

SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN ROMANIA. THE INSSUFICIENCY OF A CORRECT SOCIAL REPRESENTATION WITHIN ROMANIAN UNIONS

Assoc. Prof. PhD. Simona Mina^x
Constanța Maritime University^x

ABSTRACT

Trade union movement in Romania is mostly oriented on actions by reaction type, and the decrease of the impact of trade unionism would be generated by the fact that, for various reasons, these reactions are emptied of content, and are simple reflexes of mobilizing structures now deprived of their engine: the political action. My answer starts to widen the field of analysis. My thesis is that, long enough already, Romanian unionism preferred to old social reaction *and trade union struggle*, the participation in the construction of policies in areas of interest. Unions should be transformed in some important social actors, who are establishing social rules regarding civil society. This should be an important way for eliminating the gap of power between employers and employees.

Keywords: *unions, regional development, social exclusion*

1. INTRODUCTION

Social differentiation manifested in the recent years in Romania is usually a characteristic of young democracies. Those differences between different regions regarding the quality of life are usually generating public unfairness. Social activities, social welfare, and economic development are more reactive within the regions of an empowerment civil society.

Civil society is usually responsible of social embodiment. The individuation and the state are working together for the public benefits. Civil society is a consequence of a traditional democratic life and a real challenge for young democracies which should be able to develop this citizen empowerment, from the bottom to the top of the society. Civil society should not be confused with a public policy like liberalism or with the democracy within the entire interpretation of the word; otherwise, civil society is representing a good mechanism of those, and a real social consequence of these.

One of this study's tasks is to analyze how civil society could prevent social exclusion. And first we reduced our research to the reality of the organization. That's why we are considering that civil society presumes a good answer to the risks of social exclusions, and the principle is also applicable to the organizational life. If lobbying, advocacy and unions life would be much more powerful, the risks of the invisible employee and also the risks of the marginal employees would be diminished [4]. Invisible employees are those who are staying apart of the main organizational tasks, because they are perceiving themselves as not being involved in the process of elaborating decisions, they are not taking part in the management process or in the executive life of the organization. It is the same situation applicable to the citizens which are not empowered in the government process, in a young democracy with a poor civil society. That's why one of the main aims of this article is to determine that civil society is one of the responsible factors for social exclusion.

In corporate, members of the organizations are in relations generated by their common interests, objectives and benefits; difficulties in these relations are generated by the diversity. Societies, as corporate, would be

effective, when their actions would be a good answer to the participants' interests, respecting the rules of diversity. This also represents a real challenge for young democracies to be able to implement.

Concept of good society will be very well provided within this paper. The uncertainty in retention of position, deficiency and effective social welfare system, the atmosphere of total danger-are the realities of day-to-day life of an average individual in post-social countries. Researchers have written about the loss of trust, lack of fit, about rushing society desolation. This permits to deny the right to call the contemporary society as "good society". The definition of good society differs from the definition of civil society as the latter consists of recognition of all voluntary associations directed to the society consolidation and to mutual understanding, but good society supports specific societal concepts of welfare[1].

Over twenty- five years of foreign help to public sphere organization have not brought the expected results. Development analysis of civil societies in post-social societies is disappointing: comparing with the West, the post-social society is much weaker and it does not correspond to the prominent expectancies at the cusp of 1980-90 years [2].

2. SOCIAL EXCLUSIONS. THEORIES AND REALITIES

Situations of political exclusion could be determined by deprivation of political rights, civil rights, like political participation and the right to be organized and the right of your interests being correctly and fairly represented. These questions could be applied in the political representation of the communities, but could also be a reality of the employees' representation within the organizations.

George McKenna [3] presented within his theories this concept of social exclusion describing the state as being an unfair actor within the work of representing correctly and fairly public interests and personal interests of the citizens and communities. Economic exclusion: include lack of access to the labor market, credits and other forms of capital.

Regarding demographic variables such as: ethnicity, age, level of instruction, gender, marital status, social exclusion could degenerate in discrimination. The health of the labor market could be affected by these actions. Social exclusion is a consequence of a non-healthy relation between those who are deciding and are empowered by the capacity of taking decisions, and other collectives.

One of this study's aims is to determine if there is a relation between poverty and social deprivation and societies which are affected by social exclusion. Capacity of accepting the differences within perceptions, norms and lifestyles could be a consequence also of social exclusion and a cultural exclusion, much more specifically.

