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## ***Volunteering Economic Development – Some evidences on prompting for development of European post-conflict zones\****

### **Abstract**

The research into this area was organized to (1) learn whether there was a connection between the efficiency of foreign aid received and the cultural matrix, and, to (2) elaborate on expected contributions of volunteerism as one of the variables – contradictio in adjecto – of effectiveness and efficiency of work on projects of economic development.

Key words: volunteerism, bricolage, efficiency, cultural matrix, Kuci-in-Rovci paradox

### **1 Introduction**

In the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century, unfortunately, there was still a room for international assistance to societies that just emerged out of conflicts and other forms of social traumas, irrespectively of reasons for such.

As international, foreign consultants, we were commissioned to implement few post-conflict assistance programs in the South East Europe.

#### **1.1 Problem Definition**

Efficiency is basic economic concept and represents achievements of certain goals with minimum of costs, efforts or loses. However, more frequently, a sense and justification questions pop-up out of economic effectiveness<sup>1</sup> per-

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\* The paper is printed as submitted.

ceptions of such socio economical projects. The questions are being asked by all shareholders: donors, implementators, and, –in the end–, beneficiaries as well! So, in that way, a problem becomes cross-cultural and comunicological<sup>2</sup>.

Secondly, divided society does not communicate with „other – than – our – group – members”. In cases of receiving something free of charge, through voluntarily delivered deeds, there was a notion that members to receiver’s group did not communicate with anyone else, even internally. Those receivers acted as if such messages were something they ware not interested in! Why is it so?

### 1.2 Research Subject

Since the early years of this decade, in the South East European post-conflict regions, post-conflict social cohesion programs have been supported by international donors and their projects’ implementing organizations. However, that was in principle done in a way in which such foreign implementators were in the habit of to act: projects were evaluated as corporate commercial alike ventures, and effectiveness issues of such actions were mainly managed from suppliers’ side.

However, since those services were apparently donated free of charge to beneficiaries, from that standpoint, we might be here speaking about international and cross-cultural volunteerism, per se.

### 1.3 The Purpose of This Work

Is there an economic value of volunteerism? Especially, is there a value of a foreign imposed post-conflict or post–trauma social intervention? The research into this area, –by triangulation of ex-post evaluation and other methods –, was organized to (1) learn whether there was a connection between the efficiency of foreign aid received and the cultural matrix, and, (2) to elaborate on expected contributions of volunteerism as one of the variables – *contradictio in adjecto* – of effectiveness and efficiency of work on projects of economic development in some of deeply – divided societies of the South East Europe.

### 1.4 Expected Scientific and Practical Results

If the premise was that when communication stops, so does the life, with those kinds of applied researches we had to find solutions for real life problems, anticipating renewal of comunicological canals.

In the cases where international technical assistance programs were deployed, we evaluate culture – communicological situations aiming to identify and to propose mechanisms for change of post-conflict being. So, expected contributions of this research are seen as a twofold: a scientific one and a practical one!

As said earlier, in scientific terms, it would be interested to understand if there is interrelationship of aid projects efficiency and cultural matrix. In the practical sense, during designing research phase, we hoped the contribution of research would be seen through clarification of a certain dilemmas about aid projects benefits, especially to employ volunteerism principles as values for local development partnership of people of different socio economical affiliations.

## **2 Instead of Theoretical Background: Action Field Settings**

### **2.1 Identification of Paradigm That Influences Research Activities**

Projects of post-conflict reconciliation of deeply divided societies always start in way to look for a stakeholders' profit. As per the same strategy, the increased numbers of palliative aid-industry happenings have been noticed recently. Limited to the receivers' culture paradigm, aid industry becomes a revenue component, for, in some cases, it contributes significantly to the Gross National Income of some of the Central and South East Europe states<sup>3</sup>.

As concept, the most pertinent philosophical assumptions are those which relate to the underlying epistemology which guides the research. Epistemological position provides fundamental aspects of research as they concern the philosophical questions of what counts as reality and how beings come into being as well as what constitutes knowledge and how knowledge comes to be established.<sup>4</sup>

If constructionist ontology assumes the world we can study is a semiotic world of meanings, represented in signs and symbols, than constructionist epistemology advocates that knowledge is constructed rather than discovered, it is a representation of the 'real world' and, as such, interpreted by the researcher.

Both, the main research<sup>5</sup> question, (–What is the reason that the efficiency of donated projects of international technical aid to economical and social reconstruction of post-conflict areas is questionable? –), and some of the auxiliary

research questions, (–How cross-culture differences impact projects’ results?, and the other questions–), asked therefore for qualitative research paradigm.

