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Social Inclusion in Connection with Civil Society

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Abstract

The social inclusion is in the connection with civil society one of the most important topics in the area of social policy and social work in Slovakia. The need of understanding and using of social inclusion in social policy is visible in connection with all target groups. In this case is the understanding of civil society from slovak perspective needed, because of the cultural change in the short history of Slovak republic.

Key words

Social inclusion, social policy, social work, society, civil society, citizen

The state of civil society on Slovak Republic

After the fall of communism, new freedom and opportunities for civic activism and association have opened and new activities started to flourish. New actors – active citizens and their structures – nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and other independent bodies – started to play an increasing role in the Slovak society. New sphere of societal life – civil society – has been gaining in its importance. The development in Slovakia has been very much linked with miscellaneous political and societal changes the Slovak society has undergone since 1989. The governments were facing challenging tasks of how to transit the country into free market and open society respecting individual freedoms and restoring culture of democracy (Marček, 2008).

Many authors point out that totalitarian regimes cancelled the separation of the society from state, subjugated the civil society to the state and excluded the validity of many rights and freedoms existing before the state and being independent on it (Sedlaková, Tokolyová, 2005). In this extreme form of political society, the societal organisations were not the autonomous expression of interests but the additional tool of their amelioration and supervision. Therefore

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the restoration of the autonomy of the individual and civil society has become the main task in preventing the expansionism of the state, though it does not express that such a danger is connected only with state, because its source also exists in a civil society. State can then only be used as a kind of power instrument. Therefore the restoration of civil society also has this qualitative dimension—it requires the restoration of democratic citizenship and civil virtues (Šamalík, 1995).

Some see the evolution of Slovakia in this process as successful, stating that the creation of a democratic civil society, built upon involvement of a relatively large group of civic activists and strong and politically independent civic communities and associations, is what is now known as the Slovak story. And in this way, the Slovak Republic as a democratic state – from your perspective, a small country in the center of Europe – became a success story not only in Europe (Vašaryová, 2005).

However, if we look at empirical data we may observe many difficulties. In his research on civil society M. M. Howard presents empirical findings that constitute the crucial “baseline,” a comparative measure of participation in voluntary organizations across a wide set of countries. The countries were divided into three groups, classified by prior regime type, as either “older democracies,” “post-authoritarian,” or “post-communist.” The question phrasings were all identical, asking whether or not respondents are members of each of a set of nine voluntary organizations: (1) church or religious organizations, (2) sports or recreational clubs, (3) educational, cultural, or artistic organizations, (4) labor unions, (5) political parties or movements, (6) environmental organizations, (7) professional associations, (8) charity organizations, and (9) any other voluntary organization. The results show that, with the partial exception of labor unions, participation in voluntary organizations is much lower in post-communist countries than in the older democracies and the post-authoritarian countries. Compared to the two other groups, the post-communist countries are almost exclusively grouped at the lowest levels of organizational membership. Moreover levels of membership in post-communist countries have declined significantly, especially when compared to those in the post-authoritarian countries (Howard, 2003).

As a specific problem in Slovakia we can mention the state of the Roma population. Roma civil society organizations (CSOs) and pro-Roma non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Central and Southeast Europe have frequently called attention to human rights violations, social exclusion, territorial segregation, and inadequate civic and political representation of Roma. However, at national level and especially at local grassroots level, the vast majority of marginalized Roma communities remain detached from CSO activities. A research conducted by A. Kóczé underscores the need to rethink and restructure the financial and human resources with which these CSOs function in order to better implement high-impact projects. The CSOs’ modes of operation need to better reflect the real needs and expectations of beneficiary communities, as well as the changing roles and relationships between state and civil society actors (Kóczé, 2012).

It can be concluded that with progressing democratization, structural reforms and international integration more partner relationships between the civil society and governments in Slovakia started to develop. NGOs indeed used the opportunities to voice out their interests, shape public policies, make more opportunities for citizens to take more participatory and informed decisions and actions. Thus have significantly contributed to maturity of civic environment in Slovakia and have built respect within other actors and even beyond the borders.

