A WORRIED LOOK AT CEECs', E.G. SLOVENIA'S, ACCESSION TO EUROPEAN UNION – AFTER 15 YEARS OF THE TWO-GENERATION CYCLES LAW

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Abstract

Several countries of the Central and Eastern Europe (CEECs) are entering European Union in 2004. Mulej's theory of the two-generation cycles might be able to explain why are they about to face hard times rather than prosperity. CEECs passed one (rather than fourteen, at least) decade of (innovative!) entrepreneurship. CEECs' surviving old culture does not favor it or innovation a lot yet. Globalization also presses CEECs by pushing them into a neocolonial dependence. So does their necessity to accelerate their catching up of evolution of innovative business, economy and society, simultaneously. The world mainstream-literature on economics and systems theory/ies does not show a way out of this dilemma.

0 The selected problem and viewpoint of consideration

Experience in CEEC, incl. in Slovenia, shows trouble in implementation of contemporary innovation / entrepreneurship (Rebernik, 2003). Causes of troubles of an economy and a society modernizing as a latecomer can be more easily detected through development economics rather than through comparison of simultaneous situations. Systems thinking can help more than a narrow specialization. (See: Mulej, 2000 and earlier; Mulej et al, 2003; Cizelj, 2003; Bucar, 2003; CJE, 2003)

1 Law of Two-generation Cycles and Culture, Entrepreneurship and Innovation in CEECs

In 1980s, an exhibition about the USA history, in the Federal Hall in New York, made Mulej think about the transition processes of the pre-industrial societies into modern ones. Exposed data denoted break-through events at about every 70 years: culture changes slowly. He labeled these periods two-generation cycles (TGC) in established »the law of two-generation cycles in the transition of a pre-industrial into a contemporary society (LTGC)«. (Mulej, 1994a; Mulej, 1994b) This law might make the problems of CEECs entering EU in 2004 easier to understand – USA, Japan, and EU have long ago seen processes taking place in CEECs now. (For some details see: Mulej et al, 2000, pp. 108-116)

On LTGC's terms, USA started its modernization process by Independence War, etc, i.e. the time of 1775-1789. Now, USA is entering her fourth TGC. USA is trying, under the name of the free market and globalization, to introduce an extremely innovative / entrepreneurial economic culture worldwide. Of course, the latter causes a colonial dependence[1] of the too poorly innovative ones because they are not competitive. (See: Shutt, 2001; Lal, 2002: CJE, 2003)

In 1870s or so, two TGCs ago, the Northwestern world and Japan, only, abolished the guilds' monopolies (over the economy), and the church monopolies (over thinking and ideology). They introduced two kinds of competition: parliamentary democracy and entrepreneurship. The latter became everyone's right to take risk in the laboratory, factory, and market, at one's own account. (Rosenberg, Birdzell, 1986).

Two essential differences between USA and Europe matter here: Europe needed much more time because USA emerged from emigration of the most entrepreneurial Europeans finding the European innovation and development speed too slow. (Reich, 1984; Hansen, 2003). In addition: Europe considered management a profession (and a science) much later than USA (Zenko, 1999).

Japan used government measures that were accelerating modernization a lot and were well accepted by the business community and other population. Thus, their transition took much less time – only two TGCs were enough for Japan to catch up with USA and Europe in economic

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[1] From the viewpoint of Baumol's (1993) classification of entrepreneurial activities this frequently means the destructive entrepreneurship, and from a global viewpoint typical cases of the "rent-seeking entrepreneurship".

terms. Two managerial interventions were critical: they opened Japan to the world in 1870s, and after 1945 they coupled innovating and total quality with competitiveness incl. a very broad engaging of coworkers in innovating. It was mostly incremental, mostly, but helped the prevailing culture to change to an innovative one.

Along these lines the experience – of e.g. Slovenia – is interesting. She has been trying to become able to enter EU, having no alternative (Tupy, 2003). The help from EU has offered her much more capacity to become a partner than to become a competitor: knowledge and values concerning the entrepreneurship and innovating are offered the least.

No new competitors seem desired by US and EU.

For latecomers, such as CEECs, this means their need to catch up to overcome their technology and socio-economic development lag, and to compete in the global market with no protection from the earlier times, at the same time (see Petrin, Mihelic, 2002). This harsh need faces a poorly developed capacity: CEECs' benchmarked competitors had 2-5 TGCs to gradually innovate their prevailing cultures, while the latecomers have had only a few decades, up to one TGC. The pre-industrial culture survives and includes little competitiveness. How should the cultural change be accelerated enough, nobody seems to know (CJE, 2003; Dyck, Mulej, 1998; Greer, 2000).

