



CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

# Forum on *Studies of Society*

Second edition  
Conference Proceedings (Chieti-Pescara, 2018)

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**Forum on *Studies of Society***



**FORUM ON STUDIES OF SOCIETY**  
**SECOND EDITION**  
**CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS**

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**FORUM ON STUDIES  
OF SOCIETY  
Second edition**

**CONFERENCE  
PROCEEDINGS**

**Chieti-Pescara, 2018**





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# ABOUT THE SECOND EDITION OF THE FORUM ON STUDIES OF SOCIETY

## The Editors

The second edition of the **"Forum on Studies of Society (FSS)" International Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities** was organized by Università degli Studi G. D'Annunzio Chieti Pescara, Italy, Dipartimento di Scienze Giuridiche e Sociali and University of Craiova, Study Programs: Sociology and Social Work, Romania, in co-operation with Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, Department of Social Work, University of Bucharest, Romania, Faculty of Philosophy, St. Cyril and St. Methodius University, Bulgaria, Faculty of Pedagogy, Rzeszów University, Poland and International Society for Projects in Education and Research.

The purpose of the Conference was to create a forum for debating topics of great interest to society, thus, trying to expand the network of interested stakeholders and extend the ground for best practice exchanges from different institutions and various domains.

The Conference aimed to bring together already involved key actors as well as engaged participants, representatives of academic, economic and social partners to discuss and exchange their experiences and research results on different aspects of Social and Humanistic Science. Based on the multi-field methodology-encompassing, inter-disciplinary character of the Conference, we strongly encouraged potential participants and stakeholders with background and research interests in the fields of Sociology and Social Work, European Studies, International Relations and Security. There are currently numerous challenges to be tackled in approaching past and present subjects on society.

The rationale for the Conference relied on initiating reflection and launching debates on the following main topics: Sociology and Social Work, European Studies, International Relations and Security Studies, Law and Criminology, Politics, History and Philosophy.

The conference sessions for paper presentations were as follows:

- Session 1 – Sociology: "New social realities"
- Session 2 – Social Work: "Promoting Community and Environmental Sustainability"
- Session 3 – European Studies: "United in diversity"
- Session 4 - International Relations and Security Studies: "Security issues in a changing world"
- Session 5 - Law and Criminology: "No man is above the law and no man is below it"

- Session 6 – Politics and History: "History and Politics through time"
- Session 7 – Philosophy: "Contemporary Philosophical Issues"

The Conference sessions welcomed papers approaching theoretical studies and empirical research, good practice examples or lessons learnt in practice.

Aiming to create a space for discussing different approaches related to social sciences and humanities, the conference included 81 communications from 73 participants representing 7 countries (Romania, Italy, Bulgaria, Poland, Albania, Turkey, Nigeria).

The international conference Forum on Studies of Society (FSS) was included and indexed in 6 international databases and services:

**World Conference Alerts:**

[https://www.worldconferencealerts.com/ConferenceDetail.php?EVENT=WLD87733&name=&rdquo;Forum\\_on\\_Studies\\_of\\_Society\\_FSS&rdquo;\\_International\\_Conference\\_on\\_Social\\_and\\_Humanistic\\_Sciences](https://www.worldconferencealerts.com/ConferenceDetail.php?EVENT=WLD87733&name=&rdquo;Forum_on_Studies_of_Society_FSS&rdquo;_International_Conference_on_Social_and_Humanistic_Sciences)

**VePub Conferences:**

[http://www.vepub.com/conferences-view/andrdquo;forum-on-Studies-of-Society-\(fss\)andrdquo;-International-Conference-on-Social-and-Humanistic-Sciences/eVIInnFFOWU5SS9rQVFGY29ra25kUT09/](http://www.vepub.com/conferences-view/andrdquo;forum-on-Studies-of-Society-(fss)andrdquo;-International-Conference-on-Social-and-Humanistic-Sciences/eVIInnFFOWU5SS9rQVFGY29ra25kUT09/)

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**GoRef:**

<http://goref.ro/conferences-and-proceedings/goref-index-conferences/>

**Aconf. Conference solutions professional:**

[https://www.aconf.org/conf\\_169269.html](https://www.aconf.org/conf_169269.html)

We provided the authors with the opportunity to publish the results of their research in scientific journals indexed in international databases and collective volumes. Some papers have been published in the partner journals and another part in the present volume.



# Forensic victimology: a step forward the psychosocial profile of victimology

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## Abstract

The present paper, through a theoretical research and a operational systematization, proposes a reflection on the processes of victimization and on the dynamics that underlie it. Such a worried science phenomena can not only be criminological, psychological and legal but also social and forensic prorogation.

The object of studying victimology, which undergoes different identification according to the sociological, clinical, psychological profile analysis, can basically be summarized in three different concerns of thought and observation.

The aims of the victimology are *diagnostic* in relation to the situation and to the emerging problems, *preventive* compared to the offense and *reparative* towards the injured party.

In many of the countries of Western Balkans to date the absence of national legislation to protect victims of crime, regardless of the type of crime that has affected them (and its legal definition), the nature of the damage and outcomes, the criminogenesis and crime-dynamics of the crime, from the characteristics of the victim, does not make the fundamental rights of citizenship of care, assistance and reparation that are recognized by their Constitution.

Therefore, creating a Neighbor network of research, support and strategic planning will be helpful for developing a security map of criminal, forensic and psychosocial prophylaxis.

**Keywords:** *victimology; forensic profile; psycho -social impact; prophylaxis*

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## **1. Introduction**

In the criminological debate of our time there are many theories and sociological, medical or psychological approaches that describe and seek to give an explanation and scientific validity to the causes of the violent acts. This position often leads to the conviction that to prevent the victimization process we have to study and understand the antecedents, causes and effects of the violent act. The Draft Decision 2001/220 of the European Union was very significant, since it dictated the Member States to affirm the recognition of victims' rights and the Directive of 25 October 2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council, established the minimum standards on the rights, assistance and protection of victims of crime. Both directives stated that a crime is not only wrong to society, but also a violation of the individual rights of victims, which should be recognized and treated in a respectful, sensitive and professional manner, without discrimination of any kind (race, skin color, ethnic or social origin, genetic characteristics, language, religion or beliefs personal, political or any other opinions, belonging to a national minority, heritage, birth, disability, age, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, status in relation to residence or health), taking into account their personal situation and their immediate needs.

Victims of crime should be protected from secondary and repeated victimization, intimidation and retaliation; they should receive adequate assistance to facilitate their recovery and should be guaranteed adequate access and accompaniment in the judicial process.

In today's time, where violence fills the new and media and where the wonder of ordinary people is confused with a certain tolerance to aggression, the "aggression" is often perceived as a "factor of instance hot-temper" whereas it regards circumstances that affect the whole person psychosocial wellbeing. It is literally an *"action directed against a person with the intent to hurt her and the awareness of the attacker of the damage he intends to provoke"*. To aggravate the relational complexity between victim and executioner there are also other dynamics, for which the distinction between "good and bad" is not always recognizable.

The ideal victim, the one who represents the innocence, the purity, the moral superiority, the absence of responsibility and that forgives, clashes with the human traits of the victim as a complex and contradictory person as a human being (Bouris 2007). The collective imagination is filled by judgments and prejudices that offset the reality plan and make it difficult to understand the responsibilities on individual "cases" and the programming, at the system level, of the possible processes of help and support.

The blame, in fact, depends on implicit cultural frames and profound ignorance that can influence not only the actions of individuals and social groups, but also the choices of the community in terms of unaddressed and appropriate social policies. The possible blaming of the victim have effects and influence the policies of social control, the processes of legal and formal definition of crimes, the policies of help, assistance and compensation of the crime victims. Nowadays, the egocentric cultural system is the only reference system as in the cases where the victim is forgotten in the codes and not being a subject of law, or how our judicial and criminal justice system overlooks in the paths of empowerment and renascence of the victims.

The victim must stay away from our eyes because his or her suffering recalls our pain and therefore attention. This is one of the ways in which the human being defends his "If" case, because violence constantly calls the victim's feelings, as it consciously or unconsciously resonate in us the elements that humiliate, degrade, or harm the wellbeing and the dignity of a person.

Whether violence is premeditated, intentional, planned or spontaneous and sudden, it always has a social dimension, because every episode that involves the victim cannot be isolated from the social and value context in which it takes place. It assumes in this way a different meaning depending on the time and of the space in which it happens. Nor can its symbolic dimension be forgotten as every one of us, at any moment and circumstances, independently of the role, age, sex and economic or social condition could become a victim. It is the nature of the relationship that binds us to our executioner and the value of the trauma we suffer that makes the difference.

## **2. The dyad of Victim and Victimology.**

The term *victim* in its etymology originates from the analogy of Latin verb "winning" that refers to the condition of immobility typical of the animals and of the human beings bound tightly that in antiquity were sacrificed to the divinity for propitiatory purposes and to the condition of the one who subjugated the victor. In ancient times the won warrior lost his social status, his power. The image recalled is that of a profound suffering, independently of the cause that originated issue, of the pain suffered and of the sacrifice (Vezzadini 2012).

From a legislative viewpoint the first definition of victim was postulated in the UN Resolution no. 40/34 of 29/11/85, which defines the victims: "*persons who individually or collectively suffer injury, including physical or mental damage, emotional distress, economic loss or substantial compression or injury to their fundamental rights through acts or omissions that are in violation of criminal laws operating within Member States, including laws that prohibit the abuse of criminal power*".

It refers therefore not only to the individual who has suffered a crime but also to the collective group united by cultural, religious, economic ties and to subjects who see a violation of their rights or who suffer damage due to criminal abuse. The lesion is not only physical but also psychological, moral and economic and affects priorly the concept of a healthy well-being of the human person and self-esteem.

The victim, therefore, as a subject, is no longer recognized only if he is the bearer of clinical (health) damage caused by the crime, but also if he suffers psychological, moral, economic violence or a contraction of his rights due to criminal abuse. Over the years, various definitions of the theories that target victims were proposed. One of the authors who dealt with the subject of the victim, Gullotta (1976), defines victimology as "*the discipline that has as its object the study of the victim of the crime, of his personality, of his characteristics, biological, psychological, moral, social and cultural aspects, its relations with the offender, and the role it has played in criminogenesis and criminodynamics*". Fattah (1967) defines victimology as the branch of criminology that is interested in the direct victim of a crime, focusing on the knowledge of other sciences and analyzing its socio-cultural characteristics, relations with the criminal, the role played and its contribution to the genesis of crime.

Karmen (2006) considers in his definition what the victim experiences after the crime in the relationship with justice, the media and services and defines the victimology as *"the scientific study of victimization, including the relationship between victim and aggressor, interactions between victims and system of criminal justice, such as police and prison courts and officials, and connections between victims and other groups of society such as the media and social and economic movements "*.

For Nivoli (2010), in a purely psychoanalytic perspective, victimology deals with the multidisciplinary aspects of the biological, psychological, psychodynamic, social and sociological, juridical and political aspects of the victim. The victim is a subject in physical and psychological suffering, who has suffered damage as a result of interpersonal, often deviant, non juridical events or catastrophic events caused by man or nature.

### **3. Forensic and Cyber-victimology**

The approach considers victimology as a branch of criminology and authors define this theoretical line as "criminal victim" or "criminal" (van Dijk 1997). They identify victimology through the study, research and analysis of victimization processes caused by a crime, limiting the object of study to the victims of criminally relevant conduct, that is, behaviors defined as prohibited and punished by the positive criminal provisions in force at that moment historian. The purpose and function of criminal victimology is to study the causes of crime and the role of the victim in criminal proceedings (van Dijk 1997). It is an essential approach that help in determining an appropriate victim profile and prophylaxis.

From the etiological point of view, in the criminal victimology the object of study is the system of dynamic interaction of the criminal-victim dyad.

Exponents of the orientation that recognizes the victim of scientific validity but as a specific branch of criminology are Ellenberger, Nagel and Tranchina (Gullotta 1976). Traditional criminology, even the positivist one, saw the criminal act as determined by hereditary predispositions or the environment, but understood as a set of social, economic, family conditions of life of the offender pre-existing criminal act.

Nagel (1963) calls modern criminology as a *"criminology of relations"* overcoming both the theorizations of traditional criminology and the "quasi-science interactions" approach that he considered the only relations that the criminal had with the peer group, with the party, with the accomplices. It is necessary, thus, to move the object of interest on the criminal-victim dyad so that criminology would observe both sides of the "conflicting" interaction developing a new unit of crime analysis as a social phenomenon and therefore "relationship crime" which included the victim. Considering victimology as part of criminology is a position shared today by the majority of authors, including Fattah (2000) who considers victimology as the "young daughter of criminology" discipline, where the victimological paradigm as the study of the criminal-victim interaction, has filled the failure of the other criminological paradigms: search for the causes of crime, deterrence, rehabilitation, etc. As for Nagel also for Fattah the victimology has filled a void in the study of criminology because no valid theory of criminal behavior can ignore the victim. In the same line, forensic psychology and National Security sections are very interested in advancing the victim or potential victim profile as it can give a major possibility of early intervention and detection. Criminal

victimology mutates its own multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach from the general science (Karmen 2004). It is considered *multidisciplinary* because there are different perspectives through which we can approach and assess the problem of victims of crime (sociological, psychological, psychiatric, legal, social service etc.) and *interdisciplinary* because it integrates and interconnects the results from the different disciplinary perspectives in a single model explanatory, project or program of assistance and care of victims in relation to their needs and the effects of victimization.

#### **4. Social and Psychosocial Victimology.**

Alongside the traditional subdivision between criminal and general victimology, another field of thought and of the victim profiling movement has been consolidated, which deals with the prevention, care, mitigation and minimization of the victimization effects on the victim from a physical, psychological and social point of view. It is the victimization of assistance and treatment for victims, which overshadows or completely ignores the analysis of victimization. This area of victimology is defined by van Dijk (1997) as "assistance-oriented victimology" or even "*victimhood*". The author was primarily concerned with the clinical approach to the victims that has been developed by psychiatrists and clinical psychologists, as well as by doctors. The effects of victimization can be assessed in the results of post-traumatic stress disorder and victimology has to deal with the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of the effects (van Dijk 1997). Clinical victimology has had its greatest contributions of theoretical and didactic systematization within the French school of which the greatest exponent is Gérard Lopez.

His object of study concerns (Lopez-Bornstein 1995):

- a) The medical-psychosocial consequences of the victimization process
- b) The treatment of complications
- c) The medical-pedagogical evaluation of the damage done for the purpose of compensation in court.

Lopez considers the clinical victimology centered on the consequences and physical and psychological complications caused by the trauma. It distinguishes the direct consequence of the complication, and the eventual post-traumatic shock condition is to be considered a consequence, from the post-traumatic stress syndrome as a possible subsequent complication that may appear in the medium or long term.

In his manual of clinical victimology Lopez points out for each type of victim (of crime or catastrophes or accidents) the physical and psychological injuries and the corresponding complications that may derive from it. Alongside the consequences and complications of a physical and psycho-traumatic nature, there are economic consequences and relations with the criminal justice system. There are also several social consequences, which may or may not be related to the post-traumatic stress disorder but not necessarily, such as difficulties in family relationships, degradation of intimate relationships of couples, professional and work and so on.

The risk of developing or maintaining a post-traumatic victim symptomatology is not identical among all the victims, but depends on numerous variables such as the characteristics of the victim, the characteristics of his environment, the quality and quantity of the traumatic event etc. The clinical research carried out did not lead to

univocal conclusions. Some orders of factors that influence the victim's response to stress can be considered (Nivoli 2010):

They are all elements of a genetic, constitutional, character, family, environmental and social nature that reduce the risk of developing post-traumatic stress symptoms (Anaut 2005). It should be noted that a protection factor can also turn into a risk factor. Researches have identified the following common protecting and risk factors that causes and maintain victimology:

- **Individual protection factors** : characteristics such as temperament, ability to reflect, cognitive attitudes etc. individual factors include: active temperament, gender, age, good cognitive abilities, high IQ, good self-esteem, good social skills, social intelligence, feelings of empathy, ability to control, self-irony, charismatic skills

- **Family protection factors**: the family's ability to show the victim affection, cohesion, mutual interest, humanity, etc. among the most important family protection factors is: parents who are emotionally present and capable of support, good relations between parents and children, family harmony

- **Extra family protection factors**: represented by significant people from the non-family sphere: presence of social support also in the extended family, experiences of academic and professional success.

- **Flexibility factors**: some victims do not develop post-traumatic stress symptoms. The individual response to resisting stress is the result of a dynamic interaction at different levels: biological, psychological, social, environmental, etc. among the risk and protective factors (Cicchetti 1984, Sroufe and Rutter 1984). These differences are attributable to the characteristics of resilience or flexibility that are peculiar to each. In victimology the term resilience refers to the properties of flexibility or positive adaptation in coping with an adverse situation both as an unfavorable life condition and as an unexpected traumatic event (Masten 1990, Masten and Coatsworth 1998). Resilience is the result of the positive interaction of different factors: genetic predispositions (intelligence, temperament and personality), quality of the individual (social skills, self-esteem, etc.), environmental factors (family ties, expectations, learning etc.) and is the ability to adapt positively, despite exposure to situations at high psychosocial risk in the presence of strong stressful events and as a process of recovery from a trauma.

On the other hand, risk factors for developing post-traumatic symptoms with psychological and social discomfort after exposure to stressful events can be classified into two main types (Nivoli 2010):

#### **a. Triggering factors**

They manifest themselves during the linked event and are related to the entity and type of trauma and can influence the victimized response. The severity and duration of post-traumatic symptoms can be influenced by trigger factors including: - *characteristics of the traumatic event*: violence, severity, intensity of aggression represent one of the most important variables. The threat to one's life implies feelings of terror, fear for one's bodily integrity and confrontation with death. It is a subjective feeling that is experienced with different intensity by the victims. The physical traumas intentionally caused by the aggressor worsen the victim's feeling of vulnerability. If they remain visible they represent a continuously open window on the memory of the traumatic event, worsening the symptomatology. *The intrusiveness* of the event (e.g. Close contact with the

aggressor) makes the victim feel profaned in his intimate barriers. *The dehumanizing aspect* of the traumatic experience underlines the aggressor's attitude to deny the victim's human dimension (treated as an object). *The unpredictability and uncontrollability of the event* undermine the victim's perception of security, which does not feel capable of discriminating dangerous situations from those that are not.

### **b. Predisposing factors**

Some variables presented before the traumatic event, able to amplify the devastating power of trauma that represent risk factors or vulnerabilities for the development of a post-traumatic stress disorder and related symptoms (Nivoli 2010).

1. *Stressful factors*: biological, psychological and environmental situations such as debilitating or chronic organic diseases, conjugal tensions, economic and working problems. They help to undermine the victim's defenses and adaptation mechanisms and the traumatic event will be experienced as a further stress factor on already fragile soil.

2. *Psychopathological features*: the depressive and anxious symptoms of drug and alcohol abuse lead to greater drama in the presence of psychiatric symptoms, further invalidating the ability to respond adaptively to the state of malaise.

3. *Previous traumas*: intra-family violence, incest, sexual assaults, car accidents, represent antecedent traumatic experiences able to favor the onset or chronic of post-traumatic symptoms. The current post-traumatic reaction is influenced by both the memory and the symptoms present before (recurring memories, phobic behaviors, and avoidance symptoms) and past emotions (inability, vulnerability, terror, etc.)

4. *Conception of own life and the world*: some victims, who considered the world and good people, can show vulnerability in the face of a traumatic event experienced as unjust, bad and hard to explain.

5. *Attribution style*: designates the way in which everyone attributes responsibilities (Abalan et. al. 1995). An "external" attribution style tends to give responsibility to others, to society to destiny etc. whereas the "internal" style of attribution will give the responsibility to herself presenting a greater possibility of developing the post-traumatic symptoms.

6. *Personality traits*: subjects with rigid traits or personality disorders and a dichotomous view of reality and individuals with narcissistic personality traits or disorders with the need to exercise control and poor adaptability manifest more markedly and for longer postponement symptoms. traumatic

**c. Maintenance factors** or the elements that is present after the traumatic event and which aggravate the clinical picture maintaining the triggering stimuli (Nivoli 2010).

7. *Entourage support*: after the event the victim often experiences feelings of loneliness, confusion and vulnerability, which require external support as essential for improvement. Not only an emotional support (listening to the victim, understanding it, infecting her affections etc.) but also practical (giving her advice, accompanying her etc.). The lack of such support or negative attitudes (criticism, contempt, lack of empathy, misunderstanding, hostility) aggravates the symptomatic picture both in severity and in duration.

8. *Recognition of trauma*: failure to recognize the severity of the event is a factor that causes a series of dynamics predisposing the maintenance of symptoms. The difficulty at work that the victim can have is considered as a lack of productivity and commitment, very often more linked to the will of the person than to the momentary



illness / disability. Victims who do not make at work are often blamed and harassed with further aggravation of psychic distress.

9. *Judgment of society*: other suffering is procured from the critical and negative judgments expressed by those who surround the victims, often due to prejudices that generate feelings of shame or guilt

10. *Judicial action against the aggressor*: secondary victimization in the judicial phases causes a lot of suffering because the victims are subjected to judgments, prejudices and manipulations and they might be prone to the judgment of the community.

11. *Physical sequel*: the presence of physical sequel and signs contribute to the maintenance of post-traumatic symptoms. They are visible signs for the victim and for others and make the convalescence even more painful. It is not only the memory but the suffering of the consequences and physical handicaps. The shame of one's body is accompanied by social stigmatization, contributing to the isolation and maintenance of symptoms.

12. *Impact of trauma in family and work environment*: possible negative developments concerning the family (separations, divorces, tensions) or professional activity (loss of work, reduced yield, irritability, absenteeism etc.) are further elements that arise after the trauma and they are added to the state already present.

13. *Attribution of guilt*: the intensity of symptoms can also be influenced by the way in which the victim blames the causes, consequences and actions concerning the trauma.

14. *High risk assessment*: in some cases victims may consider themselves able to control the possible recurrence of the traumatic event. When the attribution of guilt is substantially external, victims can more easily fall into feelings of lack of control, despair, resignation and excessive vulnerability. Victims that overestimate the risk of repeating the traumatic event present a greater severity of post-traumatic symptoms.

15. *Traits of negative personalities stimulated by the trauma*: dysfunctional personality traits may appear after the trauma, apparently absent antecedently: often they are attitudes of excessive inflexibility towards themselves with respect to the restorative agents or with respect to relationships with others that paradoxically do not do anything else that support longer disability.

16. *Conceptions of emotions*: some victims are not able to recognize their emotions in a sufficiently critical and objective way to prevent their evolution towards more established psychopathological forms. Some emotions are the signal that "something is wrong" and if recognized allow us to understand better and earlier the causes of discomfort. The negation of emotions can derive from the belief that they are nothing but a sign of weakness or illness and must however be hidden. The negated emotions are often replaced by the shame the victim feel towards herself or himself.

## **5. Conclusions**

Referring to a right profile of victims, violence and crime is undoubtedly a necessity for investigation and forensic sciences. Structural models of the individual become an interaction with other. Is essential for the social sciences experts "a conversation" with that individual structure replies to the of time and space "here and now" paradigm and develops a line of interaction that is linked with the personal background in everyday life. In the analysis of structures and dysfunctional relations it should be clarified the levels of structural development of the person. If the individual

is not autonomous to be self regulated in an sufficient way and reflect on himself, he has not structured a valid relation with supply objects either external, or internal and becomes thus a subjective object of his own profile, i.e. his or her victimology.

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# The key role of education in women empowerment in Turkey

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## Abstract

Turkey is the country that has assured achieving gender equality signing international agreements such as Beijing Declaration and CEDAW, and in the adaptation process to the European Union and has been continuing to work on this issue. According to the United Nations Development Index and Indicators 2018 report, Turkey ranks 64 of 189 countries in terms of women's empowerment. One of the main reasons of Turkey's being far behind the other countries in the equality index is that women's, especially the adult women's low and limited access to the education and the low rate of paid women employment. While two-thirds of women are out of education, 85% of the illiterate population is women. Women's education levels play the key role on their access to the jobs in the primary job market with high-income and social benefits, and their empowerment. It is clear that there is a meaningful relationship between the increase in the education level of women and their participation in employment. The data broadcasted by Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT) reveals that nonfarm employment participation rate of women in Turkey is 27.5% while the rate of business ownership of the women who have higher education has doubled it and reached 71.3% in 2018. Similarly, representation of women in the parliament increases as they have higher levels of education and they take the initiative to empower other women and pioneer collective empowerment. Therefore, education plays a key role in women's empowerment efforts. This study aims at discussing the relationship between the education level of women and their position in Turkish labour market in the context of empowerment approach and its dynamics using the numerical data.

**Keywords:** *gender; empowerment; women education; gender equality; women employment; labour market*

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## 1. Introduction

Turkey has been trying to ensure gender equality and provide women empowerment for a long time. This process speeded up especially after Turkey had signed Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1985 and Beijing Declaration in 1995. In addition to these international agreements Turkey was declared eligible to join European Union (EU) in 1997 and was officially recognized as a candidate country, at the Helsinki European Council of December 1999. As a result of the processes mentioned above, Turkey started to make regulations on the legal basis and launched new programs to assure gender equality. Increasing the number of female children's access to education, trying to get more women to be involved in the paid labour force, and supporting women entrepreneurship are some of the efforts that Turkish government put into practice to provide gender equality. Women employment has always been considered as one of the significant steps to achieve women empowerment. Women are thought to be empowered when they have income. However, having income does not empower women itself; empowerment is comprised of a string of comprehensive processes.

Despite all the regulations and efforts realized by the government, Turkey ranks 64 out of 189 countries in terms of women empowerment according to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) report released in 2018. Similarly the number of the women who cannot access even the basic levels of education is 8.5%. Women's education level is the main indicator for their chance of being involved into employment. According to Turkish Statistic Institution (TURKSTAT) the rate of women employment is 27.5% while it is 71.3% among the university graduate women (TURKSTAT 2018). According to the *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends for Women 2018 – Global snapshot*, the global women's labour force participation rate is 48.5%. Turkey by far falls behind the global trends. Hence it can be said that there is a strong relationship between the women's education levels and their empowerment. This process occurs in a chain; better education causes to have better occupations with full benefits and well-paid jobs in the primary labour market, and having a better job and income lead to women's empowerment (Ecevit 1998 and 2003; Toksöz 2012). Nevertheless, we are of enough evidence not to assume it a priori as the women's empowerment depend on intertwined processes ranging related to the race, ethnicity, religion, family background and the country.

As for the education, Turkey tries to improve the quality of the education and puts effort on getting all children, especially girls to reach formal education. For this purpose, continuous compulsory education has extended to 12 years and pre-school education is planned to be reached to 100% with the Law no. 6287 on the Amendment of the Primary Education and Education Law in 2012 ([www.meb.gov.tr](http://www.meb.gov.tr)). Although these efforts, the system allows the students to leave the formal education on the secondary and tertiary level and go on open secondary or high schools. In other words, the system has the potential to increase dropouts. This can be worrying especially for the female students and might lead increased child marriages. According to Eurostat 36.4% of all pupils were early school leavers in Turkey in 2017 in contrast to only

10.6% in the European Union (EU) (Eurostat, 2018). In the case of Turkey, the trend in early school leaving related to gender is the opposite, women are the most affected by it (37.6%), in contrast to males (3.5%) (Eurostat, 2016). Additionally, only 21% of men and only 18% of women of the 30-34 age group get into tertiary education. According to the report of Education at a Glance 2018 report released by The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) yearly the rate of 25-34-year-old women who did not have tertiary education was 44%. It was almost threefold of average of OECD countries (Education at a Glance 2018).

Early school leaving is a challenge in Turkey. Early school leaving for boys and girls may have similar reasons, such as poverty, but consequences are not necessarily the same. Early and forced marriage is still a problem for girls in Turkey, the result being that the child is probably excluded from education, learning and other opportunities for the rest of her life. Some girls still drop out in the upper grades of primary school due to a combination of poverty and conservative social norms, low expectations and domestic responsibilities (carma-project.eu, 2017). Child marriages carry potential risks to increase domestic violence and other forms of violence as well as jeopardizing the lives of female children (turkey.unfpa.org). It can be said that early school leaving will probably hinder empowerment of female children. The government implemented a law on Conditioned Cash Transfer (CCT) to keep the children who are in poverty in 2003. CCT is transferred into the mothers' bank accounts, if the mother is not available to fathers' accounts on condition that they send their children to school. Female children are given more money than their male counterparts. In 2017, 2,340,374 students got this financial aid (sck.gov.tr). Even if the amount is not enough, it can be disincentive for the families who cannot send their children to school because of poverty. The impact of socio-economic status on equality in education tends to expand throughout life. When the poverty cycle breaks once, future generations will have a greater chance to get better education. The children of the low educated parents are less likely to get pre-school education and finish tertiary school and go on higher education programs when compared to the children of the parents who have at least a year of higher education (OECD, 2018).

The number of female children in schools are now bigger than it was in Turkey. However, women's employment results are still worse, although access to education is better. According to Education at a Glance 2018 report difference in salary between men and women also reflects the gender divergence observed among high and low-paid workplaces at the tertiary level, but it may also be that women are more likely to enter idle or non-employment periods and therefore to delay their salary increases (OECD 2018).

## **2. What is women empowerment?**

The term empowerment emerged from Development Theories in 1970s. This approach assumes that women will be empowered when their economic income increases. But the empowerment approach in Women in Development (WID), Women and Development (WAD), and Gender and Development (GAD) was criticized by the feminists as they were purely liberal and gender blind. In the mid-Eighties 'women's empowerment' became more political and transformative with the contributions of the feminists especially from the Third World Countries. By recognizing women as part of

Gramsci's subaltern classes, feminists incorporated gender subordination and the social construction of gender as a fundamental category of analysis in the practice of social change and development. The analysis of gender subordination and social construction of gender, and discourse of consciousness-raising used by the feminists led to the widespread adoption of the empowerment concept in many other development and social justice arenas as well (such as education, health care, rural development, workers' rights, etc. etc.) (Batliwala 1993). Joanna Rowlands's (1997) remarkable study 'Questioning Empowerment' questioned the empowerment of rural women in Honduras and examined the contributions of two organizations (Health Promoters' training program in Urraco Pueblo and PAEM Women's Educational Program) working in the area thoroughly. The concept of women empowerment has gained popularity and come to the agenda of women's studies since it was first uttered in the Seventies. Women Empowerment has become a global issue and many international organizations such as United Nations (UN), European Union (EU), World Bank (WB) and International Labour Organization (ILO) have come up with ideas and initiated projects to empower women all around the World so far.

The scope of the term 'empowerment' is still being discussed widely. Empowerment studies aim to get women to involve in decision making processes mainly. Women empowerment includes promoting women's participation in decision-making and helping women achieve economic empowerment, promote the health of women and adolescents, end violence against women and girls, eliminate harmful practices, promote the well-being of women and girls in all settings, and involve men and boys in advancing gender equality (UNFPA 1994).

Empowerment can be observed at various levels, and all the levels have a chain effect on women's contribution to the decision-making processes starting from the family and extending to the political decisions that might affect their and other women's lives directly or indirectly. Empowerment can exist at three levels: at the personal level, where empowerment is the experience of gaining increasing control and influence in daily life and community participation (Keiffer 1984). Kabeer emphasizes a more individualistic aspect of empowerment through women's individual capacities and free exercise of personal choice (Kabeer 1999). According to Rappaport, the concept of empowerment conveys both a psychological sense of personal control or influence and a concern with actual social influence, political power and legal rights (Rappaport 1987).

Batliwala emphasizes cognitive, psychological, economic and political components of empowerment. Empowerment is a process that shifts social power in three critical ways: by challenging the ideologies that justify social inequality, by changing prevailing patterns of access to and control over economic, natural and intellectual resources, and by transforming the institutions and structures that reinforce and sustain existing power structures (Batliwala 1993). Similarly, Rowlands points out the women's being into the decision-making processes. Empowerment gets people to involve in it. This puts a strong emphasis on participation in political structures and formal decision making and, in economic sphere, on the ability to obtain an income that enables participation in decision making. Individuals are empowered when they are able to maximize the opportunities available to them without constraints. Empowerment is experienced and shown in personal, close relationships and collective dimensions (Rowlands 1997).

All in all, empowerment is a process that enables women to gain power, have control in their relationships both in private and public spheres.

### **3. The Relationship between Education and Empowerment**

It is evident that education plays a crucial role on women's empowerment universally. Education has a dual effect on empowerment; education is transformative itself for the women and the higher education levels lead to get them to have better and well-paid job opportunities in the primary labour market. Education improves significantly not only the income of individuals but also the experiences they have in the labour market (Karasiotou 2012). Economic independence of women is considered the bottom line of empowerment. ILO (2013) suggests a gendered pathway out of informal labour force to promote women's empowerment. Educating girls is one of the most important ways of breaking poverty cycles and is likely to have significant impacts on access to formal jobs in the longer term. There is a mutual relationship between poverty and education. Education affects poverty and poverty affects education and there is a relationship that can be expressed as a vicious circle. As poverty increases, access to education opportunities decreases and as education levels decrease, poverty increases. (Kızılgöl 2012: p. 180). The limitation of employment opportunities, low level of education, insufficient social environment and low social participation are the main causes of poverty in our country (Aktan and Vural, 2002). When women are able to increase their incomes, and increase control over resources, the impacts can be seen on the multiple dimensions of poverty (Sallan Gul et al, 2014). The main objective of the education policy in the fight against poverty should be a plan to facilitate the access of the poor or those at risk of poverty to formal and non-formal education (Alpaydın 2008: p. 61).

Women with higher education are more likely to be into the labour market. In Turkey, the number of the women university graduates who are employed has doubled and reached 71.3% in recent years according to TURKSTAT report released on the 8th March, 2018. In addition, the women with higher educational degrees have greater chance to have jobs in the primary labour market. The best example for this situation is the increase in the number of women in academy. The rate female academicians in Turkish universities have reached 43.1% in 2016. In 2007 it was 40.1%. It is significant that the gender gap is getting narrower as the women have higher education. Unfortunately, it is possible to see this impact just among the university graduate women and partly among vocational high school graduates. There is a slight difference between the women who have lower educational degrees than high school and high school graduates. While the employment rate of women who have primary and secondary education levels is 27.2% and 33.6% among the high school graduate women, 41.4% of technical or vocational high schools and 71.3% of university graduate women involve in the labour market (TURKSTAT 2018).

Women's employment helps them empower to some extent by having income and enhances their chance of bargaining with patriarchal and hegemonic structures in the society but the question is whether it contributes having them be into decision making processes. In Turkey, it still seems considerable problems with women's participation in the administration of both private and government organizations. According to TURKSTAT, 2016 data, the ratio of women in high and medium level of administrative



positions is 16.7% in Turkey. Similarly, women's representation in Turkey's parliament is 17%. 103 women were elected as Members of Parliament (MPs) with the elections held on 25 June, 2018. The total number of MPs is 600 in Turkey, and the significant number of women MPs (almost 90%) is university graduates. Only 3 out of 81 governors are women, and the number of female mayors is just 39 out of 1397. As seen having a university degree opens doors to policy making processes.

Education not only improves the women's empowerment but also helps them to build their daughters' lives. With regard to the educational level of the parents, similar processes may play a role, with the parents using their human capital to increase their children's chances to get education (Treiman and Yip 1989; Shavit and Blossfeld 1993). Parents who have reached a certain educational level can be expected to want their children to reach at least the same level. We therefore expect a higher educational level of the parents to lead to higher participation levels of their children. For the educational participation of girls, the education of the mother will probably be especially important. Mothers who have succeeded in completing a certain level of education have experienced the value of education and also know that it is within the reach of girls to complete that level. Therefore, we expect them to use the power and insights derived from their higher education to make sure that their daughters get education too. (Smits and Gündüz Hoşgör 2006: p. 548)

The strategies may vary, but every project that seeks to empower women must build self-worth, educate, have a supportive national government, be monitored and sustainable, increase the amount of information made available to women, and advance solidarity amongst women around the world (Landig 2011: p. 217).

#### **4. Discussion**

It is clear that women are more likely to get administrative occupations and involve in policy making processes when they have a college degree. It is possible for them to realize collective empowerment representing them in the parliament and working for the change in the society. Naturally, education enables women to reach jobs providing secure employment, healthy working conditions, and fringe benefits in the primary labour market. As the education levels of the women increases, they probably get higher salaries. The motivational factors to get a university degree are more motivational for women than men as it is earnings are more (Buchmann et al. 2008; Ecevit 1998, 2003; Sallan Gul et al. 2014). Hence, economic independence of women leads to empowerment.

