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“Transcultural Impacts and Perspectives on the Future”

Perspectives from Finland, France, India, Italy, Japan, Sweden, the United States of America, and Venezuela.

Local Governance and Global Citizenship

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In the last decade, there has been a transformation in the perceptions of the role of cities (and citizens), in our society. This phenomenon is particularly relevant in Europe for a variety of reasons:

- Traditionally, cities have been seen in their respective national economic hierarchies; but increasingly they are seen in a wider European-Global economic context;
- There has been a rapid growth in the development of networks between cities within Europe designed to promote trading links, exchange good practices, and promote local interests;
- There has been growing awareness of the contribution and potential of cities to Europe's economic competitiveness;
- The search for economic growth has not always led to social equity; indeed it has often contributed to increased social exclusion¹.

So we face a paradox. Despite the growing contribution to the economic competitiveness of Europe, not all places or people contribute or benefit equally, so social problems are growing in many cities. This juxtaposition of success and failure, growth and decline, innovation and stagnation, wealth and poverty, great architecture, and environmental deterioration poses a major challenge to the social cohesion of

¹ M. Parkinson, “Local Strategies in a Global Economy: Lessons from Competitive Cities,” OECD International Conference on Local Development and Governance in Central, East and South East Europe, Trento, Italy 6th -8th June 2005

Europe. Linking increasing economic competitiveness to increasing social inclusion is the crucial challenge.

All these aspects can be seen as part of the concept of “enlarged citizenship” (e.g. new duties, different rights). A brief analysis of three concrete situations, health policy, ethnic minority assimilation, and migration, give us a complex impression: the “new citizenship” seems to be something that is under construction and we do have to work to prepare ourselves to possible futures alternatives.

ISSUES – THREE EXAMPLES

The first issue is differing approaches to facing a terrible disease, AIDS. Western Europe has one of the lowest prevalence rates of HIV globally and has not been affected by the epidemic to the same extent as other regions such as Southeast Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. In some countries of Eastern Europe, however, the prevalence of HIV during the last decade has gone from one of the lowest in the world to an alarmingly rapid spread, with the highest rate of new infections in the world. It is important to highlight that there is currently no harmonisation with respect to AIDS policy within the European Union. All of the EU countries have different legal approaches and policies regarding HIV/AIDS. There is a clash of interests with respect to the individual, institutional and social aspects. For example, some legislators feel that the rights of the patient are the more important rights, while others feel public health is more important. “This led to different policies regarding aspects such as mandatory versus voluntary testing. Because of these differences in point of view, no common policy has been formed. Many suggest that it is important to implement a uniform political strategy towards the issue, because many believe that totally uniform legislation will not be possible.”² In this context, the lack of harmonisation becomes an indicator of the absence of fundamental rights strictly connected to the concept of citizenship.

A second example is the ethnic minority assimilation issue. A century ago, about half of the area under consideration was identified with one ethnic minority or another; sixty years ago the proportion was still about one-quarter. Today, although quantitative approximations are extremely problematic, it might be estimated that no more than one tenth of the population in East-Central Europe belongs to ethnic minorities. Nevertheless, the challenges associated with minority assimilation have not declined proportionately. Unlike immediately neighbouring regions, such as Moldova, minority assimilation problems here have not exploded into armed conflict and they are not likely to do so. However, they continue to weigh considerably on the internal evolution of the area and on its future relations with the EU.

The exclusivist conception of the state, with its consequences for the minority assimilation issue, is a common feature of all the “new EU countries,” regardless of the very significant distinction in the proportion and situation of minorities among them. Four countries (Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Hungary) have minority populations not exceeding 10% of the total population. With the exception of the Roma, these minorities are not salient. In four other countries (Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, and Lithuania) minorities comprise up to 25% of the population. Here, certain minority groups constitute compact and distinct societies and they are an important factor in national policies. Finally, in two countries (Latvia and Estonia), minorities, in fact, a single Russian speaking or Slavic minority, exceed 30% of the population³. Once again, what will be the solutions of the “spectrum” of challenges related to this issue? What kind of “complete” citizenship is foreseeable for these people?

