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The coordination and the EU instruments for linking humanitarian aid and development cooperation

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Abstract: *The paper addresses the EU institutional challenges of linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD), with special focus on the lack of coordination between two directorates of the European Commission, the Directorate-General for humanitarian aid and civil protection (DG ECHO) and the Directorate-General for development and cooperation – EuropeAid (DG DEVCO). The coordination between these two directorates is limited to consultations and cooperation attempts, while practical collaboration is informal. Primarily, weak coordination can be attributed to the diverse nature of humanitarian aid and development cooperation, resulting in different principles and objectives. And secondly, the lack of collaboration is mostly the result of institutional dimensions of current EU aid architecture, ranging from different procedures and practices of directorates to the EU instruments. Paper shows that existing humanitarian and development instruments which have the potential for LRRD are time-bound, content-limited and often receive insufficient, slow, unpredictable and inflexible funding.*

Key words: Humanitarian aid, development cooperation, LRRD, DG ECHO, DG DEVCO, coordination, EU instruments.

Introduction

Nowadays, the growing numbers of natural catastrophes and expansion of extremely complex conflicts, create needs demanding coordinated, coherent and complementary response of humanitarian aid and development cooperation. Both forms of aid are extremely interlinked since humanitarian actions often address emergency needs in developing countries and at the same time this humanitarian emergencies affect development processes. Although the concept of linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD), has the significant potential to bring about sustainable peace and development, it is still one of the most complex challenges confronting international aid community. In the paper we will be mostly focused on ensuring LRRD in complex crisis, where it is the most challenging to obtain successful LRRD, especially since “in the current aid architecture, it's not always clear who is responsible for ensuring funding and resources in complex humanitarian situations” (Fowlow, 2012).

According to various authors studying and writing on the concept of LRRD in the recent years, the basic idea of LRRD is linking short-term humanitarian aid measures with longer-term development programs to ensure sustainable response to crisis situations, irrespective of the size and nature of the disaster (natural and/or man-made). As stated in the Principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD), humanitarian assistance should be provided in ways that are supportive of recovery and long-term development, striving to ensure support, where appropriate, to the maintenance and return of sustainable livelihoods and transitions from humanitarian relief to recovery and development. As also stressed by Van Dok, Varga and Schroeder (2005: 14-15) humanitarian aid should encompass: ensuring survival, reconstruction, rehabilitation and prevention. "In turn, well-designed development cooperation programs should reduce the need for emergency relief, and LRRD development activities should include measures for conflict prevention, disaster risk reduction, disaster preparedness and the development of early warning systems" (Ramet, 2012: 4). In the study on the LRRD made by Policy department of directorate-general for external policies of the union, authors emphasized that LRRD tries to harmonize short-term relief and long-term development through effective political and financial coordinating mechanisms in order to develop complementary and comprehensive approaches for a sustainable response to crisis situations (Morazan, Grünewald, Knoke and Schafer, 2012). Moreover, European platforms of humanitarian and development NGOs[1] are sharing the views that LRRD thinking seeks to ensure that humanitarian programming does not undermine development work and that development programming is building on humanitarian knowledge and results. In sum, platforms are stating that ensuring LRRD would clearly be a "smarter aid" (VOICE and CONCORD, 2012: 1-2).

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[1] VOICE (Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies) is a network representing more than 80 European NGOs active in humanitarian aid worldwide and CONCORD is the European NGO confederation for relief and development uniting 26 national associations and 18 international networks.

However, in practice the link between relief and development is still very weak due to variety of reasons and in this paper we will focus on how EU institutional dimensions, including established financing instruments, are affecting LRRD. First and foremost the distinction between different phases of crisis response still represents one of the major problems. There is still a widespread belief that immediately after the disaster, it is necessary to provide emergency assistance, which will focus on saving lives and will satisfy the basic needs of the population, such as the need for water, food, shelter, etc. In the rehabilitation phase relevant actors are supposed to provide assistance to set up more permanent structures and services. And such circumstances would then be adequate for the establishment of developmental programs and projects. However, such phased approach to aid in many regions and countries suffering from repeated shocks and uncertain situations such as Haiti, Sahel, Sudan and South Sudan, Afghanistan etc. proved to be inadequate, especially where country is confronting humanitarian and development needs or where needs in the different parts of the country are dissimilar. Therefore it is extremely important to envisage LRRD as contiguum (not continuum) or simultaneous approach, where different humanitarian and development aid instruments need to be applied at the same time and in coordinated, coherent and complementary fashion.

The analysis of the implementation of the European LRRD concept in different partner countries and crisis situations made by Morazan et al. (2012) shows that, despite some progress made in recent years, the funding gap in the grey area between relief and development still exists and the coordination and enhancement of LRRD activities is far from being institutionalized.

Development assistance committee (DAC) of Organization for economic co-operation and development (OECD) underlines that joint analysis and programming between ECHO, DEVCO and EEAS (European external action service) that can lead to better, and more strategic programming in recovery settings, is not yet systematic, and faces bureaucratic challenges (OECD/DAC, 2012). DAC also highlighted the EU institutions' lack of tailored and/or sufficiently flexible financial tools make it difficult to bridge the gap between relief and development. Ramet (2012: 7-10) came up with similar findings that the problems of linking humanitarian aid and development programs are mainly the result of a lack of coordination, and existing DG ECHO and DG DEVCO procedures for mobilizing aid that are often impending complementarity.

Therefore the overall research objective of the paper is to examine the institutional challenges of LRRD from the EU perspective. In this sense we have developed two main research questions: What is the actual degree of coordination between the two main Directorate-Generals responsible for humanitarian aid and development cooperation - DG ECHO and DG DEVCO? To what extent are relevant humanitarian and development instruments enabling LRRD?

Paper is based on the analysis and interpretation of primary sources (contracts, agreements, programs, reports, etc.) and the analysis and interpretation of secondary sources (academic articles, studies, etc.). Certain conclusions were made on the basis of author's experiences of working for Slovenian national platform of NGOs for development cooperation and humanitarian aid, field experience (working on crisis preparedness project in Africa) and consultations with Jasna Djordjević, international consultant in the field of international humanitarian assistance and former colleague of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Geneva.

Degrees of aid coordination

Coordination is one of the necessary factors influencing the efficiency of policies, programs and project according to various authors such as Van Meter and Van Horn, Hogwood and Gunn (1984), etc. This is particularly true in the complex EU public policy environment where institutional coordination is the prerequisite for efficiency and effectiveness of aid.

Our analysis of the coordination between DG ECHO and DG DEVCO will be based on the theoretical assumptions of Disch (1990) who defined three degrees of intensity/commitment regarding aid coordination:

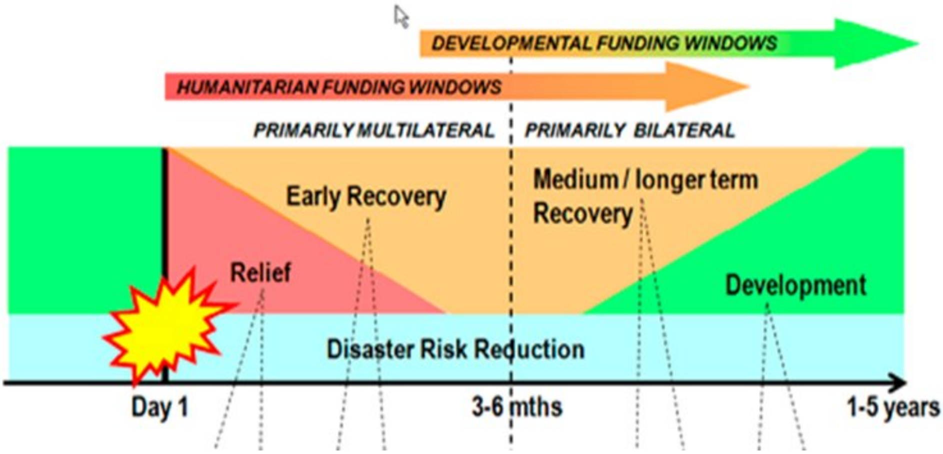
- consultation: this generally focuses on information sharing, either between host governments and donors, or within the donor community. Usually there are no formal commitments or decisions taken at this level, though there is often the intention or desire that the consultation will lead at least to informal understandings of improved practices along some defined dimension;

- cooperation: this is of a more strategic nature where policies, priorities, principles are discussed with the intention of arriving at some form of harmonization. This requires a degree of consensus as well as trust that may not cover all donors, though coordination across the entire donor community is being seen more and more, particularly in emergency situations;
- collaboration: this addresses issues of procedures and practices, where there is a conscious effort to ensure that implementation of activities runs as smoothly and seamlessly as possible, independent of funding source. The typical cases are the early joint import support programs and now sector budget support in the form of basket funding where donors accept one set of disbursement, reporting, accounting and auditing procedures and where there is complete fungibility between each individual donor's contribution as well as public funds in that sector.

Linking humanitarian aid and development cooperation

"The concept of linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD) started off as a UN initiative in the 1980s, when cases of natural disasters and violent conflicts increased, especially on the African continent, and a new understanding evolved that recognised that systemic factors, poverty and political instability actually constitute and increase the vulnerability towards natural disasters as well as in protracted crisis situations" (Morazan et al., 2012: 10). Types of assistance and their time-framework are clearly seen from the Figure 1. Although the need to link emergency relief and development is nowadays broadly accepted by scholars and practitioners, the gap between development of LRRD concepts and policy commitments, and practices in the field remains significant, including at the EU level.

Figure 1: From relief to recovery to development



Source: IFRC in Otto and Weingärtner (2013: 101).

The European Commission (EC) introduced the concept of LRRD in its 1996 Communication to the Council and the European Parliament (COM (1996) 153) that explains the need to link relief, rehabilitation and development in a complementary, coherent and efficient manner. Although the EC emphasized the benefits of coordinated response to conflicts, the continuum or chronological sequence of relief, rehabilitation and development was still seen in this Communication. That same year, the EU Council adopted Regulation No. 2258/96 on the rehabilitation and reconstruction operations in developing countries. Therefore the "rehabilitation" officially became an instrument of EU cooperation with developing countries. According to the EC "rehabilitation may be defined as an overall, dynamic and intermediate strategy of institutional reform and reinforcement, of reconstruction and improvement of infrastructure and services, supporting the initiatives and actions of the populations concerned, in the political, economic and social domains, and aimed towards the resumption of sustainable development" (Dieci, 2006: 5). The following two paragraphs will take a short overview of the importance of "rehabilitation" for LRRD in order to examine which EU instruments have the potential for LRRD.

There is a diverse terminology (*rehabilitation, reconstruction, recovery*) and various definitions related to the actions implemented during the "rehabilitation phase", however most of them share one common point and that is the strategic dimension of rehabilitation. The review of most of today's multiple, severe humanitarian crisis such as those in South Sudan, Central African Republic, Syria, Afghanistan, etc. indicate the political, economic, social and development dimensions of root causes of such crisis. Therefore rehabilitation in such complex contexts requests performance of a variety of actors who will carry out different types of interventions. And it is precisely at this point where a key challenge appears – LRRD demands coordination of actors from humanitarian and development sector that are guided by different mandates. As emphasized by Dieci (2006: 5) "it is clear that rehabilitation represents a dramatically difficult and uncertain challenge and that rehabilitation is not simply the "ring" linking relief and development but primarily a strategy which is owned by local actors and supported with external aid". In the study done by Chandran, Jones, Smith, Funaki and Sorensen (2008) it is emphasized that rehabilitation (defined as early recovery) should focus on securing stability; establishing peace; resuscitating markets, livelihoods, and services, and the state capacities necessary to foster them; and building core state capacity to manage political, security and development processes. As emphasized by many authors such as Manninen-Visuri (2006), Viciani (2003) etc. is it crucial in the rehabilitation phase to build and strengthen relevant institutions, and to follow the participatory and community based approach and empower local people and communities to participate in their recovery and be well prepared when and if a disaster happens. And last but not least we would like to mention one of the most innovative ways that has increasingly been discussed over the past years to connect humanitarian aid and development cooperation - cash transfers and/or vouchers[2]. Örneus (2012) points out that cash transfers and vouchers enhance the dignity and choice, and can be effective in promoting local markets.