Although the education is a really powerful instrument for women's empowerment, it also has drawbacks interrupting the process. Formal education system usually gets social inequalities reproduced. Education functions implicitly but more effectively for reproduction Bourdieu (1970), and empowers hegemony Gramsci (1997). Schools teach female students to become dependent mothers or wives fundamentally. They assert that they make the students gain human capital but actually they mean the men's human capital (Davin, 1979). Not all forms of education but university education seems to contribute the women employment significantly. It has been proved by the increasing rate of college graduated women's involving into labour market (TURKSTAT 2018) and policy making processes. Almost 90% of women members of the parliament are university graduates (Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM) 2018).

In addition to formal education system's deficiency, the problem of inadequate access of female children to formal education is still a problem in many parts of the world and in Turkey (Sallan Gul and Alican 2007). Many young women have still problems to be into education and this weakens their chance of entering the labour market. The precautions such as CCT taken by the government could help the poor families' children be into the formal education to some extent. Yet, Amendments on Continuous Compulsory Education with the Law No. 6287 implemented in 2012 leads to dropouts. The ratio of early school leavers is significantly higher than other OECD countries (OECD, 2018). This holds a risk of increasing early age marriages.

Education certainly contributes to increase the number of women in employment. However, women have to fulfill most of the domestic chores. This leads a double burden for women and aggravates the inequalities instead of empowerment. This process is reversed when the women involve in primary labour market. As the gender and development approach suggests, when women are joining work in the formal sector, they tend to give up responsibilities in the private domain (Ecevit, Gündüz-Hoşgör and Tokluoğlu 2003).

Whether the women's employment causes empowerment is still debatable. Yet it is clear that the higher level of education means the higher paid jobs in the primary labour market. As the college education helps increase the number of women in the primary labour market and members of parliament, there is still a glass ceiling for women. In private companies, the number of women managers and directors is quite low. Only 3 out of 20 managers are women in Turkey. Nearly all of the pre-school teachers are female but among the higher education trainers, less than one of the two people is female (OECD 2018). While the number of female teachers surpasses their male counterparts, school directors and supervisors are mostly male in Turkey (Tan 1996). More than higher education is required for women to be into managerial decision-making processes.

Women's employment results are still worse, although access to education is better than it was in the past in Turkey. While 80% of highly educated young women are employed as averaged by OECD countries, this distinction is increasing among those who have received the same training and who are 89% or less educated. Higher educated women earn 26% less on average in OECD countries compared to highly educated men. This difference in salary also reflects the gender divergence observed among high and low-paid workplaces at the tertiary level, but it may also be that women are more likely to enter idle or non-employment periods and therefore to delay their salary increases (OECD 2018).

In Turkey boys consist of 60% of middle school students but they are less likely to have completed this level of education than girls. As a result, more girls than boys are graduating at this level. Men are also much less likely to have higher education than women: 38% of males with 25-34 years of age have been in higher education across OECD countries, compared with 50% of women of the same age, and this division has grown even more over the last decade (Education at a glance 2018).

On the other hand, there is promising news related to women academicians. Women academicians consist of 43.1% and the number is increasing gradually in Turkish universities. In addition, higher education gender equality index has increased in favour of female students in Turkey since 2008 (TURKSTAT 2018). However, glass

ceiling is observed in universities too. Only 3 out of 111 state universities' directors are women (Kaplan 2018).

### **5. Conclusion and suggestions**

Women's empowerment was first discussed in the Development Theories in 1970s, but with the contributions of the feminists, gender dimension came forth later. Feminist movements in Turkey initiated arguments on women's empowerment in the 1980s. Women's integration to employment and gaining economic freedom were brought on the agenda. International agreements and Turkey's EU Membership Process have accelerated the studies on women's empowerment in Turkey. Among the efforts to enable gender equality and women's empowerment, education has played the main role.

It is evident that as the educational level increases, it can contribute women's empowerment more. Undoubtedly, there is a close relationship between the education and employment. Especially university education contributes to increase female participation in the labour market. Since the empowerment approach first appeared in development theories in the 1970s, women have been tried to be empowered through employment. Yet, there have been debates on whether the employment empowers women or not. Having economic independence causes self-confidence and helps to build individual empowerment of women. But, the ultimate step of empowerment at collective level requires being into decision making processes. It is also argued that schools could reproduce gender inequalities on the basis of primary and secondary levels of education. However, it is certain that university level of education contributes both women's employment and empowerment. As discussed above the first step that should be taken is to increase the level of education for women because university graduate women are of greater chance to be involved in policy making processes and they are more likely to transform the patriarchal structures for the benefit of themselves and the other women in the society.

Increased levels of education get women to be employed and get better jobs in Turkey. Despite all the problems, it is evident that the women having jobs and income increase their level of participation both in the public sphere and policy making processes. Women empowerment is a complicated process, so the government, media, private organizations, NGOs and women's organizations should work to constitute it collectively. To enable women's empowerment, school programs should be reorganized in terms of gender equality starting from the curricula, female children's access to education should be provided, and the number of the female students in higher education should be increased. Higher education levels of mothers bring better education opportunities to their daughters. As the women's education levels increase, their daughters are more likely to get higher education (Smits and Gündüz Hoşgör 2006, Özaydınlık 2014). In this way, future generations might benefit from their mothers' degrees to empower themselves. So, female students should be assisted to stay in the formal education system. Legal arrangements should be done to have the women involve in decision making processes and women's quotas in the parliament and managing boards.

Women's participation in labour market and managing processes not only empowers women but also plays a crucial role in terms of the country's development in the global arena. It is extremely important that the women are in the right place as their

role and status in the social sense for the development of the country and this can be achieved through a conscious and qualified education process (Özaydınlık 2014: p. 108). An overall policy should be adopted to enhance the quality of education, to increase female participation in labour market and to remove the glass ceiling that hinders women's access to managerial positions both at work and in the political area.

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# Collective memory integration in the European Union - an institutionalization of difference, competition and conciliation in inter-national relations of polity and identity

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## Abstract

The proposed paper seeks to address the possible connections between memory pluralism, European integration and also identity security, while exploring paths to European memories integration, and to European memory, respectively. Institutionalized forms of memory inform integration, from what is perceived as changeable, defined as transition in effect and set as course for a future state in internationally dealing with national pasts. Recent events seem to reflect that democracy, memory articulation and integration are becoming divergent due to surging uncertainties in national identities and struggles for recognition and significance. This turn requires inquiry in approaches to memory and change governance institutions in order to reference and accommodate understanding of the processes by which norms, practices and memory rather connect and transfer to one another in order to become European, than become mutually pitted against despite their entanglement. Competing memories of historical experiences disputed by nations in Europe, wartime, extremism and expulsion, colonialism and immigration, and a stalemate on division over the past preserve separation instead of relation and prevent the bridging of identities and the Europeanization of their constitutive memories. The collective memory therein should therefore be included in the institutional architecture of European identity, through points of access and memory transmission at European level, via practices of remembrance (historical truth informed by different experiences), reconciliation (of different meanings and experiences), toward integration (of multiplicity, into mutual identities), and construction of identity (into shared meaning and common identity) - collective memory integration in the European Union depends on institutions making both retrospective sense and prospective use of the past into a mutual polity of constitutive identities.

**Keywords:** *collective memory; national identity; EU integration.*

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### 1. Memory Matters: collectives, narratives, and ends

The growing interest for *collective memory* research, since the concept was introduced by Maurice Halbwachs, is due to its appeal in providing reference of structure to shared identity, social values, experiences and narratives which define and draw boundaries of a symbolic organism (Assmann 2008: p. 63), a community of practice in which there is an “ongoing social contextualization of individual memories” (Halbwachs 1980: p. 48).

Memory can be collected or pooled within social groups, as large as nations, through interaction and communication in social connections and frames which make up for specificity and context to group identity and shape individual memories, in recalling the past either as collective remembrance of similar or same experience or as shared memory inter-generationally. Within the same social frame-context, individuals are subjects of collective memory as they relate to a common past which they cannot remember as direct witnesses, but which they can learn, memorize and be socialized into via various modes of participation and functions of integration. Nevertheless, in order for collectively shared memory to be actively engaged as collective remembering, memory spaces and references (*lieux de mémoire*, in Pierre Nora’s wording) require *vehicles of memory*, which embody narratives to ensure commemoration of a displayed, commonly shared and carried “representation of the past and the making of it into shared cultural knowledge by successive generations” (Confino 1997: p. 138). The process of collective memory institutionalisation therefore entails not only a memory of the past, but also a (selected) representation and even re-construction or transformation of the past, which may be interpreted as a continuum between modes of understanding the past, prevailing discourses in representing the past, and normative constructs of purpose in using the past. This dynamic interplay of accounts and co-establishment of memory and remembering albeit via their oppositions (collective memory and collective remembering, history and collective memory, individual memory and collective remembering), with their identified, tried, repeated and contested contents as well as with their competing meanings, inform contemporary cultural discourse which regards identity, as to its consolidation, formation, or recognition and confirmation (Wertsch and Roediger 2008: p. 321). Individual memories enter the collective memory narrative as re-enacted, yet can also pose a challenge to dominant discourses of collective memory, building and populating spaces between discourses, and therefore playing an important role in the process of collective memory formation and re-construction since, according to Halbwachs (1980), individual memory is formed through dialogue with and within social groups.

If collective remembering is to serve a purpose, that would be to bridge the past and the memory of a time with no survivors (history) with communities of memory, in which the past undergoes various re-constructions and is presently related to and lived in many forms, in continuously re-evaluated approach to identity, engaging with change, into a shared memory of common and multiple identities in a temporal order. Shared memory as a process of dialogue between communities of memory differs, in this respect, from collective memory in that there are not only various paths of memory

with meanings and purposes which may or may not coincide, deploying explicit alternative, distinct and competing views on the past, but which could interact to produce a common space or frame for scrutinizing ambiguities and differences which render them incommensurable to each other: objective factuality meets subjective interpretation to the end of inter-subjective validity - descriptions of the past are met in normative key: they do not have to match, they need to acknowledge the narrative they are part of and they need to evolve in open exploration of mutual access points. Connecting different memories, while maintaining their respective inherent truth, is relevant for the rationale of using the past: reciprocity, in retrospect and also forward-looking may be the overarching principle of the memories becoming shared and integrated with one another (for example, one group's claim for historical justice, with victim memory, builds correspondence in a mutual use of the past, albeit from different stances, with another group's claim for amnesty, with perpetrator memory, for a shared purpose, reconciliation). Historians have always warned about the risk of reconstructing the past as a signaling attempt to manipulate truth, yet they have never denied that the past is ridden with ambiguities and that a logical thread of fact interpretation through multiple perspectives is needed to provide historical meaning - the logical thread is itself an imprinting choice in connecting elements of the past toward the present. As long as the integration of memories in the aforementioned detail is an end in itself, that is free from risk of ideological strain (meta-narrative) on collective memory and of a dominant discourse which excludes others, the reconstruction of the past into future use of shared memory is not a distortion of truth for present circumstances, but a dynamic process of legitimate identity formation in relation and through change.

## **2. European Collective Memory(-ies): foundations, temporalities, and contingencies**

The contemporary world is witnessing both fragmentation and integration with emerging forms of collective identity upward and downward of the national level of reference. In European context, there is a dual drive in identity formation, one which originates in national pasts which hold the present in their legacy, and another which is geared up toward the future, oriented toward a European identity formation aiming for a community guided by a normative framework for integration and based on consensus of values and an identity based on the possibility of common historical memory. The two are co-terminus for a consciousness of transnational, European historical narrative which can balance continuity and change in setting common references in both the past and the future.

This turn requires inquiry in approaches to memory and change governance institutions in order to reference and accommodate understanding of the processes by which norms, practices and memory rather connect and transfer to one another in order to become European, than become mutually pitted against despite their entanglement. Competing memories of historical experiences disputed by nations in Europe, wartime, extremism and expulsion, colonialism and immigration, and a stalemate on division over the past preserve separation instead of relation and prevent the bridging of identities and the Europeanization of their constitutive memories (Leggewie 2011).

There are, arguably, at least 7 major pillars or *circles* of European memory, the arch principle of which is the move away from conflict toward cooperation and integration, by use of politics of memory rather than intentional forgetting. Collective memories in Europe stem from a diversity of nations, cultures and their interactions across time and within the EU framework they may often have the appearance of unregulatable contention. Nations may or may not become transformed in the future, yet their respective collective memories survive and need to be integrated in a supranational format.

The first of these *circles* of European memory is the past experience of European multiple conflicts, wartime and mutually inflicting experience which eventually led to the common commemoration of two World Wars. From the point of view of a transnational historical consciousness, this experience shall translate into memories of winning and losing sides, but of loss for all sides. This traumatic experience allows the European nations to create a European identity and to put forward a legitimate European mission of peace, while distancing themselves from a perception of *the other from within* and from clear-cut distinctions or even divisions between various parts, regions and cultures of Europe.

A second, cross-cutting *circle* of European memory is the experience of ideological affliction, reflected in the Shoah (Holocaust) and in the Gulag, in the context of totalitarian regimes, Nazi Fascism and Soviet Communism, respectively, but which are telling of any doctrine that denies, condones, justifies crimes and instate modes of societal oppression. The Shoah represents a paramount example of traumatic account involving ethnic and religious discrimination-incrimination (anti-Semitism), displacement, expulsion, concentration camps and crimes against humanity. The Shoah provides the foundation for a global politics of human rights, but it does neither replace other traumatic memories, nor has it become *a single universally shared memory* (Assmann 2007: p. 17). The Gulag, on the other hand, has not reached the level of ‘globalized’ memory, despite sharing some of the attributes of the Shoah, due to the context in which its memory is articulated and to the different purpose in using the past. The third *circle* of European memory regards the experience of cleansing and expulsion (in ethnically non-homogenous national communities) and is connected to the fourth and fifth circles, of colonialism (with politics of memory not limited to European space, European memory travelling across the world) and transnational migration to Europe, the latter extending from the period of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries up to the present day, where it builds on a significantly different context, the refugee crisis, involving collective memories brought into Europe, with collective trauma for the displaced groups and for their home communities and resistance or rejection policies on the side of some, potentially receiving, European societies. The discourses and accounts of difficulties in social integration, political naturalization and cultural assimilation from the perspective of the “majority society” are still rampant when politically instrumented for circumstantial gains and find themselves at odds with the promise that a common future would gradually replace divided pasts. The sixth *circle* of European memory is represented by the EU project itself. Europe’s collective memory after 1989 is just as diverse as it is still divided, both “shared” and “split” (Leggewie 2011). Another potential circle could be generated by Brexit inasmuch as this withdrawal from the shared framework

creates a precedent in the European project of integration and could impact in roll-back in terms of collective memories as well.

All of these circles are based on negative historical experience foundations and form the basis for the remembrance policy entitled 'duty not to forget' in dealing with the past, yet directed at the future (so that these traumatic experiences are not to be repeated). An additional, educational-pedagogic approach ('learning from the past'), which is supported also by legally binding provisions, to mitigate or counter the risk of negationism, revisionism or trivialization is to maintain collective memories contemporary to European historical consciousness, without them re-becoming an issue. The EU function in this respect is to harmonize, to seek compatibility via the integration principle in the political field of the history of Europe, without offsetting one memory against another: for example, that of Soviet occupation for Central and Eastern European countries at the expense of Shoah in the sense that victims of the two negative experiences were seen to have different status ou, yet also at the expense of the counter-account of Soviet liberation should some of these countries choose to celebrate it.

The development of a shared European collective memory is faced with numerous challenges. The first of these resides in answering the question of approach and method regarding the Europeanisation (and EUropeanisation) of national memories and the criteria and filters which should apply; this objective to facilitate a consistent, coherent and legitimate transition and transmission between the national level of reference of collective memories to the supra- or trans-national level is particularly problematic considering the difficulties encountered in as decisive a practice as cross-border commemoration for the purpose of common collective memory, on account of divisive claims which inform national identities.

Secondly, national myths at the basis of identity are not so easily removed and cannot simply disconnect from constitutive identity - this is especially noticeable when historical and normative narratives are put together in establishing singularity of experience, transferability and the risk of their relativisation in a generic commemorative culture. There is quite a distance to be covered until the de-escalation of national memories and also of intra and extra-European space can take place institutionally. Sites of memory are identified and supra-nationally justified which makes them recognizable in different European states with the aim of strengthening a sense of community - this requires not only dialogue but, importantly, establishing the legitimacy of memory-based discourses and claims made at European level.

Thirdly, unscrutinized and unaddressed criminal past at the national level of reference make integration trans-nationally almost impossible. In the aftermath of the 1989 events that brought about the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emancipation of Central and Easter European states from under its rule, national identity re-definitions emerged along with suppressed memories of recent and distant past, some of which almost fell to the temptation of renewed falsification of history, while others kept a borderline dominant narrative via non-inclusive constructs of collective memory veiled in a pro-European discursivity which doubled up on the legitimacy and authority of those who imposed an interpretation and pushed back counter-memories, in an attempt to preserve and/or gain more power.

Fourthly, invented or distorted collective memories in the service of some political identities can turn the post-communist narratives into a politics of memory without actual

scrutiny of memory, which is officially sponsored by newly formed government apparatus to force perspectives and meanings of totalitarianism and its experience together in such a way that either take stock of selected, acceptable truths only, with disregard of social sentiment and perceptions (so that they meet circumstantial needs of the new political system), or disengage from knowledge and interpretation of the past altogether, suspending any normative account of what should be remembered and what should not, in a policy of breaking away from the past by disconnecting from it or ignoring it completely. Indeed, this is the dual risk of partial memories claimed as homogeneous for the national collective, while other memories are excluded, and of no clearly defined recent past narrative and no institutionalized collective memory (understood as different from state neutrality toward a variety of narratives).

Last, but not least, memory relations between EU and non-EU countries still seem under-developed, aside from the already considerable asymmetry of European memory which allows for borders to disappear or surge again within. EU identity extends transnationally at the European and non-European levels, yet EU and European memory do not coincide at the present moment - there is potential for the EU framework to be completed with and by European memories yet to become part of the EU space and community, while other memories connect at selected points of access without becoming integral (for example, Russia claims difference and rejects subaltern status, by maintaining autonomy of memory and identity, distinct from the European counter-part). Shared European collective memory requires an identity-formation function set against purely national and self-referential backwards-looking remembrance, which can guarantee that the result sits not in a museum of exhibits (it is based rather on action than on availability), but is ongoingly lived by all of its citizens. With each enlargement and integration phase, with every newly-joint state, the EU memory community becomes a more inclusive polity. Nevertheless, the question of a single unified memory community or plural memory communities still stands.

The aforementioned challenges describe the complex task of EU developing a collective memory of its diverse communities, in setting course for a shared mode in which remembering happens trans-nationally, while maintaining balance between singularization and universalization of experiences.

### **3. European Memory Community(-ies): constructs, templates, and the project of shared consciousness**

A European memory community is possible if memories become shared and traumatic pasts are approached via memory openness rather than by intentional forgetting, a process which requires active understanding of their makings and participation in their integration. In addressing the question of political norms and standards for a *peaceful co-existence of European memories*, Aleida Assmann proposed guidelines on identifying and rejecting practices of misconstrual and preventing *collective memory abuse* with support from a set of principles: *memory-argument distinction*; *non-offset of guilt*; *non-competition between victims*; *inclusion of memories*; *shared memory*; *contextualization*; and *framing* (Assmann, 2007: p. 19). Memory needs to be separated from its interpretations since arguments are not intrinsic and experience and sense-making can be two separate processes. Guilt of parties involved in traumatic memory disputes should not become a zero-sum game, and

responsibility for own perpetrations is not erased by an infliction cause, which means that victimhood does not replace trans-context and inter-temporal accountability. Competition of traumatized social groups is to be expected as they seek recognition and resources, but acknowledging one trauma is not going to remove another. Memories are highly selective and can promote uniformity, but they can also accommodate diversity and provide a sustainable foundation for integration, and for this purpose they need to lose their divisive effects; integration within a common framework of identity and values is the only way in which can they be made to coexist, through ongoing mutual recognition. Memories need context of experience to be meaningful - historical consciousness allows for a significant articulation of memories beyond their original background, yet there are limits to this horizon and generalizations should be pursued only in the interest of dialogue and compatibility between memories. A common framework of institutionalized values and purposes, such as that provided by the European unification project, actually supports the preservation of collective memories once they pass the test of mutual recognition and acknowledge the integration principle (Assmann 2007: pp.20-22).

The experience of a traumatic past due to inter-national conflicts should not be overturned into a memory of glorious national pasts, since injustice acknowledgement is imperative. This is part of the reason why EU shared memory is an objective for containment, so that history does not repeat itself negatively and that mutually recognizable national memories preserve identities beyond unilateral accounts. We are witnessing claims for recognition of memories in the EU precisely because memory, identity and justice are connected and mutually enforcing (Closa 2011: pp. 11-17). Recognition is crucial for identity, since identity is also a result of interaction, exchange and a dialogical process (Taylor 1992: p. 34). Normative integration requires institutionalised principles of recognition which imply reciprocity, equality and symmetry (Honneth 2004: p. 354). An *order of memory* based on collective memory integration requires that we answer questions regarding its object (identity-relevant representations of pasts), its purpose (reciprocity, the communication and correspondence between identities and pasts, respectively), mediated by the means to achieve it (justice by mutual recognition, and identity relationally built).

The European past is represented in competing memories, its future is a matter of choice involving mutual re-construction of identities. Since both conflict and cooperation breed memory, the EU supra-national framework should integrate the national collective memories, as they are foundational, together with shared collective memories as part of a newly set and developing course of the European future, for the purpose of which memory can provide both closure and opening. The national, EU and European levels of shared collective memory and their respective historical evolution and identities need to be integrated, while subnational group and individual memories enjoy both frameworks of reference. An EU order of memory should ensure integrated reference to unique accounts and narratives of memory (historical experience and identity), to relational ones (claims for recognition and justice) as well as to shared ones (mutual pasts, interactive present and common future).

The construction of shared European memory is a mutually-accommodating process, relying on the requirement that national memories are structured within a common framework of shared historical consciousness which makes national histories

visible from a trans-national perspective. The collective memory therein should therefore be included in the institutional architecture of European identity, through points of access and memory transmission at European level, via practices of remembrance (historical truth informed by different experiences), reconciliation (of different meanings and experiences), toward integration (of multiplicity, into mutual identities), and construction of identity (into shared meaning and common identity) - collective memory integration in the European Union depends on institutions making both retrospective sense and prospective use of the past into a mutual polity of constitutive identities.

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# Mediation and social work

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## Abstract

This report focuses on the possibilities of mediation in social work and the place of the social worker in the mediation process. Social work has long recognized mediation as own function that falls within the scope of generalist social work practice. The report analyses the similarities and differences between the two professions: mediator and social worker, as well as areas of social work in which mediation is appropriate.

The usual work of social workers involves dealing with different types of conflict between clients and their social environment. An important part of the social worker's professional responsibility is to manage conflicts in a productive way.

Social conflicts can arise between individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations in terms of values, needs, goals, positions, interests, and rights. Many situations in social work require the use of conflict management methods such as negotiation, mediation, advocacy, group facilitation, family group conferences.

Mediation and social work have a similar purpose: to help resolving human problems. The theories and practice skills of social work are significant for the mediation. Mediation, as well as social work, is a process that focuses on human dignity and respect for the rights of the individual. The relationship between social work and mediation is also revealed in many common theories and methods that underpin both practices. However, each of these two professional fields has specific features that will be discussed.

**Keywords:** *social work; mediation; conflict resolution; neutral side in a conflict.*

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## 1. Introduction

Mediation as a dispute settlement activity has existed for centuries. Evidence of this has been discovered in the Phoenician trade. The practice is further developed in Ancient Greece, and then in Ancient Rome. The Romans called the mediators with different names as intern, advocate, interpolator, conciliator, interlocutor, interpret. In many cultures, the mediator is regarded as a sacred figure worthy of special treatment. In this role were entered wise men, tribal chieftains and local leaders.

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In ancient Greece, mediators help resolve conflicts between city-states; in ancient China and Japan, they were actively engaged in compromising in the event of a conflict between different classes and social groups. In the Middle Ages, in Western Europe, the church is the most authoritative organization for solving family disputes, crimes and diplomatic conflicts (Lugovtsova and Egorova 2017).

The term "mediation" has long been used by diplomacy as well as in relation to conflict between social groups. In the 1960s and 1970s, the concept of mediation began to be actively used in the US as part of another concept - "alternative dispute resolution". In Europe, mediation has been introduced since the late 1980s.

Social Workers' everyday work involves dealing with different types of conflicts between clients and their social environment. Social work has long recognized mediation as own function. Mediation in social work became more widely used during the 1970s and 1980s firstly in family social work field. Since the 1980s mediation has been recognized in social work curricula as a distinct practice method. The use of mediation for resolving a variety of interpersonal disputes has expanded rapidly in the last several years.

## **2. Essence of mediation**

In order to talk about mediation and its place in social work, it is necessary to specify the term "conflict". Conflict is a state of human relationships, manifested in psychological tension and in counter-action. Conflict is a struggle between opposing principles or goals, a clash of sentiments or interests. Conflicting behavior consists of opposing directed actions of opponents. These actions carry out the processes in the psychological, emotional and volitional spheres of the parties in the conflict. The party's reactions to the realization of their interests and the limitation of the enemy's interests represent the obvious social reality of the conflict. Conflicts differ in content, i.e. on the subject of the collision. The subject of the conflict is material (resources), social (power) or spiritual (ideas, norms, principles) value to whose possession or use both sides of the conflict strive.

The process of conflict is a process of conflict development in stages and phases. The stages of conflict development are the periods of conflict development, reflecting the main moments characterizing its development from the very beginning to its decision. Knowledge of content at each stage of the conflict is important for predicting, assessing, and choosing technologies for its management.

In any area of interpersonal relationships, conflicts may arise that obstruct the communication process, making it less effective. Interpersonal conflicts are usually resolved through one of the three processes: negotiation, arbitration, mediation. *Negotiations* are a process in which the parties themselves try to resolve the conflict through direct discussion among themselves. In the event of *arbitration*, a third side (court, supervisors or other authorities) controls not only the process but also the outcome of the process. The arbitrator(s) determine the outcome of the process. *Mediation* is a form of conflict resolution with the help of a third neutral, impartial mediation side whose purpose is to assist the first two sides in resolving a conflict situation. Mediation is a tool for "peaceful" dispute resolution. It is an alternative that complements the existing judiciary and the practice of arbitration. One feature of mediation is that each party can decide unilaterally to stop mediation at any time if it

believes that the process is not fruitful, as opposed to arbitration proceedings, requiring general endorsement. During the negotiation process, the mediator helps the conflicting sides to understand their own interests and the interests of the other. The mediator motivates the sides to seek a constructive solution to the dispute acceptable to both sides (Havkina 2013: pp. 101-102; Sgubini, Prieditis and Marighetto: 2004).

The essence of mediation is to create socio-psychological conditions that reduce emotional tension, adopt constructive decisions, and generally resolve conflicts. Mediation differs significantly from other methods of conflict resolution. The mediator, whose activity is characterized by a number of social and psychological characteristics and requirements, plays the most important role in the mediation process.

Mediation is a process designed to deal with problems caused by unresolved conflicts. The third neutral party, a mediator, helps to resolve the conflict. Each mediation process has two **aspects**: (1) management of the dynamics of the process and (2) understanding the essence of the conflict.

In order to have a positive effect on the procedure, it is necessary participants to believe:

- that the conflict is resolved;
- in the mediation process and
- by working with them mediator.

Depending on the need to implement the decision, three main **forms of mediation** can be distinguished (Gulevich, O.A, Sarieva, I.R., 2018):

1. Mediation - the softest form of mediation in which participants voluntarily turn to an intermediary, but after the end of the process, they can complete or reject the decision;
2. Voluntary arbitration - the parties voluntary refer to an intermediary, but they have the obligation to complete the decision after the end of the process;
3. Mandatory arbitration - the parties are obliged to contact an intermediary as well as to execute the arbitration decision.

Directive 2008/52/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 May 2008 defines mediation as a structured process in which two or more parties to the dispute are themselves seeking to reach a voluntary agreement to settle their dispute with the assistance of a mediator. This process can be initiated by the parties or suggested or ordered by or provided for by law. The focus is on the figure of the mediator, which is "any third party required to conduct mediation in an effective, impartial and competent manner, irrespective of the third party's profession or the manner in which it was appointed or requested to conduct mediation " (Official Journal of the European Union 25.4.2008 L136/3).

The priority of the mediator is to facilitate the discussion and presentation of each party's own interests and to direct them to an appropriate common solution that is fair, lasting and working. The parties play an active role in mediation, identifying their own interests, offering possible alternative solutions and making decisions on the proposals made by the other party (Sgubini, Prieditis and Marighetto 2004). The purpose of mediation is to enable the parties to find a solution to their conflict in a sustainable way.

Mediation includes: Voluntary participation; Face-to-face discussions between the parties to the conflict; An impartial mediator without decision-making powers to

help these participants understand the other's point of view and reach an agreement; Equal opportunities for all participants to speak and explain their point of view; All the necessary information is shared; Shared agreement between the parties.

In essence mediation is negotiation because it includes the involvement of a "third party" that is well-oriented to effective negotiation procedures and can help people in the conflict process to coordinate actions so they are more effective in the negotiation process. The process of mediation is the development of a model of the negotiation process, which involves the mediator, creating new variables and dynamics in the relationships of the opponents. Without negotiations there can be no mediation.

**3. Benefits and advantages of mediation** (Steffek 2012, Woodward-Smith 2017, Clarke and Davies 1991)

- Mediation procedure is constructive and includes a chance for personal development and social growth of both sides in the conflict.
- The principle of volunteering and the achievement of a consensus on the decision bring to expectation of fairness. Because there is no winner or loser, no admission of guilt, parties are typically satisfied with mediation.
- The agreed results are beneficial to both parties.
- Mediation is more cost-efficient than other methods of dispute resolution. Employing a mediator costs significantly less than employing a lawyer. The conflict sides will paying less money over a shorter period of time. In addition, many non-profits offer mediation services for free.
- Mediation is quicker and cheaper than court proceedings. Mediation typically takes some days or weeks, whereas lawsuits take months or years.
- Additional advantage may be confidentiality. Unlike court cases, which are public, mediation is typically confidential and any evidence used during mediation cannot be revealed.
- Possibility to preserve a good relationship with the other party in cases of long-term relationships or in family disputes. Because mediation is not a win/lose process, important relationships can be saved.
- Mediation lighten the judiciary and reduce the expenses.
- Mediation is flexible which allows the parties and the mediator to adapt the mediation procedure to the needs of the individual conflict.
- In mediation, unlike in a lawsuit, the parties control the process.

#### **4. Mediator's role in the mediation process**

There are two main points of view on the mediator's role in the mediation process. On the one hand, we find a clear mediation, where the mediator clarifies and improves communication between the parties to help them make a decision. On the other hand, it is the assessment mediation where the mediator, based on training, experience and objectivity, provides some guidance for settling the dispute (Bernal 2011).

The mediator promotes reconciliation, compromise, understanding, and constructive communications between the parties. Sorokina, E.G., Vdovina, M.V. (2013) describe different roles and functions in the process of assisting in solving the conflict. These include:

- "Finder" of communication channels that helps improve communication;
- "Voice of the law", which helps recognize the right of all parties to participate in the negotiation process;
- "Organizer of the Negotiating Process";
- "Coach," which trains;
- 'Resource Extender', which provides procedural assistance to the parties and links them to external experts, such as lawyers providing the missing information;
- "Problem researcher" that enables the conflict parties to address the issue from different perspectives, helps to formulate the main issues and interests of the parties and to find conflict-resolution opportunities that are mutually beneficial to the parties;
- "Realist", which helps to make a reasonable decision in accordance with the requirements of reality;
- "Leader", taking the initiative to negotiate through the organization of the procedure;
- "Mediator" - a more neutral role.

### **5. Mediation in social work**

Mediation is most commonly used by social workers in several conflict areas.

The first conflict area is the family. In *family mediation*, the mediator acts as an independent third party and provides support to parties that cannot find a common language. The emphasis is on resolving problems in the future, not on identifying the rightness and guilty or on digging in the past. Family mediation is not appropriate in case of domestic violence when one of the parties has been the victim of emotional, sexual or physical violence and the other is in a dominant position. Family mediation implies equality of participants, who are seeking with the help of a mediator answers to their questions. It should always be voluntary and also guarantee the rights of both parties (Lugovtsova and Egorova 2017).

Divorce mediation has different goals, one of the most important being to improve communication between spouses. Mediation facilitates a more friendly relationship between spouses as the process is non-blaming, focusing on cooperation and problem solving. Another goal is the compromise that allows the parties to understand the interests of the other party and to try to find the best solution for both. There is another goal typical of any mediation - to reduce costs and resolve the dispute more quickly. Mediation helps build and maintain dignity and respect. It is important that each side has respect for the other (Abraham 2008; Emery 2010).

Mediation is a chance for parents to discuss how they will care for their children after divorce or separation. During the mediation, parents can work to reach an agreement that is in the best interest of their children and to learn to communicate and cooperate with their children. Mediation helps ex-partners to reach agreement on issues such as: settling children after separation; child support payments; finance (common home, savings, pensions, debts); child health, education, religious; where and when the children will stay, children's transportation, activities, discipline and other everyday worries.

*School mediation* is applied in the event of disconnection between the school and parents, pupils and teachers or pupils and their classmates. Consultation are held

with each of the parties in the dispute, the potential for resolving the conflict is assessed, and mediation is organized in order to improve the communication. Areas of dispute can be: special educational needs and disabilities, access, social exclusion, harassment, violence, discrimination. School mediation has three goals: 1) creation of a safe environment conducive to the development of a person who can make decisions and take responsibility for their actions; 2) promotion of a culture of constructive behavior in a conflict based on the recognition of the value of human life, the uniqueness of each individual, the acceptance and respect for the right of each person to satisfy their own needs and to defend their interests without harming others; 3) improvement of the quality of life of all participants in the educational process (family, educators, teachers, administrators, psychologists, social workers, social educators, children, adolescents) using mediation based on positive communication, respect, mutual acceptance both within the group of adults or children, as well as between these groups (Zernova 2017).

Mediation helps biological parents and *adopters/foster parents* to determine how to maintain communication after the adoption/foster care is finalized, discuss opportunities and aspects of meetings with the child, exchange of information with each other. Mediation is also useful in conflicts between foster parents/adopters and childcare agencies, as well as conflicts between careers and children. Mediation between the foster family and the biological family contributes for resolving conflicts and disputes between them and reducing the possible traumatic consequences for the child. Foster parents often are not ready for the problematic behavior of the child, especially in adolescence. This raises the risk apart from conflicts and tensions between them, but also for returning the foster children to the institutions. In such situations, the mediator is invaluable.

Another role of the social worker as mediator is *health mediation*. The Health Mediator is a professional who facilitates access to disadvantaged persons and groups (mainly ethnic minorities or refugees) to health care and social services. I. Tournev describes the role of the health mediator: to provide health information, to conduct health awareness discussions; to provide information related to solving social problems; to collect and provide information related to the needs of the community and of health and social workers; to assist the activities of doctors and nurses on the spot; to accompany people with disabilities to health and social institutions; to provide assistance in completing documentation; to provide psychological support; to participate in preventive programs - immunizations, prophylactic examinations; to help families with chronically ill or disabled family members. J. Pulova describes the health mediator as a coordinating figure that links the minority communities to the health and social services; helps overcome cultural barriers to communication and maintains dialogue with the institutions; participates in the optimization of preventive programs and health information campaigns among Roma communities; accompany illiterate Roma to health and social care facilities; protects patients' rights, etc. (Pulova-Ganeva 2011).

Two approaches are used in the negotiation process - distributive and integrative negotiation. Distributive negotiation attempts to distribute a "fixed pie" of benefits. In social work, the second approach is usually used - integrative. Integrated negotiation is referred to as interest-based negotiations based on principles. This is a set of techniques that try to improve the quality and probability of agreed consent, taking advantage of

the fact that different countries often evaluate different results differently. Integration negotiations rethink the conflict issues in such a way that both sides are profitable. Involving negotiations include a high degree of trust and a more satisfying relationship. Productive negotiations focus on the parties' main interests, not on their initial positions in the negotiation process.