² European Parliament, Directorate General for Research, STOA, briefing note n. 09/2001 PE nr. 297.575 March 2001, “HIV/AIDS in the EU and Accession Countries.”

³ Andre Liebich, “Ethnic Minorities and Long Term Implications of EU Enlargement,” EUI, working paper RSC No 98/49, Firenze 1998.

The third issue that illustrates the necessity to better understand the linkage between “enlarged citizenship” and the necessity of new forms of governance, possibly future oriented, is migration.

Fifty years after mass migration began in most of the European countries, the process of integration has entered a new phase. Since the end of the 1970s in northern Europe and of the 1980s in the south, it has been obvious that all the major European countries have become countries of immigration and must build policies to promote the assimilation of their immigrants. After a decade of debate and studies, we know a little more about the slow progress towards the social integration of different immigrant groups. However, as soon as we began to analyse the changes that have occurred in the demography and socioeconomic positions of immigrants, a new issue emerged on the social and political agenda: the ‘management of diversity.’ The rise of a ‘second generation,’ i.e. the offspring of immigrants, in the former countries of immigration has produced a new context that needs to be analysed. To improve our understanding of integration in the long run, the social sciences, demography in particular, should promote observations and analyses of the socio-economic positions and trajectories of this second generation. What kinds of integration are the second generations experiencing compared with their parents and with the natives of the countries where they live? And finally, is it correct to assume the presence of the concept of “second generation” or is it more appropriate to talk about “new first generation?” What are the consequences to civil rights and unwritten rules such as tolerance? And once again, in a contemporary society is tolerance something different from “mutual respect”?

These three examples (health policy related to AIDS, ethnic minority assimilation, and migration) give us the idea of a structured relation that links complexity, decision making, individual rights and duties, and citizenship; in one word it is a problem of *governance*. The political problem and the necessary decision making process have to face situations that already require particular skills and “levels of knowledge” even for a simple understanding; the question is: “are our Parliaments able to face this challenge?” “Historically, Parliament has been a symbol and agent of *Demos*, the basis for legitimising political authority and legislation, and accountable to ‘the people’ for laws and regulation. However, many of the most important changes in modern society are currently taking place through mechanisms beyond the scope of parliamentary purview.”⁴

NEW MODELS OF GOVERNANCE

It seems necessary to identify different (and hopefully new) paths and models of governance, and we have to recognise a series of important trends emerging as we enter the 21st century. One trend is related to the development of new forms of partnership between government, business, trade unions, associations, non-government organizations (NGOs), academia, and generations, aimed at meeting the dual challenges of social cohesion and economic competitiveness.

Governance can be defined as the framework through which political, economic, social and administrative authority is exercised at local, national and international levels. In today’s world, this framework consists of a wide variety of mechanisms, processes, institutions, and relationships – including partnerships – through which individual citizen, groups and organizations can express their interests, exercise their rights and responsibilities, and mediate their differences.

These emerging forms of partnership are needed to address societal problems where traditional, single sector approaches are proving inadequate. Inter-generational partnership can be one of them, foresight exercises and methods can be the means, and schools, universities, and other “third sector” organisations the places.

⁴ Amanda Sloat, “The Future of Parliamentary Democracy: Transition and Challenge in European Governance,” Green Paper prepared for the Conference of the European Union, September 2000.

These are new social partnerships, where individuals and organisations have invested time, energy, money and other resources in trying to solve particular social problems. This has involved forging unfamiliar approaches to working with different people and organisations, and building synergy from diverse cultures, networks and competencies⁵. In doing this, people take part in a cooperative learning process, and they propose and act on *alternatives related to the future of their respective cities*. This is the alchemy involved in making these partnerships more than the sum of their parts and effective in addressing both shared societal purposes and individual interests. The ability and willingness to adapt to changing needs, capabilities, and circumstances, is a critical success factor in long term sustainability of a social partnership.

CHALLENGES TO TRANSFORMATION

To be sure, there are challenges. First and foremost, our political structure is fighting against transformations in governance and is winning. The actual forms of western democracy do not consider the needs of future generations.

Another challenge is the need to aim for a combination of short-term (relatively easy to achieve) outcomes, as well as longer term and possibly more grand ambitions. There is often pressure on new social and inter-generational partnerships to demonstrate early success to those inside and outside of the partnership who might be sceptical or indeed hostile.