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[2] Cash transfers provide money to people who can use it to meet their basic needs for food and non-food items or services. A voucher is a paper, token or electronic card that can be exchanged for certain goods or that has a certain cash value.

In 2001 EC adopted second Communication on LRRD which came to conclusion that rehabilitation programs need to consider long-term consequences while stability and development can be significant for conflict prevention. Communication also emphasizes the link between relief, rehabilitation and development must be seen in a broader economic, social and political context and that these factors must be taken into consideration in the different phases and in the different areas of intervention. In 2003 EC established an Inter-service Group for LRRD, subsequently renamed into Transition Inter-service Group (TISG). The group is co-chaired by ECHO and DEVCO and was created to ensure more coherent response, to prepare concrete case studies on LRRD and encourage joint needs assessments (LRRD/DPP Steering Group 2003). However different studies (Koddenbrock and Büttner 2009; Morazan et al. 2012) have found that TISG is not the most functional and that their impact at the operational level is much weaker than expected.

The importance of ensuring LRRD is mentioned in the key strategic documents, which cover the areas of humanitarian and development aid such as the European Consensus on development (2005) and the European Consensus on humanitarian aid (2007). Moreover LRRD it is mentioned in numerous other EU documents such as A thematic strategy for food security - Advancing the food security agenda to achieve the Millennium development goals (2006), Towards an EU response to situations of fragility - engaging in difficult environments for sustainable development, stability and peace (2007), EU strategy for supporting disaster risk reduction in developing countries (2009) etc. Latest developments of LRRD are mainly related to discussions and concepts about response in fragile states, disaster risk reduction, early recovery and resilience. Most recent documents connected to LRRD are the Communication “The EU approach to resilience - Learning from food crisis” (2012) and its Action plan for resilience in crisis prone countries (2013). Documents are drawing on experiences in addressing food crisis, mainly in Horn of Africa and Sahel, which were presenting major humanitarian catastrophes at that time. All the above mentioned documents are recognizing that strengthening resilience lies at the interface of humanitarian and development aid.

One of the most recent studies on LRRD done in 2013 (IOB study on LRRD financed by Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and RedR (2013), international humanitarian NGO focusing on resilience, emphasize the resilience means the capacity of a system, community or society to resist to shocks or stresses or to change in order that it may obtain an acceptable level in functioning and structure. This is determined by the degree to which the social system is capable of organizing itself, and the ability to increase its capacity for learning and adaptation, including the capacity to recover from a disaster. Resilience can potentially serve as an overarching common goal and analytical framework for different policy fields such as disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, peace-building, social protection, development aid and humanitarian response. There is – at least in theory – a direct link between humanitarian aid and development cooperation in the sense that a humanitarian crisis, and ultimately a humanitarian response, can be avoided by developing resilience. There are some ongoing case studies about the application of the resilience approach, mainly in drought-related contexts

(Otto and Weingärtner, 2013: 29). Such recent initiatives supported by EC are AGIR and SHARE. AGIR (*Alliance Globale pour l'Initiative Resilience*) which has been agreed among EC, numerous countries, humanitarian and development agencies and other organizations, aims to strengthen the resilience of the affected people in the Sahel region. Among others AGIR is giving special attention to simultaneous mobilization and coordination of short-term (humanitarian) and long-term (development) instruments of EC in order to address current crisis and structural vulnerabilities. Similar objectives are included in SHARE intiative (*Supporting the Horn of Africa's Resilience*) designed to strengthen the resilience of countries in the Horn of Africa. It aims at improving the capacity of countries and communities to face the challenges linked to climate change, poverty and conflicts. However authors of the above mentioned study underline that the guidelines for building resilience that stress the focus on ownership and long-term approaches, which however have the high potential for approaches favouring LRRD, can lead to conflicts with the humanitarian principles of neutrality and impartiality in conflict settings (Otto in Weingärtner, 2013: 15 - 16).

Continuing with milestones of LRRD at the EU level, we must mention the development of a tool named Joint humanitarian-development framework (JHDF) which was established in 2011 aiming at joint humanitarian and development planning in the analysis phase. The IOB study states that application of JHDF is flexible and can be applied as a comprehensive exercise at country level or as a half-day workshop at headquarters. Proposed steps for the analysis process are: discussion on the overall nature of the crisis, identification of the target population, joint analysis of the causes for the food insecurity of the target population, identification of EU responses, assessment of the coherence of EU interventions, definition of strategic priorities and design of an action plan (Otto and Weingärtner, 2013: 54).

As we have seen so far EC does not lack political and policy commitments to LRRD, and from the ECHO and DEVCO annual reports we are able to identify some good LRRD practices in the field, such as cases in Burundi, Zimbabwe and some countries in the Horn of Africa (Kenya, Uganda). However, most of the already mentioned studies are concluding that the implementation of LRRD still largely depends on the individual willingness to support LRRD and informal coordination. Further only 35% of the humanitarian organizations that participated in the study of Morazan et al. (2012) believe that EU follows a clear strategy regarding LRRD.

In the continuation of the paper we will take a closer look at the coordination between humanitarian and development DGs, followed by analysis of the established EU instruments and related financial aspects of LRRD.

Coordination between DG ECHO and DG DEVCO

As stated by the Evaluation services of the EU (European Union, 2007: 23-24) typically a coordination process directed towards improving aid effectiveness might start by sharing information and data and then, increasingly move towards identifying issues of common interest, setting a joint agenda, the exchange of good practices and joint decision-making. After that, it may move further towards joint evaluation and monitoring, joint learning, harmonisation of procedures and perhaps, the setting of new standards. Preparatory EU studies on promoting policy coherence within the EU, found out that institutional coordination needs at least two additional, mutually reinforcing efforts to be successful (European Union, 2007: 24):

- political commitment on the part of the relevant stakeholders; with leadership and clearly defined policy objectives, priorities and criteria for assessing progress;
- adequate analytical capacity; effective systems for monitoring, evaluating impact; adequate capacity for generating, sharing and processing relevant information and for developing and implementing common standards.

As we have already seen, EU does not lack political commitment, however there are other challenges disabling LRRD that will be presented in the continuation of the paper.

Current EU legal and institutional framework designed for the implementation of LRRD requires the coordination of DG ECHO, DG DEVCO and EEAS. In the institutional context we cannot forget on the importance of coordination with ECHO field offices, EU delegations and other various actors in recipient partner countries (such as national governments and parliaments, local authorities, civil-society organization, etc.). However, for the purpose of this paper we will focus only on the coordination between two DGs responsible for humanitarian aid in development cooperation.

According to Disch (1990) the first degree of intensity of aid coordination are consultations. We are particularly interested at the coordination at EC level, since Commission is the key public policy manager of the EU and a source of political and public-policy orientations. It drafts proposals for new European laws and manages the day-to-day business of implementing EU policies and spending EU funds. Commissioners meet once a week in the College of Commissioners. Individual content is presented by the commissioner who is responsible for a specific public policy area, followed by inter-service consultations and decisions taken collectively. In principle College also adopts the financial decisions (European Union 2013; Peterson 2006). Operational work of EC takes place in formally non-political departments, called Directorates-Generals (DGs), managed by the Directors-General. Prior to the adoption, the Directorate-General that presents the draft of financing decision has to launch inter-service consultation of other Commission departments concerned and has to obtain their agreement (DG ECHO Partners Helpdesk, 2012a: 1). Further, DG ECHO can use four different types of financing decisions (primary emergency, emergency, ad hoc, global plans) that are determined my different criteria such as the degree of urgency of response, nature of crisis, financial aspect of the decision, duration of humanitarian actions. EC recognised the need to have specific procedures for adopting financing decisions in the field of humanitarian aid and delegated to the Director-General of DG ECHO the adoption of certain financing decisions under very precise circumstances. These rules known as the "empowerment" concern financing decisions which have duration of up to 18 months and a value up to and including €30.000.000. However, DG ECHO is still obliged to consult with other DG's, including DG DEVCO, when adopting emergency decisions, ad hoc decisions and global plans, regardless of the amount of the decision. Consultations can last from 2-5 days (DG ECHO Partners Helpdesk, 2012a: 4−6). Therefore we can conclude that consultations between DG ECHO and DG DEVCO are present when it comes to the decisions related to LRRD.

Cooperation already represents a more strategic level of coordination, which can be detected between DG ECHO and DG DEVCO, however we can already notice deficiencies at this level of coordination. In 1996 and 2001 EC managed to adopt Communications on LRRD, proving that leading directorates for humanitarian aid and development cooperation, were able to obtain certain degree of policy harmonization. Results of cooperation are also seen from common development of already mentioned concepts and various common documents trying to incorporate LRRD. However certain concepts that have the potential for LRRD (DRR, early recovery) are mostly present in humanitarian sector only. Cooperation attempts are also seen from the establishment of TISG co-chaired by ECHO and DEVCO, but the functioning and results of the group are not in accordance with set objectives so far. Lack of cooperation between DG's is also seen from the key strategic documents for humanitarian aid and development cooperation - the European Consensus on humanitarian aid adopted and the European consensus on development. Although both consensuses, especially the Consensus on humanitarian aid underlines the need for cooperation and linkages between humanitarian aid and development cooperation, there are certain inconsistencies within and between the two documents. Consensus on humanitarian aid stresses that humanitarian principle of independence presupposes the "autonomy" of humanitarian principles of political, economic, military or other objectives (The European Consensus on humanitarian aid 2007). Although we strongly believe that humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence must be respected, we believe that such provisions can prevent LRRD since it is hard to imagine an efficient coordination by strictly following autonomy without any common objectives. When writing about disparities between humanitarian and development sector we can also mention that EC is signatory of two important documents aiming at improving the quality of development and humanitarian aid - Paris declaration on aid effectiveness and Good humanitarian donorship initiative (GHDI). However main principles of coordination, coherence and complementary of development aid underlined in Paris declaration, can to certain extent oppose quite narrow and principled mandate of humanitarian aid supported by GHDI. And regarding the (The European Consensus on development 2005) the major critic, expressed my Morazan et al. (2012) study, is related to the LRRD being seen only as an option rather than an approach useful in all contexts of development cooperation.

At the level of collaboration actors should standardize their procedures and practices, however the paper show that DG ECHO and DG DEVCO have not yet reached this level of coordination. As already stated, both directorates continue to strictly follow their principles and consequently assert their own procedures and practices. While EC has accelerated the ECHO contracting procedures, enabling fast, flexible and efficient mobilization of resources and implementation of measures, DEVCO and its partners are facing complex, time-consuming and inflexible procedures. We strongly believe that simplification and coordination of contracting procedures are crucial for facilitating LRRD. Since development NGOs are often present in the field and have already established relations with communities and authorities, they have good opportunities to respond on (forecasted) crisis. Therefore it is extremely relevant for development donors to be more flexible and distribute funds faster. In order to achieve such response and allow LRRD, EU should definitely rethink current project cycle management, that has its advantages, but at the same time disable LRRD due to its bureaucratic and time-consuming procedures, mostly related to complex and long-term calls for proposals. Further DG ECHO and DG DEVCO still didn't establish capacities for joint acquisition, exchange and assessment of key information regarding the situation and needs in the field. As Otto and Weingärtner (2013: 55) emphasize, the context and needs assessment processes have high potential in terms of providing the contextual information and creating good linkages between different policy fields. First, context analyses and needs assessments for humanitarian programming should take long-term perspectives into account. Second, these processes could be used to overcome the 'two worlds apart' by bringing actors from the different policy fields together. Lack of collaboration is also seen from different practices regarding cooperation with the countries, building systems and ownership. Koddenbrock and Büttner (2009: 122-123) are convinced the core dilemmas of LRRD in protracted crises evolve around the relationship with the state and the willingness to promote more long-term systems building. According to authors this is a consequence of the relationship between humanitarian neutrality and independence and development assistance with its more transformative outlook, encouraging working with state and willingness to build systems instead of engaging in decade long service delivery. This choice has direct implications for increased accountability to beneficiaries and to their ownership. On the other hand Djordjević (2013) believes that cooperation with state does not have negative impact on the respect of humanitarian principles. She points out that without proper cooperation with state, humanitarian organizations cannot operate successfully. And even if the organizations may be able to circumvent the national level, they simply cannot completely ignore the local authorities. On the basis of her experiences Djordjević (2013) believes that in practice humanitarian organizations always cooperate with government but the difference is in intensity and forms of cooperation. On the other hand Otto and Weingärtner (2013: 38) stressed working under the humanitarian imperative means that humanitarian actors need to be ready to intervene in a humanitarian context if a state is not willing or able to do so. This leads to the fact that humanitarian aid usually has a compensating or substituting character – sometimes even against the will of the local authorities and often without any contribution of the aid recipients. Bringing in substantial external capacities rather than building on what is already in place is one of the main differences between humanitarian and development aid. And according to requirements for successful institutional coordination underlined by the EU study on promoting policy coherence, EU is clearly missing an effective and efficient system for monitoring and evaluating the effects of LRRD in the field.

