SOLIDUS

Solidarity in European Societies: Empowerment, Social Justice and Citizenship

Concept paper for Combating Social Exclusion

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Executive Summary

This concept paper is addressed to describe how the inclusion of the voices of vulnerable groups on the design, implementation and evaluation on policies addressed to them is a crucial factor. This approach is based on theoretical contributions on democracy and social inclusion. It gets explained trough some selected examples in order to evidence the current strategies to overcome social exclusion through close collaboration between policy makers, researchers, administrative technicians and vulnerable groups.

Contents

1. Introduction

This WP called Combat social exclusion is addressed to analyse the role of policies to promote social inclusion of those vulnerable groups (ethnic minorities -such as Roma – Migrants – especially refugees, unemployed – especially homeless-, and disabled people).

The aim of this concept paper is to present literature review that shows how the involvement of vulnerable groups on the design and evaluation of the policies addressed to them implies greatest social inclusion. For instance, the Design of the "Plan Integral del Poble Gitano" [Integral Plan of Roma] elaborated by the Autonomous Government of Catalonia is a good example. This plan assumed that the involvement and decisive participation of the Roma in the design, implementation and evaluation of the policies addressed to them are crucial factors to obtain results as well as the dialogue in an egalitarian way is an ethical and methodological principle for the actions developed related to these policies (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2014).

For this purpose, the concept paper is divided in three sections; firstly the introduction of key theoretical contributions related to the participation of citizens on policies in order to introduce in-depth democracy, secondly the presentation of some contributions on the inclusion of vulnerable groups' voices on the design of policies are presented as examples together with some of their claims, and finally we list and explain the implications on the research analysis.

2. Theoretical contributions on democracy for social inclusion

There are diverse theoretical contributions focused on democracy and practices that promote a deeper social inclusion and active citizenship of majority and minority groups. Nevertheless, as a result of the literature review done, four main contributions have been selected and included in this concept paper. First of all, the contributions of Fung & Wright (2003) on democracy an empowered participatory governance, secondly reflections of democracy deliberative carried out by John Elster (1998), thirdly contributions on reconnection of people with politics provided by Margaret Weir and Marshall Ganz (1997) and multicultural citizenship and policies developed by Will Kymlicka (2010).

Democracy and Empowered participatory governance

The representative democracy and bureaucratic administration are not enough to afford challenges in the twenty first century because they alone cannot ensure to make possible the application of ideals of democratic policies, for instance the involvement of citizens, working for the consensus through dialogue, implementation of public policies related to welfare state, among others (Fung & Wright, 2003). In this sense, Fung and Wright reflect about the design of the institutions that could guarantee the development of democratic strategies to ensure social justice, individual freedom and overall solidarity. For this reason, both authors sought experiments on empowered participatory governance around the world to further study in-depth democracy and its analysis. In this line, they selected the following experiments; Neighbourhood governance councils in Chicago, Habitat conversation planning under the U.S. Endangered Species Act, The participatory budget of Porto Alegre, and Panchayat reforms in West Bengal and Kerala. Although these experiments are diverse amongst them, they have common strategies to include the participation of ordinary citizens in the decision making process, likewise dialogic consensus to reach decisions. Besides, the exploration of these experiments is an appropriate method to learn how democracy could be improved through the participation of citizens through the awareness of deliberation mechanisms developed to best achieve social improvements for all. Empowered participation is a way to strengthen the voices of both citizens and democracy. Contrary to some perspectives, this approach does not reject the role of the technical experts, however it implies a change in the relation established with the citizens, for instance the fact of renouncing to have absolute power on decisions and to share this power in egalitarian way with the citizens (Fung & Wright, 2003).

Considering contributions on these experiments authors collect the following common points:

Table 1. Common points of Experiments (EPG) Fung and Wright (2003)

Three political principles	Three design characteristics	One primary background condition
Each experiment addresses a specific area of public concern	Devolve decision and implementation power to local action units	There is an approximately equality of power for the purpose of deliberative decision-making, between participants
Decision-making implies empowered involvement of ordinary citizens and officials in the field	Local units are not autonomous but allocate resources, solve common problems and disseminate innovations and learning	
Each experiment attempts to solve problems through reasoned deliberation	Colonise and transform existing state institutions. Example: Administrative bureaucracies are restructured into deliberative groups	

Source: Own elaboration based on data of Fung and Wright (2003)

Within the European context, there are experiences of direct and participatory democracy across Europe showing different results (Best, Augustyn, & Lambermont, 2011). One of the recommendations extracted trough this research was the need to promote that "political parties adopt European positions and engage with citizens at the grassroots" (Best et al., 2011, p. 102). This strategy works for deepening in democracy and consolidate European identity, and a best response to the citizens' needs.

