



Community is more than just a physical space

Discuss this statement with specific reference to the role of the concept and experience of contemporary community

EDIT SCHRANZ

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Introduction

What happens if among the members of a society and among the smaller and larger units and groups making up the society trust and confidence seems to be disappearing at once? What happens if confidence reposed into each other fall victim to social differences as well as to the economic / cost-of-living boxing of modern information society? How to stop the crisis symptom that seems to be developing this way and which is shown in the fragmentation of communities?¹ With other words, is it possible to “stick again together” a community or even a whole society started to disintegrate? The questions, even if not so characteristically phrased, provide sociologists actually with the scope of understanding our modern, individualistic world (Habermas 1994). Gusfield (1975) depicts dichotomy of community and society in a way that we should interpret community as a pervading, significant contrast. By now literature seems as if it was only be able to picture the changes taking place in the images both of the society and community describing them by even more pronounced, contradictory processes. The changes that send messages on the disintegration of categories and frames becoming insecure instead of the security and integration quasi missed by Habermas. It also seems as if—quasi as an answer given to this process—occlusion/seclusion both on the part of community members and the various communities from the seemingly unknown and insecure changes were more intensive (Légmán 2012). We intend to construe these phenomena on the next pages, but due to extension limits without the need for completeness of social interpretations. We want to do it with the help of mainly one dimension: value preference through the example of a given society, namely the Hungarian one. Thus we get to the stability and the solidarity of the members of the smallest unit of society, one which accepts and expresses various value preferences, the family.

¹ There is no way to go into detail in this study concerning the issues being the well-reasoned social issues raised in our present age. Maybe a whole volume would be insufficient to discuss the topic. For the moment, we considered raising the issue at all very important.



DOKTORI MŰHELYEKBŐL

1. Community and trust—questions, ideologies, inverses

1.1. CONFIDENCE VERSUS TRUST

György Csepeli, in his 2014 study, writes that the trust in the entirety of the modern social system which is shown by the members of the society towards the economic and political elite shows whether a society is ideal or not. He believes that trust appears as a tool of collective reflection on social phenomena and distinguishes between the trust of members of society in the social system (confidence) and trust between people (trust). He puts an emphasis on the fact that high confidence index both at the level of interpersonal and interactive relations refers to the ideal functioning of society. In the opposite case it is very likely called crisis (Csepeli 2014). On the other hand, Csepeli considers the two intermediate states, when *confidence* in society exists, but *trust* between people does not, and the inverse of this, the indicators of change. *“It’s a sign of regression into the Gemeinschaft state if confidence disappears but trust remains.”* (Csepeli 2014: 19 refers to Kornai – Rothstein – Rose – Ackerman 2005)

It’s not by chance that we deal somewhat longer with the word confidence itself as an instrument of communal reflection given to social phenomena—as mentioned above. It will get an important role in the next part of this study, where we intend to demonstrate by a definite population existing signs that may indicate changes acting towards disintegration in a society.

We can find the the elements of the aforementioned idea in a different form in Ferdinand Tönnies’s work already. In his *Community and Society* (1887), he was the first to make ideotypical differentiation (Csepeli 2014) between communal organization marking the natural state of man and later social organizations (Tönnies 2002). Theories set forth by Tönnies, on the one hand, allow us to notice not only the difference between the relationships developed from “security”-based, natural, family communities and communities of modern society made up of individuals on purpose based on superficial contacts. On the other hand, they give an opportunity for us to carry on the thought until we anatomize the operative functions of modern society, to the ideas of authentic and—in respect of the whole society—unauthentic existence of the economic and political system.

1.2. TRADITIONAL VERSUS MODERN

However, can the phenomena discoverable in current societies tracing out disintegration that, regarding the results of sociological research, point out the development of the crisis of confidence (Kovách – Kristóf 2012) be interpreted as the breakup of communities? Or are we simply witnessing the disappearance of old,



DOKTORI MŰHELYEKBŐL

traditional forms of community along with the appearance of new ones? (Légmán 2012)

According to Tönnies, in traditional societies the place of the individual is pre-disposed, personal identity is defined by the community and relationships are stable. Individualism of modern societies which in terms of sociological interpretation have begun along with industrialization did not make good for traditional communities. Disappearance of old clusters and emergence of new ones around the individual—putting him or her in the focus (Utasi 2002)—does not mean only that the old ones (family, relatives, workplace relationships) have been substituted by new, looser bonds (Beck 2003). It means also that to the effect of certain social events, the constant cyclicity of vanishing-emerging communities typical to societies otherwise developing and forming in a natural way is discontinued. That is traditional communities are eliminated, they are not replaced and thus no new ones appear in their places (Hankiss 2002).

