dissidents, and raises polarisation of society.

10 Maruša Gorišek:

Is there a place for meritocracy in the good society? Reconsidering merit for greater social responsibility

Abstract

Allocating social positions based on people's merit, skills and effort instead of inheritance has become one of the main components of contemporary societies. In terms of efficient human resource management it is impossible to deny the importance of meritocracy for technological development, innovation and productivity. However, in the last years, meritocracy and its principles have often been criticized and their actual benefits for society have been widely questioned. It is not only the reproduction of inequalities that remain a concern, but the core of meritocratic discourse as well, which in promotion of economic productivity, competition and individualism seems to leave no space for the ideas of social responsibility, sustainable development and reflexivity.

The contribution addresses this exact dilemma. Can meritocratic principles be part of the good society, can they include the dimension of social responsibility, or are these ideas completely incompatible? In this regard we focus especially on the definition of merit and how to measure it. Are diplomas, certificates and standardized tests really giving us the real picture of who is the most competent, skilled and makes the most effort?

In the framework of mainstream education, credential inflation and skills mismatch it is important to rethink which are the core competences, skills and achievements the society wants to promote and reward, and which are needed for sustainable and responsible social development?

What we understand and value as merit in a society largely depends on the agreement between different social subsystems about what are those key achievements and skills. However, preliminary results of the ongoing qualitative analysis show that different subsystems understand merit differently.

In this notion, we address the question whether it is really meritocracy as a principle that is not compatible with the ideas of social responsibility and sustainable development, or the core problem lies in the way we define and understand merit.

The contribution is based on theoretical approach and literature review examining different definitions and limitations of meritocracy, defining and measuring merit supplemented with data from ongoing qualitative study regarding meritocracy and meritocratic principles in different subsystems in Slovenia.

11 Mateja Rek:

Media literacy and active citizenship in the EU

Abstract

Democratic deficit in the EU is related to the realization that EU institutions increasingly, through broadening of their policy scopes, directly influence lives of the citizens of the EU, who don't really care much for the participation on the EU level and don't think that their voice is or can be heard on the level of the EU. EU institutions are seeking to find different ways of allowing citizens to have a greater influence in the decision-making process in the hope that this will eventually translate into greater knowledge of, interest in and support for the European Union. In last decades several actions have been taken to strengthen interaction among policy-makers and civil society. Interaction goes beyond keeping the public informed of ongoing political debates and decisions. It means that citizens and civil society has its say, the means to formulate a position, for example, and to know that this position is being taken into account in the policy-making process.

Transnational civic organisations, organized on an EU level do play an important role in the governance of the European Union. As sources of policy advice, they are being increasingly influential. However, they do not resolve the issue of democratic deficit in the EU as they are mainly professional organisations (tied to a greater need for accumulation of specialized expert knowledge in their field of work as well as in the field of managing, leading and fundraising) and have very weak links to European citizens on the local level. The lack of reference to the social capital dimension and the vertical dimension of the multi-level governance of these Brussels-based governance arrangements is evident.

In this contribution we argue, that in a digital age media literate citizens are becoming a pre-requisite for a vibrant, modern democracy. Media literacy has become a core element of the citizen's competence since it enables informed political engagement. Media literacy, which includes our capacity to access and use various media, have a critical understanding of, and interact with the media, enables citizens of all ages to navigate the modern digital news environment, deliberate and take informed decisions. It strengthens their ability to identifying and use credible information as well as develop resilience to negative phenomena produced by the media landscape, such as disinformation, hate speech fake news that can mislead their judgment. We explore, whether and how media literacy skills can contribute to a more active role of citizens in policy processes, taking into account a unique and complex policy-making system in the EU.

12 Maya FarrHenderson:

Choosing One's Own Demise: Autopsy of a Student-Led International Alternative Break

Abstract

Alternative break programmes attempt to provide an ethical alternative to voluntourism by requiring pre-trip education and advocating for equitable relationships between volunteers and communities. This study focuses on a seven-year partnership between students and a rural community in Ghana; despite personal rewards, institutional support, and community benefit, students eventually opted for organizational demise. Alternative programmes train students in critical perspectives, yet their modernizing assumptions, and the institutional conditions under which they operate, frustrate the realization of this critique in practice. Facing this tension, students concluded that international alternative breaks are incompatible with the ideal of equity that originally attracted them to and was cultivated by the programme itself.