Our findings on the coordination between key directorates, which are clearly presented in Table 1, are largely in line with the views of implementing humanitarian organizations collected within the study made my Morazan et al.

(2012). Only 11% of interviewed organizations fully or somewhat agree that ECHO, EEAS and DEVCO have effective coordinating mechanisms concerning LRRD, while concerning 78% of them believes that there are conflicts of interests among ECHO, DEVCO and EEAS in respect of LRRD activities.

Table 1: Degrees of coordination between DG ECHO and DG DEVCO

DEGREES OF COORDINATION	DG ECHO IN DG DEVCO
Consultation	✓ Exchange of information and inter-service consultations; X certain exceptions for DG ECHO funding decisions.
Cooperation	✓ Weekly meetings of the Commissioners at the College of the EC; ✓ two Communications on LRRD (1996, 2001); X *with certain limitations regarding LRRD;* ✓ the establishment of Transitional Inter-service Group (TISG); X *although assessed as not being functional;* ✓ development of concepts (such as *resilience*) and new documents regarding LRRD.
Collaboration	✓ Establishment of Joint humanitarian-development framework (JHDF); X separate and uncoordinated procedures and practices (needs assessment, building systems/service delivery); X lack of capacity.

EU instruments for LRRD

In the following chapter we will explore to what can the analysis of the EU humanitarian and development instruments offer an explanation of the institutional possibilities and challenges for LRRD.

Instrument for humanitarian aid (IHA)

In 1996 the Council of the EU adopted the Regulation 1257/96 concerning humanitarian aid. Regulation governs the implementation of all Union operations providing humanitarian assistance to victims whose own authorities are unable or unwilling to provide effective relief (Council Regulation 1257/96). Although LRRD is not directly mentioned in this regulation, there are certain indications on linkages of humanitarian aid and development cooperation. In the introductory part regulation underlines that whereas humanitarian assistance may be a prerequisite for development or reconstruction work and must therefore cover the full duration of a crisis and it may include an element of short-term rehabilitation aimed at facilitating the arrival of relief, preventing any worsening in the impact of the crisis and starting to help those affected regain a minimum level of self-sufficiency. Such approach of humanitarian aid is extremely important since United Nations (UN) estimate that “every US$7 spent on responding to a natural disaster could be offset by US$1 spent on preparedness and early warning. Likewise every

US$1 spent on conflict resolution saves US$4 in humanitarian response" (UN in Costello, 2012: 14). Further, regulation stresses that humanitarian aid must be provided whereas there is a particular need for preventive action to ensure preparedness for disaster risks and, in consequence, for the establishment of an appropriate early-warning and intervention system.

Morazan et al. (2012: 21) note that the IHA proved to work well in response to acute emergencies (earthquakes in Pakistan and Haiti, cyclones in Vietnam and in the Philippines, military conflicts) and certain protracted crises, such as those which involve population displacement which lasts for an extended period (Chad, Darfur, Myanmar, Bangladesh). But they stress it is not adapted to managing transitions, nor sometimes even to providing efficient aid in the context of protracted crises or situations of long-term food insecurity. We can explain such conclusions with OECD/DAC (2012: 91) review underlining the limited time period and scope of IHA - only while emergency conditions are ongoing - usually 18 months maximum.

Development cooperation instrument (DCI)

Latest DCI was adopted in 2006 and launched in 2007, for the period 2007-2013. The development instrument is very comprehensive and complex instrument since it is covering three components: geographic programs, thematic programs and special Programme of accompanying measures for the 18 African, Caribbean and Pacific Sugar Protocol countries.

Regarding LRRD, DCI stresses that Multiannual indicative programs for countries faced by conflicts or post-conflict situations should place special emphasis on stepping up coordination between relief, rehabilitation and development. DCI also underlines the importance of disaster preparedness and prevention and foresees the possibility of adopting special measures not provided in different documents in cases of unforeseen and duly justified needs or circumstances related to different types of crisis when these cannot be covered by other instrument. LRRD is also indicated in the article providing special measures may also be used to fund measures to ease the transition from emergency aid to long-term development operations, including those to better prepare people to deal with recurring crises.

We can conclude that DCI contain certain sections which indirectly indicate on LRRD, however such provision remain challenging for coherent crisis response. Morazan et al. (2012: 12-16) of the study on LRRD recognize that addressing fragility is not articulated as a primary objective and the related connections to transition strategies and linkages between humanitarian aid and development cooperation could have been explained more clearly. The mentioned study also emphasize that DCI has difficulties to actually see LRRD as a cross-cutting issue as the contiguum model would suggest.

Therefore the proposal for new DCI is very important for strengthening LRRD. From the LRRD perspective it is promising that Article 10 in the current draft of new DCI foresees leaving a certain amount of funds unallocated in order to increase the flexibility of the instrument and the possibility of reacting to unforeseen events (new political priorities, natural or man-made disasters, etc.). Article 11 introduces the possibility of having a Joint framework document that would lay down a comprehensive EU strategy for crisis response and stresses that Multiannual indicative programs can be adjusted through a midterm or ad hoc review, in view of achieved objectives as well as in light of newly identified needs, such as those resulting from crisis, post-crisis or fragility situations. And last but not least the Article 12 highlights the potential need for a swift response for countries in crisis, post-crisis or fragility situation and foresees a special procedure for an ad hoc review of the strategy paper and of the Multiannual indicative programme. However, Morazan et al. (2012: 33) suggested that the new regulations should be much more specific in tying up the unallocated funds with LRRD measures.

Instrument for stability (IfS)

Instrument for stability was established in 2007 by Regulation 1717/2006, replacing Rapid Reaction Mechanism. IfS focuses on a number of issues related to global security and development. From the instrument, donors can fund short-term responses to crises and preparedness. These measures should be oriented towards conflict prevention, support post-conflict political stabilization and ensure early recovery after a natural disaster. IfS can also finance long-term measures in the field of nuclear weapons proliferation, capacity building for responses to terrorism and organized crime, and capacity building for preparedness before and after the crisis. LRRD measures are referred in Article 4 of the above mentioned regulation. It states that assistance for conflict prevention, peace-building and crisis preparedness shall cover support for measures aimed at building and strengthening the capacity of the EU and its partners. Measures shall include know-how transfer, the exchange of information and best practices, risk or threat assessment, research and analysis, early warning systems, training and service delivery, structural dialogue on peace-building issues and necessary technical and financial assistance (Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing an Instrument for Stability, 2006).

In practice the IfS is focused on the area of security and conflicts. Further its thematic strategic plan clearly emphasizes the link between security and development (Morazan et al. 2012: 13-14). However, Morazan et al. (2012: 14) are convinced that IfS must distance itself from central objectives in relation to nuclear weapons, terrorism and organized crime, if it should allow funding for LRRD measures, where it comes to financial gaps. Authors also assess the IfS is designed to enable LRRD, however it still remains mainly on theoretical level, while in practice it is rarely used. Study also emphasizes the challenge of EEAS being mainly responsible for the management of IfS. In this sense we strongly suggest coordination should be enhanced between all three key actors in Brussels – ECHO, DEVCO and EEAS, especially in the areas of conflict prevention and peace building that have a major impact on crisis prevention and development.

Other instruments and programs

Good opportunities for LRRD are also provided by EC instruments in the area of food security: The Food security thematic programme and the EU food facility. Both instruments allow the financing of measures that have a lasting impact on the provision of food security of the affected countries. This is notably through a number of iniciatives for the development of agriculture, which still represents the main source of livelihood of the majority of the population in developing countries. In the context of establishing the financial perspectives for 2007-2013, the EC has created a new budget line for humanitarian food aid - Food aid budget line (FABL). URD notes that within FABL, ECHO started to support a number of new tools that contribute to LRRD, such as vouchers, cash transfers, programs "cash for work", etc. FABL also supports the distribution of productive assets such as seeds, tools and livestock. Further certain programs also cover training, education on health and hygiene, care of animals, etc. URD evaluation points out that with its scope of interventions ranging from emergency food aid and nutrition to recovery and resilience-building projects, the food assistance sector is at the heart of LRRD strategies. DG ECHO could further contribute to the development of EC policy on LRRD by ensuring that lessons learnt in the food assistance sector are shared more broadly throughout the relevant EC institutions (URD, 2009: 46).

Since it is of utmost importance to build state and civil capacities which will lead the rehabilitation and development processes, we must mention the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). In 2006 it has replaced and upgraded the European initiative for democracy and the human rights. The EIDHR is designed to help civil society to become an effective force for political reform and defense of human rights. Therefore EIDHR can complement other EU funds, which are related to democracy and human rights. EIDHR is able to focus on sensitive political issues and innovative approaches and to cooperate directly with local civil society organizations which need to preserve independence from public authorities, providing for great flexibility and increased capacity to respond to changing circumstances. However, instrument was used to a very limited extent, especially in politically sensitive environments. Critics are also related to the fact that under the instrument it is difficult to choose strategic initiatives that contribute to sustainable change, that it is difficult to avoid supporting projects that can harm local guided process, and that the instrument is not suitable for rapid and flexible response in crisis situations due to long-term funding procedures, which are based on public tenders for the selection of projects and other administrative requirements and requirements for co-financing (Gourlay, 2006).

And last but not least it is very important to mention the program related to disaster preparedness and disaster risk reduction[3]. Such programs

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[3] Disaster preparedness aims to reduce to the minimum level possible, the loss of human lives and damage to buildings and natural infrastructure through the prompt and efficient actions to response and rehabilitation. Disaster risk reduction is the systematic development and application of policies, strategies and practices

are extremely relevant for LRRD since they are considering risks while implementing development cooperation and proactive actions of humanitarian aid. In 1996 ECHO has established a DIPECHO programme (*disaster preparedness ECHO*). The key goal of the programme is to increase communities' resilience and reduce their vulnerability. DIPECHO is a people-oriented programme, helping communities at risk of disasters to better prepare themselves by undertaking training, establishing or improving local early warning systems and contingency planning. Even though there is a wide agreement on the need for DRR, Otto and Weingärtner (2013: 28) note that concept is commonly applied in the context of natural disasters only and not in conflict. Further such programs, even though often declared as priority, still receive very limited financial support, including from the EU (European Commission, 2009).

As evident from the overview of instruments, EU has not established specific instruments or budget lines for LRRD, while established ones are faced with numerous challenges regarding LRRD. Even results of the survey (Morazan et al., 2012) among humanitarian organization show that extremely high proportion (86% or more) of organizations are convinced that there is a funding gap in the grey zone between relief and development, disagree that EU financial instruments are flexible enough to ensure effective transition/linkage, agree that fragmented instruments and EU structures make

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to minimise vulnerabilities, hazards and the unfolding of disaster impacts throughout a society, in the broad context of sustainable development (RedR UK, 2013: 12).

it difficult to apply for and receive adequate funding and think the EU should make tangible changes to their financial instruments.