Jürgen Habermas, however, takes a rather firm stance. Proceeding from individualism as well, he evaluates the loss of frames marking community inhesion as a consequence of individualism. He says that the lack of integration results in identity crisis in the society (Habermas 1994). This suggests that he misses the security providing, integrating effect of traditional community image in modern society (Légmán 2012). At the same time, Anthony P. Cohen, according to the challenges of the era, studies community from a different aspect than the representatives of classical sociology or the great predecessors from the Chicago school do². Although built on the work of the predecessors, as we already referred to that in connection with Durkheim, Cohen's works do not miss the "doctrines" of Weber either. Cohen, when investigating the idea of community, did not examine community itself only. He also wanted know how the members of community really define and imagine again their groups and identities (Cohen 1985). According to Cohen, at the level of everyday life—family, friends, neighbourhood, rivalry and jealousy as the orientation points of social processes—the existence of community basically depends on sense. This "sense" comes into being, on the one hand, by human interactions. On the other hand, it is an unbreakable perception of the "bounds" which community bounds are described as of symbolic type by Cohen. Not only because different meanings do mean different things to people, he says, but also because sensing communal

² Cohen has belonged to the third "generation" of community studies. Western community study originates basically from sociology, first of all the Chicago School – e.g. Lynd; Park – Burgess – McKenzie; Zorbaugh; Whyte, as well as the social anthropology of British imperialism—e.g. Evans-Pritchard; Rees. This school has come a similar way in other Western-European countries, as well. Its first "generation" has taken community for granted; communities were considered as static, harmonized and functionally healthy groups. The second "generation" has essentially carried on in the same direction, e.g. Newby; Minar – Greer; Nisbet; Parsons Stacey; Willmott (Bencze 2010).



DOKTORI MŰHELYEKBŐL

bounds may be completely insensible for people being outside of the community. Symbolic bounds are “illegible”—he writes in his book: *The symbolic construction of community*. “You cannot drive a bridge across a river which you cannot see” (Cohen 1985: 37)—he adds for emphasis.

1.2.1. The cohesion of the “we” consciousness

Compared to Cohen’s symbolism Elemér Hankiss³ approaches the issue from a more realistic aspect in his book dated back in 1979⁴. For him community means the coexistence of people who are held together by a common objective, interest or values, that is the “we” sense. His standpoint is that the more of these four criteria are present in the life of a community, the stronger its inner cohesion, efficiency and resistance against outer effects are. However, says Hankiss, community as the catalyser of the evolvement of human personality, is as much an important instrument as “dangerous” it is, “because it can ruin and even eliminate human personality, human autonomy” (Hankiss 2004: 171). And though Hankiss instances here the personality destroying practice of Hitlerjugend, today we can exactly identify present problems of “we” and “you” with it, paired with political theories hidden behind the shield of the “absolving” role of community. For this revelation, the issue of modern communities and the potential solution of existing problems, however, it is not evadable to exactly know what the word “confidence/trust” means. What it means today and meant then when—according to various criteria and not incidentally also in order to seek answers for solving social problems—the study of human communities and human societies was started. The share of troubles of present societies as a food for thought is the fact that the actions and thoughts of a community or communities of a certain country (Islamic State) seems to have become global by now. Moreover, apart from geographical location, based on certain criteria, it unites people—who actually do not belong to a community in close terms of classical sociology based on Spencer’s doctrines—into an ideological community, the community of defence.

³ Elemér Hankiss (1928–) Hungarian sociologist, philosopher, value-researcher and literary historian, holder of the Széchenyi-award.

