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CISES s.r.l. & PSIOP

Political and Economic Self-Constitution: Citizenship Activity and Education

Proceedings of the VI international scientific and practical seminar
June 5th, 2018
Olsztyn, Poland

Edited by
Irina Bondarevskaya, Beata Krzywosz-Rynkiewicz





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Possible economic impact of robotisation and modelling of the educational response

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Introduction. As the contemporary tendencies show, the robotisation (this term is being used here as a generic one, the term that encompasses economic and other activities of human life) gains impetus and has ever increasing implications on the way we organise our walks of life (Gimžauskienė et al, 2015; Lipinski et al, 2013; Micevičienė D., Sinkevičius, V., Urbanavičiūtė, L. Henschcke M., 2015).

The economies in some cases grow (as in Japan), in some cases the data is in controversy (the UK) due to robotisation. However, the impact itself is evident even after a superficial analysis. Researchers emphasise next to the evident facts that robotisation changes production and increasingly so – service. It lines the fact that robotisation (again, the term is used in a very broad sense, encompassing, e.g., internet-based governmental services, including such sensitive ones, as registration for a social security programme and similar) plays a very important role in every person's life in other spheres.

While earlier a citizen was consulted on medical, social services, pension and other concerns by a professional – fellow citizen, today the same consultations are provided as an 'ask-answer on-line' task. The same applies to banking, increasingly so with shopping, etc. However the main focus of this study is on specifically possible impact on public servants – because of three main reasons.

Firstly, the public servants are highly competent and highly qualified. Moreover, with the increased role of robotisation (the software that registers applications, processes them etc.) the important and substantial part of their work:

direct consultations and social dimension of those consultations will be lost. That is, the citizens will not have an important and sometimes even vital link to their state, which had been previously ensured exactly that way: via social interaction during consultations. A vital, authentic, probably irreplaceable and reciprocal channels between citizens and a state will be severed. Secondly, while public servants are at risk of structural unemployment in quite near future, the very foundations of a state may be at risk. Though to some extent this is an exaggeration for the sake of an argument, however, to a substantial degree that is a risk that a responsible researchers and a citizen should not overlook. Thirdly, due to the nature of their work, the loyalty to profession, serving citizens and residents, flexibility, public servants may turn out to be most receptive to new roles and functions in a drastically changing walk of professions and society (Łapiński K., Peterlik M., Wyżnikiewicz B, 2013).

The research interest stems from the fact that with an increasing impact of robotisation on all the walks of life, the concern should not be overlooked regarding all the gains (increased flexibility, effectiveness in processes), also a negative aspect must be analysed and countermeasures introduced. And namely, with an increasing rate of delegating production and services (including social) to robots (again, the general term, including software), a large number of formerly highly qualified professionals are at risk of losing their jobs in all spheres (the process is already evident). Bank-teller, travel agent, etc., even state employer, public servant, responsible for consulting and calculating a pension of a citizen is made redundant, because the task is now performed in a matter of seconds by a specific software. Surely enough, the IT professionals are the ones not at immediate risk identified; however, many other professions: even doctors, lawyers, analyst are at risk (<http://fortune.com/2015/02/25/5-jobs-that-robots-already-are-taking/>).

Therefore, the prognostic research and possibly, actions as to how assist highly qualified professionals in finding new ways of organising their lives with

the risk (very real) of losing their jobs in several years or a decade, is worthwhile and timely. Moreover, for adult educators the research focus may have another important dimension, and namely – how to re-organise their own education and re-shape their own profession, because of the increasing e-learning opportunities, the educators themselves are at risk of being made redundant (Butrime, Zuzevičiūtė, 2016).

Therefore, in the light of the above, the research question is formulated as follows. What are the most immediate and also longer-term challenges for public servants in the context of the increasing speed and scope of robotisation (the term being used as a general term to denote activities that are being based on IT technologies, therefore, excluding the necessity for participation of a human being) in assisting professionals at risk of losing their jobs and still – organising their lives in a rewarding and meaningful way for their personal and social benefit?

Objectives. 1) To present and discuss the available theoretical considerations with regards to research question above; 2) To present the research (qualitative approach, interview) that was designed for the purpose to display the issues regarding research question; 3) To invite participants to react critically to the research question, its rationale and theoretical model behind, also, to invite them to join the study.

For the first step it is planned to invite to participate as respondents (for the pilot phase), teachers, teachers of adults and teachers in higher education – as representatives of public servants. It is suggested to have may be 12 – 15 teachers interviewed. A semi-structured interview is suggested. The interview should be recorded, the main parts / findings transcribed, preferably, directly in English, to be sent to initiator for analysis and reporting.

Results. Only the results of preparatory phase may be presented at this stage; and namely, the questions for a planned interview. The semi-structured interview consists of the following questions (preliminary formulation).

- a) What is an extent of robotisation (a term is used in a broad sense, and interviewer is allowed to explain) in your country? For which professions do you think it may have the most immediate impact? For which – a longer one? How will you characterise that impact? What is the situation of professionals that may be at risk if the process of robotisation gains further impact and scope?
- b) What can you, as a professional in teaching adults, do in order to participate in this process rather than to observe it?
- c) What additional help (dimension for professionalization) do you need in order to help professionals that potentially might be at risk with further robotisation? What additional help (dimension for professionalization) do you need in order to help professionals who already are or are experiencing jeopardy to their job because of robotisation?
- d) How will you describe a professional and society in ten years (given the rate of robotisation)? How will you characterise your own work and mission in such society?

Conclusions. The tendencies illustrate well the necessity to investigate research question and the implications of the process. The prospective thinking enables concluding the necessity to work towards the direction in order to have at least some answers and ideas about facing an issue that will become evident in few years' time (and better sooner than later). Especially, the role of educators is important, because obviously educators may turn out to be the ones that may help to organise the transition period in order to avoid systemic unemployment as opposed to creating a new pool of competencies and the roles to rely upon for citizens and residents. Due to the novelty of the situation itself and the lack of methodology to tackle it a study is timely and therefore critical constructive comments and joining the initiative will be most appreciated (at the e-mail: vaiva.zuzeviciute@mruni.eu).