However, there are various opportunities for making a linkage within the instruments for humanitarian aid, development cooperation and stability. On the chapter of instruments we are concluding that EU should particularly pay more attention to ensure greater flexibility of its (financing) instruments, especially in terms of time and content, which will enable the integration of humanitarian and development work. And taking into account the frequency of different crisis, we believe the funding for LRRD must increase.

Concluding remarks

Regarding the coordination and instruments for linking humanitarian aid and development cooperation, we are concluding that EU has made progress in past years, however margin for manoeuvre remains significant.

EU has proved its commitment to LRRD in a number of documents, partly with conceptual and institutional developments and some good field experiences. However, the coordination between DG ECHO and DG DEVCO is still limited to the level of consultation, weak cooperation, and informal and occasional collaboration. The lack of interaction can be primarily attributed to the diverse nature of humanitarian aid and development cooperation. The directorates often strictly follow their different principles, objectives and procedures, which to a large extent constitute an obstacle for the integration of humanitarian aid and development. Humanitarian aid is following humanitarian principles, often enabling cooperation with governments and often focusing only on short-term assistance to save lives and to prevent and relieve human suffering. While development cooperation underlines the close cooperation with the governments of recipient countries, and focuses on poverty reduction and long-term measures. We believe the lack of coordination can also be a result of certain expectations of different actors such as the media, the public, donors, local governments, etc. regarding the mandates of humanitarian aid and development cooperation. In this sense the humanitarian aid is still primarily seen as the aid that saves lives and provides emergency assistance. Therefore there can be consequent lack of incentives for humanitarian actors to think about the challenges being beyond their core responsibilities. We think that also financial aspect is contributing to such situation. Humanitarian aid is often responding to media high-profile disasters and is able to achieve visible results in shorter period in comparison to development cooperation, and is therefore able to mobilize greater amount of (financial) resources. Even former Commissioner Georgieva (2013) admitted that it is much easier to raise money for major emergencies rather than to strengthen the resilience, since “preparedness is the dog that does not bark”. Therefore we believe that all relevant actors need to ensure that even the dog does not bark, is heard loud and clear.

As presented in the paper, the division between the sectors is also evident from the institutional perspective. DG ECHO is responsible for the area of humanitarian aid (and civil protection), while development cooperation is under the jurisdiction of DG DEVCO and EEAS. As we have seen, coordination is not only limited due to conceptual differences but also due to very different procedures and practices of directorates. Coordination is also difficult due to established EC instruments that have certain potentials for LRRD, but also time and content restrictions. In addition, LRRD often receives limited and untimely, unpredictable and inflexible financial support.

As paper explains the relevance of LRRD, and since humanitarian aid and development cooperation are often carried out at the same time on the same place, it is crucial that the directorates really put emphasize on strengthening mutual relationships and work closely together to ensure the success of LRRD. We think that first of all humanitarian and development donors and their partners should really change their mentality regarding LRRD and their coordination. Further we believe humanitarian and development actors should reach a wider exchange of information, knowledge and experience, for example through the inter-departmental database which would include information on situation on the ground, threats, needs, etc., ensure exchange of good practices, develop and implement joint trainings and other measures to strengthen the coordination etc. In this sense we also suggest to activate already existing structures for enhancing LRRD, such as TISG. We are also convinced that LRRD should be included in most programs for developing countries, especially for countries facing complex crises and countries that are prone to natural disasters. EC should also finance crisis preparedness, prevention and rehabilitation measures to a greater extent. And from the field point of view, humanitarian actors should definitely take greater consideration of presence and with that connected advantages of development actors in the field, while development actors should build on the good results of humanitarian aid in cases where rehabilitation and development programs are followed by emergency assistance. Mutual co-ordination seems significant also in terms of harmonization of aid standards. In this sense we would like to complete our paper with thoughts of Djordjević (2013) - it is crucial mostly for humanitarian actors, as well as development ones, to follow the principle of “building back better, safer and fairer”.

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Connections and context of political efficacy, efficiency, legitimacy, and citizenship in the 21st century

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Abstract: *There is an elementary citizen need for identification with the nation-state and identification with political leaders, even while this may not always be explicit. Contrary to other papers, this presents a relationship of two distinctive parts: context (circumstances) and connections (links) in interaction between citizens and political elite, where asymmetry in contemporary understanding of functioning and efficient management of nation-state relates to functions of efficacy, efficiency, legitimacy, and citizenship.*

So, the question is not what kind of democratic transformations are needed to manage the recent political and social transformations, but is an understanding of connections and context of political efficacy, efficiency, legitimacy, and citizenship from the perspective between political elites and their citizens in old context and new situations.

Keywords: connection, context, nation-state, efficacy, efficiency, legitimacy, and citizenship

Introduction

The changing processes in the world and society are called transformations. The paper reflects on the constant demand for new transformations, answers to those transformations, and a need for understanding of these transformations in the foundations on which we build our society.

Political efficacy, efficiency, legitimacy, and citizenship are the foundations of society, and are the basis for successful management of the nation-state. Constant calls for new transformations on account of interconnections and interdependence defined by the processes of globalization are producing consequences in themselves. We manage these transformations with application of new tools for leadership, governance, and management not considering for foundations. This distinctive, new style of action is denying us the foundation and understanding of the problem.

This causes a circle of never ending consequences, where applied solutions produce difficulties or problems themselves. These difficulties or problems produce a new perception of societal complexity that arises from the action of new answers to new social transformations. Complexity can be found in the interaction of two distinct parts: context (circumstances) and connections (links), which in relationship to applied new transformations, solutions, or answers to problems deny an elementary citizen need for identification with the nation-state and action to act accordingly.

The Process of Understanding Connections and Context of Political Efficacy, Efficiency, Legitimacy, and Citizenship in the 21st Century

It could be said that the 21st century is more complex than any other century before. However, this would be a gross understatement as that statement considers only a modern perspective and ignores the perspective of former times. Or put simply "the context in which events took place is unfamiliar" (Bryden, 2014:9). This is why assessments and conclusions have their defined and un-defined sides, and where context is used to dictate connections and explanations.

The search for explanation between context and connections has and is present through the ages of social development in different forms. Trying to find measured solutions to contemporary problems was and is either time consuming or a question of chance throughout the ages from the point of pragmatic politics. The emphasis becomes more exponential when social transformations are arise everywhere, and economic questions escalate the social fabric of a nation-state from the point of strained to dangerous. The danger lies between weighted decisions and understanding of context and connection in former and new actions and passivity.

Therefore, it is an elementary, important part of leadership (political elites) to understand the definition of organizational identification in a way, as Mael and Ashforth put forward, in the form of understanding of individuals as being united in connection of being accepted in organization, in this case society, and where individual identification conveys or provides meaning in terms of adherence to a particular organization or society (1992:104).

Simultaneously, it is necessary to account for methods of organizational citizenship behavior, which demonstrates significant beneficial effects for the organizational level, and in improvement of organizational effectiveness, allowing validation of the same through exploitation of a range of measurements (Zhang, 2011:2).

These methods reciprocally complement and allow grounded consideration needed in understanding of citizens to identify with nation-state and with that the success of its leaders. Refusing to notice something such as organizational identification in the context of managing a nation-state is not just a mistake, but ignorance of leadership or (in this case political elite) due to the assumption that the world (or somehow times) have changed, thus the priorities in decision making and managing the nation-state have changed with it. So any refusal or ignorance on account of organizational identification and organizational citizenship behavior is going to have serious consequences denying citizen need for identification with the nation-state and disallowing political leaders any possible success in managing the nation-state successfully in any context and connection.

Some things change, but some stay the same

If we proceed with an argument of successful management of nation-state under the assumption "human nature does not change much over time, but politics and technology do" (Bryden, 2014:9), then understanding the management of a nation-state stands not on what we can see and measure, but what is not distinctly seen and clearly perceived. Management and proper functioning of the nation-state is more of an art than science. Science needs a support of art, and art needs to understand science in implementation of political decisions and successful management of nation-state.

In the globalized world of the 21st century, political leaders see themselves as part of the political (cosmopolitan) elite that works in the transnational environment, and emphasis lies in answering the transnational questions detached from national countries. Leaders will be seen as detached and alienated from their citizen in the quest of their self-interest. And if this perceived self-interest is actual rather than merely perceived, then the alienation of citizens of national countries from the elites, will become strained and ultimately broken with severe consequences.

Key factors of successful management of nation-state, and with that government, are: citizenship, efficacy, efficiency, and legitimacy. What innovates are connections in context, the fundamental definitions stay the same.

Fundamental definitions: Four points of influence in a process

There is a considerable number of explanations for four fundamentals, but the chosen one demonstrates effectively core meaning of the structure of citizenship, efficacy, efficiency, and legitimacy in the process of successful management of the nation-state.

Citizenship **–** The concept of citizenship "has long acquired the connotation of a bundle of rights – primarily, political participation in the life of the community, the right to vote, and the right to receive certain protection from the community, as well as obligations" (Leary, 1999:247).

Efficacy – "Political efficacy describes the average ... feelings of political empowerment, and his or her perception of the government's receptiveness to public political participation. In simpler terms, political efficacy describes an individual's motivation to engage on the subject of politics, and whether he or she believes the State listens to his or her opinions" (Sharoni, 2012:119).

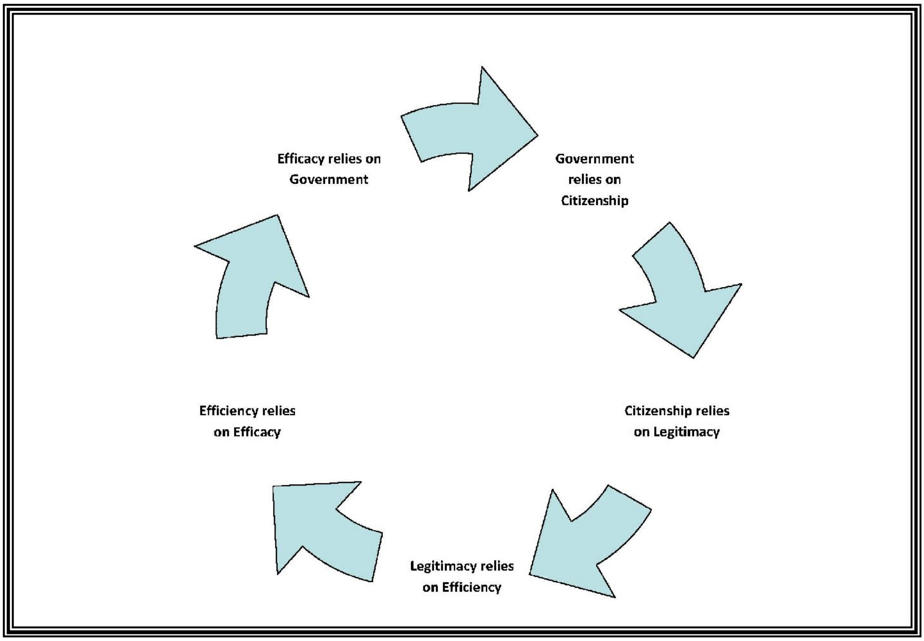
Efficiency – "The emphasis on efficiency is related to the fact that many countries face a demographic development that increases the demand for public services, and at the same time experience substantial fiscal deficits and public debt. Improved efficiency in public service production facilitates more services without increasing government expenditures" (Borge, Falch and Tovmo, 2004:1).

Legitimacy – "There is no such thing as universal legitimacy. It is dependent on particular contexts, circumstances and communities. Legitimacy has multiple formal and informal sources. But there is general agreement that it will be greater where there are high levels of political inclusion, participation, representation and achievement" <u>*Grounded legitimacy*</u> – "… which is a 'sine qua non' for the emergence of effective, capable and legitimate states in vulnerable environments. …. Legitimacy is grounded when the system of governance and authority flows from and is connected to local realities" (Clements, 2014:13).