⁴ At that time there was still a socialist system of government in Hungary. The published book was titled *Social Traps and Diagnoses* and there was quite a good turnout for it. It was due to its content which gave an exact analysis of distortions affecting community and its sense into the hands of readers (as well as the part of leaders of the one-party state who were willing to read the book). (*The author*)



DOKTORI MŰHELYEKBŐL

2. “Security” in contrast with free choice⁵

2.1. SOCIETY-WIDE DISTRUST—THE EXAMPLE OF HUNGARY

Members of the Institute of Sociology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences started a research project three years ago which was going to last for several years and was to be conducted in several stages. The project aims to survey the exact definition of the phenomena that became perceptible as a consequence of the social transition happened during the two decades following the change of the political regime⁶ in Hungary in 1989/90. Researchers hope it will result in an expected change of paradigm. Precisely, sociologists want(ed) to figure out *how integration*⁷ does and *how does not function in the present Hungarian society*. The initial wild shoots⁸ of new capitalism in Hungary then by virtue of the economic crisis in 2008 the even more spectacular *social differences* resulted in perceptible *fault-lines* within the Hungarian society. Additionally, the ever less manageable *inequality* and *non-confidence* being present at both the macro and the micro levels of society have by now perceptibly manhandled citizens’ belief reposed in values. Also for that reason researchers studied the issue along *trust and confidence*⁹ respecting both the interaction of two

⁵ Z. Baumann (2000) asks the question in his book titled: *Liquid Modernity*; Foreword: On Being Light and Liquid.

⁶ The change of the political regime marks the era of Hungarian history in the course of which the Hungarian state became a democratic state breaking with the one-party state as well as its cultural and ideological relations. The new political and economic elite having been established and organized by the end of the 1980s were willing to stand less and less the supervision of the weakening party leadership. By 1988 the party operating the one-party regime has lost its support provided by both the majority of party members and the wide ranges of society. The majority of the population urged radical changes as well as a peaceful alteration of the regime that would cease the dictatorship of the one-party system and besides ensuring political rights also would provide social security for every of its citizens. Oppositionist organizations have developed; the predecessors of future parties, such as the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF), the Association of Free Democrats (SZDSZ), the Association of Young Democrats (FIDESZ) and the Independent Small Farmers’ Party (FKGP). The change of the political regime in Hungary broadly means an event in the course of which the structure of the Hungarian society has begun to change.

⁷ In terms of sociology we can distinguish three levels of the concept of integration: 1. the level of social theory, 2. the level of “factual sociology” or “professional level” referring first of all to groups integrated partially into society, and 3. the everyday “layman’s” level. At the level of academic social theories the concept of integration is connected to the issues that how the mass of people, groups, actions, institutions, norms, etc. will become—a more or less—functioning whole, i.e. how these will evolve to *society* (Kovács 2012).

⁸ Privatization not adequately regulated by the transition governments and the legal loopholes of taking the former socialist state property into private ownership brought forth unexpected disproportionateness in the society within a few years. (The era of the new “wild capitalism”.)

⁹ “Trust and confidence mean the acclamation of the way a socio-economic system functions. It also means a socio-psychological mechanism that may influence the behaviour of those participating in the system positively and serves as liaison between personal motivations and faiths as well as organizational and social objectives to be achieved,” (Csepeli in Hajdu 2004; Csepeli Gy. – Örkényi A. – Székelyi M. – Barna I. (2004). Trust and mistrust. Socio-psychological difficulties on the way leading to market economy in Eastern-Europe. *Sociological Review*, 1. 3–35.)

DOKTORI MŰHELYEKBŐL

persons and the level of the whole society. The study ranged from the dimension of the family through employee groups, economic units as well as the integration and discriminative dimension of minorities to the disintegration of local communities as well as to the extension of social effects made by the social elite and the facts of inequality. Within the frames of this study there is no way to address all mentioned dimensions. However, if we *approach* the dimensions of norms and values *from the standpoint of* a social group considered to be the most vulnerable one (Furlong 2002), i.e. *theyoung generation*, it turns out immediately why the presence of the disintegration process can be traced in the Hungarian society. That's why we shall focus on this example later on.