Causes of social exclusion could not be determined exactly. Some authors described ways of social exclusion generated by geography, access barriers, corruption, intimidation and physical violence. The gap between rural areas and urban zones are some geographical characteristics which are usually determining poverty and social exclusion (lack of infrastructure access which could prevent large possibility of going to school and having equal and free access to the educational system). Network of social relations takes on a special configuration with roles and gaps which reflects the lack of links with social actors of welfare. Isolated rural areas will promote poverty and social exclusion; but urban areas could generate such perceptions also, within geographical factors of exclusion: are you providing by some stigmatic areas, with some problematically neighborhood associated with crime, drugs or fights between gangs, this will definitely reduce your chances to obtain a job, or to be recommended for obtaining another accommodation; this exclusion facts will determine frustration, isolation and ultimately violence, will develop short communities isolated by the large ones, with no interests defined or represented.

Another category of access barriers bureaucracy is determined by the required documentation. The state is often inflexible in supporting "the excluded", for having access to resources. Following studies and research, most of the poor interviewed, especially in cities, express frustration at the difficulties of access to programs, services or jobs because of various nature documentation required by the bureaucracy. But documentations are just some of the bureaucratic barriers because these requirements are added as hostility way of working from a position of superiority to the poor bureaucrats.

Corruption is the link between bribes and obtaining pensions, jobs, health care, diploma study, business or licenses. Corruption in the local officials has been registered as a common problem worldwide [6].

Its consequences are reflected not only in financial terms but are all the more serious as eroding confidence in state institutions, essential trust to the normal functioning of the society.

Equal access and fair treatment of the poor by these institutions is otherwise impossible and accelerates their disengagement and deepening poverty, which becomes chronic.

Due to corruption, companies no longer provide security to their members and increasing insecurity leads

to deepening social cleavages, increasing social fragmentation and exclusion.

Intimidation and violence: they are observable at all levels of society and the mechanisms of social exclusion are used for reinforcing stereotypes and power relations.

Self-exclusion is among the sources of social exclusion and is mainly attributed to individual choice. We note that in this case the individual's choice, however keeps the way it is integrated or not in the community, which practically influences the decisions.

The most common explanations are related to cultural model, carelessness, indifference, rejection to participate in social life or simply social non-involvement.

The main factors of social exclusion are:

- Rapid erosion of revenues due to the economic crisis, both in value and number;
- Increased income polarization;
- Reduced wage work places;
- Income of those who resorted to economic activities on their own were marked by uncertainty;
- Disruption of social control - the decline in the population with basic social services.

Roger Muchielli [5] puts beyond the conformist behavior two types of factors: the need for approval from others and the need for certainty. Each of us are developing a variety of behaviors, without knowing, always accurately which ones are not that positive, the negative effects that have been taken and which have been rejected. Approval or behavior certainty we receive from our group of organizational affiliation, leads us to respect the norms of the group in which we live (the first reason compliance is more important than jurisdiction or coercion). The group meets, above all, the need for security and, with it, the approval or certainty. Typologies of dissent in labor groups are, however, permanent sources of conflict. The main forms of dissent are found in organizational psychology:

- deviation from the norms of the group: deviances;
- entry in opposition to the behavioral norms of the group: opponents;
- keeping the edge group rules: Marginal ("marginal man").

Deviance is characterized by rules that do not conform to group membership. It is known that each group contains so-called "tolerance limits on behavioral line." Group behavior can support one of its members, held within certain limits. Once these are overcome, the phenomenon of deviance appears. Deviance is individualized in relation to its own group in that act from another group or simply through aberrant standards. In such conditions, many interactions will appear between a deviant person and a group. On the one hand, deviants trying to sustain and even to impose their views and sometimes, on the other hand, the group takes measures to limit deviance, reduction to normal or even open fight with deviance. In the initial phase, the pressure is only within the affective nature. When deviant behavior

becomes more suspect, the group is much open to it and the main forms of manifestation of the group is blaming and / or assigning "tags" (renegade, traitor, irresponsible...). In another phase, when deviance presumes lucid refusal, involving systematic, especially aggressive deviance, not only affective relationships are broken, but also, social contact with the deviant is becoming limited.

Opponents manifests itself more open than deviance. He opposes categorically and permanently to group's norms and collective opinions and practically behaves the same as deviants. If opponents, the phenomena are more precisely shaped and there is a risk for generating group's rupture.

Marginal or "marginal man" is one who stands at the edge of the group, in a way, "out of" or beyond its limits, not strictly limited, but psychologically and morally limited.

By the expression "distance" we should translate moral and psychological distance, which individual is versus group's membership norms and values.