In all, the parts present an interesting condition that allows connection in context for a conceptual modeling of nation-state functioning: Government relies on Citizenship, Citizenship relies on Legitimacy, Legitimacy relies on

Efficiency, Efficiency relies on Efficacy, and Efficacy relies on Government (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Circular process of management in nation-state functioning



Source: (Malinić, 2014)

So, for successful management of the nation-state these parts are necessary. Any attempt of separating the parts will produce consequences. Taking citizenship out would essentially dissolve everything. The idea of managing a nation–state as a corporation is known. Mike Botter expresses the fluidity of citizenship in the titles of one of his works: "if citizenship is a construct, it can be deconstructed." Furthermore, he explains that types of citizenships in the future will not exist in form they exist now. But new states or political arrangements will bring new forms of repetition in citizenship which is going to be called natural and eternal (2003:101). It is possible to see and feel these changes today and is nothing else but a warning that we can have a citizenship or citizenships in the future, but it will be insignificant to an individual and society.

The contemporary question about citizenship transformation is not in question. Is it a concept or construct? Does it exists or is it imagined? But more to the question of advantages (promotion of wellbeing) in connection of who benefits (cui bono). Rufus Pollock defines this through a model of objective calculation in politicians who are "responding to the incentives they are offered." As he further details; if deliberate deception includes effort or time, then strenuous effort in order to achieve a purpose demands reward for services rendered, and should be returned in and a kind of manner or method (2011:1). What we can comprehend is the play between political context and connections in the game of contemporary 'divide and conquer' that is producing the condition where "if elites lack grounded legitimacy their rule will always be precarious." (Clements, 2014:13). This means if we want a successful society and management of nation-state, we need to watch for eloquent political ways between new context and connections in old solutions.

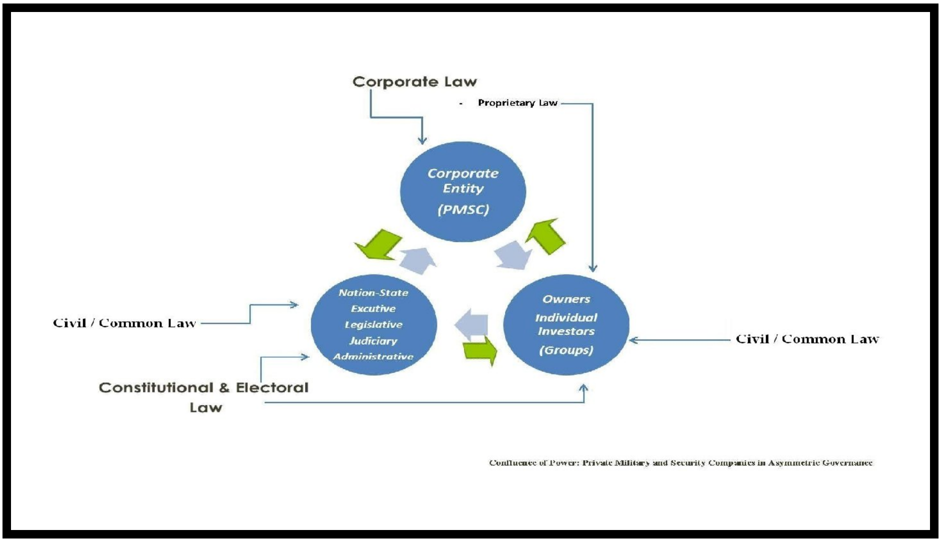
Logic would have us believe if the evolved body is redundant for existence, than the constituent parts are redundant as well. Meaning if every part in society and the social contract is redundant then parts that are redundant (e.g. war and peace) are allowed to be used as deemed fit. So, the only things that can innovate are new connections applied to the old context of the social contract, where the control of how they are used is imperative. Otherwise, contemporary political eloquence will be played between context and connections for a select few at larger scales than is known today.

Engaged Examination

Management and proper functioning of nation-state is more of an art than science, and this can be identified from the play between context and connections. From history, we all know the famous maxims from the political management of Julius César "divide et impera" (divide and conquer) and "divide ut regnes" (divide and rule). A less mentioned statement of Sir Edward Coke in English parliament is also useful to consider: "Eritis insuperabiles, si fueritis inseparabiles…"[1] (Coke, 1797:35). 21st century contemporary political eloquence allows us to play between present or new context and connections efficiently one against each other to reach the old result from a different position; <u>being inseparable you will be insuperable, allowing you to conquer and with that rule.</u>

To place this into a contemporary perspective, we do not need to look too far into the distance. Contemporary inseparability of elites and groups from government has taken place, where elites or groups can conflate power through law and the legal system. Based on rhetoric, security is necessary for development, but in the same time development is, or becomes security (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. De-jure and de-facto conflation of power through law and legal system



Source: Adapted on basis of Master Thesis: Confluence of Power: Private Military and Security Companies in Asymmetric Governance (Malinić, 2014)

This idea stems from a 21st century view of political elites, which can be explained through this excerpt by Leibfried and Mau: “The fusion of territory, law, national identity, and legitimacy in the ‘nation state’ can no longer be taken for granted,” meaning, political elites view new ideas, situations, and supranational regulations as limiting factors for old ways of nation-state maneuvering or skilled action of political leadership (2008:XXIV). These separate developments present two things: One, a loss of real perspective of (smaller or economically weaker nation-states) political elites and leadership will concur with political decisions of other (stronger) nation-states. Internal or external politics as developing political trends allow grounds for contemporary ideas of the indirect dissolution of the social contract, and the carved social transformation can be seen as improvements. The other is that power groups re-strategize in the form of a new context and adapt in any idea or situation. This can be found in research of the Department for International Development in ascribed form. The development of the nation-state has greater likelihood to succeed if political agreement, which is crucial to all development, does not exclude powerful players or elite, and with that increasing the probability of conflict prevention (2010:8). Permitting us to extrapolate, that multitude of powerful players in past decades demonstrated their knowledge and understanding how the social transformations, economy, and with that connected other processes should be managed. The results have become only something of a strong desire. Solutions and adaptations are and will be present. The art is to have an understanding in decisions that will bring in forefront the most desired outcome for society in the world of singular transformations (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Context and connections between action, success and failure

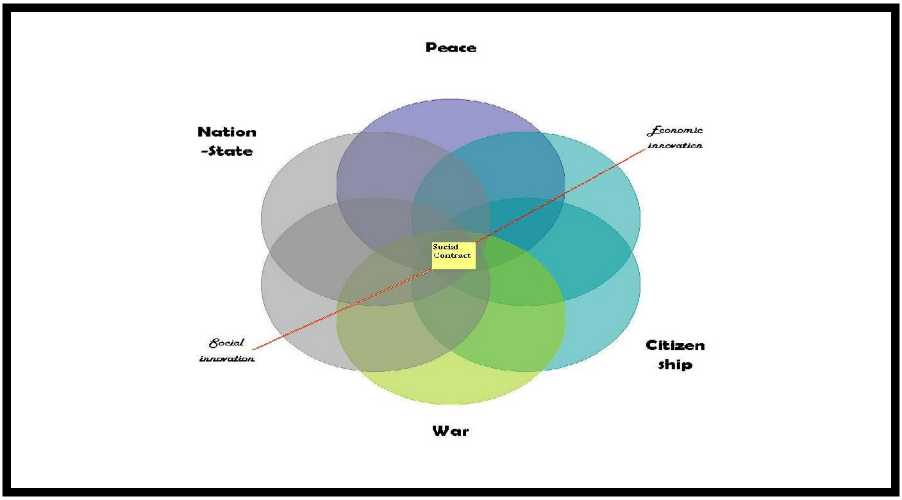
	OLD CONTEXT –	NEW CONTEXT –	NEW CONNECTIONS –	OLD SOLUTIONS
REALITY:	Ignored	Confused with old and new situations	Equated with solutions	Are solutions which we use

	OLD CONTEXT –	NEW SITUATIONS –	NEW CONNECTIONS –	NEW SOLUTIONS
DESIRED:	Exist	We live and work	Need to be developed	Introduced

Source: (Malinić, 2014)

The answer to this is control of new connections in present context and past solutions, where appropriate management in this kind of environment still allows innovation in new connections applied to old context (of social contract) with new solutions**.** Innovation can and will thrive and adapt to contemporary transformational processes, adjust and bring forth new solutions to answer any social, economic, political challenge which is or is going to be presented in-front of society (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. New connections to old context



Source: (Malinić, 2014)

Summary of Findings and Conclusion

The presented paper considered alternative approaches through pragmatic prism when it comes to critical thinking and reflectivity. An aspect of pragmatism in decisions is what makes the procedure in argument possible to relate. The essence derives from combination of two sources; reflective examination of the literature and the pragmatic empirical conclusions obtained from the findings in examination.

In summary, to find the connection between government and citizens—citizens and government in the contemporary world, political elites still need to be aware of tradition and act in a sense as MacKinnon, Maxwell, Rosell, Saxena defined in traditionally distinctive manner: it is expected from governments to defend the interest of citizens and with brought revenues provide public goods and services. However, this should be designed in a way that allows self-reliance and avoids dependency for citizens providing nation-state with room to manouver (2003:XI).

Unlocking this potential in the nation-state and a contemporary globalized world, where social and economic transformations are processed with electronic speeds, is the responsibility of political elites and leadership to connect government to citizens and citizens to government.

Accomplishing this through establishment of new programs or the national body that can connect with citizens and deliver adaptable solutions on a variety of social or economic situations with the same effectiveness as those processes can occur or take place. Always based on appropriate management, permitting constant innovation in new connections applied to old context with new solutions to occurring transformations. Then the government can count on open connection with citizens and citizens with government.

To draw conclusion we need to take into account that when we talk about citizens and government we are in a complex mix of different factors and variables. In the contemporary world, we address these complexities with response of marshaling expertise spanning a range of disciplines to answer or solve singular changes called also transformations, not giving priority to the strategic thought of what consequences are greater for nation-state and society: singular changes/transformations or solutions/responses.

So, we need to acknowledge that not all changes are needed to be classified as transformations, and new solutions or responses in form of new transformations necessarily found. What is necessary is to allow strategic thought and strategy to guide a process of decision on necessity to respond to singular changes in globalized society, which influence the functioning of nation-state or society and to not allow ignorance to dictate our actions, where citizens are detached from nation-state and leadership, and vice versa.

Contemporary changes can connect and divide, but not necessarily influence the structure or foundation of nation-state or society. The decisions are those that pressure and threaten the present and future. The art of national leadership, governments, and political elites is to allow flexibility in the way the singular changes cannot be allowed to influence a nation's response in governing the nation-state.

In this context, it can be expressed that we must adjust to challenges of living in 21st century in an adaptive, responsive, and even more engaged way in nation-state government-citizens-government communication and with less reliance on globalized architecture, which purpose is to assist in decisions, communications, but will never remind us of necessity of foundations.

This can be seen in Figure 1. A modeling of nation-state functioning: Government relies on Citizenship, Citizenship relies on Legitimacy, Legitimacy relies on Efficiency, Efficiency relies on Efficacy, and Efficacy relies on Government. The purpose of the modeling presents the strategic importance in the foundation of context and connection, and simultaneously represents strategic thinking for decisions/solutions taken in organizing the society and nation-state in a 21st century globalized context.

Figure 2, is a model based on research, representing the mistaken approach of decision making in security context of nation-state and society, presenting legal growth of conflated power, allowed on grounds of fast pragmatic solutions without strategic thought to future strategic consequences for nation-states or society at large.

Figure 3 combines the explanation of context, connections, and action in a model of comparing contemporary social reality and social desire in nation-state leadership-governmental decisions. Underlying support can be found in the basis of figure 1 and 2. One importance lays in connection of foundation and political context. Signifying the connection and desire of the citizen to nation-state and nation-state to citizen, and two representing an example of consequence, where mistaken approach on the decision making level by government and political elite produces alienation between citizen and government, permitting contemporary thought of undermining foundation of nation-state and alienation of citizens from identifying with nation-state and the government.

