

RESEARCH GROUP
MODERN TECHNOLOGIES

RESEARCH AREA
SOCIAL SCIENCES (POLITICAL SCIENCES, LAW,
EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES)

APPLICATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE SHARED SOCIETY CONCEPT: COMPARATIVE MODELS OF SOCIAL INCLUSION



INTRODUCTION

Shared society is approached a priori as a universal symbol, an overarching vision for the future and an ideal in its moral foundations. The term is put into the orbit of applied scientific research, with its broader scope of public policy, relations, norms, practices and attitudes. Thus, it is enhancing development of a sustainable democracy, overcoming challenges and crises. In the context of political theories, it is explored in its transformative potential of integrative processes vs. fragmentation and atomization. It stimulates development and change, adaptation and progress. As every social phenomenon, it is generated by centrifugal forces of discontent and conflict and improved by positive integration and collaboration. It sustains adaptability of environment, to respond to emerging challenges to generate energy for development, rather than conflicts, cleavages and polarity. In principle, every social environment generates centrifugal forces, forms of discontent, disagreements, critiques and various forms of frustration and conflicts. However, in itself, it stimulates development and social change, pathways for adaptation towards innovations and social progress. The problem occurs when social environment is not adapted enough to respond to emerging challenges against it and instead of energy for development, the conflicts and problems in society form temporary or permanent cleavages and social atomization.



PROJECT GUIDELINES

The project provides a comparative analysis and empirical research data on the inclusive forums for shared society, as an alternative to social transformation and community dialogue are important for cities to address the effects of polarization. However, there is also a need for more proactive strategies that address the underlying drivers of polarization. The Shared Society approach can support cities with guiding principles to help them develop inclusive strategies and self-reflective learning processes to dismantle their discriminatory structures and engage constructively with diversity. The project team is conducting research in several dimensions of cleavages, conflict resolution and civic engagement practices, youth participation and collaborative forms of democratic civic participation at the municipal level, electoral process analysis and monitoring and mapping of models of shared society. One of the key prerequisites for the existence of a shared society is the sharing of common value orientations regarding the joint political life and the norms of the political behavior of the members of society. Electoral participation is the most important and prominent aspect of citizens. One of the main goals of research is to discover what are the psychological experiences of these people, whether their experiences are determined by their orientations towards the values.

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METHODOLOGY

Important research questions are: *In case being given all institutional requirements for sustainable and consolidated democratic process, why then A-given social phenomenon will generate a non-A phenomenon in public space or its direct opposition? In other words, what is this social thing, that we are missing, in order to ensure thriving and evolution of a cohesive and integrated society, appraising its achievements and envisioning further its progress and development? Why then, the favorable economic indicators and the sustainable peace, do not keep esteem highly the importance of these values?* Quantitative research concentrates on respondents' perceptions – the subjective feeling of members of society with an emphasis on behavioral status in various situations. Conclusions are made in four main aspects – public policies, European community and value environment, socio-psychological profile of categories of dignity based on integrity and political analysis of electoral behavior.



RESULTS

In the field of political morality, the principles of shared society can be assessed in terms of values and the recommendations for morality, as a guiding principle for community interactions. The conceptualization of the common good, from the perspective of the Pragmatism and John Rawls, contributes to the shared society framework in a sophisticated formulation of the maintenance of civic relationships with practical reasoning, a way of thinking and acting that constitutes the appropriate form of mutual concern among members. In terms of more coherent theoretical and methodological frameworks, it highlights consistently the added value to scholarly achievements on power-sharing in divided societies, social cohesion, resilience, or conflict transformation theories. The shared society approach is focused more on the relationships, collective action practices, and the level of connectedness of all citizens to their society in cooperation and interdependence. Shared Society goes beyond neighboring theories and existing practices like multicultural dialogue, inter-ethnic coexistence, or protection of human rights, as a more holistic and cross-sectoral approach. Beyond the relationships, variability and fragmentation, shared society may lead to a in a more collaborative model through active political participation and deliberation, to bring forward an intricate balance between the government and citizens, in a more responsible and knowledgeable decision-making process, that takes into consideration legitimacy and positive outcomes for society, based on joint contribution by stakeholders, rather than partial interests of some social groups. The deeper understanding of differences in this concept provides an incentive for a certain paradigm shift towards a more relational mode of social collaboration, co-construct their reality as equal participants. The shared society approach is an integrative and multi-level societal approach that in times of increasing polarization is suitable for social structures in contexts, where conflict transformation is important, but has its limits. Social cohesion is the progress towards the joint vision of a Shared Society through social interaction and political participation.