I win - You win strategy allows the two sides in the discussion to feel that the deal is satisfactory for both parties and that none of them is the "loser". This is especially useful when it comes to ongoing relations between the parties. All this overlaps with one of the basic principles of social work - social justice. The technique consists of five principles: 1. separating people from the problem; 2. focusing on interests rather than on positions; 3. creating opportunities for mutual profits; 4. use of objective criteria; 5. know and use the best alternative to a negotiated agreement (Fisher, Ury and Patton 1992).

Mediation in relation to child protection is successful from different points of view. It solves most of the cases cited by the court, and those who cannot decide are returned to court with better litigation opportunities. Decisions reached in mediation are better suited to the needs of the family and children than decisions after a lawsuit. Participants believe the mediation process is productive and useful. Parents are more satisfied because the process allows them to express their dissatisfaction and worries. Finally, mediation leads to better results for children (Edwards 2004).

Todorova describes the process of mediation between the juvenile offender and the victim. The mediator is a third party in the process when the young offender and the victim meet each other. Mediation increases the young offender's awareness of the emotional, physical, and material damage from the offense and at the same time prevents the young person from committing a new offense (Todorova 2005: p. 34).

## **6. Similarities between mediation and social work**

- Mediation and social work share many techniques, values, and approaches.
- The mediation and social work share a common purpose, have similar objectives and apply many of the same skills and interventions. In addition the goal of every intervention in both social work and mediation is to further the self-sufficiency of the clients (Parsons 1991, Barsky 2001, Howard 1987).
- Mediation and social work have a common goal - empowering people based on the principles of equality, justice and social well-being, as well as seeking consensus and understanding among people, groups and communities.
- Both mediation and social work intervene in situation of conflict, but with an important difference.
- In both mediation and social work, the confidentiality of information is fundamental.
- An obligatory condition in mediation is the observance of a certain code of ethics. Like the social worker where professionalism corresponds to morality, the mediator is obliged to comply with confidentiality (Stoyanova 2014).

## **7. Differences between mediation and social work**

But there are also significant differences in the roles of the mediator and the social worker (National Family Mediation 2012; Blanco 2016; Drenfeldt 2016):

- The mediator aims for a clear agreement between the participants about how they will deal with specific issues. The social worker is more concerned that the parties will gain a better self-understanding of their individual and social behaviour.

- The Mediator recognizes the feelings of the individual, but does not examine them in depth. The social worker is concerned about how customers feel about their experiences.

- The mediator relies on both sides to be available so that they can negotiate, usually face-to-face. It is not necessary for the social worker to see both sides at the same time.

- The mediator is required to be neutral. The social worker can play a supporting role. Mediators are impartial and neutral professionals who, with the relevant skills, can facilitate communication and negotiations between the parties through a procedure designed for this purpose. For social workers, their function involves establishing a close link of support to accompany individual consumers in the processes of social integration and raising their levels of well-being. This means that social workers' interventions must not necessarily be neutral and impartial; they may go beyond these limits.

- Mediation requires both sides to be ready to negotiate. Social work can only work with one party, even if the other is not ready or unwilling to change.

- Mediation is a structured process that is usually limited to one or more sessions. Social work tends to be longer - depending on the needs and progress of the client.

- The role of the mediator is focused on how people would like to see things in the future rather than on a comprehensive analysis of recent events. A social worker may need to examine the client's past in detail to bring out the origins and patterns of human beliefs and behaviours out of the open, but that is not his main focus;

- The focus on mediation is the narrowest. Mediation is usually aimed at resolving a particular dispute. Counseling is usually more widespread than mediation. Therapy provides the widest range and depth to deal with relationship issues. Usually the focus is less on what needs to be decided specifically, but rather why this pair is in current conflicts and how they can do things differently to avoid a constant conflict]

- The mediator controls the process but does not attempt to openly influence the participants or the result. A social worker often deliberately takes this role in the process by striving to influence the client to move in a certain direction or to focus on certain issues.

- The main difference is in the methodology used. When a social worker intervenes to resolve a conflict, he uses mediation as another intervention activity. Mediation does not use the methodology of social work, but adopts its own specific approach to achieving its only goal of resolving the conflict.

## **8. Conclusion**

The mediator role involves resolving conflicts micro, mezzo, or macro systems. It mediates between the client and the microsystems, between the client and the macro system, between two microsystems or between two macro systems. At the macro level, the mediator helps various subsystems within a community, or a community and some other system, work out their differences. At the micro and mezzo levels, mediation is helps in such areas as resolving divorce and child custody cases. (Zastrow and Kirst-

Ashman 2007, Kirst-Ashman and Hull 2016). All three levels of mediation have a function to advocate on behalf of and intervene to help people. Micro social workers interpros between individuals. Mezzo social workers mediate between individuals in group settings, or with families. Macro social workers negotiate with communities.

The need to include social work professionals in mediation activities can be explained by the nature of the profession. Social workers are often at the epicenter of conflicts between spouses, between parents and children, adoptive parents, guardians, foster parents, between neighbors, ethnic or religious groups, at work or at school (Osmuk 2014).

If we analyze the functions of social workers, we can assert that the scope of their work is greater than that of the mediator. The mediator role is inherent in social work. Social workers, besides mediating, can also diagnose, advice, direct, direct, protect and assist in conflict management. However, mediation expands the field, the horizon of social work. Training of social workers in mediation techniques to resolve conflicts can improve the efficiency of social work.

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# Opportunities of higher education graduates in Romania and Bulgaria. A comparative analysis in Dolj county and Vidin region

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## Abstract

Bulgaria and Romania are both European Union states, with a high migration rate, and we could start from the premise that cross-border mobility between the two states is high, but in fact things are not like that, because we can find here several factors that contributed to poor attractiveness of these two neighboring states. In this context this paper analyzes the labor market of the two countries in order to promote the opportunities they offer. The present work begins by making a theoretical analysis of the labor market in Romania and Bulgaria, using for this purpose the analysis of social documents, books, statistics, articles. Then a description of the labor market opportunities of the two border regions Vidin and Dolj follows, the analysis being mainly focused on the results of a field sociological research carried out in 2018 among the entrepreneurs in the two regions.

**Keywords:** *labor market; Romania; Dolj county; Bulgaria; Vidin region; employment opportunities.*

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## 1. Labor market in Romania and Bulgaria

The labor market can be defined as “the meeting place, in space and time, totally and structurally, of labor demand with labor supply” (Ignat, Pohoată, Luțac and Pascariu 2002: p. 255). At the same time, the labor market can be defined as “the economic space in which, the demand for labor (represented by capital holders) and labor supply (represented by older workers capable of working) meet, confront and negotiate” (Crețoiu 2077: p. 157 apud. Ilie 2012: p. 20). When demand and supply reach the equilibrium level, we can talk about a balanced market, but when the two elements are not equivalent, the phenomenon of the unbalanced market appears, characterized by unemployment or rarely, total employment in some areas.

From the perspective of demand, the labor market is derived, being determined by the characteristics of the productive process, and from the perspective of the offer, it is a main one with its own determination in labor market fluctuations interfering with

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economic, social and cultural factors (Ilie 2012: p. 514). The labor market situation is largely determined by the development of other markets (Goods market, capital and credit market) as well as by the nature of economic development and motivation at work (Kuteva 2012: p. 99).

Depending on state intervention in labor market evolution, we can find two main models: a) *The social-democratic model*, characterized by the principle of "equality", with intense interventionism of "the Providence State or the Welfare state" oriented on the distribution of welfare within the population, on social activities and social services, by finding active measures for the protection of young people, the unemployed, disadvantaged social groups and with the development of special programs and extended social insurance systems, etc. b) *The liberal model*, characterized by the principle of "freedom" and non-interventionist liberalism, based on the state's minimal intervention, here being referred to as the "protector state", the labor market being based on competition and wage flexibility (Poede 2002: pp. 53-55). Globalization causes "significant structural changes in societies, involving a number of new processes like technological development or facilitating access to education" (Niță and Ilie Goga 2017: p. 11) and international labor market. Regardless of the level of state intervention, we now find a "Europeanized" and "globalized" labor market, so that migration and the intervention of international organizations give a new dimension to the labor market. The dynamics of the mobility of employees and employers at international level is very high and deeply influences the orientations of the actors involved. On the one hand, future employees fluctuate greatly from the moment of career choice, with countless possibilities to study inside or outside the borders, followed by the job route according to the most convenient offers, regardless of the geographic position, given that language and space barriers are more and more easily covered with the development of language skills and transport technology. On the other hand, employing companies are increasingly internationalized and open up workplaces in all corners of the world, depending on economic interests.

In this context, of a labor market with many opportunities for cross-border mobility, the question is, who has the most employment opportunities in different regions or states? Thus, taking into account the current socio-economic context, the present research focuses on the analysis of the opportunities in Romania and Bulgaria in order to highlight the need for focusing on certain areas of qualification and research.

Labor markets in Romania and Bulgaria are developing, retrieving over time a series of stages in which many practices have been experienced and the main legal regulations and institutions have been created. It seems that in Romania and Bulgaria, low level of development is caused mainly by three factors: "the labour market; family structures and migrations" (Motoi and Gheorghită 2017: p. 40; Șerban 2017: p. 377).

Bulgaria and Romania are both neighboring European Union states, both of which have a high migration rate and we could start from the premise that cross-border mobility between the two states is high, but in fact things are not like that. Although, "international migration can be used as a tool for improving specific deficits of the labor market" (Porumbescu 2018: 41), it seems that the poor economic development of the two countries, the high level of unemployment, the low level of wage relative to the EU average, the high level of corruption were factors that contributed to the weak

attractiveness represented by the labor markets in Romania for Bulgarians and in Bulgaria for Romanian emigrants.

Bulgaria has a population of 7,101,859 inhabitants, 73.28% living in urban areas and 27.72% in rural areas. The number of Bulgarian emigrants found in the statistical data is 104,000, but 3 million emigrants are estimated unofficially (Birtu, Gavrilă, Goga, Stanciu and Gruev 2018a: p. 112). Romania has a population of 19,644,350 inhabitants, 51.12% are women and 53.6% of the country's population lives in the urban area (National Institute of Statistics 2018a). Although in the official data in our country we find a little more than 1 million emigrants, in fact, corroborating the statistical data of the destination countries where the Romanians are located, we will obtain an average of 3,500,000 Romanian emigrants residing abroad.

The two areas that are of particular interest to us in this paper and which are under analysis, are the Vidin Region of Bulgaria and the Dolj county of Romania, the two territories being neighboring, on the border between Romania and Bulgaria and being separated from the Danube River.

The Vidin District is in the northern part of Bulgaria and has a population of 88,867 inhabitants, 64% in urban and 36% in rural areas. The unemployment rate in the region in June 2017 was 17.1% (Birtu, Gavrilă, Goga, Stanciu and Gruev 2018a: 12-13). In 2009, the gross income was 4879 BGN. At the end of 2011, there were 3183 businesses in the region, with about 50% active in the area of "trade, machinery repair and household appliances", followed closely by the "hotel" and "industry" sectors, with approximately 8% followed by "transport and communication"; "agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing" and "social and health activities" with 5% each and "constructions" with 2% (Birtu, Gavrilă, Goga, Stanciu and Gruev 2018b: 15-16).

Dolj County is located in the southwestern part of Romania and has a resident population of 630,507 inhabitants and 693,427 if we consider the population with domicile in Dolj. The population distribution according to the residence environment is as follows: 53.85% live in the rural areas and 46.15% in the urban areas (National Institute of Statistics 2018a). In July of 2018, the registered unemployment rate in Dolj County was 7.8% and the share of registered unemployment was 4.7% (National Institute of Statistics 2018b). For Dolj County it is estimated that the migration phenomenon contributed with over 38.000 people to the demographic decrease registered only in the period 1992-2011 (Dolj County Prefecture 2015: p. 9). Predictions for the Dolj County region demography are somber: "the population will decrease by 14.7% until 2030 and by 33.5% until 2050" (Ghețău 2007). In Dolj, the economic structure was divided as follows: the service area 49.7%, the industrial are – 33.1%, constructions are -9.4% and agriculture – 7.8% (Dolj County Prefecture 2015: p. 95). In 2016, the active persons in Dolj county were 265,100, and of these, almost 76,000 were working in the field of "Agriculture, forestry and fishing", 42,000 in "industry", almost 36,000 in "Retail trade; vehicles and motorcycles repair", 13,100 in "Health and social assistance", 12,400 in "Education", 10,400 in "Transport and storage", 6,400 in "Administrative services activities and support services activities", 5,600 in "Public administration and defense; social insurance from public administration", 4,700 in "Hotels and restaurants", 4,200 in "Professional, scientific and technical activities", 3,400 in "Information and communications" etc. (National Institute of Statistics 2018c). We can see that the preponderance of activity in agriculture "generate low income, seasonal and vulnerable jobs without a significant impact on life quality" (Pricină 2018: p. 36).

## **2. Analysis of employment opportunities in the cross-border region from the perspective of employers**

After analyzing the situation on the labor market in Romania and Bulgaria, this chapter will analyze the opportunities found in two neighboring regions of the two states, Dolj county of Romania and the Vidin region of Bulgaria. This analysis aims at identifying the opportunities offered by the labor market in Dolj and Vidin, as well as studying the employability and cross-border mobility, taking into account the fact that the geographical positioning of the two counties, as well as the two counties belonging to the European Union space, represents a favorable factor for cross-border mobility that could be exploited. Moreover, this analysis comes as a help to the labor market policies, which at European level has as its main purpose “high degree of labor employment and quality of work” (Ilie Goga 2014: p. 200).

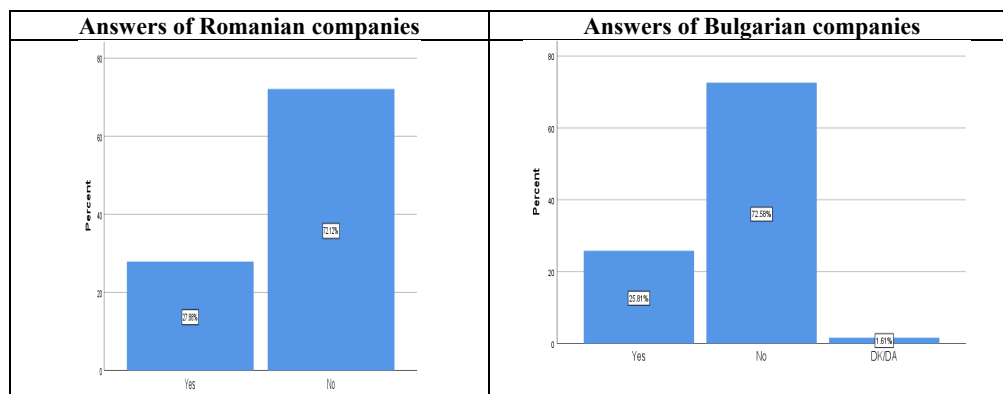
Thus, within the project “*Cross-Border Partnership for Employment and Labour mobility in the Juridical field*” selected under the Program INTERREG VA Romania-Bulgaria, funded by the European Union from the European Regional Development Fund, Priority Axis 4 “A Qualified and Inclusive Region”, a sociological research was carried out by performing an opinion survey, by applying a questionnaire in the Dolj county and the Vidin region to legal entities governed by public and private law.

In Dolj County, questionnaires were applied to companies with more than 20 employees (there were 1173 institutions with over 20 employees in the county), on a representative sample of 104 firms. For applying questionnaires, a quota sampling was performed, taking into account the location of the business (rural /urban) and the type of the firm (private /public /mixed). Thus, 74 questionnaires were applied in the urban area: 19 in public institutions, 54 in private institutions and a questionnaire in an institution with mixed capital; and in rural areas 30 questionnaires were applied: 17 in public institutions and 13 in private institutions (Birtu, Gavrilă, Goga, Stanciu and Gruev 2018a: pp. 30-32).

In the Vidin region 62 questionnaires were applied to institutions / companies, out of a total of 200 institutions in the region, with more than 20 employees. Quota sampling was used, taking into account the type of surveyed company: public and private, and considering that the proportion of public / private institutions questioned is equal to the proportion of public / private institutions in the region. Thus 22 questionnaires were applied to public institutions and 40 questionnaires to the private institutions (Birtu, Gavrilă, Goga, Stanciu and Gruev 2018a: p. 35).

The data collection was carried out from June 2017 to March 2018, both in Dolj-Romania and Vidin- Bulgaria.

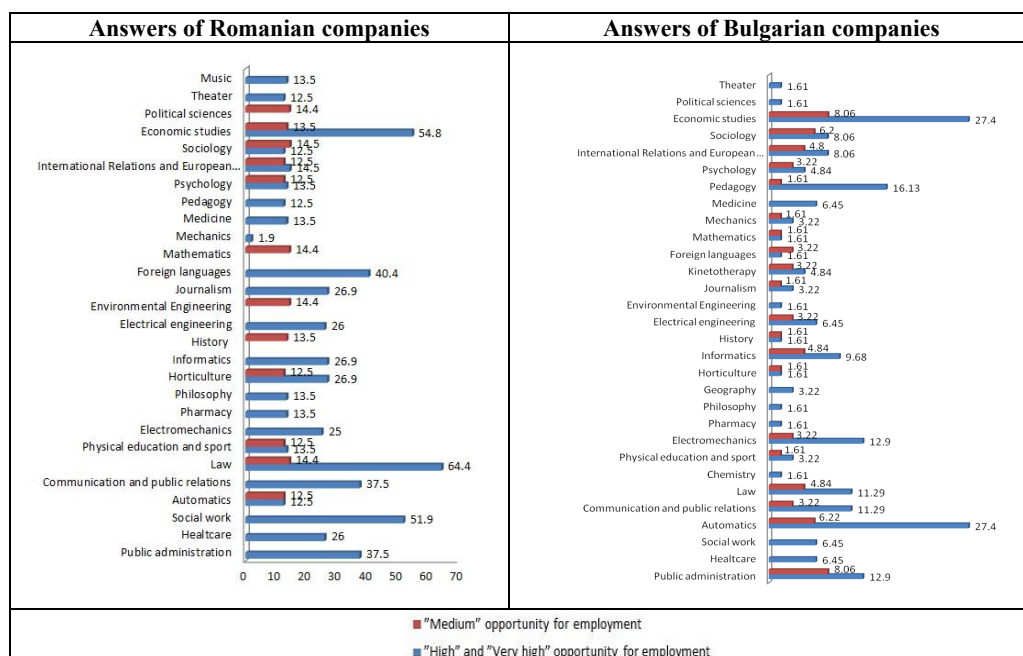
**Question no.1.** “Does your institution has cooperation ties with institutions/organizations from the neighboring country” (Romania/ Bulgaria)?



In Dolj county, “just 27,88% of the surveyed institutions said that they have cooperation links with institutions from Bulgaria and 72.12% of these institutions said that they have no collaboration with the Bulgarian organizations” (Birtu, Gavrilă, Ilie Goga, Stanciu and Gruev 2018a: p. 97).

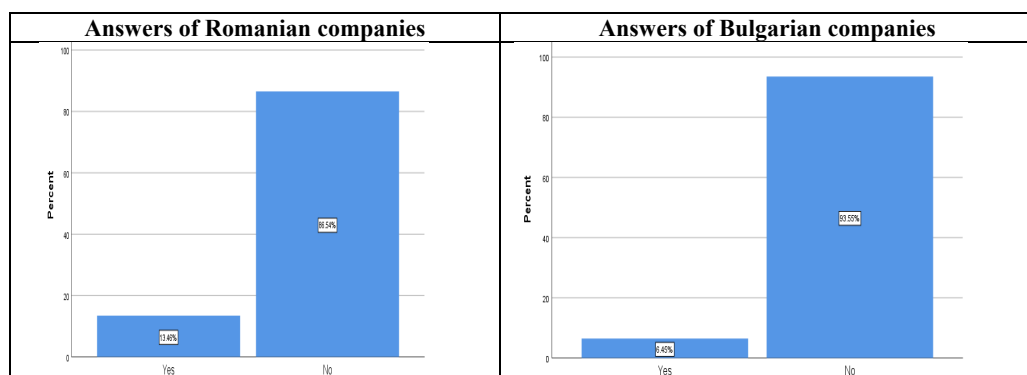
In Vidin county, only “a percent of 25.8 of the surveyed organizations located in this Bulgarian region said that they have cooperation links with institutions from Romania and 72.58% of the respondents said they have no collaborations with the legal persons from Romanian” (Birtu, Gavrilă, Ilie Goga, Stanciu and Gruev 2018a: pp. 164-165).

**Question no. 2:** “For future employment in your institution, what is the university’s field of study that the job candidates should have in order to have the opportunity to occupy vacant positions?”



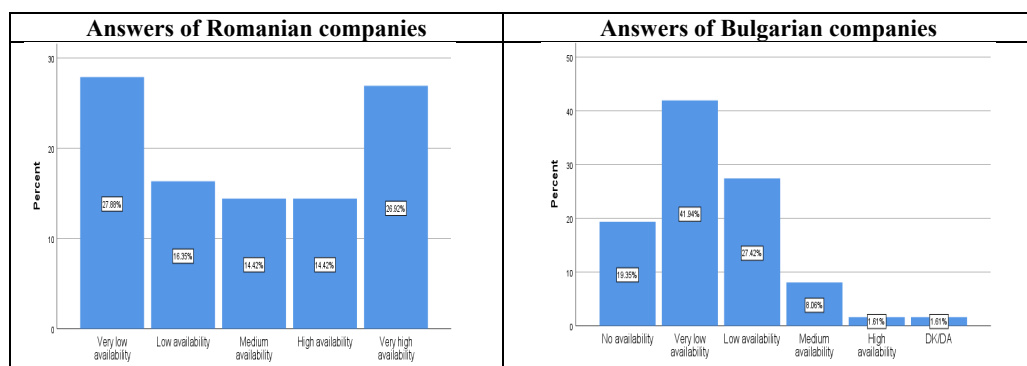
The institutions surveyed in Dolj, “gave the highest chances for employment in the organization they represent to the graduates of the „law faculty” - 64.4%, followed by the graduates of the "economic studies faculty" with a 54.8% percent, then followed by the social work specialization graduates - 51.9% and then the graduates of "foreign languages" faculty - 40.4%” (Birtu, Gavrilă, Ilie Goga, Stanciu and Gruev 2018a: pp. 91-92). The employers surveyed in the Vidin region ”gave the highest chances for employment to the graduates of "automatics" and "economic studies" faculties - 27.42% of the "high" and "very high" employment opportunities and then followed by the graduates of Informatics and Pedagogy” (Birtu, Gavrilă, Ilie Goga, Stanciu and Gruev 2018a: pp. 158-159).

**Question no 3:** “Do you have employees of a different nationality than Romanian/ Bulgarian”?



In Dolj County, “just 13.5% of the interviewed institutions had employees of other nationalities than Romanian, such as Bulgarians, Germans and Scottish” (Birtu, Gavrilă, Ilie Goga, Stanciu and Gruev 2018a: p. 92). In Vidin region, “just 6.45% of the interviewed employers said that they have employees of other nationalities than Bulgarian such as Polish, Ukrainian, Russian and Germans” (Birtu, Gavrilă, Ilie Goga, Stanciu and Gruev 2018a: p. 159).

**Question no. 4:** ”What is your institution’s availability degree to hire a foreigner with higher education completed in another state”?



When the employers in Dolj county were asked "about the availability to hire a higher education graduates completed in other states, only 26.92% said that they have "very high" availability and 14.42% mentioned they had a „high" availability level. Medium availability level was identified at 14.42%, "low" availability at 16.35% and "very low availability" at 27.88% of the interviewed legal persons" (Birtu, Gavrilă, Ilie Goga, Stanciu and Gruev 2018a: p. 93). In Vidin, "only 1.6% of employers said they have "high" availability and 8.1% said they have a „medium" availability level to employ higher education graduates completed in other states. A percent of 27.4% expressed a "low" availability for employing graduates from other countries, 41.9% had a "very low availability" and 19.4% showed a total lack of interest" (Birtu, Gavrilă, Ilie Goga, Stanciu and Gruev 2018a: p. 160).

From the previous analysis we can see the relatively low interest of the employers in Dolj and especially of those from Vidin to hire graduates of higher education in other states, however graduates of certain professions have higher opportunities, being more sought after by the institutions in the region, namely: law graduates, economics and social work graduates in Dolj and graduates of informatics, economic studies and pedagogy in Vidin.

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# Principles of sustainability reporting and disclosure

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## Abstract

The information needs of stakeholders in recent years are changed. Although to disclose information about financial position, financial results and cash flow is still relevant and useful, to be full of content financial information should be complete to non-financial information about the impact of environment, uncertainty, society and others over entities and their business activity. The paper is focus on sustainability reporting and disclosure. Based on analysis of existing frameworks and practices are derived the main principles of sustainability reporting. The paper aims to analyze the sustainability reporting guidelines and principles. By using the quantitative content approach and comparing them, are defined the essence, framework and principles of sustainability reporting and disclosure.

**Keywords:** *sustainable development; sustainability reporting; sustainability disclosure; integrated reporting*

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## 1. Introduction

The world is changing, with it changing everything - people, society, environment, economy, technology. New realities require innovative solutions. Most of all, business senses the impact itself. If it was previously accepted that successful business is profitable business, now is more valuable to create value, worth for society - regulate climate change and reduce the ozone hole, waste reductions, protecting the environment, no poverty, etc. In other words, the greed of capitalists has been replaced by morality, ethics and empathy of entrepreneurs and investors. The new philosophy of successful business is by creating a better and healthier society, and a stable environment is growing the transparency and business gain trust, and this is the way to better financial results and to market expand and earning new adherents in new ideas and projects (these are new partners, clients investors). The goal is to achieve sustainability. That is why sustainability is a key word for more and more companies.

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By strengthened the role of business for society, stakeholders' expectations for information also increase. They require companies to provide and disclose information about all ideas and activities in which they are involved in the issues of society and the environment. Responding to these expectations, companies reporting regularly in different reports, interviews, speeches in the public space, mass media, the Internet, and social media and networks. Information disclosure without observing certain rules and principles is inconvenient for investors and entrepreneurs (they are one of most sensitive stakeholders) – complicate them in decisions making especially by comparing different companies. Therefore is necessary to issue standards about quantity and quality characteristics of information disclose in sustainability report. In recent years interest by regulatory bodies and NGOs growing. The framework of sustainability reporting isn't still unified and even quite diffused. In this sense, the paper aims to analyze the sustainability reporting guidelines and principles. By using the quantitative content approach and comparison them, are defined the essence, framework and principles of sustainability reporting and disclosure.

## **2. Background**

### *What is sustainability?*

Sustainability is term and concept in the same time. The term is prior. It origin from the Latin “sustinere” - to hold; sub, under. Later meaning is "maintain", "support", or "endure". It is used as a base for develop the concept of sustainability. The concept is fairly new idea with “deep” roots. It was clearly introduced at late 80s last century after a decades of effort to harmonized the social justice, social equality and ecology with prosperity. The concept of sustainability is part of sustainable development.

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it two key concepts:

- a. the concept of “needs”, in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and
- b. the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs. (UN, Brundtland Commission 1987).

The sustainable development has three components: economic development, social development and environmental protection (UN 2005). In this sense, sustainability is holistic approach, which is focus on balancing the need of society, environment and business and consider achieving lasting prosperity. It is the capacity to improve the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of the Earth is supporting eco-systems (IUCN). Sustainability means creating a world in which we have:

- 1) A positive ecological and sociological footprint (meaning we leave behind wetlands, not toxic waste dumps; healthy, developmentally appropriate educational systems, not ineffective relics from the Victorian era).
- 2) Cross-sectoral coordination amongst the public and private sectors to nurture global economic development and growth (not physical growth, but in standard of living) to occur within our ecological limits, while delivering social justice.

3) An alignment of the different levels of our individual and collective consciousness so that we can create, maintain, and healthily evolve all of this. (Barrett Brown 2004)

There are clearly distinguish three core aspects of sustainability: environmental sustainability, social sustainability and economic sustainability.

*Environmental sustainability* maintains ecological integrity achieved by keeping balance between rate of non-renewable natural resource use and their consumption. It has an agenda to minimize negative impact corporate operations on stakeholder (GRI 2013)

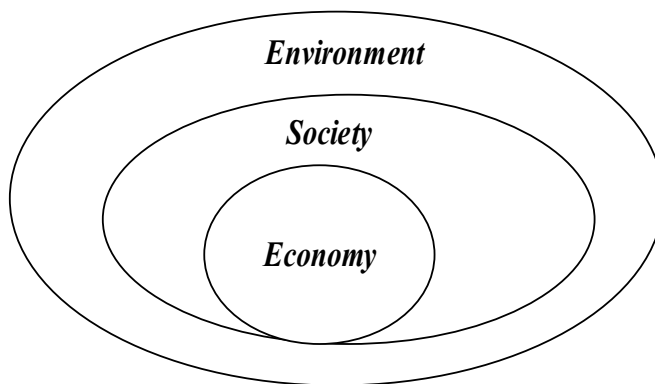
*Social sustainability* encompasses human rights, labor rights and fair labor practices, living conditions, social responsibility, social justice, health, safety, wellness, diversity, equity, work-life balance, empowerment, social support, community engagement, philanthropy, volunteerism, corporate governance, and more. It has an obligation to maintain a positive relation between firm and stakeholders (Montinel and Diego-Ceballos 2014)

*Economic sustainability* is the ability of an economy to support a defined level of economic production indefinitely. It support long-term economic growth without impacting the community and environment and recommended companies' better and sustainable financial performance (GRI 2013; Baumgartner and Ebner 2010)

Each of them characterized different aspects of system „environment - society - economy". Environment, society and economy are systems that operate independently and interact at the same time. Relationship between them can be explain as vertical relation and as integral relation.

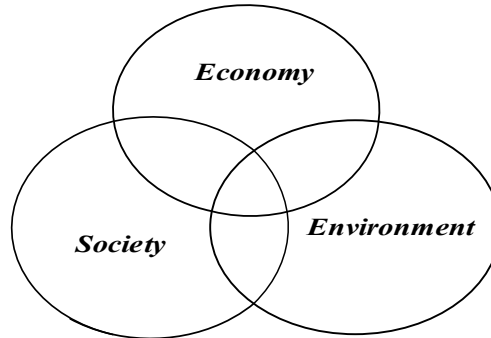
Vertical relationship “environment – society - economy” is hierarchal type. It characterizes the subordination of the economy to environment and society. It is shown as three circles included one inside another on idea of Passet (1979) (See Figure no.1). The essence of hierarchy of economy, society and environment can be established from Gray and Milne's (2002) definition of sustainability where sustainability is defined as the efficient and equitable distribution of resources intra-generationally and inter-generationally over time with the operation of economic activity within the confines of a finite ecosystem.

**Figure no. 1.** Relation “environment – society - economy”



The second approach characterizes actions and interactions between economy, environment and society. (See Figure no. 2)

**Figure no. 2.** Relation “environment – society - economy”



It reveals bond of sustainability to some others concepts with similar essence, as social responsibility (CSR), triple bottom line (TBL), social accounting (SA).

Corporate social responsibility outlines the social commitment of the business to the development of society and the provision of high quality living through sustainable growth. It is defined as a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis (The Green Paper European Commission 2006)

Triple bottom line (TBL) is a concept that seeks to broaden the focus on the financial bottom line by businesses to include social and environmental responsibilities. TBL incorporating sustainability into corporate strategy. It aims to measure the financial, social and environmental performance of the corporation over a period of time.

Social accounting is Social accounting is a method for quantifying and qualifying performance of socio-economic activities of entity/organization. In this sense, it is a process of “preparation and publication of an account about organization’s social, environmental, employee, community, customer and other stakeholder interactions and activities, and there is possible, the consequence of those interaction and activities” (Gray 2000).

The concepts of sustainability (sustainability development), corporate social responsibility, triple bottom line and social accounting.

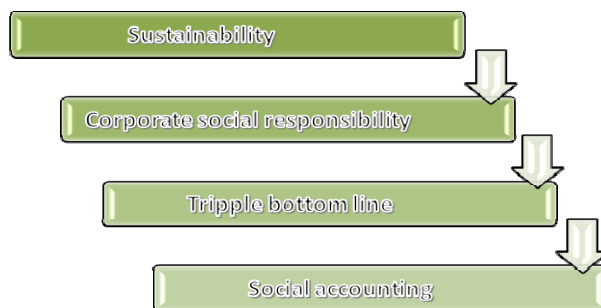
Looking into the nature of concepts established that:

a. Each of the concepts characterized the system “environment – society - economy”.

b. Their implementation in corporate practice help corporations to achieve sustainability and sustainable growth.

c. The relation between them is hierarchic. It is expressed: each of prior is precondition to next (Fig.3): corporate social responsibility is one of management tools to achieve sustainability and sustainable growth; triple bottom line is evaluate the corporate social responsibility and triple bottom line is the base for social accounting, reporting and disclosure information about “social and economic consequences of governmental and entrepreneurial behavior” (Mobley 1970).

**Figure no. 3.** Hierarchy between sustainability, corporate social responsibility, triple bottom line and social accounting



The key indicators for development of sustainability concepts are:

- Change of morality and ethical behavior of a company towards the society, it means interruption the business practice to ignore the social consequences of enterprise's economic activities and reluctance to assume social responsibility.
- External pressure on companies to demonstrate their social commitment to society.

Strengthened role of business for society and under public pressure, the companies have begun to measure, report and disclose sustainability information.

### 3. Essence of sustainability reporting

Sustainability reporting, in broader sense, is an organization's practice of reporting publicly on its economic, environmental, and/or social impacts (GRI 2016: p.3). It is non-financial reporting for social and environmental performance of business activities. Sustainability reporting measuring and disclose the companies' contributions (positive or negative) towards the goal of sustainable development. (GRI 2016: p.3).

As a result of relationship between sustainability, corporate social responsibility and triple bottom line, sustainability reporting can be considered as synonymous with other terms for triple bottom line reporting, corporate social responsibility (CSR) reporting, and more (GRI). Considering hierarchy between them can be concluded sustainability reporting is the unifying element for achieving sustainable development. In the same time by broader approach established sustainability is part of overall performance of entity, known as integrated reporting. Integrated reporting is an expression of everything create value in entity - capital, resources, activities, reputation, etc. It provides companies' financial and non-financial data. Integrated reporting aims to incorporate everything from strategy through risk management; from financial reporting to the inclusion of other capitals (social and environmental impacts), and to meet the needs of a broad a group of stakeholders (Main and Hespeneide 2012). It is focus on future orientation helps to provide tomorrow's reasons for investing today (Labrey 2016). Integrated reporting provide a more holistic form of reporting the value created by a business, by considering non-financial resources such as human, social and intellectual capitals as well as financial capital. Its elements are financial reporting, sustainability reporting, risk disclosure, non-financial

reporting (Figure no. 4). In this sense, sustainability reporting is an intrinsic element of integrated reporting.

**Figure no. 4.** Elements of integrated reporting



Sustainability reporting creates value and is useful for both – companies and stakeholders, and society at all. Benefits include:

- Better reputation – improve brand loyalty and image (EY 2016: p.14; Rogers 2016; GRI).

- Better communication with stakeholders (employees, business partners, local and/or public communities) (ACCA 2013: p.6) and reduce the information asymmetry (Merkl-Davies and Brennan 2007, Du, Bhattacharya and Sen 2010) - enable external stakeholders to understand the organization's true value, and tangible and intangible assets and demonstrate how the organization influences, and is influenced by, expectations about sustainable development (GRI); meet the expectation of employees (EY 2016: p.3), etc.

- Access to capital (EY 2016: p.3 and p. 13).

- Save costs, waste reductions and increase productivity (EY 2016: p.14; Rogers 2016; GRI)

- Reduce risks, identify opportunities and build resilience into the core business model (ACCA 2013: p.6; EY 2016: p.3 and p. 14; GRI).

- Improve efficiency (EY 2016: p.13; ACCA 2013: p.6; GRI)

- Emphasize the link between financial and non-financial performance (EY 2016: p.12; GRI)

- Stimulate the innovation and increase the efficiency (EY 2016: p.13).

- Help to define a long term vision of company and help to set targets (ACCA 2013: p.6).

- Instinct discipline (ACCA 2013: p.6).

- Give competitive advantage (Rogers 2016) and etc.

Besides incontestable advantages applying sustainability reporting, the reason to disclose a sustainable information can be also the will to respond to stakeholders' expectations and contribute to the welfare of society (Morsing and Shultz 2006) or to manage their own legitimacy (Reverte 2009).