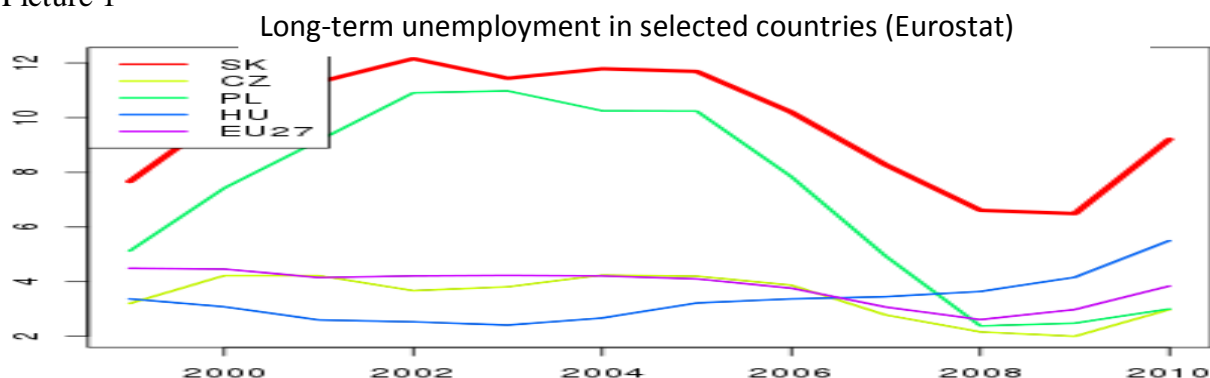
However, for the future more understanding approach especially from the ruling elites would be desired. Understanding the role of independent criticism and advocacy for governments as well as formulation of public policy to enhance development of the NGO sector in Slovakia are important challenges. On the other hand, the NGO sector in Slovakia also faces needs to define where it is heading and what model of the government-NGO relationships it would prefer. Mutual dialogue and cooperation can at the end bring more effective usage of both actors' capacities and resources to enrich public space for the good of whole of society (Marček, 2008).

Unemployment, poverty and age structure in Slovakia

Unemployment - especially long-term unemployment - is one of the major social problems in Slovakia since the democratic changes in 90`s. Current unemployment rate is more than 14% and haven`t decrease since the beginning of financial crisis. The fluctuation on labour market between 2007 and 2011 has been accompanied by total increase of unemployment. The main risk groups in the labour market are young people and graduates, women with young children, people with low education and skills and people with disabilities. As already mentioned, significant problem is long-term unemployment. (Picture 1) Almost 64 % of all unemployed in 2011 were unemployed more than 1 year, dominated by men (65%, women 62,5%). Percentage of those, unemployed more than 4 years was more than 9%. (Botek 2012) This high percentage is important even for future activities, as chance for participation on labour market for these people is lower than those unemployed shorter. Other significant problem is unemployment rate of young people. More than 20% of all unemployed people were in age from 15 to 24 (man – 23%, women – 17%). Another risk group consist of people with low education. These people comprise more that 55% of all unemployed people. (Social Trends in Slovak Republic 2011) Slovakia with it`s strong orientation on automobile and electronic industry is in higher risk of structural unemployment. Some new approaches and programs were introduce to deal with unemployement in Slovakia, as for example:

- Competition of Employment Services (non-public services)
- Intermediate labor market
- Inclusive enterprises

