



UNIVERZITA PAVLA JOZEFA ŠAFÁRIKA  
v Košiciach

**FAKULTA VEREJNEJ SPRÁVY**

**2/20**  
**23**  
ročník XXIV.

ISSN 1335-7182

# VEREJNÁ SPRÁVA A SPOLOČNOSŤ

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION  
AND SOCIETY



**VEREJNÁ SPRÁVA**

**A**

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**Open Access:**



**Indexovaný v:/Indexed in:**



**2/2023**

**ročník XXIV.**

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ISSN 2453-9236 (online)

<https://doi.org/10.33542/VSS2023-2-0>

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**VEDECKÉ PRÁCE**

# Cohesion policy and citizens' identification with the European union

Eva Výrostová

<https://doi.org/10.33542/VSS2023-2-4>

## Abstract

European identity is recognised as an important element of the European Union's (EU) sustainability. It can be influenced by economic benefits from EU membership and a combination of historical, cultural, social, economic, and political factors. The paper focuses on identifying the relationship between citizens' identification with the EU and Cohesion policy expenditures as perhaps one of the most visible benefits of EU membership at the regional level. Results of econometric analysis reveal that citizens' identification with the EU is higher in regions with higher EU funds expenditures and better socio-economic situation. European identity seems to be positively influenced by perceived EU benefits, understanding how the EU works, and persuasion that country interests are considered in the EU. Moreover, we confirm the positive relationship between awareness of Cohesion policy and identification with the EU.

**Keywords:** European structural and investment funds, European identity, European regions

## Introduction

The primary objective of the Cohesion policy (CP) is to contribute to the economic, social, and territorial cohesion of the European Union (EU) to reduce regional disparities and differences between countries. It also contributes to achieving EU political priorities, such as the European Green Deal, digital transformation, and strengthening the EU economy and social Europe. As the Cohesion policy accounts for one-third of the EU budget, it is one of the most visible policies of the EU. In the 2021-2027 programming period, this policy accounts for 392 billion euros, which are delivered through four different funds: European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), Cohesion Fund (CF), and the Just Transition Fund (JTF). As the Cohesion policy solves regional needs, it is perhaps the most tangible for EU citizens. It is reasonable to assume that this policy is more visible in regions that receive more funding (less developed regions) or those that receive funding for longer periods (regions in the original 15 member countries). Visibility is enhanced by the fact that the beneficiaries are obliged to publicise the funding, projects, and achievements to increase awareness of the benefits of the EU and the use of the EU budget.

Moreover, the multilevel governance character of CP encourages the participation of various socio-economic actors at the subnational level in regional development policies. Therefore, we expect a positive relationship between CP funding and citizens' identification with the EU. Responsibility for implementing this policy is carried out at the level of member states. Therefore, we expect that success or failure in implementing this policy may influence citizens' attitudes to the EU. When the Cohesion policy effectively reduces regional disparities, promotes sustainable development, and increases the quality of life, e.g., through improved infrastructure, job opportunities, education, investment, etc., it could affect attitudes towards the EU.

Nevertheless, although the Cohesion policy has heavily supported some regions, their citizens voted for parties with strong Eurosceptic orientation (Rodríguez-Pose and Dijkstra, 2021). In recent years, national elections have revealed an increasing popularity of Eurosceptic parties and a declining confidence in European institutions (Aiello et al., 2019). The example of the United Kingdom stresses how important it is to better inform about the benefits of CP and other EU policies. Fidrmuc et al. (2019) found that the relationship between CP and the remaining vote in the UK was weak at the regional level. The support for the EU was highest in economically strong regions, which benefitted from globalisation and international flows of capital and labour. Moreover, according to Fidrmuc et al. (2019), regions that benefitted the most from CP had lower voter participation in the Brexit referendum.

Several authors explore how Cohesion Policy influences European identity or ability to generate a positive perception of the EU among citizens. While some of the studies find that CP contributes to European identity (Rodríguez-Pose and Dijkstra, 2021; Borz et al., 2022), others found no impact of EU structural funds on the feeling of European identity (Verhaegen et al., 2014) and support for the EU (López-Bazo and Royuela, 2019).

There are also other factors influencing European identity, such as other EU policies, broader socio-political context, crisis (e.g., Armingeon and Ceka, 2014; Smętkowski and Dąbrowski, 2019), media, personal experiences, or attitudes and resources, e.g., socio-economic status, education, information, or language skills (Kaina and Karolewski, 2013), or political narratives. Armingeon and Ceka (2014) confirm some evidence for a direct effect of EU policies. They found that the most significant determinant of trust and support for the EU was the level of trust in national governments. Reinl and Braun (2023) argue that the group of citizens that hold the EU together experiences a personal benefit from the EU, is worried about the global crisis and has a general interest in politics and relative satisfaction with the current political affairs.

Our empirical research tests the utilitarian approach, according to which the respondents feel more like EU citizens when they perceive benefits from the Cohesion policy.

To evaluate such a relationship (hypothesis 2), first, citizens must be aware of the projects financed from EU funds in the regions where they live (hypothesis 1).

*Hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between awareness of Cohesion policy and citizens' identification with the European Union.*

*Hypothesis 2: There is a positive relationship between Cohesion policy transfers and citizens' identification with the European Union.*

The primary goal of Cohesion policy is to reduce regional disparities and improve the social welfare of the regions. Therefore, we assume that the socio-economic situation of the region where citizens live may influence European identity (hypothesis 3). In addition to the objective results of the Cohesion policy, the European identity can also be influenced by the subjective perception of the benefits of EU membership, which is tested by the last hypothesis.

*Hypothesis 3: A positive relationship exists between the socio-economic situation of the region where citizens live and citizens' identification with the European Union.*

*Hypothesis 4: A positive relationship exists between the perception of benefits from the EU and citizens' identification with the European Union.*

This paper is structured as follows. The first section provides a literature review on European identity or citizens' identification with the EU and the factors that influence it, focusing on the relationship between Cohesion policy and European identity. The second section describes the data and methodology. The third section presents the analysis of our main variables and the results on the relationship between cohesion policy and European identity. We conclude with the implications of the empirical findings.

## **1. European identity and Cohesion policy - literature review**

European identity is recognised as an essential element for the sustainability of the EU as a political regime (Borz et al., 2022) and a prerequisite for forming a European community and legitimising the European integration process (Aiello et al., 2019). Several authors point to the benefits of European collective identity development for further integration (Kaina and Karolewski, 2013), effective functioning of the euro (the relationship between money and identity is reciprocal according Kaelberer, 2004), citizens' political support for the EU (van Klingeren et al., 2013), willingness to accept EU's redistributive policies and show solidarity

(Lengfeld et al., 2015), financial solidarity support with member states in economic crisis (Verhaegen, 2018).

Explanatory factors of public opinion towards the EU can be divided into economic and utilitarian (so-called hard factors) and soft factors relating to identity and cultural aspects (van Klingereren et al., 2013). "Economic utilitarian theory assumes a relationship between economic benefits, support for European integration, and European identity" (Verhaegen et al., 2014). This theory suggests that citizens are more likely to support integration if there is a net benefit for the whole economy (macro explanation) or direct support for their self-interest (micro explanation), e.g. de Vries and Edwards (2009). Utilitarian (hard) factors are based on rational choice theory. They can be measured by socio-economic variables such as GDP per capita, unemployment rates, education, occupation, income level, wealth, or perception of the economic situation in the region.

Soft factors are examined by van Klingereren et al. (2013), who, based on Social identity theory and Realistic group conflict theory, assume that people who have a strong attachment to their nation may perceive the European identity as a potential threat and increasing migration between EU countries can lead to Euroscepticism. Their results did not support both theories, as national pride and a possible increase of cultural threat by immigrants do not always lead to more Euroscepticism. De Vries and Edwards (2009) stressed that the importance of political elites shapes public opinion towards the EU. They point out that Eurosceptical elites can be found on both extremes, right and left, of the political spectrum, but for different reasons. Extreme right parties' argument is based on the defence of national sovereignty, and the extreme left's argument is based on economic insecurity and fights against the neoliberal nature of the EU project (De Vries and Edwards, 2009).

According to López-Bazo and Royuela (2019), other factors influencing attitudes toward the EU include communal identity, demographics, and political and institutional factors, such as EU effectiveness and corruption. Economic benefits from EU membership can influence European identity development, together with geographic proximity, especially in border regions, historical events, such as wars, alliances, cooperation, cultural diversity, media, and crises (such as financial, debt crisis or COVID-19 crisis). Attitudes towards the EU vary among individuals and regions and are subject to change over time.

European identity can be influenced by economic benefits from EU membership, which are the results of EU policies, such as Cohesion policy, Common agriculture policy, internal market, monetary union, foreign policy, Erasmus programme, Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme, and other EU programmes and funds. One of the most visible for the citizens is the EU Cohesion policy, which is also the most redistributive.

The role of EU Cohesion policy in developing European identity has been investigated by several authors with mixed results. Citizens' support for and identification with the EU on a

regional level became the object of research only recently. Borz et al. (2022), using the survey in 17 regions across 12 member states, found that citizens who recognise the advantages of EU Cohesion policy for themselves and their region's development were more likely to develop European identity. They confirm that cognitive awareness of the CP and its communication contributes to citizens' identification with the EU. However, they found that individuals who think that their country benefitted from EU membership still have a predominant country identity. Most individuals who declare a sole European identity were from old member states who don't think their country benefitted from EU membership. Based on a case study of two Dutch regions (the Netherlands is one of the largest per capita net contributors to the EU budget), CP and citizens' perception in old member states is investigated by Dąbrowski et al. (2021). They mention growing Euroscepticism through the rejection of the 2005 referendum on the EU constitutional treaty, anti-immigrants' sentiments, rejection of the EU Association Agreement with Ukraine in 2016, and extreme right-wing parties in government in the 2017 national election.

Moreover, CP funding does not play an important role in total public investment (only 0,59% in the Netherlands in 2015-17 compared to 84% in Portugal, 80% in Croatia, or 55% in Slovakia based on Cohesion data, 2020). Dąbrowski et al. (2021) confirm that the scale of funding, awareness of CP among citizens, and implementation architecture matter for EU identification. In the case of Dutch regions, low allocations of EU funding, way of communication, fragmented funding, bureaucratic government structure, and distance from the levels of government with which the citizens identify can have limited impact on positive EU identification. Based on the analysis of Eurosceptic voting at the regional level, Rodríguez-Pose and Lewis Dijkstra (2021) conclude that vote for parties strongly opposed and opposed to European integration is higher in areas with lower CP investment per capita, economic decline, lower level of education, higher level of unemployment and higher share of elderly population.

On the contrary, some studies suggest no relationship between cohesion policy and identification with the EU. Attitudes towards the EU are influenced by people's perceptions of the economic situation in their region and the EU institutions' ability to address regional challenges, but not by the allocated amount of structural funds per capita (Aiello et al., 2019). These authors found that subjective and individual indicators are more important in determining the support for the EU. Capello and Perucca (2019) conclude that awareness and satisfaction with CP are determined not by objective policy needs but by individuals' perceived needs. Most studies did not make a distinction between various types of funding. Still, Dellmuth and Chalmers (2018) examined different forms of spending. They realised that not all forms of spending support EU integration and that examining how transfers are spent is necessary. They reveal that transfers based on regional needs in three areas – human capital,

infrastructure, and environmental projects, increase support for the EU. López-Bazo and Royuela (2019) have found that the intensity of CP in the region doesn't impact support for the EU, although it affects the perception of the subjective benefit.

## **2. Data and methodology**

The analysis uses representative data from residents of 27 EU countries using a Eurobarometer survey 2019 before the COVID crisis. Periods of crisis within the EU, such as economic downturns, influence how people perceive their European identity. These crises may lead to increased nationalism or calls for greater integration, depending on public sentiment. Smętkowski and Dąbrowski (2019) analysed the change in the EU image during the economic crisis of 2008-2016. They found that the role of Cohesion policy in shaping inhabitants' EU image was relatively small compared to the economic crisis. Compared to other authors, their results showed convergence of opinions on the EU across the regions, so the crisis has a different impact on European identity in different regions. As our primary goal within this paper is to evaluate the relationship between Cohesion policy and European identity, we are using data from before the COVID crisis, which can potentially substantially impact EU identity formation.

The United Kingdom was omitted from the main analysis because it is no longer a member of the EU. Our analysis is performed on a regional level, specifically NUTS 2 regions and NUTS 1 regions in several countries, due to the availability of data from the Eurobarometer 91.5 survey (European Commission and European Parliament, 2019). This survey is based on a representative sample of EU citizens aged 15 and over.

Citizens' identification with the EU (European identity) can be measured in different ways, such as citizens' attachment to Europe of EU (e.g., Mendez and Bachtler, 2017; Dąbrowski et al., 2017), European vs. national identification (e.g., Borz et al., 2022), support for European integration measured by evaluation of membership in EU (Verhaegen et al., 2014; Dellmuth and Chalmers 2018; López-Bazo and Royuela, 2019, Aiello et al., 2019) or support for European integration measured as the desired speed of European integration (de Vries and Edwards, 2009). Several authors combined indicators into the Euroscepticism indicator (van Klingeren et al., 2013), Dąbrowski et al. (2017) who combined the EU image and attachment to the EU, and Verhaegen (2018) who combined attachment to Europe and feeling like an EU citizen. Most authors used results of surveys (such as Eurobarometer, projects COHESIFY, or PERCEIVE).

Within this paper, we apply an approach partially similar to Verhaegen et al. (2014), and our dependent variable (European identity) is measured by Standard Eurobarometer survey results on opinion on this statement: "*You feel you are a citizen of the EU*".

## 2.1 Eurobarometer

The Eurobarometer Survey is a series of public opinion surveys conducted regularly on behalf of the European Commission since 1973. The Eurobarometer employs a standardised methodology to ensure consistent and comparable results across countries and time. While there is some critique related to the potential biases in question phrasing, the influence of current events on respondents' answers, or the challenges associated with representing the diverse views of the European public within a single survey, the consistent methodology and broad scope of the Eurobarometer render it a valuable tool for gauging public sentiment across the EU. Our analysis is based on standard Eurobarometer 91.5 (European Commission and European Parliament, 2019).

The explanatory variables that can influence people's views of the EU included in our analysis are knowledge about the EU and subjective indicators, such as perceived benefits of a country's membership in the EU and the perception that the country's interests are well taken into account in the EU (Table 1). Individual control variables include gender, age and perceived financial situation of the respondent's household. We expect that younger respondents have higher identification with the EU, because of potential higher benefits from free movement within the EU, participation in programmes like Erasmus+ or experience growing up in a more integrated Europe.

While the Standard Eurobarometer is conducted bi-annually and examines public opinion on broad topics, specialised surveys are known as 'Special Eurobarometers' and 'Flash Eurobarometers.' We are also using data from Flash Eurobarometer conducted as a phone survey on "Citizens' awareness and perception of EU Regional policy", taken seven times between 2010 and 2023. The newest Flash Eurobarometer 531 from 2023 allows us to see the relationship between awareness of CP and feeling like an EU citizen (this question was not included in the Eurobarometer survey 2019). In 2023, the survey included 25 718 interviews.

**Table 1: Definition and encoding of variables based on Eurobarometer 91.5**

| Variable | Question ID | Question   | Questionnaire options  | Variable encoding                     |
|----------|-------------|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| FEEL     | QD2_1       | Please tell me to what extent it corresponds or not to your own opinion: You feel you are a citizen of the EU.   | Yes, definitely<br>Yes, to some extent<br>No, not really<br>No, definitely not<br>Don't know | 0 if no,<br>1 if yes                  |
| BNFT     | QF2         | Taking everything into account, would you say that (OUR COUNTRY) has on balance benefited or not from being a member of the EU?                                  | Benefited<br>Not benefited<br>Refusal<br>Don't know  | 0 if not benefited,<br>1 if benefited |
| UNDRST   | QA18A_1     | Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements: I understand how the EU works.  | Totally agree<br>Tend to agree<br>Tend to disagree<br>Totally disagree<br>Don't know         | 0 if disagree,<br>1 if agree          |
| ACCTD    | QA18A_2     | Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements: The interests of (OUR COUNTRY) are well taken into account in the EU. | Totally agree<br>Tend to agree<br>Tend to disagree<br>Totally disagree<br>Don't know         | 0 if disagree,<br>1 if agree          |
| HFIN     | QA1A_5      | How would you judge the current situation in each of the following? The financial situation of your household.   | Very good<br>Rather good<br>Rather bad<br>Very bad<br>Don't know                             | 0 if bad,<br>1 if good                |
| GNDR     | D10         | Gender.  | Woman<br>Man   | 0 if woman,<br>1 if man               |
| AGE      | D11         | How old are you?   | Number   | Number                                |

Note: Answers to all questions indicating indifference ("Don't know") or refusals to answer were encoded as missing values.

## 2.2 ARDECO and Eurostat

The economic situation of the region can influence European identity. Regional control variables came from ARDECO, maintained by the European Commission's Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy and updated by the Joint Research Centre, which serves as the Annual Regional Database for the European Commission. The predominant data source for ARDECO is Eurostat, augmented with information from other national and international sources. Country control variables also include dummy variables for joining the EU and membership in the Eurozone. Kaelberer (2004) showed that the relationship between money and identity and entering the EU are relevant control variables.

**Table 2: Definition and encoding of variables based on ARDECO and Eurostat**

| Variable | Description   | Units  | Time |
|----------|---|--|------|
| GDP      | Regional GDP (source ARDECO, variable SHVGDP)             | PPS, per capita.                                 | 2018 |
| UNEM     | Unemployment rate (source Eurostat, table lfst_r_lfu3rt). | Percentage.                                      | 2018 |
| NEWEU    | New EU member country, joining in 2004 or later.          | 0 = not new member,<br>1 = new member            |      |
| EURO     | Eurozone member.  | 0 = not Eurozone member,<br>1 = Eurozone member. |      |

### 2.3 Cohesion open data platform

Based on utilitarian theory, the main variable of our interest is Cohesion policy funding. We use data from the Cohesion open data platform. This dataset offers a consolidated regional annual EU expenditure data source for European structural and investment funds (ESI funds<sup>1</sup>). These payments are mapped to or estimated by NUTS-2 regions based primarily on the NUTS-2013 version. When EU-funded programs span multiple NUTS-2 regions, payments are allocated using data from managing authorities or by applying specific distribution rules. The usual annual division of expenditure aligns with the European Commission's payment schedule to the Member States rather than the actual expenditure timing on-site. This discrepancy may have a considerable impact on policy evaluation analyses. The Commission engaged BERGEN to model the genuine annual spending to better approximate yearly expenditure. This "Modelled\_annual\_expenditure" variable, made available in the dataset, is derived from the average of 100,000 simulations assessing annual EU payments for realistic expenditure estimation (European Commission, 2020).