This necessity to respond to changes in society on one side and responsibly to approach solutions with future in mind on the other, bring us to last (Figure 4) which is an interpretation view derived from perspective of context, meaning, no solution in 21st century society will succeed without a counter balance, and if counter balance is needed, then the center is necessary. So, why if we search for solutions or improvements in society, do we not search or improve our social fabric—the social contract?

Otherwise, we are going to be left only with "entropy [to measure] the uncertainty of a random variable" (Crocker, 2014:199). And perception of interpretation is or will be of that "the world we have made as a result of the level of thinking we have done thus far creates problems that we can't solve at the same level as the level we created them at"[2] (Ulrich, 2012:297), signifying that we are incapable of producing results with serious value, substance, or practical effect on the basis of contemporary thinking, and that knowledge is inadequate to provide a necessary level of understanding in 21st century to solve new challenges.

Notes

[1] "Eritis insuperabiles, si fueritis inseparabiles. Explosum est illud diverbium: Divide, & impera, cum radix & vertex imperii in obedientium consensus rata sunt. – You would be insuperable if you were inseparable. This proverb: Divide and rule, has been rejected, since the root and the summit of royal authority are confirmed by the consent of the subjects."

[2]There is no direct public conformation to cited text still it's attributed to Albert Einstein by Ulrich Rogers in this form first time in Behaviorists for Social Action Journal, Vol. 2, No. 2, 1980, p. xxix-xxxiv.

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Figures

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The construction of romantic relationships by young women in Germany and Kyrgyzstan

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Abstract: *The article considers the preliminary results of the comparative qualitative study of romantic relationships of young women in the context of two countries – Kyrgyzstan and Germany. The research question is how young women in these countries understand romantic love and construct their romantic relationships today. The present study is aimed at exploring what kind of changes women are experiencing in this sphere nowadays, and how the realization of romantic relations varies in different cultural and social contexts. Some of the preliminary findings of the study are consistent with the view that individualization process characterizing the modernity, has caused dramatic shifts in the understanding of romantic relations. The influence of this process is increasing at the present time, but it is manifested differently in different modern societies.*

Keywords: romantic relationships, love, social transformations, individualization, democratization

Introduction

The topic of this article is the perception and the formation of romantic relationships by youth in different modern societies. Earlier it was considered that romantic love and romantic relationships is the sphere for psychological studies. At the present time the social nature of these phenomena is not doubtful, and this topic acquires more and more attention from the side of sociologists.

According to different theoretical perspectives, in the beginning of the adulthood when youth develop their individuality and specific capacities to adapt and take part in social life, love and romantic relationship becomes one of the main aspects which determines their future biographies (Arnett, 2000; Hurrelmann, 2012; Liebsch, 2012).

It is commonly recognized that social transformations lead to crucial changes not only in the interpretation of romantic love, but also in the process of constructing romantic relationships. That is why it is interesting to study how modernization and globalization makes impact upon this sphere.

Many scholars consider different changes in the perception and the formation of private life including romantic relationships by youth in modern societies. For example, Blossfeld, Klijzing, Mills and Kurz (2005) argue that uncertainty caused by globalization makes young people use quite different strategies nowadays: “These strategies include postponement of entry into adulthood (remaining in the education system, postponing labor market entry and entering more flexible partnership)” (p.429).

This research makes attempts to identify which factors make impact upon the perception and construction of romantic relationships by young women. They include different sources of information, people who surround them, traditional values of previous generations and some other factors. It is important to investigate how young women understand and form their relationships in the beginning of their adult life, what role feelings play in them, and what place romantic relationships take in women’s plans for the future.

In keeping with the theoretical perspective which identifies romantic love as culturally and socially constructed (Luhmann, 1982/2012), it is interesting to consider this topic in the context of two countries with different cultural ideology, different history and different social conditions. That is why Kyrgyzstan and Germany are chosen for comparison.

The main research question is “How do young women in Germany and Kyrgyzstan perceive romantic love and construct their romantic relationships today?”

The Definition of Romantic Relationships: Literature Review

At present the concept of romantic relationships continue to be controversial, and there are numerous definitions and classifications which are far from being in line with each other (Felmlee & Sprecher, 2006).

There are various definitions of romantic relationships which are used by sociologists. For example, W. Furman, B. Brown, and C. Feiring (1999) identify the following features which can be included in the definition of romantic relationships. First, romantic relationships imply a continuing pattern of interaction between two people. Second, romantic relationships are usually constructed as a voluntary process. And the third characteristic is attraction which consists of different elements, and sexual is one of them.

Anthony Giddens (1992) defines the term “relationship” as “a close and continuing emotional tie to another” (p. 58). He introduces the term “pure relationship” for the description of this concept: “The romantic love complex helped carve open a way to the formation of pure relationships in the domain of sexuality” (1992: 58). Giddens (1992) considers sexual and emotional equality to be the basis for pure relationship. Among the ideals of pure relationship he mentions the participation of each partner in the process of deciding what kind of terms will be the basis for constructing their union. And according to him, the involvement of individuals into this common process makes up the main difference between relationships in traditional and modern societies (Giddens, 1992).

In spite of the fact that scholars suggest different definitions of romantic relationships and describe various components that constitute this concept, some studies show that youth often associate romantic relationships with romantic love, and use these notions interchangeably (Manning et al, 2008; Felmlee & Sprecher, 2006). Taking into account that the given study is aimed at the perception of youth, in this paper there will be no focus on the differentiation of these concepts, and there will be the discussion of romantic love and romantic relationships.

Romantic Love and Romantic Relationships in Sociological Theory: Theoretical Background

Niklas Luhmann (1982/2012) in his book *Love as Passion. The Codification of Intimacy* considers the evolution of the semantics of love beginning from the 17th century to the modern times; and features and dimensions of romantic love presented by him are used as the basis for considering some findings of the study. Luhmann (1982/2012) argues that in the process of transformation of the social system from the stratified to the functional form, we can observe crucial changes in the interpretation of some concepts. According to him, the meanings of words and phrases can change, and "with it the way in which they pinpoint a specific referent, encapsulate particular experiences and open up new perspectives" (Luhmann, 1982/2012: 8). Further he explains that the same words are passed on to the next generations, but as a result of evolutionary transformations "a shift occurs in the pivotal point from which complexes of meaning direct actions so that as long as the conceptual resources are rich enough, they can pave the way for and accompany profound changes in social structures…" (Luhmann, 1982/2012: 8).

Seeing romantic love as a phenomenon which is dependent on each particular historical period of time, Luhmann (1982/2012) defines this notion differently for various times.

Referring to Medieval love poems and growing aristocratization of the Medieval structure of stratification, Luhmann (1982/2012) explains why love was formulated as ideal- it was dictated by the requirement to separate love from vulgar sensuality. He writes: "The great love semantics of the Middle Ages focused on the difference between loving God and loving a woman with respect to make a distinction in view of the mystical unity promised in both cases" (Luhmann, 1982/2012: 49). Because of this, the definition of love included the religious component. And the author of the book comes to the conclusion that such interpretation of love was in line with social hierarchy and understanding of moral of that period. The idea of service and duty was characteristic of aristocratic norms, and it made up the basis for the notion of love as well.

But the semantics of love changes in the 17th century. Love is not contrasted any more to common sexual needs; vice versa sexuality is seen now as one of integral elements of love. And describing this transformation, Luhmann (1982/2012) defines love during this period as "emotion preformed and indeed prescribed, in literature, and no longer directed by social institutions, such as the family and religion" (p. 45). Speaking about significant changes in the semantics of love in the 17th century, the author of the book points out another very important aspect – the woman got the ability to make her decision and to choose if she wants to be involved in romantic relationships with a certain partner (Luhmann, 1982/2012).

Observing the development of the semantics of love during Romanticism, the author argues that at that time the interpretation of love incorporates "a relationship between the individual subject and the world" (Luhmann, 1982/2012: 133).

As for romantic love of the contemporary period, the author admits that it is more complicated to define it. Romantic love is seen by the author as a phenomenon of the modern age which is a product of the evolution. He comes to the conclusion that compared to the past, contemporary society provides more opportunities for developing personal relationships (Luhmann, 1982/2012). He emphasizes that at the present time the question of equality of men and women in sexual relationships is not disputed any more. At the same time, analyzing the contemporary intimate relationships of youth, he points out the following characteristics: "Skepticism vis-à-vis high spirits of any kind is combined with a demanding, highly individualized set of expectations. The alternative to breaking off the relationship and instead going it alone is taken seriously as a course of action for life…" (Luhmann, 1982/2012: 155).

Luhmann (1982/2012) believes that in the modern society the autonomization of intimate relations is observed. In the discussion of love and marriage at the present time, he admits that the “tie to marriage appears to be in the process of loosening” (Luhmann, 1982/2012: 157). More than that, he argues that people tend to choose living together instead of marriage, and this becomes a socially accepted option. So, it must be recognized that during different historical periods the marriage plays different roles in the semantics of love: “A semantics for love developed to accommodate extra-marital relationships, and was then transferred back into marriage itself…” (Luhmann, 1982/2012: 5). And according to the author, these variations in the interrelation of love and marriage are determined by socio-structural developments of particular historical periods. For example, explaining why in the 18th century love is still not used as the only basis for choosing the spouse, the author refers to the fact that at that time “the family was still seen as the unity which survived the change of generations…and had to be controlled as the means of reproducing one and the same family” (Luhmann, 1982/2012: 129).

This study makes focus on changes that social transformations in modern time bring to love and romantic relations. The discussion of romantic love as the phenomenon of modern age leads to the necessity to consider the concept of modernity and its characteristics which influence the changes in personal relationships, emotions and romantic love. In order to discuss how modernity offers specific conditions for love, the theoretical framework for this work includes the perspectives of Giddens (1991, 1992) and Beck, Beck-Gernsheim (1990/2004).

Anthony Giddens (1992) in his work *The Transformation of Intimacy. Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies* comes to the conclusion that the possibility of people to travel and cross borders, the development of technologies and mass media and many other innovations resulted in the rejection of tradition in social life. He relates modernity with the socialization of the world and the domination of socially organized systems. According to Giddens (1992), all these changes led to the transformation of the concept of love. He writes: “The transmutation of love is as much a phenomenon of modernity as is the emergence of sexuality; and it connects in an immediate way with issues of reflexivity and self-identity” (Giddens, 1992: 34). He differentiates between “romantic love” and “amour passion”, and when identifying this difference, he emphasizes that romantic love is “much more culturally specific” (Giddens, 1992: 38). So, like Luhmann (1982/2012), Giddens (1992) also refers to romantic love as a culturally specific phenomenon. He speaks about the emergence of romantic love from the end of 18th century. According to Giddens (1992), romantic love appeared in modernity as a result of denying traditions of the past, growing equality between genders, restoration of such notions as home and maternity, and the democratization of personal life. When identifying distinctive characteristics of romantic love, Giddens (1992) names the following: the association of romantic love with freedom, implication of immediate attraction, and the domination of sublime feelings over sexuality.

Among different changes that occur in personal life of people in modern age, and that can characterize romantic relationships of nowadays, Giddens (1992) points out the process of democratization: “A democratization of the private sphere is today not only on the agenda, but is an implicit quality of all personal life that comes under the aegis of the pure relationship" (p.184). He compares democratization of personal life with promoting democracy in public life. But he thinks that when it concerns personal relationships between people, this process is not so open and noticeable, still its consequences can be equally significant. Giddens (1992) believes that the democratizing of personal relations and the same process in public life are interconnected and can affect each other. This goes in line with his main conclusion related to what pure relationships determine and what they are determined by: "There are structural conditions in the wider society which penetrate to the heart of the pure relationships; conversely, how such relationships are ordered has consequences for the wider social order" (Giddens, 1992: 195). Considering romantic relations in this theoretical context makes the study sociologically significant.