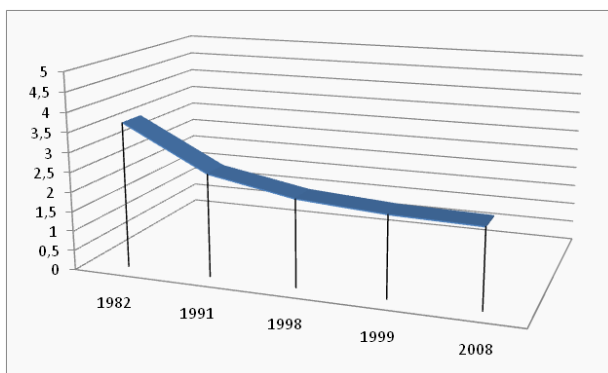
2.2. DISINEGRATED IMAGE OF SOCIETY

Trust, as Bence Ságvári writes in his study, enhances the feeling of an individual of belonging to a community. At the same time, it does not mean the exclusion of other groups. The lack of trust, however, leads to the erosion of social capital which ends up with isolation and the disintegration of structures. Communication channels do not work and deterioration of human relations begins. Rumour-mongering starts and prejudices and stereotypes get stronger (Allport 1954 in Ságvári 2012).

Researchers themselves found hard to face the fact after the first stage of the project had been finished that in respect of social integration the level of trust and confidence in Hungary is extremely low compared internationally.

According to the outcomes of the analyses made institutional confidence has significantly decreased since the change of the regime and trust reposed in others diminished, as well. In this regard Hungary is ranked in the last third of European countries (*Figure 1.*)

Figure 1. Change of generalized confidence in Hungary (in a scale of 0–1), 1982–2008



Source: Volume of Social Integration 2012



DOKTORI MŰHELYEKBŐL

Rejection of norm transgressions is quite high, though respondents seem to be insincere in connection with the action of transgression. Compared at an European level, Hungarians assume others violate the norms at an extremely large rate while they are among the last ones to admit their own activity of the transgression of norms. This attitude, as we shall see, affects the thinking of young generations to a large extent.

At the end of the first decade of the 2000s Hungarian people perceived an average rate of corruption. At the same time, according to the corruption perceiver index of Transparency International used in international comparison, the judgement of persons involved internationally was that the situation of Hungary is observably getting worse¹⁰ (Hajdu 2012). *“Summing it up, if Hungarian society has to be ranked in a scale of well integrated and disintegrated societies then—based on the examined dimensions—we have to say that Hungary rather shows the image of a disintegrated society”* (Hajdu 2012: 60)– states Gábor Hajdu in his comparative study.

The question is rightfully posed about the extent politics is responsible for the arousal of the current situation, and in addition to, or rather, as a function of this, the extent the intelligentsia are at fault. Istvan Harcsa, in his review published in 2007 in *Szociológiai Szemle*¹¹, briefly implies that by the early-mid 2000’s “the decline in the social weight of the intelligentsia is not a[n exclusively] Hungarian phenomenon” (Harcsa 2007: 257). However, this assertion does not detract anything from the relevance of that which the authors of the book that serves as a basis for this analysis write about the reasons for the depreciation of the Hungarian intellectual elite. The study written by the sociologists Kuczai – Kovách – and Kristóf entitled¹² *A szociológia szerepváltozása és az értelmiség útja a hatalomból*¹³ describes the process that even though after the regime change of 1989 the question of rethinking the role of sociology arose—which placed into the focus of the new paradigm shift the revision of the stratification of social classes—the process fell victim to the “bad habits Hungarian sociology” (Harcsa 2007: 256). With the avoidance of factual, public sociological debates, the function, importance, and role of the sociologist profession changed—practically depreciated, because the political “class” (Harcsa 2007: 257) rejected the intelligentsia’s need for the practice of control over politics to be unquestionable. Moreover, the spread of mass media transformed the structure of the public, significantly limiting the intelligentsia’s room for maneuvering. In

¹⁰ News of 17th October 2014: the USA posed a prospective prohibition of entry against nearly ten Hungarian civil servants, diplomats and large entrepreneurs having close liaison with the government, because evidence was found that they tried to influence American businesses operating in Hungary. Source: online daily newspapers www.index.hu; www.hvg.hu; www.origo.hu

¹¹ *Sociological Review*.

¹² In: *Társadalmi metszetek*, edited: Kovách Imre.

¹³ *Sociology’s role change and the intelligentsia’s path away from power*.