This dataset on modelled expenditures has two main advantages. First, using the modelled values instead of the formally declared expenditure allows for its more precise attribution to individual years, which is essential when pairing the data with the views and perceptions of respondents in the Eurobarometer survey. Second, the dataset integrates the expenditure over various funds and different programming periods, allowing for the estimation of the total effect of EU funding in the given period.

One of the disadvantages of this dataset is its limited coverage: the dataset does not include expenditures of 2019 and beyond. However, we do not expect this shortcoming to be

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<sup>1</sup> ESI funds in programming period 2014-2020 include Cohesion policy funds (ERDF, ESF, CF, Youth Employment Initiative - YEI), Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD), European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF).

significant vis-à-vis our research objective, as the data for late 2019, but mainly 2020 and 2021, are greatly influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic substantially affected the perceptions and attitudes of EU citizens and EU spending, where it had a redistributive effect. Overall, limiting the scope of the study to the end of 2018 allows for interpretation and inference during standard, non-crisis periods.

We use the Cohesion open data platform to aggregate EU expenditure over the 2014-2018 period by NUTS2 units in two variables of interest (see Table 3). The first variable (EXPND) covers all ESI funds expenditure over five years, while the EXPNDCF variable aggregates only expenditure from Cohesion policy funds. Interreg expenditures are not included in any variables. We use the EXPNDCF as a robustness check and a way to verify whether Cohesion policy initiatives are the main factor driving the results.

**Table 3: Definition and encoding of variables based on cohesion open data platform**

| Variable | Description                            | Funds                                   | Time coverage |
|----------|--|---|---------------|
| EXPND    | modelled annual expenditure per capita | CF, ERDF, ESF, YEI<br>EAFRD, EMFF, FEAD | 2014 - 2018   |
| EXPNDCF  | modelled annual expenditure per capita | CF, ERDF, ESF, YEI                      | 2014 - 2018   |

**2.4 Methodology**

The relationship between awareness of CP and identification with the EU is based on data from the newest Flash Eurobarometer 531, June 2023. The first hypothesis is tested on the country level using linear regression. To test other hypotheses (H2-H4), we use a univariate logistic regression to model our binary dependent variable (FEEL), describing how the respondent's identity is aligned with the EU (do you "feel you are a citizen of the EU?").

Even though our main objective is to model the relationship of the dependent variable with EU expenditures, other control variables are necessary to better describe the spatial and country-level heterogeneity. In its simplest form, our model contains only the explanatory variables on EU expenditure (EXPND) and regional gross domestic product, which should capture much of the differences between regions (GDP).

We augment this baseline model with two extended groups of control variables captured by two additional model specifications. The first group is respondent-specific and contains information provided in the Eurobarometer questionnaire. These variables capture the personal characteristics (AGE and GENDER), perceived household financial situation (HFIN), the respondent's understanding of the workings of the EU (UNSTD), the belief that the home country's interests are accounted for within the EU (ACCTD), and the respondent's belief whether the home country benefited from EU membership (BNFT).

The second additional group of control variables captures regional unemployment (UNEM) and additional country-level information, including the status of a new EU member state, joining the group in or after 2004 (NEWEU) and the membership in the Eurozone (EURO).

In its most detailed form, the model specification may be written as:

$$f(FEEL_i) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 EXPND_i + \beta_2 GDP_i + \beta_3 AGE_i + \beta_4 GENDER_i + \beta_5 HFIN_i + \beta_7 UNSTD_i + \beta_8 ACCTD_i + \beta_9 BNFT_i + \beta_{10} UNEM_i + \beta_{11} NEWEU_i + \beta_{12} EURO_i$$

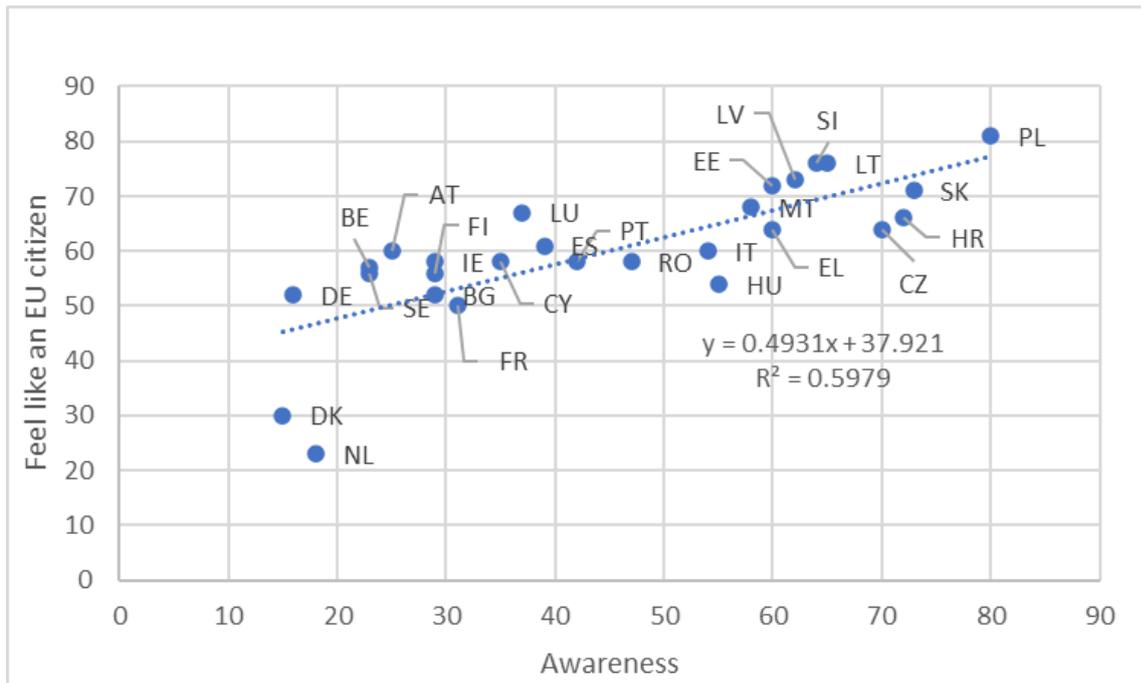
where  $f()$  is the logit function. All country-level and regional variables are chosen for each respondent ( $i$ ).

### 3. Results

#### 3.1 Awareness of the Cohesion policy and European identity

Citizen's identification with the EU can be shaped by awareness of the Cohesion policy. We evaluate awareness through the Eurobarometer question, "*Have you heard about any EU co-financed projects to improve the area where you live?*". In 2023, about 39% of respondents have heard about EU co-financed projects. The highest awareness was in Poland (80%), the biggest recipient of CP funds, followed by Slovakia and other new member states (Figure 1). The lowest awareness of CP projects was in Denmark, the Netherlands, and Germany (less than 20% of respondents heard about EU co-financed projects). These differences could be explained by the scale of allocated EU funds and differences in communication strategies between countries. Based on the Flash Eurobarometer survey, the most important sources of information are the internet, national television, and billboards. ERDF and ESF are the most visible funds, and 66% of respondents in 2023 have heard of at least one of the CP funds. Slovakia leads the ranking with a 90% awareness of at least one of the EU funds (Flash Eurobarometer 531, 2023). Most of the respondents in the EU (81%) agree that EU-cofinanced projects positively impact the development of their region or city.

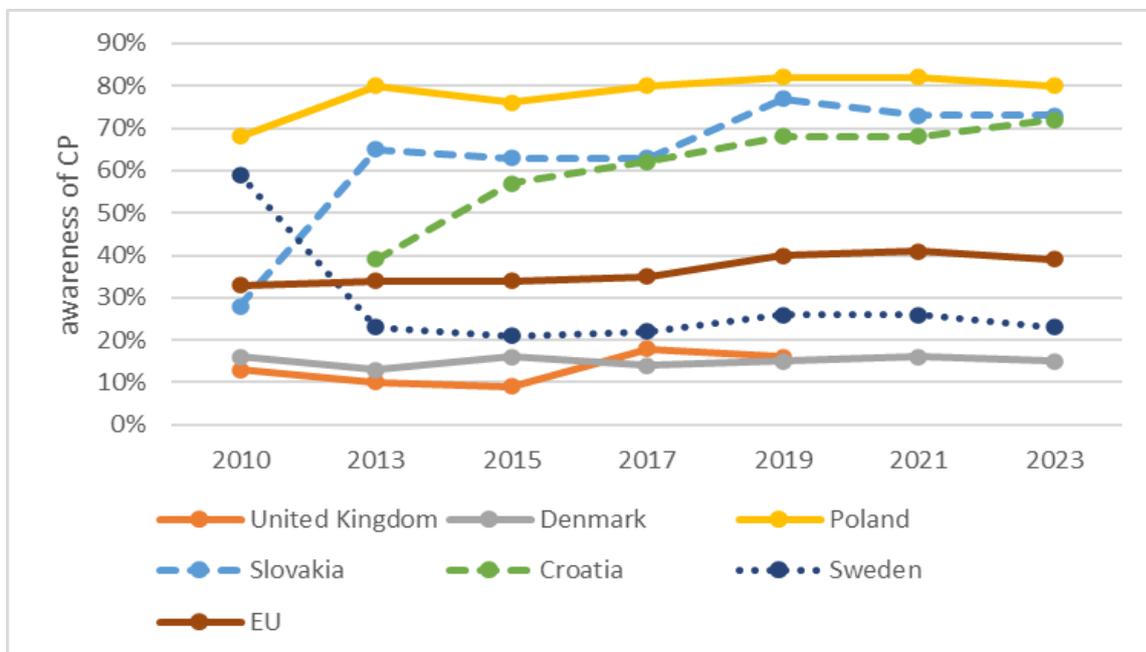
Of the entire sample of EU respondents, 57% replied that EU co-financed projects in their area make them feel like EU citizens. The highest perception is in Poland (81%), and the lowest is in the Netherlands (23%). *The relationship between awareness and identification with the EU is positive.* The highest awareness of CP is accompanied by higher identification with the EU (Figure 1), so we may accept our research hypothesis 1.



**Figure 1: Relationship between awareness of CP and identification with the EU**

Source: authors' elaboration, based on data from Flash Eurobarometer 531, June 2023

Note: Awareness is measured by the proportion of respondents who have heard about any EU co-financed projects to improve the area where you live. Identification with EU (feel like EU citizens) is measured by the proportion of respondents who answered "yes" or "some yes" to the question "Do EU-funded projects in your area make you feel like an EU citizen?"



**Figure 2: Awareness of Cohesion policy in EU and selected EU countries**

Source: authors' elaboration, based on data from Flash Eurobarometer 2010 – 2023.

Figure 2 shows us that there is not much variability in awareness of CP in countries with the highest awareness (Poland) and countries with the lowest awareness (Denmark, Netherlands).

Even though the United Kingdom is no longer a member of the EU, we can see that the lowest percentage of people within the EU until 2019 have heard about EU co-financed projects improving the area where they live in this country. Based on economic utilitarian theory, a low perception of CP benefits can lead to low identification with the EU within this country. The highest growth of awareness of CP between 2010 and 2023 was in Slovakia, which can be attributed to better communication from national and regional authorities and growing CP funding per capita. Croatia has the second highest growth of awareness, which is explained by entering the EU in 2013 and gradually implementing EU co-financed projects. Looking at the other "new" member countries, not all experienced a growing awareness of CP (e.g., Romania). The highest decline within the old member state was in Sweden. Although since 2010, the EU average citizen's awareness of projects funded by the EU has slowly increased (Figure 2), it should be noted that there was a significant decline in awareness before 2010, when the EU's average awareness reached its peak of almost 50% (this dynamic of awareness is analysed by Cunico et al., 2021).

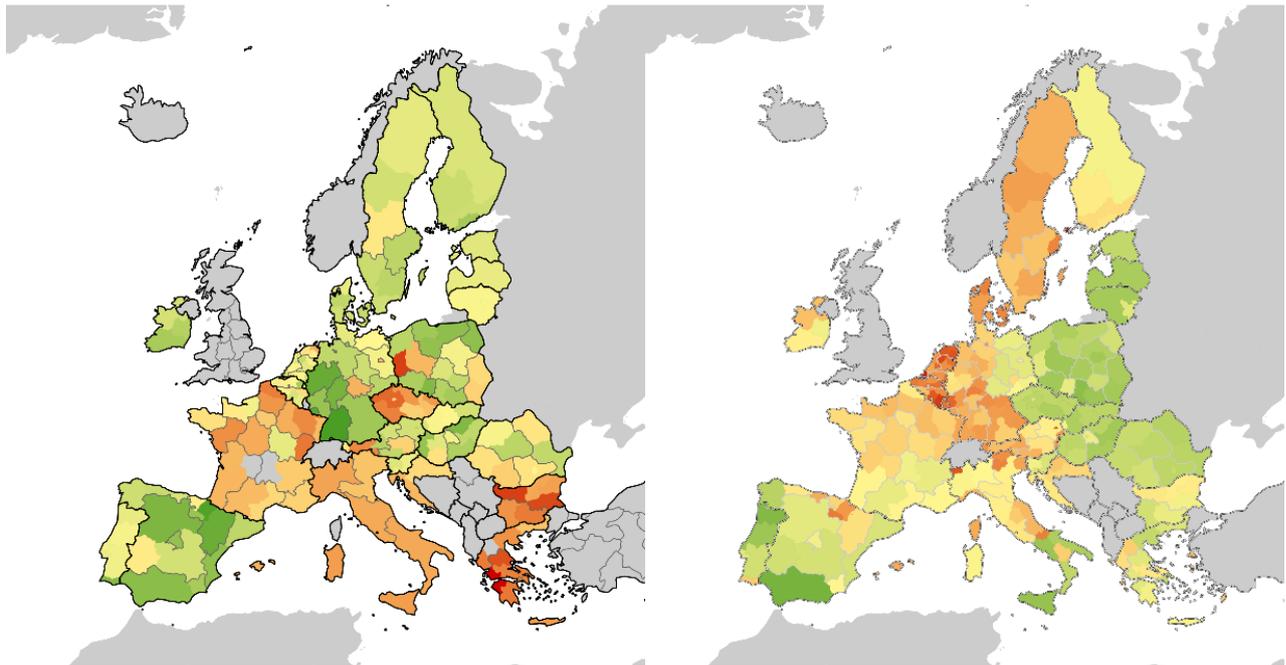
### **3.2 Modelling the relationship between Cohesion policy expenditures and European identity**

Our primary analysis focuses on the determinants of the EU identity among Eurobarometer respondents (FEEL variable, "You feel you are a citizen of the EU"). The spatial distribution of the dependent variable across EU regions is shown in the left part of Figure 3. Note that the Eurobarometer does not follow a single definition for EU regions. While most responses have been recorded at the NUTS2 level, several countries (e.g., Germany) have used only the NUTS1 level. Figure 3 integrates the data by the most detailed level at which the results have been reported.

As shown in Figure 3, the feeling of European identity is not spatially uniform. There are notable differences among EU countries in general but also between groups of older and newer countries that became EU members in or after 2004. For example, while there is a strong EU citizenship feeling in Germany and most of Poland, it is relatively weak in France, the Czech Republic, and Bulgaria. When compared to the cumulative level of EU payments (or their logarithms, as shown in the right panel of Figure 3), it is clear that the respondent's attitudes cannot be explained just by EU financing. For example, the Czech Republic, Greece, southern Italy and Bulgaria have a relatively low score in EU identity despite receiving relatively high EU funds in 2014-2018.

QD1a: How attached you feel to the European Union?

Historic EU payments (log)



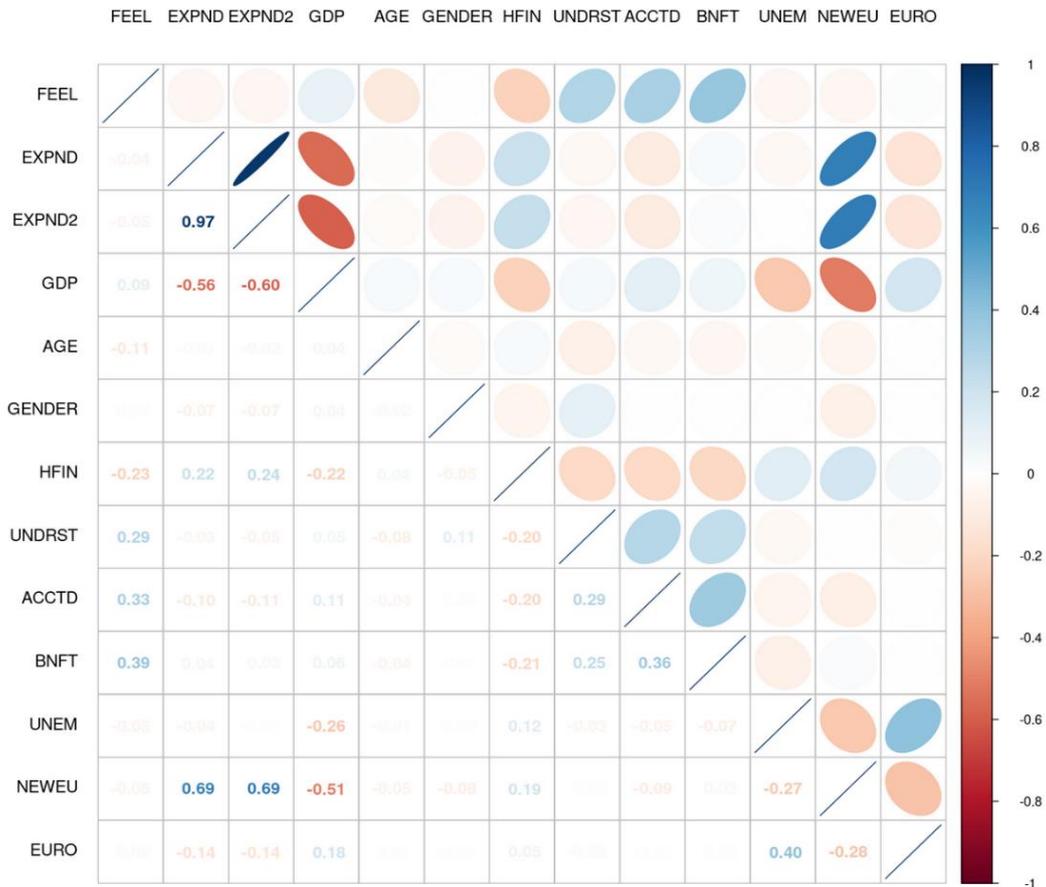
**Figure 3: Spatial distributions for the dependent variable (FEEL, left) and the logarithm of historic ESI funds payments over the 2014-2018 period (right)**

Source: authors' elaboration, based on data from the European Commission (2020) and Eurobarometer 91.5

Note: For the FEEL variable (left), red/green shading corresponds to disagreement/agreement with the statement "You feel you are a citizen of the EU" in 2019.

On the contrary, the south of Spain scores relatively high in pro-EU attitudes and the historic amount of financing. The highest amount of ESI funds allocations is received in regions with the lower GDP per capita, mostly peripheral regions of new member states, less developed southern regions in former EU countries, such as Greece, Portugal, Spain and southern Italy, following the CP allocation rules. However, in some regions with lower ESI funds expenditures, the identification with the EU is higher, such as northern EU countries, Germany or Ireland.