### 3 Methods

These positions significantly shaped our research design as well as methodology chosen. All previous phases<sup>6</sup> of our research followed the same intro-theory model, including epistemological, ontological and methodologies questions structure. Mentioned structure determines the underlining paradigm, in this case constructivism<sup>7</sup>, and since we have employed the qualitative research methodology, the corresponding research strategies have been adjusted: combination of history method with a method of participatory observation.

Variable of our research is „volunteerism”, and we had to establish a system to measure changes as result of our interventions, if any. To suite for that, here-with we have introduced the grid for analyses of several aspects connoted here to volunteerism.

Therefore, in the hope that the answers would be embedded in the research results, as one of contemporary prevailing<sup>8</sup>, the grounded theory methodology<sup>9</sup> was employed during empirical material assessments.

#### 3.1 Data Collection:

Following the methodology explained above, the data collection techniques for this chapter were made as simple as possible into a bricolage environment. Data were collected through several sources, 1920 where primarily are those data which were unpublished and which this research had gathered from people or organizations directly. Secondary data sources refer to any materials (book, articles, etc.) which had been previously published<sup>10</sup>. As in the cases of tertiary sourcing, a desk research method was employed while collecting these empirical materials through electronic media.

Our samples are:

##### 3.1.1 Data primarily level sources

3.1.1.1 „Traditional and cultural propensity to accept help”, where we bricolage-ed via method of participatory observation because it was important to assess a volunteerism patterns, and propensity to share.

### 3.1.2 Data secondary level sources

3.1.2.1 „Kuci-in-Rovci” as culture-historical perspective and prevailing behavioural model, where we virtually bricolage\_ed via history method.

### 3.1.3 Tertiary sources data

3.1.3.1 Desk research data fishing: Internet

## 3.2 Empirical Materials Analysis Techniques

The technological process of analyses of the empirical materials collected was made possible by the usage of contemporary qualitative data research software. Its purpose is to help researchers uncover and systematically analyze complex phenomena hidden in text and multimedia data.

## 4 Results, Findings and Discussion:

### 4.1 Primarily Source Data Results:

#### 4.1.1 „Traditional and Cultural Propensity to Accept Help”

We assume, it is always important to understand receivers’ volunteerism patterns, and, consequently, propensity to share and/or to receive. Therefore we shall here coin a-volunteerism-pattern-term. It seems, additionally, that we had to introduce this kind of aspect anticipating that there were interrelationship of aid projects efficiency and cultural matrix. For such a bricolage, we used the method of participatory observation of the post-conflict reconciliation based on the economic development programs that were bringing tangible economic benefits to the aid beneficiaries.

Once, during 2004, we visited the neighbouring refugees’ camp. The camp consisted of the wooden houses that were donated by Western Europeans, who claimed that size of premises was fair even in comparison to their tax-payers’ standard at home. The local contractors assembled a four apartment wooden houses, in a very inadequate way. The tenants used to complain. The foreign observers thought that complaints went around contractors’ negligence in building those interim refugee residences. However, the migrants’ complaints were based on never ending comparison of the premises they had before with current settlements. While foreigners wanted to organize for fixing crafts-

men's details and therefore to improve living conditions, or, additionally to use the hot water creek that runs unused through the settlement in order to save on heating costs being paid by regional government, the aid beneficiaries seemed like not receiving such pragmatically messages and initiatives.

Like, only that what they had before basically constitutes the responsibility of somebody else, their government, international community, donors, volunteers, etc. Free of charge? Who cares!? All that seemed irrelevant for those aid receivers; With a time passing by, individual property back there, –because that is now far from real value measuring, nor there is fair and moral sense in that ex-post control–, ends in collective discourses where „ours we had” and „ours we still have there” generate attitude: „we are entitled to” sharing in compensations.

Previously to that, –which additionally confirms above mentioned–, we have already observed that inhabitants of that region<sup>11</sup> consider their government to be responsible for economic growth in that region:

- the local and national governments were seen as most responsible for promoting economic progress in that region, rather than private business.
- moreover, most people thought that government should protect business in that region from international competition.
- other similar things

Consequently, it appears that it was important from which side this aid contribution comes! Shall aid receivers take gifts from their government? Based on their conviction that government is responsible for such a situation, yes! All that makes researchers believe that royalties and values are in these cases connected; people do expect „return on investment” they think they are entitled to that. Even if this was compensation for their lost previous premises in which they had lived, work places and working rights, etc.

Shall aid receivers take gifts from volunteers, also free of charge?