Speaking about the formation of romantic relationships in the modern world, it is important to consider the changes introduced into this sphere by individualization process. The individualization process is mentioned by many scholars as one of the main factors which have influenced the perception of romantic relationships and has made impact on their realization today (Illouz, 2012; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1990/2004; Giddens, 1991, 1992).

Giddens (1991) introduces the concept of lifestyle into his description of individualization process. He explains that the notion of lifestyle cannot be used in the context of pre-modern reality, because it contains the idea of making a choice. And he believes that the term "lifestyle" is important for understanding self-identity in the world of late modernity. When describing the fundamental characteristics of the individualized contemporary world, Giddens (1991) writes that “in conditions of high modernity, we all not only follow lifestyles, but in an important sense are forced to do so– we have no choice but to choose” (p. 81).

Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1990/2004) also emphasize the changes of romantic relationships caused by individualization. Comparing the attitude to love and family in the modern society with how it was before, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1990/2004) describe a big shift from family and marriage to free relationships which do not imply home in its traditional understanding. The scholar comes to the conclusion that individualization process has caused dramatic changes in the perception and understanding of the whole sphere of private life and relations (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1990/2004).

So, this discussion leads to the conclusion that under the pressure of individualization many crucial changes were brought into private lives of individuals. But, according to many scholars, individualization can produce controversial effect. For example, Giddens (1991) believes that the availability of choices for individuals in modern social conditions brings certain difficulties and uncertainty. These controversial sides of individualization influence romantic relations as well. On the one hand, individuals experience more freedom, and are not restricted by traditional patterns of the past, and this could contribute to the further development of romantic relationships. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1990/2004) confirm this: “While men and women are released from traditional norms and can search for a “life of their own”, they are driven into seeking happiness in a close relationship because other social bonds seem too tenuous or unreliable" (p. 24). But on the other hand, many scholars share the opinion that the construction and maintenance of romantic relationships today has become more complicated than earlier (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1990/2004; Giddens, 1992; Illouz, 2012).

Considering these contradictions of modern times, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1990/2004) describe them as "the pros and cons of a life of one's own" (p. 52). They argue that the possibility to have a choice and to make a personal decision can lead to certain difficulties and challenges even for one individual who is not restricted by any commitments. When we speak about romantic relations of couples, these challenges increase by twice, and "..all the issues which affect the partner directly or indirectly…have to be fed into the decision-making process as ideas and wishes, habits and norms of two different people" (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2004: 52). And this threatens the construction of relationships of two individuals. According to Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1990/2004), the effect of individualization is revealed in internal consequences for people, and he comes to the conclusion that these collisions can lead to the breakup of relations.

In the age group of 18-25-years-old youth the focus of the present research is made on women, not men. It is believed by many scholars that women take a special place in relation to these transformations. In the historical context it becomes understandable why ideas of romantic love were associated predominantly with women. Giddens (1992) writes about "influences which affected women from about the late eighteenth century onwards" (p. 41-42). By these influences he means the reconstruction and reinforcement of such notions as home, relations with children, motherhood. The development of the notion of romantic love led to the idea that women, not men, performed the difficult job of constructing love; and on the one hand, this role connected women with home, and on the other hand, it empowered women. Giddens (1992) argues that "ideals of romantic love have long affected the aspirations of women more than those of men…" (p. 2). Describing the democratization of pure relationships, the sociologist once again emphasizes the main role that the woman plays in this process.

In spite of the fact that both men and women have come across the changes, Giddens (1992) believes that men and women experienced them differently and not to the same extent: "Men, like women, fall in love and have done so through-out the recorded past. They have also over the last two centuries been influenced by the development of the ideas of romantic love, but in a different way from women" (p. 58). Giddens comes to the conclusion that all transformations concerning romantic relationships, were important for people of both genders, but they made especially significant impact upon women. What makes the effect of these transformations so dramatic specifically for women?

As it was said above, the individualization process has produced a significant impact on people's private lives and the construction of romantic relations. It also influenced certain social institutions, such as marriage. According to many scholars, in pre-modern conditions in women's lives the major focus was made on family and marriage (Giddens, 1992; Beck & Beck-

Gernsheim, 2004; Illouz, 2012). For example, Giddens (1992) writes: “In contrast to those in younger age-groups today, the experience of older women was almost always framed in terms of marriage… Marriage was to them the core experience of a woman’s life…” (p. 53). So, the opportunity to leave the parents for the woman was usually associated with forming romantic relationships and marriage. It was the most common reason for a girl to enter a new outside world. “It is only over the past generation that striking out on one’s own, for women, has meant leaving the parental home. In previous periods, for all but a small proportion of women, leaving home meant getting married” (Giddens, 1992: 53). In the process of social transformations, as the result of women’s strife against domestic ties, women get freedom and they are no longer restricted by home and family tasks. “Women have protested against, and broken free, their confinement to a domestic milieu and the limitations of self-development that went with it” (Giddens, 1992: 149). The way young women construct and plan their life today is very different from the way the generation of their grandmothers did. At present the woman enjoys the freedom to decide if she will marry, when she will marry and whom she will marry. Having more choices, young women today see more options how to construct their romantic relationships. Referring to these dramatic changes for women in modern societies, Giddens (1992) points out that this process is not completed yet, but has a strong tendency to develop in this direction.

Speaking about changes that have influenced the women during the past decades, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1990/2004) introduce the notion of “whole new areas of freedom” (p. 21). According to them, women have found new areas of freedom in law, education, sexuality, career and job. And this has brought significant changes into lifestyles of young women today. According to Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1990/2004), modern young women have more rights and chances to get education, to develop their careers, they enjoy more freedom in making decisions concerning different spheres of their private lives, including romantic relations and marriage.

All these arguments allow us to put women in a special position compared to men. It is generally recognized that during social transformations women come across more significant changes concerning their private lives than men. At the same time sociologists argue that freedom and equality which women have got, is still insecure from many points of view and characterized by different contradictions. And that is why from a sociological standpoint it makes sense to put accent on women in this study. The controversial position of women caused by social conditions in the modern world makes them relevant for the research. It seems important to investigate if this kind of contradiction is disclosed nowadays when young women begin to form their romantic relationships in the beginning of their adult life. In addition to this, it is interesting to find out if this is similarly observed in both Asian and European contexts. And this comparative study of young women in Germany and in Kyrgyzstan makes an attempt to explore this.

Study Design and Methodology

This is a comparative qualitative study, and in order to get appropriate data for answering the research question semi-structured in-depth interviews are used as a research method. This method seems to be the most appropriate for this investigation. Qualitative interviews as a research method itself make it possible to get the respondents' reflection of the reality concerning different subjects (Folkestad, 2008). The in-depth interview is considered to be a method that allows the researcher to display the information which is not so explicit, which is under the surface. Many researchers believe that in-depth interviews suit studies in the field of relations because of its characteristics which make it possible to obtain comprehensive qualitative data about particular processes or phenomena from the point of view of individuals (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). It is also underlined by many scholars that in-depth interviews are helpful if we want to explore personal experiences, opinions or attitudes, feelings, and personal background (Esterberg, 2002).

The structure of the interviews in the given research is rather open. A special interview guide with a particular set of questions has been prepared. These questions allow the researcher to follow a specific system of the interview and help to focus on topics and categories which might be essential for answering the research question. At the same time additional questions are asked to help a respondent to go into details and provide much deeper answers to specific questions.

According to the research question and the dimensions which were developed during operationalization process, the interview guide for the given study is divided into several sections, namely: introduction, warm-up, definition of romantic relationships, the first experience, other relationships, the role of family and environment, plans for the future and conclusion.

Not to miss any important information during the interviewing process, all interviews are recorded with the help of the audio recorder.

Mostly the use of qualitative interviews as a research method is associated with face-to-face communication between the interviewer and respondents. But in this study during data gathering process an additional research medium– Skype– was used for conducting some interviews. This medium was chosen because it was necessary to conduct interviews in two countries which are thousands miles away from each other. Traveling to Kyrgyzstan in order to conduct interviews there was an expensive and time consuming option. In this case conducting interviews with the help of Skype turned out to be a non-expensive and easy solution. Besides, the presence of the respondent and the interviewer at the same place is not an essential point for the interviews in this study. Vice versa, the first couple of Skype interviews showed that being located far away from the interviewer helps the participants to feel at ease. So, the screen of the computer in this study is not an obstacle, but a protective screen which creates a kind of private zone for the interviewee. And this privacy is necessary because of the topic of the discussion. The subject is not what can be easily discussed by everybody in the café or the club, even if it is a talk between two. Some girls who were interviewed during face-to-face individual meetings would look around to check if anybody heard what they said. Skype interviews allow the respondents to sit alone in their own room and feel enough privacy to share some girlish thoughts. Through Skype they speak only with one person and see this person's response, but at the same time they have some protection from the interviewer- the screen of the computer and their home environment around them.

For the researcher Skype provides enough interaction which is necessary for the talk with the respondents, but at the same time allows the interviewer not to interfere with their privacy. So, on the one hand, the researcher speaks to the respondents face-to-face, can respond easily to their feelings and concerns, can notice their facial expressions and gestures, but on the other hand – feels like an observer, outsider, who can obtain the information but does not influence its integrity.

So, if in the very beginning Skype was chosen because it provided the solution for the problem of a long distance between Germany and Kyrgyzstan, later in the process of the work, its advantages contributed to the effectiveness of the interviews.

Besides, according to some researchers (Sullivan, 2013), interviewing through Skype is considered to be appropriate for interviewing young people. Unlike a certain proportion of older generation, youth likes to use new technologies for different purposes. This was one more reason why the use of this medium meets the objectives of the given research, and why Skype can be used for conducting interviews with young women.

Before starting the official data gathering, 2 pilot interviews were conducted: one- by Skype, and the other– during the individual face-to-face meeting. This was done in order to test a newly prepared interview guide and to understand which questions are totally appropriate for getting the information to answer the formulated research question. It was also very important to check whether girls of 18-25 years old are ready to talk with the interviewer about their relationships with guys.

Preliminary Findings and Discussion

The research is going on at the present time. The data gathering process and the analysis is not finished yet. So, this article presents just some preliminary findings and some ideas that still require further analysis and interpretation.

From the discussion of love semantics development it becomes obvious that romantic love is understood and interpreted differently at different times depending on historical and cultural contexts. Luhmann (1982/2012) argues that in the process of transformation of the social systems we can observe crucial changes in the interpretation of some concepts, including the concept of romantic relationships. This study is considering the transformations that the concept of romantic relationships is going through nowadays. That is why during the interview it was important to ask the question: “How could you explain the concept *romantic relationships*?”

Concerning the definitions and understanding of romantic relationships, the answers of the respondents in Kyrgyzstan and in Germany do not reveal considerable differences between two countries. The significance of feelings in relationships was mentioned many times by the respondents in the sample group. All the respondents from both countries referred to feelings and romance as the most essential components of romantic relationships.

Another common point between two countries which was noticed in many responses is the importance of sharing interests and attitudes to life with the partner. The respondents expressed their strong belief that mutual hobbies and the common way of thinking play an essential role in constructing relationships. For example, one girl said: “You know, romantic relationships for me is when 2 people have mutual feelings and ideas. In my opinion, romantic love is when the man takes care of me…. when we have the same hobby…” (Interviewee #3, August 3, 2014). And similar ideas were mentioned by the respondents from both countries.

There is one more similarity among the answers of the young women in Kyrgyzstan and Germany. When they were asked to bring an example of perfect romantic relationships, all of them showed readiness and provided lengthy stories about such relationships. Some of them referred to the union of their parents or grandparents as the best example, others were telling about relatives or friends. Many of the respondents pointed out that in the future they would like to have romantic relationships which are similar to those which they saw as a model. For example, one girl spoke about the relations of her parents: “In my opinion, they (parents) really have perfect relationships, because they are together for a long time, they brought up such wonderful children as we are (laughing). I've never seen them fighting or scolding, they always have some kind of a dialogue. They understand each other well… that is why these are real relationships for me, which are strong and which can exist not only one - two days, or just one hour as it is sometimes shown in the movies” (Interviewee # 5, August 22, 2014).