Figure 4 further explores the interrelationships among the dependent and explanatory variables. As several variables, mainly based on the Eurobarometer, are ordinal or binary, we report nonparametric Spearman rank correlations. While most of the pairwise correlations suggest medium to low dependence, there are three variables with stronger relationships: the GDP, ESIF expenditures, and membership among the newer member states joining the EU after 2004. There are negative correlations between GDP and expenditures and GDP and new member state status, both intuitive. As the more recent member states are economically weaker than the older EU member states, the GDP also reflects this.



**Figure 4: Spearman rank correlations**

Source: author's elaboration

The negative correlation between GDP and ESI funding is directly related to the EU Cohesion policy objective of decreasing regional disparities between EU member states – the funding is primarily allocated to economically weaker regions to achieve convergence.

The main results of our models are presented in Table 4. In model (1), we explain the dependent variable only by the ESI funds expenditure and the GDP. Both variables positively influence respondent's feeling like an EU citizen: the more economically developed the region and the more funds are allocated to the region, the more likely the respondents are to feel associated with the EU. However, the model's explanatory power is relatively low, with pseudo-R2 being close to zero. More control variables to explain the dependent variable are needed.

**Table 4: Logistic regression results**

| Model                                    | (1)         | (2)         | (3)         | (4)         | (5)         | (6)         | (7)         | (8)         |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| EXPND                                    | 0.000126*** | 0.000252*** | 0.000101*** | 0.000230*** |             |             |             |             |
| <i>(ESI funds payments, per capita)</i>  | (2.87e-05)  | (3.03e-05)  | (3.57e-05)  | (4.16e-05)  |             |             |             |             |
| EXPNDCF                                  |             |             |             |             | 0.000143*** | 0.000270*** | 0.000125*** | 0.000298*** |
| <i>(CP payments, per capita)</i>         |             |             |             |             | (3.26e-05)  | (3.45e-05)  | (4.02e-05)  | (4.73e-05)  |
| GDP                                      | 2.05e-05*** | 1.57e-05*** | 1.01e-05*** | 2.84e-06    | 2.06e-05*** | 1.56e-05*** | 1.04e-05*** | 3.07e-06*   |
| <i>(regional GDP, PPS per capita)</i>    | (1.23e-06)  | (1.27e-06)  | (1.52e-06)  | (1.75e-06)  | (1.23e-06)  | (1.27e-06)  | (1.53e-06)  | (1.75e-06)  |
| AGE                                      |             | -0.0144***  | -0.0118***  | -0.0126***  |             | -0.0143***  | -0.0118***  | -0.0126***  |
| <i>(respondent age)</i>                  |             | (0.000800)  | (0.000941)  | (0.000950)  |             | (0.000799)  | (0.000941)  | (0.000950)  |
| GENDER                                   |             | -0.00850    | -0.101***   | -0.105***   |             | -0.00967    | -0.101***   | -0.105***   |
| <i>(0 = woman, 1 = man)</i>              |             | (0.0282)    | (0.0329)    | (0.0330)    |             | (0.0282)    | (0.0329)    | (0.0331)    |
| HFIN                                     |             | -0.721***   | -0.421***   | -0.398***   |             | -0.719***   | -0.421***   | -0.399***   |
| <i>(household fin. situation)</i>        |             | (0.0195)    | (0.0229)    | (0.0233)    |             | (0.0195)    | (0.0228)    | (0.0233)    |
| UNSTD                                    |             |             | 0.799***    | 0.821***    |             |             | 0.800***    | 0.826***    |
| <i>(understand how EU works)</i>         |             |             | (0.0341)    | (0.0343)    |             |             | (0.0341)    | (0.0343)    |
| ACCTD                                    |             |             | 0.953***    | 0.950***    |             |             | 0.954***    | 0.952***    |
| <i>(country interests accounted for)</i> |             |             | (0.0350)    | (0.0351)    |             |             | (0.0350)    | (0.0351)    |
| BNFT                                     |             |             | 1.344***    | 1.346***    |             |             | 1.343***    | 1.345***    |
| <i>(EU benefited as EU member)</i>       |             |             | (0.0348)    | (0.0349)    |             |             | (0.0348)    | (0.0349)    |
| UNEM                                     |             |             |             | -0.0292***  |             |             |             | -0.0296***  |
| <i>(unemployment rate)</i>               |             |             |             | (0.00468)   |             |             |             | (0.00469)   |
| NEWEU                                    |             |             |             | -0.332***   |             |             |             | -0.350***   |
| <i>(new EU state, member after 2004)</i> |             |             |             | (0.0507)    |             |             |             | (0.0507)    |
| EURO                                     |             |             |             | 0.241***    |             |             |             | 0.261***    |
| <i>(0 = no, 1 = Eurozone membership)</i> |             |             |             | (0.0406)    |             |             |             | (0.0408)    |
| Constant                                 | 0.456***    | 2.925***    | 0.600***    | 0.893***    | 0.468***    | 2.957***    | 0.596***    | 0.886***    |
|  | (0.0490)    | (0.0824)    | (0.101)     | (0.117)     | (0.0472)    | (0.0816)    | (0.100)     | (0.117)     |
| Pseudo R2                                | 0.009       | 0.064       | 0.214       | 0.217       | 0.009       | 0.063       | 0.214       | 0.217       |
| Observations                             | 30 671      | 30 083      | 27 962      | 27 962      | 30 671      | 30 083      | 27 962      | 27 962      |

Note: Binary dependent variable FEEL ("You feel you are a citizen of the EU"). Coefficients with standard errors are in parentheses.

Sig. codes: \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1.

We augment our baseline model with three additional groups of variables. For the first group (model (2)), we add variables describing the respondent in the Eurobarometer survey (age, gender, and the state of household finances of the respondent). The second additional group of variables is also based on the Eurobarometer. It accounts for other attitudes the respondent might have towards the EU – the beliefs of whether the respondent understands the workings of the EU, whether the EU accounts for home country interests, and whether the respondent's country has benefited from EU membership in general. Including these characteristics substantially increases the model goodness of fit to the previous models (model (3)). Finally, the last group of additional explanatory variables captures further characteristics, like status as a newer member state (members from 2004), membership in the Eurozone, and regional unemployment.

Following Table 4, a significant and positive influence of EXPNDCF on FEEL means we may accept our research hypothesis 2, so we have identified a positive relationship between Cohesion policy transfers and citizens' identification with the European Union. We have also identified a positive relationship between socio-economic situation and citizens' identification with the EU. Higher regional GDP and lower unemployment rate is connected to higher citizens' identification with the EU (hypothesis 3). Finally, Table 4 shows a positive relationship between the perceived benefits from the EU (BNFT) and citizens' identification with the EU (hypothesis 4).

As shown in Table 4, the results seem very robust, as the inclusion of additional control variables does not substantially change the sign of the coefficients and their magnitude across model specifications. Furthermore, the results remain qualitatively the same even when substituting Cohesion policy payments instead of total ESI funds expenditure (models (5)-(8)). The stability of the results provides further evidence for the robustness of the results and shows that the main results on EU funding are mainly driven by Cohesion policy.

## **Discussion and conclusion**

This paper confirms the positive correlation between CP expenditure and citizens' identification with the EU. The amount of money spent in the region is not the only factor influencing the relationship between Cohesion policy and European identity. We agree with Reinl and Braun (2023) that EU citizens must be well-informed about CP projects' benefits. We confirm a positive relationship between awareness of CP and citizens' identification with the EU. On the other hand, CP performance, which not have been investigated within this paper, may influence the formation of European identity. Pegan et al. (2018) mention several challenges, such as inefficient and non-strategic use of funds, implementation of unsustainable projects, rent-seeking behaviour, cost overruns, project delays, bureaucracy, noncompliance

with rules, fraud and corruption. Based on discussions in all focus groups, Pegan et al. (2018) conclude that despite respondents' appreciation of the benefits of the projects, they did not contribute to European identity, even though some respondents consider the EU's financial contribution as a mechanism of control and power. New Flash Eurobarometer data with the direct question "Do EU-funded projects in your area make you feel like an EU citizen?" shows us that Cohesion policy funds contribute to citizens' identification with the EU, mainly in countries with high allocation of EU funds.

Our empirical research supports the utilitarian approach by showing a positive relationship between EU identity and the amount of EU funds, but also by subjectively perceived benefits from the EU, including eurozone membership. This paper confirms and complements previous research in confirming that other factors can explain variation in citizens' identification with the EU, such as personal persuasion that country interests are taken into account in the EU and information on how the EU works. Our results showed that being a citizen from an old member state positively relates to identification with the EU, which is a similar result to Borz et al. (2022), who declare that most respondents with a sole European identity were from old member states. As we expected, our results confirm a negative relationship between age and identification with the EU, which is consistent with Rodríguez-Pose and Lewis Dijkstra (2021), who say that voting for parties strongly opposed and opposed to European integration is higher in areas with a higher share of elderly population, lower CP investment per capita and higher level of unemployment.

Although the exploration of all factors of heterogeneity of citizens' attitudes towards the EU is beyond the scope of this paper, future research should focus more on political factors as identification with the EU can be influenced by political interest, opinions of political leaders, identification with pro-European parties or Eurosceptic parties, trust and effectiveness of EU institutions, satisfaction with democracy or fear of potential global crises.

### **Acknowledgement**

This work was supported by the Vedecká Grantová Agentúra MŠVVaŠ SR a SAV (VEGA), grant number 1/0837/21 "Spatial and Temporal Aspects of EU Cohesion Policy: Lessons Learned and Future Perspectives".

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# Evaluation of Achievement and Challenges of health care reform using Community-based health insurance in Ethiopia

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<https://doi.org/10.33542/VSS2023-2-1>

## Abstract

As part of Health care financing system, the Ethiopian government has introduced Community-based health insurance (CBHI) and Social Based health insurance. The aim of this paper is to examine the challenges and achievements of healthcare reform using community-based health insurance in Ethiopia. In this study, narrative reviews were employed in order to analyze the data collected from secondary sources. The study concludes that since 2014, coverage of CBHI district has been increasing, eventually going from 161 in 2014 to 827 (of which 770 launched) in 2020. CBHI is not able to cover reimbursement costs for health facilities due to a disjointed pooling system; lack of political commitment to developing and cooperating with the CBHI scheme are challenge affecting the implementation of CBHI in Ethiopia. Based on the finding recommendation were suggested in order to solve the challenges of CBHI implementation.

**Keywords:** Health care reform, Community-based health insurance, Implementation, Achievements, Ethiopia

## Introduction

The Ethiopian government recognized a strategy for health financing in nineteen ninety-eight that intended an expensive range of edges. It is obvious that in order to implement one reform. It should be supported by regulation (Legitimized). Therefore, the Ethiopian government-endorsed reform initiatives through regional legislation and executed them in line with model implementation. In 2004, the actual execution was initiated by three regions, such as Oromiya national regional state, SNNP, and Amhara, after they made ratification and legitimization of regional proclamations, regulations, and directives after serious conversion and meeting within their regional council (caaffe in the case of Oromiya national regional state), regional cabinets, and regional health bureaus. In order to ensure long-range health finance sustainability Ethiopian HCFS acknowledged that the cost of people's health care should be financed via different mechanisms among that; executing health care system withholding and utilization, a tax-exempt system for the poor, standardize exemption services, establish and review user fees, introduce a private wing in public hospitals, outsource non-

government services promote the autonomy of the health care system by introducing a system of government (Zegelew, 2014).

As part of HCFS, the Ethiopian government has introduced CBHI and SHI. Both are focusing on saving people from unexpected health costs and reducing the number of people dependent on out-of-pocket payments besides this, domestic financial resources for health and achieving UHC.

Community-Based Health Insurance is part of University Health Coverage designed by the Ethiopian government with the help of different stakeholders such as USAID and Abt Association and started in 2011. As part of UHC, CBHI is a comprehensive and sustainable risk protection system planned to expand good health service in an equitable and accessible way to all.

According to the NHA (2017), the source of Ethiopia's HCF is still comprised of three sources: external funding (aid and donations), which account for 35%), domestic government sources (From the federal government and regional governments, which account for 32%); and out-of-pocket spending (from payments made by inpatients and outpatients during service taking). One of the limitations of the CBHI in most developing countries is that the scheme is highly dependent on the external source of finance. As a result, such schemes are relatively small, indigent, and low-income groups are registered and may not have a large enough risk group to exceed the operating cost. The aim of this paper is to examine the challenges and achievements of health care reform using community-based health insurance in Ethiopia using secondary sources, which include both published and non-published materials (journals, articles, and government reports regarding health care reforms, including the EHIA CBHI performance report).

## **1. CBHI Practices In Africa Focus On Ethiopia**

The per capita expenditure on health spending in Ethiopia was very poor before 1998, in the 1980s to mid-1990s; it fluctuated between USD 1.20, was below the average per capita in sub-Saharan Africa of 6.70 USD (FMOH, 1998). Resource allocation has also been biased in favor of hospitals and urban areas. Utilization fees levied at health facilities did not reflect the cost of health care, and all revenue collected was remitted to the government treasury. There was little or no insurance coverage in the country. Private sector participation in health has been limited. All of these circumstances make access to health care a challenge for many households. To address this issue, the Council of Ministers approved a strategy for funding healthcare in 1998. Its objectives were to mobilize additional resources from internal and external sources, to improve efficiency, in particular by transferring resources to primary care, and to ensure sustainability of quality health services. It also aimed to improve community participation and the delivery of health services (EHIA, 2015)

When we compare the per capita expenditure on health from 1990 to 2018 (which is 28 years), it is US \$ 24, which is 3.30% of the GDP (WB). When we see this data, it is well less than the per capita average for SSA.

Even though different healthcare financing reforms have been formulated and implemented by the Ethiopian government, their effect on healthcare utilization is not that significant. A study conducted by USAID reveals the former health care reforms have not significantly affected rates of use of health services, as “up to 36% contacts per person per year have been maintained”(Solomon et al, 2015). This was due to the service cost, especially for the households who could not pay these rates at the time of service (ibid). Accordingly, in 2011, Ethiopian government drafted the CBHI, aiming at the people working in the informal sector of the economy to protect them from risky financial costs and to have modern health facilities.

The Ethiopian government, take initiative to establish a community health project that brings together payments made by members into fund that covers the costs of basic health care; therefore, members have access to local health care centers when they are ill (USAID, 2019). The project was drafted and executed by the Ethiopian government under the special effort of different stakeholders to achieve UHC by improving the overall financial protection of healthcare (Solomon et al., 2015).

In 2011, the Community health insurance was initiated for the first time within thirteen districts selected from Tigray, Amhara, Oromiya, and Southern Nation Nationality and peoples Regions (EHIA, 2015). Since then, the federal government, with the collaboration of the regional governments, has started to scale up the CBHI to the rest of the regions and woredas to increase the number of members.

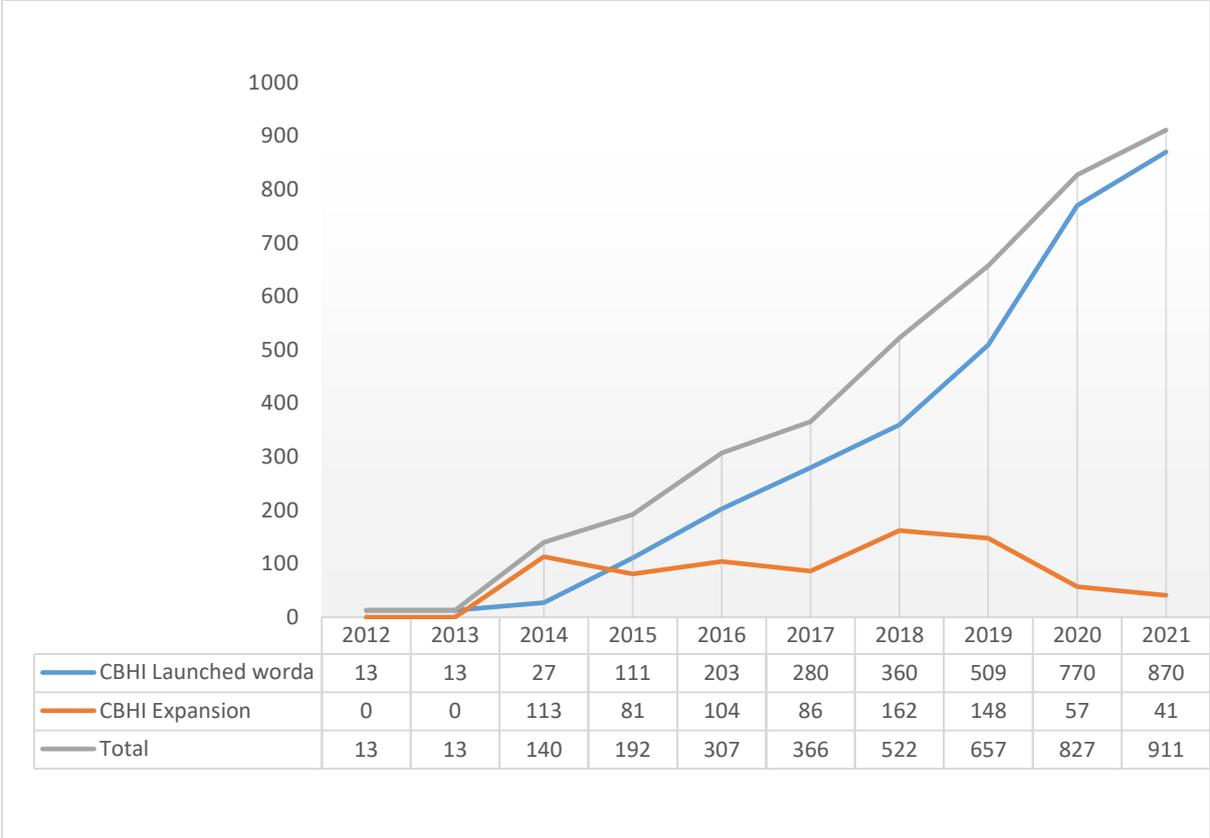
According to EHIA (2021), since 2014, the expansion of the scheme has been gradually increased from 161 towards 827 (of which 770 launched) in 2020.

In order to Executing the scheme effectively there are some circumstances considered for those are presence of a negligible level of quality care provision, institute enough institutional practice and strategy, as well as responding to the needs felt by insurance management, clear political commitment, drafting controlling bases, clear pledge in order to help the indigent member of the community to be the member of the schemes and making the membership criteria as mandatory (Ibid).

## **2. CBHI Membership Expansion In Rural Areas Of Ethiopia**

Due to the significant rise in the cost of health services, citizens are forced to incur huge expenses that lead to impoverishment as well as much suffering and death from preventable disease. These issues become serous for the people living in the rural parts of the country who have no formal health insurance while they feel sick because they may have no cash on hands.