Deliberative democracy

At this point it is necessary to retake one of the contributions of Jon Elster (1998) related to deliberative democracy. An essential condition to establish deliberative democracy mechanisms that guarantees a fruitful dialogue is to ensure that nobody exercises the power position for forcing an agreement, in Elster's words "In deliberative contexts, force-based threats are unacceptable […] and the only force that is admissible is "the force of the better argument" (Habermas)"(1998, p. 103). In this sense, Elster quoted Habermas in order to rescue one of the contributions most relevant of his Theory of Communicative Action (Habermas, 1984, 1987). Habermas said that our interactions could be based on the relationship power established between speakers or based on the validity claims; this last one promotes communicative action and creates the ideal conditions to establish democratic actions. To achieve this, dialogues could be based on validity claims. These validity claims should include moral

principles, sincerity, goodness and aesthetic values in order to reach consensus between speakers involved on the conversations (Habermas, 1984).

Therefore, for having practices of deliberative democracy a basic condition is that of ensuring a healthy environment that implies a successful development of communicative acts based on validity claims between the speakers involved. Speaking of policies, this means that policy makers, technicians of bureaucratic administrative and end-users could dialogue based on these validity claims and not on established power relationships for social context. Therefore, people could reach major consensus because they agree that consensus is their common goal. This type of dialogue encourages sense of policy for the citizens, thus their voices are listened.

Reconnecting people and politics

Besides, the need of recovering sense on policies depends on how politicians are connecting with the citizens. Weir and Ganz (1997) worked together the contribution *Reconnecting people and politics.* The inclusion of leadership shared between politics and citizens, for instance those who belong to civic organizations, unions or other NGOs are a basic point, also with ordinary citizens. This democratic leadership is enabling new forms of daily governance because this is an essential point to advance on policies in which all of us are involved , like Weir and Ganz stated: "The reconnection of people and politics has to be made day by day, in how we actually do politics, not only in how we talk about it"(1997, p. 171). Dialogue mechanisms should apply to previous contributions in order to ensure the engagement of the citizens. Weir and Ganz (1997) said that the development of critical intermediate level of leadership linking local leaders with regional and national ones allows the development of common interests also allows coordinated actions that imply a better development of those policies addressed to the citizens.

Multiculturalism citizenship and policies development

Moreover, other challenge in politics is facing multiculturalism citizenship in the policies development. Kymlicka (2010) reflected the role of politicians towards minority groups and assumed that in some countries these relationships have overcome previous prejudices and minority groups are no longer in the "security box" but in the "democratic politics box". For Kymlicka this step is a "first condition for multicultural citizenship to emerge and take root" (Kymlicka, 2010, p. 107). A second precondition is the self-governing minority institutions, but this condition has more resistance because states fear that minority groups could apply tyranny inside a democratic state (Kymlicka, 2010) , this is also a prejudice difficult to overcome. However, in some countries this second precondition is

applied with policies practices that involve government and minority groups. For instance, the case of *Consejo Estatal del Pueblo Gitano* [National Council of Roma] that it is a collegiate inter-ministerial, consultative and advisory body attached to the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality. This body enables the cooperation between politicians and Roma movement for developing policies that ensure social welfare of the Roma population. Kymlicka (2010) highlights the relevance of paying attention to the conditions that enable successful practices of multiculturalism instead of selecting best practices on multiculturalism only.

Considering these previous contributions in full, policies aimed to combat social exclusion need to include vulnerable groups on the design of policies and follow up mechanisms of its results. Not every mechanism achieves same results, deliberative mechanisms based on egalitarian dialogue between researchers, policy makers and end-users are needed to improve results on social inclusion. Thereafter, we hereby describe some examples of policies aimed to combat social exclusion from this approach.