Individual marginality stems from the fact that either it is integrated, but has profound dissatisfaction related to group affiliation, or he is refusing to integrate.

In this context, marginality is an extreme limit sign of deviance and is producing a fracture. As marginal can occur: alien, (a researcher that remains far from inner life of a group); newcomer (that adapts and integrates hard, which makes the initial periods of this process to be outside the group, with all the efforts we make to adapt); deviance (passing over the edges of tolerable behavior of their group).

Depending on nonconformist personality (status, role, authority, prestige) the degree of the conflict and its influence within the group could be determined. If left alone maverick in his attitude, he will generate ineffective behavior and, finally, he will be neutralized, expelled and even "liquidated". Conflicts generated by the nonconformists within the group are in this situation, dysfunctional. If, however, nonconformists add other members to the group, it appears the possibility of establishing fractions, broad frameworks of micro-groups within the group, which facilitate the emergence of phenomena of conflict and tensions between them.

Nonconformists could influence the group, especially in certain circumstances, when they become leaders. Spirited enough by the position to drive and influence the actions and behaviors of others within its own actions and behaviors, the nonconformists need support and partisanship to impose their ideas, which will lead some members of the group or everyone to comply with the new values and / or standards.

From this results that conformist and nonconformist attitudes are not completely polar, but rather complementary. Some effects of nonconformity concern the group as a whole: rupture, splitting the group into subgroups, the emergence of tension states hampers the normal activities.

In labor groups, the few nonconformist attitudes can translate in violation of internal rules of the group on a number of phenomena, of which the most important may be the performance in terms of work productivity and absenteeism.

In labor groups, there may be three types of nonconformity:

- Nonconformity group - when the entire group as a whole, departs from some group norms, respecting other rules of other groups;
- Nonconformity subgroup - when some group members deviate from its rules;
- Nonconformity individual - in case one member does not comply in part or in full compliance group.

But because group compliance rules are not a permanent, a positive factor in labor groups, nonconformism is not always a negative factor. Appropriate priority of those situations where patterns and modes of behavior between the group and the reality there is a big discrepancy when group norms are worn and require organizational change processes and formulated demands are very important.

There are within labor groups, some employees who will be open to new, compared to some urgent, latent or explicit, and there are also employees who are determining, through behaviors, actions and their skills, and the capacity of managing to overcome even conflicting states; this presence should only be saluted.

Such a leader is required to be the union leader, who aims to raise group level predictability, obsolescence or conformism, to a new level in accordance with the requirements and demands of the social group. In Lewin's experiment on management styles, such a leader is called "radioactive atom". To create some chances for a labor conflict being settled in favor of employees, union leader, even in stages of mediation and negotiation with the employer or the government, must borrow such a nonconformist behavior productive (which can constitute only a functional conflict approach).

We revealed that the mission's chances of union's success are greatly diminished by the inapplicability of procedures of lobbying within mediation negotiation or arbitration of labor disputes. To formulate and estimate correctly the diminished chances of success of trade unionists in resolving labor conflicts, we consider it appropriate to present US doctrine sense about what is the process of lobbying. Whatever the typology or managerial style, we conclude that, in our opinion, it is impossible for a union leader to meet scientific terms to streamline a process of lobbying.

If we are trying to describe lobbying in the American perspective, we should clarify the term interest group. An interest group is any group of citizens that shares certain views about what the government should or should not do and that attempts to influence public policy accordingly. A lobby is the arm of the interest group that is used to influence policymakers.

Interest groups come in many variety: economic interest groups, such as unions and business organizations; single-issue interest groups; liberal and conservative interest groups; religious interest groups; public interest groups; and state and local interest groups.

Pluralist theory supports the interaction of interest groups. It sees them as a way to govern without repressing the vital interests of any legitimate group in society. It

emphasizes the virtues of compromise and gradual change.

Three criticism of pluralism are, first, that it gives short shift to those who are not organized; second, that it fails to deal with the fact that some interests have more power than others; and third, that it seems to leave no room for consideration of transcendent national interests.

Some critics of pluralism go further, arguing that America is run by a power elite. Pluralists oppose this argument, claiming that it is the dispersal of power, not the concentration of it that marks our system.