As result the Ethiopian government has been attempting to scale up the CBHI since 2014, by including the non-pilot woreda's and regions that were not included in the 2011. Beside, CBHI proclamation was drafted by the Ethiopia government in 2022 and approved by the members of parliament.



**Figure 1: CBHI Woreda² Launched and expansion**

Source: EHIA, 2021

As the data in the above fig 1 show that new woreda has significantly increased since the launching of the schemes when we see the difference between 2012 and 2021, there are 857 new woredas launched under the CBHI membership. In 2012 and 2013, the CBHI expansion to the launched woreda was zero because it was a time period in which CBHI was at the trial stage and only implemented in selected pilot regions and woredas, namely Oromiya national regional state, Tigray, SNNPR, and Amhara. In the history of the Ethiopia CBHI scheme, the expansion of the scheme to the rest of the woredas within the launched CBHI regions started after 2014, Based on the lessons drawn from the launch of CBHI during the pilot year (2011-2013), and the expansion initiatives taken by federal and

<sup>2</sup> Woreda (District) is administrative division of Ethiopia, managed by local government. It is the second lowest tiers of local government followed by Kebeles (Villages).

regional governments in collaboration since 2014, the following table present the distribution of newly launched woredas and expansions made to the existing regions.

**Table 1: Regional distribution of newly launched and expanded schemes**

| Years    | 2016             |                    | 2017  |        | 2018  |        | 2019  |        | 2020  |        |
|----------|------------------|--------------------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|
|          | Launched (Laun.) | Expansion (Expan.) | Laun. | Expan. | Laun. | Expan. | Laun. | Expan. | Laun. | Expan. |
| Amhara   | 76               | 17                 | 104   | 7      | 133   | 23     | 149   | 31     | 176   | 6      |
| Oromiya  | 70               | 61                 | 109   | 33     | 124   | 73     | 201   | 45     | 281   | 13     |
| SNNP     | 40               | 27                 | 49    | 28     | 70    | 37     | 88    | 45     | 148   | 25     |
| Tigray   | 17               | 1                  | 18    | 18     | 21    | 15     | 29    | 7      | 36    | 0      |
| B/Gumuz  | NA               | NA                 | NA    | NA     | 2     | 1      | 2     | 6      | 3     | 4      |
| A.Ababa  | NA               | NA                 | NA    | NA     | 10    | 0      | 40    | 0      | 120   | 0      |
| Hareri   | NA               | NA                 | NA    | NA     | 0     | 9      | 0     | 9      | 5     | 4      |
| Afar     | NA               | NA                 | NA    | NA     | 0     | 1      | 0     | 1      | 1     | 0      |
| Gambella | NA               | NA                 | NA    | NA     | 0     | 3      | 0     | 3      | 0     | 3      |
| Diredaw  | NA               | NA                 | NA    | NA     | 0     | 1      | 0     | 1      | 0     | 1      |
| Somali   | NA               | NA                 | NA    | NA     |       |        |       |        | 0     | 1      |
| Total    | 203              | 106                | 280   | 86     | 360   | 163    | 509   | 148    | 770   | 57     |

Source: EHIA, 2021

As shown in the above table 1, among the regions, Oromiya national regional state (1,010) leads in the launching of the CBHI to the new woredas (7850, and the registering of the new members (225) to the already enrolled woredas (CBHI expansion woredas), followed by the Amhara region (722), on the launching of new woredas (638), and whereas SNNP is better than the Amhara region in the expansion of the CBHI (increasing the membership of enrollment), that is 162, and the total performance of the SNNPR is 557, of which 395 was newly launched. The list is for the Somali region, which a launched in one woreda only. In this case, further effort is required by the concerned body.

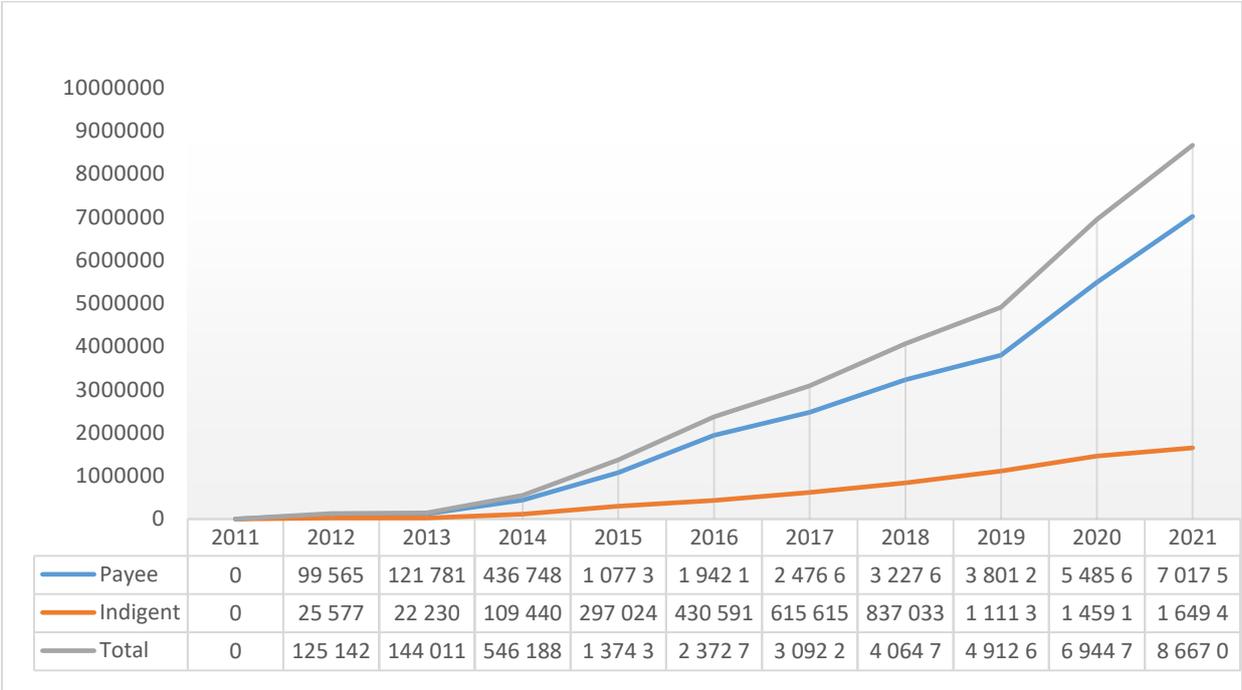
So, based on the above data, the CBHI performance (expansion of the CBHI) in the above three a region is so far good, but commitment and efforts from stakeholders responsible for the CBHI's operation are still required.

### 3. CBHI Registration And Types Of Membership

According to the CBHI proclamation No (2020), membership is defined as anyone in the informal sector who is a member of the schemes. Aside from that, involvement must be on the family level, and registration must be done by the head of the household.

The main factors that determine CBHI enrollment by households are premium affordability, unit of enrollment (having an adequate membership rate), distance to the premium collection, quality of health care service, and trust (WHO, 2003).

Commonly, there are two types of membership in CBHI: paying members and indigent (non-paying members).

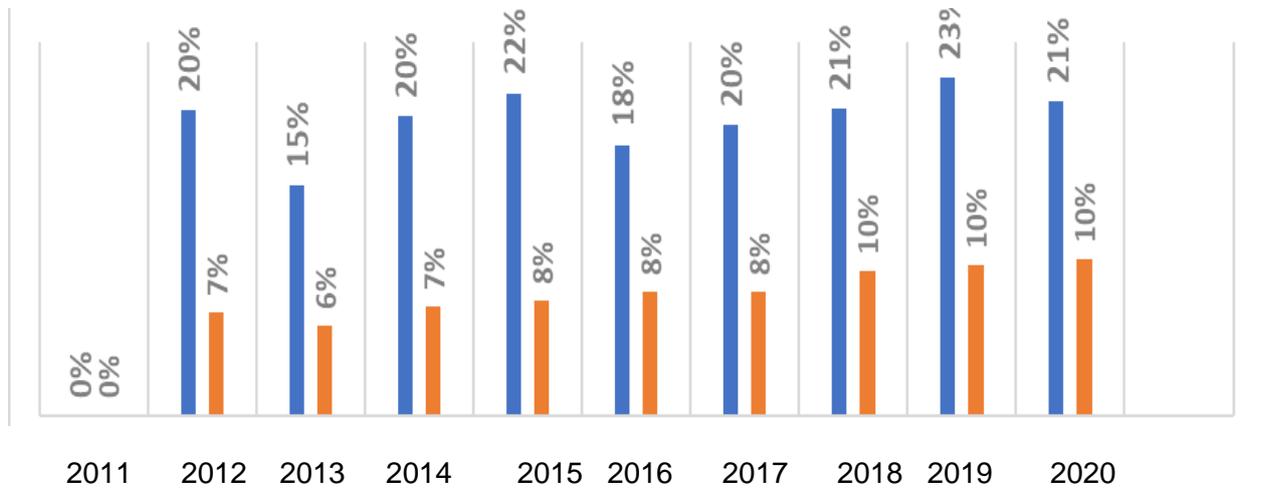


**Figure 2: CBHI members from 2011-2021**

Source: EHIA, 2021

Corresponding to the number of CBHI woreda (launching and expansion), membership inclination from 2012-to 2021 shows robust progress. At the time of launching CBHI, the total active members were 125,142 in 2012 and, 960,369 in 2020. By taking the average family size, the above fig 2 reveals that about 32.2 million households participated in the schemes by 2020, which may roughly account for 36% of the population in the informal sector.

■ Indigent per total member    ■ non-indigent per eligible household



**Figure 3: Proportion of Indigent with active members and CBHI eligible household**

Source: EHIA, 2021

As shown in Figure 3, the proportion of active members in need was around 20% in 2012, fluctuating slightly in the financial years 2013 and 201. Similarly, the coverage rate for those in need increased in the latter (except for 6% in 2013), from 7% in 2012 to 10% in the financial years 2018-2020. However, the coverage of those in need from households eligible for CBHI is well below the country's 23.5% poverty line each year (UNDP, 2018), which requires a commitment from regional governments to improve the minimum rate current needs (10%) from eligible households.

When we see the indigent coverage rate of the CBHI members during the whole strategic period (2011-2020), the non-paying active CBHI members and yearly CBHI eligible households in Addis Ababa followed by Oromiya national regional state and Tigray, achieve almost equal to the national average.

#### 4. Challenges Of CBHI In Ethiopia

Even if the progress of each region in CBHI expansion and new werda enrollment is good in most regions, expect the woredas, such as Somalia, Harari, Afar, Gambela, and Diredawa, to require much effort. Both demand and supply side challenges are responsible for less implementation of CBHI (Namomsa, 2019).

The following are the major challenges affecting the development of the CBHI in Ethiopia:

*The CBHI was unable to cover reimbursement costs for health facilities because of a disjointed pooling system*

Disjointed pooling system is due to monies raised by CBHI members are not adequately pooled or managed. In other words, there is a problem with the CBHI system's collection, and distribution of funds. This can make it difficult to cover the price of health-care facilities.

*The lack of political commitment to developing and cooperating with the CBHI scheme*

In case of Voluntary based CBHI membership without adequate government assistance and resources, overcoming the various barriers and problems associated with executing the CBHI plan becomes difficult. Inadequate funding for the system may result from lack of political commitment, limiting its ability to cover reimbursement expenses for health facilities. It also results in a fragmented pooling structure in which funds received from CBHI members and other sources (donations and grants) are not adequately managed and allocated to cover healthcare bills. Furthermore, a lack of political commitment may result in a lack of coordination and collaboration between government and other stakeholders which limit the CBHI scheme's implementation and efficacy.

*There is a shortage of basic health facilities, mainly medicine in health facilities*

Members are supposed to buy medicines from private drug vendors. This suggests that the healthcare system is unable to provide its members with necessary pharmaceuticals, necessitating reliance on private suppliers. Acquiring medicine from private vendors may impose additional financial strain on individuals because they must bear the expense of the medicines themselves. This reduces the effectiveness of Community-based health insurance (CBHI) Plans. The CBHI major goal is to provide its members with affordable and accessible health care services. However, requiring members to purchase drugs from private vendors contradicts the scheme's aim and may impede its success.

*Poor document management by the scheme administration*

Most of the registration membership registration process is takes place is via paper work (it is not digitalized). This leads to inadequate record keeping system of the members and Lack of defined procedures for document handling. It might result in mistakes in member records, making evaluating eligibility for health care services or calculating reimbursement costs for health facilities problematic. It can also stymie the efficient processing of claims and reimbursement requests, resulting in delays and inefficiencies in the administrative process. Furthermore, poor document management have impact on lack of transparency and accountability within the CBHI system, as tracking and auditing the movement of cash and resources can be difficult.

There are various factors contributed for lack of development digitalizing health care system of Ethiopia as the study conducted by Gutama (2023) reviled that lack of ICT infrastructure, a lack of computer skills, a lack of budget, a management style, and a lack of

enabling legislation were the most common problems in the deployment of ICT in the Ethiopian health care system.

#### *The ongoing war in Ethiopia*

Because of the ongoing war in various parts of Ethiopia, most public health infrastructures such as health posts and healthcare facilities have been damaged. It is very difficult for CBHI workers to go from place to place convincing households to join CBHI.

#### *Covid-19 pandemic*

The pandemic has posed additional challenges to the implementation of community-based health insurance (CBHI) in Ethiopia, including resources constraints and disruptions in health care services.

## **5. Research Methodology**

The main objective of this study is to evaluate the achievements and challenges of health care reform using community-based health insurance. The Main data sources for this study were peer-reviewed publication, articles, and government and Non-government reports on Community-based health insurance. According to Baumeister and Mark (1997) narrative review can be used to compares management and health care research. In this study narrative review were employed in order to analysis the data collected from secondary sources. A literature review was utilized to collect, criticize and synthesize the body of literature on practices, challenges and achievements of community-based health insurance that has been authored and published. Until July 1, 2023 published content was searched using internet databases. These studies were found using the keywords challenges OR CBHI OR achievements OR advantages OR CBHI OR Ethiopia.

## **Conclusion**

In the 1998 the Ethiopian government recognized a strategy for financing health care that intended an extensive variety of reform edges. In order to ensure long-range health finance sustainability, Ethiopian HCFS acknowledged that the cost of people's health care should be financed via different mechanisms. As part of HCFS, the Ethiopian government has introduced CBHI and SHI. Both are focusing on saving people from unexpected health costs and reducing the number of people dependent on out-of-pocket payments. Besides this, domestic financial resources for health and achieving UHC, The source of Ethiopia's HCF is still comprised of three sources: external funding (aid and donations, which account for 35%), domestic government sources (from the federal government and regional governments, which account

for 32%), and out-of-pocket spending (from payments made by inpatients and outpatients during service taking).

Community-Based Insurance is part of Universal Health Coverage designed by the Ethiopian government with the help of different stakeholders such as USAID and Abt Association and started in 2011. Since 2014, the expansion of schemes in different districts coverage of CBHI has been increasing, ultimately going from 161 in 2014 to 827 (of which 770 launched) in 2020. Since 2014, the Ethiopian government has been attempting to scale up the CBHI by including non-pilot areas and regions that were not included in 2011. Besides this CBHI proclamation, drafted by the Ethiopian government for the first time in 2022 and approved by the members of parliament, membership inclination from 2012 to 2021 shows strong progress corresponding to the number of CBHI woreda (launch and expansion). At the time of launching CBHI, the total active members were 125, 142 in 2012 and 6,960,369 in 2020. Using the 4.6 average family sizes, approximately 32.2 million people are expected to be enrolled in the CBHI program by 2020, accounting for approximately 36% of the population in the informal sector. In 2012, the proportion of active members in need was around 20%, with slight decreases in the 2013 and 2016. Similarly the coverage for those in need eventually increased in 2018 which reached ten percent. However, each year the coverage of those in need of households eligible for CBHI is less than the poverty line, with 23.5% of the country. Major challenges affecting the development of the CBHI in Ethiopia: The CBHI was unable to cover reimbursement costs for health facilities due to a disjointed pooling system. Other challenges of the CBHI include a lack of political commitment to developing and cooperating with the CBHI scheme; a shortage of basic health facilities, primary medicine in health facilities, forcing members to purchase it from private drug vendors; and below scheme yearly financing, Ongoing war Ethiopia and covid-19 pandemic.

### **Policy Recommendation**

To overcome the above challenges and make the CBHI performance sustainable, actions such as planning and executing a multi-stage pooling strategy to ensure cross-subsidization among the regions in the scheme implementation and to make the service rendering in line with the referral system, enhancing and promoting the role of political commitment through focusing on the specific goals of the CBHI, working with different stakeholders and partners like Pharmaceutical fund and supply agency in order to solve the problem of medical supply and shortage, Improving the procurement and distribution process to ensure an adequate supply of medications in health care institutions, Improving health-care facilities' ability to manage and store medications effectively, Investigating collaborations with pharmaceutical companies or international organizations to ensure a steady supply of medicines for healthcare facilities, Providing financial assistance or subsidies to CBHI

members for the purchase of medicines, particularly those who cannot afford the expense, Monitoring and evaluating the availability and accessibility of medicines in healthcare facilities on a regular basis in order to detect and address any gaps or issues, continuously working on the CBHI expansion in order to solve the financial shortage of the scheme, and digitizing CBHI scheme membership premium collection.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest from any individual or institution regarding submission of this article.

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# Public Administration and Corruption

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<https://doi.org/10.33542/VSS2023-2-5>

## Abstract

The presented contribution is concentrated on the corruptive behaviour and practices with which we can meet in the Slovak public administration, e.g., in many public administrative organizations the improper non-performance of administrator duties can occur which are quite often connected with the big corruptive affairs. All of them might have led to our political system deformation and the existence of the non-functional lawful democratic state. Even if the official legal system is relatively an extensive one as regards the elimination of the corruptive practices, on the other hand, we have to admit that its practical reflection is more or less a formal one, and consequently it is not very effective. Besides that, the content of the contribution deals with the tools that might help to improve the defects in the Slovak reality.

**Keywords:** Public Administration, Corruption, Law, Ethics, Slovak Reality

## Introduction

The main aim of the presented contribution concentrates its attention predominantly at the intolerable and the inexcusable defects that are commonly appeared in our public administration everyday life marked by the abuse of power, the corruption mega scandals and the proliferating of the so-called petty corruption. The topic of the article has been inspired by the personal experience observation of the corruptive misuse of power by our dignitaries and the protracted scandals resonated not only in media but in the public environment as well. Furthermore, the investigation research provided together with the students studying public administration and law at the Faculty of Public Administration in Kosice helped to gather the practical data which were obtained by means of the research questionnaires provided in the localities and municipalities where our students have a permanent residence. The major failings and inadequacies were found in the formal respect of legislation. and in some cases, it can be even found the obsolete formal legislation contents that need their actualization to make laws and legislation closer to the present-day conditions. The spread of corruption is likewise evident in the petty corruption practices combined with the reluctance of our citizens actively participate to erase it from the public administration. Further on, the lack of ethical conscience and the public administration ethos are evident, and last of all, the unsystematic protection of whistleblowers is apparent. From the theoretical point of view the presented contribution has found its inspiration and the theoretical base initiated by the international

documents and in the renowned authors' professional works that dealt with the mentioned topic regarding corruption, public administration, law, and the professional ethical consciousness.

