

Coordination Instruments in Croatian Integration Policy: Classification, Evaluation, and Proposals for Improvements

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Integration policy may be defined as a “wicked problem”, as it is a cross-sectoral issue that concerns the responsibilities of various actors. It requires coordination across different sectors and tiers of government, with both formal and informal coordination structures and instruments that can be used to facilitate coordinated implementation of policy goals and measures. Croatia has only rather recently started

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to develop its integration policy. Due to a relatively small number of migrants, the integration policy is primarily targeted at the refugee population. In practice, integration is an inter-departmental task dealt with by different organisations (ministries, agencies) at different governmental levels (national, local), and it includes their cooperation with various non-state actors. The aim of this paper is to examine the recently promoted integration policy in the light of coordination models and instruments. The paper provides an overview of the types and instruments of coordination in the government system and presents the development of the Croatian migration and integration policy, its institutional setting, and the implementation of integration in practice. It also provides a classification and evaluation of the coordination instruments in the integration policy.

Keywords: integration, coordination instrument, refugees, policy, wicked problem

1. Introduction

Unlike a biological organism, whose constituent parts – organs – are firmly connected by material composition and connections and which does not require coordination, in a social system coordination is of the utmost importance for organisms and/or organisations because their constituent parts are not physically connected, but instead consist of individuals and groups linked and divided by psychosocial forces. Therefore, the term *coordination*, referring to the mutual harmonisation of different activities, has become one of the key terms of administrative science and policy research. The need for coordination is particularly evident with regard to policies that involve ‘wicked’ problems, such as the integration of migrants and refugees (Scholten, 2011), which are characterised by complexity, uncertainty about the effects of policy interventions, and strong disagreement on the nature of the problems and adequate solutions (Rittel & Webber, 1973).

Due to its nature, integration policy (i.e. policy directed at the integration or settlement of migrants and refugees) is a cross-sectoral issue that concerns the responsibilities of various actors at various government levels. Therefore, integration policy requires coordination across different sectors and tiers of government, with both formal and informal coordination

structures and instruments that may be used to facilitate coordinated implementation of policy goals and measures. Integration is not a policy that can develop by virtue of serendipity;¹ it needs to be designed and proper instruments of coordination should be developed.

Considering its migration profile and historical migration patterns,² Croatia has only rather recently started to develop its integration policy. The integration policy is still at an early stage of development and largely concentrates on the national level of government. Due to a relatively small number of migrants, the majority of whom are nationals of countries in the region,³ who share a similar historical and institutional heritage with Croatian society, as well as similar language and cultural patterns, the integration policy is primarily targeted at the refugee⁴ population. In practice, refugees are facing different challenges with regard to integration

¹ The word *serendipity* was coined by a British nobleman, Sir Horace Walpole, in the mid-1700s. It originated from an ancient Persian fairy tale “The Three Princes of Serendip”, which describes how three traveling princes repeatedly made fortunate discoveries. Walpole coined the word *serendipity* to refer to accidental discoveries (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/serendipity>).

² During the twentieth century, Croatia was predominantly a country of emigration, with traditional destinations of North America, Europe, Australia, and South America. After World War II, European countries (Germany, Switzerland, and Austria) became the main destinations for Croatian work migrants. With political stabilisation and socio-economic recovery at the beginning of the 21st century, Croatia is gradually becoming a country of destination for different types of migrants. Today, Croatia is at the same time a country of both immigration and emigration; however, the emigration trend is prevalent, creating a negative migration balance (DZS, 2014).

³ According to the statistical data of the Ministry of the Interior (available at <https://mup.hr/ministarstvo/dokumenti/statistika>), by the end of 2015 only 8,525 third-country nationals with permanent residence were registered in Croatia, the majority of whom were citizens of countries of the region (5,147 from Bosnia and Herzegovina, 997 from Serbia, 628 from Kosovo, and 597 from Macedonia). There were also 5,126 permanent residents of the European Economic Area (most of whom come from Germany – 1,429 and Slovenia – 1,333). In 2015 a total of 4,518 third-country nationals and 8,470 EEA nationals with temporary residence were registered. All in all, these are just over 26,000 foreigners with registered residence in Croatia. In 2016 there were 8,107 third-country nationals registered with permanent residence, the majority of whom were once more citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia.

The last census in 2011 showed that the foreign resident population stood at 35,490, which accounted for 0.83% of the overall population (4,284,889). This is below the EU-28 average, as the number of people residing in an EU member state with the citizenship of a non-member country stood at 20.7 million on 1 January 2016, which accounted for 4.1 % of the EU-28 population. In addition, on 1 January 2016 there were 16.0 million persons living in an EU member state whilst simultaneously holding the citizenship of another EU member state (see http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics).

