

(Missing) Social Policy Response to Covid-19 Crisis in BiH: Crisis within Crises

Prof. dr. Sanela Bašić

University of sarajevo, Faculty of Political Sciences

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Resignation, apathy and hopelessness among young, highly educated unemployed youth

..to live

"in our sad socialist society where it is quite normal to grow old, and still live with your parents, unemployed" (Hemon; Book of my Lives, 2013:63)



First Social Fracture: War over Independence

- 'hiperreal hall' (Baudriallard)
- 'perverse reverse side of our civilization' (Žižek)
- From individual perspective: the experience of war is far beyond normal, ordinary human experience
- From the collective point of view: war is the most traumatic fracture of the *'social'*

First Social Fracture: War over Independence

- between 100.000 and 250.000 inhabitants killed, 31.500 forcibly disappeared/"missing persons"
- 1.2 million internally displaced and 1 million refugees
- between 25.000 and 50.000 raped women
- destruction of social ties, tolerance and co-existence,
- breakdown of families and local communities
- collapse of social values and normal life (Papić et al. 2007:14)

Second Social Fracture: Transition

Transition: democratic political system and market economy

IN: free elections, institution building, development of civil society

“Democratization + market economy = PEACE”?

Political realm: Ethnodemocracy (Mujkić, 2007)

Economic Realm: Macroeconomic stability, but jobless growth

Transition as de-development (Blagojević Hjuston, 2013)

- Social "anomia", fragmentation of society in accordance to different lines of conflict (ethnic, political, class, residence...), destruction of local communities
- (Constant) political instability, semi-protectorate
- Institutional destruction, low institutional performance, no rule of law
- De-industrialization, failed process of privatization
- Rising poverty and social inequality, lowering quality of life (survival economy)
- Reduced social welfare/policy and systemic discrimination– consequently growing number of people out of the social protection system
- Growing social problems (raising rates of criminality, mental health issues, youth delinquency, domestic violence, human trafficking, corruption, ageing society)
- Brain-drain

LSMS (2001)/Household Budget Survey (2004/2007/2011/2015): Poverty Rates

Poverty Rates	BiH	FBiH	RS	BD
2001	19.5	16.3	18.6	
2004	17.7	18.5	17.4	7.9
2007	18.6	17.5	20.2	25.0
2011	17.9	17.1	19.5	14.7
2015	16.9	17.1	16.4	17.6

EBRD, 2011.- RISK OF POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION - AROPE INDICATORS

	Number of persons	% of population
At risk of (income) poverty	1.514.576	32.4%
Severe material deprivation	891.614	19.1%
Low work intensity	305.641	6.5%
Risk of poverty and social exclusion	2.711.831	58%

Social Policy System(s)

- No state authority in social policy
 - Potential of social policy programs to peace consolidation and development of democratic citizenship on normative and institutional level
- 13 (3+10) separate systems, with shared competencies, different level of centralization, but similar systemic shortcomings in terms of effectiveness

Third Social Fracture: Coroca Crisis Pandemic

- First “corona case” reported on 5th March → lockdown (suspension or reduction of economic activity, restrictive policies to prevent virus from spreading)
- **Covid Positive: 52.206** Covid Active: 17.346
- **Covid Deaths: 1415** Covid Cured: 33.445
- **GDP:** In 2019, the Government projected 3.4% of GDP growth for 2020 – due to COVID-19, it is expected to real GDP in 2020 to drop by 5%
- **Unemployment: 34.7%**

Social Impact Assessment Study (Unicef, 2020)

- **Unmet health needs**: 15% of respondents (people with disabilities and people with chronic diseases)
- **Rising mental health issues**: 40,4% of respondents (more pronounced in women)
- **Worsening of financial situation**: 48.5% of respondents (16% borrowed money to met basic needs, out of which 20% of households with children)
- **Housing problems**: 13% of respondents
- **Lowering food consumption**: 21.5% of respondents (particularly in rural areas)

Governmental Responses

1. **Labor market measures**

- a. Unemployment benefit
- b. Minimum wage, social security contributions and taxes

2. **Cash transfers** within social assistance scheme for elderly and families with no income/low income (not universal –countrywide, but depending on political decisions of local communities (KS) – social assistance poorly targeted (favors war veterans over poor; only 1% of 4.6% off GDP allocated to social assistance programs reaches those in need; low coverage and low level of benefits)