

## **Panel: Human Relationships and Social Power**

Marta Nešković

Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia

I consider the human factor responsible for inducing dynamism of the social structure, which is required for ensuring the growth of social power. Therefore, I want to underline the importance of a synergistic perspective for this growth. What do I mean by this? An individual should be open to free exchange of ideas with the social environment through numerous interactions and various types of cooperation. Even though cooperation is said to be the basis of modern society, a minuscule expression and interrelation of the individual potentials within the social structure have made it standing far from reaching the optimal level necessary for its harmonious and prosperous development. How many governmental and non-governmental organizations across the world today work to find answers to a limited number of social questions and how many of them actually consider each other as partners? Their fight for leadership, justified by the inevitable competition for a limited number of influential positions within the social structure, rules out a great amount of cooperative opportunities. How many collaborative interactions and exchanges of ideas are there between different intellectual groups worldwide considering human values? How many such organizations build concepts of global development, progress and peace from different perspectives? It is clear that integration of all these perspectives in a wider framework requires constructive cooperation of all these organizations, which would definitely lead to unprecedented human achievements.

Every human contact is an opportunity for constructive exchange of ideas. The wider the range of difference between the expressed views, the larger the content to be understood and learned. A multicultural encounter is a clear example supporting this statement, showing potentially very different individual frameworks that need to be constructively confronted. Such an interaction is an excellent opportunity for expressing diverse individual potentials, establishing understanding and cooperation between individuals belonging to different cultures, and, thus, generating additional social power. However, we are aware that it is still difficult to establish sincere and productive relationships in multicultural environments worldwide.

A collective consists of individuals connected through a large number of diverse structural and additional subtle relations. Productive human interactions are based on different types of exchange. In classical social science, three types of exchange have been recognized – exchange of materials goods, favors, and other nonmaterial goods, such as information (Befu, 1977). However, recently, an additional type of social exchange has been introduced – exchange of emotions (Lawler, 2001). I consider this type of social exchange crucial, because of its unstructured and unpredictable nature.

For a successful cooperation, in any kind of work, a certain degree of emotional balance between the participating individuals is necessary. Emotions should enable and strengthen cooperation, but they may also prevent it. The theory of social groups tells us that in society, each individual has his or her primary group, comprising the family, and the secondary group, including friends, coworkers and other acquaintances. I say that in human cooperation, there are three basic emotional levels. The first one concerns the consciousness that the individual has towards the goal he/she is aiming to accomplish. The second one concerns the emotions that the individual has in relation to his/her collaborators which make part of the secondary group. And the third level of emotions is produced by the individual being immersed in the world and includes his/her perspective of self, of his primary group and of his/her social life.

I think that when we consider human relationships in regard to the growth of social power, we should take into account all the types of social exchange, not forgetting the additional subtle type – exchange of emotions.