⁴ The term *refugee* includes persons who have been granted international protection in Croatia (asylees and foreigners under subsidiary protection) according to the Law on International and Temporary Protection (Official Gazette No. 70/2015 and 127/2017; hereinafter: LITP).

into Croatian society, ranging from learning the Croatian language to health care, employment, education, and accommodation.

Given the above, the aim of this paper is to examine the recently promoted Croatian integration policy in the light of coordination models and instruments. This is important for several reasons. First, although there has been research into Croatian integration policy (see Tatalović & Jakešević, 2016; Jurković & Rajković Iveta, 2016; Lalić Novak & Vukojičić Tomić, 2016) there is a lack of analysis that would connect the institutional setting and planned outcomes of the policy with the instruments and types of coordination in the government system. There is also a lack of scholarly research into “how immigration and integration policies are created, operationalized and implemented” (Borkert & Penninx, 2011, p. 10). This paper attempts to take a step towards filling that gap. The analysis in the paper is based on policy documents, official reports of state institutions and non-governmental organisations, and personal insights of authors into how the integration system operates in Croatia.⁵

The paper is organised into five sections. The introduction is followed by a brief overview of the types and instruments of coordination in the government system. The third part provides an overview of the development of the Croatian migration and integration policy, the institutional setting, and the implementation of integration in practice. In the fourth part coordination instruments in the integration policy are classified and evaluated. In the concluding remarks the authors provide proposals for possible improvements of the current coordination instruments.

2. Types and Instruments of Coordination in the Government System

2.1. Types of Administrative Coordination

In terms of subject matter coordination may be divided into political and administrative coordination,⁶ while in terms of content and manner of

⁵ The authors participated as experts in the project “IPA 2012 FFRAC – Supporting Implementation of Integration Policies for Migrants”, implemented by WYG Consultancy and Teched Ltd., for the Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities. The overall aim of the project was to develop a comprehensive framework for improving the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of integration policies in Croatia.

⁶ Pusić (2007, p. 41) sees administrative coordination as a “system of everyday work linking and guidance of the work of a large number of organizations and people that make

decision-making it may be categorised as interest-based or technical coordination. *Political coordination* is performed by political bodies (a representative body, executive bodies). It mostly deals with interest-based issues, and interest-based and political coordination partially overlap in this respect, as decisions of political bodies, in addition to mostly interest-based elements, may also contain some technical elements. It is similar to the differentiation between technical and administrative coordination. *Administrative coordination* is performed by administrative bodies and usually deals with technical issues. However, by analogy, the decisions of administrative bodies within the set goals (in other words, in terms of their operationalisation) may also contain some interest-based elements.

Coordination primarily has a political character (as a conflict regulation mechanism) in making decisions between alternatives; namely, the distribution of benefits and costs related to specific plans. Political coordination primarily uses political means and in doing so primarily utilises the domination method. Administrative coordination is characterised by the planning and implementation of previously adopted measures as rationally as possible with regard to the utilisation of existing resources. Its purpose is to establish a connection between different activities due to their technical interdependence. Political coordination is a prerequisite for administrative coordination. An adopted interest-based decision within the administrative system is elaborated by means of legal regulations and the administrative organisation sees it as a number of technical decisions. In the contemporary world it is no longer possible to define unambiguously, as was previously the case, the difference between political and administrative coordination. In practice, the boundaries between these two types of coordination have become almost as vague as those between politics and administration (Bouckaert, Verhoest & Peters, 2010; Giljević, 2013). Consequently, the paper uses the term administrative coordination as a complementary term for both types of coordination.

The differentiation between positive and negative coordination was originally introduced by Fritz W. Scharpf, who used it to describe situations in which the plans of one actor imply external impacts for the others or, in other words, when costs and benefits are unevenly distributed. *Negative coordination* implies primarily bilateral negotiations in which the in-

up the administrative subsystem". Giljević (2013, pp. 1067–1068) defines administrative coordination as a process of harmonisation and adaptation of the decisions and activities of a number of actors, with a view to attaining a certain goal that cannot be attained by activities of one actor only.

volved actors express their disagreement and possibly take the veto position. Consent and/or refusal are conditioned exclusively by individual judgments of the costs and benefits, due to which negative coordination is primarily a mechanism for preventing problems. On the other hand, *positive coordination* is a mechanism whereby problems are resolved efficiently. By means of multilateral negotiations, a decision about the goals and plans of all involved actors is taken in an innovative way, by comparing the solution favourable for all of the actors (Mayntz & Scharpf, 1975, pp. 145–149).

The distinction between horizontal and vertical coordination depends on the direction pursued in the effort to maintain the unity of the administrative system. *Horizontal coordination* ensures the unity of administrative organisations at a single hierarchical level within the same territorial unit (municipality, city, county, and central government) or between different territorial units located at a single territorial level (local, regional, or central). Its purpose is to subordinate the policy objectives of various administrative organisations to general government policy goals. *Vertical coordination* connects different levels of the administrative system (from central to local level) to ensure that they function as a whole. The autonomy of local self-government units contains strong centrifugal tendencies, which is why vertical coordination has many political implications and cannot be viewed as an entirely technical task of achieving and preserving the unity of the administrative system (Pusić et al., 1988, p. 317; Giljević, 2013; Bouckaert, Verhoest & Peters, 2010).