Applying sustainability reporting required companies to publish sustainability report. Sustainability report:

- Presents the organization's values and governance model, and demonstrates the link between its strategy and its commitment to a sustainable global economy.
- Help entities to measure, understand and communicate their economics, environmental, social and governance performance, and set goals, and manage change more effectively.
- Support stakeholders to combine the analysis of financial and non-financial performance. (GRI).

Inside the report company discloses information about the economic, environmental and social impacts caused by its everyday activities and particularly employee related information and environmental information about ecology, society and sustainable development.

Preparing sustainability report is voluntary. In recent years after adoption and enter into force on Directive 2014/95/EU grow the number of mandatory disclosures – it is compulsory large undertakings which are public-interest entities exceeding on their balance sheet dates the criterion of the average number of 500 employees during the financial year shall include in the management report a non-financial statement, ie enterprises must disclose information about environmental, social and governance matter including respect for human rights, anti-corruption and bribery matters. It means to prepare sustainability report, in fact. Whether sustainability reporting voluntary or compulsory towards sustainability report should be transparent, authentic, stakeholder engaged, initiative structured and meaningful (Rebecca Treacy-Lenda 2012).

Not all sustainability reports are created equal. Some reports look like marketing brochures, others are detailed, boring and difficult to read. The best reports are balanced comprehensive, material data, in a well-designed format. In its preparing, companies are guided by own approach, established practice in the entity, and in accordance with essence of entities' activities. Several professional organizations provide reporting initiatives, principles and guidelines, and established sustainability reporting framework. The most authoritative among them are:

- Global Reporting Initiative (GRI);
- Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB),
- International Integrated Reporting Council (IIRC),
- World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD),
- CDP (formerly the Carbon Disclosure Project).

Each of them issued requirements as standards and guidance (see Fig.5). They respond the needs to greater coherence, consistency, and comparability among corporate reporting frameworks and related requirements, and aims:

- to communicate about the direction, content, and ongoing development of reporting frameworks and guidance;
- to identify practical means by which respective frameworks and guidance can be aligned and rationalized; and
- to share information and express a common voice on areas of mutual interest, where possible, to engage key regulators. (PWC, 2016)

All together, they build the framework of sustainability reporting.



**Figure no. 5.** Regulatory body's guidance set



#### 4. Fundamentals of sustainability reporting

Sustainability reporting measure and disclose company's` activities and their economic, social and environmental impacts. Three are the main elements of sustainability disclosure – economic, environment and social.

*Economic disclosure* includes topics as economic performance; market presence; indirect economic impacts; procurement practices; anti-corruption; anti-competitive behavior.

*Environmental performance* cover entities` activities concern ecology, climate action (energy; water; biodiversity; emissions); effluents and waste; environmental compliance; supplier environmental assessment.

*Social disclosures* are various and detailed. Usually include labor practice and relations, human rights, product responsibility; society; occupational health and safety even security practices; customer privacy, non-discrimination rights of indigenous peoples, local communities; supplier social assessment; public policy; marketing and labeling; socioeconomic compliance and ect.

The entities don't encounter any significant difficulties on the scope of the sustainability report. It` s easy to define the scope: the essence of sustainability reporting clear and easy to understand on one hand, and it depends from entities activities on other hand. But when it concern content and quality of sustainability disclosure entities are embarrassed. In most cases, they use the professional organizations` guidance. Variety of issued standards, principles, requirements, guidelines hinder more than help. The reason, there is any unified criteria although most of them are quite similar (See Table 1)

**Table no. 1.** Sustainability reporting criteria

| <i>Professional regulatory body</i>                |  |   |  |
|--|--|---|--|
| <b>GRI</b>   |  | <b>IIRC</b>   | <b>WBCSD</b>   |
| <i>Reporting principles for define the content</i> | <i>Reporting principles for define the quality</i> | <i>Reporting principles for content and quality</i> | <i>Qualitative characteristics of sustainable development report</i> |
| Materiality  | Balance  | Strategic focus and future orientation              | Relevance  |
| Stakeholder inclusiveness                          | Comparability                                      | Connectivity of information                         | Reliability  |
| Sustainability context                             | Accuracy   | Stakeholder relationships                           | Comparability  |
| Completeness                                       | Timeless   | Materiality   |  |
|  | Clarity  | Conciseness   |  |
|  | Reliability  | Reliability and completeness                        |  |
|  |  | Consistency and comparability                       |  |

*Note:* By comparing the sustainability reporting criteria are excluded the principles issued by Sustainability Accounting Standards Board and CDP. There aren't universal criteria. The professional bodies issue unique requirements for specific industry.

*Source:* The author according GRI, Consolidated set of GRI sustainability reporting standards 2016; WBCSD, Sustainable development reporting 2002; IIRC, The international framework 2013; SASB 2018; CDP 2018.

By applying the quantitative content approach of professional reporting initiatives is established:

First. The framework define the reporting boundaries. Seeks answers to the following questions: What to report? and How to report? The framework addresses – the scope of sustainability reporting and reporting criteria, named as principles.

Second. All of them require companies disclose information in three areas: economic, environment and social.

Third. Each reporting initiative is valuable and has a competitive advantage:

- Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) is focused on ecology and global nature capital disclosure (concern to emissions, renewable energy, water, climate hazard, mitigation actions, adaptation action, governance and opportunities).

- Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB) provides detailed guidance on 77 industries across 11 sectors. It is industry orienteered.

- World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) presents step-by-step approach to developing a sustainable development report.

- International Integrated Reporting Council (IIRC) establish guiding principles and content elements in context of integrated reporting.

- Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) issue a set of sustainability reporting standards and give detailed requirements, recommendations, and guidance for each specific reporting topic.

Fourth. All regulatory initiatives requires general disclosures – organizational profile, company's strategy, ethics and integrity, governance, stakeholders engagement, reporting practice.

Fifth. Looking at the essence of applicable principles is established that regulators develop similar by using different concepts

Sixth. There are two type of reporting principles – for content and quality of sustainability disclosure, although it is not clearly defined. All initiatives requires sustainability report to be

- **materiality**, i.e. to reflect the reporting organization's significant economic, environmental, and social impacts; or to substantively influence the assessments and decisions of stakeholders;

- **balance** – to provide a balanced and reasonable representation of the sustainability performance of a reporting company or organization – including both positive and negative contributions;

- **reliability** - shall gather, record, compile, analyze, and report information and processes used in the preparation of the report organization in a way that they can be subject to examination, and that establishes the quality and materiality of the information.

- **comparability** - select, compile, and report consistently; and also the reported information should be sufficiently accurate and detailed; in a manner that is understandable, accessible to stakeholders and support them to analyze changes in the organization's performance over time, and that could support analysis relative to other organizations.

Other criteria reveal specific characteristics according to the nature of reporting initiatives.

The quality of information enables stakeholders to make reasonable assessments of performance, and take appropriate action (GRI 2016), so the reports should present the reporting organization's performance in the wider context of sustainability; include coverage of material topics and their Boundaries, sufficient to reflect significant economic, environmental, and social impacts, and to enable stakeholders to assess the reporting organization's performance in the reporting period; report on a regular schedule so that information is available in time.

Seventh. The quality of sustainability report depends on quality and quantity of reported sustainability information and its faithful and objective representation.

Eighth. Undertakings falling within the scope of a Directive 2014/95/EU apply choose initiative together with requirements in Directive about report's content (in fact they are much close to integrated reporting then to sustainability reporting). The minimum disclosure include a brief description of the undertaking's business model; a description of the policies pursued by the undertaking in relation to those matters, including due diligence processes implemented; the outcome of those policies; the principal risks related to those matters linked to the undertaking's operations; non-financial key performance indicators relevant to the particular business.

## **5. Conclusions**

Sustainability reporting becomes a regular business practice and in recent years the numbers of sustainability disclosure increasingly grow even for voluntary reporting (see Survey of European Federation of Accountants and Auditors for SMEs (EFAA) of on non-financial information reporting by small and medium-sized entities (SMEs) across 14 European countries, <https://www.iasplus.com/en/news/2018/11/efaa>). The

reasons can be to satisfy stakeholders' informational needs, or to create a value, or better reputation, or is mandatory required. No matter the reasons, it is fact more and more companies implement sustainability reporting in companies reporting.

Sustainability reporting is part of integrated reporting. It is focus on economic, environmental and social performance of company's activities. The disclosures subordinate the requirements of regulatory initiatives among them Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) standards are widely used. There are several attributes characterized the good sustainability report: materiality, reliability, accountability and transparency (true and fair view), completeness and comparability.

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# Social integration and civic participation among the immigrants in Romania

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## Abstract

While most of the studies on the topic of human population movement depict Romania as an emigration country, official statistics reveal that, during the past years, the number of temporary or permanent immigrants in Romania has increased continuously. One of the points of great interest in the academic research linked to migration is represented by the level social integration of immigrants. While civic participation is merely a dimension of integration, we argue that analyzing its evolution, correlated with the evolution in the number of immigrants, can contribute to a better understanding of the situation of these people, thus creating a functional framework for integrating them. Previous studies reveal the fact that civic participation of immigrants, especially regarding political interest, raises many issues in most of the countries, mostly due to the fact that they rarely benefit from any kind of political rights, and their civic representation is often rather precarious.

**Keywords:** *immigration; integration; Romania; civic participation; political rights*

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## 1. Emigration and immigration in Romania

Although Romania is predominantly a source country for emigrants, the immigration phenomenon is also a significant influence on the Romanian society, as it results in the need to integrate those arriving in our country. The National Institute of Statistics reveals that “Romania continues to be a country of emigration, the phenomenon of emigration being the second biggest cause of the country's population decline. The balance of international migration in 2016 was negative, with the number of migrants exceeding the number of immigrants with over 76,000 people” (National Institute of Statistics 2018: p. 2).

According to the National Strategy regarding immigration, legal migration must be the result of the common will of the migrant and of the receiving Member State, both for the benefit of the State of origin, in the context of circular migration. “Romania implements a specific immigration policy according to the needs identified

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at national level and at the same time concentrated, taking into account its impact on the other EU Member States, while ensuring equal treatment of immigrants and their harmonious integration into the host society” (Strategia nationala... 2015).

During the past ten years, as the table below indicates, more than 230. 000 people have permanently migrated to Romania, thus creating the need for legal institutions, social spaces and a coherent plan to be integrated into the life in Romania.

**Table no. 1.** Total amount of permanent immigrants in Romania, 2007-2017

| Year | Total amount of immigrants |
|------|----------------------------|
| 2007 | 9575                       |
| 2008 | 10030                      |
| 2009 | 8606                       |
| 2010 | 7059                       |
| 2011 | 15538                      |
| 2012 | 21684                      |
| 2013 | 23897                      |
| 2014 | 36644                      |
| 2015 | 23093                      |
| 2016 | 27863                      |
| 2017 | 50199                      |

*Source: National Institute of Statistics, Romania*

Romania has had legislation in the field of integration since 2004. The main attributions in this area are given to certain ministries and local authorities. However, the legislation in the field of migration is under continuous improvement, so, it is likely that the legislation will undergo some changes in the near future. In Romania, each institutional actor (Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Labor and Social Justice, Ministry of Health, etc.) is responsible for the integration of foreigners in its field of activity, coordinating and monitoring the policy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs through the General Inspectorate for Immigration (IGI), which also has the task of providing, through its regional structures, specific services to facilitate the integration into Romanian society of different categories of foreigners.

Institutional coordination is mainly done through meetings with stakeholders (organized on the basis of the National Immigration Strategy) and expert meetings (regularly organized by the General Inspectorate for Immigration through the Asylum and Integration Directorate). The measures provided by the law to achieve integration refer, on the one hand, to facilitating access to a range of economic and social rights, such as the right to a job, housing, the right to education, the right to health care and social assistance, and, on the other hand, the implementation of integration programs (specific activities of cultural orientation, counseling and learning of the Romanian language).

Government Ordinance no.44/ 2004 on the social integration of foreigners who have obtained a form of protection in Romania, as amended and completed, defines



social integration as the process of active participation of foreigners who have acquired a form of protection or a right of residence in Romania and citizens of the Member States of the European Union and the European Economic Area to the economic, social and cultural life of the Romanian society, in order to prevent social marginalization, respectively in order to adapt to the conditions of the Romanian society.

The general policy objective of integrating foreigners who have obtained a form of protection in Romania is to help them self-support, become independent of state assistance or non-governmental organizations, and actively participate in economic, social and cultural life.

To this end, the General Inspectorate for Immigration, through Regional Centers, supports these people by offering a package of services reunited in the Integration Program. The Integration Program offers: accommodation on request in the centers of the General Inspectorate for Immigrants for the period during which the person is enrolled in the integration program (up to 12 months), Romanian language courses, during the period of the person enrolling in the integration program (up to 12 months), organized with the support of the school inspectorates; cultural accommodation sessions; granting, for a period of 2 months, material assistance equal to that provided for asylum seekers; social counseling that includes ensuring access to their rights in Romania: the right to a job, the right to housing, the right to health and social care, social security, the right to education; counseling and psychological support; a non-refundable grant amounting to 540 lei/ person, granted for a maximum of 12 months, provided that they enroll in and participate in the activities of the integration program and set out in the integration plan (according to the information available at <http://igi.mai.gov.ro/ro/content/programul-de-integrare>).

After the completion of the program, financial support for the payment of accommodation outside the Center can be claimed by settling up to 50% of the accommodation costs for a maximum of one year. Three types of activities are offered within the integration program: Romanian language learning courses, cultural accommodation sessions and counseling activities (Witec and Berbec 2018: p. 4).

## **2. The civic participation dimension of social integration**

Social integration of immigrants is a wide topic, addressing several aspects, such as: education, language skills, engagement in civic activities, culture etc. In this context, civic participation is merely a dimension of integration, an expression of the different type of routes immigrants can choose to integrate more easily in the host societies. The social reality, both in Romania and other European countries, reveals the fact that civic representation of immigrants is often precarious and raises many issues in most of the countries, mostly due to the fact that they rarely benefit from any kind of political rights.

Thus, civic participation can be defined as the ways in which migrants can act like citizens, taking into account the fact that they do not have the national citizenship, and, therefore, traditional political participation methods are not available for them (Gsir 2015: p. 2). Carrera defines civic integration as an expression of immigrant incorporation in a recipient country, which, in addition to economic and political integration, also includes individual commitment to the knowledge, norms and traditions that characterize the host country (Carrera 2006).

In a study published in 2009, comparing four member states of the European Union on measures adopted for the civic integration of third-country nationals (referred to in the report as TCNs), it is noted that “The promotion of civic integration policies by some EU member states has also taken place through the exchange of ‘good practices’ and ‘lessons learned’ among member states representatives in the scope of the EU Framework on Integration as well as the financial support provided by the European integration fund. The common EU immigration policy is thus granting an increasingly prominent role to civic integration programs and policies for TCNs” (Carrera and Wiesbrock 2009: p. 39).

Civic integration (CIP) policies can be defined as a “particular set of policy instruments and integration requirements, specifically country knowledge and language skills, that are conditional towards various legal statuses, for example, at entry and for long-term residence. The strategies used to enhance civic integration are conducted through tests that examine language skills, country knowledge and social values. The character and scope of CIPs differ between countries. However, one prominent factor that unites some countries is the conditionality integrated into some of these policies” (Ahlen and Borang 2018: p. 4).

Political participation of immigrants is a disputed topic, because they usually don’t have political rights, and the situations when they benefit from the existence of strong consultation groups are also rare (MIPEX 2015). Furthermore, there is a great diversity among the political participation of immigrants in some countries of Western and Eastern Europe, where migrants can only engage in political activities after obtaining citizenship.

Regarding the nature of engagement of immigrants in political activities, scholars concerned with the topic highlight the difference between political participation and involvement in other kind of civic activities. While political participation implies the existence of a direct contribution to the political decision making process, either by voting, or by undertaking other kind of political activities, such as registering in a political party, engaging in campaigns, or reaching out to a politician, civic participation regards the range of activities that do not have the capacity to directly influence the political decisions. However, civic participation, too, has the ability to influence the political decision making process, although not directly.

Learning the language and having basic knowledge about the host country are basic requirements to gain independence and self-support, and to become part of the local community. They also represent a means for immigrants to regain their security, dignity and self-esteem. There are a number of factors that can affect the ability of immigrants to learn the language or culture of the host country, including education followed and familiarity with the school environment, age, sex, physical and mental health, family responsibilities and economic or housing circumstances. The cultural context in which the integration processes take place is also very important, as culture is a “central factor for the developing of contemporary societies is also favored by the globalization of economies and the rise of the production and communication means” (Niță and Ilie Goga 2018: p. 9). External factors may be related to the availability of qualified staff, to the extent to which the analytical curriculum covers the needs of migrants with educational needs and the availability of support systems that offer people the opportunity to participate in language courses and cultural orientation, including childcare, transport

costs or appropriate income support. In this regard, some studies reveal the fact that “the welfare system is not prepared to face today challenges” (Șerban 2017: p. 378) in many of the European countries, as the immigrants usually need at least the same amount of assistance, especially if they find themselves in a special situation.

Regarding the people that benefit from refugee treatment, designated international documents include provisions regarding the measures that are to be taken by states in order to help them integrate. In this regard, UNCHR has established a series of Common Fundamental Principles on Integration of Immigrants (UNCHR 2009: p. 26) that identify, for instance, frequent interactions between migrants and citizens as fundamental mechanisms of integration and encourages participation of immigrants in the democratic process, as well as the formulation of measures and policies related to integration. Furthermore, the topic of civic participation is also dealt with by the European Commission in the Handbook on Integration for policy-makers and practitioners. UNHCR considers integration of refugees a dynamic, multifaceted and bidirectional process calls for efforts from all parties involved, including refugee availability to adapt to the host society without giving up their former cultural identity as well as the mutual availability of host communities and public institutions to receive refugees and face the needs of a diverse community.

The Convention on the Status of Refugees presents a series of targeted social and economic rights in the direction of the integration process. These include freedom of movement, access to education and to the labor market, access to aid and social assistance, including medical facilities, the possibility of acquire and dispose of properties and ability to travel with valid identity documents and travel. Moreover, in Article 34, it requires states to facilitate integration and access to citizenship for refugees. The UNHCR Executive Committee has admitted that the process of local integration is complex and gradual, having three distinct but interlinked dimensions, namely legal, economic and socio-cultural, all of which are important for the integration capacity of refugees as members with rights full of society (UNCHR 2009).

UNHCR has also been concerned about the lack of involvement of refugees in designing, implementing or evaluation of integration programs and activities in Central Europe. Regarding participation in larger social or political processes, many refugees remain prisoners at the edge of the host society, lacking the knowledge and means to take part in local, regional or national processes. In some countries, in the absence of voting rights and the possibility to run for local or regional functions, some refugees may wait for long periods of time and go through complex procedures until they are granted citizenship and implicitly the right to take part in official political processes.

Integration is an interactive process involving both immigrants, citizens and institutions in the host country. The end result is the creation of a society that is both diversified and open, where people can form a community despite the differences between them.

### **3. The situation of immigrants in Romania**

Cultural differences have always been a barrier to the integration of foreigners, and one of the most important ones. In Romania cultural accommodation courses for foreign citizens are being organized, aimed at facilitating the process of integrating them from a cultural point of view and adapting them to the Romanian society.

The integration indicators used for the civic participation dimension of social integration in most of the studies that approach this topic (MIPEX 2015, OECD 2015, Radu 2017) include three main levels. First, locally, the involvement of migrants in civil society organizations in the host country is being evaluated. Secondly, involvement of immigrants with organizations of migrants that militate for migrant's integration in the host country regard the trans-national level of integration, and, thirdly, assessing the involvement with organizations that deal with situations in their country of origin, mainly in the context of globalism and transnationalism

Regarding the trans-national and international dimensions of integration, there are two perspectives for analyzing bi and multinational organizations. One approach states they can harm integration, mainly due to the fact that the participants can be perceived as loyal to the state of origin, which can threat integration (Portes 1999: 472). The other one, on the contrary, claims that they can facilitate integration, because they cause immigrants to act first based on their ethnicity, in time, becoming involved citizens in the country of destination. Research has shown that transnational civic participation has had a positive impact on civic participation in the country of destination (Fox and Bada 2011: pp. 147-148).

A study released in 2011 (Alexe and Paunescu 2011), regarding the integration of immigrants in Romania and the instruments meant to facilitate integration reveals the restrains of the locals regarding the efforts they are supposed to make in order to help the foreigners accommodate more easily. Some of the responses in that study help create a multidimensional picture of the sociologic context in which these integration efforts take place: "The differences are up to the gestural language... Differences created by religion, religious systems, I believe that religion has a great importance on the formation of man" (interview, public institution).

Other respondents believe that stereotypes exist in all countries, and that the Romanian society would need better communication in general: "We need better communication, we Romanians have no communication within our family, why should we have it with foreigners "(interview, international organization)

Moldovan students studying in Romania explained there are no big differences in the cultural relations between them and the Romanians here, especially as they speak Romanian and have a common history to the Romanians, which contributes significantly to their integration (Alexe and Paunescu 2011: p. 391).

Civic participation is important in the process of migrants' integration, both due to the social interaction it involves, and also due to its political and social efficiency. Migrants that get civically engaged are considered better integrated than those who do not belong to such organizations.

However, many immigrants find it difficult to establish close relations to the population in the host community, and, with the assistance of modern long-distance fast communication channels, they can keep in touch with their families or friends left at home. Migrants confess that that in many cases, institutions and organizations are not sources of information for them, but most often appeal to friends, knowledge, people in the community and employers. Of they also say, they do not watch Romanian TV stations and the press (due to the lack of knowledge of the Romanian language). Instead, use the internet often, anyway chosen to track news from their home country and communicate with family or friends remaining in the country. For some, their

country's embassy in Romania is a source of information for issues related to legal residence rights, visas, employment opportunities and others (Alexe and Paunescu 2011: p. 392).

The Internet is, according to foreign students' statements, an important source of information for them, especially with regard to information on transport possibilities, of accommodation and employment, communication with family and friends through networks socializing, accessing information on cultural life and leisure.

The conclusions of the research on the civic participation dimension of integration in the Index of immigrants' integration in Romania (Radu 2017: pp. 117-118), concerning civic participation, trust in institutions and participation associated to the phenomenon of transnationalism, the image depicted is complex: "approximately 35% of the immigrants are involved in student organizations, over 30% in education, art and music organizations and over 25% in home country organizations. The least popular organizations are trade unions and professional associations. High participation in student organizations can be explained by the generous offer of participation in various associations existing among universities".

#### **4. Conclusions**

Civic participation of migrants is very important for the integration process, as it creates the channels for a direct transfer of their needs towards the authorities involved in the decision-making process. Several studies have revealed the fact that civic (and political) participation facilitates the contact between migrants and locals, thus having a significant socializing role (Lindekilde 2009). Furthermore, in the absence of any kind of political rights for non-citizen residents, civic participation of migrants increases their political efficiency, providing them opportunities to express their needs.

Although numerous programs and projects are aimed at creating context for immigrants to integrate better from the social perspective, to participate, the possibility to measure how efficient they actually are in the process is very small. "There are a number of indicators that could be used to measure civic commitment. Examples include: membership of community associations, sporting or leisure activities, neighborhood committees, trade unions, political parties, and volunteer activities. Going out with friends is also a good indicator of social integration. However, everyday life surveys gather little data for such indicators. Their questions usually focus on the mere fact of participation, not on the actual scope of engagement" (OECD 2015: p. 208). Furthermore, some of the actors involved in this process state that civic integration policies and the ways they are being enforced in some countries can easily be considered immigration control in disguise (Ahle and Borang 2018).

However, the issue of how cultural, spiritual or educational differences can be overcome in order to achieve a multicultural, homogenous society remains. The policies and tools of civic integration are designed to support both the new comers and the locals as well, by building bridges enabled to shorten the social distance. But this is not a goal that can be achieved in a short period of time, but rather a continuous, mutual effort, which engages all the parties involved in the process, not only the immigrants. Constructing institutional tools and social places that can facilitate this process is not only the state's responsibility, but also one of the local communities, which, in turn, can benefit from the presence of immigrants.

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# Social entrepreneurship and social work - common ground for sustainable communities

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## Abstract

In the recent years, social entrepreneurship has been widely discussed as an opportunity to solve social problems of vulnerable groups in society, based on economic means and mechanisms.

A new area of practice emerges, which is insufficiently explored from a scientific point of view. Both social work and social entrepreneurship are aimed at improving the social situation of vulnerable groups and their better inclusion in society. A social entrepreneur, like a social worker, uses skills and knowledge to solve a social problem and to help improve the quality of life of the needed.

The report looks at the common ground between social work and social entrepreneurship, the role of the social worker and the social entrepreneur in terms of working with vulnerable groups. Where do they complement and where do they differ? What are the skills that a social entrepreneur should possess and how do they correspond to the skills and knowledge that a social worker uses in his/her work with vulnerable groups? How they contribute towards sustainable communities? Can social entrepreneurship be seen as a business model in social work?

**Keywords:** *social work; social entrepreneurship; business model in social work*

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## 1. Introduction

Today, more than ever, sustainable communities are needed. This necessity stems from the growing complexity of the societal, economic and social conditions of life as a result of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

The world is changing due to digital, bio- and nanotechnology and as a result of the material sciences development. These developments have an impact on the life and provoke a transformational change in the national and global economy. We are witnessing a profound transformation that, on the one hand, leads to better solutions to the problems of the planet's resources, on the other hand, leads to the transformation of established, traditional patterns of employment and community participation.

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To meet the new challenges of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, new skills and knowledge are needed to make a difference in contemporary processes. There is a "blurring" of the boundaries between technology, economic and industrial sectors, organizational models (public, private and civil), and this affects societies, their dynamic and openness to the world. They become, more than ever, more interdependent and pluralistic. Social relationships are becoming complicated and this requires adequate economic response and adequate organizational structures and models. The current systems of social protection and economic growth fail to respond adequately to the changes that have been created and to ever-growing public needs.

The emergence and growth of social entrepreneurship is precisely the result of the need to achieve a transformative change in social relations, to introduce novelty into traditional patterns and structures so as to realize a pattern of existence that takes account of different interests but is based on shared, collective values and actions.

The interest in social entrepreneurship is justified in terms of rationality at its core - combining economic benefits and social causes, through market means and mechanisms. Issues of poverty, social inclusion, and economic growth in the conditions of reduced social spending find a new, more adequate solution through the mechanisms of social entrepreneurship.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution requires a social revolution, too. How can we make this happen? Will not social entrepreneurship be this new social revolution?

There is a need of radical change in how to provide help to people in need so as to ensure a change in their lifestyle towards better quality.

Social work and social entrepreneurship have common ground in their focus on solutions of social problems of vulnerable groups. But at the same time, they differ in the mechanisms of delivering the help.

Are we ready for the new social revolution and how it will affect us - as consumers and as professionals? Are the professionals in the helping professions ready for change?

## **2. Entrepreneurial activity as a strategy to address the unemployment and social exclusion**

From 2011 entrepreneurship, including social entrepreneurship is on the agenda of the European Commission. The changing realities of the world of work are only one part of the changing realities of the European social model. "Our Union has always been a social project at heart. It is more than just a single market, more than money, more than the euro. It is about our values and the way we want to live" (Junker 2017).

A number of negative processes such as unemployment, poverty, social exclusion, inequality are among the factors that make politicians, practitioners and theoreticians rethink their actions so far.

Today we are witnessing a change in the reconfiguration of the welfare state – from Keynesianism to Welfare State, which relies on active measures. The cuts in public spending on social programs and measures aimed at prosperity, the financial and economic crisis have changed the philosophy of thinking - from generous systems that provide prosperity for all, to active measures that bring to the fore individualism, personal skills and qualities. The social policy is reoriented towards solving social problems by empowering individuals to be entrepreneurs, creating their own and society's prosperity through entrepreneurial activity, social entrepreneurial activity.

Further the Lisbon Strategy points out that Entrepreneurship as one of the foundations of the EU policies and employment policies are a key option for social integration. A number of documents at European level (GECES 2016) state that entrepreneurship and especially social entrepreneurship will lead to changes in the European social model towards better preservation and standing up for citizens' rights and freedoms. Establishing close ties and affiliations between citizens is one of the prerequisites for sustainable communities. Exactly this democratic participation in entrepreneurial activity and the existence of affiliation for the realization of mutual interests, including for the benefit to the community, is at the core of the social economy and social entrepreneurship.

Issues of unemployment and social exclusion are acute problems that need to be resolved through modern and adequate mechanisms, including through interaction between stakeholders.

Over the centuries, the importance and meaning of entrepreneurship has changed and today entrepreneurs are the ones who use and create opportunities.

In his famous book "Innovation and Entrepreneurship" Peter Drucker (Drucker 2015) lists seven sources of innovative opportunity, which are in the core and can inspire systematic innovation and change: the unexpected; incongruities; process need; industry and market structure change; demographics; changes in perception; new knowledge.

Social Entrepreneurship is characterized through creation and maintaining of social value, but also innovation. Modern perceptions of social entrepreneurship are associated with the idea of implementing in practice social business through market mechanisms. Social business or social entrepreneurship is the new fourth revolution in social relations because it unreachably links civil society to business and state institutions. This is never done before in such a way and today it has given particular attention to theoreticians and practitioners.

Within the concept of social entrepreneurship, the empowerment of an individual to create his / her individual well-being through entrepreneurship is at the heart of modern understanding of solving social problems. "Entrepreneurship is a silent revolution that will be for the 21st century more than the Industrial Revolution to the 20th century" (Timmons 1990)

A significant role in the process of combating poverty and inequality is the individual with his/her entrepreneurship skills and awareness of own value and significance.

### **3. Social entrepreneurship and social work – common ground for sustainable communities**

There are similarities and common features between social entrepreneurship and social work:

- They share a **common focus** - helping individuals in need in solving a particular social problem, as a result of the disrupted connection between the individual and the labour market or between the individual and the community. The goal is to restore this broken link; social work and social entrepreneurship are called upon to cope with failures in key policy areas such as employment, education, crime, etc.
- Social work and social entrepreneurship have **the same aims** – to support the weak social positions in the society – both help people to develop the skills they need

in order to become fully independent and functioning at their optimal personal and social levels.;

- social work and social entrepreneurship **share the same values and principles** – dignity, personal and collective values and responsibility, human rights, social justice (IASSW 2014)

- social work and social entrepreneurship **are carried out by people who are dedicated to social cause** – in general they fight for a social cause which solves a specific social or environmental problem;

- Both are supposed to support same **political outcomes** - more employment, more social inclusion, less disparities and inequalities;

- Social entrepreneurship and social work share **common aims in the helping process**, which can be characterised as follows – empowerment of individuals and liberation of people; creation of sustainable communities at micro- and macro level; change in the quality of life of the individual;

- Social work and social entrepreneurship **are key partners in implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights**. The Pillar of Social Rights consists of 20 key principles, structured around three categories: 1) equal opportunities and access to the labour market; 2) Fair working conditions; 3) Social protection and inclusion.

- Social work and social entrepreneurship **promote social change and development, social cohesion**.

At the same time, social work and social entrepreneurship have differences:

- There are **differences in the philosophy of helping process**: social entrepreneurship arises because of the need to protect the individual from market failures and the need to bring more morality to business, as well as from the understanding that the individual and not wealth must be at the heart of the economy (Recent Evolutions of the Social Economy in the European Union 2017). Social work, as well as other helping professions, originates from humanistic, religious and democratic ideals and philosophies, and its universal application is to meet the human needs arising from the individual-environment interaction and to develop human potential (Budeva 2018)

- There are **differences in the way and mechanisms both use** in order to help the individuals in the process of resolving the specific problems - social workers carry out the helping process by relying on state funding, donors, philanthropy etc.; social entrepreneurs use innovative ways to identify, allocate and manage resources – they use mix of resources and voluntary work as well.

- There are **differences in the knowledge and skills both use** – social entrepreneurs act as entrepreneurs and develop businesses with social aim; social workers act as agents of change in the individual wellbeing and exercise social control through the process of resocialization of the clients.

- There are **differences in the way the needs of the individuals are identified** – in most of the cases social workers are limited by institutional frameworks; the social entrepreneur identifies changes in society and needs that the market or the state fails to adequately satisfy and mobilizes resources to meet them.

Regardless of the differences, the common features give grounds to assume that social work can use some social entrepreneurship business elements to respond to the tremendous need for solutions to today's pressing social challenges.

We assume that social entrepreneurship comprises innovative ideas for social change executed utilizing sound business strategies and skills (Germak and Singh 2010). The emergence and development of social entrepreneurship in a *broader sense* is the result of the interconnected processes of progress (renewal) and decline (dying away of the old and the emergence of the new): on the one hand, it is related to the positive changes in socio-economic and social life that have occurred as a result of the progress in science and technology, the increased opportunities for examination of the environment, and the accompanying positive changes in the contemporary way of life; on the other hand, it is the result of dying away of values, processes, traditional relationships and the emergence of new ones, a new attitude towards the environment, new behaviors and intentions pertaining to established market traditions and mechanisms and their accompanying market and non-market relationships. In the narrower sense, the development of social entrepreneurship is determined by specific changes in business organization and behavioral culture when creating a new product with added economic and social value, as well as by specific changes in the business orientation and entrepreneur thinking regarding the creation of an innovative product in order to solve a social problem (Todorova 2017).

Undoubtedly, social work professionals are the individuals best prepared to respond to the world's social problems. Changing the conditions in which social workers, particularly those from the non-governmental sector are developing their activities, show that they are forced to operate in a highly competitive environment and often under pressure from cuts in funding for their activities. In order to be sustainable social work organizations need to provide high level services and be fiscal stable. This is not always the case with some non-profit organisations, which have to compete for financing. One of the possible ways to stay at the market and be sustainable is the chance to embrace the practice of social entrepreneurship. As Germak and Singh point out "the fiscal stability of a social enterprise and the availability of profits allow for business growth, which is not frequently seen in traditional social work organizations" (Germak and Singh 2010: p. 88). Often social workers are convinced that with sufficient and good funding they could develop and provide a quality service. This would be possible if social workers embrace social entrepreneurship.

Even though social workers are natural community catalysts for institutional and social change, social innovation, entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship is not automatically affiliated with social work (Zadek and Thake 1997 as cited in Nandan, 2014).

There are good examples that can be an inspiration for social workers wishing to make a step towards developing a social enterprise.

The specific **examples of innovative social enterprises** are extremely varied in different areas of activity. They show how specific social problems can be addressed in an innovative way.

**One example - a sheltered café in Sofia** - is aimed at developing the labor and social skills of people with intellectual disabilities. In this way, they can find employment, communicate more confidently and feel independent and self-sufficient.

It is a place for work-related rehabilitation and improvement of the skills of the persons with intellectual impairment, tailored to their individual needs. The sheltered café is both a tool and a bridge to the next activity – professional integration of persons with intellectual disabilities to appropriate jobs.

***The ASSIST example – Assistive Technologies Foundation.*** Eye gaze assistive technologies for communication enable children and adults with severe disabilities to express their feelings, needs, wishes, opinions; to communicate, study, enjoy, create, to develop their skills and full potential, to acquire and practice a profession. Promotion and implementation of such technologies will allow people that need them to take their rightful place in society, thereby significantly changing current attitudes and reinforcing the right to fulfillment of every person.

***And last but not least a very important example*** – Ms. Kristina Tsvetanova and Mr. Slavi Slavev, Bulgaria developed a tablet for blind people - BLITAB. This is an innovation, which can be distributed as a service to the people in need.

BLITAB® is the first multi-line Braille tablet in the world for blind and visually impaired people. BLITAB® is a device for Braille reading and writing that displays one page Braille text, without mechanical elements. It is like an e-book which instead of using a screen displays small physical bubbles. For the first time the users may view the whole document.

BLITAB® offers an entirely new user interface for Braille letter and for non-Braille readers, by applying the text-to-speech interface and Perkins style keyboard. It uses direct conversion of any text file in Braille letter. BLITAB® is not just a tablet; it is a platform for all existing and future software applications for blind readers, so that applications do not compete, but are integrated and collaborating.

The latter example is indicative in many respects:

1. It is an example of innovation - one of the driving forces behind social entrepreneurship;
2. It is an example of how problems of vulnerable groups in society are tackled in an innovative way;
3. It could be an example how through innovative ideas, social entrepreneurs are able to create entire industries in which no one has ever worked.

Social entrepreneurship has the potential to transform social relations, especially through the introduction of social innovation, to solve problems using innovative ways, to bring about economic change. This is related to the creation of sustainable communities.