A warning from the neoclassic economists (convergence theorists) also matters. Thus, e.g. Abramovitz warns several times (1986, 1991) that the social capability belongs to clue determinants of success in catching up. If a community (country, society) is not capable of (which means having institutional conditions) and does not also (!) have suitable values encouraging innovating, competitiveness and entrepreneurship, then she has a poor chance to catch up (Bucar, 2001). This social capability depends on the prevailing culture, ethics, and values, not merely on professional knowledge and technology. With a lack of innovative and entrepreneurial culture (see e.g. Radosevic, ed., 2002; Bucar, 2003; Rebernik et al, 2003) well-meant programs remain unrealized and/or ineffective.

This difference in culture is what a prevailing majority of CEECs', incl. Slovenia is facing after their independence and will face even more after joining European Union. The gap is both unavoidable and dramatically huge, making adoption of a new culture a very demanding and urgent task. At the same time, experience of the economically advanced older market economies says that in some cases it was possible to accelerate the development (Japan, South Korea, etc). The technological development makes an important part of this development, but it hardly can be attained and used economically with no organizational development (Wong-MingJi, Millette, 2001), especially in the small and medium size enterprises (Wollongong, 2003), which make nearly 99 % of all in both EU and Slovenia.

2 CEECs Cannot Imitate Their World-top Forerunners

Around 1990, in transitional CEECs their political decisions and, partly, wars made a legal end to the period of their so-called socialism and communism. In development economics terms this meant a visible end of their 1st TGC. This TGC created the industrial and urban basis of a further transition from a pre-industrial to modern market economy (See: e.g. Mulej, 1981). A natural next phase, the 2nd TGC, is the liberal entrepreneurial capitalism, according to the western history. But it does not accelerate enough, today. A sufficiently advanced government might perhaps try to apply some models of measures from Japan, Singapore, Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Ireland, or Finland in order to accelerate emergence of innovative entrepreneurship more than a comparable TGC has seen in the West. Though, the socio-economic circumstances do not favor such interventions, at least not in CEECs, now, at least not on a natural basis. Why not?

After her Civil War of 1860s, the USA faced her own local need for creation of inventions and turning them into innovations, including a critical role of entrepreneurship, management, and government (see: Reich, 1984). After 1870s other Western countries and Japan did so, too. CEECs did not, mostly.

Such an experience teaches the latecomer countries who, in principle, have somebody and something to imitate: yes, you can imitate, but include your own creative (!) adaptation to current circumstances of your own; the development strategy making e.g. Ireland successful in 1980s, will not result in an equal success today, the circumstances in the international economy have radically changed, partly due to technology development. Thus, the transitional countries decide well, if they analyze the development ways, mechanisms and policies of the countries that have succeeded in their catching-up in the past, but do not repeat their actions. Besides the changed international circumstances, they have very different starting bases of their own, including the culture of entrepreneurship, as we have pointed out.

Unfortunately, the CEECs, once established after the 1st or 2nd World Wars, exaggerated the role of government as the problem solver of the society and produced etatism. This brought them in feudal relations (not yet fully outlived anyway, in terms of LTGC) of a new form; thus, one's right of being entrepreneurial and different from one's co-citizens lacked, and therefore the development was lagging.

Among CEECs, it was only the Czech area that had experienced some more of a Western style of the 1st TGC before the 1st World War; it was the most industrialized and educated area of the Austrian Empire. After the dissolution of the Austria-Hungarian Empire, Slovenes were included in Yugoslavia, a kingdom having its center in an area with a very pre-industrial culture. This is a critical fact. Politically, Yugoslavia (1918-41, 1945-91) was centralistic. She lacked entrepreneurship of her own and needed to open her economy to foreign investors in order to start to industrialize. Foreigners came (in 1928-41) mostly with written-off factory equipment requiring little knowledge and creativity or innovating from workers. 87% of their investments were located in the former Austro-Hungarian areas and the city of Belgrade, while the other half of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia received only 13 % of investment, mostly in mining. (See: Mulej, 1981)

– Experiences of Yugoslavian people (1918-1941) that matter for this contribution most include:

- Capitalism provides no benefit to majority: it does not offer them a good life.
- The entrepreneurial people should better move to the more modern West, abroad.
- The ones remaining at home are less entrepreneurial, and solidarity is an essential social attribute to them, including their economic thinking and values.

The positive consequence was that the modest Yugoslavian people/s were used to hard life, and were capable of the tremendous efforts of their victorious insurrection against Hitler, Mussolini and their local allies (1941-45). At the same time, the negative consequence was that these people did not see capitalism as an innovative society living on implementation of new benefits resulting from new ideas, but as a society of exploitation, first of all.