If aid comes from some-good-hearted people, volunteers, than post conflict aid receiving would be limited with a reflection of „antidoro”<sup>12</sup> daily practice. Why is it so?

There is regional treat of sharing pieces of bread in the end of a religious ceremony. It is believed that bread should be shared only „antidoro”, among us,

group members. Even if taken by outsiders, especially non believers, no benefits would be recorded at all. Nor an impact on any of such participants: if one does not believe in such value, then there is nothing to participate in sharing into. Sharing the bread, semantically a token, participants primarily share their belief values. Also, the process requires that one share only what that one owns. If there is nothing to own, then there is nothing to share in consumption, as well. Consequently, since economical means are scarce, they should be kept for sharing „antidoro”, for us only. Therefore, we anticipate, receivers might feel they were not entitled to receiving such volunteered values in quantities more that they were entitled to.

Finally, in the terms of culture-historical perspective and prevailing behavioural models, what might be intersection in between of 1/value concepts and 2/cultural matrix with 3/ volunteering concept? Of course, as from traditional and cultural propensity to accept help, this is: the same antidoro-value-concept that is deeply embedded in the social life of the region.

## 4.2 Secondary Sources Data Results:

### 4.2.1 „Kuci-In-Rovci” As Culture-Historical Perspective and Prevailing Behavioural Model:

In this case, via history method, we have sourced the artistic interpretation of historical event that might have happen long time ago. Here are some aspects of the literature found<sup>13</sup> in the story that we can name: An oath, story of the given word.

The Kuci tribe resides still on what is today the border of Montenegro and Albania. In the ancient time, the Kuci assimilated or pushed away previous owners of territory, the small Vlach tribes, Vukumire and Mataguže, and so called „minor Albanians”<sup>14</sup>.

Already in the mid-fifteenth century the Kuci presented very strong organized political community, uniting, –the book argues, firstly or lastly–, two peoples: Montenegrin and Albanians and the three faiths: Orthodox, Catholic and Muslim, all in one tribe.

Later, as new external power appeared, the Kuci themselves were almost exterminated after heavy fighting with Skadar Vizier Busatlia. They did not recognize his authority, and refused to pay him tax. Remaining six hundred of

the Kuci, of which only seventy old enough for fighting men, were received in the Rovci, high in the hills not accessible to Turks. The Rovci tribe protected the Kuci from the Turks, at the cost of their own danger, sharing with them their homes and estates.

They shared the good and evil, brotherly. The Rovci were cautious not to do something wrong to the Kuci and vice versa. It was a wonderful example of generosity, beneficence and maintenance of the given word which was more important than life. In order to hold given word, the Rovci, the hosts, used the strongest weapon: an oath saying: „...Our brothers the Kuci fled from the killing and stayed with us. It is known to everybody. To escape any scandal, we could make a deal. All the Kuci women are born sisters to all of us”, imploring that no children should be born with the Rovci up to the time Kuci return to the old country. For the sake of „face”, they have sacrificed their posterity.

The hosts were followed by their guests: „...child will not be born with the Kuci until we, the Kuci, are guests in the Rovci... to help them to hold the oath. As we live in their houses, we would not like any sort of suspicion to appear. We would not like any evil seed to spring up and poison us and them... How long will it last, brothers? Up to the time we return to the Kuci county.” The oath had been held for seven years by both sides.

This story became a novel, true event happened allegedly in 1774, about moral values of the „Brđani”<sup>15</sup> of that time and about how the institutions were being developed and survived in that region. Woven into legend, –sharing the same platform values–, the story becomes a form of thinking and behaviour of contemporary Kuci tribe members who are even nowadays grateful and at the same time pledged to the Rovci tribe; in 1920 at the time of the Rovci rebellion against the new government of the Kingdom of SHS<sup>16</sup>, an officer, the Kuci tribe member, refused to shoot at the rebels under the threat of the military court. When brought to the military court, the court acquitted him because it could acknowledge the reasons for his behaviour.

Historically, in the terms of culture-historical perspective and prevailing behavioural models, what might be intersection in between of 1/value concepts and 2/cultural matrix with 3/ volunteering concept? Of course, from „Kuci-in-Rovci”, this is: the same value platform deeply embedded in social life. „The face” was held for the utmost value, and therefore it should be protected with all means: the verbal ones like an oath given, and non-verbal behaviour to confirm previous. The Kuci escaped from physical extermination by the en-



emy, –for economical reasons because they refused to acknowledge its fiscal supremacy–, and were saved by friends voluntarily. Later, under the new circumstances given, and in order to preserve „face”, –the highest social moral values–, the cost of principal they paid was paradoxically the same as initial punishment: physical extermination of the own human capital by refraining from childbearing. As interest, the same terrible price was paid by their saviours: The Rovci also voluntarily prevented the own childbearing! Voluntary act define a free choice or consent, done without compulsion and without payment<sup>17</sup> Therefore, the second aspect of this Kuci-in-Rovci paradox is that, *contradictio in adjecto*, voluntarily adopted decisions become compulsory morale.