3. Inclusion of vulnerable groups voices on design and evaluation on social inclusion policies

This section aims to describe some examples or contributions of how vulnerable groups are included on policies in order to achieve best results on social inclusion. Firstly, the Integral Plan of Roma (Catalonia) introduces an example of how this dialogue is focused on scientific evidence and the lifeworld of Roma in order to design policies addressed to them and oriented to achieve social inclusion. The dialogue between policy makers and Roma is crucial together with the knowledge of the most recent scientific evidence (Munte, Serradell, & Sorde, 2011). Secondly, examples from policies addressed to people with disabilities also highlight the need to include their voices on this design as well as those homeless and unemployed people.

Roma voices in politics. The case of The Roma Integral Plan (Catalonia)

The year 2010 was considered in Europe as the year to combat Poverty and Social Exclusion and one of the most vulnerable groups was Roma as one of the groups with higher risk of suffering poverty compared to the overall population. Besides, the European Commission has urged their member states to implement national strategies in order to improve the situation of Roma through its Europe 2020 Strategy.

In spite of lack of official data that evidence the Roma exclusion, there are many researches, reports and European resolutions asking member states to work for and with Roma in order to overcome inequalities suffered by Roma in areas such as health, education, employment, among others (Alexiu, 2013; FRA (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rigths), 2014; Sivic, Huremovic, & Djerzic, 2013). The government of Catalonia has developed its third edition of the Integral Plan of Roma (2014-2016) establishing as principles the dialogue and inclusion of Roma voices from its plan design, implementation and evaluation. This plan is an example of making policy together with Roma and considering scientific advances for improving social inclusion.

The inclusion of Roma on the Plan design, the implementation and the evolution of governmental plan implied a milestone that promoted a change on bureaucratic administrative process in the day-to-day policies. It was an example of how to modify top down approach policy towards a bottom-up approach policy, including decisive participation of Roma. Considering the previous theoretical contributions this Plan faced challenges like multicultural citizenship, shared leadership among policy makers and citizens, and deliberative democracy.

Taking into account the principles of the Integral Plan of Roma, in its edition 2014-2016 (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2014), this plan aims to develop a public policy of the Roma inclusion that improves the socio economic reality of this ethnic group. One of its statements is that if this policy aims to search results, then it is essential to include the participation of Roma. Thus, Roma have participated in all stages of the Plan (design, implementation and evaluation). In this sense, there are organisms that follow up this Plan composed by Roma. For instance, the Integral Plan established following organisms: Renovation Team of Integral Plan of Roma (composed by 10 Roma association representatives), Roma working Groups (organized by different fields and with Roma presence), Advisory Council of Roma (main participatory body of the Integral Plan of Roma, there are 21 Roma people from diverse organisation/associations).

The Integral Plan of Roma established mechanisms of interdepartmental and multilevel collaboration. There are eleven departments of the Government of Catalonia implied in this Plan that have specific competences on some of the strategic points included on the Plan. In this sense, there is the Interdepartmental Commission chaired by Social Welfare and Family Department in order to implement the Integral Plan of Roma. There is collaboration between Government of Catalonia and local government for guaranteeing the correct development of the Plan regarding the multilevel collaboration. In this connection, this plan included efforts to collaborate Roma and different

representatives of the Administration (autonomic and local) to generate an inclusive public policy with social impact.

As previously mentioned, diverse Roma voices play an essential role on the public policy design, paying attention to those strategies that faces the demands and needs of this group to those scientific evidences that guarantee results and policy institutions have competences for developing them. One criterion pointed out that participation of Roma is also included in the evaluation of the impact (ex post) in order to valorise results obtained. This characteristic is relevant because there are policies that include voices of the vulnerable groups but only as a consultative mechanism; including them in every step in the process is a step forward.

It is a quality criterion that own end-users play an active role on the actions addressed to them, including the Roma that are not involved in civil associations, because Roma is considered protagonist and not a passive subject (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2014, p. 50). The fact to give this protagonist role to the Roma is the difference regarding other public policies on Roma that operate behind them. The dialogue between administration, Roma and experts, open the knowledge and the possibilities for guaranteeing successful policies on social inclusion.