## **1. Corruption Concept and the Slovak Reality**

The corruption concept is mostly comprehended as a kind of the set of informal collective images and traditions where the giving and accepting bribes is for a certain group of citizens a matter of course and the habitual legitimate behaviour. In societies with a culture of ritualized gift-giving, as it has been mostly common in the former East-Bloc countries, the line between the acceptable and unacceptable gifts is often hard to draw. The definition of corruption is not an easy one, and even the body of laws does not offer a complete and adequate one-sided definition. As it is mentioned by many authors and noticed by the common people, the corruption has various forms, but it appears predominantly in the ways of bribe-giving and bribe-taking or as the official patronage connected with the administration management abuse of power. When speaking about corruption, we mostly imagine a bureaucrat who accepts bribes or who abuses his power as regards the entrusted him property or abusing any other people's rights following just the purpose to obtain his own private advantages.

Besides bribery, its forms include blackmail, and the inside information misuse. Mostly the corruption is also defined as an improper and usually unlawful conduct intended to secure a benefit for oneself or another partaker. Heywood defines corruption as "a failure to carry out the proper or public responsibilities because of the pursuit of private gain, usually involving bribery or misappropriation" (Heywood, 2014, p. 386). Further on, he continues that "the level of corruption in an institutional system is conditioned by the effectiveness of external control, the level of country's economic development and the level of administrative discipline and order" supported by the strength of internal codes and norms (Heywood, 2014, p.386). D. Mistree and A. Dibley in their study present a revised definition of corruption concentrated more on acts rather than the actors. Their revised definition "targets those who intend to carry out an act which is unauthorized, whether they successfully carry out the act, or not, as well as those who cause damage to public institutions as consequences of their acts" (Mistree and Dibley 2018, p. 19).

Besides the above mentioning the acceptance of money or any other favours and benefits, the corruption practices indicate the privileges to attain the approval of contract or in any other ways fostering one personal interests into the front at the price of violation the official processes. More often than not, it is combined with the unlawful interference into the judiciary enforcement and infringing thus the rudimentary principles of law enforcement that is mostly concerned with the prevention of violating the democratic rules and norms. Moreover, the

proper functioning of the judiciary and the law enforcement safeguards the protection of the fundamental human rights having a direct impact on the quality of life of all individuals and society finally leading to the defect of public order and public trust.

The worst failures are those connected with the perversion of justice provided by some judges and procurators accused of the rough illegal performs and their crime behaviour. The big and small corruption, nepotism and clientelism favouring the specific individual groups or some dominant financial groups contribute largely to our political system deformation, especially when it has apprehended as the everyday phenomenon in all spheres of our public life; political, economic, public administration and the private sector as well. Therefore, as it is emphasized by Tholen, it is needed to make organizational and institutional decisions and actions clearly identifiable whether their realization or support are in accordance with the internal or social common good (Tholen, 2014). More insidious and harmful is the devastating effect that corruption has on governmental and public institutions. Once corruption has taken the roots, the public trust is damaged. A loss of public confidence in the integrity of government and public institutions impairs their ability to function well, which is sometimes not to be repairable. As it is declared by D. Mistree and A. Dibley "...if the public does not trust the state, it is often unwilling to allow its institutions to make decisions on the public behalf" (Mistree and Dibley 2018, p.17). Besides that, corruption is a fundamental threat to undermine the legitimacy of government authority and our constitutional democracy.

The actors involved in corruptive practices quite often cause that the public resources are diverted into the private hands away from benefiting the public, as it is put into forward by Benaissa and Caiden that "the illegal activities regarding the distribution of common resources and all abuses of the public role for private advantages are marked by the actions that deviate from the expected norms abusing the public position, business, influencing the official acts leading to a special category of the organized crime that causes deviation in the administrative conduct" (Benaissa, 1992; Caiden, 2001). The administrative corruptive practices in connection with the public properties and funds personalization are divided by Caiden into treason, smuggling, and the unclear non-transparent privatization of the public properties and funds. (Caiden, 2001, 432). (Benaissa, 1992; Caiden, 2001).

Besides bribery, another corruption forms are evident, such as the misuse of confidential data, the information and manipulation, the improper gifts giving and entertainment, the blackmail, cronyism, and the illegal surveillance are put to the front by Caiden and Benaissa. (Caiden, 2001, p. 432). All those mentioned forms can frequently appear in our public administration life. Moreover, the corruptive deformations having a negative impact on the public trust and the good administration caused by the corruptive acts in the areas of scarce commodities, the export concessions, privatization, the administration of trade licenses, the concluding of governmental contracts, and finally, they are evident in the

nominations into the state government or local administration posts. Many times, the unfair methods and the non-transparent backing, acts and practices are used, which are far away from the citizen right to good administration. Furthermore, as it is mentioned by Mistree and Dibley, the government officials are often reluctant to address corruption simply because admitting that corruption exists might undermine their own political standing. (Mistree and Dibley 2018, p.5)

By the Slovak Republic Strategic Plan against the corruption created in 2010, the corruption is defined as a kind of promise, offer, or bribery provided with the aim to influence somebody's action or decision. It can be as well the demand for inducement or its acceptance. As it is mentioned by the Strategic Plan, the bribe in our public administration cannot be necessary a financial one, it can have many other forms, e.g., giving an information, providing material gifts or any other advantages. It might occur in the form of a certain kind of services or having a form of favouring relatives or acquaintances. Further on, the corruption can have a form of an extraordinarily advantageous contract concluded by an entrepreneur or the next of kin administrator who has a power to decide. The activity which is generally known as nepotism or clientelism is quite common on all levels of our society. We can say that we can every so often meet with the mentioned practices accompanied by the dishonesty mainly as regards the misused of Euro funds, the abuse of political power in the form of mobbing, chicanery or even the torture. Moreover, in our localities we can quite often come across another characteristic administrative failures, such as the administrator duties improper non-performance and the lack of public servant professional virtuous proper behaviour. Another negative aspect of the public administration behaviour rests in the administrator decision powers, e. g., in services, concerning lowering or enhancing tax payments, obtaining building licenses, or when an early warning before the police encroachment is needed.

Within the state service, as it is commonly accentuated by many authors and perceived by public, we can meet with the various forms and methods of corruption, e.g., ministers "sell special rewards" for obtaining their independence and freedom in their decision-making. Some administrators take commissions for the public orders, and the entrepreneurs obtain orders in case of providing various special advantages for administrators, sometimes it is common that the executive power representatives accept bribes instead giving penalties to abusers.

The least that can be said is that corruption stands for the whole society's deformation and manipulation regarding the profit distribution when the legal and unethical standards follow just the benefits of wrongdoers (Blalock, 1992). As citizens, we are entitled to expect that the civil servants, politicians and businesses honour the principles of righteousness and the professional moral integrity. We are entitled that the provision of public services is without being asked to pay a bribe, and we are legally and morally obliged not to pay bribes if asked for them. We are also entitled to expect that government will provide services and goods fairly

and without personal favour. Nor should we expect to be favoured by friends or family in government in relation to the public procurement or employment.

Even if the international comparison shows that there is not a sufficient guarantee and satisfactory level of the fair standards in practice, mainly as regards the corruptive behaviour and corruption as such, it still seems to be one of the basic social problems especially in environments where the so-called corruptive climate dominates, “when an actor seeks an unauthorized benefit from an organization in a manner that could comprise the public trust in that organization” (Mistree and Dibley 2018, p. 20). After all, it can be said that corruption mainly exists where the community indifference exists accompanied by a lack of the transparent policies enforcement or when corruption relates to the weak state economy.

## **2. Effective Legal Environment in Slovakia**

Corruption and mega scandals connected with it have become a widespread topic which thanks to our media constantly resonate in many areas of our society, e.g., they are common not only in the public administration but in the areas of sport, culture, public policy and in the private spheres. As it is given into attention by Jackson and Brown (1990), the putting in motion the public discussions calling for the more effective anti-corruptive measures corresponds to the contemporary course of events in many countries, and we have to say that it is actual for our country as well. In the first place the main aim of the anti-corruptive measures is to reach the better and more up-to-date legal environment in order to reduce the number of corruptive practices, the likelihood of crime and violence, and in this way to contribute to the enhancement of the public administration transparency which is closely interrelated to democratic values and respecting of the good governance principles. In addition to that, the United Nations emphasizes the orientation on the basic values of the consensus-oriented and participatory public administration following the rule of law based on the respect and esteem of all individual basic human rights and freedoms (Buchanan, 2000). In this essence, it is required to apply a new citizen-oriented management by the government institutions, the approach where the relationships and partnerships have become more important than as it was in the past, that means to divert from the stereotype generalist” know-it-all- model” emphasised by Vigoda (2002) towards the most active, open and the content-dependent approach. (Ondrova, D., Ethical public administration in democratic state, 2018, p.6).

Following the improvement of anti-corruptive measures, the European Union has worked out the so-called “Anti-Fraud Cycle” including prevention, detection, investigation, prosecution, recovery, and the sanction mechanism. In this way the European Union tries to apply a kind of” the holistic approach to fraud prevention” across the whole European Union (Brussels, 2016). As it is declared in document, the priority in the mentioned cycle is given to prevention, management, certifying and auditing in order to alleviate the risks of fraud and

malaise. Detection is a critical phase that 'should be handled with the due attentiveness and proactively by all participants, management, and control authorities, including audit authorities as well as the law enforcement services (Brussels, 2016). Investigations and prosecution are closely interlinked, their competence requires properly qualified staff, full cooperation of the management and the control authorities combined by a smooth collaboration among all authorities. The cooperation with other relevant actors on the level of the European Union and the national actors is of a high importance. The retrieval and sanctions have to be operative and strictly followed up by the relevant administrative and the law enforcement authorities (Brussels, 2016, p.8).

Even if the reality of the Slovak Republic is far from an ideal state of actions, it has an adequately elaborated formal legal system aimed at the elimination of corrosive and corruptive practices, e.g., the Criminal Law No. 300/2005 Coll.as amended, comprising the substantive provisions concerning corruption and the abuse of power. Anyway, we have to mention that the declared Act dated from 2005 is not fully compatible with the contemporary situation which has been considerably worsened in many areas of our life, e.g., in the area of health care, judiciary, education system, police and agriculture, and that`s why the innovation is wanted. The mentioned Act is connected with the Criminal Code No. 301/2005 Coll.as amended, regulating the wording of the criminal deed case substance. Equally as the Criminal Law, the Criminal Code should be amended in order to be in congruence with the present-day situation whose shadow aspects correspond with the contemporary reality of the Slovak Republic that holds one of the lowest places regarding the occurrence of corruptive practices number. At present, according to the Transparency International Global Corruption Barometer, Slovakia has to improve its ranking considerably.

### **3. Effective Anti-Corruption Institutions in Slovakia**

At present, if we look at the Slovak Institutions dealing with the corruption prevention, there are the following ones: The Anti- Corruption Bureau of the Police Presidium Corps, The Public Procurement Office, The Public Defender of Rights, and the other relevant offices and institutions. Besides that, the Government Office has established the Anti-Corruption Service-Line for dealing with the special cases, and at the same time to give a chance to citizens to report their suspicions regarding the corruptive behaviour including the petty and grand forms of corruption. The Anti-Corruption Line is a part of the control program managed by the Division concerning the prevention of corruption in collaboration with the specific task bodies having been active in this area. This Division organizes and coordinates their activities and an important role rest in their participation in partnership projects aiming at the minimalizing or the entire elimination of corruption in the Slovak public life. At the same time, the aim is to eliminate space of the corruption in the public administration in cases where the public administration

institutions and organizations provide the public procurement or when they deal with the state property. One of the most used pillars of the mentioned programs is the usage of electronic tools. By means of the electronic appliances a chance is given to become more transparent and open as regards the state and public administration decisions, staff expenditure, contractual payments and their minutes giving the necessary information for public including elections and the public procurement.

Finally, we can say that it is without any doubt that the changing of law acts and regulations are needed, but at the same time the implementation of other necessary means must be put into the everyday actions provided by the public administration authorities. In the first place it wants the obligation to extend the scope of required information for citizens delivered by state, judiciary, and all public administration bodies, and in this way to enhance the public confidence towards their institutions and authorities. Recently, as it has been already mentioned, a lot of huge political causes and discrepancies have got into the surface, and they certainly call for the more transparent central evidence of incomes and expenses not only of the political parties but the political leaders and public dignitaries acting on all levels of public administration. Moreover, it is necessary to clearly define the use of state and municipal properties, services, and other means in cases when they are used for private purposes.

#### **4. Active citizens participation model**

Within the anti-corruption program and the principles of open governance, it is necessary to enable citizens to be actively involved in the creation of public policy on all levels, the local level, and the state level. Instilling the public control of public administration everyday activities, especially as regards their decision-making procedures, the participatory aspect of public administration is needed. Citizens have not only the right but also the obligation to demand the material accountability of their dignitaries who are responsible for dealing with the public resources and funds. In case of the public control absence, the threatening of politicians or administrators misuse of power is evident and the use of unclear and illegal practices might appear. According to the recent survey conducted by the Anti-Corruption line the following examples of the citizen active participation have been evident: in 2018/19 there were around 158 instigations put on by our citizens concerning the corruptive practices, around 50 citizens have used the anti-corruptive line, and 145 citizens have laid down instigations in a written form. From this evidence follows that citizens have an interest to control administrative acting and to help to do away with corruption. At the same time, the active citizens engagement and political involvement might become a kind of panacea curing the representative democracy crises in our country, and to overcome obstacles connected with the democratic advancement. The active public and political participation help to fill a vacuum between the state and citizens and thus strengthen the citizen trust in public institutions and organizations. The dependency-

pattern-public administration-model, which was used in the past during the totalitarian regime in our country characterized by the routinization and the rigid employment rules must be converted into the representative “active -participation-model” where a citizen is not dealt as a passive user but treated as an active self-conceited participant.

Besides that, the active -participation-model requires the public participation awareness and citizen new way of thinking combined by the revival of the public administrative professional ethos and ethical craftsmanship. At present taking seriously the public administration integrity and good governance is called by many authors finding its expression in their theoretical conceptions labelled as the “New Public Service “ (Denhardt, 2011; Haque, 2014; Adams and Balfour, 2008), or the “Public Virtue Approach” (Tholen, 2014; Garofalo, 2011; Frederickson, 2002) characterized by respecting the public administration values and the public servant professional virtues where an administrator is “a virtuous gentleman, knowledgeable, non-corruptive, respectful, honest, forgiving, compassionate, and trustworthy “(Frederickson, 2002,p. 616). By Berry Tholen “the Public Virtue Approach offers necessity to focus “on responsible individual, personal judgement and deliberation and not on individual rent seeking and calculation” (Tholen, 2014, p. 45). The non-corruptive good governance must apply in its administration the principles of the managerial qualities together with the transparent infrastructure which should become an inseparable part of politicians and the administrators work. Both politicians and administrator must be the advocates of the good governance respecting law, democracy, and the accountability mechanism regarding their deeds and decisions strictly following their administrative code of conduct. They have to become the real professionals with an adequate education and personal virtue qualities aimed at the actualization of the active civic society (Garofalo, 2011). As it is emphasized by Berry Tholen, Garofalo and Cooper, the real reorientation of the public administration rests not only in the changing of technical instruments and skills, but it has to be concentrated on cooperation and dialogues with citizens. The community communication and negotiations must be in the centre of their work carrying on common and communal goals, and thus making the public managerialism less corruptive and deformed. The encouraging of the traditional ethical standards like political neutrality, justice, accountability, equality, fairness, and human dignity leads the public administration management towards the more human oriented public administration where the final goal is the Aristotle`s and Kant`s teleos that is a human being. (Ondrova, D., 2018, p. 11).

## **5. Protection of Whistleblowers**

Another important step in helping the improvement of the irritating deformations of the Slovak public administration rests in the elaboration of the effective system of whistleblowers protection. Whistleblowers called in Slovakia” the white crows”, by Judith A. Truelson there are

called “the indispensable agents of accountability” (Truelson, 2001, p. 407) considerably hamper the occurrence of many government and administrative misdeeds. They assist in “any disclose of information by an employee which the person reasonably believes evidence a violation of any law, rule, or regulation, or gross mismanagement, a gross waste of funds, an abuse of authority, or a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety (Truelson, 2001, p. 408). Besides that, she argues that the current scheme of whistleblower protection, e.g., in the USA needs “to be expanded and better enforced and to develop the extra-legal survival strategies for dealing with bureaucratic blockages to legal intent (Truelson, 2001, p. 407). The same is true about Slovakia, the mentioned legal modes might be an inspiration for our society to protect whistleblowers more consistently and efficiently and to put to the fore the legislative strategies over the simply relying on the executive branches, e.g., police themselves.

The approved Act No.307/2014 put in force 1st January 2015 is just the formal answer to meet the public requirements without any evident practical application. Its official form is in the versions of the internal provisions and regulations laying down the incitements in connection with the unlawful and antisocial activities. Formally, the Act has been accepted by all levels of the public administration authorities, but its implementation in everyday life is regularly deformed. Moreover, the possibility to announce anonymously the anti-social acts of public administration authorities or individual representatives, e. g., by means of using black boxes or any other anonymous procedures are limited and hardly used by our authorities as it was found by our research questionnaire and student`s personal experience. There are still many barriers and obstacles to overcome the fear connected with one`s own ethical and moral deeds. Anonymity, as it is mentioned by many authors, might certainly help to disclose the nature and credibility of whistleblower as they are often labelled as “persona non grata” “since they discover the lapses in public administration and the public officials” (Caiden, In: Cooper 2001, p. 431). Besides the above-mentioned Act, in our country the protection of whistleblowers is formally guaranteed by the following legal regulations: Labor Code No. 311/2001 Coll. as amended, State Service Act No. 400/2009 Coll. as amended, and Law on Complaints No.9/2010 Coll. as amended.

Labor Code emphasizes that nobody can be persecuted or in any other form punished in connection with the exercising labour relations. The State Service Act defines the employee`s right to lay down a complaint regarding the state service matters provided by the state authorities. Further on, the duty of the state employee is defined to announce the organizational or the law enforcement authority`s causations regarding damages or the misuse of property belonged to or managed by the state administration. The Law on Complaints is considered to be the general amendment regarding laying down complaints. The protection of complainant is assured by paragraphs 7 and 8. To lay a complaint gives no reason for making

any consequences for a complainant. Any information which is the part of the plaintiff documentation content must not be made accessible. The public administration authorities are obliged to keep secret of complainant identity in case he/she asks to do it. The public administration authority is allowed to do it only if it is within the interest of carrying out a definite complaint. When investigating such a complaint, its transcript or copy are proceeded on without assigning any data which would identify a complainant. Lastly, it can be said that in our society the protection of whistleblowers is more or less formally declared and only slowly it gets into our everyday reality. The reason might go back to the previous totalitarian regime when people were afraid to express their opinions and the criticism was strictly punished. This way of thinking still prevails among some groups of people missing the understanding that their participation in public matters is not only their right but personal accountability to improve the stated status quo. This way of thinking only gradually has been changing and it still needs to be accepted by the general public.