2.2. Instruments of Administrative Coordination

Coordination instruments represent specific activities and structures created with a view to improving coordination. They may be divided into two categories: structural-formal and informal instruments. The basic trait of *structural-formal instruments* is that they are provided in advance by specific acts of the organisation and may be differentiated according to the level of hierarchism. The least hierarchical structural form is the liaison officer (boundary spanner), inter-organisational groups and the coordinator are in the middle, while coordination units and lead organisations that may have all the characteristics of an organisation are the most hierarchical (Alexander, 1995, p. 117).

The boundary spanner is the channel for formal communication, interaction, and coordination between his or her organisation and other organi-

sation(s). Other important functions of the organisation are the collection and processing of information from the environment.

Next in line is the inter-organisational group, which according to the good governance model represents quite a frequent structure of inter-organisational coordination in public administration. It may be also called a working group, a task force, or a steering committee. Working groups can be standing or ad hoc. A lack of formal powers is frequently stressed as their deficiency; in other words, they are not politically strong enough. Their function is important as a type of an ad hoc network for the transfer of information and the harmonisation of the central level with the rest of the territory (Alexander, 1995, pp. 121-122). In the process of the drafting laws, experts and representatives of stakeholders may be appointed as members of expert working groups in accordance with applicable legislation or on the basis of a public call. Working groups are very common in sectoral coordination (task forces focusing on a particular policy, issue, or programme). According to Alexander (1995, p. 141), the crucial problems of inter-organisational groups are low political commitment and insufficient authority to oblige powerful public organisations to modify their actions.

The coordinator is an individual whose only or main function is to coordinate the activities of an inter-organisational system related to a common project. The coordinator has no staff but has the power of persuasion or a certain amount of authority. An example of a coordinator is a customer relations specialist in human services, also known as a client advocate or an ombudsman, whose job is to answer questions, resolve problems, and ensure that all clients receive professional service (Brody, 2005, p. 52).

A coordination unit is an organisation or an organisational unit with the single or principal function of coordinating decisions and actions in an inter-organisational system. It usually has its own identity, its own operational budget, and its own staff (Alexander, 1995). A coordination unit has no line functions nor does it participate in the implementation of coordinated functions (Alexander, 1995).

The lead organisation, in addition to certain line functions, is responsible for coordinating the activities of all other organisations. The success of lead organisations in the administrative system depends on the authority the organisation has in relation to other organisations, as well as on the willingness to employ that authority (Alexander, 1995, pp. 177, 183).

According to Peters (2003), there are five fundamental political processes that are involved in coordination, implying the utilisation of various types

of capacity for government. The sources of capacity for government for coordination purposes are authority, power, bargaining, information, and norms. The other dimension of the capacity to coordinate involves mechanisms of coordination (hierarchy, market, and networks)⁷ that are available to governments in order to achieve greater coordination between programmes. Based on these two components, a model of instruments for coordination and socio-political resources in integration policy was created (see Table 1) and this will be used as the analytical tool to analyse the instruments of coordination in Croatian integration policy.

Table 1. *Model of instruments for coordination and socio-political resources in integration policy*

Instruments for coordination	Socio-political resources				
	Authority	Power	Bargaining	Information	Norms
Informal cooperation	–	–	–	+	+
Liaison officer	–	–	–	+	+
Coordinator	–	+	+	+	+
Working groups	–	–	+	+	+
Coordination unit	+	+	–	+	+
Lead organisation	+	+	+	+	+

Source: authors, based on Peters, 2003; Bouckaert, Verhoest & Peters, 2010; Alexander, 1995.

On the other hand, *informal coordination instruments* include various relationships of both the members of the organisation and its environment. People feel better in these relationships and satisfy their own needs for self-determination (Katz & Kahn, 1966). Informal cooperation between non-governmental organisations (NGOs), which form a loosely-coupled network, sees that they coordinate their activities mostly implicitly (forums, conferences, public campaigns). Chisholm (1988, p. 65) analysed numerous informal channels of coordination in his study on a public transportation organisation in the San Francisco area. Those informal contacts frequently compensate for the slowness and tardiness of formal contacts.

⁷ Coordination mechanisms refer to the manner in which an organisation or a social group reacts to the pressure of uncertainty, uneasiness caused by a lack of an inner orientation of their activities, and unpredictability of expectations with regard to the behaviour of other actors (Giljević, 2013).

They are also used in situations where formal instruments are blocked because of organisational politics.