#### **4. Why sustainable communities. What is the common ground for sustainable communities?**

“A sustainable community is one that is economically, environmentally, and socially healthy and resilient. It meets challenges through integrated solutions rather than through fragmented approaches that meet one of those goals at the expense of the others. And it takes a long-term perspective – one that’s focused on both the present and future, well beyond the next budget or election cycle.” (Institute for sustainable communities).

The term “sustainable community” refers also to sustainable infrastructure, mutual social control, and local (self) governance. Often it is associated with the term “sustainable cities” which focuses on societal, economic and environmental impact.

When related to social entrepreneurship, it means stable employment, well-being of the people through adequate social inclusion and less inequalities. The sustainability is seen as a result, but also as a basis for future developments achieved in a (social) responsible way.

Both social work and social entrepreneurship are aimed at contributing to the sustainability of communities. The overall driving force behind this goal is the preservation of social peace and social cohesion. One of the main principles and at the same time mechanism of action behind this goal - empowerment of people to create their own well-being - is relevant for both social work and social entrepreneurship. Both, social work and social entrepreneurship, can be considered as an institutional response to the interests and needs of those deprived for more social justice, on the one hand, and as large-scale social programs<sup>1</sup>, driven by social change, for economically sustainable and socially inclusive communities, on the other hand.

The sustainability of communities is due both to social entrepreneurship initiatives that attract volunteers from these same communities as well as to the enthusiasm that social workers have in the helping process and which is very similar to what volunteers manifest when they engage in social entrepreneurship activities.

## **5. Discussion**

At present, social workers in Bulgaria are less interested in the practice of social entrepreneurship. Moreover, it is little known to them.

As German and Singh point out “When an organization is freed from dependence on government contracts and earmarked charitable donations, the organization can respond to market demand and, in fact, develop services in response to what consumers are willing to *pay* for” (German and Singh 2010: p. 91). Many nonprofit organizations have been established to operate in a different manner. Social entrepreneurship is potentially a good match for social workers and can be worth the effort (Germak and Singh 2010).

Combining a business strategy with a social mission is still difficult to be perceived and understood by social workers. But many non-profit organizations gradually change their approach in adapting to society and start thinking differently. It is more likely to be changed the way non-profit organizations function, because the social element is guaranteed and there is a need to add the business element, instead to be changed the way regular business is functioning. This is how the approach to social work changes.

To contribute to sustainable communities, the social business<sup>2</sup> itself must be sustainable. This is difficult to be achieved if social enterprises are not in partnerships with public authorities or other stakeholders. Reducing public spending on social programs by a number of governments should not lead to withdrawal from social functions. On the contrary, opportunities must be sought together with social product providers to meet the needs of the disadvantaged groups.

Another discussion question is whether the public is willing and ready to embrace the idea of social entrepreneurship and to assess the social impact and social added value of social enterprise activities. There is a need to overcome significant social and even psychological barriers most of the people have, like this one: “You’re either a businessperson or a social worker - you can’t be both.” The organizational culture and individual behavior needs to be changed as well. In this respect, we need to

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<sup>1</sup> in the sense of wide-ranging activities and socially oriented actions

<sup>2</sup> the term is used as a synonym for social entrepreneurship

work on building a comprehensive ecosystem of social enterprises. It is necessary to create a culture of supply and consumption of products produced by social enterprises. We need to create adequate financial framework and financial sources. Creating a legal framework is one of the essential elements of the ecosystem, but not sufficient in itself. Recently there the Bulgarian National assembly adopted a Law for enterprises in social and solidarity economy, which means also for social enterprises. The main question is what the preconditions are and how it is possible to transform the social work on entrepreneur basis. What are the implications for social work education? But also important question is – when innovation trough social entrepreneurship is called for, and when it isn't.

## **6. Conclusion**

Social entrepreneurship is a new phenomenon in public life. It challenges the traditional mechanisms of helping those in difficulty. It is a hybrid between traditional businesses and organizations working in the public interest. Its appearance is accompanied by many changes related to the realization of political goals and solving social problems. Social entrepreneurship, in general entrepreneurship, is seen as a quiet revolution that is commensurate with the industrial revolution of the 20th century.

The potential of social entrepreneurship to transform social relations and the way in which the economy operates is enormous. Still, people are not sufficiently aware of this potential, and they are hard to perceive and appreciate the revolutionary role of social entrepreneurs as agents of change. To establish itself, social entrepreneurship needs a proper eco-system. Only in this way it will contribute to sustainable communities.

Social work has traditions in solving social problems and can be seen as the basis for the development of social entrepreneurship. It is based on principles of work, which are also principles of social entrepreneurship.

It can contribute to its modern understanding of the assisting process - as a process of empowering the needy for self-help - social entrepreneurs to combine the social element with business strategy in the best possible way. The aim of both social work and social entrepreneurship is to contribute to sustainable communities that resist rapidly changing conditions and are characterized as economically sustainable and socially inclusive.

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# **Integrated measures for Romanian marginalized rural communities. Case Study: Reducing the risks of social exclusion in "Amărăștii de Jos", Dolj County**

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## **Abstract**

The last years of the „post-December” transition in Romania generated an unjustified increase in the number of people dependent on state resources, which is approaching the quarter of the population that is also involve in a demographic decline and a full occupational migratory process. For few years, the National Institute of Statistics reported that 4-4.5 million persons are receiving social benefits, with a total sum allocated of 600 million RON. Among the first places in the hierarchy of the 41 Romanian counties is Dolj, the first in the South-West Oltenia region, with a risk of social exclusion calculated at 41.9%, higher by about 5% compared to the national rate. In total, the 145.400 people that are receiving social assistants in Dolj, consume annually from the state budget over 20 million RON. Thus, one of the European Union's directions was the introduction of a set of indicators, after which a plan of integrated measures for rural areas, financed by the European Social Fund, could be developed. The most relevant indicators have been considered education, occupation and housing, starting from the premise that poverty is almost three times higher in rural areas than in urban areas and the rate of severe material deprivation is higher in small communities. One of the localities mapped in the Marginalized Rural Atlas of Romania is Amărăștii de Jos, situated in Dolj County, with 5,520 inhabitants (according to the 2011 Census), with a Roma minority of 22.16%. This is one of the communities who benefits of integrated measures through European projects designed to help reduce intra and inter-community dissolution, increase hope and quality of life through access to decent living conditions, reduce drop-out and provide support for school retention by investing in qualification for adults and boosting employment by adapting the skills of the population to the needs of regional employers or by developing entrepreneurship.

**Keywords:** *social development; social policies; marginalized and social exclusion; integrated measures; european projects.*

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## **1. Introduction**

"The winter of the Romanian demographic decline" has intensified the phenomenon of poverty and social exclusion. The descending birth rate and the growing occupational migration have generated negative consequences in the plan of social processes in Romania: "1/3 of the country's population is facing severe material problems, which means that one in five inhabitants suffers from relative poverty" (Atlas of Marginalised Rural Areas and Local Human Development in Romania 2016: p. 6). According to the latest census in Romania, conducted in 2011, the distribution of stable population by residence area reveals that 46% of the country's inhabitants are concentrated in rural areas, the most affected post-communist social space. The transition from the centralized economy to the market economy has led to a number of changes: the stagnation and regression of agricultural land exploitation that directly resulted in unemployment and indirect migration, lack of interest in education expressed through school dropout and illiteracy translated by the disappearance of rural occupations, increasing the number of persons involved in subsistence agriculture and dependents on the resources of the state. These changes in the dynamics of preoccupations emphasized the disparities between rural and urban areas and have enhanced the social phenomena specific to the environment: physical depravity severe social exclusion, poor quality of life, etc.

## **2. Social Development, Marginalization and Social Exclusion: definitions and conceptual meanings**

In order to be able to analyze the transformations in the Romanian rural environment after 1989 it is necessary to understand the concept of "social development". The definition is difficult and subjective, from a Romanian sociological perspective we can explain the social development as referring to the description of the state of desirability of a community, which can be achieved only by a planned intervention process, which implies setting a goal, converging actions to its achievement. (Zamfir in Zamfir and Stoica 2006: p. 11). The theories of modernization, dependence and the world system have progressively explained, since the 1960s, the paradigm of social development through an endless process of cyclical self-organization at the Romanian community level. In capitalist societies, social development is achieved through the individual - global/state economy, complemented by "social welfare" for marginal individuals, who need integrative support. In the case of developing or underdeveloped societies, we extend the concept to "community social development" based on the "bottom-up" approach, involving the involvement of community resources, creating cohesion and cooperation to capitalize on social capital. (Zamfir in Zamfir and Stanescu 2007: pp. 176-177) Social policies address social development in close connection with poverty, marginalization and social exclusion / inclusion.

The term of marginalization, taken from the European Union's social policy documents, has entered our vocabulary after 1989, describing a process by which certain groups are temporarily or drastically removed from the center of social life.

(Arpinte, Baboi, Cace, Tomescu (Dobos) and Stanescu 2008: p. 343) Often it is attributed as a synonym, the concept of social exclusion. Even though the two terms may have similar valences, however, the concept of social exclusion refers rather to a failure to fully realize citizens' rights, both due to structural causes of a socio-economic nature and to individual causes" (Zamfir, Preda, Dan, Zamfir in Zamfi and Stanescu 2007: p. 241). Once the process of marginalisation takes place, it has the effect of enrolling the person on a trajectory of "assisted" life. (Ilie Goga and Niță 2018: p. 50) This situation can be explained by all three types of existing social exclusion: *structural exclusion* (the inability of the system to respond to an individual need), *the belonging of the person/group to an unfavorable community structure* (predetermination or wrong choice of an insufficiently developed structure to satisfy their primary and / or secondary needs) and *self-exclusion* (lack of individual interest in participating in social life). Practically, in 2000, the Lisbon European Council introduced in 2010 the notion of "social inclusion" in order to reduce / combat marginalization or social exclusion, on which the axes and major areas of intervention for the European Social Fund are structured. Among its program objectives we find the promotion of social inclusion and employment in order to increase the quality of life. The quality of life is defined as the assessment that the individual does on his/her own life, reported to the "culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns" (World Health Organization [WHO], n.d.). (Motoi and Gheorghiță 2017: p. 35-36).

### **3. Reducing the risks of social exclusion in Amărăștii de Jos, Dolj County**

Romania's accession to the European Union in 2007 has generated the opportunity to capitalize on the European Social Fund, a tool whose programs allocate funding for more than 61 years to member countries that have carried out projects in the field of employment and social inclusion. The two financial exercises, run in the 2007-2014 accession and post-accession period 2014-2020, have allocated hundreds of billions of Euros for education, training, labor market adaptation, improving public services and diminishing social exclusion. For 2014-2020 alone, budgets of € 80 billion are set, with each Member State setting its priority objectives in line with the overall objective of the Partnership Agreement which aims to reduce the economic and social disparities between Romania and the Member States the European Union. (Human Capital Operational Program 2017: p. 1)

### **Methodology**

Social inclusion, poverty reduction and the fight against all forms of discrimination is one of the seven investment priorities of the Operational Programme Human Capital that aims at socio-economic integration of marginalized communities. In order to be able to objectively justify the way of choosing the communities classified as disadvantaged, an Atlas of Marginalized Rural Areas and Local Human Development in Romania was developed on the basis of the data provided by the 2011 Population and Housing Census (extracted and hierarchized localities according to three indicators: human capital, jobs and living conditions), the World Bank's Local Human Development Index (LHDI) and a land survey focused on qualitative methods, with the aim of verifying the quantitative results.

The rate of demographic dependence highlights a difficult situation in Dolj County where the demographic dependence in the urban area is 38.96%, while in the rural area it is 62.00%. (Pricină 2018: p. 34). This area is occupied by 47 marginalized communes, with 66 villages in risk situations, classified according to the research methodology of the Marginalized Rural Atlas and Local Human Development in Romania. The second position in this county hierarchy, based on the mentioned indicators, is occupied by the commune of Amărăștii de Jos. (Atlas of Marginalised Rural Areas and Local Human Development in Romania 2016: p. 86).

In order for this community to benefit from a European project, a sociological research to justify the allocation of funds was carried out. The methodology of this research included both the qualitative component (opting for 4 focus groups conducted in July 2016) and the quantitative component (by choosing as a tool the administered questionnaire, which contained 46 questions and was applied to a sample of 280 people).

Under the quantitative method, the survey based on the administered questionnaire used the probabilistic sampling, random-simple type technique with a margin of error calculated at  $\pm 3.5\%$ .

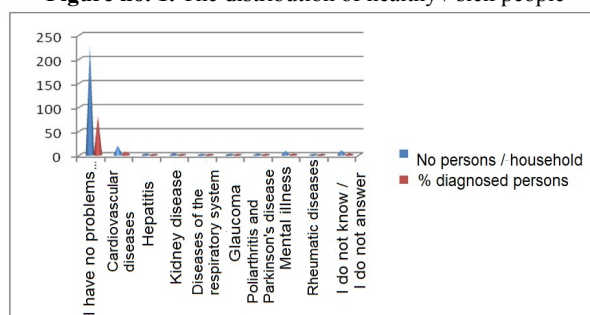
The commune of Amărăștii De Jos has 5,520 inhabitants, distributed in 3 villages, with a heterogeneous population distribution.

## 1. Human Capital

### a. Health

Romania is one of the countries with the lowest life expectancy in the European Union, which is on a positive dynamic at national level, averaging 75.01 years in 2016. To this extent the population in the urban area, where the access to quality medical services is superior, contributes to this value. In rural areas, poor education leads to a lack of awareness of medical prevention and lowers life expectancy. The population does not regularly check their health status, a very small number being declared as recorded in the records of the family doctors with various diagnosed diseases.

Figure no. 1. The distribution of healthy / sick people

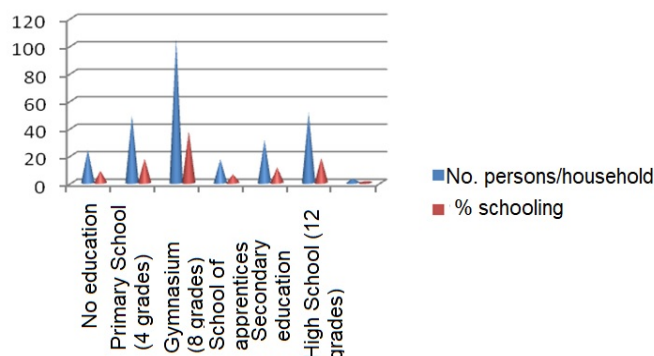


### b. Education

In the village of Amărăștii de Jos there are two kindergartens, two primary schools and a high school. The Amarastii de Jos Theoretical Highschool serves 3 communes and the total number of children enrolled in the 5 educational institutions exceeds 1,000 children. The phenomenon of dropout, the Roma ethnic's tradition to not

educate the female population, the lack of motivational school retention programs led to the promotion of the twelve classes of 48.78% in 2016, 25.81% in 2017 and 18.18% in 2018. The decline is obvious. Over 85% of respondents said they did not attend a form of education during the last calendar year, neither for qualification nor for professional reconversion.

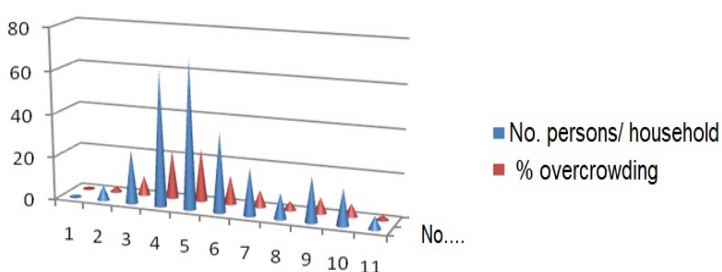
**Figure no. 2.** The distribution of people according to the last schooling



## 2. Housing

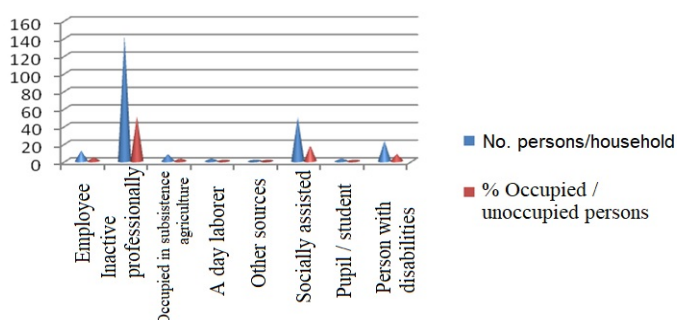
In the rural area of Amărăștii de Jos, were inventoried as over-agglomerated 261 households (<15.33 sq m / person), whose owner is known only at the level of 46.1%. Over half of the houses were built before 1980, a quarter of them using only adobe and having high thermal resistance problems. Approx. 30% of the houses do not have sanitary facilities inside, which is located in the yard of the households. Excluding electricity, which almost all homes benefits off and drinking water to which half of the houses are connected, the rest of the utilities do not exist.

**Figure no. 3.** The distribution of persons/houses



## 3. Employment

From Amărăștii de Jos total population, only 518 people work. Of the respondents to our study, 95% of the potentially active population does not have a job, living from subsistence agriculture, noting that there are 6 persons with a fixed-term contract, 1 with a contract of indefinite duration, 2 freelancers and 1 business owner.

**Figure no. 4.** The distribution of occupied / unoccupied persons

The sociological analysis has confirmed the status of a marginalized community and reiterates the need to apply for funding for the implementation of integrated measures necessary to compress the distance of social development, so that after the realization of a partner consortium it was possible to select the project whereby one third of the population at risk of social exclusion could benefit from at least two measures out of three possible.

#### 4. Conclusions

The three relevant indicators on the basis of which integrated intervention measures in the community were considered, with the aim to reduce the obvious cleavage and changing the status of a marginalized community, are undoubtedly the structural pillars of vigorous social development.

The community intervention is going to determine an increase in hope and quality of life through access to decent living conditions, reduce drop-out and provide support for school retention by investing in qualification for adults and boosting employment by adapting the skills of the population to the needs of regional employers and/or by developing entrepreneurship.

We know that Migration is an important factor in the evolution of contemporary European societies, with positive effect ensuring the necessary work force in the developed countries and better use of the work force in the origin country, after they return home. (Porumbescu 2018: pp. 41-42) It is important to be able to think of social policies that stimulate the retromigration process, which contributes to the improvement of the quality of life.

Strengthening the position of education is the main viable solution that can provide to every individual, as well as the nation he belongs to, the right to preserve his cultural memory and identity, without which we would be anonymous and irrelevant. (Niă and Goga Ilie 2017: p. 19)

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# Contemporary and psychological viewpoints of the educational leadership in higher education institutions

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## Abstract

Nowadays, in the 21st century, an increasing number of students and youth are facing psycho-social disorders, issues and challenges regarding the terms of learning, psycho-emotional, social behavior and adjustment state. Not only is the number of students with difficulties but also the severity and complexity of the difficulties that face Lecturers and Pedagogists with a various number of management issues.

To successfully cope with these difficulties, immediate needs have arisen to redefine the role of the Professor and Lecturer as a leader in Higher Education both in terms of teaching and in the form of reforming the roles and services that day-to-day access to students, parents-families and the wider community.

The focus of this article is to present a broader and supportive view of the Higher Educational Leadership and its psychological and social training towards qualitative changes and ever-increasing demand for Education-based training as a significant pre-requisite for EU integration of Albania.

**Keywords:** *higher education leader; lecturer; training; EU standards.*

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## 1. Introduction

Higher Education around the world is at a cross-road as a wide range of change forces bear down upon it. Especially in Albania Higher Education has an aspect of unsustainability, because of the impact that has on it politics 'decisions. These include a complex, interlocked and rapidly unfolding set of sustainability challenges underpinned by social, cultural, economic, politic and environmental developments.

In order to influence students' knowledge base, thinking abilities and skills, higher education offers the opportunity to promote other aspects of students' growth as people. Higher education has an important role in shaping our future society, because today's university students will be tomorrow's doctors, engineers, business managers, teachers, faith leaders, politicians, citizens, activists, parents and neighbors. While they need to be able to demonstrate key skills and knowledge to enact those roles effectively, they must

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also demonstrate personal and social responsibility in carrying them out. A focus on holistic student development may be particularly timely in addressing the current challenges the sector, and society, faces. This is why Higher Education has to take a leadership role in producing the individuals of future society and of future leaders equipped to manage them effectively. So building the leadership capacity of our institutions is the greatest challenge facing higher education. This paper aims to explore different views on leadership theories and styles through literature review.

## **2. Historical, contemporary and psychodynamic views on leadership styles of teachers, professors and lecturers and principals of the educational institutions**

The concept of leadership have received a wide attention initially in the studies of organizational psychology and afterwards, in clinical and psychopathologic, since the second mid of the 900s (Quaglio 2005).

In the etymology of the recent English word “*lead*” stand the roots of the olden verb “*læden*” that coincides with the Dutch word “*Leiden*”, and the German “*leiten*” as an etymological part of the Anglo-Saxon word family. This novel property “*to lead*” meant “...*to go with*...” whereas the first use of the term “*leadership*” (Family word... 1978: p. 455) meaning “*being in the first place*” is not recognized until the 1300 B.C. The crucial characteristic of leadership, therefore, is the ability to organize individuals within social contexts, the mobilization of all parties involved within a relationship range between subjects who interact together in the achievement of the inquired results.

The psychodynamic study of the leadership process and dynamic aspects of a leader personality are very important for the analysis and interpretation of the present work. Childhood experiences and child rearing patterns influence on how individuals mature and develop.

In his psychoanalytic model, Sigmund Freud and then, his daughter Anna, argued for the significance of the teaching method in schools and universities as one of the greatest advantages psychoanalysis could give in the ordinary life (Freud, 1919). Teaching and learning methodology to Freud, should be didactic through lectures, discussions and experience.

In 1930, in her work “*Psychoanalysis for teachers and parents, Four lectures on...*”, Anna Freud writes that the relationship which is created between teachers, child and analyst is equal to a delicate process of education; the role of psychoanalysis is to give “a helping hand” to children either to disclose their unexplored possibilities or in the full and real experience of the symptom.

In her theoretical model, students projected even their worries in the endeavor to understand other through the pedagogical relation (Object Relation) but also their ordinary life frustrations through the process of learning.

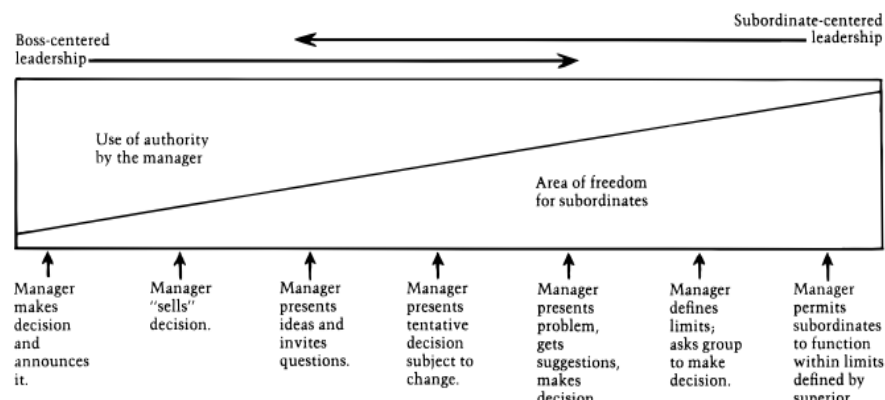
The concept of Anna Freud on education is like “*an endless battle*” when ego comes into the world through its defense mechanisms (perception, observation, projection, hallucination and reality testing) (Freud 1930: p. 101), beyond external influences and pressures. Teachers and leaders may also be involved in dreaming and fantasies with a great covering range of defense mechanisms.

Early theories of leadership and organizations were task oriented. The aim was to improve efficiency regardless human factor. Contrary to this approach, in 1960

researcher Douglas McGregor introduced the humanist leadership model when human relations and motivation for work had a crucial role.

Recent studies of Robert Tannenbaum and Warren Schmidt (1958) describe leadership as a continuum where several leader behavior tendencies interact.

Figure no. 1. Scheme of leadership



Source: according to Tannenbaum and Schmidt, 1958.

For Schmidt and Tannenbaum (1958) leadership styles can be defined according to two macro objectives that have to be followed up:

1. coherence of outcomes and focusing in responsibilities (a characteristic feature of an autocratic or paternal leader who commands and convince)
2. interpersonal relations and focusing in Human-resource (a characteristic feature of a democratic leader or counselor, who involves and collaborates with his or her dependents)

Situational approach of Blake and Mouton (1964) argue that there is a connection between two objectives that could be beyond a range of leadership styles:

- authoritarian-aggressive,
- assertive searcher /attentive,
- motivational,
- administrative,
- political.

Through this model the authors defined a style to orientation, tasks and situation when the style is developed. In other words, we encounter an approach where there is an emphases on the objectual relations of teacher or director leaders.

An executive and functional school leader holds several responsibilities as:

- organize and plan (according to case priorities and urges)
- delegate
- recognize merits and values in a sincere and incisive mode
- verify and assess
- reproject for a consistent improvement (actions appropriate in time)

- a leader knows what he is looking for, finds ways to achieve what he wants through maximizing resources and with aim of enhancement of efficiency and productivity, creates the suitable climate to motivate individual efficiency.
- A successful leader should possess normative, juridical and expiring knowledge, understanding and solidarity, capacities of analytical synthesis, capacity to resolve problems and take assertive and constructive decisions, they are also flexible.

### **3. Leadership and the change in society**

Educational institutions leadership must respond to the needs of changing and information asked by the society and embracing new leadership forms especially in the field of leadership teaching (Frost and Durrant 2003). Formative leadership shares the responsibility of guiding to a range of individual educators in an anti-hierarchical or horizontal way. Gonzales (2004) argues that the democratization of education occurs when redefining teacher leadership as a shared form of leadership to all teachers. “Teacher leaders can transform schools in communities that prepare students for citizens and work in a complex, technological and democratic society” (Lieberman and Miller 2004: pp 12).

Researches of Silins and Mulford (2002) revealed a strong relationship between the very high students scores of students and leadership used in school community, including teacher empowerment. Teachers as leaders may pursue to ask school institutions to leave structured systems and to join into improved organizational forms (Ackerman and Mackenzie, 2006).

Let us remember at this point the continuous efforts of setting an inner and outer control of treating school as “community service” in Albania. This new formula for our country based on strong credibility in Western Countries, creates more space in fixing organizational behavior and teacher leadership. In a similar study for the fulfillment of educational reform in the United States,

Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (2001) distinguished an important characteristic related to the shared leadership. In this leadership form, teachers, as by authors, should be active participants to be able to contribute to the school progress (Ash and Persall 2000; Lieberman 1992; McCay et al. 2001). Recent data indicate that teachers choose to stay in those educational institutions that offer opportunities of collaboration and shared leadership (Harris and Muijs 2005).

Kilcher (1992) argues that when teachers feel valued as participants in a cohesive community and are strengthened as decision-makers, they transmit this power to students giving voice to their commitment.

Pont, Nusche and Moorman (2008) reasoned that successful school leadership requires a degree of administrative autonomy in decision-making for the core components of input in the teaching process.

Leadership plays an important role in influencing compliant behavior for organizational purposes and improve passive patterns with an effective organization.

Some of the most important dimensions of educational leadership may be summarized in the following table:

**Figure no. 2.** Summarized scheme of the most core dimensions of effective educational leadership.

|  |
|--|
| <b><i>Self-Cognition</i></b><br><i>Cognition of the self-internal status and interpersonal resources.</i>  |
| <i>Emotional Cognition:</i> Recognizing own emotions and effects   |
| <i>Appropriate Assessment of Self:</i> Knowing own strength and weakness.  |
| <i>Self-Confidence:</i> Security on the assessment of Self and other capacities.   |
| <b><i>Auto regulation</i></b><br><i>Control of our states, impulses and internal resources</i>   |
| <i>Auto control:</i> Capacity to manage appropriately the emotions and conflictual impulses.   |
| <i>Reliability:</i> Confidentiality to the criterion of sincerity and integrity.   |
| <i>Integrity:</i> Assuming the responsibilities of our personal actions  |
| <i>Adaptability:</i> Flexibility to cope with change.  |
| <i>Innovation:</i> Feeling comfortable and open to new ideas, approaches and information.  |
| <b><i>Motivation</i></b><br><i>Emotional tendencies that facilitate achieving our objectives</i>   |
| <i>Motivation for achieving:</i> Improvement and satisfying criteria for excellence.   |
| <i>Compromise:</i> Fulfill the objectives given by the group or organization.  |
| <i>Initiative:</i> Ready to take action when is needed.  |
| <i>Optimism:</i> Persistence in the consequences of objectives despite the obstacles.  |
| <b><u><i>Social Competencies</i></u></b><br><b><u><i>These competencies determine the mode of relationship with others</i></u></b>                             |
| <b><i>Empathy</i></b><br><i>Cognition of feelings, necessities and preoccupation of others.</i>  |
| <i>Comprehension of others:</i> Having the ability to capture the feelings and views of others and actively concern on things that are for interested to them. |
| <i>Orientation to the service:</i> Anticipating, recognizing and meeting customer needs  |
| <i>Advantages of Diversity:</i> Advantaging from opportunities offered by different types of people.   |
| <i>Political Awareness:</i> Ability to realize the emotional currents and relationships underlying power in a group.   |
| <b><i>Social Abilities</i></b><br><i>Ability to induce desirable responses in others.</i>  |
| <i>Influence:</i> Using effective techniques of persuasion   |
| <i>Communication:</i> Sending clear and persuasive messages  |
| <i>Leadership:</i> Inspiring and directing groups and persons.   |
| <i>Catalyzing Change:</i> Beginning to direct changes.   |
| <i>Resolution of conflicts:</i> Ability to negotiate and resolve conflicts.  |
| <i>Collaboration and Cooperation:</i> Being able to work with others in achieving a common goal.   |
| <i>Group Skills:</i> The ability to create group synergy in pursuing collective goals.   |

Source: Goleman, D. (1998) "La pratica de inteligencia emocional" (adapted by the Spanish version, pp.19).

Peter Drucker provides another example on the rational decision-making model that affects in problem solving. It implies :a) classification of the problem, b) definition of the problem, c) specification of conditions for the solution of problem, d) decision for the best action to take, e) compromise, f) implementation of the decision-making and g) review of the effectiveness of decision-making.

Shared decision-making is a process of making educational decisions in a collaborative way at the school level and gives an opportunity for school professionals, parents, community members and students to promote student improvement and teachers effectiveness.

T. J. Kowalski cited some of the advantages of shared decision-making:

- a) participation increases motivation, productivity and commitment of dependents;
- b) dependents are less competitive when working on shared aims;
- c) the range of knowledge and skills increases with involving people in better decisions
- d) communication and knowledge increases within members of the organization.

Leaders' behavior also focuses in his social context, role expectations, hierarchy and authority as components of the structure, norms and other individual factors in the entire performance. Personality organization, psychodynamic structure, maladaptive behavioral tendency and pathologic levels of leaders are centered as core components in the present work.

#### **4. Leadership styles and personality**

Leadership styles are related to personality, demeanor and communication patterns of leaders in guiding others for achieving personal or organizational goals. Significant research on leadership styles have been associated to self-reporting perceptions toward leader's behavior in decision-making, interpersonal relations, planning, instructions and efficient management. Among the most widely used instruments in literature to assess leadership style are: Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ), Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) and the Organizational Health Inventory (OHI). These instruments collect evidences on staff and members perceptions of the leadership style of directors and teachers in the dynamics of school organization. The four styles derived by these categories are: authoritarian, participative, transactional or transformational.

*Authoritarian Leader* employ coercive tactics to enforce rules, he or she uses Machiavellian modes to manipulate others and reward trust over merit. Control and Dominance are the primary management strategies employed by authoritarian leaders. In this form of leadership, is emphasize the objectivity in the workplace and tends not to be involved to human problems and not displaying emotions or affection toward others. The X theory of Douglas McGregor is the leitmotiv of authoritarian style, under which people must work, closely supervised and rewarded according to their productivity. In certain situations when “a commander to right the ship” is needed, authoritarian leadership style have been effective. Thus, for instance, if a director of an important institution would not have disposed some authoritarian features, likely, the direction would create space for neglect and chaos. At the same time, it is very important to know the perception of the individual over his or her own leadership style;

evidences following this study, suggest a progressive increase perception over style of leadership and the reinforcement of the perceived style features.

*Participative Leadership* moved away from the authoritarian mode of leadership to the human side of the institution. This form of leadership was initially proposed in 1930 by Mary Parker Follett, Elton Mayo, Frederick Roethlisberger et al. They argued that productivity and human relations were closely linked and directed toward informal structures and social systems. Follet thought that “managers should treat workers with dignity and change the workplace from strict authoritarian control to a collegial team concept.” Authors of this stream viewed organizations as social systems where human social needs are the most important factors in motivation and efficiency. In 1938, Douglas McGregor, Rosabeth Kanter, Tom Sergiovanni and Terry Deal, argued that shared decision-making and grouping participation in productive organizations is focused on people and their needs. These authors greatly influenced to the creation of shared decision-making in public education.

*Transactional Leadership* tend to balance structures that meet the needs of people while things are being completed. This form of leadership requires the integration of organizational goals and expectations with the needs of individuals. As an example of representation of the transactional leadership style is the Getzels Guba<sup>3</sup> (1957) social systems model. This model includes two essential dimensions: idiographic (the needs of individuals), nomothetic (the goals of the organization) and transactions between the two. Thus the model balances the dynamics of needs and productivity of organization with needs, personality and dispositions of people working.

Eric Berne initially analyzed the relations between group and leadership as the principles of transactional analysis which includes the following elements: contingency reward, management through active exception and management through passive exception. These leaders influence the motivation of their followers by exchanging rewards to their workers for the time they are efficient with their managing needs.

*Transformatonal Leadership* is called the leadership style, where the leader works alongside employees to identify the necessary changes, to develop a leadership view to change and implement the effects of this change. This form of leadership encourages motivation, morale and performance at work through a number of mechanisms, such as the understanding of self-identity and the way of designing this meaning in group identity, being a model for followers, challenging employees to master their work, and understanding the strengths and weaknesses of employees so that the leader can boost their performance.

The term was first used by Downton in 1973 but its establishment as an approach began with the publication of James MacGregor Burns entitled “*Leadership*” (1978). In this work, he describes leaders as “people who tap the motives of followers in order to better reach leaders and followers aims” (MacGregor 1978: p. 18).

Transformatonal leadership is compounded by *five core elements*:

- *Idealized influence* (attribution) - form of charismatic leadership based on

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<sup>3</sup> Getzel-Guba model (1957) conceives leadership and school organization as a social system that comprises two interacting but independent dimensions: The first dimension is the institution, viewed in the light of roles and expectancies to roles. The second dimension is related to personality and individual factors connected to organization.

emotions and relations to admiration, respect and appreciation of dependents by the leader

- *Idealized influence (behavior)* - form of leadership characterized by a behavioral activities related to feelings of admiration, respect and appreciation.
- *Inspirational motivation* – motivation to enhance a common view and to stimulate members of the organization to have a commitment that goes beyond the predicted tasks of the organization and providing staff with appropriate behaviors.
- *Individualized consideration* - *intellectual* stimulation provide new working forms associated by innovation and creativity.

With the charismatic leadership form, this form of leadership shares several similarities as: the significance of identification with leader and the consistence of leader's visions with all members of the organization. Research have shown that transformal leadership is an important defensive factor to the process of burnout in the health institutions and covers a positive impact on taking gratification from work and responsibility to organization.

This is a strong supporting aspect for the posited research, to foster personality patterns that involve teacher or director leaders with the transformal or innovator leadership style.

Another argument on transforming leadership was given by Bass (1998), who coined for the first time the concept of pseudo transforming leadership. The term is related to leaders who are self-consumed, exploitive and power oriented (Bass and Riggio 2006). Pseudo transforming leadership is considered as personalized that is focused in leaders interests (Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999).

Authentic transformational leadership is a socialized leadership in which leaders are generally concerned to the collective good and over shade themselves (Howell and Avolio 1993). Zhu, Avolio, Riggio and Sosik (2012: p. 3) proposed a theoretical model that explained how authentic transformational leadership affects the ethics of followers and groups.

