

THE LONG - TERM UNEMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY AS AN INTERDISCIPLINARY PROBLEM

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Abstract:

The author in her article focuses on the issue of long-term unemployment and poverty, which often results in interdisciplinary problems. It is a problem of the whole society, which needs to be constantly looked into and it also constantly needs the elimination of the outside world's effects on it. The aim of this work is to highlight the seriousness of this problem, the need for its elimination, with emphasis on the confrontation between scientific disciplines and their connections.

Key Words: Unemployment, work, personality, poverty, risks, social and psychological consequences

Unemployment is one of the most discussed macroeconomic indicators of the market economy and is a global problem that continues to affect an individual's life and it also affects the whole society. In Slovakia, the unemployment is still an enduring problem triggered by many causes with detrimental effects. Unemployment is a shocking life event that creates a disruption in a person's life. Since it is affecting the life of all unemployed, the unemployment is more than just the exclusion from the production process. The economical problems are at the same time the most important. The social insurance network during the unemployment reduces serious financial problems, but the unemployment usually brings the lost of social contacts, slid into social isolation, a growing sense of powerlessness and therefore it presents a substantial disturbance in personal self-development of man.

Most psychological studies suggest that unemployment is a risky period associated with increased experiences of stress, which may appear as a significant negative impact on mental and physical health and they are also adding that the psychological studies of job loss and the following unemployment are mainly focused on three problematic areas:

1. Deterioration in mental health (distress, increased depression, anxiety, neurotic symptoms, reducing confidence);
2. Deterioration in physical health, including drug addiction, increase in suicide attempts
3. Coping strategies and ways of coping with this difficult life situation

Every day we talk about the crisis - the economic crisis, social crisis, a crisis in the educational system, moral crisis, a crisis in the value system. In fact, those crisis don't exist, they only exist in a figurative sense. They are just manifestations of one crisis - the crisis of man. (Csampai, 2007, p. 120)

It turns out that the solution to this problem, the problem of unemployment, especially the long-term one, must be a priority not only to economical, but above all to social and educational policies since the barriers to employment are increasing over the time. It is necessary to get and mobilize the clients not only as soon they lose their jobs or leave the school, but it is necessary to systematically work with the school children especially those ones coming from families at risk of unemployment. The recommended methods are: bringing services to businesses, schools, organizations, use of media, organizing collective assistance through work clubs. The important factors for its elimination are foreign investments, particularly the use of the European Social Fund.

Factors that are even today affecting the degree and dynamics of unemployment's development are:

- A) Instability of the state and public administration's system

- B) Workers salary evaluation and its significant lag behind the EU average, but also and labor productivity growth in recent years in Slovakia
- C) Excess employment, especially in state and public administration, with a result of low productivity, quality and work organization
- D) Underdeveloped tertiary sector
- E) Lack of support for small and medium businesses
- F) Lack of funds for capital construction needs, especially in economically underdeveloped regions of Slovakia
- G) Educational and qualification structure of the economically active population, which does not correspond to the needs of the labour market
- H) Regional differences in unemployment and low labour mobility
- I) Insufficiently flexible to the needs of the labour market and not corresponding with the educational system
- J) Remained deformation in the social security system, active labour market policy and the control of black labour.

Mass unemployment brings these social problems that negatively affect the quality of Slovak society's life:

1. It threatens the stability of social and cultural society system. This is reflected in the reduction of funds to the whole society important areas and therefore to their optimal development. These are mainly the areas of :
 - Educational system
 - Healthcare
 - Social care and other support to economically non active and in social need population
 - Science and Research
 - Culture and arts

2. Increases the risk of social-pathological phenomena in society
3. It leads to social isolation of the most vulnerable social groups affected by unemployment, creating a threat to the counterculture in relation to the majority society, especially among the gypsies ethnic group.
4. This leads to the risk of social relations qualities and the value system in society

The existence and an increase of social risks can under certain assumptions foreshadow the future social crises. As the causes of social risks and crises there are currently three groups of phenomena:

1. Changing social relations in different countries as well as across the world society mainly due to the economic consequences of globalization processes. Reduction of social security and an increase of socially vulnerable groups.
2. Continuing war conflicts in the world, national, ethnic and religious conflicts, humanitarian disasters and the inability of developed countries in the world effectively solve the resulting problems.
3. Natural catastrophes, technological disasters, environmental crises, and other disasters causing more and more economic damage. By their consequences are mostly affected socially vulnerable people, socially dependents like elderly and sick, unemployed, minority communities, including immigrants, etc.