DOKTORI MŰHELYEKBŐL

the words of Erzsébet Szalai, the intelligentsia slowly lost its independence, and its members—with the exception of a narrow group—ended up in the sphere of influence of the political and economic elite (Harcsa quotes Szalai 2007: 257). While looking for connections, approaching the responsibility of politics from the side of the paradigm shift—or ultimately, lack thereof—the unheld debates about the validity stratification studies are most probably explained by the insensitivity of politics and the political elite, the problematic relationship between politics and science, and the partial projectivization, marketization of science (Harcsa 2007). These aforementioned phenomena, however, did not push Hungarian society towards integration either.

Returning to the summarized results of the MTA Sociological Institute, in the research done on the level of individuals in the analysis dealing with relationship networks *centers around the question “Whom to be trust in?”*. Results are unequivocally thought-provoking here, as well. It turned out that in an average Hungarian people have very few confidential relations and even within these the ratio of relatives is high compared to that of friends (Albert – Dávid 2012). According to studies we need to add that “about the half of the adult population lives in a “disintegrated”¹⁴ family” ... and nothing proves that a family made up of a married man and woman and their children—and only and exclusively this one—would be “integrated” in all cases (Tóth 2012). In my opinion, based on these strong but unequivocal statements, this allows us to start to understand what can lead to the disintegration of either a narrower or a wider community or even the frames of the society itself in the middle of Europe in our modern age. If family as the smallest unit of society (Utasi 2012), a community based mostly on the ties of blood cannot be a sufficiently secure point for the members of the society in many cases—as suggested by the above statement—then what kind of example can many future generations in a society take with them for the journey and what values are they going to represent?

2.3. LOSS OF TRUST AMONGST THE YOUNG GENERATION

When investigating the value dimensions of the age group of Hungarian youth and young adults (15–29) researchers wanted to know how this generation could be described and characterized in Hungary. Moreover, they thought it was important to analyse to what extent does their thinking differ from that of the elder generation, that of their parents. We have to note here that at the beginning of the transition

¹⁴ In her study Olga Tóth measures the extent of integration/disintegration within a family by the good or bad functioning of the family, the tightness of relationship between family members and the quality of family life.



DOKTORI MŰHELYEKBŐL

process that has taken place in Hungary it was assumed that the generation born in the early 1990s would already follow different values by its age of twenties than the twentysomethings of the 1990s. This was in accordance with the collective social expectations: taking risk, innovation, dynamism and competitiveness “should characterize” the young generation of the 2010s in an expectedly developing, open society (Ságvári 2012). Comparative analyses, however, show a disillusioning difference in contrast with the expected results. In his study titled “Age of transitions?—The Society’s Image of Hungarian Youth” Bence Ságvári depicts two conspicuous differences in terms of comparing his empiric research to EU studies. One of them is that in the opinion of young age groups in Hungary *the transgression of norms is necessary not only for economic success, but also for everyday life*¹⁵. We can see without special explanation that this is an evident proof of the value crisis and the loss of confidence. So it is, mainly if we add the attitude mentioned above to the effect that people do not really admit their own transgressions of norms while they bring on those occurring in other countries. That is, if it was allowed within the territory from generation to generation to suggest the appropriateness of accepted, unwritten “rules” of “wangle” to generation for the expectable economic benefits, while everybody exactly knows what would be appropriate according to the rules of general norms. This is bound to be the view of young age groups on the transgression of norms. We assume however, that this results in increasing fault-lines instead of forcing cohesion within a society or community. That is it does not assist the predominance of “cooperative strategy”¹⁶ (Hankiss 2004: 44) in the actual human and social practices. Rightly is the issue raised on how this erosion of trust/confidence could be stopped then? Should all this be considered as the above mentioned symptom of crisis or does it fit in the conceived “movements” characterizing modern communities and societies? We assume that it does not fit in, but we are going to give detailed explanation on the relevant evidences in another study. (We need to note though that finding a solution to this communal problem seemingly represents a major challenge for the all-time responsible political governance.) The other conspicuous difference as Ságvári indicated in his paper is—according to one of the results of the European Social Survey cited in the study—that the average satisfaction of Hungarian young people with the effective political and economic system scored 52. Compared at a European level this is qualified as very low (the lowest) index¹⁷. (Figure 2.)

¹⁵ It is important to note that—according to the study—this point of view is typical not only in the case of young people studying in higher education but to the Hungarian youth in general.