Picture 1

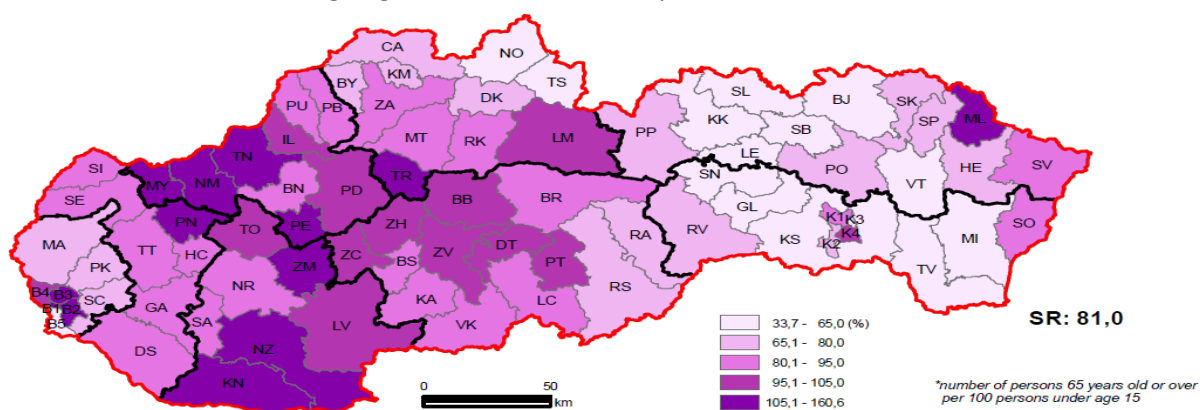


Unemployment or non-participation at labour market belongs to significant factors with impact on formation and deepening of poverty. There were 13% of population in risk of poverty in Slovakia in 2011, with slightly higher risk for women – 13,1% than men – 12,8%. (EU SILC 2011) According to type of household, highest risk is observed in households with two adults and three and more dependent children (32,6%). Other risk groups are single parent families with at least one dependent child (26,4%).

Specific group of inhabitants in risk are elderly people. The age structure of the post-productive population (65+) has gradually changed. Since 2010, the share of post-productive inhabitants has increased to 12.4% of the total population. As a result of the decrease in 0 – 14 year old and the increase in 65+, the aging index continues to rise (picture 2). Compared with 2009, the aging index increased by 1 point.

Picture 2

Ageing index of inhabitants by districts of the SR



When comparing with the current state of social services for seniors, we can see very slow increase of these services (picture 3). This situation negatively affects long latencies for social services for seniors.

Picture 3 Social service facilities as on dec. 31, 2011

2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Indicator
824	873	955	1 060	1 135	<i>Social service facilities in total</i>
549	579	643	707	755	<i>of which Institutional facilities</i>
407	436	494	563	613	<i>of which For adults</i>
206	208	222	263	243	<i>of which Seniors homes</i>
15	16	-	-	-	<i>Boarding-houses for seniors</i>

Roma issue

Slovakia can be described as a multiethnic state. Roma do not live in an integrated territory, but are scattered throughout Slovakia. In their number, and the concentration of the various regions of the Slovak Republic, there are large differences. Although the degree of integration of the Roma ethnic group is very heterogeneous. For the integrated nature of the part of the Roma ethnic group, which took over all the habits, customs, or most, of the majority society. Conversely non-integrated part of the Roma population is a way of life very different from the majority. Non-integrated Roma live mostly in separated or segregated Roma settlements and about a quarter of non-integrated Roma live among the majority population. (List faktov, www.romovia.vlada.gov.sk)

Currently there are no official statistics on the ethnic composition of the population, whereas in retrospect these data are in conflict with human rights. The most ethnic data are replaced by the ethnic composition of the population. Unlike ethnic data, which is attributed to the citizen on the basis of ethnicity or assessment. decision of another person, national data are based on voluntary declaration of any individual to any nationality. This fact is particularly effective to determine the real number of Roma in Slovakia. (Atlas Rómskych komunit, 2004)

According to the Atlas of Roma Communities 2004, the number of Roma living in Slovakia 320 000 people. Estimates of Demographic Research Centre (Vaňo, 2011), however, say the likelihood of 440,000 Roma living in Slovakia in 2011, which is about 8% of the total population. Most Roma are concentrated in Prešov, Košice and Banská Bystrica Region.

Atlas of Roma Communities in 2004 mapped the 1,087 villages or towns. In them was identified 1,575 different types of settlements in which they live community perceived as Roma. In 772 villages or towns they live these communities integrated into the majority population. Segregated settlements is 149, it means that these settlements are located on the outskirts of a village / town with no access to running water and a high proportion of illegal

dwellings. According to the survey of the United Nations Development Programme (hereinafter referred to as UNDP, from English. United Nations Development Programme) in 2010, more than half of all Roma households living in separate brick houses and apartments in residential buildings used by a total of 21% of households. The non-standard forms of dwellings lived together 16% of Roma households, of which 10% in the shack and 5% in a wooden house or a non-standard type of dwelling. (Regionálny prieskum marginalizovaných Rómov, 2011, UNDP/Svetová banka)

According to the UNDP survey in 2010 based on the current economic status of the Roma population constitutes the largest part of a group of Roma in pre-productive age. This group represents a total of 44% of the total Roma population, while 19% were children before school age, and 25% were young adults up to 25 years. Defined as the ratio of post-retirement-age pensioners was very low, amounting to 5%. The remaining 51% were economically active (employed and unemployed) and other economically inactive - at home, on maternity and parental leave, disability pensioners, and other types. The degree of segregation in housing is represented preproductive population of Roma slightly increases. According to research by UNDP in 2010, the survey methodology workers showed that the Roma population 15 to 64 years are most numerous on-unemployed Roma women is 72% of Roma women and 75% of the population. According to the same research using the same methodology is employed 20% of Roma men and 11% of Roma women. (UNDP, 2010).