When after their victory over Hitler etc, the winning Tito's partisans saw, like the West had seen one TGC or more earlier, their need for acceleration of urbanization and industrialization as well as education and science associated with them. They saw that it had been the government that introduced such – basically revolutionary / radically innovative – changes in the West. And they introduced their own style of the enlightened absolutism, which differed from the one in the previous Kingdom of Yugoslavia (having produced a poor advancement). They tried to catch up in an accelerated way, including by methods that might be called violent.[2] They saw that they lacked entrepreneurial and educated people; hence they introduced centralization of power and added a lot of social care to it (with which emperor Wilhelm of Germany and his chancellor Bismarck bought social peace one TGC earlier). But both Soviets' and Tito's mistake was to let centralism last for too long and deteriorate in a specific prolongation of a, rather feudal and un-innovative society (under the name of socialism and/or communism):

- They lacked care for innovation, easily accessible entrepreneurship and modern market.
- At the same they did not solve – like nobody in history did – the issue, which used to occupy Adam Smith already and later on Karl Marx: how to preserve solidarity from pre-industrial times of small village communities after the transition to the prevailingly industrial and urban life. (Walker, 1978; Petzinger, 2000)
- The so-called General Industrial Associations inside the Chambers of Economy had the role of letting the existing »competitors« / suppliers allow or not allow a new supplier to show up in the »market«; thus the feudal guild principles with a lack of competition survived until the very dissolution of the »socialist« Yugoslavia.
- The political monopoly of a single party kept alive another attribute, which the Northwest of the World had abolished in 1870s: ideological monopoly. It was a more innovative one than ever before in the area, but not enough.

Thus a lack of room for entrepreneurship and innovating was created, and too much room was left for science, research and higher education, as well as businesses, to remain more or less closed in themselves, self-sufficient, while the perception and practice of development is linked with investing much more than with innovating[3].

In the first years after the 2nd World War, Boris Kidric, after a short while of chairing the first government of Slovenia in 1945, was the Yugoslavian minister of economy until his death in 1953. He supported the development of education and science a lot (see: Repe 2003). In his times, inventors and innovators were supported a lot and the Union of Inventors of Yugoslavia held its first Congress[4]. In mid 1960s prof. dr. Stojan Pretnar became the head of the Federal Patent Office. Under his impact Yugoslavia passed her law on innovation. In accord with the international practice of that time, the term of innovation included only incremental technology novelties produced outside one's job duties. In 1971 OECD, in its Frascati Manual, introduced a much broader definition of innovation: it is every beneficial novelty (the benefit is determined by users, not authors). In law, Yugoslavia adapted to this definition in 1981, in practice very partially only, and so did Slovenia[5], too.

Only in 1989, a new law eased the legal and financial access to entrepreneurship very much. But this was too one-sided, too late and had too little accelerating impact for Yugoslavia to survive. The visible reasons for her to fall apart included the too big difference in the culture concerning innovation between Slovenia on one hand and the Southeastern areas / Republics in Yugoslavia on the other hand. Slovenia was not reaching the level of innovation experienced in the West, but greatly exceeded the one of all other Republics. – In early 1980s, Slovenia decided to become an innovative society (Komunist, 1984). Nobody did so in CEECs then.

2 The Two Decades Since The Slovenian Decision to Become An Innovative Society

After several initiatives by professionals and the resulting conference of the League of Communists (see: Komunist, 1984) the Assembly of Slovenia passed legislation supportive of innovation in 1985 and 1986. –

[2] Similar as in the West (see: Reich, 1984) and later on in Soviet Union they moved people from agriculture and villages to industry and towns. But it was government who took over the role of the entrepreneur, including its own usual right of coercion. Thus, people lacked both understanding of what was going on and was needed, and deciding about themselves. Therefore, they opposed.

[3] But, on the other hand, a investment culture matches Keynes's teaching on economic theory, which never mentions innovation, at least not explicitly. In his times, innovation was much more narrowly defined than today.

[4] Its second congress took place only 36 years later; the time distance says a lot about the prevailing culture.

[5] EU, too, found it necessary to define innovation explicitly and to introduce conscious efforts for its promotion (see: EU 2000). Later on the same need was felt concerning entrepreneurship. (See many documents on it at http (http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/enterprise_policy/index.htm) Green paper on Entrepreneurship, in debate in 2003, has an equal purpose: to encourage entrepreneurship for Europe to become more competitive.

But the laws were abused soon and therefore abolished soon: companies, as users of laws, proclaimed many results as an innovation-based income unlawfully for tax allowances. In 1984-86 teams made of experts and politicians wandered around all Slovenia trying to make the local politicians and managers aware of the fact that the innovative society is a must in the contemporary circumstances, and so is the innovative business in all organizations (see: PODIM, 1978-2003; Kos, 1986a; Kos, 1986b; Mulej et al, 1987). But the encouragement by the professional and political words was not enough. In enterprises doing a lot of business in the world markets, they did understand what the power holders suggested and why, but the ones with a rather monopolistic position in the Yugoslavian market did not accept these suggestions.