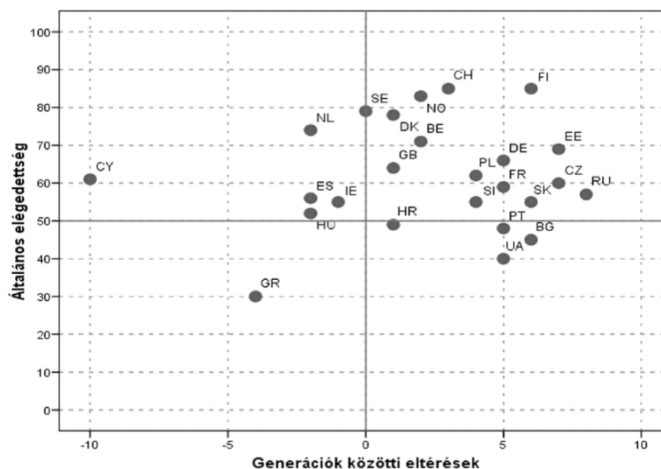
¹⁶ Elemér Hankiss describes cooperative strategy as fixed in the process of a phenomena related to society. This includes not merely the cooperative behaviour of the individual taking the interests of the majority into consideration but also that the individual does not give priority to his/her own direct personal interests against those of the community in course of the process. (Social Traps – Diagnoses, 2004: 44.)

¹⁷ The average value of the index measuring satisfaction scored 58 in the complete ESS sample while



DOKTORI MŰHELYEKBŐL

Figure 2 Values of general satisfaction in the age group of 15–29 years and, respectively, differences between these and the average values of the age group over 60 years typical to the given country.



Vertical text: General satisfaction. Horizontal text: Differences between generations.

Source: Volume of Social Integration 2012

At the same time this outcome is not irrespective of the opinion of society as a whole. That is, *in terms of the survey, there are no differences between generations*—Ságvári states. What can this all mean? What can be the reason for that concerning their thinking, attitude to life and recognition of situations generations about at this point in Hungary? As Bence Ságvári writes, “*due to insecurity caused by the crisis*” young people “*have ‘grown old’ up to their parents*” (Ságvári 2012: 79). Ságvári delineates the answer in his study very clearly: economic setback and stagnation, respectively, as well as the sluggish recovery in future years does not promise fast and positive changes in the life of Hungarian young people. This means that *crisis-mindedness and insecurity may become a general experience of generation* for young people entering the job market in the near future. It is very hard to accept the recognition that this “*experience of failure*”—as young generation approaches stability and calculability—might accompany them through all of their life. The lack of calculability and the lack of stability of workplaces go hand in hand with

it scored 60 in the case of young people aged 15–29. The average values of this age group varied between 85 (Finland) and 30 (Greece) scores (in: Bence Ságvári: *The Age of Transitions?—The Society’s Image of Hungarian Youth in: Contemporary Social Integration in Hungary, Studies; MTA Research Institute of Social Sciences (Institute of Sociology) of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Argumentum Kiadó 2012.*



DOKTORI MŰHELYEKBŐL

the feeling of instability of the members of society. This diminishes confidence expressed towards social institutions and this has an effect on the economic views as well as the characteristics of the normative cohesion of a society.

2.3.1 *Lack of cohesion and real sense of community*

Derived from the demonstrated analysis we could see that by the end of the first decade of the 2000s young generations in the exemplified Hungarian society are at least as much mistrusted and conceive the future insecure as the elder generations are and do. Nevertheless, the common experience of this mistrust naturally *does not create a real community feeling* between the different generations. (Kovách – Dupcsik 2012) On the contrary: it enhances the feeling of insecurity concerning the future, which in turn—by generating a response—poses “choice” for the individual. Hence while in “traditional” communities individuals occupied their “predetermined places” providing this way a secure identity as a support, we have been uprooted from the safe environment of this protected world by today’s modern age (Bauman 2000). It was not by chance using the phrase by Bauman as a title of this small chapter: “Security” in contrast with free choice. “*Modernity puts compulsive and binding ‘self-identification’ in the place of “determination” of social status*”—states Bauman in his paper titled *Identity and Globalisation*¹⁸ (Légmán refers Baumann 2012: 360).