The state government, local authorities, nongovernmental organizations, churches, volunteers and others have been striving to ameliorate Roma issues. There were projects with local and international funding but their implementation has failed to bring significant progress. Poor coordination and ineffective use of resources as well as little participation by Roma are the causes.

The Roma population has not managed to cope with transition-related changes and now the "Roma issue" ranks among the most pressing issues of the Slovak society (Janot, 2004). Activities must be coordinated and implemented by several entities such agencies of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, municipalities, schools, NGOs, churches, etc. Motivating the Roma population and developing their awareness, values and responsibility are important challenges.

Priority areas that need to be targeted include education, unemployment and prevention.

Education of Roma ranks among the elementary segregation factors. Roma children account for a substantial share of students in special schools. Education is influenced by the so-called "dual socialization" which actually reflects two-track education. Education, on one hand, is under the influence of the traditional trends claiming that children learn everything at home. On the other hand, education is provided by the state. The strong presence of the traditional forms results in many children not coming to state-run schools or staying for just a very short time. In the future, attention will be focused on pre-school facilities where children can acquire elementary hygiene habits and social skills. Their transition to school is then much easier for them. Elementary schools have been successfully using services of so-called Roma

assistants. Their role is to help children master their assignments at school in order to prevent children from lagging behind their classmates. Roma assistants frequently are graduates from social work courses specialising in Roma culture. In order to succeed in education of Roma children, economic barriers have to be eliminated and, above all, parents of Roma children need incentives to get involved in the education of their children. Education also concerns adult Roma. There are projects and programs offering training courses for acquisition or reinforcement of working habits.

Employment is closely inter-related with education. The unemployment rate among the Roma population is high, at times as high as 100%. The cause is poor or no education; in many cases one could speak about illiteracy which is alarmingly high in that group of the population. On the other hand, there are problems concerning the labour market situation and job opportunities. Many Roma live in regions with very few job opportunities which makes their success in the labour market more difficult. Social discrimination against Roma is also a barrier to their employment. Many of them, discouraged with previously experienced failure, stay within their community and stop looking for employment.

Prevention focuses on social and pathological phenomena and also on health condition of the population. In segregated communities, in particular, the birth rate is high and first time mothers are often very young. Those communities frequently suffer from epidemics and oncologic diseases. Regarding pathological social phenomena, there is a rather high incidence of sexual crime and prostitution and drug addiction in children and juveniles is increasing.

Social services

In recent years is the area of social services increasingly discussed not only by the professionals but also by the all members of the society. In Slovak Republic in the field of social services has happened significant changes.

In the year 2008 was adopted the Act on Social services no. 448/ 2008 Coll. Before the adoption of this important legislation was the area of social services carefully investigated by the focusing on the social services client's needs and on the conditions of providing social services. For example in the year 2007 the Ministry of labour, social affairs and family of Slovak Republic in cooperation with municipalities prepared the SWOT analysis of the providing of social services. The results of this analysis showed the urgent need of strengthening and encouraging of this area by the adoption of the new legislation. As a strongest site of social services „is considered particularly the focus and effectiveness of the social services providing after the decentralization, also the respect for the principle of the subsidiarity and strengthened financing under the new tax redistribution mechanism.“ According to the Act No. 448/2008 Coll. on social services as amended public and non-public providers are obliged for registration to provide social services and specialised activities.

The aim of provision of social services is prevention, solution, or mitigation of unwanted social situations of individuals; to support an individual to lead self-sufficient life and prevent

social exclusion, and to secure the conditions for the satisfaction of an individuals' basic life needs.

The legislative standards were developed on the basis of decentralisation and subsidiarity, devolution of powers from the state to local levels. The planning of social services is drawn from the needs of citizens and the specificities of separate regions. Agents participating in community planning of social services are:

- Procurers of social services: towns and municipalities, self-governing regions with a statutory obligation of ensuring social services;
- Providers of social services – “public providers” established by self-governing regions or municipalities, or “non-public providers”;
- Users of social services – clients in distressing social situations;
- The public – family members of clients, citizens living in the covered area.