13 Ortenca Kotherja:

Bullism and its impact on pupils' psychological aspect

Abstract

The phenomenon of bullies is characterized by a series of negative behaviours that affect the body, feeling, social relationships, reputation and social status of the individual that has been abused. This phenomenon of bullying in Albania is not well documented and does not necessarily represent the same patterns of behaviour as in other countries. The print and electronic media, as well as various studies pointed out that Albanian children experience bullying. The data provided by those few surveys that have been conducted are limited and do not provide a complete picture of the phenomenon. In these circumstances, not all school violence is visible and recognizable. The school is the place where children spend most of their time. The social climate created at school and the quality of control at school are of particular importance in detecting and coping with the phenomenon of bullism. Teacher themselves need to be more involved in positive climate change at school. Clear and firm rules need to be put in place to apply them with their positive and negative consequences. Their thinking affects the student's academic performance. Understanding the causes that enable the development of ballistic behaviours helps to create problem-solving strategies. The purpose of this study is to provide a picture of the spread of the phenomenon of school bullying and its effects on students' psychology. Quantitative and qualitative methods were used for conducting this study. Questionnaire on bullying for students (1996-2006) of Dan Olews aimed to measure the spread of the phenomenon of bullies' while interviewing for data collection on the psychological impact of bullied students. The sample consisted of 100 pupils where only 71 of them completed the questionnaire. Students were of class level 10-12 and 15-18 ages. Based on the results, it was concluded that bullies were a widespread phenomenon and a very significant impact on their behavioural responses. Some of the recommendations presented in the study are to emphasize the development of teaching and social interaction techniques to eliminate the negative effects created by bullied children as well as individual and group counselling by school psychologists on the psycho-social well-being pupils.

14 Paola Menepace:

Effectiveness of policies for innovation on a local level. A comparative study of social networks

Abstract

How can partners from different societal fields (science, business, third sector), who enter an innovation project, develop a network that enables them to communicate and coordinate the project to reach the expected results in time and budget? Do partners reflect on their relations to the other partners within a network? This dissertation project aimed at addressing these questions by investigating the role of social reflexivity, as theorized by Donati (2011), on “team-efficiency/effectiveness” in outperforming of EU-funded innovation projects in two specific regions of the Netherlands and Germany. Social reflexivity is a concept used by Donati for describing reflexivity at the meso-level of the social networks, which builds upon the prior theorisation of Archer about the analytical category of reflexivity. Donati tries to extend this notion of reflexivity to social networks, considering reflexivity being inherent to social structures in an interactive way, i.e., producing social reflexivity. The main thesis of the dissertation was that the presence of social reflexivity at a team level allowed more efficient and effective results at the end of a project.

In this dissertation a morphogenetic approach to change (Archer 1995, Donati 2011) was applied in an explorative way in order to detect the emergence of the property of social reflexivity in the networks of the innovation projects at the end of the morphogenetic process. The main aim was to detect if the networks were able to produce and stabilise a new structure, which could inform about the emergence of social reflexivity. For Donati there are four “paths to change”, which may occur at the end of the morphogenetic process, but only the path of the creative morphogenesis is considered to be indicative of a network that shows a completely new structure that can stabilise itself through the use of social reflexivity, i.e., relational feedback and steering. The importance of social reflexivity for outperforming of EU-funded innovation projects, especially regarding effectiveness, not for efficiency, was confirmed in both countries.

The innovativeness of this dissertation was in the application of the more complex and cognitively-based concept of social reflexivity, which pertains every social network, for studying the link between group reflexivity and performance in EU-funded innovation projects. The results of this research cannot be generalised but they can contribute to a better understanding under which conditions social reflexivity can emerge in a network and how it can be used for better performance.