Authors assumed that authentic transformational leadership positively affects to moral identity and moral emotions that lead to the moral decision-making and moral enactment of their followers. Thus, this leadership subtype is positively associated to group ethical climate, decision-making and moral enactment. Leaders' authenticity is considered as significant as the authenticity of being and it's *Dasein*. Psychodynamic study of the leadership process and the dynamical aspects of leader's personality are of great importance in the analysis and interpretation of this research. Childhood experiences and the patterns of child rearing affect the maturation and development of the individual.

## **5. Conclusion**

Nowadays styles and frameworks of leadership for the Higher Education sector do not reflects all what has been expressed in established leadership literature. Leaders in Higher Education need a combination of leadership and management competencies in order to address the challenges faced in this sector. Within a changing world an effective leader must be both student and teacher (Kotter 1996): always hungry to learn more about how to enthuse, engage and empower those who follow. Sometimes for staff in academic positions, becoming a "learner" may be uncomfortable, so these

individuals should be encouraged, through the active, visible and credible example of seniors and peers, to appreciate the benefits and necessity of personal leadership development.

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# Web-based health information in Romania between accessibility and bias

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## Abstract

In recent years a number of initiatives have been developed to assist consumers in locating quality health information on the web (Eysenbach et al. 2002). These include the use of quality labels based on compliance with codes of conduct, portals that provide a gateway to websites of “high quality”, and rating tools designed for consumer use (Commission of the European Communities eEurope 2002). The main objective of this article is to provide a framework for systematically developing validated and usable instruments to evaluate the quality of web-based health information in Romania.

Romanian health-related websites were identified using Google search engines and the search terms “Health” and “Medicine”. A total of 1338 Romanian websites, blogs and Facebook pages about health and medicine were evaluated using the validated DISCERN rating instrument to determine the quality of health content and treatment information.

Romanian health-related websites, blogs and Facebook pages could be strengthened by providing more of the information patients deem to be important, and by more clearly identifying sources of information and the date the information was updated. Most websites, blogs and Facebook pages would benefit from more attention given to reducing the reading level and improving the organization of material. Most Romanian health information available on the Internet had average quality especially in terms of usability and reliability and was written at high readability levels. As such, efforts are needed to develop the health information websites, blogs and Facebook which can help general population in informed decision making.

**Keywords:** *health-related information; DISCERN; quality of information.*

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## **1. Introduction**

Nowadays it is generally accepted that the Internet provides a large source of health-related information for patients in the entire world. Much more, as the Internet becomes a growing source of health information, evaluating the quality of the web-based health information is of a paramount importance for science, e.g. medical sciences (Powell and Clarke 2002). Giving the availability of medical information on the internet which could be assessed as the support of informed and shared decision-making by patients (Powell and Clarke 2002) one must also admit that the existent tools of online information are frequently incomprehensive, invalidated, not easy to use, and difficult to understand.

In response to the above-mentioned concern about the quality of web-based health information designed for patients, a number of initiatives have been developed to assist consumers in locating quality health information on the web (Eysenbach, Powell, Kuss and Sa 2002). These include the use of quality labels based on compliance with codes of conduct, portals that provide a gateway to websites of “high quality”, and rating tools designed for consumer use (Commission of the European Communities eEurope 2002).

In the same vein, one must also consider the efforts made in the last decade to develop the definition of high quality online health care information (Wong and Smith 2011) and to establish quality rating indicators (Eysenbach, Powell, Kuss and Sa 2002; Griffiths and Christensen 2002).

To our knowledge the scientific literature on this topic was centered mainly on developed countries and no research was conducted in Eastern Europe. The present article tried to fill an existing gap and focused on the quality and accessibility of health-related information in Romania.

The main objective of this article is to provide a framework for systematically developing validated and usable instruments to evaluate the quality of web-based health information in Romania.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

In the contemporary society, alongside with the expansion of the new technologies of information, more and more patients are increasingly using the Internet to access health information and purchase health products. Although the Internet could provide highly accessible, interactive, and tailored health-related information, this might be limited by several factors such as: navigational difficulties and inaccurate or misleading medical information (Cline and Haynes 2001). At the same time, studies of literacy practices in relation to health have pointed out that, in assessing health information patients relay mainly on trustworthiness as the key issue (Papen 2013).

According to existing literature (Eysenbach, Powell, Kuss and Sa 2002), an individual's risk of encountering an online website that is compromised in its quality, accuracy and readability is a combination of two variables: the proportion of inadequate information on the web, and the competency of the population to filter out those sites that lack reliability and validity. It is assessed, as such, that patients' risk

can be reduced through the introduction of clear critical appraisal tools and with a standardized website evaluation system for health information (Eysenbach, Powell, Kuss and Sa 2002).

Apart from the quality of health information on the web, patients also find many websites presenting health information using highly technical language. Although technical presentations may be advantageous for researchers and clinicians; the technical language can be overwhelming and confusing for lay people, especially if it is not properly explained and exemplified (Cline and Haynes 2001).

In general, three categories of tools are used to rate health information quality in online and offline media: codes of conduct, quality labels and the evaluation instruments (Wilson, Baker, Brown-Syed and Gollop 2000). The codes of conduct provide a description of the evaluation process that must be implemented and explain to websites owners and users as well the best practices to be followed in disseminating high-quality information, so that the website designers be able to respect the principles of website creation and the users be enabled to identify the websites not complying with the recommended practices (Wilson and Risk 2002). On a basis of a certain code and a set of quality criteria, the user guides help visitors to appreciate to what extent and in what way the information on the visited websites meet quality standards (Commission of the European Communities eEurope 2002).

The existing meta-analysis (Eng and Gustafson 1999) showed that a considerable proportion of English, Spanish and French medical websites are of poor quality and users are exposed to significant risks by taking wrong decisions about their treatment procedures. At the same time, as Nădășan, Ancuceanu, Tarcea, Grosar and Ureche (2011) have shown, the Romanian medical cyberspace has not yet been systematically evaluated as regards the general characteristics of the medical websites. The Romanian studies (Nădășan, Ancuceanu, Tarcea, Grosar and Ureche 2011) concluded that, due to the fact that almost 90% of Romanian medical web sites draw an insignificant number of visitors, they could have a small real potential to influence Internet users seeking health information. But how accurate and scientific is the medical information published on the web?

On the basis of the existing instruments and tools for assessing the quality of online health information in 2016 we have made an evaluation of the existing health and medical information on the Romanian websites, blogs and Facebook pages.

### **3. The research project**

The paper uses an analytic approach which consists of using quantitative content analysis as the main research method.

The grid for content analysis was based on several rating instruments used to determine the quality of health content and treatment information. The instruments at the basis of my grid were: the DISCERN rating instrument (Charnock 1998), HONcode ethical standards (Boyer, Baujard and Geissbühler 2011) and LIDA Minervation's validation tool for health websites (Minervation 2005). Using the items found in the above-mentioned instruments I devised a general grid of analysis made of 75 categories.

Giving the exploratory character of the study no research hypothesis or research assumption was stated in a clear shape, the analysis aiming only to identify the characteristic of health-related information existing online in Romania.

In order to identify the characteristics of Romanian online health information a content analysis of a sample of 1338 websites, blogs and Facebook pages about health and medicine were evaluated. The health-related Romanian websites were identified using Google search engines and the search terms “Health”, “Medicine”, “Doctors”, “Hospital”, “Clinic” and “Cabinet”. The generated results of the search procedure were saved, and the first 210 hits obtained for each search procedure were screened for inclusion (N=1338). The period of time in which the analysis was conducted was February-May 2016.

The data analysis was made with the help of SPSS package and the paper presents mainly descriptive statistics on the basis of the findings.

#### **4. Analysis of the results**

The presence on the internet of the Romanian medical institutions was dominated by surgery (10.8% of the sample), followed by obstetrics (8.3%) and general treatments for internal medicine (7.6%). Only 0.7% of the total websites, blogs and Facebook pages made reference to organ donation and transplant, 2.2% made some references to NGOs activities in medical field and only 2.9% of the sample had presented institutions and organizations involved in the preventive medicine.

**Table no. 1.** Main medical specialization presented on websites, blogs and Facebook pages

|   | <b>Percent (%)</b> |
|---|--------------------|
| Specialty medicine  | 39.7               |
| Surgery   | 19.7               |
| Paraclinical medicine   | 11                 |
| Dental medicine / Dentistry                                       | 7.6                |
| Pharmacy  | 4.4                |
| Medicine in general   | 10.8               |
| Website does not make a reference to a specialization of medicine | 6.9                |

The importance of surgery on the Romanian internet is obvious when the medical specialization presented on websites, blogs and Facebook pages was analyzed. Thus, 68.7% of the Romanian medical blogs, websites and Facebook pages referred to specialty medicine and 34.1% referred to surgery. Only 6.9% of the total sample did not make a direct reference to a specialty in medicine and 10.8% of them refer to medicine “in general”.

The main medical specialties presented on the web with websites, blogs and Facebook pages were cardiology (10.6% of the total sample), internal medicine (8.8%), dermato-venereology (7.1%), endocrinology (6.1%), pediatric (5.9%) and neurology (5.8%). As regards the surgical specialties presented online, general surgery was on the first place (18.7%), followed by obstetrics and gynecology (15.8%), and ophthalmology (10.8%).

In the case of paraclinical medicine 36.4% of the websites, blogs and Facebook pages presented laboratory medicine, while 32.8% of them made reference to radiology and medical imaging. Hygiene (1.1%), nuclear medicine (1.1%) and epidemiology (1.7%) were the specialties from paraclinical medicine which were less presented on the Romanian websites and blogs.

**Table no. 2.** Institutions presented on websites, blogs and Facebook pages

|                               | Percent (%) |
|-------------------------------|-------------|
| General hospital              | 13.5        |
| Specialised hospital          | 12.7        |
| Specialised clinic            | 20.7        |
| Emergency Unit                | 3.6         |
| Private clinic and laboratory | 17          |
| Dentistry clinic              | 6.6         |
| Cabinetsof family doctor (GP) | 2.9         |
| Elderly care center           | 0.7         |
| Children care center          | 2.1         |

Only 2.9% of the websites, blogs and Facebook pages presented the cabinets of family doctors (GPs), while only 0.7% presented elderly care centers. The specialized clinics represented 20.7% of the total sample, and private clinics and laboratories had 17% of the websites, blogs and Facebook pages.

**Table no. 3.** Sections of the websites, blogs and Facebook pages

|                                   | Percent (%) |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| Website/Blog general presentation | 8.6         |
| Presentation of the medical staff | 6.3         |
| Doctors'program                   | 3,4         |
| Medical services offered          | 8.3         |
| Laboratory analysis               | 3.4         |
| Partners                          | 3.9         |
| Drugs                             | 0.9         |
| Price list                        | 4.2         |
| Photos                            | 7.5         |
| Map                               | 4           |
| Contact form                      | 9.1         |
| Events                            | 2.2         |
| News                              | 2.4         |

The internal organization of the websites, blogs and Facebook pages was, in general, a minimal one. Thus, only 8.6% of the sample had a section that stated the general identity of the medical institution presented, 8.3% presented the types of medical services they offered and 7.5% have not only texts but also photos of the building and of the medical staff. The sections that were less frequent on the Romanian medical websites, blogs and Facebook pages were: number of visitors for the site (0.3%), testimonials of the doctors and nurses (0.3%), the set of internal regulation for the medical institution (0.6%).

In the meantime, 54.5% of the websites, blogs and Facebook pages have stated the aim and mission as online media outlets, while 67.8% of them also clearly presented the aim and mission of the organization which backed the online page(s).

**Table no. 4.** Institution which backed the websites, blogs and Facebook pages  
(as they were mentioned online)

|                         | Percent (%) |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| Association of patients | 10.9        |
| Private clinic          | 30.6        |
| State hospital          | 21.3        |
| Private hospital        | 10.3        |
| Association of doctors  | 7.3         |
| Pharma company          | 3.8         |
| A doctor                | 3.2         |

When I verify the identity of the organization and/or of the institution which was “behind” or backed the online page I found that only 72.3% of the total sample of websites, blogs and Facebook pages mentioned clear it. From the total sub-sample of webpages, blogs and Facebook pages which mentioned the identity of the institutions 30.6% were of the private clinics, 21.3% - of the state’s hospitals, 10.9% - of the patients’ associations, and 10.3% - of the private hospitals.

The financing source of the online website and blog was mentioned only in the case of 22.3% of the sample. A governmental agency was mentioned as the financing source in the case of 36.2% from the total of sample and 37% websites and bloogs mentioned in that position a private enterprise.

As regards the authors of the articles published online about health and medicine, my analysis showed that 67.1% of the websites, blogs and Facebook pages did not mention the name of their authors and only 16.5% did that in an explicit manner. Also, 64.9% of the identified authors did not have any indication regarding their specialisation in medicine and/or health-related sciences.

An important percent of the medical articles published online (72.8% of the total sample) did not mention the source of information and, also, they did not have any reference to other health-related articles. The citations of the source and the existence of final reference were identified only in the case of 9% of the websites, blogs and Facebook pages analyzed, while 18.2% of the articles published online made sometimes reference to the existing medical and health-related scientific literature.

The information regarding the last update of the article and the day of its posting was also scarce. Only 14.4% of the total websites, blogs and Facebook pages used these types of information and 72.2% did not mention when the article was posted and when it was modified for the last time.

Around half of the total number of online health and medicine-related media outlets analyzed (52.8%) did not describe their target audience, a rather high percentage for “niche” online outlets.

The relation between the websites, blogs and Facebook pages and their audience is rather a “traditional” one. The email address and the contact form are available in the case of 36.5% of them and 32.1% of the total sample considered did not have such information relevant for the target audience. 16.9% of the websites analyzed had only the email address without the contact form, while 14.5% of them had only the contact form (and no email address for contact). But the e-mail address and the contact for are functional only for half (50.8%) of the websites and blogs which possessed them, a rather small sub-sample.

As the data analysis showed only in the case of 22.2% of the sample one could identify the constant reactions to the visitors as quick answers at their questions. Meanwhile, in the case of 59.6% of the websites and blogs studied there was no response at the visitors' feed-back.

**Table no. 5.** Reactions to the visitors' posts are...

|                                  | Percent (%) |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| Prompt and personalised          | 6.9         |
| Prompt but not personalized      | 2.7         |
| Personalized but send with delay | 4.7         |

The way in which the technical staff of the online health and medical media outlets maintained their relations with the visitors differed also very much. Around one third (33.3%) of the answers at the visitors' questions were personalized but they were send with a considerable delay, 18.8% of those answers were quickly send but used an impersonal manner of addressing and 48.2% of the total answers were both rapid and personalized.

**Table no. 6.** Online privacy and data protection

|   | Percent (%) |      |
|---|-------------|------|
|   | Yes         | No   |
| On the website there is a special page devoted to the security/privacy policy       | 14.3        | 85.7 |
| On the website it is mentioned how the visitors' email addresses are processed      | 11.8        | 88.2 |
| On the website it is mentioned how the visitors' contact informations are processed | 11.8        | 88.2 |
| On the website it is mentioned how the visitors' personal names are processed       | 11.4        | 88.6 |
| On the website it is mentioned how the visitors' personal data are processed        | 11.2        | 88.8 |

When I considered the online privacy and data protection issues we found that 85.7% of the websites, blogs and Facebook pages did not have a special page devoted to the online security and confidentiality policy. Also, 88.2% of the total sample analyzed did not mention how the email addresses sent by the visitors are processed and a similar percent (88.2%) did not mention how the contact details send by those visitors are processed.

A percent of 88.6% from all websites, blog and Facebook pages did not mention how the personal names send by visitors are processed and 88.8% of them did not mention how the personal data sent by visitors are processed. In the case of 89.8% of the websites, blogs and Facebook pages one cannot find a section with explanations regarding the way in which the information provided by visitors are used and 94.3% of the total sample did not mention how the cookies are used by the owners of the online outlet.

If the general online privacy and data protection for the websites' visitors proved to be under threat due to the lack of adequate and secure online measures, the same was true regarding the medical data of the patients. My analysis showed that 92.1% of



the websites, blogs and Facebook pages did not mention how the medical data of the visitors and patients are processed, a huge percent that showed the lack of online security for the medical information of patients.

**Table no. 7.** Treatments and commercial products presented on the websites, blogs and Facebook pages

|  | Percent (%) |
|--|-------------|
| Both treatments and commercial products are presented on the website     | 14.3        |
| Only commercial products (and no treatment) are presented on the website | 2.7         |
| Only treatments (and no commercial product) are presented on the website | 25.2        |
| Neither treatments nor commercial products are presented on the website  | 57.8        |

When the issue of direct to consumer advertising for medical products and treatments was studied I found that 57.8% of the total sample did not present either commercial products or treatment to the visitors. In the case of 14.3% of the websites and blogs both commercial products and treatments were presented and only treatments (without commercial products) were presented on other 25.2%.

For 64.4% of the sample there are no specifications about the efficiency or lack of efficiency for treatments and/or commercial products and only in the case of 20.8% the efficiency of some treatments was pointed out. Only 25.1% of those materials which included specification of treatments' efficiency had cited medical articles, health journals and reports.

Generics drugs were presented in an unbiased way only in 7.8% of the total websites and blogs we analyzed (in 83% cases their presentations were extremely biased and inaccurate).

A high percent (83.8%) of the websites, blogs and Facebook pages did not display paid advertising on them. At the same time, 98.7% of the websites and blogs included in the sample did not post a clear statement that the website and blog did not host or receive advertising funds from the inclusion of any promotional material.

**Table 8.** The signaling of the advertising and of its sponsorship

|   | Percent (%) |
|---|-------------|
| Materials are marked as advertising and the source of sponsorship is indicated    | 7.4         |
| Materials are marked as advertising but no source of sponsorship is indicated     | 9.9         |
| Materials are not marked as advertising and no source of sponsorship is indicated | 48.6        |

In the case of 48.6% of online pages, websites and blogs analyzed there was no indication on the fact that a material is a promotional one and no indication of a sponsorship for it, 9.9% of them signaled the advertising but did not mention the sponsorship and 7.4% mentioned both the advertising and the sponsorship.

The results showed that only 7.4% had indicated the financing source for the advertising materials posted.

Much more, a huge percent (99.7%) of the websites and blogs included in the sample did not mention what types of advertising and publicity will not be allowed to be published online.

## **5. Conclusions**

According to Charnock, Shepperd, Needham and Gann (1999) patients can only make informed choices if they have access to good quality information. In the same time, as Risk and Dzenowagis (2001) had showed, the quality of Internet health information is of paramount relevance, due its rapid worldwide spread and availability to a large number of people. The accessibility and quality online medical and health information had become a key factor in improving access to health services and facilitating informed health decision making (Devine, Broderick, Harris, Wu and Williams Hilfiker 2016).

In the case of the Romanian medical websites, blogs and Facebook pages, as the results of my analysis have shown, one can notice the complete lack of scientific quality and the low level for the accuracy of information delivered to the general public. Also, on the basis of the analysis for the results regarding the online advertising and publicity on the Romanian health-related online media, we found frequent conflicts of interest as many websites, blog and Facebook pages were backed by commercial companies, private clinics and hospitals.

Information on the Internet pertaining to Romanian health and medicine accessed via general search engines was overtly commercial. Much more, as my analysis had showed, the websites, blogs and Facebook pages published medical and health-related information which has poor accessibility and readability levels. The same type of online information was extremely incomplete and, in a vast majority of cases, it has serious problems with scientific (and even reasonable) accuracy.

Romanian health-related websites, blogs and Facebook pages could be strengthened by providing more of the information needed for the patients. In addition, if the sources of information are clearer identified and the authors of the texts had a clear identity and medical qualifications, the information will have a greater scientific credibility. Most websites, blogs and Facebook pages would benefit from more attention given to improvement of material's organization.

As our analysis had stressed, most Romanian health information available on the Internet had low quality especially in terms of usability and reliability. In addition, they were written at low readability levels. As such, efforts are needed to develop the health information websites, blogs and Facebook pages which can help general population in informed decision making.

The present study has some limitations, the most important being the narrowing of the analysis only on a single country (e.g. Romania). Another limit of the study was the lack of comparative analysis – either on the temporal axis, or the geographical (international) dimension.

Despite the above-mentioned limitations we can conclude that there is a need for independent external validation of medical and health-related websites, blogs and Facebook pages using world-wide evaluated consensus criteria such as DISCERN,

HONcode and LIDA. That evaluation has to be made by an independent body of academics from medicine and health-related domain in order to secure the scientific character of the information delivered to the general public on such sensitive topics as health, illness and disease.

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# **The need of students from “Social activities” specialization for training by working with people who suffer from intellectual disabilities**

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## **Abstract**

The profession of social worker is incredibly difficult and requires specialized knowledge, sustainability, stability, communicative skills and ability to form positive interrelations and overcoming of complicate situations.

The social policy of government regarding people with intellectual disabilities is clearly outlined: during next 3 years there should be closed ten specialized institutions for people with mental disorders, where about 750 persons live in. There shall be provided support for them through implementation of one hundred new social services in community. The recruitment for employees as the social workers are on first line shall be increased. The profession is encountering real challenges, related to the training and preparation of specialists that are responsible for need of highly qualified staff. The training of students from specialty „Social activities“ is targeted to prepare social workers, having the knowledge, practical skills and readiness to manage the activities. The survey among the students from the specialty of Medical college – Pleven and Faculty of Economics of the „St. Cyril and St. Methodius” University of Veliko Tarnovo is intended to establish the ratio and attitude for work with persons, having intellectual disabilities. The results showed that students have knowledge and positive attitude to persons with mental disabilities and two thirds of them future careers committed to work with intellectual disabilities people.

**Keywords:** *training; students; social worker; people with intellectual disabilities*

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## **1. Introduction**

### **Social work and the profession of social work**

**1.1 Definition.** International federation of social workers (IFSW) at General Meeting, held on 6-th and 7-th July, 2014 in Melbourne, defined Global definition: „Social work is a profession, based on practice and academic subject that encourages

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social changes and development, social adhesion as well empowerment and liberation of people. The principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect to differences are central point for social work. Based on the theories for social work, social sciences, humanitarian sciences and knowledge of indigenous population, social work engages people and structures to overcome challenges of life and improve of the welfare“ (IFSW definition of the social work profession 2014).

The social work in Bulgaria is defined in Social Aid Act as: "Social work is professional activity to improve mutual adaptation of persons, families, groups and environment they live in. It is a set of supporting activities, directed to achieve better quality of life, dignity and responsibility of people on the base of their individual abilities, interrelations and resources of community“ (ЗСП 2016).

**1.2 The profession of social worker** is based on special theoretical knowledge, that are presented by a system of comprehensive training. The social workers are experts in practical activities and recognized as such by society. It is considered that the professional should possess a sense for confidence, ability to individually regulate his/her activities, desire to provide services and look upon his/her work rather than a calling, not as a way to earn means of existence (Радев и Будева 2005: p.21).

The social worker solves various tasks: creates conditions for self-assertion of representatives of vulnerable social groups; diagnostics of social and personal issues; social prophylactics; social aid and social support of those in need; social consultations; social rehabilitation and therapy; social supervision and guardianship; social planning; social mediation among customers and various organizations; innovation activities in social work etc. (Радев и Будева 2005: p.28).

The profession of social worker is humanitarian one, its major intention and purpose to aid people with problems and adaptation to society, to create or restore their personal or social statuses, that is, the social work is a profession, committed to improvement the quality of life of people thru various activities, directed for social changes (Morales and Sheafor 1996).

### **1.3 Training of social workers**

The resource provision of qualitative social support, intended to minimize social exclusion of individuals, families, groups and communities is a function on one part of provided financial means and on the other part of the level of training and professional qualification of the social workers. The quality of higher education on social activities in Bulgaria depends to a great degree of the quality of the services provided to all people, who are in need of them. In terms of calling the social workers in their practical work should defend the human rights, human dignity and social justice (Социална работа – обучение и практика 2010).

**1.3.1 Faculty of Economics** was established to the structure of Veliko Tarnovo University „St. Cyril and St. Methodius“ on the base of an agreement between Veliko Tarnovo University and the Institute for economic researches of Bulgarian Academy of Science, signed 01.04.1992.

The faculty established as one of the leading centers of education and science in Bulgaria in the field of economy, management and social activities. The lecturing in

Faculty of Economics is harmonized with national and European educational media. The academic staff of the faculty is highly qualified, proving their abilities in lecturing and research and development area, economical and social practice.

The chair „Organization and methodology of social activities”, educate students in specialty „Social activities“, 4 year course of study, graduates receiving educational qualification degree „Bachelor“. The specific feature of bachelors' programs that prepare analytical specialists is characterized by the theoretical training. Practical training commences in the IInd year, third semester and ends in eighth semester with pre-diploma training, the lectures amounting to total of 360. Practice is conducted in social services of the community of residency type and specialized institutions.

Graduates realize themselves successfully as: social workers; employees and managers on various levels in institutions for social protection and social aid; in structures for social services; in NGO with social subjects of activities (Стопански факултет на БТУ).

**1.3.2 Medical college to MU – Pleven** teach students in specialty „Social activities“. The specialty is accredited by NEAA /National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency/ in 2017 with the grade 9, 34 for 6 year period – to 2023.

The curriculum is harmonized to National standards and offer profound and specialized knowledge on profiled, pedagogic, general medicine and clinical teaching subjects. The practical training has relative share up to 53% (885 classes training practice and 400 classes pre-diploma training) of total syllabus and conducted in modern facilities – social institution, NGO, specialized schools and institutions, specialized medical establishments etc. The facilities for training with beneficiaries with intellectual disabilities are: Center for social rehabilitation and integration, Protected home for old age people with retarded development, Center for young and old age people with disabilities (beneficiaries are mainly people with mental disorders and/or combined with physical, sensor etc. disorders), Center for psychic health.

Graduates with EQG/educational qualification grade/ professional bachelor for professional qualification „social worker” may occupy positions as applied specialists, performing tasks, related to practical application knowledge in the field of administrative services, social aid, implementation of social activities in the field of social cares, social services, social protection and social security and social assistance in respective departments and sections.

Other fields for realization of graduates are: multipurpose hospitals for active treatment, psychiatric hospitals, centers for psychic health, departments and sections on municipal level, re-socialization, consultative and correction centers for children, local commissions for fighting with anti-society acts of underage law breakers, structures for social activities and other governmental institutions (Медицински колеж при МУ - Плевен).

## **2. People with intellectual disabilities**

**2.1 Intellectual disability** – The definition for intellectual impairment according to AAIDRD – American association for intellectual disabilities and retarded development (2013): „Intellectual disability/impairment“ means considerable

restrictions of intellectual functions and adaptive behavior, that has great impact a lot of daily social and practical skills“. (AAIDD)

## **2.2 Social services for people with intellectual disabilities**

Social services are one of most rapidly increasing economic sectors in Europe. Since 27 years Bulgaria is on the way of democratic development България, accompanying part being the reform in social sphere, including social services and support of the vulnerable groups of society that is in progress and nowadays. Social Aid Act formulates in “Social services” the statement that those are activities in support of the persons for social inclusion and independent manner of life that are based on social work and provided to community in the specialized institutions (ЗСП 2016).

The reform in the sphere of social services and implementation of deinstitutionalization as principal priority of Bulgarian social policy were formulated in adopted by Council of Ministers National strategy „Vision for deinstitutionalization of elderly people with psychic disturbances, mental retard and dementing“, where among the priority objectives have been shown: reduce the number of people, accommodated in specialized institutions, and elaboration of social and healthcare services, directed to the most vulnerable groups of society. An emphasis has been put on the transition from institutionalization cares to services, that allow to people remain in their community and family environment in order to improve considerable their quality of lives (Национална стратегия 2010).

The action plan for the period 2018-2021 on execution of the National strategy for long term care envisages in the next 3 years to close down ten specialized institutions for people with mental problems, presently accommodating about 750 persons. There shall be provided support for them thru implementing of one hundred new social services for the community members (План за действие 2018-2021) and (Национална стратегия за дългосрочна грижа 2014).

There shall be expanded the recruitment for first line employees what the social workers are. The profession encounters real challenges, related to training and preparation of specialists, who should respond to the need of highly qualified personnel.

## **2.3 Social work with people, suffering intellectual disabilities.**

The main objective for all tasks of the social worker is to alleviate the consequences of the social isolation and gradually to evade it in order to satisfy the various basic social needs of different customers, to secure services for their social rehabilitation and re socialization, as well provide adequate and qualified aid and support for all various groups in need with their individual peculiarities.

The needs of the person with intellectual disability includes those, specific for each age group (without disability) plus the specific needs, result of the impairment. Considering the age peculiarities of the persons with intellectual disabilities is related to the type of provided social service, mainly impacts the type of daily care and nature of professional work of the service. Significant peculiarity of the people with intellectual disabilities is the consideration that chronicle age not always corresponds to emotional, psychic and intellectual development of the person. That requires flexibility when define age limits of social services for children and elderly people (Динамичен модел 2010).



Generally speaking, the needs of support for children and elderly people with intellectual disabilities include the needs for support in terms of education, development, mobility, free time, labor activities and occupation.

The social integration of persons with intellectual disabilities is objective of the social work. It reviews how a person “accommodates” in society and public life. The ability of man to enter into interrelation with environment is influenced by many factors that could improve or worsen the adaptation.

The social work with intellectual disabilities persons proved that when assisting them to solve their life issues is complicate activity, requiring certain competency. To be a success when aiding the beneficiary the social worker should be aware with his/her role in the process and objectives that are to be reached. There should be build internal security for the beneficiary thru expression of doubtless, well intended attitude and concern through acceptance and empathy.

The social worker should assess correctly what are the capacities of the person, his/her potential to overcome difficulties and needs he requires. Resources of the environment also are identified: family, relatives, community.

To be an excellent social worker also requires a level of emotional stability and confidence that is achieved by practical experience. It is of great importance also the academic theoretical knowledge to be correlated to its practical implementation, thus providing to students modern and perspective experience.

### **3. Materials/Target group and methods.**

In February– March 2018 there was conducted a survey among students of „Social activities“ specialty, studying in Medical college of Medical University– Pleven city and Faculty of Economics of VTU „St. Cyril and St. Methodius“. The total number of interviewed students was 75, 31 from Medical college to MU- Pleven, first year students – 10, second year – 10 and third year – 11 students. Interviewed students of Faculty of Economics to VelikoTarnovo University - 44, first year – 11, second year – 14, third year – 10 and from fourth year - 9 students.

#### **Objectives:**

1. To survey knowledge of students for people with mental disabilities as well the attitude to them;
2. To survey opinions for practical training in the facilities– social services for persons with intellectual disabilities;
3. To survey attitude for work, related to people with intellectual disabilities.

**Methods:** Literature review on the topic and questionnaire survey by means of questionnaire card with 15 opened and closed questions.

### **4. Results**

**First group of questions** refer to establishment of students’ awareness about people with mental disability, as well the attitude to them. The results are following:

The greater part of interviewed students from both universities – 62.51% were aware of the specific of mental impairments, respectively, 65.83% from FE and 58.14% from MC, the remaining 37.49% still have not that knowledge, that could be

explained by the fact that first year students of both universities still lack the required theoretical preparation, and respectively practice that follows the theory.

About the question: „Do you know that in the category „persons with intellectual impairments fall in the inflicted by psychic diseases and mentally retarded?“, two thirds – 66.5% of students (70.37% from BTU and 61.37% from MC) responded they know, remaining one third– 33.5% responded, they have some idea but no one replied „I am not aware“.

Asked whether the attitude to people with intellectual disabilities is more different to remaining people, a little bit more of students– 58.52% said they have not more specific attitude (56.75% from FE and 61.37% from MC), 33.25% say „partly“ and 7.98% have different attitude to that category persons with disabilities.

About the question: „Do you think, that the needs of intellectual disability person are more different to those of remaining people?“, considerable part of the responders – 78.47% (81.72% from VTU and 74.29% from MC) say „yes“, 21.28% think, that their needs are same as remaining people and 2.66% responded by following opinions:

- in some cases, there should be paid more attention;
- the main vital needs are similar for every person but for persons with such disabilities there should be paid special attention.

About the question: „According to you what of the self-servicing activities and daily routine of live, persons with intellectual disabilities could manage and overcome?“, the opinions and knowledge of students from both universities differ. The greatest part of responders from VTU – 79.45% reckon that the persons may alone go and get up in bed, as well eat and drink (70.37%), last ranking is „maintain personal hygiene“, 40.86% of interviewed think, people with intellectual disabilities can do themselves. Different opinion have expressed 13.62%:

- they could manage by the help of other persons;
- frequently they need help and cares;
- depending on the condition of the person;
- think, they cannot manage by themselves only.

To same question, the greatest part from Medical College-Pleven students - 58.14% have put on first place that the persons can independently dress on and undress, on second place the half (51.68%) that they can feed and drink alone, and smallest part – 41.99% think that they could perform „going to the WC and self cleaning“. It gives the impression that 80% of first year students have responded: „depends on the grade of impairment“.

About the question: „What of the activities from social functioning, persons with intellectual disabilities can manage?“, the greatest part of students from both universities – 55.86% think that the persons can manage communication and transmit messages, on following place 26.6% think that people w/t intellectual disabilities can individually plan and organize their daily routines; according 10.64% those persons are capable to individually manage their means and only 2,66% believe that they can individually settle administrative matters. Considerable part of responders – 29.26% have expressed another opinions, as:

- the grade of impairment - 2.66%;
- grade and type of impairment /intellectual disability – 11.97%;
- with alien help they could manage - 6.65%;
- no, I don't think they could manage those activities individually - 3.99%;
- no, I don't think they could manage everything individually – 2.66%;
- most people with intellectual disability need all kind of assistance.

About the question: „What of the household activities the persons with intellectual disabilities could manage?“, half of the students(49.98%) from VTU think that the persons can manage individually with food preparation, serving, dish washing, 27.26% think that those people can go shopping alone and only 18.17% say that persons with intellectual disabilities can use household utilities.

The students from Medical College have expressed different opinions: a little over the half – 54.91% think that persons with intellectual disabilities can alone prepare food, serve, dish washing; on next place according 41.99%, those persons can go shopping alone 38.76% think, they can clean home and sanitary premises and the smallest part – 29.07% say, that persons with intellectual disabilities can use household facilities and units.

Every fifth student has expressed other opinion:

- they cannot manage – 2.66%;
- could manage but with assistance, Alone-no: 5.32%;
- by little assistance and instructions;
- can be trained;
- depends on the impairment of the person – 2.66%;
- depends on type and grade of impairment – 6.65%;
- depending on complexity of the activities.

Social inclusion and integration of people in unequal condition in society may be reached thru improvement of the consciousness and attitude of the society to them. In that regard the interviewed were asked in what fields they think the attitude of society should be more special to persons with intellectual disabilities. The greatest part of students from Medical Collage – 77.52%, have placed as priority field the education of persons with intellectual disabilities, while the interviewed from VTU (72.64%) have put on the first place more special attitude at „communication“, education on the second place is (70.37%). The students from the college (74.29%) put on the second place the requirement for more different attitude „when looking for a job“ more different attitude of the people from that group, communication being on the third place (67.83%). The students from VTU put on third place more special attitude at the administrative services of those persons (68.10%), and on the next place „when looking for a job“ (65.83%). The opinions of the students from both universities – almost half of them (51.29%) from BTU and 45.22% from MC put on fourth place, „at the performance of work“ by persons with intellectual disabilities the necessity of more different attitude. The students also are of the same opinion regarding the field, where the society should interfere at the least, that is – organizing the free time of those category of persons, respectively the least part of responders being from VTU – 24.97% and from MC – 19.38%.

**Second group of questions** is aimed to establish the opinions of the students about the practical training at the facilities– social services for persons with persons with intellectual disabilities.

On the following question the students had the opportunity to share opinions, regarding contacts to persons with intellectual disabilities during the time of practical training, conducted in social facilities for those persons. It is necessary to consider the fact that first year students from both universities on that stage of training have not still commence practice in social facilities their training is theoretical and includes, legislation and normative regulations regarding disability persons and organization and management of social services. That was the reason some of them to respond „other“: „Still we have not visited social facilities“ (50% from MC) and 27.27% from VTU. The remaining first year students have expressed their opinions on contacts with persons with intellectual disabilities.