## **Conclusion**

Summing up, we can say that in spite of many failures which have been done in the Slovak Republic public administration, there is still a huge number of the honest administrators, public administration representatives and citizens who want to be active in combating corruptive practices. All of them together with the experts, academics and the honest politicians try to unknit this Gordian knot searching to find out the most appropriate solutions to make democratization of the public administration more open and transparent. The most reliable prospect which might help rests in a closer consensus between the legal rules, laws, and the ethical integrity including the application of both commonly used models, the traditional one resting in the principal-agent unauthorized activities, and the model concentrated on the collective anti-corruption activities. Sometimes certain forms of corruption might be best addressed through the lens of the principal-agent model; at other times, corruption is better framed in collective undesirable actions focusing on anti-corruption efforts on both public-private and wholly- private forms putting attention on all unauthorized acts damaging the public institutions as consequences of their acts. (Mistree and Dibley 2018).

Besides that, the occurred incompetence of public administration and their staff can be improved by means of enhancing their personal professionalism putting into the fore their ethical and legal abilities and skills which should be accompanied by their constant regular education and training. The lack of the mentioned qualities and values usually leads not only to the deformation of law, but to the widespread corruption and distortion of our political system. To express it in words by Menzel, it means that without the public ethos, the public policies and public administration might fall into “an ethical vacuum which is likely to swallow up even the most well-conceived plans, policies, and day-today operations of governing” (Menzel, 2001, p. 357).

In spite of the fact that the fight against corruption is a long process, the earlier improvement might be reached by fostering all society moral integrity accomplishment and the faster and more effective communication and cooperation among all segments of our public administration.

Being responsive to the community needs, willing to listen and not only giving orders, accepting the general public participation in governance of public affairs at all levels will assure the people trust that they have responsible and accountable public servants and representatives who are ready to serve them and ready to improve the quality of their lives.

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# Administrative and Democratic Development in Africa: A comparative analysis of Cameroon and Ghana

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<https://doi.org/10.33542/VSS2023-2-2>

## Abstract

This paper examines the nature of public administration characterizing Sub-Saharan Africa to reveal some of the lasting impacts it has had in the regions and probe into the constitutional architecture. It showcases the major and often ignored constitutional differences between the former colonies of Britain and France that have unavoidably led to the widening gap between these countries. This paper digs deep into these country's constitutions to expose the reservations behind semi-presidentialism, which was emulated by these countries, but over the years, has produced very unsimilar results. It then concludes that the complexities surrounding the various problems facing these countries are not far-fetched, but consecrated into the very foundations of these states in the form of patron-client relationships and rent-seeking attitudes.

**Keywords:** constitutionalism, public administration, centralization, decentralization, democracy, development

## Introduction

This paper's objective is to uncover the lasting effects and impacts of the most dominant systems of government that characterized sub-Saharan Africa during the colonial period spear-headed by the French and the British in the colonies. Many works exist to distinguish between the colonial strategies used by Britain and France in the colonies (Hailey, 1938; Mazrui, 2019; Davidson, 1989; Khapoya, 2015), but far little has been written to expose the implications of these colonial systems of government in the current affairs of African countries. Answers to this question were however attempted by Mazrui, who visualized a pattern tilting towards nationhood in French African former colonies forged by the concentration of power in the center which at this time was the "metropole/Paris" and statehood in British former colonies forged by decentralization to the local population, allowing them the possibility of managing their own affairs (Mazrui, 2019). General knowledge from all these previous works reveals that while the British system of administration was known for promoting decentralization, the French system idealized centralization. The paper also highlights as shall be seen below, that the culture of public administration in Sub-Saharan Africa in general is very complicated and same goes for the two cases examined here. A lot of challenges have

been recorded on the process of public administration especially in running these newly independent states, due to the lack of experience and capacity in the public service to effectively manage administrative organs. The realities in the French speaking and English-speaking countries post independent are dissimilar especially concerning managing the government. It has equally been remarked that the administrative architecture of present former French colonies in Africa remains entrenched in the French administrative system (Njoh, 2000, p. 166). Njoh establishes a comparative analysis of both systems and concludes on the basis of human development following the United Nations Development Program's Human Development Index and the ability to translate economic expansions into better living conditions that the British system of "indirect rule" performed better in setting the ground for modern governance in Africa compared to the French system of "direct rule" (Njoh, 2000).

This paper in this regard thus evaluates administrative decentralization and democratic progress in Cameroon a country of the former French colonies and Ghana, a country from the former British colonies and makes use of empirical data from Freedom House, and Ibrahim Index of African Governance to establish a comparative analysis of the implications of the former systems of rule under which these countries were subdued to. This article resents from making colonialism the blame for Africa's present predicaments, but goal is to establish how successful democratic consolidation has been in these countries after the Third Wave, (Huntington, 1993) following the differences in the systems.

The colonial past of the African continent has left the continent with a lot of remarkable relics amongst which are public administration, which must not be left out. European models of administration were imposed by the colonial powers and have been adopted by almost all African countries upon achieving independence. Administrative models such as indirect rule and direct rule introduced during the colonial era and the subsequent political transformations witnessed in the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa continue to affect their current governance status'. Prior to independence, many African countries especially those colonized by France and Belgium were governed through a system called direct rule. With this system, power wielded was centralized by the "mother" country or the colonizer. These systems were imposed on these territories without any consideration of the local customs and traditions or how their administration was organized. As highlighted Kisangani (2010:223- 226), France administered its colonies directly through appointed governors from Paris. While in Africa, these governors and authorities appointed from France in turn appointed and used local chiefs who supported French rule to administer the rest of the population. Majority of the chiefs that were chosen by the French colonial authorities during the colonial period were not part of the native ruling family in the African politics and were often regarded as "puppet" chiefs by the local population as emphasized Peemans, 1975:173,174). Unlike the French and Belgian systems, the British delegated the power of authority to the local authorities in a system called "indirect rule".

According to Gerring et al. (2011:382), for the indirect system of rule to be realized, it was essential that the colonizer identifies an agent within the colonized who is capable for whom power and authority can be successfully delegated.

## **1. Data and Methods**

This paper makes use qualitative data and analytical method of research based on constitutional follow up. It makes use of information from Freedom House, which presents up to date empirical data on the degree and progress recorded in ensuring democratic consolidation and freedom of its citizens. It also relies on data from the Ibrahim Index of African Governance, which as of now is one of the few survey sources that present a fair and unbiased representation of the nature of governance in Africa based on the numerous variables it relies upon.

## **2. The Situation**

Significant transformation has been recorded in African countries following the Third Wave. A lot of institutional changes have taken place in almost every country and several results have been applauded. Also, many governments both military and civilian have fallen, giving rise to rule-of-law-based governments characterized by constitutionalism and constitutional government, which have come with several reforms such as presidential term limits. However, many African countries remain plagued with the problems of democratic institutionalisation and are unable to deal effectively and fully govern with impunity. Many of these countries are still struggling to govern with impunity due to severe abuse of executive power and human rights violations. The cases of Ghana and Cameroon picked out by this paper provide a comparative analysis of the effects of the legacies adopted by the colonial system of government, which has led to these countries adopting different patterns of government. These two cases though not exclusively similar to all countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, present a fair representation of the relics of the Anglo-Saxon and Francophone tradition and style of public administration and governance introduced in Africa. The constitutional make-up of these countries has been the basis of their present progress and predicaments.

To begin with, while it is of common knowledge that presidents in some countries especially those formerly colonized by Britain have abided by their new constitutions to keep to the specified term limits, which in the case of Ghana is two terms. The case in the French former colonies has been different and the tendency has been that the leaders make use of legislatures subservient to them to change their constitutions, allowing them to stay in power beyond the two-terms specified in most constitutions governing the former British colonies. In the case of Cameroon, the parliament in 2008 voted to amend the constitution, shading off all presidential term limits, LeBas, (2016). The 1961 Federal Constitution and the 1972 Unitary

Constitutions in Cameroon, without putting in place restraining mechanisms, set extensive powers to the president. These powers fortified presidential absolutism in Cameroon and the 1996 Constitution came as a bail-out to limit these powers. In this vein, under the 1996 Constitution the executive took the form of a semi-presidential system, meant to curtail the over-centralization of executive in the president. First used by Maurice Duverger, he referred to semi-presidentialism as 'a political regime bound by a constitution which combines three elements: (1) a president elected by universal suffrage; (2) a president who possesses quite considerable powers; (3) he has opposite him, however, a prime minister and ministers who possess executive and governmental powers and can stay in office only if the parliament does not show its opposition to them', Duverger, (1980: 166). Perfectly describing some major transformations in some countries, Duverger attempted to expose why similar constitutions have been applied differently in these countries. Though his thesis focuses on the content of these constitutions, their traditions and the circumstances surrounding them, he fell short of clarifying the nature of what he actually meant by 'quite considerable powers' vested upon the president in his definition. In regards to the Cameroon, the president holds the power to appoint and dismiss the prime minister and his cabinet. Though his article described what he had noticed going on around the world during his writing, the type of decentralization efforts in Cameroon through the 1996 Constitution failed to secure a semi-presidential system as devised by Duverger. The reality and practice of the semi-presidential system in Cameroon is that it did not display any honest separation of powers. The system is still made up of a popularly elected president who appoints and dismisses the prime minister and cabinet, and who has the powers to dissolve the parliament as stated in article 8(12) of Cameroons 1996 constitution. This article fails to promote democracy as it does not specify the conditions under which the order from the presidency to dissolve parliament can be passed, thus further concentrating powers in the hands of a single individual with the yam and the knife to cut towards any direction which he or she pleases. Shugart and Carey describe such a regime as a 'president-parliamentary' (1992: 24).

Over the years, the situation in Cameroon has proven to be totally in control by the president and the ruling party, which has been declared winner of all presidential elections in the country since its first ever presidential elections were held in October 1992. The ruling party equally has occupied the highest number of seats in the national assembly following the country's first multi-party parliamentary elections in March 1992. As of January 2021, statistics from the Cameroon national assembly's website states that of the total 180 seats in parliament, the ruling party, Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) headed by the president occupies 152 seats<sup>3</sup>. It should be noted that since independence, the ruling party, the CPDM,

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.assnat.cm/index.php/en/>

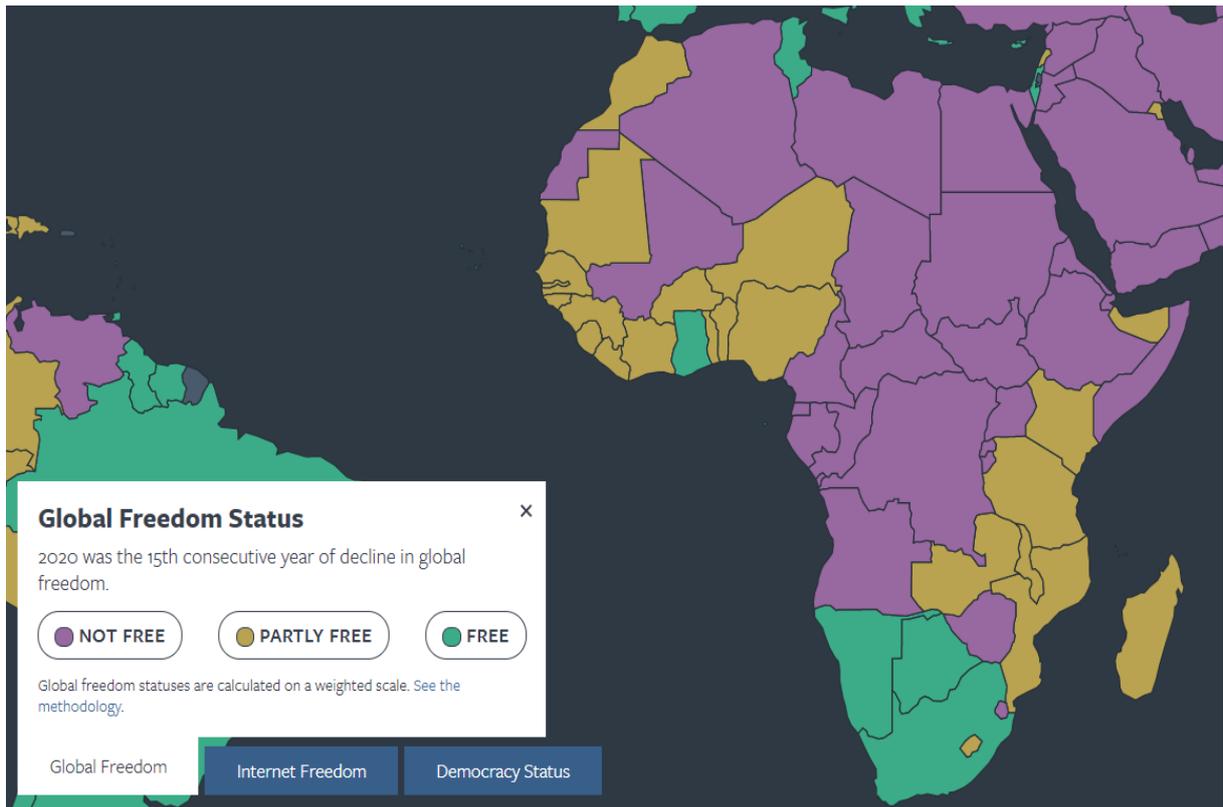
has dominated the political landscape. The party has maintained its power through patron-client relationships and has limited opportunities for opposition parties to participate in the political process. While it will be a situation similar in almost all Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries to have a parliament dominated by the government in power, some constitutions like that of Ghana however give the parliament some degree of insusceptibility to the will and control of the president. While the 1992 Constitution of Ghana places the powers of legislation in the hands of the parliament to exercise according to the constitution, Ghana Const. art. 93 (2). It also gives the parliament the powers to determine its own agenda, and precludes the executive from dissolving the legislature or even forcing it to vote on a bill. This new constitution was supposedly meant to fashion a more reasonable balance in the powers between the executive, legislative and judicial arms or government. These institutional and constitutional changes in most of the cases create conditions that make it very difficult for opposition candidates to take part in competitive elections.

Following this line of argument, this paper highlights the data presented by Freedom House, which classifies Cameroon in the 2020 Freedom in the World as “Not Free” with Cameroon having a score of 18/100<sup>4</sup>, while Ghana had a score of 82/100<sup>5</sup>. It should be noted that this report uses as variables, political rights and civil liberties. The classification of both states by Freedom house follows a long tradition of research into the implementation of the constitutions of these countries, which according to this article, stem from the differences in the constitutional provisions, which has left lapses that have translated into the day-to-day affairs of these countries.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://freedomhouse.org/country/cameroon/freedom-world/2020>

<sup>5</sup> <https://freedomhouse.org/country/ghana/freedom-world/2020>



**Figure 1: Global Freedom Status**

Source: Freedom House

The act of changing the constitution to wipe off presidential term-limits is been considered by Mbaku as a “constitutional coup”, Mbaku, (2018). The highlights that the genesis of the relatively weak institutions, that led to the absence of a democratic culture got its roots from the elitist and undemocratic colonial administration which ruled over especially the French and Belgian colonies such as Cameroon, which led to the undemocratic handing down of power after independence, creating the elitist class system that dominates these societies.

### 2.1. Electoral democracy in Cameroon and Ghana

The role of elections in the process of democratization cannot be over emphasized. Elections contribute towards the building and effective sustaining of democratic institutions; serve as an effective legal instrument for the people to put pressure and prevent excessive governance and also limit impunity; and finally, elections also provide an opportunity to the people to carefully change their governments and bring into public service more efficient and competent leaders.

The role of elections however has been greatly minimized, and rendered almost unimportant especially as constitutional manipulations like the case in Cameroon, wherein

elections have proven to be a means for the government to sustain majoritarian power at the expense of the minority. Without any doubts, free and frequent elections serve as a means to consolidate, deepen and entrench democracy because they help coerce government oppression. The importance of free and frequent elections is visible in governments where successive elections have taken place like in Ghana, which has since independence had its presidency change hands 12 times, compared to the Cameroon, wherein power has changed hands just 2 times notably without an election. No doubt, democracy and freedom in Ghana has far advanced than the situation in Cameroon.

While the respect for the constitution has to some extent been practiced in some SSA countries such as Ghana, the situation has been almost lamentable in Cameroon where acts of parliament have been unjustly decided and enacted. A divisive constitutional amendment went through in Cameroon in 2008, which amended the article 6(2), which originally limited presidential term limits to two terms. This new and controversial amendment was adopted after a ruling party majoritarian vote with 157 pro-votes, 5 against and 12 abstentions<sup>6</sup>. As earlier mentioned, parliamentary immunity in decision making is not a practice known to the legislature in Cameroon. The very process of constitutional amendment to take off presidential terms limits was marked by intimidation as reported by one of the members of parliament, Paul Ayah Abine, who complained of the exaggerated presence of agents of security in an event which is supposed to be democratic, free and fair, (Oyono in Kamto et al, 2016: 49). This alone explains why the president who is also head of the ruling party has been able to sustain his stay in power since he became president in 1982. Just as it is the practice in Cameroon's former colonial master France, wherein the constitution according to article 16 grants the president with certain legislative and regulatory powers. However, this applies only during cases of national emergency. Article 8(8) of Cameroon's 1972 Constitution with all amendments through 2008 ironically alienates the role of the parliament as the sole legislative organ, thus limiting its efficiency. This article of the constitution gives the president of the republic some degree of legislative and also regulatory powers, permitting the president to make use of statutory authority to impede the authority of the parliament. The implications of this article in the case of Cameroon fails to state whether such powers can be used by the president only during cases of national emergency or not. Article 27 equally grants the president the powers to decide on certain rules and regulations which are out of the competence of the parliament, thus completely weakening a parliament that is almost entirely made-up members loyal to the president and the ruling party. This article particularly is very misleading as it fails to specify what aspects of legislation is not within the parliament's competence, which on the other hand

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.voanews.com/archive/cameroons-parliament-lifts-presidential-term-limit>

gives the president extensive and unlimited powers over the parliament to put in place unpopular policies such as scrapping off presidential term limits.

While these laws may be very similar to the situation in France as highlighted above, both cases cannot be compared because the cultural and historical background of France which can be considered an advanced democracy has forged a set of strong checks and balances. These checks and balances help to limit the powers of the president and ensure proper distribution of power between the various arms of government. These checks and balances however have continually been marred by neopatrimonialism and rent seeking politics in Africa.