Analysis, evaluation and management of social risks and crises thus become new challenges in crisis management more broadly. In recent decades, the concept of crisis management has changed significantly. Currently the opinion is being stabilized that the term crisis management should be considered *as a coordinated systematic process aimed at prevention, elimination and removal of the impact events, threatening or likely to significantly jeopardizing the security of society, the lives and health of people, their property and the environment.*

The most common pathological phenomenon of unemployment that occurs is the poverty which is characterized by a lack of resources to meet the necessities of life. According to the political concept of poverty it is a poor person who fulfils criteria set by the State for social benefits, or social assistance. It is a condition, so called condition of social need, when the citizen cannot provide care

for himself, taking care of his home, protection and enforcement of his rights and legitimate interests or contact with the social environment, especially with regard to age, poor health, social maladjustment or loss of employment. Poverty is part of society and also a global problem faced by the world's richest countries. Inextricably linked with poverty there is also the concept of social exclusion. This concept is much broader than the concept of poverty. It presents the transfer of emphasis from financial handicap to its multidimensional nature. Social exclusion is trying to capture processes for which individuals become or remain poor. Measurements of social assistance and social services create social safety nets of social policies of individual states. Both of these factors are dependent on securing funds for social needs of its economic potential. Social assistance will be applied in situations where other resources that could help families and individuals overcome life-threatening situation are not available for them and therefore they are not able to overcome it without help.

Social work, however, understands the concept of "social assistance" much more complex. It understands it as a public and social activity that tends to care for those members of society who, in certain life situations are not able to cope on their own or even with the help of their immediate surroundings and to solve their own problems (Levická, 2004). From this perspective, we can consider social assistance as an implementation of such methods as working with individuals and families such as family therapy, occupational therapy, social rehabilitation but also advices, particularly advice accents, which does not have the same tradition in Slovakia as in neighbouring countries.

In countries with developed economies is suitable a concept of relative poverty, which is based on establishing a fixed ratio between the level of individual's income and average (or median) income of the whole society. This concept of relative poverty measurement is also adopted and used in the European Union. Poverty in the EU is described as follows: "People are living in poverty if their income and other resources are so inadequate that they cannot reach the living standards of what is acceptable in the society in which they live. Because of their poverty they may experience multiple disadvantages - of unemployment through low income, poor housing, and inadequate health care to barriers to access to education, culture, sport and recreation. They are often excluded and marginalized from participating in activities that are common to other people and their access to fundamental rights may be restricted." (Národný akčný plán sociálnej inklúzie 2004-2006, p. 57)

It is necessary that the government and other authorities have made arrangements to change the structure of the unemployed. The research shows that unemployment affects mainly people with low education. In addition to the restructuring of the economy is necessary to invest also in restructuring the unemployed through their training. Due to the increase in the overall unemployment rate and the share of long-term unemployed will increase with time shift and deepen the poverty rate and income inequality in the EU and in Slovakia. It is therefore necessary for the government to constantly monitor these processes and take measures to mitigate the impact of the crisis in this area.

Unemployment is associated with significant loss of social roles and the reduction of social prestige, the role to which it contributes. Professional role is an important component of adult identity, integrating it with the company and is associated with the inclusion of the social hierarchy. Job loss therefore leads to social degradation and human discards in some way from mainstream society (M. Vágnerová, 1999, p. 405).

As a result of poverty there is also the rise of further socio-pathological phenomena, such as **homelessness**. In the vocabulary of social security the concept defined a homeless as a citizen or group of citizens, who, in consequence of their ways of life need an extra help: no permanent address, and if there is some, they are not living there, they are unemployed and the only source of their income are mostly funds provided by the social security, or other sources.

The aim of some homeless people or people in unfavourable social situation, as they are defined by the Law 448/2008 Z.z. of social services (Z.z. is an official Law book), is the effort to achieve social re-integration. In most cases when it comes to long-term situation that persists for more than a month, or several years a man is already so accustomed to the street and their own life situation, that he resigned to change it in any way. Employment of homeless is a problem resulting from the overall situation, when their home becomes a street where they probably sleep and street becomes a part of their life also with its crime, prostitution, and there is a high probability that they become addicted in various ways.

And what is the recommendation for the practice?

First of all, the age discrimination should be repealed, the abolition of which was enforced in the European Union on 1 May 1999 in Article 13 of Amsterdam Treaty and was subsequently adopted in the Community Action Programme to combat the discrimination and also in European Union Council Directive number 200/78/ES. There was often mention the term of ageism, when employers are afraid to employ people near their retirement age, over 50's, even though they have the experience, expertise and they are efficient and reliable. They should be given the opportunity and the possibility to take courses in foreign languages, be retrained or to acquire new advanced technologies. Another option is a tax credit for employers of unemployed people, or the provision of state to the regions with high unemployment and creation of new jobs as a support for small and medium business. Another important step is to pay attention to consulting services for the unemployed, whether individual or groups, which will prepare the unemployed to be competitive in the labour market. Currently these services have been provided by work offices and therefore they should be constantly supported, but also to expand their services in more areas to the unemployed, like a legal or psychological advice.

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