So this can bring me to the conclusion that in general, when describing the perception and definition of romantic relations, and giving examples of ideal relationships, the respondents from both countries reported many similar characteristics and shared common understanding.

However, more detailed discussion of how they interpret romantic relationships, provided certain data indicating some variations between the countries. For example, the girls in Germany, when describing their understanding of romantic relationship between two partners, spoke about equal obligations from both sides. They did not mention any specific obligations of men, while the girls from Kyrgyzstan, when explaining their expectations from their partner, often used the word *must*: “The man must always take care of his woman…" (Interviewee # 1, July 20, 2014); “My boyfriend must prepare surprises for me… bring flowers, gifts…” (Interviewee # 6, August 30, 2014); “My future man (I don’t have a boyfriend now) must have a good education, because in the future, when I am going to have kids… I hope to have kids someday…and when I am staying at home taking care of my kids, I want to be sure, that we have everything we need…" (Interviewee # 8, September 10, 2014).

It can be assumed that in spite of many changes in gender roles in Kyrgyzstan nowadays, still cultural peculiarities and local traditions make impact upon the perception of romantic relationships by Kyrgyz girls. And it is still strongly believed in Kyrgyzstan that the traditional role of the man as a bread-winner obliges him to be stronger than the woman, to keep moral and financial responsibility both for himself and for the woman.

While the definitions and interpretation of romantic relationships did not show many differences between two countries, the question about the influence of family and environment upon the construction of relationships revealed a considerable gap between Kyrgyzstan and Germany.

A strong dependence on the judgments of the family and surrounding community turned out to be noticeable from the analysis of the responses of girls from Kyrgyzstan. All the respondents from Bishkek reported not only the importance of their families' opinions, but they also spoke about the significant role of attitudes which are believed to be acceptable by the society and traditions. All the interviewees from Kyrgyzstan said that their parents knew from the beginning about their dating and about the boys (4 girls mentioned particularly their mothers). Some girls mentioned mothers and elder sisters as a support and source of advice in romantic love questions.

This is what one respondent from Kyrgyzstan said: “In our family girls should be at home at 8 p.m. My mom trusts me, she knows that I am aware about our tradition not to have sex before the wedding. The trust is the most important thing. Without trust to me, she would never let me go with my boyfriend somewhere at night” (Interviewee # 1, July 20, 2014). Another girl said: “I said to my mom that there was nothing between us. I always tell her about the boys and she tells me what is better in this or that situation” (Interviewee # 6, August 30, 2014). One more response: “Before dating with me, he asked for the permission of my mother” (Interviewee # 3, August 3, 2014).

So, the preliminary findings of the study allow me to assume that the impact of national traditions and societal values on the construction of relationships in Kyrgyzstan is quite significant. Many of the respondents reported that it was important for them what the family and relatives say about their dating and about their relationships with boys, and how it can influence the reputation of their family. Just one example: “It is our custom and our tradition that we do not think about ourselves, but we should care about our parents. And I always think first of all about my parents. I do not want other people to say something bad about my parents, I do not want my parents to worry about this. It is the most important thing for me!” (Interviewee # 8, September 10, 2014).

This finding about the significance of other people’s opinions seems to be interesting because it indicates some cultural factors which influence and form girls’ perception and practice in Kyrgyzstan. The research suggests that girls in Kyrgyzstan often correlate their practice of constructing romantic relationships with the ideas and beliefs which are commonly spread in the society, their environment, community. The participants of the study spoke openly about the importance of national traditions and societal views for them.

At the present stage of the study there are not enough data to make any conclusions about the influence of this factor in Germany. But so far the respondents from Germany have not reported the importance of such things for them. Two girls mentioned that they tell their mothers about their boyfriends, but at the same time they pointed out that they always take decisions independently. For example, one respondent from Germany said: “It’s me, but not my parents who will live with this man. That is why I listen to myself” (Interviewee # 2, August 1, 2014).

As it has been emphasized by many scholars, while in the past marriage and family was seen as an integral part of the woman’s life story, at the present time the woman has more freedom to choose if she will marry or not, have children or stay childfree, combine job and family tasks or concentrate on carrier only (Giddens, 1992; Beck, 1990/2004; Illouz, 2012). That is why it was important for me to investigate in the present study what young women in Germany and Kyrgyzstan are going to do further, and how they integrate their understanding of romantic relationships in their life planning. For this reason one of the questions to the respondents was about their plans for the future and about the place that romantic relationships take in these plans. The girls were asked to describe how they see themselves in one year, in five years and in ten years from now.

In the responses to this question all the respondents spoke about the importance to finish their studies, to find good jobs. Three girls from Kyrgyzstan mentioned that they plan to travel and to study abroad. Two respondents also pointed out that it is important to be financially independent on their partners in the future. Among their strategies for the future many respondents reported their intentions to combine career and studies with the construction of romantic relationships and marriage. But in choosing different roles for themselves, the young women did not always place the formation of romantic relationships in the list of priorities. Among the main goals for the future the girls were more likely to name traveling abroad for studies, diplomas, good jobs, and financial independence. It was interesting to find out that all the respondents in Kyrgyzstan and in Germany who have romantic relationship with a man now, didn’t mention this particular partner in their future plans. They did not obligatory relate their present relationships to their future marriage.

So, the responses about plans for the future in this study go in line with the theoretical perspectives, which argue that young women in the modern world enjoy more freedom in making decisions concerning different spheres of their private lives and have more opportunities for professional growth (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1990/2004; Giddens, 1992).When discussing the transformation of the concept of love in modern times, Giddens (1991, 1992) expressed his expectations that these changes would develop further in modern societies. And as possible trends for the future he named growing equality between genders, democratization of intimate relationships and individualization. The diversity of choices for an individual is considered by Giddens (1991) and Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1990/2004) as one of major features of individualization.

This perspective finds extensive support in the preliminary findings of the present research. When speaking about the problems which they have in their relations or about the reason why they broke up with their former partners, the girls always mentioned other options and priorities which were available for them or their partners and which they preferred to the relations. Among these options they spoke about going abroad for studies, moving to another city to accept good job or other reasons. For example, one respondent from Kyrgyzstan recollected the situation when she broke up with one boy: "Till today I feel sorry for this. Well, not really sorry. I just think that I was stupid to do this. I feel sorry for losing that boy-friend. But on the other hand, instead of this, I managed to make a career for myself!" (Interviewee # 4, August 17, 2014).

And two respondents from Germany at the time of interviewing were in the so-called long-distance relationships. One of them has a boyfriend who lives and studies in a different city in Germany; and the second respondent maintains relationships with the partner who went abroad for studies and lives now in a different country. This is how the girl described these relationships: "Unfortunately we don't see each other very often, because we are in long-distance relationships. But we constantly keep in touch with each other, every day. And of course it means 100% of trust. By now we have many connections within our families. And when we see each other, yes, we do a lot of things together…” (Interviewee # 7, September 6, 2014). These two girls mentioned in the interview that their relationships differ from those that their friends have. They realize themselves that such types of relationships bring some peculiarities and even threats to their unions with their boyfriends. But this was the choice of their partners. And they accepted this type of relationships as an option, and consider this as an alternative to traditional attachments. And among Kyrgyz respondents there was a girl who spoke about the plan of her partner to travel abroad for the purpose of continuing his studies. And during the interview the respondent expressed her intentions to continue the relationships with the boy in spite of the long distance. More than that, the respondent did not show any disagreement with the decision of her partner to be separated for a long period of time. Though she expressed some regret about this, still she also accepted this as the right of her boyfriend to choose his career and a possible option for their future life plan (Interviewee # 9, September 19, 2014).

These findings do not seem surprising if we recollect what scholars write about the influence of modernity on romantic relationships. Giddens (1992) pointed out that the sphere of private relations in modern times is characterized by denying traditions of the past. Giddens (1991, 1992) and Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1990/2004) argued that individuals began to see a lot of other options and alternatives to traditional attachments and ties. The individualization process has produced a significant impact on people's private lives and the construction of romantic relationship. The changes lead to a wide variety of lifestyles and, correspondingly, types of attachments and relationships. Discussing the effect of individualization, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1990/2004) wrote that individuals in modern conditions have “to build up the life of their own by way of the labour market, training and mobility, and if need be to pursue this life at the cost of their commitments to family, relations and friends” (p. 6). These are situations when individual interests and personal priorities dominate and defeat the relationship of two individuals. According to Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1990/2004), the logic of individualization “leads to a ‘battle over space of one’s own’ in the literal and figurative sense, in a search for oneself and for fulfilling of one’s own potential” (p. 53).

And the research does reveal such a “battle over space of one’s own” (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1990/2004: 53) almost in all responses of the participants. For example, the interview includes the question “Would you give up your hobbies if your boyfriend doesn´t like them?” There was only one person who told me that she might consider such a possibility, but all the rest said that their boyfriends have to accept them as they are. They are not going to give up what they like to do, even if the partner chooses something different.

Many respondents from both countries spoke about the lack of time for dating because they devote a lot of time to other spheres of their lives. The girls mentioned that because of their studies, work, and hobby they cannot see their partners every day. One German respondent told me that earlier her understanding of good relationships was different. She wanted to see her boyfriend every day, and her feelings were hurt when he could not come. But now she accepts that they spend time together only once or twice a week, because both of them are busy with studies and other activities. “Earlier it was important for me, that when 2 people are in relationships, they spend a lot of time together. And now… I know that this does not obligatory determines good relationships… That is why… now I would prefer that he does a lot of things by himself” (Interviewee # 10, September 23, 2014). Striving for freedom to take their own decision was heard in many responses during interviews. Sometimes it was very explicit, like in the words of one girl from Kyrgyzstan: “How do I see myself in a year? In a year, I think, we will continue our relationships. And none of us will hurry up the other, and we will not press or force each other to take any steps” (Interviewee # 9, September 19, 2014). Such responses allow me to assume that in modern societies young women consider many choices in their lives, and at the same time they show respect to the choices of their partners. These findings clearly indicate changes of lifestyles of young women and transformations in their understanding of romantic relationships.

Conclusion

This study makes an attempt to study how social transformations in the world influence young women’s understanding and realization of romantic relationships, and to detect societal, cultural similarities and varieties in romantic relationships in different modern societies.

As it is generally recognized by many scholars, modernity offers specific conditions for romantic love, and it is more difficult for youth to form romantic relationships at the present time than earlier (Luhmann, 1982/2012; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1990/2004; Illouz, 2012). Discussing crucial shifts which are observed in the realization of romantic relationships by women in modern societies, Giddens (1992) argued that these changes would continue in the same direction. And some preliminary findings of the given study allow me to assume that at the present time there is a further development of the processes which were pointed out by Luhmann (1982/2012), Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1990/2004) and Giddens (1991,1992).

One of the main conclusions of this discussion is that individualization and a wide variety of choices observed in modern societies has made multiple and non-homogenous effects upon women's lives, including their romantic relationships. Considering romantic relationships in the context of individualization, it is necessary to underline the availability of different options for young women nowadays. The responses of the study participants clearly show their freedom to decide what they wish to do in the future, reflect their new approaches to romantic love and new features of their romantic relationships such as flexibility.

It is especially interesting to observe some similar shifts in such different societies as Kyrgyzstan and Germany. This allows me to assume that these changes could be caused by dramatic social transformations of the latest decades in such countries like Kyrgyzstan. At the same time other results of the research indicate that there are still many differences between the perceptions of romantic relationships by young women in these two countries. And the conclusion about the continuing influence of cultural traditions and national values on this sphere goes in line with the perspectives of Luhmann (1982/2012) and Giddens (1992) who emphasized that romantic love should be considered as a culturally specific phenomenon.

These are some of the thoughts raised by the preliminary discussion of the data obtained in the study. Hopefully the further work will provide more interesting findings related to the transformations in the perception and construction of romantic relationships by young women in different modern societies.

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