While there have been several periods of political instability in Ghana before the Fourth Republican Constitution under which the country currently runs, it can be argued that since its initiation, the various arms of government have discharged their functions creditably following the law and ensuring a degree of fair representation. 5 presidents have ruled Ghana since the spark of democracy incepted by the Fourth Republican Constitution in 1992, while Cameroon has had no change in government since the amendments made through the 1996 constitution.

## **2.2. A comparative analysis of Overall governance in Cameroon and Ghana**

As already highlighted above, the governments that took over the running of Cameroon and Ghana respectively after independence played a very crucial role towards setting the future course in the way public administration turns out to be. The Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) has one of the most accurate data set about governance in Africa and according to its most recent results, the differences in the nature of public administration in Cameroon and Ghana are clearly specified. This data set uses variables such as security and rule of law, participation, rights and inclusion, foundations for economic opportunity, and human development to determine the overall governance status. According to the Ibrahim Index of African Governance, Cameroon has a score of 43.5 on 100 and is on a downward trend of -0.6 since 2010, and ranks Cameroon number 37 out of 54 African countries which it covers. As far as Ghana is concerned, the Ibrahim Index of African Governance scores Ghana 64.3 on 100, places it on an ascending trend of +0.1 since 2010, and ranks Ghana on number 8 out of 54 African countries. The following image illustrates these differences.

| Overall Governance   |              |   |             |
|--|--------------|---|-------------|
| Cameroon   |              | Ghana   |             |
| 43.5 Out of 100.0<br>In overall Governance, scores lower than the African average (48.8) |              | 64.3 Out of 100.0<br>In overall Governance, scores higher than the African average (48.8) |             |
| Trend  | Ranking      | Trend   | Ranking     |
| -0.6<br>Absolute trend since 2010  | 37 Out of 54 | +0.1<br>Absolute trend since 2010   | 8 Out of 54 |

**Figure 2: Table adapted from data from Ibrahim Index of African Governance**

Source: Ibrahim Index of African Governance

Taking a close look at the constitutional set up in Cameroon especially, it places the state almost entirely in the hands of the president of which he bends as will. The design of all state and para-public institutions is such that all decisions come from the presidency, and because of this, there is a high degree of inefficiency and efficacy. A study of both constitutions reveals that they reserve some powers to the president to appoint ministers and their cabinets. While the 1992 Constitution of Ghana under article 71 stipulates that from among the members of parliament, the president can appoint majority of the ministers, it also under article 103 stipulates that the parliament has the responsibility to monitor executive performance and also examine and provide parallel approval to the various ministerial appointments made by the president. Meanwhile in Cameroon, the president reserves the right to appoint the Prime Minister, all ministers and their cabinets, civil, military and other public institutions. This system creates a resounding foundation for the flourishing of a patronage structure build to reward the key figures that support the regime as highlighted in Takougang and Krieger (1998) and Bayart (1993), thereby helping to sustain the regime in power, while throttling on democracy.

While good governance is very important, public responses to it is immediately manifested. Citizens are the recipients of public leadership and governance, and while the assessment of governance needs to be rooted on results for the citizens, the IAG explores some categories to present the public perception data on government performance. In the case of Cameroon, the public perception score recorded shows 41.1 on 100, with a downward trend of -1.7 since 2010, indicating that the public or citizens are unsatisfied with overall governance in Cameroon. Comparatively, Ghana's public perception score of overall governance has been improving and it currently has a score of 59.2 on 100 and an upwards trend of +0.3 since 2010 as seen on the following figure.

| Public Perception of Overall Governance                                 |                 |   |                |
|---|-----------------|---|----------------|
| Cameroon  |                 | Ghana   |                |
| 41.1 Out of 100.0<br>In overall public perception of overall governance |                 | 59.2 Out of 100.0<br>In overall public perception of overall governance |                |
| Trend   | Ranking         | Trend   | Ranking        |
| -1.7<br>Absolute trend since 2010                                       | 30<br>Out of 38 | +0.3<br>Absolute trend since 2010                                       | 4<br>Out of 38 |

**Figure 3: Table adapted from data from Ibrahim Index of African Governance**

Source: Ibrahim Index of African Governance

Talking about the rule of law, government accountability is a significant feature towards securing administrative progress and democracy. The constitution of Cameroon through its 2008 amendments<sup>7</sup> stipulates that the president is immune from prosecution as per article 53(3). Considering the fact that immunity from prosecution for high level government officials especially the president is vital for the proper functioning of the state especially concerning decision making, this article as introduced in Cameroon by the 2008 constitutional amendment can be considered premeditated and inconsistent. The country's state of corruption has been deplorable and while the constitution should strive for the protection and the interest of the public, this very article 53(3) failed to outline the nature of immunity to be enjoyed by the president. It should be reiterated that the country has been ruled by a single president since its first ever presidential elections were held in 1992, thus enacting and adopting such a bill in parliament means selling out the country as the president is not subject to any form of prosecution or cannot stand trial at any court for his actions as a president. It should be recalled from the previous paragraphs that this very act of parliament which amended the constitution in 2008 took off presidential term limits as per article 6(2). Our assumptions of a premeditated act are fully confirmed here, since while still being a president and even out of office, the president cannot answer to any court of law for any decision it makes whether good or bad, Hatchard (2000). This constitutional act is typical of only dictatorship regimes, and in no way represents a government that is striving towards democracy. Fombad and Nwauche label them as 'Imperial presidents' (2012).

<sup>7</sup> Law No. 2008/001 of 14 April 2008 to amend and supplement some provisions of Law No. 96/6 of 18 January 1996 to amend the Constitution of 2 June 1972.

Comparatively, while the constitution of Ghana also for the purpose of ensuring the full capacities of the president to perform his functions in office without any fear of prosecution and delays or distractions, it stipulates as per article 57(6) some immunity for a sitting president. It allows any legal action against the president to be initiated within 3 years after when he or she is no longer president, and it should be for anything he or she did or omitted to do during his tenure as president or in his or her personal capacity before taking office, notwithstanding any period of limitation except where the proceedings had been legally barred before he or she assumed the office as president. This is to ensure that while struggling to govern, it should be remembered that “no one is above the law”, and in this case, apparent crimes committed during a tenure as president can be brought to a court of law the following 3 years once one ceases to be president. Also, while the constitution of France and that of Cameroon both seem to present the head of state to be inviolable, the constitution of France according to article 68 states that the president is liable to prosecution after the end of his or stay in power. Over the years, this resolution of the French constitution has been utilized to prosecute and even pass judgements against former French presidents such as Jacques Chirac in 2011 and most recently, Nicolas Sarkozy in 2021 for acts they committed while in power. This constitutional clause being used is a simple reminder that in a democracy, no one should be above the law, and also serves a deterrence to all forms of governance malpractice.

### **2.3. Patron-Client Relationships and Rent-Seeking Attitudes in Cameroon and Ghana**

After independence, the patron-client relationships that emerged in Cameroon and Ghana had a significant impact on governance and development. Politicians in both countries have relied on personal networks and ethnic or regional allegiances to gain and retain power. This has frequently resulted in a focus on short-term gains and rent-seeking rather than long-term development.

Patronage networks, according to Bratton and van de Walle (1997), are formed by the exchange of resources, typically between a patron who has access to resources and a client who seeks those resources. President Paul Biya of Cameroon, who succeeded Ahidjo in 1982, has been accused of maintaining a patronage system that benefits his own ethnic group, the Beti. As a result, widespread corruption and a lack of accountability became the order of the day. In Ghana, successive governments have been accused of abusing power to benefit their own ethnic or regional groups rather than the country as a whole.

These patron-client relationships have also aided in the practice of rent-seeking, in which politicians use their positions of power to extract resources from the state for personal gain. Rent-seeking behavior, according to Collier and Gunning (1999), results in resource misallocation, reduced investment, and slowed economic growth. As a result, both countries' development has been hampered by a lack of investment in infrastructure and social services.

Rent-seeking attitudes have been fostered in Cameroon as a result of the government's control over the economy and limited opportunities for private sector development. The government has distributed economic benefits to political allies through patron-client relationships, creating a culture of rent-seeking and corruption.

The government's commitment to private sector development and economic liberalization has reduced rent-seeking attitudes in Ghana. The government has put policies in place to encourage private sector growth and reduce the role of the state in the economy. This has increased entrepreneurship opportunities while decreasing the incentives for rent-seeking behavior.

In order to evaluate efforts at combating the ills of our societies, according to data from Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2021, Cameroon ranks 153rd out of 180 countries, with a score of 26 out of 100, indicating a high level of perceived corruption in the country. Ghana ranks 79th out of 180 countries, with a score of 41 out of 100, indicating that the country has a moderate level of perceived corruption (Transparency International, 2021).

In a similar way, the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) report for 2021 includes information on governance and corruption in Cameroon and Ghana. Cameroon received a score of 22.5 out of 100 in the Control of Corruption indicator, placing it 176th out of 202 countries, while Ghana received a score of 42.4 out of 100, placing it 89th out of 202 countries (World Bank, 2021).

Data about corruption in Cameroon and Ghana is also available from the Ibrahim Index of African Governance, which evaluates the effectiveness of government in African nations. Cameroon received a score of 41.7 out of 100 in the category for Accountability, which covers efforts to combat corruption, in the most recent index report, which was published in 2020. This placed Cameroon 42nd out of 54 countries. Ghana received a score of 64.5 out of 100 for the same indicator, placing it eighth out of 54 nations (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2020).

The complexity of corruption and embezzlement, which cannot be fully understood by data alone, must be kept in mind. These organizations' data only offer a snapshot of the situation; therefore, it should be used with caution.

As established by the analysis in the previous paragraphs, the culture of public administration in Africa especially sub-Saharan is very complex. The colonial legacies which cannot be ignored left every country with a culture of public administration almost unique to it, but the disparities between the former French and British colonies is clear and very noticeable. The colonial legacies continue to play a major role in influencing the way in which public administration takes place in these countries. Lukamba and Molokwane (2017: 240) have established that even with these countries being independent, progress in the development of public administration is recorded more with the former English-speaking colonies such as

Ghana than the French former colonies like Cameroon. Generally, it should be reiterated that there is growing need for grassroots institutions to be independent so as to produce lasting results to remedy the current democratic lapses currently facing these countries. Also, with the lack of independent and proper checks and balances to keep a watchful eye on the activities of the various arms of government, the existing political turmoil is prone to flourish, limiting the chances of flushing out this rent-seeking generation of despotic rulers that have ravaged the African continent.

## **Conclusion**

Administrative and democratic development in Africa especially Sub-Saharan Africa is surrounded by so many complexities, that must be uncovered from the foundations of the state creation laid during independence. Also, the comparative analysis of both administrative and democratic progress in Cameroon and Ghana underscores the nuanced consequences of constitutional similarities and differences which find their roots in their shared colonial past. Though no society can claim to be corrupt free, Sub-Saharan Africa has exhibited a relatively high degree of patronage and rent seeking relationships and this is a virus that is eating deep into health of public administration and democratic development in the continent. While both Cameroon and Ghana wrestle with several challenges related to these patron-client relations and rent-seeking attitudes, their divergent trajectories inform on the significance of contextual factors in shaping democratic outcomes. Cameroon's struggle underscores the need for targeted reforms to mitigate the adverse effects of patron-client relations, fostering a more inclusive and transparent democratic process in pursuit of sustained political stability and growth. Cameroon's challenges also emphasize the need for comprehensive reforms to strengthen democratic institutions. On the otherhand, Ghana's experience, though still a work in progress, reflects a more robust democratic development, suggesting that certain institutional choices and governance practices can foster resilience against negative influences. These cases bring much attention to the evolving nature of democratic development in Africa and the case of Ghana's inspiring progress indicates the potential for effective governance structures and a commitment to institutional integrity, fostering citizen engagement and political stability. In a general view, as sub-Sahara African nations navigate their unique trajectories towards progress, the analysis in this paper encourages a more profound exploration of the complex interplay between historical legacies, constitutional designs and current socio-political dynamics in moulding the democratic landscape that will project Africa positively.

Despite the fact that the historical ties between the former colonial powers and their former colonies have fashioned different governance structures, contrary to the situation in both Cameroon and Ghana, their former colonial masters, like much of the rest of Europe have

generally experienced more stable constitutional and democratic development. Their successes draw on centuries of political transformations, which have gained them more robust democratic institutions that pay a lot of emphasis to the rule of law and the culture of political pluralism. Just to mention a few, Sweden is characterized by a strong tradition of decentralization which sees that local and regional authorities have significant decision making powers, thereby promoting independent and responsive local governments to community needs. The effectiveness of Finland's anti-corruption measures has seen it consistently ranked high in global anti-corruption indicators, which has promoted trustworthiness in public administration. Germany's social system that encourages dialogue has led to the involvement of several stakeholders in decision-making, thus promoting social cohesion and inclusiveness. Netherlands' merit-based recruitment system, which is a system that focuses on skills and professional qualifications rather than political affiliation, has played a great role to wipe out patron-client and rent-seeking attitudes.

From the above, both Cameroon and Ghana must continue to pay attention to prioritize the strengthening of democratic institutions, guaranteeing their independence, transparency and effectiveness. Also, the roles of the judiciary, the electoral commission and anti-corruption agencies must be clearly spelled-out and made independent of other state organs. Both countries must equally consider learning from best democratic practices globally, adopting that which suit their country's unique context and making more constitutional reforms tailored towards fixing the loopholes currently faced and enhance the checks and balances for a vigorous democratic system. While patron-client relationships and rent-seeking attitudes continue to rage havoc to both countries, they should strengthen and enforce strict penalties for corruption and also enhance the autonomy of anti-corruption agencies to be able to effectively battle corruption.

On a social note, great investment is needed in both countries concerning civil engagement in political activities. Both governments must both invest in civic education and encourage their citizens, advocacy groups and Non-Governmental Organizations to serve as watchdogs in holding the government accountable. Great investments should equally be made in political education programs so as to increase citizens' mastery of what democratic principles entail, citizens' obligations and rights, and the importance of their active engagement in the entire process to ensure a thriving democracy. Media freedom should also be prioritized to ensure unbiased reporting and promote diverse opinions to enhance transparency and accountability. In all, the implementation of these recommendations demands a very holistic approach, with a combination of legal reforms and institutional capacity building coupled with sustained commitments from the political leaders, advocacy groups, civil society and the citizens.

This paper has in a few steps provided a comparative analysis of the present public administration cultures of two countries; Cameroon, a former French colony, where during colonialism, “direct rule” was the way; and Ghana, a former British colony, which was governed through “indirect rule”. Decades after the Third wave however, several reforms have been introduced to bolster and consolidate democracy as many would argue. However, records show that while countries like Ghana, from the English-speaking culture have been experiencing great advancement with the reforms made, other countries like Cameroon with heritage of the French colonial system regrettably have been lagging as far as democratic consolidation is concerned. This paper emphasizes that the type of leadership, their plans for the people, the type of institutions and how strong these institutions are in building a solid state that can stand the test of time are what determines the success of public administration. It also advises that it is important for these countries to adapt with special considerations to the examples of good administration practices in some European countries to suit the unique socio-economic and cultural contexts.

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**DISKUSIE**

# Old Age Pensions Valorization 2023 in the Slovak Republic vis-a-vis Axiological Orientations of Relevant Political Parties

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<https://doi.org/10.33542/VSS2023-2-3>

## Abstract

Valorization of old age pensions is always very important issue in the whole globalized world (also) in the Slovak Republic. It is systematically and continuously linked to the axiological orientation of the relevant political subjects, who hold the political power and competence to legislate and implement valorization of pension payments. Naturally, the key question is the space (where) as well as the time (when) the valorization process takes place, whether it is a common government term or an exceptional situation for various reasons. The aim of the paper is to identify the valorization mechanisms of old age pension system (the first pillar) in the Slovak Republic in 2023 vis-à-vis the axiological orientations of the political parties that approved and implemented it. As a methods the secondary analysis of statistical outputs was used in the research paper and also the axiological analysis of the political ideologies.

**Keywords:** old age pension system, valorization, political parties

## Introduction

The old age pension valorization issue from the perspective of social policy legislators is in many respects key to becoming a metamodern legal and democratic state of the 21st century. It has a real impact on the everyday socio-economic quality of life of the target people, i.e. the elderly population, and reflects the way and degree of understanding and implementation of the fundamental principles of social policy—social justice and social solidarity of the respective state in a specific time range. Ultimately, it is always a question of grasping and understanding social justice in terms of the extent to which a person is perceived to be personally responsible for their social position (on the state-citizen axis).

It is polyparadigmatically viewed from many perspectives—political, economic, legal, sociological, and psychological (Geffert, 2021a,b; Geffert – Rovenská, 2022a; Geffert – Rovenská 2022b, Baláž, 2012; Košta, 2017; Bačová – Kostovičová, 2018; a. e). The unifying solution of individual social situations in the lives of (among others) the elderly is their standard of living. The latter (despite its relativity in time and space) is ultimately the impact of the perception and implementation of specific socio-economic measures by the relevant political

actors who have the political power to put them into practice (politics always precedes economics).

### **1. Slovak Republic Political Situation in Diapason 2020 – 2023**

The Slovak Republic, from spatial, temporal, and value perspectives, as a member state of the European Union, is part of the Western civilization, legally, axiologically, politically, economically, and socially. In this context, it is necessary to set and subsequently identify the valorization system of the mandatory pension fund system for the year 2023 under review. This time is the result of the governmental period 2020-2024, and can be politically characterized, inter alia, as very exceptional in the Slovak Republic. The exceptional situation begins basically with the fact that the three different governments were created during a single electoral period, namely - the government of I. Matovič 20.4.2020, the government of E. Heger 4.5.2021, and the government of Ľ. Ódor 15.5.2023 (SR National Council, 2020, 2021, 2023) (the first two were formed around coalitions based on the results of the parliamentary elections in the Slovak Republic 29.2.2020, the third government does not have the support of voters and the parliament, and instead it was appointed by the President of the Slovak Republic—the so called ‘government of experts’). The situation in the Slovak Republic National Council is extremely complicated due to the number of political parties and factions and the association of different MPs therein because many of the political parties did not have properly gone through the 2020 elections. This is also the reason that the support for legislative proposals in the National Council does not come from the initial coalition, and it is relevant to see the votes of specific MPs (who in a given specific vote show a mix of their values and their populist-pragmatic pre-election attitudes).

The economic situation in the European Union, i.e. in the Slovak Republic—when dealing with the pension valorization mechanism—is to a large extent (in the period under review) influenced by the consequences of the COVID pandemic, as well as the Russian military invasion of Ukraine, the expansion of BRICS, the weakening of the dollar as the world reserve currency, and the like (which causes uncommon economic preferences in the given period, such as high inflation, scarcity of goods, high prices of inputs, and the like, which results in a chain of negative social events...). The end of 2023 is also the time when early parliamentary elections will be held in the Slovak Republic (30.9.2023). Following the objective facts above, it can be stated that this is an exceptional and turbulent year, when—in addition to real axiological (ideological) and economic aspects—a pre-election dimension enters the valorization mechanism of pension funds in the Slovak Republic. At this point, it is necessary to note that ideology in this paper is understood objectively in philosophical-political terms (not negatively populist-political) in a neutral fashion as a set of values, not in a Marxist negative sense. (For more details see Šaradín, 2001; Bauer, 1991; Geffert, 2014; Geffert, 2021a,b).