3. PREDETERMINED POSITIONS—COMMUNITY IMAGES DIFFERENTLY

3.1. *A small detour to the “prehensile”, the smallest unit of society*

When analysing qualitatively the historical-structural changes of modern families, the aforementioned Baumanian idea of family providing security becomes central once again. We cannot in good conscience move on without taking note of the smallest social unit as a pillar of society, which is the starting point of the behaviour and trust between people who make up society. In his study, Somlai László also approaches the traditional and modern family environments from the direction of stability and instability. According to Somlai, “*modern families do not primarily differ in the number of their functions or the extent of their cohesion from those of the earlier ages but rather in the type of their members’ relation*” (Somlai 2012: 504). His standpoint is that by the changing of stability criteria it is not the accumulated objects and goods, neither the swearing and group symbols that count in family relations, but that “how family members loose or tie each other” and how they shape the system

¹⁸ Bauman, Zigmund (2001). *Identity and Globalistaion. Lettre*, 42: 11–13.



DOKTORI MŰHELYEKBŐL

of their relationship. As Somlai views it, two opposite theories and directions may be connected to the phenomena of family disintegration from the aspect of stability. One of them—called *family consensus theory* by him—is the idea symbolising the integration of the persons of various gender and age living in the family. The other one is the opposite of this which he describes as the “*family conflict theory*”¹⁹ (Somlai 2012: 517). The point of it is that the tightness of family ties is based on solidarity and thus it depends on the strength of the agreement that to what extent do the members of the family adapt to the mutually undertaken situations and acceptance of common values. If the mutual expectations of roles are undermined and the conflict stretching between them gets increasingly stronger then stability and the unity of family will disintegrate (Somlai 2012).

So the decline or absence of solidarity within the family can lead to its fragmentation just as a state of distrusts can lead to the disintegration of a greater structure, even society. However in academic literature we can find several examples and ample evidence²⁰ of the idea that in a society trust affects—amongst others—the view of the importance of solidarity in a positive manner (Janky 2005).

There is another sociological view which approaches this topic from the standpoint of stability and security, which in the past twenty years has considered the family a system, and discussed it based on its functions. *Normann W. Bell and Ezra F. Vogel* in the introduction of their book titled “Modern Introduction to Family” articulate their opinion *on the open feature of family as a social system*. The two authors write about an open system in which having connection with other systems is a fundamental characteristic. Moreover, in terms of investigating its functions four types of the system can be distinguished, including the reproductive socialising, the economic, the political and the communal functions. At the same time, *functions that are necessary for the stability of the family*, such as leading the family, assurance of integration and solidarity and maintenance of family values and norms are interpreted separately (Cseh-Szombathy 1979). Robert F. Winch counts among the authors who interpret family in a system and maybe he has given the most comprehensive classification of the functions that characterize family in his book titled “The Modern Family”²¹. Winch mentions already five fundamental functions by

¹⁹ Similarly to the consensus theory the conflict theory does not deal solely either with the functioning of the family organization. It has phrased out and has tried to verify statements of a wider range, as well, since the mid 1960s (see e.g. Coser 1968; Deutsch 1973; Bonoma – Milburn 1977.) (Somlai 2012: 517).

²⁰ These can be found in Tárki’s 2015 research, the conclusion of which, both of the crosstab and the regression analyses, is that the “untrusting” part of the Hungarian population rejects the importance of helping their fellow humans in quite a large ratio, which means that their solidarity felt towards other humans is fairly low (Medgyesi – Tóth 2005: 11.)

²¹ The Modern Family by Robert F. Winch 1963



DOKTORI MŰHELYEKBŐL

which the family contributes to the survival of the social system and, respectively, to the satisfaction of the needs of the individuals who make up the family. These are the *reproductive function ensuring the new generation*, as well as *the economic, political, socializing* and educational as well as *the religious functions* which, according to Winch's interpretation, make social control as well as the toleration of crisis situations in the family possible (Cseh-Szombathy 2006).

3.2. THOUGHTS ABOUT COMMUNITY...

As opposed to the modern theory of society, the aforementioned "self-defining" interpretation which places the individual at its center, the creators of classical theories such as Tönnies, Weber, Parsons, Beck or Giddens focus on the family and civil society. For this reason investigation of the community itself remains somewhat neglected (Légmán 2012) in the majority of social sciences.