The results of the project contribute to the expansion of its conceptual scope. This is presented in two of the publications, where the theses of the shared society are applied to documentary-historical research and analysis of specific historical issues: Albena Taneva – 2 articles published in Web of Science – NASLEDIE and EPOHI. The general approach of shared society concept is published in WoSci Journal PHILOSOPHIA: "Philosophy of the shared society" by the project team and invited co-author – Dr. Melanie Hussak (Freiburg).

A significant result of the work on the project in terms of its interdisciplinary nature and potential for further development is the thematic focus of the Eighth International Scientific Conference of the Public Administration Department, entirely dedicated to the topic of the Shared Society: "Politics and Policies for the Shared Society" with the presentation of 34 papers. The discussions took place in four thematic areas of the Shared Society: 1) Manifestations of the Shared Society; 2) Factors for the Shared Society; 3) The Shared Society as a Focus of Policies and 4) Mapping Cases of Shared Society. Their publication in a scientific collection of articles is forthcoming (October 30, 2024)

A quantitative study was conducted by Trend Agency (1006 respondents). The focus of interest is on the perceptions of the respondents – the subjective feeling of the members of society with an emphasis on the behavioral status in different situations. One Focus group is conducted in May 2024.

CONCLUSION

The multi-dimensional approach of shared society provides opportunities for positive social transformation and collaboration. It also fosters active civic participation and long-term democratic sustainability. This serves as an prevention to fragmentation, cleavages, inequalities, discrimination, and polarization. Its practices are implemented mainly in community-based, local initiatives and within civic networks. Yet, it has the potential, to provide guidelines for wider impact and change. In 'the structures of the everyday life', the insights on its role for positive change will cultivate a sharing culture in the long-term. Within its deeper philosophical foundations, the term is inspired by numerous schools of thought, revealing in its evolution the contributions of fundamental concepts like shared living, moral imperative, equality, common good, power-sharing, participatory democracy intentionality, identity, conflict resolution and coherence. Undoubtedly the concept reveals more intricate links to its ancient roots in its etymology and multi-faceted dimensions. In the philosophy of Aristotle is used as a reference to conscious, virtuous life, and the true essence of happiness (eudemonia), of common values upon which citizens jointly deliberate together. The categories of the shared society refer to understanding of identities, co-existence, and collective responsibility. We may even assert that its long-term use in public policy will impact sustainability and resilience, to overcome crises and resist tumultuous times. Additionally, it will contribute to social integrity, improve shared living, and wellbeing. The results of the survey give grounds for concluding that voter pressure in the electoral process reveal serious threats to the prospects for democratic development. This socio-political phenomenon undermines the public trust in the representative institutions and creates prerequisites for deepening the tendencies of violation of fundamental political rights and freedoms.

This creates new dividing lines in society, increases polarization, and has the potential to hinder the practical implementation of the philosophy of shared society. This problem should be thoroughly researched to find an adequate response to the challenges facing society. At present, the results of the study provide grounds for further analysis and conclusions that it is of key importance to implement strategic actions at the level of public policy. The threat to the practical realization of the philosophy of the shared society here stems from the confinement of people in their own world, from the lack of trust in all institutions, and in all people in power (whether political or economic power). Important consequences of this perception are the feeling of desperation, hopelessness, the refusal to actively participate in life together, and the creation of one's own life. The application of the concept of the shared society is a series of criteria that examine the degree of social cohesion, dignified life, equal opportunities for development and business, the sense of partnership between different groups in a given society, social integrity and responsible leadership. The implementation of the project creates an opportunity, through the collected data and the upcoming re-collection of data on some of the questions of the empirical study, to track the manifestation of typical social cleavages, as well as specific cleavages caused by problems in the social environment or provoked by current conflicts in the international envirc



	It's definitely collective	It's rather collective	It's neither not collective	It's definitely not collective	Don't know
When people help each other when in need	56%	32%	5%	2%	5%
When people respect the rights and dignity of others	51%	35%	5%	2%	7%
When the majority and minorities live in peace and respect	40%	37%	10%	6%	7%
When citizens actively participate in the decisions of the authorities	40%	39%	8%	3%	10%
When the law does not differentiate between the rich and the poor	37%	33%	15%	7%	8%
When the different person doesn't feel redundant / unneeded	37%	33%	12%	4%	14%
When people don't get annoyed by the different opinion of others on some matter	36%	38%	10%	4%	12%
When the country is ruled by a strong hand of power	29%	35%	16%	6%	14%
When there is no parties	27%	33%	12%	3%	25%

trend



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