It results from the above that social services in Slovakia are provided by both “public” (selfgovernment) and “non-public” (private) providers. The state social services represent a substantial share. The law designates characteristics of kinds and forms of social services. Regarding kinds, social services focus on the following:

- Taking necessary measures to satisfy the basic needs for life;
- Supporting families with children;
- Handling difficult social situation of people on grounds of poor health or retirement age.

Services can be provided for *visiting, in-field or residential* clients. Visiting clients come to sites where they get services. In-field services are provided to clients in their original locale. The aim is to avoid societal exclusion of individuals, families or communities. Residential services are provided in facilities with available accommodation for clients. These are mainly all year-round or weekly services.

In order to assess eligibility for a social service, social workers conduct a so-called *social assessment* to assess individual clients, their family background and the general setting which influences how clients are included in the mainstream community. Clients who meet certain criteria can pick social services and the form of their provision. In Slovakia social services are ensured by municipalities. Municipalities may prefer to choose those providers which it had established (the public to non-public). In situations where services cannot be provided by public providers, municipalities buy those services from non-public providers. Those practices have been criticised by non-public providers who complain about imminent discrimination against them. The clients' right of free choice of facility also is jeopardized.

All providers are generally obliged to:

- Consider the needs of clients on an individual basis;

- Activate clients to their capabilities and capacities;
- Cooperate with families, municipalities and communities in preparing clients for re-integration with their families;
- Carry out specialised activities, servicing and other activities.

The fundamental legislative framework for social work is the Act of Social Services and the Act of Child Protection. The legislative standards were developed on the basis of decentralisation and subsidiarity, with devolution of powers from the state to local levels. The planning of social services is drawn from the needs of citizens and the specific needs of separate regions. (Šramatá, Kállay, 2010)

Social services include the following:

- social services to secure necessary conditions for satisfaction of basic life needs in accommodation facilities,
- social services to support families with children (especially help with child care),
- social services to resolve unwanted social situations arising due to heavy health impairment, unwanted medical state, or reaching pension age (caretaking service, transport service, guide service, reading service, interpretation service, arranging personal assistance, lending gadgets),
- social services with use of telecommunications technologies,
- support services.

The Ministry of labour, social affairs and family of the Slovak Republic is responsible to run the Central register of those providers. Registrations of service providers are structured according to a regional aspect, area of services, type of services within an area and according to a legal status of service provider .

Up to the first half of 2011 there were in the Central Register of social service providers totally of 2742 registrations for providing of social services and specialised activities (the figure was higher than total number of providers because of one provider could be registered for more times to provide various services and activities according to the Act on social services).

- Almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of all registrations (73,5%) were connected to social services for long-term care

dependent persons (mainly to provide home care, services of care homes or homes for seniors).

- In the Bratislava and Košice regions a number of registrations referred to a number of people as potential social service users was the highest, in Prešov region was, in opposite, the lowest.

- Almost 62% of all registrations were as registrations of public providers, 38%

were as registrations of non-public ones

- The highest amount of public service providers' s registrations were focused for area of

long-term care services (66,5%) and supportive services (80%) which belong to a traditional social service engagements of local and regional governments.

- Number of registrations of public and non-public providers in other social service areas

(e.g. ensuring of basic living needs, family and children support) was more balanced/equalised; in a case of new types of social services (e.g. low-threshold centres, services based on ICT solutions) or some specialised activities (e.g. social counselling, social rehabilitation) the representation of non-public providers was clearly higher.

- To ensure an integrated social – health long-term care for care dependent persons totally

For 14 hospitals were registered as social service providers. In totally eight cases they were as non-profit organisations, mainly from Prešov a Košice regions.

- There was some general observation that traditional types of social services (e.g. home care,

homes for seniors, residential care homes) were dominated by public service providers while new types of them were as a dominance of non-public ones.

Conclusion

The reality of the connection between social inclusion and society is different with specific target groups. From the evolution perspective are the conditions on political level comparable with other European countries. The specific problem of social inclusion with Roma and long-term unemployed needs intensive cooperation based on long-term strategy in connection with civil society, government and self-government.

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