3. Integration Policy in Croatia

3.1. Migration Profile and Policies

Due to its economic situation and one of the highest unemployment rates in the EU, Croatia is still rather unattractive for economic migrants and is actually increasing its emigration rates, especially those of highly-skilled labour (Knezović & Grošini, 2017, p. 24). Irregular migration in Croatia is of mainly transit character; during the 1990s and 2000s, Croatia was part of the so-called Balkan route of irregular migration used for illegal entry into the European Union.

During the conflict in the 1990s, Croatia hosted more than 400,000 refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, it is a relatively new country of asylum for refugees from outside the region, with its first asylum application registered in 1997 and first refugee status granted in 2006. Since then, more than 350 persons have been granted international protection. Recently, Croatia has faced an increase in the number of asylum-seekers, but most of them left Croatian territory before the end of the status determination process. A similar trend was observed during the migrant/refugee crisis (September 2015–March 2016) when around 650,000 refugees and migrants passed through Croatia, but only 22 applied for asylum. Therefore, Croatia is still perceived as a transit country, and the huge influx of migrants and refugees heading towards western EU member states has not significantly changed its migration profile.

In 2017 Croatia started to fulfil its relocation obligation within the framework of the European programme of relocation and resettlement of third-country nationals or persons without citizenship (by October 2017 78 persons were relocated to Croatia out of a total of 1,583 persons whom Croatia undertook to resettle).

The development of a national migration policy was a consequence of conditionality in the process of EU accession (Lalić Novak, 2016), but also, to a lesser extent, of the greater importance of the issue of migration at the regional, European, and global level (Knezović & Grošini, 2017, p. 210). The first strategic document in the field of migration, *Migration Policy of the Republic of Croatia for the Period 2007–2008*, was adopted in July 2007 (Official Gazette No. 83/07). The migration policy was expect-

ed to provide the Croatian government with a more comprehensive and sustainable policy framework in the area of migration.⁸

The second strategic document, *Migration Policy of the Republic of Croatia for the Period 2013–2015* (Official Gazette No. 27/13), was adopted by the Croatian Parliament in February 2013, only a few months before Croatia accessed the EU. The document focuses on ensuring that migration trends have a positive impact on the country's overall development, especially in the field of economy. It aims to increase the efficiency of state administration and ensure good coordination between its various bodies in order to respond adequately to the challenges of migration. The migration policy establishes measures to be implemented in the following areas: visa policy, the status of foreign nationals, the acquisition of Croatian citizenship, asylum, integration policy, irregular migration, and the Croatian diaspora.⁹ The integration policy measures will be elaborated further in the following chapter.

3.2. Development of an Integration Policy

According to the *Migration Policy of the Republic of Croatia for the Period 2013–2015*, it was “very important to continuously implement the measure which secures, with the aim of preventing discriminatory practices and attitudes towards immigrants in the economic, social and cultural life, the right to an equal status in relation to Croatian citizens, with a focus towards acquiring citizenship”. Within this aim, the importance of a partnership with civil society and the private sector was recognised.

Among the proposed measures, the majority were more technical in nature¹⁰ and only two were directed towards integration itself: a) activities

⁸ The main objective was to establish a systematic and comprehensive approach to migration issues by means of a transparent and effective system of administration of regular migration; a fair and contemporary system of compensation claims which derive from forced migration; and a clear, transparent, and effective system of control and prevention of illegal migration.

⁹ The migration policy does not regulate the area of migration by means of a holistic approach. The policy was not formulated as a component of a long-term, strategic development plan of Croatia; the policy goals were not clear enough nor were the deadlines that were set for their achievement. Clarity was also lacking with regard to progress indicators within the set deadlines, as well as quantitative and qualitative indicators of the expected results.

¹⁰ E.g. drafting proposals for the appointment of the Standing Committee for the Implementation of the Integration of Foreigners into Croatian Society; the appointment

aimed at raising public awareness – through the media, public campaigns, and human rights education – of the various aspects and cause-effect phenomena of migrations as a precondition for the prevention of xenophobia, prejudice, and negative attitudes towards foreigners, and b) the implementation of a Croatian language curriculum for persons above 15 years of age, at the level of all counties. No additional budget was planned for those measures, as it was envisaged that their implementation would be carried out by competent authorities in their budget items, within regular activities.

As part of the measures prescribed by the migration policy, in April 2013 the government appointed the president (Head of the Government's Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities) and members of the Standing Committee for the Implementation of the Integration of Foreigners into Croatian Society (representatives of Ministries of Education; Health; Social Policy, Labour and Employment; Construction (and Physical Planning); the Interior; Foreign Affairs; Regional Development and European Union Funds; and the State Office for Croats outside the Republic of Croatia). In 2014, the Standing Committee was extended by the appointment of representatives from the State Office for Reconstruction and Housing and from the Office for NGOs of the Government of the Republic of Croatia.