### 4.3 Tertiary Sources Data Results:

#### 4.3.1 Desk Research Data Fishing: Internet

Let us assume that values, or better to say perception of values, are subjects of transactions. One exchange „a value” already owned for some perceptions of wished value. As per concept transaction of values, values are either exchanged against other value, or one does that free of charge (volunteerism). In such cases, mathematically, whenever „free of charge” is equal to „volunteerism”, volunteerism has a certain „value”, whatever a measurement scale might be.

Further more to here mentioned other sources, and anticipating that there could be a kind of universally accepted volunteerism concepts in respect to economic values promoted, in this part of study, tertiary data sources were researched for the presence volume of the variables identified. Some data were found, like 65.900 web data<sup>18</sup> for „Merchandising Commodities and Citizenship on Television”, – which is the title of the famous 1951 article about is it possible selling brotherhood like a soap?<sup>19</sup>–, in the comparison to: 17.700.000 web „benefits of volunteering”<sup>20</sup> data.

Respectfully to this enormous data<sup>21</sup>, we are positive about that in those tertiary sources there were significant body of empiric materials from which one could derive volunteering for economical causes data. What are interrelations in between of those variables, „benefits of volunteering”, „Merchandising Commodities”, etc.? In respect to that, interrelations must connote behavioural style we can call propensity to volunteer, through propensity to give. Since we have values of volunteering in question, it is therefore herewith proposed to coin those interrelations as: propensity-to-share-with-others. Logi-

cally, when there was nothing to share, in sense of volunteering values, any form of communication stops. That has been heavily confirmed as a prevailing post-conflict status.

However, –process of adding apple and a pear is not easy, which means: –, one can not calculate with different values. Therefore, even if apparently same calculus forms would be used, that would derive absolutely different values.

For that, Umberto Eco confirms: „Do we think that technological development, the expansion of trade, and rapid transportation are good? A great many people do, and so they consider our technological culture superior. But in the Western world, some feel that life in . . . . to define one culture as better than another, it's not enough to describe them; we need to refer to a system of values we feel we cannot do without. Only then can we say that our culture is better, for us.”<sup>22</sup>

## 5 Conclusions:

Both, the main research question, (–What is the reason that the efficiency of donated projects of international technical aid to economical and social reconstruction of post-conflict areas is questionable?–), and some of the auxiliary research questions, (–How cross-culture differences impact projects' results?, and some similar questions–), asked for qualitative research paradigm and applied research strategy. As such, research report is therefore written in the first person, plural, as it should be with bricolage techniques. Based of above finding, the full set of conclusions might be:

Economical impacts of the prompting for development of European post-conflict zones by voluntarily implemented projects might be significantly inter-related with cultural matrixes prevailing with receivers.

Apparently, implemantators do not communicate expected values to aid receivers, so, communication stops even before it starts. That validates our notions of having there, in such situations, two-never-touching-process-cycles. Each cycle represents all what is happening at different ends of communication channels. So, both parties to such communicational process actually just care for their own interests, as if there were no other of those suppose to communicate participants. In that way, since no sender and receiver communicate, nothing at other end is made important for any of communication

parties! That, furthermore, confirms the famous micro-macro paradox: aid implementators report successes of individual missions while the whole process, as per macroeconomic indicators, is getting worse.

Why is it so? Simple for there were just very low direct communicological contacts between sender and receiver recorded in all cases where aid receiving societies had developed their own values paradigm, –especially about a property question–, which is seen in the concept of „antidoro”. As that what participants have got is „antidoro”, a materialised value owned by their groups, which in that way become solo entitled to share. Since that propensities are made important to aid receivers, the rest seems irrelevant and of no value against their measuring scale.

Secondly, here identified as the Kuci-in-Rovci paradox, voluntarily adopted decisions become compulsory morale within aid receivers’ circles.

Thirdly, whenever a system of values is being defined, communication receivers know what is better for them and tend not to communicate any prompting messages.

Economic aid for post conflict and volunteerism as implementation concept behave as endogenous variables within „antidoro” cultural matrix irrespectively of Kuci-in-Rovci paradox.

Consequently, not only the efficiency but also effectiveness of post-conflict aid assistance, volunteering including, is questionable!

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