Despite the facts above, as Table 1 shows, from an axiological and ideological point of view, the governments of 2020 to 2023 (the 2020-2024 government period) can be characterized as relatively stable and consistent in terms of values.

**Table 1: Values (Ideological Views) of Political Parties of Government Coalition 2020 - 2023 (First and Second Government)**

| Subjects of the government coalition<br>Government period 2020 – 2023 % in NR SR and mandates/electoral votes | Fundamental value orientation of the political subject/ Political spectrum (political axiology) | International (European) political; value anchoring political subject |
|---|---|---|
| <u>OL'ANO</u><br>25,02% (53)<br>721 166   | <u>Christian democracy Social conservatism Anti-corruption Pan-Europeanism</u>                  | <u>European People's Party</u>  |
| <u>SME RODINA</u><br>8,24% (17)<br>237 531  | <u>National conservatism Social conservatism The right</u>                                      | <u>Movement for a Europe of Nations and Freedom</u>                   |
| <u>SAS</u><br>6,22% (13)<br>179 246   | <u>National liberalism Classical liberalism The right</u>                                       | <u>Party of European Conservatives and Reformists</u>                 |
| <u>ZA L'UDÍ</u><br>5,77% (12)<br>166 325  | <u>Conservative liberalism Centristism</u>  | ---   |

Source: Own processing, www.sme.sk a.

The 2020-2023 governing coalitions are axiologically situated in the centre-right part of the political spectrum. Both the government led by I. Matovič's coalition of OL'ANO, SME RODINA, SAS, and ZA L'UDÍ, as well as the coalition of the government of E. Heger in a slightly different inclusion of political parties, were built around the results of the 2020 parliamentary elections (with the replacement of the Prime Minister, both de facto and de jure, a new government was formed, which submitted a new policy statement and asked for the support of the Parliament).

## 2. Old Age Pensions Valorization in the Slovak Republic 2023

To monitor and meet the stated objective of this paper, it is first necessary to identify the basic valorization mechanisms in the SR in 2023. Pension payments have increased twice in this calendar year (plus two more increases - the freezing and raising of minimum pensions and the introduction of the so-called parental pension)—thus, from a certain point of view, they have been increased four times. The first valorization was implemented on 1 January 2023, when the pension payments were increased by the percentage of the year-on-year increase

in consumer prices for elderly households determined by the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (according to pensioners' purchasing behavior), usually calculated for the first half of the calendar year 2021. Since—according to this calculation—the consumer price index for elderly households increased (on average for the first six months of 2022 compared to the identical period in 2021; Table 2) by 11.8%, the corresponding pension payments increased by that value, i. e. by 11.8% ([www.employment.gov.sk](http://www.employment.gov.sk)).

**Table 2: Pension Payments Increase Inflation (%)**

|  | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Public Expenditure on Pensions from Growth | 1,6  | 2,7  | 4,6  | 3,2  | 4,5  | 4,6  | 2,0  | 10,9 |
| Public Misc Expenditure from Growth        | 0,1  | -0,1 | -0,1 | 1,2  | 3,0  | -0,3 | 6,2  | -2,8 |
| Total Increase in Pension Benefits         | 1,7  | 2,5  | 4,5  | 4,4  | 7,6  | 4,3  | 8,3  | 8,1  |
| Pension Inflation                          | -0,7 | 1,2  | 2,5  | 3,1  | 2,2  | 3,0  | 13,9 | 11,3 |

Source: [www.rrz.sk](http://www.rrz.sk)

It is an indexation mechanism under Section 82 of Act 461/2003 Coll, on Social Insurance, as amended ([www.socpoist.sk](http://www.socpoist.sk)). In relation to minimum pension benefits, a special type of valorization started to apply from 1 January 2023, under which this type of pension benefit did not increase at all by the defined date. As for the valorization mechanism linked to the pension inflation above, it is still a result of the government's policies from 2016, i.e. the Fico Government (and the Pelegrini Government from 21.3.2020, which had the same values as the Fico Government, for more details, see Geffert - Rovenská, 2022a, b) comprised of political parties shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: 2016-2018 Government Political Coalition Values (Political Axiology)**

| Subjects of the government coalition<br>Government period 2020 – 2023 % in NR SR and mandates/electoral votes | Fundamental value orientation of the political subject/ Political spectrum (political axiology)   | International (European) political; value anchoring political subject   |
|---|---|---|
| <p><u>SMER-SD</u><br/>28,28% (49)<br/>737 481</p>   | <p><u>Left nationalism Social conservatism</u><br/><u>Social democracy</u><br/><u>Center left/left</u></p>  | <p><u>Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats</u><br/><u>Party of European Socialists</u><br/><u>Socialist International</u></p> |
| <p><u>SNS</u><br/>8,64% (15)<br/>225 386</p>  | <p><u>National conservatism</u><br/><u>Economic nationalism</u><br/><u>Social conservatism</u><br/><u>Right/extreme right</u><br/><u>Economically-center-left</u></p> | <p><u>Europe of Freedom and Democracy</u></p>   |
| <p><u>MOST-HÍD</u><br/>6,50% (11)<br/>169 593</p>   | <p><u>National conservatism</u><br/><u>Center right</u></p>   | <p><u>Group of the European People's Party</u><br/><u>European People's Party</u></p>   |
| <p><u>#SIEĽ</u><br/>5.60% (10)<br/>146 205</p>  | <p><u>Conservatism</u><br/><u>Center right</u></p>  | ---   |

Source: Own processing, www.sme.sk b.

From 1 July 2023, pension benefits will increase due to the re-linking of minimum pension amounts to the subsistence minimum. From 1.7.2023, they were exceptionally valorized by 10.6%. On 21 June 2023, the National Council of the Slovak Republic approved Act 275/2023 Coll, amending Act 461/2003 Coll, on Social Insurance. The changes concerning the increase in minimum pensions will start to apply on 1 October 2023. Calculation of minimum pensions applicable from 1 October 2023: For the first 30 years of the so-called qualifying period of mandatory pension insurance, the amount of the minimum pension is set at 145% of the subsistence minimum applicable on 1 January of the calendar year, and further minimum pension benefit increases are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4: Minimum Pension Benefits Applicable from 1 October 2023**

|  |                                      |                                       |
|--|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Additional Year of Qualified Pension Insurance | Qualifying Period Year from 31 to 39 | Subsistence Minimum Increase by 2.5%  |
| Additional Year of Qualified Pension Insurance | Qualifying Period Year from 40 to 49 | Subsistence Minimum Increase by 3 %   |
| Additional Year of Qualified Pension Insurance | Qualifying Period Year from 50 to 59 | Subsistence Minimum Increase by 5 %   |
| Additional Year of Qualified Pension Insurance | Qualifying Period Year from 60 to 69 | Subsistence Minimum Increase by 7.5 % |

Source: Own processing according to Mihál 21.7.2023

Amendment to Act 461/2003 Coll, on Social Insurance (352/2022 Coll) introduced a new concept of parental bonus, the so-called 'parental pension benefit', as an additional pension benefit for the elderly. The Social Insurance Institution shall grant it to the recipients of the mandatory pension benefits, disability retirement benefits, or military and law enforcement retirement benefits, after meeting the relevant conditions (more details are given in Act 461/2003 Coll, on Social Insurance). The Social Insurance determines the amount of the parental pension based on the earnings and average wages of the pensioners' children in 2021. It is intended only for elderly whose children are employed. The amount of the parental pension benefit is set at 3% of the child's gross salary - 1.5% share per parent.

The maximum parental pension benefit in 2023 for one parent for one child is €21.80 per month (see Table 5 for more details on the amounts of parental pension for 2023). In this case, the aggregate parental pension payment for the maximum amount of parental pension for 2023 is €261.60. In 2023, the Social Insurance Institution will pay the parental pension benefit in one aggregate payment, and from 2024 onwards it will be paid monthly together with the pension payment.

**Table 5: Parental Pension Benefit 2023 per Parent per Child per Month**

| <b>Child in 2021/Income</b>                     | <b>Parental Benefit 2023</b> |
|---|------------------------------|
| wage 1447 € and more                            | 21,80 €                      |
| wage 1400 € and more                            | 21,00 €                      |
| wage 1200 € and more                            | 18,00 €                      |
| wage 1000 € and more                            | 15,00 €                      |
| wage 800 € and more                             | 12,00 €                      |
| woman on maternity leave (state) 655,20 €       | 9,90 €                       |
| minimum wage 623 €                              | 9,40 €                       |
| self-employed person min. measuring basis 546 € | 8,20 €                       |
| nursing (state) 546 €                           | 8,20 €                       |
| voluntary insurance 546 €                       | 8,20 €                       |
| Part-time 400 €                                 | 6,00 €                       |
| woman on maternity leave 200 €                  | 3,00 €                       |

Source: [www.socpoist.sk](http://www.socpoist.sk)

### **Conclusion and Discussion**

Following the above, the valorization of retirement plans is an ongoing issue in an open democratic society based on the fundamental principles of social policy. It affects the quality of life of the elderly. We rate the quality of a Western civilization also by the extent of how it can take care of people who cannot take care of themselves. Several social groups fall into this category, including the elderly.

It can be noted that pensions have been valorized two and possibly four times in the calendar year 2023. The first ordinary valorization of pension benefits was implemented on 1 January 2023. The second exceptional valorization of pension benefits was from 1 July 2023. The other two pension increases comes from unlocking and valorizing minimum pension payments from 1 July and 1 October 2023. Parental pensions can also be seen as an increase in pension benefits based on the number of working kids. All four valorization mechanisms have been briefly described above for the purposes of this paper.

In percentage terms, pension benefits in the Slovak Republic grew by about 22.4% overall. When the parental pension is included in the total, the amount has increased by more than 23% on average. The question remains, is this really a valorization or—given the level of inflation in 2022, which was over 16% and therefore higher than the pension increase—is it not rather an indexation?

The aim of the paper was to identify the valorization mechanisms of old age pension system (the first pillar) in the Slovak Republic in 2023 vis-à-vis the axiological orientations of the political parties that approved and implemented it.

Despite numerous open questions and controversies that can be reached and further developed when following the topic, the fact remains that the pension benefit increase in 2023 was implemented predominantly on a percentage basis, whether it was an ordinary or exceptional valorization, or the parental pension. In relation to the valorization (indexation?) in previous calendar years and electoral periods (see Geffert - Rovenská, 2022a, b for more details), it can be concluded that it is confirmed that centre-right and right government coalitions prefer valorizations based on percentage rather than across-the-board increases in pension benefits. Such value preferences, and indeed understandings of social justice in the welfare state system, are based on Titmus's corporatist, and therefore power-type, understanding of social policy and welfare. In a sense, they favor those who have worked more, earned more and contributed more during their economically active lives (in the case of parental pensions, these are parents who have working children and the pension benefits depend on the amount of the children's earnings). The emphasis is on subjective personal responsibility as opposed to state-wide (re)distribution.

The government of centre-right conservative-liberal political parties in the period 2020 - 2023 formed by OĽANO, SME RODINA, SAS, and ZA ĽUDÍ, although in different forms and variations, remained a value-consistent coalition in terms of the preference of value orientations (in 2023, it is not official but virtual coalition, because the second government created on the basis of the result of the 2020 elections, the Heger Government, was given a vote of no confidence at the end of 2022, precisely on 15.12.2022).

Several factors have to be taken into account in the context of this issue, as well as the fact that the proper valorization process in a given calendar year is always prepared in the previous year. Also, the exceptional valorization mechanisms (even if they are implemented earlier than the standard deadline) are also based on macroeconomic indicators monitored and obtained in previous calendar years (months). The key in a democratic and legal state is always politics and politicians—the MPs who represent this politics, i. e. those who ultimately agree, by the mechanism of majority voting, on the form, the model, and indeed the level of valorization of (also) pension benefits. Although, in a democratic and rule of law state, the majority should respect the will and rights of the minority/minorities, in a parliamentary democracy system the key moment is always the elections, in which the right of the majority (which we may not agree with, but which we must respect to maintain the democratic rules and the social order) is ultimately enforced.

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Zákon č. 461/2003 Z. z. o sociálnom poistení v znení neskorších predpisov

Zákon č. 352/2022 Z. z. ktorým sa mení a dopĺňa zákon č. 461/2003 Z. z. o sociálnom poistení v znení neskorších predpisov a ktorým sa menia a dopĺňajú niektoré zákony

Zákon č. 275/2023 Z. z., ktorým sa mení zákon č. 461/2003 Z. z. o sociálnom poistení

Zákonom č. 71/2023 Z. z., ktorým sa mení a dopĺňa zákon č. 461/2003 Z. z. o sociálnom poistení

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**RECENZIE**

## **Yarım Kalan Aydınlanma Atılımı Köy Enstitüleri**

### **The Incomplete Enlightenment Initiative: Village Institutes**

**İsa Eşme**

Eşme, a seasoned academic in education departments, boasts an extensive array of publications and columns spanning physics, teacher education, educational history, and contemporary educational issues. However, the author's primary fascination with Village Institutes originates from his educational background and subsequent role as a physics teacher at Kastamonu Göl Primary Teacher School. Despite its transformation from Kastamonu Göl Village Institute in 1954, the institution managed to preserve the principles and values of the Institute, as well as its traces and educational climate, to a certain extent. In the preface of his work, Eşme acknowledges that his experience at the Göl Village Primary Teacher School was a pivotal moment in his life.

The seven-chapter book commences with an analysis of educational reforms during the Republic of Turkey's first decade and their importance. This section also explores the challenges of extending these reforms to rural areas, presenting pertinent perspectives from that era. Chapter two focuses on the Village Educator Courses, which initiated the progression towards Village Institutes. It delves into the emergence of the educator concept, the foundation of initial courses, and the development of the course program. The third chapter scrutinizes the process leading to the establishment of Village Institutes, the institute law, and parliamentary criticisms directed at these institutions. Chapter four delineates the functioning of the Institutes, the formulation of their educational and teaching programs, the implementation of their distinct principles, and the revitalization of villages through their nationwide expansion.

Chapter five offers an in-depth analysis of the Hasanoğlan Higher Village Institute, which aimed to train teachers for Village Institutes and conduct scientific research in villages, examining its activities. The sixth chapter discusses the accusations leveled against the Institutes during the country's shift to a multi-party system. The concluding chapter outlines the abandonment of the unique values and principles of these institutions, the liquidation of reformists within the government, and the remnants left by the Institutes following their transformation into Primary Teacher Schools in 1954.

The work's strengths include its clear objective to acquaint readers with the Village Institutes, employing accessible language and a fluid style to engage a broad audience. The author maintains the academic rigor while achieving the narrative flow of a novel, with a title that aligns with the content and encapsulates the author's stance. The integration of

photographs by İsmail Hakkı Tonguç enhances the work's value, offering visual insights into the historical context and the Institutes' achievements. The author's thorough examination of the Institutes' remnants and proposal for establishing 'City Institutes' contribute originality to the literature.

However, the work is not without its limitations. The author's partiality is evident, as they belong to the group that lauds the Institutes and acknowledges their personal debt to these institutions. This bias manifests in the uncritical acceptance of historical accounts by Institute affiliates and the use of polarizing adjectives to describe historical figures. Additionally, the work does not fully utilize contemporary scientific articles and books offering original analyses, resulting in a largely repetitive account.

Despite these shortcomings, Eşme's "Incomplete Enlightenment Initiative: Village Institutes" is a valuable contribution to the literature on Village Institutes. The work is likely to enlighten readers seeking comprehensive knowledge about the Institutes. The chronological presentation and attention to coherence facilitate easy reading and comprehension. The detailed exploration of the Institutes' lingering traces and the innovative proposal for 'City Institutes' are particularly noteworthy.

#### **Information about the publication**

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Yarım Kalan Aydınlanma Atılımı Köy Enstitüleri  
The Incomplete Enlightenment Initiative: Village Institutes (English Translation)  
Publisher: İstanbul Kültür Üniversitesi Yayınevi  
Release year: 2021  
Number of pages: 327  
ISBN 978-605-4763-96-2

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# **Accounting of the budgetary organizations**

**Eva Mihaliková**

The accounting is an essential part of any organisation, in private and also public sector. The university textbook „Accounting of the budgetary organizations“ is focused on the specific features related to the accounting in the budgetary organizations, but also contains theoretical background related to accounting in general – the subject of the accounting, accounting documentations, evidence, etc. This fact makes the textbook a suitable material for students who have not encountered with accounting. The topic of harmonisation and international accounting standards is also relevant part of the university textbook.

The university textbook is clearly designed, maintaining logic from general to specific, which helps the reader to better understand the accounting theme. It contains up-to-date information reflecting current legislative conditions. The author divided the textbook into nine basic chapters. The first two chapters introduce students, as well as the public, to the subject of accounting by defining its essence, principles, accounting evidence. Considering the social context, the textbook also includes a basic overview of harmonization of accounting rules, procedures, standards used in the accounting of other countries. The author characterizes international accounting standards (IAS/IFRS) with addition and an emphasis on international accounting standards applied in the public sector (IPSAS). The third chapter is specifically focused on the budgetary organizations, the founders of which are most often municipalities and higher territorial units. The author deals with their general characteristics and legislative definition. The main part of the chapter is the issue of transfers as financial relations between the founder and the budgetary organization. The fourth chapter contains information about the organization's assets with classification into long-term and short-term assets, including correction items. In the fifth chapter, the author deals with the sources of coverage in the budgetary organization – explains the possible forms and alternatives of assets obtaining. Cost and revenues, which are the content of the sixth and seventh chapters, are also part of the accounting of budgetary organizations. The author concentrates on the basic characteristics of costs and revenues accounts and on the principles of their accounting evidence. The last two chapters of the textbook are devoted to financial statements, containing information on the method of their compilation, content and formal requirements, consolidation processes of financial statements in public administration, as well as on their control and transparency.

It can be concluded that the university textbook entitled „Accounting of the budgetary organizations“ is a compact, clear, up-to-date and suitable study material for students of the Faculty of public Administration of Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice, but also for other

students who want and need to gain the overview of the issue. At the same time, it represents a suitable tool for supplementing information even outside the academic community – for workers who come across the accounting of budget organizations in their daily practice, but also for their founders.

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Účtovníctvo rozpočtových organizácií

Printer: ŠafárikPress

Year: 2023

Pages: 105

ISBN: 978-80-574-0224-4 (e-publication)

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**Písmo** Arial 11b.

**Riadkovanie** 1,5

**Rozsah príspevku**vedecké príspevky 10 – 20 strán

**príspevky do diskusie** 8 – 13 strán

**recenzie** 2 - strany

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