In the first half of 2013, a working group of the standing committee was set up, which drew up the *Action Plan to Remove Barriers to the Realization of Certain Rights in the Field of Integration of Foreigners for the Period 2013–2015*.¹¹ In both the action plan and in the activities of the Standing Committee, an emphasis was placed largely on the integration of refugees as the most vulnerable group of foreigners. The Standing Committee is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the action plan, while the Office for Human Rights and National Minorities coordinates the work of all ministries, NGOs, and other bodies involved in the integration of refugees.

of the Working Group for the Operational Implementation of the Tasks of the Standing Committee for the Implementation of the Integration of Foreigners into Croatian Society; and an action plan for removing obstacles to the exercise of rights in the field of integration based on an analysis of the problems encountered in this area.

¹¹ Action Plan to Remove Barriers to the Realization of Certain Rights in the Field of Integration of Foreigners for the Period 2013–2015, <https://pravamanjina.gov.hr/User-DocsImages/arhiva/30092013/Akcijски%20plan%20za%20uklanjanje%20prepreka%20u%20ostvarivanju%20pojedinih%20prava%20u%20podru%C4%8Dju%20integracije%20stranaca%20za%20razdoblje%20od%202013%20do%202015%20godine.pdf>

The envisaged measures for the integration of migrants were aimed at ensuring their equal status in economic, social, and cultural life vis-à-vis Croatian citizens. Special emphasis was placed on the area of education, employment, housing, and the prevention of discriminatory procedures and behaviour towards foreigners. The need for active cooperation was recognised between all competent state administration bodies and local and regional self-government units responsible for the implementation of the integration policy. The action plan measures also included proactive policies and campaigns to promote and protect human rights, equal treatment, and diversity.

The Working Group for the Operative Implementation of the Tasks of the Permanent Commission for the Implementation of the Integration of Foreigners into Croatian Society, with the support of the Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities, developed a *Guide for the Integration of Foreigners into Croatian Society in 2015*. The guide contains basic information on Croatia and an overview of the rights that foreigners have in the areas of social welfare, health care, education, work and employment, and housing.

In 2017, the Working Group, currently comprising permanent representatives of the relevant ministries, central state offices, the Government Office for NGOs, the Croatian Employment Service, representatives of NGOs (Croatian Red Cross and the Centre for Peace Studies), and international and other organisations directly involved in working with refugees (the Institute for Migration and Ethnicity, the Jesuit Refugee Service, and UNHCR) prepared the *Action Plan for the Integration of Persons Granted International Protection for the Period 2017–2019*.¹² The government adopted the action plan in November 2017.

The new action plan is devoted entirely to the integration of refugees and it explicitly mentions “the particular vulnerability of persons who have been granted international protection and the aim is to provide them with assistance and protection”. It covers seven areas of integration: social welfare and health care, housing, language learning and education, employment, international cooperation, inter-agency cooperation, and awareness raising. Goals have been set for each area and the action plan

¹² *Action Plan for the Integration of Persons Granted International Protection for the Period 2017 to 2019*, <https://pravamanjina.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/dokumenti/AKCIJSKI%20PLAN%20ZA%20INTEGRACIJU%202017-2019.pdf>

defines concrete measures, bodies in charge, deadlines, funding, and result indicators for each goal.

3.3. Institutional Setting

Integration of refugees in Croatia is trans-sectorial and includes measures in several areas, to be implemented by different government ministries and agencies.

The coordination body responsible for integration is the Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia. Their authority stems from article 76 of the LITP which stipulates that the Office “shall coordinate the work of all ministries, NGOs and other bodies who participate in the procedure of integrating asylees or foreigners under subsidiary protection into society”.

The main body for the overall implementation of asylum policy is the Ministry of the Interior. According to the LITP, the Ministry is responsible for assistance in one’s integration into society, which includes the drawing up a plan of integration for refugees in view of their individual needs, knowledge, abilities and skills; providing assistance to refugees for the realisation of this plan; and supervising the implementation of the plan.

Other ministries and agencies are involved in exercising rights provided to refugees pursuant to the LITP: the right to social welfare is within the competence of the Ministry of Demographics, the Family, Youth and Social Policy; the Ministry of Health assumes the costs of health care provided to refugees; the Ministry of Science and Education is in charge of exercising the right to education and assumes the costs of Croatian language, history, and culture courses for purposes of integration into Croatian society; the Central State Office for Reconstruction and Housing is responsible for providing facilities to accommodate refugees who have been granted the right to accommodation. Other ministries and agencies included in the development of the integration policy are the Ministry of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Crafts, the Ministry of Labour and the Pension System, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds, the Government Office for NGOs, and the State Office for Croats Abroad.

International organisations, first and foremost the UNHCR, play an important role in monitoring the implementation of the integration policy and relevant legislation (in accordance with the Refugee Convention that

stipulates a range of socio-economic and legal rights required for successful integration: the UNHCR assists the government and local authorities in the integration of refugees and provides financial support to NGOs that offer assistance to refugees).