Voices of persons with disabilities in politics

People with physical and cognitive disabilities are other vulnerable group that have suffered social exclusion. In fact, one of six of Europeans has a disability and their rate of poverty is 70% higher than average (European Commission, 2010). One of the priorities of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 is to achieve full participation of people with disabilities in Europe, and one of the basic points is to improve policy and regulatory frameworks because "do not reflect the needs of people with disabilities adequately" (European Commission, 2010, p. 4). It is necessary to include them on design policies addressed to them. For instance, one of the studies carried out by Coates and Vickerman (2010) demonstrated how those children with disabilities felt empowered because they felt that their voices were heard by politicians during the inclusion of their reality into policy agenda since 1997 in the government of UK. On the other hand, an example founded in Australia describes how the movement led by people with disabilities and their advocates achieved political impact once their voices were heard (Thill, 2015). Considering the contributions developed by Thill (2015) concluded that National Disability Scheme in Australia have achieved the first step that it is to value the voices of people with disabilities as active agents in politics. But there are required improvements like ensuring such that they could play an active role in the development and evaluation of the policies,

their representation should be guaranteed in the boards as well as recognition of the diversity of people with disabilities.

Voices of the unemployed, especially youth and homeless, in politics

The unemployed group is another priority collective for the European Union, and fighting youth unemployment one of the goals. Some of the critics on the design of policies on employment is that are being elaborated without taking into account the people affected. Egdell and Graham (2016) analyse how the Capability Approach could be an alternative in UK for measuring successful employment activation. This is based on the inclusion of the young jobseekers on the design and implementation of employment activation policies. In author's words the "CA offers a useful framework to critically analyse unemployed young people's voice and agency in the development and implementation of employment activation policies" (Egdell & Graham, 2016, p. 14). One of the main results of this research is that the young ones perceive as main barriers structural constraints however employment policies are focused more on the individual without taking account this structural barriers identified by the young people (Egdell & Graham, 2016).

The European Commission has created the "Network SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres to enhance the implementation of the EU Erasmus + Youth in Action Programme"[1] aimed to promote competences related to labour market on young groups considering that labour conditions could be precarious at an initial stage. This programme established the inclusion of young people under highest social risk, listening to their voices and needs on the design, implementation and evaluation of the strategies addressed to them.

In another hand, homeless are one of the most vulnerable groups in Europe. This group suffers from extreme poverty; there are 410,000 homeless people according to European Union data. Diverse NGOs of Europe, for instance FEANTSA[2] (Federation of National Organisation working with the Homeless) or European networks as EURODIACONA[3] have claimed that homeless could be a priority on European policy Agenda as well as on the political agenda of member states. In this sense, European Commission has elaborated report analysing the situation of homeless in Europe, and identifying opportunities and difficulties on the elaboration of public policies aimed to obtain best social inclusion of this group (European Commission, 2014). Besides, there are different addressed to overcome homelessness in Europe, for instance funds such as the European Social Fund (ESF) and the

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[1] https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/see/seeyia/objectivesandpriorities/
[2] http://www.feantsa.org/en
[3] https://www.eurodiaconia.org/

Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD). There is a program called "Housing First" addressed to those homeless suffering most serious situations and created by Sam Tsemberis in United States during the nineties. This program has been applied in European context, and one of its characteristics is to include the voices of homeless and those people working with them, listening to their proposals and respecting their decisions. There is evidence of successful results of this program although more research is needed (Aubry, Nelson, & Tsemberis, 2015; Stefancic & Tsemberis, 2007; Tsemberis, Gulcur, & Nakae, 2004). In Europe, the first results 'evidence of this program are included on the House First – Europe Guide has concluded that this program could work in countries with diverse welfare and housing systems as shown on initial evaluations reports in countries such as Denmark, England, France, The Netherlands, Portugal, Scotland and Spain (Pleace, 2016).

4. Research analysis implications for WP7

This WP will analyse the cross-cutting issues of identity and policies aimed to combat social exclusion of vulnerable groups and people with disabilities with the research evidence founded in WP2-5.

Considering previous sections, background national papers will focus on the analysis of key policies documents fighting against social exclusion of vulnerable groups (i.e. ethnic minorities, migrants, unemployed, and people with disabilities) taking into account the following Analysis Chart:

Title of the policy	
URL	
Year	
Addressed to	
Are there results of this policy available)?	If yes, please describe them
Does this policy including voices of the vulnerable group?	If yes, please indicate how they are included (design, implementation, evaluation, etc.....) and what are the mechanisms.
Drivers	
Barriers	

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