Techniques used to exercise influence presumed by a lobbying activity, that should be applied by union's leaders too, are:

- Contacting government officials directly to present your point of view
- Engaging in informal contacts with officials
- Presenting research results or technical information
- Sending letters to members of your organization to inform them about the stage of develop of the lobbying process
- Entering into coalitions with other organizations
- Attempting to shape the implementation of policies
- Talking with the representatives from mass-media
- Consulting with government officials to plan legislative strategy
- Helping to draft legislation
- Shaping the government's agenda by raising new issues and calling attention

3. RISKS OF THE INVISIBLE EMPLOYEE

John Burton defines a series of eight human needs that are based on the idea of feedback from others, need for response from others (and therefore consistency), need for stimulus, need for security, need for recognition (whereby individual social achieving confirm the fact that his reactions to stimulations coming from society are relevant and approved), need for specific costs (not enough that the answers the individual receives be consistent, they must be consistent with the experiences and expectations), need to be perceived as a rational person (this stems from the need for consistency of response that an individual receives from others; rationality notes that there are others who need a consistent behavior too), need to understand the consistent response and need for control

Maslow's based on the idea that the threat of unmet needs in an individual creates considerable tension, imagine what can cause in organizational neglect by both the employer and the employee of these human needs based on feedback.

People are drawn to the idea of whole, complete, and will understand the events that happen every day and have principles that give order and therefore predictability. The activity of an employee depends not only on the component "to do", but also on the component "evaluate" and "improve". If the activity carried out by an employee is evaluated and the evaluation result is not communicated

in a comprehensive manner, the employee may experience a voltage generated by unmet needs for response from his boss. If this lack of response persists, according to his personality, the employee may manifest as: outbreak ("explosion") or attack directed inward, inward ("implosion").

In both cases, we are dealing with a frustrated employee that, over time, can become very cranky (but may not exactly call because of their irritability) and will end up leaving his employer or leaving the physical organization or staying, but becoming "absent" from the point of view of its participation (especially within the creative aspects).

The lack of feedback places the employee in a state of stagnation: being confused, he does not know if his efforts are adequate, sufficient or if there are necessary for the head to notice. When the employee receives feedback, either positive, negative or neutral, he is already placed in an environment more secure than when not knowing this feedback.

He feels free to choose his next move and has the feeling of belonging to a transparent environment, the predictability of actions not free fuels his tension / stress. The idea of feedback can create unjustified inhibition. Many who should provide feedback forget or do not understand that feedback means a phrase like: "You did a great job! Thank you!" or "During the meeting, you made the transition from one subject to another, without ensuring additional comments as anyone has done," and concludes that result from the most complex evaluation process. It is very important for the employee to feel that his work is recognized, in any form and that this recognition has continuity.

If, on several occasions, the employer shall give positive feedback to his employee, it should lead naturally and, as a gratification of efforts, expressed as a change of function by assigning new responsibilities and increased compensation or even form of bonuses based on performance. Without this continuity in applying feedback, the employee may feel ignored or even useless for the company where they work.

It is true that it is very difficult to give negative feedback and also it's hard to get it. Most often, poor performance of an employee can have many causes and discuss both partners need to be aware of this and, if possible, to eliminate them. There is, however, a solution to avoid negative feedback if it is precisely that avoiding means stagnation, and this prevents the development of solving / improvement.

Feedback should be provided when the performance is of a certain level, either negative or positive. There are employees who, in the absence of feedback, especially in the absence of negative ones, are imagining that their work stems from the standards required by the employer.

It is a lack of respect for the employee to claim that at the end of an activity year, his performance was low, as long as during that year no one warned him about the decreasing quality in his service. Speaking of feedback, we are talking about the attention that an employer knows or does not know to offer to his employee and thus by exhibiting /showing it or not, the employee will invest the same attitude in the employer.

The employee becomes increasingly "invisible" for the employer, the chances that he will seek to fill that need as being remarked in another company will grow up.

Most often, bosses are defending themselves against this threat through lack of time, paying more attention to the business itself than to the people's unwanted interferences that might disturb the organization's life.

4. DECENTRALIZATION OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND PATERNALISTIC ORGANIZATIONS

The classics of managerial science present conflict as a "bad" thing, determined by the lack of understanding among people and the profoundly poor interpersonal relations. The characteristics of the organizational sector, as the main guide of the human behavior, are considered to be "guilty" for the presence of conflicts. In order to avoid the conflicting coordinates, the organizations will focus on developing a harmonious cooperation between the management and the employees. The organizations that practice this type of policy promote harmony, the family spirit and helping one another, are considered to be paternal organizations. In their framework, the united team will not accept unwanted interferences that might disturb the organization's life.