Many NGOs (the Croatian Red Cross, the Jesuit Refugee Centre, the Croatian Law Centre, the Centre for Peace Studies, Are You Serious? and the like) provide a range of services and various forms of assistance to refugees: Croatian language and cultural orientation courses, legal advice on exercising rights and obligations, assistance in contacting state institutions and public services, psychological support to victims of torture, and many more. NGO activities complement the measures and activities implemented by state actors, sometimes in partnership with state institutions or in mutual partnerships.

3.4. Rights of Refugees and Integration in Practice

Pursuant to the LITP, the rights of refugees encompass their stay, family reunification, accommodation, work, health care, education, freedom of religion, legal aid, social welfare, assistance with integration into society, ownership of property pursuant to the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951, and the acquisition of Croatian citizenship, pursuant to the regulations on the acquisition of citizenship (see more in Lalić Novak, 2016).

However, in practice, refugees experience a range of problems in exercising those rights, especially with regard to learning the Croatian language, employment, health care, education, and accommodation. No official Croatian language course was held from 2011 to June 2015. In 2015 only four people completed the beginner language course, while others left either the course or their place of residence (HPC, 2016). In 2016 a single course was held, lasting 70 hours, and no money was secured for the remainder of the programme (Pučki pravobranitelj, 2017). A 70-hour course is not sufficient to learn Croatian and many refugees had difficulty following the lessons, especially those who were less educated or illiterate, and those who did not speak English, in which the lessons took place. Due to their insufficient knowledge of Croatian, refugees have difficulty communicating with institutions when exercising their right to social welfare and health care. The lack of language knowledge is also an obstacle to employment, and many refugees are unemployed (HPC, 2016). In terms of health care access, there is a problem with insufficient

information about refugee rights: the costs of medical treatment for refugees are assumed directly by the Ministry of Health but health centres are frequently underinformed about this, so problems arise in practice. Therefore, some doctors are reluctant to provide refugees with medical treatment (Pučki pravobranitelj, 2017). There are also problems with the enrolment of refugees in higher education institutions, because the software categorises candidates into Croatian and foreign citizens, so foreigners are required to pay tuition fees (unlike Croatian citizens) or to submit the results of the state school-leaving examination, as are Croatian citizens. Children who are not Croatian citizens do not have the right to scholarships (HPC, 2016). Following an initial two-year period during which the state assumes the cost of their accommodation, refugees very often have no possibility of finding and paying for accommodation independently. The lives of both families with children and single refugees are frequently endangered after their right to accommodation expires, and they face a greater risk of homelessness.

4. Classification and Evaluation of Types and Instruments of Coordination in Croatian Integration Policy

There are many difficulties involved in achieving proper coordination in the highly fragmented and pluralistic Croatian public administration system, which lacks integrative government capacity, strategic planning, and prioritisation of developed consultative mechanisms. Overall, coordination involving line ministries at both the political and technical level is lacking, as well as a dialogue between central and local government (Giljević, 2017). Significant areas of policy in Croatia require greater capacity for coordination than is presently in place. The weakening of vertical links (coordination) within the administrative system leads to a significant reduction of administrative capacity. There are no sufficient instruments for vertical coordination in the Croatian public administration system, and the lack of coordination was compensated for by arbitrary, ad hoc political interventions (Koprić, 2017). This general situation in Croatian public administration has also influenced the coordination of the integration policy.

Instruments for coordination and socio-political resources in Croatian integration policy are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. *Instruments for coordination and socio-political resources in Croatian integration policy*

Instruments for coordination	Socio-political resources				
	Authority	Power	Bargaining	Information	Norms
Loosely-coupled network of NGOs (informal cooperation) ¹³	-	-	-	+	+
Civil servant from the Ministry of the Interior (liaison officer)	-	-	-	+	+
Croatian Red Cross employee (coordinator)	-	-	+	+	+
Standing Committee for the Implementation of the Integration of Foreigners into Croatian Society (working group)	+	+	+	+	-
Working Group for the Operative Implementation of the Tasks of the Permanent Commission for the Implementation of the Integration of Foreigners into Croatian Society (working group)	-	-	+	+	+
International organisations – UNHCR (coordination unit)	-	+	+	+	+
Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia (lead organisation)	+	-	-	-	+

Source: authors' analysis

The civil servant from the Ministry of the Interior represents a *liaison officer*. The liaison officer lacks authority and power, as liaison officers usually do. The possibility of bargaining is also missing because the Croatian civil service is very hierarchical and there is no “equality among the actors so that each will have to give something in order to achieve his/her policy goals” (Peters, 2003, p. 15). The task of coordination is only related to the

¹³ The role of the loosely-coupled network of NGOs in the development of an inter-organisational field in integration policy in Croatia is vital. The influence of public administration field logic on the acceptance of the rules of integration is important; however, the activities and interests of different NGOs participating in the field are also growing increasingly important, creating pressure on public administration to accommodate their behaviour (see more about inter-organisational field (Lalić Novak, 2013).

liaison officer's functional role in the Ministry of the Interior. However, the liaison officer has information about refugees because the Ministry of the Interior is the nerve centre for the majority of tasks related to the integration of refugees in Croatia. The liaison officer is devoted to the protection of refugees.