Remaining students, who during practical training have had contacts with users of social services from that group shared following opinions:

- The greatest part of students from Faculty of Economics – 56.75% share that when contacted persons with intellectual disabilities „not always been sure that they understand me“, next with equal part of 38.59% said „not always I understand them“ and those who have no worries when contacting those persons. A little bit lower is the part of the students – 27.24%, who have no worries when perform joint activities with the beneficiaries/users. Every forth interviewed (24.97%) form first to third year student pointed out that he/she is embarrassed to contact the beneficiaries, some saying „I do not know how to behave “ (22.70%) - „I do not know what to say“ (13.62%) – here not recorded four year student to respond referenced replies. There were also and other opinions:

- I am careful how to talk to them, in order not to cause anxiety, worries, confusion – responder was a fourth year student;

- I try to be attentive, listen to them and understand them - responder was a third year student;

- The greatest part of the students from Medical College - 51.68% (eight out of ten from third year and half of second year) said they have not worries when contact persons with intellectual difficulties, on the next place 48.45% (same ratio of replies with third and second year students as previous) have no worries when performing joint activities with the beneficiaries. Every fifth student (19.38%) worries about communicating, on an equal share of 9.69% not always understand those persons and also not always being sure they have been understood. Insignificant part of 3.23% provide answers as „do not know how to behave“ and „do not know what to say“ when contacting the beneficiaries.

About the question: „Preferable social services for practical training for you are:“, students from both universities first mentioned social services for children without disabilities, respectively 86.26% from VTU and 80.75% MC. Second the interviewed from Faculty of Economics mention social services for adults without disabilities– 74.91%, while the students from Pleven College mention services for children with disabilities– 45.22%. Only one from 5 students in VTU mention preferences to the services for children with impairments and to adults with intellectual

impairments – 20.43%, while MC students, almost every third (32.30%) mentioned social services for adults with intellectual disabilities and every fourth prefers those for adults without disabilities – 25.84%. The least part of interviewed from both universities mentioned preferences to services for people with physical impairments. (15.89% from VTU 12.92% from MK).

**Third group of questions** includes establishment of the attitudes of students to work with people with intellectual disabilities.

- I will have the opportunity to improve their lives, to help them build habits for their daily life, the opportunity to improve or not to deteriorate their condition – 4-year student from VTU;
- Every individual, despite the physical or mental condition should be socialized and not allow discrimination or be isolated from society – 4-year student from VTU;
- My work includes and defined as „helping profession“ for people who cannot manage alone in daily routine of life and I'd be happy to help them – 3-year student, VTU;
- I don't think people with intellectual disabilities should be isolated and rejected by society – 3-year student, MC;
- Everybody needs help, despite his/her impairments or difficulties – 2-year student, VTU;
- The work of the social worker is obligatory to help Man, despite his/her problems – 2-year student, MC;
- I think we are people who must help them thru the correct and proper methods and socialize them. – 2-year student, MC.

Part of the students – 33.25% wouldn't accept the role of the social worker – his/her work related only to people with intellectual disabilities (38.59% from VTU and 25.84% from MC). The opinions may be summarized to the following:

- I feel embarrassed when talk to them – 9.31%;
- It is a psychic burden – 7.98%;
- I think I couldn't manage - 5.32%;
- I am very emotional and that would affect me; feel simultaneously the same they do – 2.66%;
- I am very sensitive person, very compassionate to the problems of others and think that would prevent me to some degree to be efficient and useful at the work place;
- I don't feel like ready for such serious job;
- I prefer to occupy another job in the field of social services, not that one;
- I am not oriented to that field.

About the question: „What difficulties do you expect to encounter when you work and render assistance to people with intellectual disabilities:“, the greatest part of students from both universities– 72.64% from VTU and 58.14% from MC think that at the communication with those persons would have problems; on next place they say „concerns for his/her own safety/security “ (63.56% from faculty of economics and

51.68% from college). On third place they share worries about „attending /lack of self-attending“, respectively 31.78% from VTU and 22.61% MC. On the last place the least part of students (11,35% and 9.69%) are on the opinion that they would be worried for the security of those people with intellectual disabilities. Only 2.66% replied that „I don't think I'll have difficulties“, one of the students saying that would encounter difficulties in their „inclusion to the social environment“.

## 5. Discussion

Attending to people with intellectual disabilities is a test for the professionalism and personality of the attending to people. The specialists, attending to people with mental problems provide direct assistance and cares to persons with complex psychic needs, requiring high grade maintaining and long term therapy. Despite the specific of beneficiaries' conditions there are existing and other factors, as: enhance the search for social services, regulatory changes, decrease funding and lack of support for employees in that field, that cause difficulties to recruit and keep qualified specialists.

The survey, conducted in 2017 among the employed in social services for persons with mental disabilities in Pleven city, aimed to establish the satisfaction of work and professional „burnout“, showed, that about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of employed, the manifestations of physiological discomfort are frequent among those employed for longer time in the services. Emotional and behavioristic symptoms of stress are to be noted in more than half of employed, despite not accepting it as serious problem. Nearly  $\frac{2}{3}$  of employed in the social services for persons with mental disabilities are not satisfied from payment for the efforts and labor rendered. Insufficient payment in the sphere of social services as a whole and in particular makes them unwanted vacancies for qualified specialists. If opportunity occurs for employment to another sphere about half of the interviewed would accept that vacancies and leave the system. The greatest number of specialist requiring changes is the one among the social workers. (Budeva and Spasova 2018)

The following conclusions can be made from the results of survey among students of specialty „Social activities“, studding in Medical College at Medical University – Pleven city and Faculty of Economics of VTU „St. Cyril and St. Methodius“:

- Six from ten students of both universities are familiar with the specific of the mental impairments and the remaining still lack that knowledge that could be explained by the fact that first year students from both universities still lack required theoretical readiness and respectively practice, following the theory.

- Two thirds of the students are familiar with the categories of persons, who include the group of persons with intellectual disabilities. To the questions, related to theory little bit higher is the number of students from Faculty of Economics, who have knowledge on the topic.

- Regarding the possibilities of the persons from target groups to overcome activities on self-attending, those of social functioning and household tasks, better knowledge was demonstrated by students from Medical College. That could be explained with the great part of practical training of students as a whole and facilities for people with intellectual disabilities, where they have opportunity to be included in activities, together with the beneficiaries and observe how they manage the various tasks.

▪ The opinions of the students regarding practical training of social services for people with intellectual disabilities is different with the interviewed from both universities. Over the half of the students from College have not worries to communicate to beneficiaries, as well at performing various joint activities, while with the students from Faculty of Economics, the leading point is „I am not always sure they understand me“ as well „not always I understand them, the beneficiaries“. The difference could also be explained with the lectures/classes for practical training in both universities that are considerably more in the College and the students spare more time with the beneficiaries, accustomed to understand them and communicate to them without embarrassment.

▪ The readiness their future careers to be related to people with intellectual disabilities express three fourths of the students from Medical College and six out of ten of the students from Faculty of Economics to VTU „St. Cyril and St. Methodius“.

We can make the conclusion from those results that practical training, conducted in social and healthcare establishments for people with mental disabilities, when training social workers is one of the prerequisites to form positive attitude for work in social facilities for people with mental disabilities.

The training and preparation of students from specialty „Social activities“ for attending to people with mental disabilities is a prerequisite for recruitment of reliable staff that is to provide cares, support and assistance those people need.

## **6. Conclusion**

The social policy of Bulgaria in the field of Social services emphasises in coming years to 2021 and long term schedule to 2034 the problem for deinstitutionalization of the persons with intellectual disabilities and elaboration of social services for that category of persons. The implementation of new social services shall highlight the necessity of better staffing, where the social workers are the specialists with key role in the process of integration and social inclusion of the target group people in the life of community.

It is required the training of students from specialty „Social activities“, perspective specialists – social to be emphasized on the theoretical knowledge, as well on practical training in order achieve good preparedness, motivation and formation of positive concerns to attend to people with intellectual disabilities.

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# Between statistics and social reality: emigration as individual election to the lack of opportunities

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## Abstract

This article is based on a research aimed at analyzing public policies regarding the Romanian social economy. The statistical data highlights that the economic forms through which the population exposed to social exclusion can overcome the vulnerability situation are used below potential. Thus, we witness a discrepant evolution of the different socio-economic indicators: on the one hand, we are witnessing a sustained economic growth, an improvement of the specific indicators of many economic sectors, while, on the other hand, a series of indicators of a social nature have negative values. Moreover, the slight improvements do not prove to be sustainable as much of the population affected by poverty is not at an adequate level of resilience.

The sociological analysis reveals that Romanian society is characterized by a low level of opportunities that favor social mobility, which generates geographical mobility. Samuel Stouffer mentioned in his definition that emigration is due to the opportunities that arise, while Arnold Rose completed this theory by introducing into the analysis the socio-economic status of migrants. Thus, starting from the socio-economic status of vulnerable people, we consider that there are limited opportunities for social mobility, which means getting a job, qualification in a job, using a system of support for social entrepreneurship or for getting a job. Instead, economic needs can be met by geographical migration in another social area with higher financial opportunities than the home society.

Statistical data describes a pessimistic picture from a social point of view, but knowledge of their trends will allow identification and implementation of functional mechanisms for implementing public policies with sustainable effects.

**Keywords:** *social economy; entrepreneurship; poverty; public policies; social marginalization; vulnerable groups; unemployment; vacancy*

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## **1. Introduction**

Romania's economic and social context is characterized by some complex processes that agglutinates according to criteria related to internal and external influences. In societies looking for the best ways to develop, additional costs are associated with the lack of anticipation of the consequences of some processes. Thus, poverty, social polarization, school abandonment and crime are just some effects of the lack of opportunities for a part of the population or due to the inability to adapt to the challenges of the modern world.

Economic cycles have reduced individual entrepreneurial potential. Existing support systems did not meet individual needs. But the development of an alternative system designed to ensure a minimum level of existence appears to us as a response to the radical change of society or the various social groups caused by the numerous economic crises. Solutions to social and economic problems also lie in the functioning of social economy enterprises and the multiplication of social entrepreneurs. Social solidarity is the foundation of such steps. Ability to aggregate individual skills can offset the negative effects of economic crises on the vulnerable population is the foundation of social economy and social entrepreneurship policies.

The social economy can solve social and economic problems that are not addressed by the current dynamics of society or by public or private interventions. In addition to solving individual economic problems, the social economy contributes to promoting the social inclusion of vulnerable groups, increasing employment opportunities and facilitating labor market mobility for people in difficult times of life.

The social economy goes beyond the simple economic framework and its objectives, income generation and job creation, but aims at the integrated and sustainable economic and social development of human communities. Various entities, such as organizations and foundations, contribute to the development and implementation of support services for communities and vulnerable people. Thus, by facilitating the social integration of vulnerable people, the social economy contributes, from a multidimensional perspective, to the elaboration of sustainable social development solutions.

By the provisions of the Law no. 219 of 23 of July 2015, on the social economy, the principles underlying the social economy activities were regulated, stipulating the goals and objectives of these activities. Non-patrimonial purposes, such as the general interest, community or collective interest, or personal and non-patrimonial interests, illustrate the social area in which such initiatives can be implemented, defined as private, voluntary, autonomous, responsible, and allowing limited distribution of profits to associates.

From the perspective of social economy principles, the present study aims at evaluating governmental public policies intended to analyze the dynamics and development of social economy and social entrepreneurship in accordance with the European legislation. Specific objectives aim at systematically analyzing the social economy and its effects, seeking to describe the main components of an ensemble resulting from the coagulation of all conclusions into a set of conclusions with a high

degree of generality. The purpose of such an approach is to provide a clear picture of the current level of social economy and social entrepreneurship policies. A clear overview resulting from both internal analysis and comparisons with the existing level in other countries will help estimate the investments needed to exploit the full potential of this area and avoid errors.

The elaboration of this study is based on the achievements of social economy so far, existing data and analytical structures confirm the progress made in this area.

## **2. European regulations in the field of social economy**

European countries in which efforts have been made to develop the social economy are divided into two main categories: the first concerns the countries where legislation has been implemented and the second where this field is included in the existing legislation on civil society organizations various forms.

In all cases, there is only one principle regarding the social economy and social enterprises: these are circumscribed to social objectives, and profit distribution between members is forbidden. In the case of profit, it will be reinvested to increase the degree of achievement of the objective, to increase the social services quality, the number of beneficiaries, and increase in rendered services efficiency and to satisfy community interests.

From this point two new categories of countries are detached: the first refers to the countries that provide support for the development of the social economy, while the second category refers to countries that do not have a policy to develop this sector of activity.

Depending on European societies, we can distinguish between societies that focus on the use of unused workforce and those that focus more on the social insertion of people with disabilities.

From this point of view we can see that, depending on the governmental vision, we have a distinction of the perception of the social economy: that subsumed to economic interests or subsumption of social assistance.

Research conducted at a European level was carried out in three directions (CESE 2018):

1. Social economy and its concepts / emerging movements;
2. Public policies, broadly, both at EU and Member State level, to promote the social economy sector;
3. Measuring the size of the social economy in each EU Member State.

The analysis of the three coordinates reveals that European countries are at different stages in terms of social economy policies.

Thus, the most advanced countries in recognizing the importance of the social economy are Spain, France, Portugal, Belgium and Luxembourg. Its importance is widely recognized in all media, both public institutions and the academic and scientific world. Moreover, Spain was the first country to benefit from the first national law on social economy since 2011. In these countries, there are probably the best results of the social economy.

The second category of countries consists of those with a moderate level of recognition of the importance of the social economy: Italy, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Malta, Poland, UK, Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Romania, and

Slovenia. In these countries, the concept of social economy is not specifically addressed. It is treated as a component of a wider scope covering all forms of association of civil society, such as nonprofit, volunteering and social enterprises. In the United Kingdom it was found that government support for social enterprises is not found in the degree of knowledge of this field.

The third category includes countries where this concept is weak or not at all recognized: Austria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Slovakia and Croatia. Areas such as the nonprofit sector, volunteering and non-governmental organizations are better represented.

From the analytical point of view, it is observed that the implementation of social economy policies is due to top-down strategies, from central institutions to the population. This raises the issue of the understanding of this concept by the population or the internalization of their principles. In large part, the integration into the labor market of vulnerable people is dependent on a set of measures, including employment, together with elements related to combating addictions, treatment for certain illnesses, improving living conditions, accompanying services, qualification or retraining, etc. However, the reductionist approach to a complex context of factors generating social exclusion can limit the success of such a move.

For the success of this program, it is necessary to accelerate measures to promote the advantages of the social economy and its acceptance "by all stakeholders" as a way of solving social problems. In this sense, the share of the social economy can be understood as the result of the promotion actions, on the one hand, and the increase of the degree of involvement of some categories of population on the other.

The correlation of social economy policies with community and regional needs is another factor supporting development policies based on the development of the social economy. The sustainability of social enterprises is dependent on several factors: consultancy in creating a business plan, marketing, sales, the development of new markets, funding sources, etc., suggesting that the success of such an activity is dependent on a socio-economic context which exceeds and discourages the work of people exposed to social exclusion.

Comparing the different degrees of acceptance and implementation of the social economy, we find that there is currently a European trend favorable to the development of this economic sector. Statistical data indicates an increase in scope and a tendency to diversify the activities included. Future developments are conditional on the harmonization of legislation and the creation of a standardized system of procedures in EU countries, detailing the measures related to the context of each country.

At the level of the European Commission and on the basis of the report of the European Parliament, the Department for Social Economy was established within the General Directorate of the European Commission. The purpose of this European structure was to support the establishment and development of the sector of cooperatives, mutual societies, associations and foundations. In addition to this category of activities, the activities of studying the social economy, addressing specific issues, analyzing the coherence of EU policies, linking with existing social economy structures, and supporting the attraction of unorganized and underrepresented people, and promoting the social economy to policy-makers. This structure was abolished in 2000 and was taken over by two Directorates-General within the EC: the Directorate-General for Enterprise

and Industry and the General Directorate- for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Splitting the approach of this field had effects contrary to the original intentions: the effects obtained were non-uniform (MMPS 2010).

*The European Economic and Social Committee* is an advisory body with the role of promoting and facilitating civic dialogue, given that this institution strongly supports participatory democracy.

A major direction of action is to boost the recognition of the social economy and to correct the imbalances faced by the various forms of social economy. The European Commission recommendation to the EESC in 2009 reads as follows: "The social economy sector needs tailored solutions in terms of taxation, public procurement and competition rules." (MMPS 2010)

*The European Parliament* is working for the development of the social economy through the social economy intergroup, which is "a monitoring and information body on the social economy that promotes the idea of building a competitive Europe based on knowledge of the characteristics and difficulties of the social economy." (MMPS 2010). The Intergroup is also a platform for the exchange of information between the European Parliament and civil society.

*The Council of Europe* is another institution with responsibilities in the field of social economy. It acts through three major areas of intervention: human rights, democracy and the State law. The aim of the Council of Europe is to ensure stability, economic growth and social cohesion. Within the Council of Europe, the Research and Development Division for Social Cohesion, which addresses the social economy in terms of solidarity, social cohesion, active citizenship and social co-responsibility (MSSD 2010)?

The social economy is a factor that supports social cohesion, which makes this European structure involved in promoting this activity. The Social Cohesion Directorate of the Council of Europe, in partnership with the IRIS Network, has developed the "co-responsibility" project to promote social cohesion, understood as "the capacity of society to ensure well-being for all its members." (MMPS 2010) The concept of "Co-responsible Territory" is a social area in which all relevant social actors are involved: municipalities, collective actors, citizens, socially responsible organizations, environmental organizations, and new responsibilities for public institutions (MMPS 2010). The aim of the action is to increase social welfare by involving citizens. This concept has been involved in Europe's developed areas, but in Central and Eastern Europe only the city of Timisoara, where the City Hall and the Prefecture got involved.

Considering the relative contradiction with the principles of the market economy, however, it is possible to make economic calculations of the integrated labor force in the economic activities, which would otherwise be in the care of the social assistance system. The integration into the labor market of vulnerable, unemployed or disabled people positively influences both the persons concerned and the members of their families. It is recommended that, along with the setting of objectives related to the target group of the social economy, calculations should also be made on the added value generated by these activities in terms of labor productivity, reducing social spending and increasing consumption of goods and services by their families.

### 3. Macroeconomic framework

#### 3.1. The gross domestic product

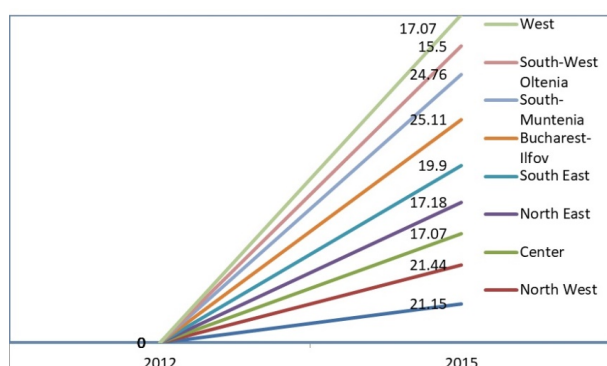
After the period of global economic crisis, which affected the Romanian economy, the macroeconomic development efforts are found in the improvement of the values of some development indicators, which also indicate the context of implementation of the social economy policies.

*Gross domestic product per inhabitant* indicates the trends of economic development at regional and national level. Thus, in 2015 (the last year with data available on GDP) and 2012 (the year of exit from the crisis) gross domestic product per inhabitant has grown at both national and regional levels. At national level, it increased by 21.15%. The national average is exceeded by the Bucharest-Ilfov regions (25.11%), the South-Muntenia region (24.76%) and the North-West region (21.44%). Below the national average are the South-East regions (19.90%), the North-East region (17.18%), the Central and Western regions (17.07%) and the South-West Oltenia region (15.50%). (INS 2018)

GDP growth per inhabitant suggests that economic trends are positive. In all development regions there are positive trends, with relatively close values, the differences between the highest GDP per capita, achieved in Bucharest-Ilfov, and the lowest in the South-West Oltenia region, is 9.61%.

According to the methodology used by INS, Gross Domestic Product is calculated as "the sum of end-users of goods and services of resident institutional units (actual final consumption, gross fixed capital formation) plus exports minus imports of goods and services." (INS 2018) This increase in GDP per inhabitant shows that development trends are supported by public policies, with a convergent direction with a regional differentiation margin of less than 10.0%.

**Figure no. 1.** Evolution of GDP per inhabitant between 2012 -2015



Source: INS-TEMPO-Online database

#### 3.2. Labor shortage

Population employment and unemployment are key indicators of the absorption degree from a society. The key statistical indicators in this area indicate the persistence of the existing employment problem on the one hand and on the other hand the employment of a part of the population does not bring a corresponding life quality.

Eurostat data (2018) includes factors that determine poverty in different countries of the European Union. Poverty is considered to be a multidimensional, persistent phenomenon that is spread across generations, which means that those born in poor families will be poor in adulthood, placing themselves below the poverty line of each society.

In August 2016, in an IMF report, it is recommended that countries in the G-20 group (the most developed in the world) undertake macro-prudential policies in order to avoid serious disturbances in the financial system or part of it, which may have had serious consequences on the real economy (Heath and Goksu 2017: p. 9). Beyond the goal of avoiding a new financial crisis and its negative effects, the stability of financial policies can support the efficiency of the services offered on the one hand and, on the other, contribute to reducing systemic risks. The concept of financial stability is defined in several ways, but the most accepted definition refers to the proper functioning of the key elements that make up the financial system (Heath and Goksu 2017: p. 9). Governmental analyzes bring together macro-prudential, micro-prudential and other financial stability considerations in a holistic approach to financial stability analysis (Heath and Goksu 2017: p. 9).

The economic and financial dimensions of a society are constantly being matched, being impossible to separate. Within the wide range of socio-economic phenomena, the social economy is a niche of a comprehensive package. Thus, the elaboration of public policies on the social economy is dependent on bringing economic and financial goals together. Separating economic and financial principles will lead to the failure or lack of success of the policies for economic sector development. Experience has shown that micro-prudential supervision and regulation of market behavior are necessary but not sufficient for financial stability. Developing a macro-prudential policy that complements micro-prudential policy provides a more systemic picture. The advantages of this approach stem from the precise vision that specialists have in the analysis of the whole system, which allows a precise view of the interdependence between the real economy and the financial sector (Heath and Goksu 2017: p. 9).

Macroeconomic development is directly linked to financial stability and the risks faced by an economy. For example, rapid growth in the economy will encourage excessive credit growth until the unsustainable economy favors rising non-performing loans. The International Monetary Fund report identifies the differences between macroeconomic phenomena and macro-prudential policies, which are more focused on the level and types of aggregate needs management required by the business cycle than on financial stability. The purpose of a macro-prudential policy is to protect the financial system from economic and financial shocks.

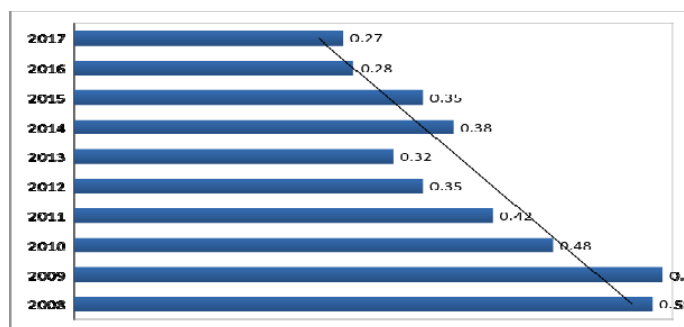
The holistic approach results from macro matrix and microanalysis due to the need for macro data for micro analyzes and micro data for macro-analyzes to identify emerging systemic risks and vulnerabilities.

In the case of Romania, a member of the European Union, employment in co-operative or public enterprises is decreasing. The collected statistical data shows that in the case of cooperatives the employed population decreased by 55.58% between 2008 - 2017 (data available), while the employed population in public enterprises increased by 14.85%. In absolute terms, 51.1 thousand people were working in cooperatives in 2008, while in 2017 22.7 thousand people were working. In the case of public property,

the employed population increased from 20.2 thousand persons to 23.2 thousand persons (INS 2018).

In both cases we find that the population that is active in these forms of economic organization has a low share. Where there is room for association and private initiative, these businesses have a significant impact on the share of the employed population. However, the lack of opportunities influences the low number of people employed in these economic sectors. In the analysis we find that the elaboration of such a policy presupposes the continuation of the vertical approach, from top to bottom, by creating a friendly context with these initiatives. This implies a macroeconomic approach to such a policy, with the assurance of a holistic approach. The microeconomic approach implies subsuming the macroeconomic vision, given the regional disparities found in the emergence and maintenance of social economy enterprises.

**Figure no. 2.** The employment rate in co-operative enterprises



Source: INS-TEMPO-Online database

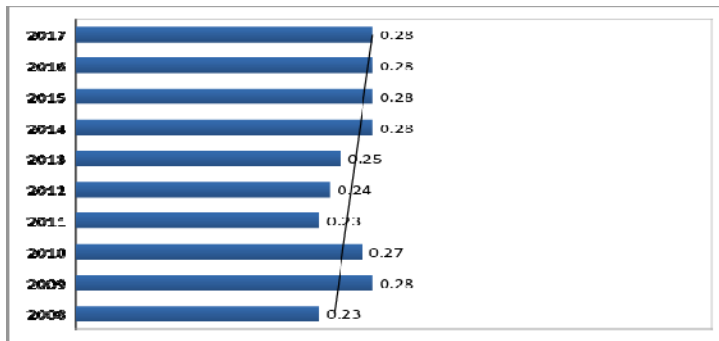
Co-operative property offers less employment opportunities. We find that the establishment of the economic crisis overlapped for a slight trend of population growth in co-operative enterprises. Subsequently, the share of this population began to decline, and after the adoption of European inspired legislation in 2015, the share of this population declined to a greater extent. We note that this trend is not due to employment growth in other areas of economic activity.

Statistical data shows that the civilian population employed in different activities of the national economy is decreasing in all areas (INS 2018): in total the employed population decreased by 4.35%, in the public-owned enterprises decreased by 14.36%, in enterprises of mixed property it decreased by 43.93%, in private property enterprises decreased by 0.61%. These percentages result from the stagnation of the economic system, the demographic decline and the emigration of the labor force. The only legal category for the organization of productive enterprises that has registered increases is the one that includes the public property enterprises (INS 2018).

Although this form of organization has experienced a statistically increased employment, we note that this is minor and without a higher impact on employment. Moreover, between 2015 and 2017 the share of employment in the total stagnated.



Figure no. 3. Degree of employment in public enterprises



Source: INS-TEMPO-Online database

The social economy can contribute to increasing the competitiveness of small communities in terms of identifying the local potential needed to provide services or the development of productive activities.

Research in Romania revealed that the company needs to intensify social economy activities due to the advantages it implies (Petrescu 2013: p. 21):

- „The main purpose is to serve a community or group of people. Ensuring community welfare is one of their main goals;
- Limited profit distribution - organizations may not distribute or distribute only part of the profit. Asset lock makes these entities difficult to move or closes;
- Democratic Governance - Various stakeholders are involved in the governance process, depending on their interests. Multistakeholder governance allows you to identify local needs and resources and provide optimal solutions to problem solving;
- The decision-making process is democratic, each member having the right to vote that is not determined by the subscribed capital;
- Autonomy - are autonomous entities that are not run by public institutions or other organizations”.

#### 4. Conclusions: growth, job vacancies, unfocused alternatives and migration's level

This article is the result of a research carried out with European funding, which analyzed the exploitation of opportunities offered by social entrepreneurship.

The social economy is understood as a theoretical solution to social problems that do not have immediate or sustainable solutions. The usefulness of such an approach is recognized at European and national level, but it does not have well-structured implementation mechanisms, both at the level of the European Union and at the level of each Member State.

The social economy can grow by correlating three dimensions: funding, visibility (knowledge of the field) and legislation. At present, the greatest success is due to the legalization of social economy principles in most EU countries and at the level of the EU institutions. Extending the operation of this field of activity is conditioned by the harmonization of the constituent elements of each dimension and the correlation of the three dimensions. The analysis of collected data from various

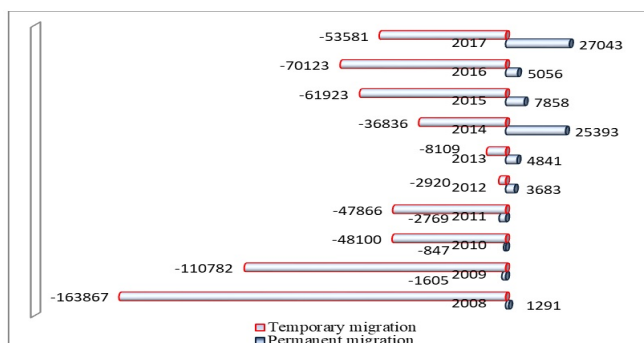
sources and presented on the above pages highlights a history of the efforts made to expand this area of activity.

From the three dimensions it is found that the legal one, that is to say, the establishment of some legal rules, is the easiest. Along with this, other conditions are added, such as financing or training a qualified human resource. In this context, legislative standardization at European level and transferred to member countries will be hampered by regional disparities.

The analysis of employment opportunities in society also includes the analysis of the migratory balance. In the case of Romania, it is clear that depending on the type of migration, there is a difference: in the case of the definitive migration, we find that there are positive values of immigration, totaling 69944 persons in the period 2008-2017, while temporary emigration from the same interval comprises 603,907 people. We note that more than half of the immigrants come from the Republic of Moldova.

Referring to the type of migration, we find that the temporary migration, which has as main objective the economic activities, has high rates, in only 9 years it has 603,907 persons. These statistics indicate the lack of domestic economic opportunities and emigration as a solution to individual problems. Statistical trends indicate the trend of emigration to a higher level than immigration, even if we are talking about definitive immigration and temporary emigration. Experience has shown that those who declare their intention to return to Romania after achieving economic goals will only do so after long periods of time or postpone this decision until retirement.

**Figure no. 4.** Definitive and temporary migration balances



Source: INS-TEMPO-Online database

The graphic representation of the migration in the period 2008-2017 highlights the amplitude of the population emigration from the Romanian society and draws attention to the negative consequences this phenomenon may have on social development (INS 2018).

The significance of emigration is that of the lack of opportunities for the working-age population. The documented analysis of the population's preferences, the activities carried out abroad, and the benefits obtained through migration and the relation between expectations and achievements during the emigration will provide a useful set of information for building successful social integration policies at national level and reducing the tendencies of emigration as a result of lack of opportunities.

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# Health in the context of better quality of life of people with disabilities

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## Abstract

The article presents the results of a study of health services provided to people with disabilities in Veliko Tarnovo. The study was conducted between June and July 2015 and covered two focus groups - people with disabilities, users of social services and people with disabilities who are not users of such services. The article analyses the attitudes and the preferences of the respondents to the health services received; the access to primary, specialized medical care, diagnostic, treatment and rehabilitation procedures; the satisfaction of the health care received; the right to choose and to participate in decision-making about their health, etc. The results show that the respondents with disabilities expect from the health system: better, timely and sustainable health services, corresponding to their individual needs; a wider package of diagnostic, treatment and rehabilitation procedures for preserving and improving health; respect, greater appreciation of personal dignity and the right of choice. They state necessity for financial security, support in the community, greater awareness of: the decision-making process by the expert medical committees in defining the degree of disability, their rights, the services and the documentation of the administrative state services.

**Keywords:** *health care; quality of life; people with disabilities*

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## 1. Introduction

The problems with the health of the Bulgarian nation, the accumulated negative health trends and inequalities affect the most vulnerable groups of the society. This poses a number of challenges for the health system to overcome the unfavorable health deterioration trends and ensure a better quality of life for people with permanently reduced working capacity in accordance with their physical, functional and mental health status. The organization and access to the various levels of the health system and the health services and care they provide

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should correspond to the needs of the people with disabilities, their expectations and preferences; to ensure quality, timely and continuous health care, while respecting the right to choose and preserving their personal dignity.

The objective of the study is to identify the expectations, access and satisfaction of the persons with disabilities from the health services received in order to improve their quality of life.

## **2. Material and methodology**

To accomplish the objective of the study a survey was conducted in Veliko Tarnovo between June and July 2015. It covered two groups - persons with disabilities who were not users of social services and persons with disabilities who were users of such services. For the random selection of respondents from the first group the list of members of the Union of People with Disabilities in Bulgaria, Veliko Tarnovo Region was used. The second group was formed by persons with disabilities, users of social services, with 20% of them receiving home care (home carer, personal assistant and social patronage) and 80% were users of day care services (Day Care Centre for People with Disabilities and a Centre for Social Rehabilitation and Integration). The surveyed persons were aged 19-60 + years and were divided into three age groups: 19-25 years, 26-60 years and over 60 years.

The survey used a direct individual questionnaire with anonymous character. The respondents filled out the questionnaire by themselves or with the help of the research team. It included questions with standardized, mostly closed-ended responses. The pre-approbation of the questionnaire provided the opportunity to compile it in a way that would facilitate the respondents in their responses.

## **3. Main results**

### **3.1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the surveyed persons**

In the group of the persons with disabilities, non-users of social services, the ratio by gender: females-males is similar and is respectively: 55.1%:44.9%. The majority of the persons are aged over 60 years - 66.3%, followed by those between 26-60 years - 31.5%. Depending on the degree of disability, the highest relative proportion are the persons with a loss of working capacity of 71-90% - 44.9%. The proportions of the persons with a degree of disability of 50-70% and over 90% are similar and are respectively: 27% and 28.1%. The breakdown by degree of disability in both gender groups is similar, as all the surveyed persons in the youngest age group (19-25 years) have a permanently reduced working capacity above 90%.

A significant proportion of the persons with disabilities, non-users of social services, have a secondary education - 59.6%, followed by those with higher education (23.6%) and primary education (16.9%). In the group of the persons with higher education, the proportion of females is nearly 1.6 times higher and in the highest degree of disability - 36% have higher education. The majority of respondents are retired - 65%; economically active are 23.6%, of which 19.1% work in a common environment (similar proportion females-males), 3.4% in a specialized enterprise (only females) and only 1.1% have their own business.

Depending on the marital status of males, non-users of social services, predominant is the share of the married men - 65.9%, of the single and of those who have lost a partner is 12.2% and of the divorced - 9.8%. For women the share of married women is also the highest - 41.7%, and the widowed women are 3 times more. Half of all divorced persons have a degree of disability above 90%. At present, the majority of the respondents live in a family environment - with their family (53.9%), a partner (11.2%) or their parents (4.5%), the share (37%) of the women living alone being 2 times higher, compared to men. A significant proportion (77.5%) receive income amounting to BGN 400, and only 2% - over BGN 600. The proportion of women with income up to 200 BGN (41%) is nearly 2.5 times higher.

In the group of persons with disabilities, users of social services, the ratio by gender females-males is 4:1. The relative proportions of the persons in the age group 26-60 and over 60 years are similar and are respectively: 45% and 47.5%. In the combined examination by "gender" and "age", for men the proportion of the persons between 26-60 years is predominant - 75% and for the women – that of over 60 years - 56.3% predominates. A significant part of the persons have a loss of working capacity between 71-90% - 45%. For the men, the proportion of the persons with a disability of 71-90% and over 90% are by 37.5%, and in the group of the women those with permanent incapacity of between 71-90% predominate.

Depending on the educational status of the users of social services, the share of the persons with secondary education predominates - 70%, followed by those with primary education - 20% and higher education - 10%. In the men's group, the share of higher education graduates is 4 times higher than that of women. Unlike the non-users of social services, there are no persons with a degree of disability of over 90%, higher education graduates. The proportion of retired people is significantly higher - 85% and the employed persons are only 2.5% - all are aged 26-60, with a degree of disability 71-90%, men working in a general environment.

Depending on the marital status of men, users of social services, half of the surveyed persons are married, and the highest proportion in the group of women is that of widows - 40.6% and of married women - 25%. At present, the majority of respondents live in a family environment - with their family (40%), their parents (17.5%) or a partner (2.5%). In the group of persons living alone the share of women is 2.7 times higher. The majority (87.5%) of the users of social services have income of up to 400 BGN. When comparing the income distribution in both gender groups, the proportion of men receiving up to 200 BGN is twice as high.

In both groups of surveyed persons those with a loss of working capacity or degree of disability 71-90% predominate, with secondary education, retired people and income of up to 400 BGN. With the increase of age the share of those living alone is growing, and they are predominantly women, as this tendency is more distinctly expressed for the users of social services.

These data coincide with the disability profile in the Republic of Bulgaria: the highest share of persons with loss of working capacity or degree of disability from 71 to 90% (39.7%) and in the age group 60-69 years (27.8%); increasing the severity of disability and the risk of invalidisation with age; a higher number of women with disabilities; a predominant share of persons with secondary education (44.1%), as those living in the cities have a higher level of education. 54% of the persons with disabilities

have a legal marriage; economically inactive are 84.6%, of whom 95.9% are retired. The majority live in ordinary households, as one person with a disability lives in 87.8%. (National Statistical Institute 2011) and (National Statistical Institute, 2012) and (Balakova et al., 2012: pp. 218-219) and (Krasteva et al., 2012: pp. 214-222).