Another concept, in opposition to the traditional one, called behavior driven, accepts the existence of conflict as an inevitable, and even a desirable fact. According to this concept the presence of conflict is not caused by the organizational sector, instead it is caused by different personal interests, purposes and/or objectives. It is not beneficial accepting a conflict, when the purpose is to follow one's personal interests to fulfill unproductive purposes. However, in the absence of conflicts, apathy, immobility and the organizations' inability to adapt to the challenges of change might occur.

Special attention must be provided to the asymmetries within the organizations. A flawed developed union life and the centralism of the human resources policies, these are the causes for asymmetrical, power struggle conflicts, which unfortunately the employer-employee relation will end in a win-lose situation with the triumph of the employees, they are part of a special status group.

The position taken by the actors involved in the conflict allows the symmetrical and asymmetrical differentiation of conflicts. In this context, the conflicts frequently arise among the sides that have a different predominance, such as the majority and the minority, a legitimate government and a rebel group, an owner and its employees, etc.

These types of conflicts are asymmetrical, and their genesis is not found in the typical problems or aspects that might divide the sides, it is found in the structure that constitutes the sides. It seems that no structure given by the role and/or relations cannot be changed, without the emergence of a conflict.

In the asymmetrical conflicts the structure is constituted in such a manner, that "the big fish always gulps the smaller fish". The only solution is to change the structure; however, this is not always in the interest of the "big fish". As such, there are no win-win results, and the

third party can only join forces with the "smaller fish", in order to reach a solution. If this doesn't take place, the "big fishes" will try to maintain their power and keep under control the "smaller fishes".

5. CONCLUSIONS

Trade union movement in Romania is mostly oriented on actions by the reaction type, and the decrease of the impact of trade unionism would be generated by the fact that, for various reasons, these reactions are emptied of content, simple reflexes of mobilizing structures to now deprive of their engine: political action.

It would be desirable, then, that the trade union movement regain the political, meaning campaigning for rights, on the one hand, and actively monitor the "ideological" quality. By politics, we have to understand something different from the partisanship, however, that political union as such. But this evidence is not nothing but this: evidence, not the truth; review and not reality... If we look more closely to trade union's movement in Romania, behind these records and impressions, looms a more interesting landscape, which can make us to worry and hope alike.

My answer starts to widen the field of analysis. My thesis is that, already long enough, Romanian unionism preferred to old social reaction and "trade union struggle", the participation in the construction of policies in areas of interest.

Political union and dimension nowadays in Europe, are no longer possible to think about in terms that were designed 100 years ago. There are certainly enough unionists who switched doing politics in a "vulgar" sense of the term, for example becoming part of the internal system of political parties.

This is taking in consideration so many predictable aspects, that we cannot criticize it as a phenomenon (even if, in some cases, we can consider it as being the result of a personal interesting decision). There are structural homologs between political movements and trade union policy that led to contamination of party's workers with doctrinal elements, or to amalgamations, migrations and hijacking.

In addition, I noted that a policy of working people will no longer arise in the context of currently socio-economic context, simply because "work" cannot make weight for a long time (those who work will no longer recognize all that being part of a single group, class, for reasons of representation and recognition manifested since the 30's of last century).

What is implementing, however, already, since for more than ten years, Romanian unionism is to participate in local, regional or national policy making. More still: actively participate in the development and implementation of programs, in compliance with these policies, corrective or constructive to influence within its sectors of interest.

The more difficult is manifesting partnership with other social partners at the central level, the more effective is manifesting the locally one. I am referring especially to the fact that the unions seem to be a piece of construction which cannot be ignored by any partnership that aims to work in the social-economic sector. At least in Romania,

which has no agglutination as the core of the church, as happens in other European countries.

6. REFERENCES

- [1] Corry, O.T., Global civil society and its discontents, in *Voluntas* 17, DOI 10.1007/s11266-006-9025-1, 2006
- [2] Kocka, J.(2003).European civil society: historical roots and contemporary perspectives in the East and in the West, apud Vladimirovna, E.S. & Borisovna, O.S., Prospects of the civil society development in post-socialist conditions, in *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 166, 2015
- [3] McKenna, G., Drama of democracy. American governments and politics, The Dushkin Publishing Group, Inc, 2008
- [4] Hall, A. J., The nature of civil society, in *Society*, may-june, 1998
- [5] Simona Mina, Perfecting conflict management/Mediation, Lobbying and Advocacy: from resolving disputes to the participative democracy, Bren Edition, ISBN 978606 610 023 6, 2011
- [6] Zburavleva, I.V., Institutions of civil society in space of democratic politics, in *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 166, 2015