The employee of the Croatian Red Cross (CRC) in charge of the integration of foreigners has the role of coordinator. The CRC employee is in direct contact with refugees and their main function is to provide refugees with the support and guidance, as well as to contact various administrative organisations and NGOs with regard to the issue of integration (informal coordination). The coordinator (just like the liaison officer) lacks authority and power; however, he or she has the ability to bargain because the CRC, as an NGO, is less hierarchically organised than the ministries. The coordinator is devoted to the protection of refugees, and norms of trust and solidarity are present. The coordinator also has information about refugees because they are in constant contact with refugees, helping them solve problems in exercising their rights.

The Standing Committee for the Implementation of the Integration of Foreigners into Croatian Society has the role of a working group. The committee comprises state officials from central state administration bodies. It is stipulated that the committee meet at least twice a year.¹⁴ Given the high status of its members, the committee has the requisite authority and is politically strong enough (in terms of power) to push powerful civil state administration bodies to modify their actions. The committee may be considered an ad hoc network for the transfer of information between different organisations. Because it consists of large number of state officials appointed by their organisations, there are no shared beliefs and norms of trust and solidarity.

The Working Group for the Operative Implementation of the Tasks of the Permanent Commission for the Implementation of the Integration of Foreigners into Croatian Society consists of stakeholders (members of central state administration bodies and non-governmental organisations). The working group lacks authority and power, as do most working groups. The Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia is the lead organisation in the

¹⁴ Report on the work of the Standing Committee for the Implementation of the Integration of Foreigners into Croatian Society <https://vlada.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/Sjed-nice/2016/28%20sjednica%20Vlade//28%20-%2028.pdf>

coordination of the integration policy of refugees in Croatia. The office lacks the administrative capacity for the task of coordinating integration because only a few civil servants from the office deal with the issue of the integration of refugees. The office lacks political importance because it is headed by a senior civil servant who has no bargaining resources. Civil servants from the office are devoted to the protection of refugees, norms of trust and solidarity are present, and they have vital information considering their placement within the government and contacts with the Office of the Prime Minister.

The UNHCR has the role of a coordinating unit, with certain powers over government officials and servants, even though it lacks formal authority. The UNHCR monitors and assists the government and the local authorities in the implementation of the integration policy, and these activities provide it with relevant information and bargaining possibilities. UNHCR employees all share norms of solidarity and are devoted to the protection of refugees.

The last instrument of coordination in Croatian integration policy is the network of NGOs (the Croatian Red Cross, the Jesuit Refugee Centre, the Croatian Law Centre, the Centre for Peace Studies, and Are You Syrious?), which act as partnership organisations. They are loosely coupled and their main function is to coordinate actions within the inter-organisational system of the integration of refugees in Croatia. The network of NGOs is informal and thus lacks authority. Its strength is maximal flexibility, as they can easily adapt to the situation in the field. NGOs have some power over public administration; the media follow their activities, and so they have some influence on public organisations. The network has norms of trust and solidarity and widely disseminates information about the integration of refugees.

The analysis has shown that developed model of instruments for coordination and socio-political resources in integration policy can be used as an adequate analytical tool for a deeper understanding of coordination in integration policy, but also in other public policies and programmes.

5. Conclusion

Despite the development of a legal and institutional framework, the results of MIPEX (2015) research show the integration policy in Croatia to be only halfway favourable, with an overall grade of 43/100. This places

Croatia in the 30th place out of the 38 countries encompassed by the study. Research has shown that, although legislation in the field of asylum and migration was aligned with the EU *acquis* on Croatian accession to the EU, its implementation is vague. It is made difficult for migrants to exercise certain rights such as the right to permanent residence, the right to acquire Croatian citizenship, the right to family reunion, and the like. Future policies and funds need to address the areas missing in its current integration strategies: work-related language courses, access to vocational training and study grants, targeted education support for children in addition to language learning, health entitlements/access and a migrant health plan, avoidance of discrimination against non-EU citizens, and political participation.¹⁵

The inefficiency of integration policies in practice is also partly the result of poor inter-sectoral cooperation between the competent institutions and the local communities and NGOs, the academic community and, generally, professionals who are involved in integration (Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies, 2016).

The capacity of the Croatian government to coordinate the integration policy is still *in statu nascendi*. The formulation and implementation of an integration policy involves different governmental levels and agencies, as well as interactions between public authorities, NGOs, and private organisations. The question is how different public authorities with limited tasks, competences, and resources can solve the problem of the integration of refugees – a problem that cuts across the boundaries of governmental levels and functional jurisdictions. The coordination achieved by means of voluntary and spontaneous action of public organisations and/or NGOs in the integration of refugees is not sufficient. It is highly unlikely that adequate coordination might stem from the mostly voluntary actions of NGOs (see Hanf, 1987, p. 14.).