The timing of success also highlights the fact that different participants have different timeframes, and this can be an important determinant of success or failure. To manage the relations between expectations and timeframes becomes an important skill in leading governance processes.

Fourth, in synthesis there are “shifts” in our understanding and practice of governance. These shifts in the structure, process and scope of governance emerge from deeply rooted changes in the global economy and associated shifts in organisational, technological, and political processes. These changes are still in their early stages and will continue to impact governance as they evolve.

The emerging forms of governance therefore present both a potential threat to participative democracy and a real opportunity to strengthen meaningful citizen involvement in decision making and service delivery. The challenge is to ensure a form of civil governance that effectively manages human affairs while enabling citizens to take active roles in designing the policies, institutions, strategies and programs that shape the quality of their own lives. To do this, it will be necessary to balance roles, responsibilities, accountabilities, and capabilities of different levels of government and the various actors or sectors in society.

Linked to this, the future of new social partnerships depends critically on whether they prove capable of delivering societal benefits that cannot be achieved more effectively through other means⁶. To be effective, they will need to demonstrate clear added value at the local level in building sustainable coalitions and improving quality of life, and at a strategic level, in helping government bodies create an enabling environment for additional proactive and innovative approaches to address socioeconomic problems.

ROLE OF FUTURE STUDIES

⁵ J. Nelson, S. Zadek, *Partnership Alchemy, New Social Partnership in Europe*, The Copenhagen Centre, Denmark 2004.

⁶ *Ibidem*.

In this framework, the role of futures studies becomes crucial; theoretical, methodological and conceptual innovation often derive from crises that become opportunities. The 21st century will be characterised by technological efficiency and social turbulence; characteristics that were particularly present during the Nazi era. The western democratic system seems to be searching for sustainable models of economic growth, social cohesion, and inter-cultural dialogue. In other words, this is what is commonly considered development, and in a global society it is often useful, even necessary, to start with what is considered immediately possible, which is often participation at the local level.

The challenge is clear: civil governance and participation require a “visionary and empowered theoretical approach and innovative forms of coordination.” In this context, once again, the support of future studies can be extremely useful. Specifically, the use of future studies methodologies and the ability to think, participate and act locally can lead to the emergence of new forms of citizenship (expansion of the rights) and future forms of “shared governance” or “civil governance.” We have to assume that modern economic and social systems are increasingly complex and that the two traditional mechanisms of coordination, “hierarchy” and “market,” are inadequate in their pure forms⁷. A new form of multilateral coordination, involving all economic and social actors, is needed in order to put together all the elements of the system so that common goals can be achieved, that is, “network or interactive governance.” Innovative governance is the actual “policy request,” and intergenerational dialogue and futures studies are crucial resources for a possible approach.

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POINTS FOR THE CLASSROOM (send comments to forum@futuretakes.org):

- "Fission" or "fusion"? Ten years from now, will governance and notions of community be more local, more regional (trans-national), or more global? What about notions of identity? Will the global integration of the world's economies continue to increase, or are there weak signals of a countertrend?
- Cinquegrani discusses emerging new modes of governance, including a trend toward new forms of partnership between government, business, trade unions, associations, NGOs, and academia. In your part of the world, what roll will these various sectors play in governance in 2015? What roles will IT-enabled direct citizen participation play (see Youngsook Park's article, Fall 2008 issue)? Political parties? Other avenues of participation (such as political action committees in the US)?
- Cinquegrani states that "Linking increasing economic competitiveness to increasing social inclusion is the crucial challenge." In what ways will various nations and regions

attempt to meet this challenge, and with what consequences? What will be the impacts, if any, on notions of prosperity?

- *In his discussion of minority assimilation, Cinquegrani asks “What kind of ‘complete’ citizenship” is foressable for these people?” What are your thoughts on this. (Fast-forward ten years and characterize minority assimilation, and the impact of associated challenges, in various parts of the world.)*

Also see Stephen Aguilar-Millan’s article on immigration issues and Sohail Iyanatullah’s comments on governance in the Spring-Summer 2008