However, this does not mean that e.g. Weber—derived from social relation²²—would not have described his own concept of community as an independent entity. It's true though, that his emotional investigations do not miss religion-based approaches. Weber names that social relationship a community where social activity²³ is characterised by an attitude of participants based on their subjectively experienced—emotional, impulsive or traditional—inheritance. By these ideas Weber raises the issue of mutuality in sociological thinking on a long term. The use of Durkheim's concept of collective sense²⁴ and later that of the concepts of common knowledge (see e.g. Cohen) can be originated from this issue, as well. It was, however, principally the issue of *what does really hold society together?*—that influenced the direction of thinking in social science. And though Durkheim using the concept of social cohesion describes and also precisely defines the most adequate answer²⁵ to

²² Following the explication of the triple concept of behaviour, action and social activity Weber introduces the concept of social relation. "In respect of grasping human sociality maybe this is the most important step." We talk about social relation when the behaviour of several people—appropriate to their sensual content—act mutually upon each other and this mutual adjustment orients their attitude (Wright cited in Szakadát 2011).

²³ Weber defines the idea of social activity as an action that refers to others' behaviour and is adjusted to others' attitude in accordance with the intention and sense of the actors (Szakadát 2011). Weber distinguishes four types of behaviour: purpose-rational, value-rational, emotion-rational and tradition-rational actions.

²⁴ As per Durkheim—influenced by Comte and Spencer—social facts (empirical researches) are independent of the individual as well as the personal sense and practice. They are exclusively determined by the collective sense (*âme collective*) and its changes, respectively. Changes in collective social sense can exclusively be traced back to social reasons and not to biological or psychological ones. That means that sociological medium has a definitive role (sociologism).

²⁵ Durkheim in his book *On Social Division of Labour* (1893) asks and answers the questions considering cohesion in modern society. As per his standpoint division of labour is one of the bases of social



DOKTORI MŰHELYEKBŐL

the question, by introducing the idea of social solidarity as the expression of the internal cohesion of community, he has practically established a school. In spite of that, in sociological literature the work of Ferdinand Tönnies (*Community and Society* 1887) is regarded as the starting point of discussions on communities.

In sociologic literature, the starting point of the discourse about communities is considered to be the work of Ferdinand Tönnies, as mentioned above (*Community and Society* 1887).

Conclusion

Nevertheless, both society and people are in need of community. People are because community may provide security, goal and content for them as well as the opportunity to deploy their personality. Society is, in turn, because it would fall apart and become a simple mass of people without the “rich network” (Hankiss 2004: 63) of communities. Hence the point is that the diversity of individual interests would become strong and effective interests of groups so as to ensure the internal movement and development of communities by all means, either intensifying or contradicting with each other (Hankiss 2004). But we wonder to what extent is the contrast between societies and the potentially contradicting processes of communities forming, ceasing and renewing in them acceptable? To what extent can the series of symptoms resulting in insecurity in our individualised age be considered as movements following the “natural” changes of modern societies? And when are they to be called “unhealthy processes” from the point of view of community and society? By the example of the survey carried out in the Hungarian society we see that young generation facing a crisis of values has itself an insecure vision including community images standing on insecure bases. We assume that this could not be a stable base of a future law-abiding society, or at least it is doubtful. In this respect this young generation seems to expect help in order to change its opinion and view. Bauman writes in his book *Liquid Modernity* that it is even less clear whether what evidences reality can serve with reflecting the needs of community. We would like to add to this that the real question is whether when we notice that it is high time to pay attention to the “order of reality”—as Bauman says. And whether when we hear the signals of not “real

order. Society is not a simple complex of individuals, but rather a system evolving by associations. Nothing “communal” can be accomplished if there are no individual senses; this is a necessary, but not sufficient condition to the evolvement of society. As per Durkheim’s approach, changes in collective social sense can exclusively be traced back to social reasons and not to biological or psychological ones. That means that sociological medium has a definitive role. Durkheim found the idea of social solidarity through questions: “Is there any moral that is able to integrate society? Is there any science that deals with this? Does moral integrate modern society at all?” He believes that this is the power that sustains inherent cohesion of community. This inherence drives people towards each other.



DOKTORI MŰHELYEKBŐL

communities” (Kovách – Dupcsik 2012: 12) so as to give a chance to the formation of new, real ones where perceptible movements of communities and their changes indicating disintegration cannot very likely be charged merely on modernity.

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DOKTORI MŰHELYEKBŐL

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