Informal and voluntary instruments of refugee integration are based mostly on interior motives to help, and personal sacrifice mostly on part of NGO employees and some street-level bureaucrats. They are bypassing standard procedures by finding street-level bureaucrats willing to provide services. The main problem is viability, because the integration of refugees in Croatia generally relies on several persons. What is missing

¹⁵ The Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) is a reference guide and a fully interactive tool for the assessment, comparison, and advancement of integration policies. It measures the state of development of integration policies, thus providing a review of integration policies in various countries. See <http://www.mipex.eu/croatia>.

is a systematic approach, and depending just on informal and voluntary instruments may be considered depending on serendipity in the coordination of Croatian integration policy. Therefore, deliberate coordination is a prerequisite to managing the interdependencies of the integration policy, which should be developed by design and not by serendipity.

The coordination of the integration policy can be improved by introducing several measures: encouraging partnerships between public organisations and NGOs, combining and mutually supplementing formal and informal instruments of coordination, developing a holistic approach to integration, developing an information system to monitor the progress of the implementation of integration measures, and better coordination of existing programmes.

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COORDINATION INSTRUMENTS IN CROATIAN INTEGRATION POLICY: CLASSIFICATION, EVALUATION, AND PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENTS

Summary

The key question addressed in this paper is that of connecting the institutional setting and planned outcomes of the integration policy with the instruments and types of coordination in the government system. Integration policy may be defined as a “wicked problem”, as it is a cross-sectoral issue that concerns the responsibilities of various actors. Integration is not a policy that can develop serendipitously; it needs to be designed and proper instruments of coordination should be developed. It requires coordination across different sectors and tiers of government, with both formal and informal coordination structures and instruments that can be used to facilitate coordinated implementation of policy goals and measures. Croatia has only rather recently started to develop its integration policy. Due to a relatively small number of migrants, the integration policy is primarily targeted at the refugee population. In practice, integration is an inter-departmental task dealt with by different organisations (ministries, agencies) at different governmental levels (national, local) and includes their cooperation with different non-state actors. This is very challenging in the highly fragmented and pluralistic Croatian public administration system, which lacks integrative government capacity, strategic planning, and prioritisation of developed consultative mechanisms. The paper analyses the recently promoted Croatian integration policy in the light of coordination models and instruments. It provides an overview of the types and instruments of coordination in the government system and presents the development of the Croatian migration and integration policy, its institutional setting, and the implementation of integration in practice. Finally, it provides a classification and evaluation of the coordination instruments in the integration policy.

Keywords: integration; coordination instrument; refugees; policy; wicked problem

KOORDINACIJSKI INSTRUMENTI U HRVATSKOJ INTEGRACIJSKOJ POLITICI: KLASIFIKACIJA, EVALUACIJA I PRIJEDLOZI ZA NAPREDAK

Sažetak

U radu se istražuje mogućnost povezivanja institucijskog okvira i planiranih ishoda integracijske politike s koordinacijskim instrumentima i vrstama koordinacije u sustavu vlasti. Integracijsku se politiku može opisati kao teško rješiv problem (*wicked problem*) s obzirom na to da se radi o pitanju koje obuhvaća veći broj sektora i odgovornosti različitih aktera. Takva se politika ne može razviti spletom sretnih okolnosti već je treba osmisliti i razviti primjerene koordinacijske instrumente. Potrebno je koordinirati različite sektore i razine vlasti te imati službene i neslužbene koordinacijske strukture i instrumente koji će omogućiti koordiniranu provedbu ciljeva i mjera. Hrvatska je razmjerno kasno započela s razvojem integracijske politike koja se, s obzirom na relativno malen broj migranata, prvenstveno odnosi na izbjegličku populaciju. Na terenu je integracija međuresorni zadatak različitih organizacija (ministarstava, agencija) na različitim razinama vlasti (državnoj, lokalnoj) te uključuje suradnju s nedržavnim akterima. To predstavlja velik izazov za hrvatski sustav javne uprave obzirom na to da se radi o fragmentiranom i pluralističkom sustavu kojem nedostaje kapacitet za integraciju, strateško planiranje i davanje prioriteta razvijenim konzultativnim mehanizmima. U radu se analizira nova hrvatska integracijska politika iz perspektive koordinacijskih modela i instrumenata. Nudi se pregled koordinacijskih instrumenata i vrsta koordinacije u sustavu vlasti te se predstavlja razvoj hrvatske migracijske i integracijske politike, njezin institucijski okvir i provedba integracije u praksi. Također se klasificiraju i evaluiraju koordinacijski instrumenti integracijske politike.

Ključne riječi: integracija; koordinacijski instrument; izbjeglice; javna politika; teško rješiv problem