The limitation in the public perception of the notion of innovation to incremental technology novelties – having the legal monopoly over the term innovation by the law of 1965, but no longer by the law of 1981 – is still not out-rooted even today (see: investigations by graduate students; Mulej et al, 2003).

In 1980s, Slovenia was the only Republic in Yugoslavia to give a member of the Presidency of the Republic the duty to promote innovation. In March 1990, several months before dissolution of Yugoslavia, Slovenia passed two constitutional amendments: the first one abolished the notion »Socialistic« in the name of the Republic of Slovenia, the second one introduced the notion innovation into her bases of economy. This was also the direction of the constitutional development after Slovenia's independence. Nobody did so in CEECs then.

In 1989, the last government of Yugoslavia legalized a simple way to entrepreneurship, but to a legally existing one only[6]. The necessary new capacity to link entrepreneurship and innovation into one notion and save the country by their synergy did not result. The 1st TGC was resulting in different outcomes – if viewed per areas, Republics and Autonomous Provinces of Yugoslavia. For Slovenia, which had experienced a little bit of her 1st TGC for the second time (due to her Austrian history), this introduction was too late. For some other areas in which they favored emotions of the national belonging and of solidarity to the economic basis of contemporary independence, it was too early.

In the first years after her independence, Slovenia carried on her way toward an innovative society. Establishment of enterprises became simple on legal terms, but the culture kept favoring solidarity to richness and other outer signs of success (see: Dyck, Mulej, 1998; many other analyses). Soon, Slovenia started to pass legislation supportive of innovating and linking it with entrepreneurship, anyway, but a passive one: supporting rather than accelerating. For a catching-up latecomer this is not enough.

[6] The delusion that the clue to development lies in the legal ownership rather than in entrepreneurship, ruled almost throught the entire 1990s in Slovenia, and even more in other CEECs. (See: Rebernik, 1997)

4 Conclusions

In a summary, the situation is complex and has very deep historic roots that are allowing for a gradual change of culture from the one objecting to risk, innovation, and entrepreneurship, to the one accepting and favoring them. Measures supportive of innovating exist more in legal than in economic terms, and even less as an essential component of the national, regional, and personal cultures (see: Bucar, Stare, 2003). It is interesting that Slovenia has introduced, including by advice of foreign experts (GOPA Report, 1994; PHARE projects), into her institutional scheme of measures aimed at promotion of entrepreneurship and innovation a number of mechanism known in the advanced countries. – It is exactly the relatively poor success of these measures, which points out: measures to be undertaken must be adapted to local conditions; much more must be done to make ethics, culture and values support innovation.

Legislation is not enough. Market also works slowly, too slowly for a big enough share of citizens of Slovenia to be modern enough when entering EU[7].

The part of the former Ministry of Science and Technology, working on technology development, was transferred to the Ministry of Economy. This gave it a new impetus, including a transition from fostering inventing to fostering innovating. For a number of years, Ministry of Economy has had a state secretary etc. for innovating (with another official name), but mostly a passive strategy.

Slovenia has her »Strategy of Economic Development of Slovenia for 2001-2006« (UMAR, 2002). She has practically all supports known in the West, for those who – on their own – want to invent, innovate and be entrepreneurs (including the ones not merely existing on legal terms, but innovative).

But she has no measures working on changing / innovating the prevailing culture into a new one – favoring innovating, risk taking and entrepreneurship – on a more accelerated basis than the market one. Slovenia is under the EU average of being entrepreneurial. Not even all the ministers are sure that Slovenia cannot do well in EU, if she is not entrepreneurial and innovative over the average. Similar findings result from surveys among managers; nearly half of them think that no serious changes will be needed after accession to EU. At the same time, the relatively small example of brands and trademarks shows that they lack knowledge of EU norms (Marn, Zenko 2003). – Economics and management, especially the innovation management, teach differently, like being professions with nothing in common!

Unfortunately, latecomers to the modern life such as CEECs, cannot easily imitate the older countries. EU countries, too, are looking for their ways, because they need a new one, they need innovation, new visions, new institutions, and new relations. So does USA, so does the

[7] In the advanced countries they find, too, that the promotion of entrepreneurship and innovation requires an active role of the government. It should provide a suitable macroeconomic environment and rather direct measures strengthening the behavior of business entities (EU, 2003; OECD, 2001; CJE, 2003).

rest of the current World. There are no impressive role models easy to imitate. They have all been too one-sided rather than holistic (Mulej, 2003) for centuries, misreading Adam Smith: his "invisible hand" has spoken for interdependence, not independence (see: Petzinger, 2000). – Systems thinking lacks badly among politicians, economists, and businesspersons.

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