### **3.2. Health assessment and expectations for it**

In the group of the persons with disabilities, non-users of social services, the majority of the surveyed assessed their health as "satisfactory" - 57.3%, while the relative proportions of those who chose "good" and "bad" were similar: 18% and 20.2% respectively. Half of the respondents reported that their health had remained at the same level compared to the previous year, and 33.7% stated they had experienced deterioration. Nearly 2/3 of the persons in this group had positive expectations for their health - 40.4% expected improvement, and 35% hoped their health status would remain unchanged.

In the group of the persons with disabilities, users of social services, 40% gave a satisfactory assessment of their health and the relative proportion of those who chose "poor" and "very bad" was 10% higher. Only 1/5 of the respondents hoped that their health would remain at the same level as the previous year, and according to 43% there was deterioration in their health. The majority (67.5%) of the surveyed persons in this group also had positive expectations for their health - 45% expected improvement and 22.5% - to preserve the same level.

Changes in the subjective health status assessment occurred with the age increase. For those in the youngest age group (19-25), nearly 1/3 considered their health as "very good" and "very bad", with 67% expecting a positive change. In the group of persons aged 26-60, the majority of the respondents had a positive opinion - 39% defined their health as "satisfactory" and 33% as "good"; 50% expected improvement in their health status, and 22% - to preserve the same level. In the group aged over 60, the proportion of the persons who chose "good" health (5%) decreased, as nearly half of the respondents identified their health as "bad" and considered that there had been a negative change compared to the previous year. In the group of the oldest persons (aged over 60), 36% expected a deterioration in their health status in the future. All surveyed persons who defined their health as "very bad" had a loss of ability to work above 90%. Logically, with increasing age and severity of disability, acute and/or chronic pathology accumulates, which increases the needs for general and specific health care and services and creates a necessity for their continuity in the long-term.

All respondents who defined their health as "very good" lived in a family environment – either with their family (66.7%) or with their parents (33.3%). The overwhelming majority (71.5%) of the persons who defined their health as "good" lived with their family, parents and were males (50%). Almost half of the people who lived alone defined their health as "bad" and "very bad".

The results of the survey show that the persons with disabilities, non-users of social services, associated good quality of life with positive health. The majority (67%) defined their quality of life as "unsatisfactory" and had "poor" (44.4%) or "very poor" (22.2%) health. Of those who assessed their quality of life as "good," 66% reported their health status as "satisfactory" and 20% as "good." All surveyed persons who considered their quality of life to be "very good", assessed their health positively - 60% reported

"good" health and 40% - "satisfactory". A similar, but not so clearly expressed trend was also found in the group of the persons with disabilities who were users of social services.

The persons with disabilities, non-users of social services, assessed health as a particularly important parameter for their individual quality of life, with males being more critical and optimistic in their assessments. The persons with disabilities who were users of social services were more skeptical about assessing their past and present health status but also had positive expectations for the future. Self-employed persons with disabilities from both groups, due to the difficulties and limitations of everyday life, were more pessimistic about their health and the possibility of a positive change in the long run. This life pessimism is confirmed by studies of the subjective quality of life and social services provided to elderly people of the same target group (Yorgova 2016: pp. 101-102) and (Yorgova 2018: pp. 301-302).

According to the persons with disabilities, non-users of social services, among the most important factors for the preservation and improvement of their health were: financial security, cheaper medicines, better organization of health care, implementation of rehabilitation and physiotherapeutic activities, family support, relatives and friends. The respondents who were users of social services ranked as most important for their health preservation: rehabilitation and physiotherapeutic activities, cheaper medication, financial security, more frequent medical examinations by a specialist, better professional competence of medical professionals, family support, relatives and friends.

### **3.3. Opinion on health services**

The main priority outlined in the National Health Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria is the provision of accessible and quality medical assistance and health care for every Bulgarian citizen. In this regard, one of the national policies is aimed at ensuring effective care for vulnerable groups of people, with a special emphasis on dignified care for people with permanent disabilities. Improving the quality of life of people in this group and their inclusion in community life closely correlates with ensuring equal opportunities and equal access to quality and safe healthcare; application of modern medical approaches for diagnosis and treatment; development of structures for physical therapy and rehabilitation and rehabilitation care; improving the system of medical expertise; implementation of an integrated approach and coordination between different health professionals and social service providers etc. (National Health Strategy 2013).

Access is a complex and multifactorial concept for which there is no uniform and universal definition. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), it can be defined as "a long-term, organized provision of medical assistance that is geographically, financially, culturally and functionally accessible to the whole society, in its volume and quantity it satisfies and is adequate to people's needs and is implemented through methods and practices acceptable to them " (WHO Constitution 1948).

The access to health services is generally characterized as a process of receiving timely medical care at the appropriate time, tailored to people's individual needs; characterized by universality and durability. In literature, this concept is also linked to a number of other criteria for measuring the quality of medical care, such as: adequacy, efficiency, satisfaction, consistency, justice, equality, sufficiency, accessibility, etc. Satisfying and meeting patients' expectations play a significant role in assessing the



quality of the received health services and have a significant impact on the formation of the public opinion about the healthcare system (Budeva 2006: pp. 397-399) and (Ivanov 2009: pp. 1-11) and (Ivanov et al. 2012: p. 153).

Accessibility reflects the ability of patients with the same health needs to reach and receive qualified medical care from a GP and/or specialist. It can be characterized by criteria such as the location and distance to the doctor's office, the way and time spent travelling, the availability of convenient transportation, the length of stay in front of the surgery etc. (Dimova 2002: pp. 6-12). This criterion is especially relevant for persons with disabilities and the elderly as it has a significant impact on their morbidity, life expectancy and quality of life.

The restructuring of the Bulgarian healthcare system at the end of the last century introduced the general medical practice in which general practitioners occupy a central place. Their role is to provide continuous, high-quality and responsive care by addressing a significant part of people's health problems and coordinating access to other levels of the health system.

The results of the survey show that during the previous six months, the persons with disabilities, non-users of social services, most often sought medical care from their GP - 55%, from a specialist - 23% and only 3% from a rehabilitator or a physiotherapist. Over the same period, the majority of respondents (66%) visited a GP for an examination, advice or medical records between 1 and 5 times. Amongst the factors limiting the provision of health care, the most important were: the waiting time (40.4%), getting to a doctor's surgery (14.6%), the necessary financial resources (10%), the distance to the surgery (9%).

Nearly 1/3 of the respondents, non-users of social services, reported that they always received the necessary health care, with the relative share of the respondents who gave a negative response being similar - 25%. A categorical response 'yes' that they were sent by the GP for consultation with a specialist whenever they expected and thought they needed, was given by 47.2%, and for an instrumental or a laboratory test - 37%. Nearly 40% believed they needed additional health services, but had difficulty in determining their type and provider. The majority (60%) rarely or very rarely had paid for the diagnostic and rehabilitation procedures and 20% - never had. As the main reason, the respondents indicated the lack of funds and the significant financial burden that these activities would have on their personal budget or their families' budget.

Over the previous 6 months, the persons with disabilities, users of social services, had most often sought medical care from their GP - 47.5%, from a specialist - 15%, from the Center for Emergency Medical Care (CEMC) - 7.5%, from a rehabilitator/physiotherapist - 5%. All persons who had sought medical care at CEMC were over 60, none of whom had sought health care from a rehabilitator or a physiotherapist over the previous 6 months.

Like the persons with disabilities who were not users of social services, the majority of the respondents (60%) had visited a GP over the previous 6 months between 1 and 5 times. Among the factors limiting the provision of health care, the most significant were: getting to a doctor's surgery (20%), the waiting time (15%), the time for making an appointment (12.5%), the physical accessibility and the necessary financial means (by 7.5%). Nearly half of the respondents believed they always received the necessary health care and were referred by the GP to a specialist for

consultation or a laboratory test whenever they expected and deemed it necessary. Nonetheless, 55% stated they needed additional medical care, most of them elderly people aged over 60 (60%), females (86%) and persons living alone (41%). The overwhelming majority (nearly 75%) had rarely or never paid for the health care and services they received.

At present, the reform of the Bulgarian healthcare has led to a decrease in the volume and type of activities provided by general practitioners in the homes of the sick. Patients who, for various reasons, confront difficulties and limitations to visit the ambulatory of their GPs, do not receive timely and adequate care. This applies to a large extent to the people in need of prolonged medical supervision – persons with disabilities, very old people, people with terminal diseases, etc. The obligations and responsibilities for organizing and implementing health care at night, at weekends and on holidays have been transferred to the general practitioners, which creates difficulties and inconveniences for both the practitioners and the patients. Assigning this activity to medical centres and diagnostic-consultation centers (for a payment by general practitioners) is very often an obstacle for the patients with permanent disabilities and the elderly and is a prerequisite for seeking health services and care from Emergency Medical Centres. The European practice shows that setting up specialized units to provide health care during hours outside of the announced work schedule of general practitioners with planned resources (financial, human, material) is one of the most effective solutions to this problem (Ivanov et al. 2012: pp. 289-290).

Of the persons with disabilities, non-users of social services, 35% reported they had sought medical home care, as with about 1/4 of them this happened rarely or very rarely. The most common causes for the occurrence of this need were: complications accompanying the disease/diseases (21%) and a new health problem (16%), manipulation (7%). The percentage of the persons with disabilities, users of social services, who had sought similar assistance, was by 13% less, the causes for which were similar: a new health problem (15%), disease complications (12.5%), manipulation and rehabilitation (7.5%). Only 1/5 of the respondents from the two groups categorically stated that they had received in due time the requested home care.

Of the group of persons with disabilities, non-users of social services, the proportion of “rarely” and “very rarely” (51.7%) undergoing rehabilitation procedures was predominant, and 24% gave a response “never”. Over the previous 5 years, 53.9% had not received rehabilitation assistance under the programs of the National Social Security Institute (NSSI) for prevention and rehabilitation, or by a clinical pathway for physical therapy and rehabilitation, 21.3% had benefited of this opportunity once, and only 4.5% - more than 4 times. The relative proportions of the users of social services, who rarely/very rarely and never had rehabilitation procedures, were similar: 42.5% and 20% respectively. Similar is the proportion of persons (60%) who had not benefited from NSSI programs and a clinical pathway for similar health services and care.

The low relative proportion of the users of social services that undergo rehabilitation activities also poses the problem of the opportunities and the efficiency of the medical rehabilitation in the social services, as according to the accepted methodology for work, social services for day care for persons with disabilities are provided with kinesitherapy activities and physical therapy.

The majority (77.5%) of the persons with disabilities, non-users of social services, did not have the financial means to pay additional, desirable and necessary according to them diagnostic, treatment and rehabilitation procedures. They took into account their positive effect (41.6%) on their health status and quality of life but expected the activities and care they received to be more in line with their individual needs and preferences. In the case of the users of social services, a significant proportion (72.5%) also declared lack of funds for additional, desirable medical activities. They were aware of the role of diagnostic, treatment and rehabilitation activities for preserving and improving their health and quality of life (48.6%), and expressed a higher level of satisfaction than those in the first group.

The presented results logically indicate that the respondents from both groups most often sought health care from their personal doctors, as primary care is the most wide-spread and most affordable. However, what makes an impression is the low proportion of those seeking and receiving rehabilitation assistance compared to the need for such. Respondents rarely sought and received timely medical care provided at home. The non-users of social services had more unsatisfied expectations from the general practitioners and the health services received from the healthcare system. In both groups, there was a problem with the accessibility of the assistance received, which requires a better organization of the medical work. Due to the lack of funding, persons with disabilities very rarely paid for additional and desirable health care and services.

### **3.4. Right of choice and awareness**

In the Republic of Bulgaria, the right to inform the patient when performing medical activities is regulated in the Health Act. In this process, the patient has the opportunity to be an active participant and is able to make choices regarding diagnostic and treatment decision-making concerning his/her health. Medical information should be provided in good time to the patient and the patient's parent or guardian. It has to be clear, sufficient and comprehensible in order to allow the freedom of choice of treatment. In order to obtain an informed consent, the attending physician needs to inform the patient (the parent/guardian) about: the diagnosis and the nature of the disease; the goals and the nature of treatment, the reasonable alternatives, the expected results and prognosis; the potential risks associated with the proposed diagnostic and therapeutic methods, including the side effects and adverse drug reactions, pain and other inconveniences; the likelihood of a beneficial response, the health risk of other treatments etc. (Health Act 2005: Art. 87 and 88).

In the Bulgarian healthcare system, the patient's informed consent is not always considered as a mandatory part of the diagnostic and treatment process; the patient's awareness is often in insufficiently appropriate volume and form, resulting in both lower trust in medical professionals and the health system, in maximal expectations regarding the health services received and their results (Ivanov et al. 2012: p. 129).

Studying the right of choice and the awareness of the persons with disabilities, non-users of social services, it was found that only 18% of medical professionals always treated them with due respects and appreciated their right of choice. Only 11% of the respondents reported that doctors were always willing to take into consideration their opinion when making decisions regarding the diagnosis and treatment, and for nearly 1/4 of them their opinion had not been sought in most cases or never. For 36% of the respondents their opinion had not been sought before they were given medication.

In the case of the persons with disabilities, users of social services, the proportion of those who gave positive and negative responses to the right of choice and their personal dignity was the same - 27.5%. From this group, 17.5% of the respondents reported that doctors had always been willing to comply with their opinion about the diagnostic and treatment methods and other interventions and for 30% their opinion had not been sought in most cases or never; 55% of the respondents had not been asked about the prescription of medication.

The majority of the persons with disabilities, non-users of social services, believed that they had sufficient information about their disease/diseases. According to them, a negative impact on the onset and development of their disease were: the life style (72%), the work environment (70%) and the physical environment (46%). A significant proportion (56%) believed they had sufficient knowledge and skills to help themselves and prevent possible complications of their disease, 21% were self-educated, 19% were educated by the specialist they visited, 10% by relatives, friends and people with similar diseases and only 6% by the general practitioner.

The surveyed persons in this group indicated that they did not have or did not have sufficient information regarding: the decision-making process of the Territorial Expert Medical Commissions (TEMC)/the National Expert Medical Commission (NEMC) - 55%, their own rights - 57.3%, the services and documentation of the administrative state services - 61.7%.

In the group of the persons with disabilities, users of social services, the majority (75%) believed that they had sufficient information about their disease/diseases. The shares of the persons assessing negatively the impact of their lifestyle and the work environment on the onset and development of their disease were lower than those of the respondents - non-users of social services and were respectively 55% and 47.5%. The impact of the physical environment was assessed in a similar way - 42.5% reported its negative impact. The same proportion of respondents (42.5%) believed they had sufficient knowledge and skills to self-help and prevent possible complications of their disease, with 15% educated by relatives/family members and other people with a similar disease, 10% were self-educated, and 7.5% were educated by a general practitioner and a specialist.

The persons with disabilities, users of social services indicated that they did not have or did not have sufficient information regarding: the decision-making process of the Territorial Expert Medical Commissions (TEMC)/the National Expert Medical Commission (NEMC) - 37.5%, their own rights - 30%, the services and the documentation of the administrative state services - 42.5%. These lower relative shares, compared to the respondents who did not use social services, might be related to the activities (e.g. providing information according to the individual needs of the client, social-legal advice, etc.) and the assistance of social workers in providing day care.

#### **4. Conclusions**

The analysis of the obtained results allows drawing the following conclusions:

- The outlined profile of the persons (predominant degree of disability 71-90%, secondary education, living in a family environment, retired people, with low income, the proportion of the persons living alone increasing with age, especially for the users

of social services) has an impact on their assessment of their health status, expectations and preferences related to the health care and services received;

- The persons with disabilities consider health as a particularly important parameter for assessing the subjective quality of life;
- They expect from the healthcare system: timely, comprehensive and sustainable health services tailored to their individual needs and preferences; a wider package of diagnostic-treatment and rehabilitation procedures for preserving and improving health;
- They expect from the medical professionals respect and appreciation of their personal dignity and their right of choice in making diagnostic and treatment decisions regarding their health;
- They report the need for: financial security, support in the community environment, better awareness of the decision-making process by the expert medical committees in determining the degree of disability, their rights, services and documentation of the administrative state services;
- The persons with disabilities, non-users of social services, are more critical in their assessment - they have more unsatisfied expectations, not only from the health services received, the work and communication with the medical specialists, but also from the organization of the health care.

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# Evolution of juvenile delinquency phenomenon and re-socialization of delinquent minors in Romania

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## Abstract

The degree of danger ratio of juvenile crimes in other countries, as well as in Romania, is a problem that concerns the educational and social control factors. In our country, the offences have increased due to malfunctions, anomie and social pathology aspects, problems of education and adaptation, malfunctions regarding the promotion of young people that determine phenomena of maladjustment, frustration, alienation and delinquency. At macro-social level, we are confronting cope with the accelerated development of the big cities, massive displacing of population, emerging of heterogeneous social communities, unemployment, inflation, economic instability, lesser community social control, social tolerance, new customs and habits etc. At a micro-social level there appear malfunctions in the activity of the main groups having an important role in socialization processes and social control (family, school, working colleagues, group of friends, associations and youth clubs). From an individual point of view, according to the personality of the teenager, one can exteriorize oneself through certain deviant behaviours: egocentrism, impulsivity, aggression. Through this research I will analyze the dimensions and characteristics of the juvenile delinquency phenomenon in the Romanian society, after the socio-political change in 1989; characterization of the juvenile delinquency phenomenon in Romania; identification of the social causes and factors of juvenile delinquency in our country; I will analysis of the vindictory sanctions applied to the delinquent minors for the identification of the adequate measures that help decreasing the number of involved and the new aspects of the crimes.

**Keywords:** *juvenile delinquency; re-socialization; integration; control factors*

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## 1. Introduction

The degree of danger ratio of juvenile crimes in other countries, as well as in Romania, is a problem that concerns the educational and social control factors. In our country, the offences have increased due to malfunctions, anomie and social pathology

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aspects, problems of education and adaptation, malfunctions regarding the promotion of young people that determine phenomena of maladjustment, frustration, alienation and delinquency.

At macro-social level, we are confronting cope with the accelerated development of the big cities, massive displacing of population, emerging of heterogeneous social communities, unemployment, inflation, economic instability, lesser community social control, social tolerance, new customs and habits etc.

At a micro-social level there appear malfunctions in the activity of the main groups having an important role in socialization processes and social control (family, school, working colleagues, group of friends, associations and youth clubs) (Ban 2014: p. 102).

From an individual point of view, according to the personality of the teenager, one can exteriorize oneself through certain deviant behaviours: egocentrism, impulsivity, aggression.

The existing elements of continuity and discontinuity of the juvenile delinquency in the Romanian society after 1989. Elements of continuity are: maintaining certain malfunctions taken over from the old system, visible among the main “instances” of socialization and moral integration of the young people, maintaining the “risk” factors that lead to juvenile delinquency manifestations.

Elements of discontinuity are: young people do not represent anymore a homogenous or undifferentiated demographic category, having particularities referring to age, social status, value and normative system between different individuals, emerging of new styles and ways of living and of some juvenile “sub-cultures” that tend to contest the world of adults (Pescaru 2008: p. 89).

Before 1989, very few studies in this area were made in Romania. There were two ideological obstacles for the validation of the researches in addressing the factors and the dynamic of the juvenile delinquency during this period: “total secret on the statistic data regarding the evolution of the juvenile delinquency, in order to hide the emerging and its “normal” status and objective manifestations (Durkheim), in any society; legislative manipulation, by changing the nature of certain penal offences committed by minors, for “hiding” the social dimension of the juvenile delinquency.

The existent statistical data that refer between 1980 and 1989, show the fact that, during this period, most of the sanctioned minors (74%) committed robberies in the detriment of public and private property, 9.2% outrage and physical aggressions, 3.3% homicide and raping, and the rest of 4.8% prostitution, treachery and vagrancy.

As regarding the age group, the highest percentage in the juvenile delinquency phenomenon, during the analysed period, was made of minors between 16 and 18 years old (over 85%), while the minors under 14 years old and between 14 and 16 represented only 15% from the total number of the minors sanctioned for their offence (The National Commission of Statistics 1993: p. 644)

## **2. Problem statement**

The general and specific causes of the juvenile delinquency in Romania are: states of anomie; numerous economic disorders; political instability; legislative incoherence; incapacity in establishing a hierarchy of the social policies priorities; *resettling and readjustment* of the systems of values, norms, motivations, moral and civic attitudes; “Identity Crisis” of the young generation; numerous deficiencies of



family and social socialization; certain prejudices, stereotypes and labeling that consider the young people a “problematic” category; the violent treatment of children; alcohol and drugs consumption; school abandon.

To present the types of crimes committed by juveniles a criminal typology should be considered. It is important to explain the actions of the categories and their analysis to see whether the offense is characteristic of juvenile delinquents.

The studied categories are the next ones: assault offenses; offenses against property; organized offenses; offenses related to drugs, alcohol and sex.

Purposes for the research of the theme are: elaboration of a work that has a scientific and unitary character (based on the statistical data and the results of the sociological results made by the Rehabilitation Centre for Minors from Găești) on the juvenile delinquency in the Romanian society – as one of the significant social aspects from the last 18 years; accomplishing a case study at the Rehabilitation Centre for Minors in Găești, regarding the psycho-social characteristics of the delinquent minors and the factors that contribute to the emerging of the juvenile delinquency, which is useful as informational basis for those that work in the decisional institutions for establishing the solutions in order to diminish the number of crimes made by minors and of those who are involved in the prevention, treatment and socialization programs of the minor delinquents.

### **3. Research questions**

Possible questions for diminishing the juvenile delinquency are the following: if teachers get involved in special correctional programs for the students showing some of the above listed characteristics; educating the people who want to become parents and showing them the necessity to attend antenatal infant psychology courses; government involvement through financial support and providing facilities in order to deal with such cases; an information campaign and society involvement on delinquency problems.

In any society, social control is not only a means of coercion and legal sanctions, but also a procedure to induce such behaviours that stimulate desirable and legitimate lines of conduct.

Desirable and legitimate behaviours include: manners, customs, traditions, and art, ethics, personal ideals and gestures (flattery, opprobrium etc.).

Social control processes aim at social and moral integration. Positive social control requires knowledge and understanding of the values, norms and rules of social coexistence by each individual. Negative social control is based on the individual's fears that he / she will be punished for non-compliance or violation of social norms and rules.

Organized control can be exercised by the society in its whole thorough bodies and professional organizations, social or belonging to the state, and the unorganized control is exerted by the belonging groups. Formal Control is achieved by legal, moral and administrative laws and regulations. Informal control is achieved through customs and traditions.

### **4. Purpose of the study**

Objectives of the study are as follows: knowing the dimensions and characteristics of the juvenile delinquency phenomenon in the Romanian society, after

the socio-political change in 1989; characterization of the juvenile delinquency phenomenon in Romania; identification of the social causes and factors of juvenile delinquency in our country; analysis of the vindictory sanctions applied to the delinquent minors for the identification of the adequate measures that help decreasing the number of infants involved and the new aspects of the crimes.

## **5. Research methods**

We applied as research methods: case study elaborated within the Rehabilitation Centre for Minors in Găești: analysis of the prisoners' files, questionnaires, minors' interviews, analysis of the specific programs accomplished by means of specialized interventions into the specified institution; analysis on delinquent behaviours among the minors; forms of delinquency; types of offences made by the juvenile delinquents.

The Rehabilitation Centre for Minors from Găești has been functioning since 1959. The structure of the educational process is adapted to the new conditions, but following the same main objectives: continuing studies at school; qualifications in vocational schools or short courses; carrying out the educational, cultural, artistic and sports activities to promote a social integration after release.

After the events of December 1989, the rehabilitation of the juveniles bears major changes in order to adapt to the new demands regarding the democratization of the prison system. From now on, it has become possible to: organize activities outside the rehabilitation center; connect with the civil society, which is becoming more and more evident; some institutions and associations that protect the minors can carry out direct protection activities within the penitentiary.

After 1995, the center has established experimentally a Bureau of Probation, with all its own human and material resources.

The Functions of the Rehabilitation Center for Minors in Găești are: institutional care and supervision; rehabilitation, socializing and personal development of minors; family and social integration; professional training and orientation; monitoring and evaluation.

The specialized intervention is given by a team of specialists (psychologist, sociologist, priest, social worker, physician, educator) and consists in carrying out specific programs: „Chiar și acum începe drumul tău spre libertate” (Even now, your way towards freedom unfolds)- institutional adapting program; „Fii atent... nu dependent” (Be attentive, not addictive) - programme for former drug or hallucinogenic substance users; the program for the prevention/diminishing violence; the special program for minors in a separated room to learn how to control anger, to acquire communication and self-learning skills or the positive thinking.

Stages of the research: We established the connection with the management of the Rehabilitation Center for Minors from Găești, we analyzed the records of the former convicts, we made questionnaire researching, we interviewed some minors. By analyzing the files we had the possibility to know the social situation of the juvenile delinquents. The second step was the questionnaires' research on control group. The studied group of minors was comprised of 45 people aged between: 15-18 years old, both genders, from both the rural and urban environment, we tried to identify the differences in attitudes and the real possibility that these features may influence the deviant behavior of the young people. Participation in the study was voluntary, without

exerting any pressure upon the questionnaires. The questionnaires were filled in personally by investigative staff under discretion without the presence of another person or member of the staff. The questions were formulated so as to provide a maximum amount of information. The number of questions was kept to a minimum in order to maintain the focus and the interest of the questionnaires.

Biological characteristics of the studied group: the interviewed group is made up of 88.9% boys and 11.1% girls. This percentage mostly corresponds to the gender structure of the young people institutionalized in *The re-education centre for minors*. Moreover, the population institutionalized in this type of institutions, including penitentiaries, is generally made of males.

The category of age was between 15-18 years old. The middle intervals, 16 years old with 40.0% and 17 years old with 48.9%, totalizing almost half of the group members, are majority, as comparing to the other age group: 15 years old, with 6.7% and 18 years old, with 4.4%.

This distribution is justified by the fact that at the age of 18, the young people are externalized, and age 15 is the lowest, being the age of onset in the criminal activity. The ages with a stronger criminal activity and falling in casuistry of the teenagers are between 16-17 years old, reflected in the age structure of this group too.

If analyzing the low level of education, we can estimate that the young people from this group were not socialized, they abandoned school at an early age, being members of street gangs, as they declare.

The lack of education is closely related to the professional profile. Therefore, none of the young people is qualified. This aggravates their social status by excluding them from the labor market or the accepting the unqualified and low-paid ones in the field of physical work. If analyzing the categories of responses it can be noticed their preference for physical work, outdoors, and avoiding the activities that require intellectual effort.

All group members are at their first conviction, which favors full reintegration action due to the potential offered by the young age and isolation of recidivist offenders. School attending during the institutionalization offers the possibility of a return into the social life.

60% of the young people come from the urban areas and 40% of them from the rural areas. Among these, 75.6% were brought up in complete families up until their arresting, 20.0% were brought up in single-parent families – 13.3% were brought up only by their mother, 6.7% are under the care of their father and 4.4% were brought up by their grandparents.

The Rehabilitation Centre for Minors from Găești supports the young people through complex educational activities, social assistance and rehabilitation programmes and regards the finality of all these activities by: building the capacity to reflect on the world, to solve basic problems; inter-connection with the acquired knowledge; valuing the personal examples for social integration; development of the capacity of active integration in different groups: family, social environment, professional, friends etc.; development of the essential functional skills for the school success; communication, critical thinking when making decisions; constructing one's personal autonomy.

## 6. Findings

In the research conducted at the Rehabilitation Center for Minors from Gaesti, the analysis of the juvenile offenders' files, after the questionnaires and the semi-structured individual method of interviewing the juvenile offenders who proved a high level of thrills searching and after the performed case studies, the following conclusions have been drawn: most of the surveyed minors committed the offense in the urban areas; as regarding the atmosphere of the family, there is a significant difference between those who are delinquents and those who are not; where juvenile delinquents grew up in an improper family environment, they committed more crimes; in committing the crime, the reference group had an important role; very often the crimes are committed by juvenile offenders under the influence of alcohol and drugs; very often juvenile offenders are searching for thrills; they are less sociable, especially with members of the control group; thrill seeking, self-control, impulsiveness are aspects that characterize the activity of juvenile delinquency.

Generally, juvenile offenders are aware of the illegality of the committed acts, of the risk posed by each delinquent action. In most cases, juvenile offenders are very good at making decisions, they always think about the possible actions of the others and make their decisions based on that thing.

## 7. Conclusions

The mentioned family environment explains in a great extent the social failure of the young people: lack of family support; malfunctioning of the partnership between school and family; the tensioned atmosphere inside the family. The interviewed group in this case is an acknowledgment of the sociological theories on the social learning of delinquency: drugs abuse; lack of qualification; school abandon; confusions when interpreting the surrounding reality; interesting structure in self-perception; young people's personality; social labeling; other people's mistrust.

The crime prevention can be addressed on three levels, given the action and its recipient:- the first level is that of the offender, the second one is that of the victim, the third one considers the opportunities for committing the crime.

We can talk about primary, secondary and tertiary prevention models. Primary prevention includes ways that strengthen the feeling of security of the population. Secondary prevention belongs to the realm of strategy about who committed the crime and the victim. Tertiary prevention contains institutional reactions caused by the offense against the criminal and the victims, and in terms of opportunities to commit a delinquency, it is constituted of direct, concrete mechanisms, for the removal of the possible recurrence of crime in dangerous areas.

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# **Social work in the context of social services for elderly people with disabilities: a critical view on professional practice**

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## **Abstract**

The article presents a study which is part of a thorough research of the accessibility and quality of social services for people with disabilities. The research interest in the parameters of social work in the context of social services for the elderly is provoked by the disability profile in Bulgaria and by the national policies in the field of social services and people with disabilities. The study was conducted in the municipality of V.Tarnovo between June and July 2015. It covered two groups of specialists. The first group included social workers from the social services for the elderly with disabilities, and the second group - municipal experts and managers of social services for people with disabilities. The focus was on identifying the main problems and challenges in social work. The results show that social work operates in strict administrative frameworks, subject to intense regulations and requirements to ensure users' choice and control. It is entrusted with the difficult task of identifying and addressing the needs for accessible resources while providing more diverse and better quality social services.

**Keywords:** *social work; social services; people with disabilities; social inclusion*

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## **1. Introduction**

Social work is a profession with long traditions in the European countries. It occupies an important place in the lives of the European citizens. A place that is related to curbing insecurity and activating their potential for personal and social change. European citizens have the choice of satisfying their needs and this reflects the expectations of social intervention in terms of its scope, variety of forms of support, accessibility and quality. Expanding demand for social work and social services is combined with higher efficiency and effectiveness requirements to ensure social and economic stability. This raises doubts that the social work practice is subject to political and economic rationality, set by organizational procedures and management

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practices, and the professional expression of social workers is limited by cost optimization considerations to highly bureaucratic normative activities. These doubts are particularly relevant for Bulgaria, bearing in mind that 38.9% of its population live at risk of poverty and social exclusion (NSI 2017).

## 2. The changing face of social work

In recent decades the development of social work in Europe has been dominated by neoliberal influences. These influences are not accepted unambiguously by the researchers. A number of them (Rogovski 2010; Green 2009) believe that this has had a negative effect on social work. There are a number of limitations to it, related to reasonable sufficiency, maximum efficiency, transparency, accessibility and accountability. This reflects on the work of social workers and leads to its standardization, transforming it from "art to assist" into a delivery of social services, and usually pursuing "foreign" social goals. (Green 2009) According to other authors (Price and Simpson 2007; Asquith, Clark and Waterhouse 2005), social work has always experienced tensions related to choosing between care and activation; protection and control; individually and socially. It is tied to the social policy and can not remain distant from its influence and its effects.

Social work has been changing to adapt to the changing public needs, political expectations and priorities in the development of public social services. It follows a path of change in line with public expectations and resources, where its parameters are determined by applying a rational approach based on:

- *national determination*. Social work can not be seen in isolation from the society within which it is localized. Its national-specific characteristics are historically conditioned and are the result of the particular development of the country. They are manifested in the network of institutions, in the specific expectations and attitudes of the population towards social intervention, in the specific forms and mechanisms for realization of the support, in the set of specific skills for professional activity of the social workers, in the educational traditions that determine the educational degrees of social work professionals.

- *regulatory determination*. Social work undergoes a validation process whereby a certain understanding of its nature and function is enshrined in legislation. From the competing perceptions of what social work is and what it should be, this definition is legitimized, which at the given moment of time corresponds to the highest degree to the specific political and economic situation, corresponds to the public attitudes and expectations (Asquith, Clark and Waterhouse 2005: p. 11).

- *seeking consensus* in defining social work, defining and maintaining an adequate core of professional values to preserve the *professional purpose* of social work ("to protect the weakest members of society and to help all citizens to maintain an independent way of life"), as well as its *professional philosophy* ("concern for the potential growth and development of each personality, respect for each person, faith in the dignity and worth of each individual, empowering the weak and the neglected (Sagden et. al. 2003) under the new conditions.

- *setting priorities* in the implementation of social work functions. Social work is used as an instrument for maintaining community cohesion, controlling inequalities, solidarity. It is relied upon not only to support those in need - providing them with an

acceptable standard of living and protecting them from extreme poverty, but also to develop their potential for independent living. It is also a guarantee that the interests of the low-income and vulnerable groups of the population are adequately represented and protected. It is also expected to address the shortcomings of public policies in areas such as education, health, crime, etc.

The existing serious economic, social, demographic and political challenges in European societies call for a widening of the scope of social work while preserving its commitment to protecting and respecting the rights of people affected by the effects of existing inequalities, discrimination, poverty and social exclusion. Their problems are considered to be related both to the individual life history and to the accumulation of negative influences provoked by the interaction between economic, social and political circumstances. Their causes are found at individual, family, community and national levels. The complex nature of the problems requires social work to combine individual and collective approaches to solving them. The solutions are sought within pragmatism, by applying a differentiated approach and mobilizing all stakeholders. There is a shift of focus from individuals to target audience groups. The individual work with the customer changes and takes on more tangibly the form of personalized customer service. Its content is shifted to planning, responsiveness to the needs of target groups and specification of functional tasks.

Social work is changing. The processes developing in social work are related to:

- *strengthening its market orientation and introducing market relations.* This concerns the creation of competition in the delivery of social services through the formation of quasi-markets. On these markets, "public institutions or non-profit organizations are in a competitive relationship for more serviced users and for a higher level of funding, which is obtained by contracts with the municipality or other public financing organizations" (Delcheva et. al. 2000: p. 46).

- *building a mixed economy.* It is an attempt to change the balance in the provision of social services to widening the participation of private and non-profit organizations. Privatization of social care, introduction of criteria and standards of quality of care guaranteed by the state, promotion of private entrepreneurship are used.

- *using business management practices.* They are introduced to solve organizational and management problems related to surplus and rising costs, lack of finance, uneven territorial coverage, informal payments. Decentralization of social services management is introduced, relying on the ability of local authorities to more accurately assess the local needs and to provide diverse and flexible services accordingly. Offering informal care by the family is also encouraged. Quasi-market methods such as management contracts, etc., are also applied. In addition, working technologies are developed and a quality-oriented system audit is carried out.

The adoption of the perception that public social services should be managed in a similar way to the services in the private sector leads to the increased control of social workers, the introduction of practices that strengthen the position of the user in the delivery of the service, the rationalization of the behaviour of organizations. Organizations are required not only to improve the services they offer but also to change their behaviour towards customers. This influences the position of customers in the social work process. From passive users, they take an active consumer stance and are aware of their difficulties and assert their right to participate in the process of

assessing the needs and planning the care. The services they use do not depend solely on the experts' assessment, but also on their choice and desire. The practice introduces concepts of "user involvement" and "user empowerment." There is a transformation in customer positions. They become consumers, focusing on their right to individual assessment and personalized services.

The positions of social workers are also changing. They are closely related to the delivery of social services. Social workers assess needs, provide access to services, manage the process of their presentation, monitor and control, mediate and consult. These activities they carry out in partnership with the customer and in cooperation with other specialists. This aims at providing quality services tailored to the individual needs and corresponding to the user's needs. Social workers are forced to integrate and coordinate their actions with both the customers and their relatives, as well as with other professionals and organizations. They operate from clearly defined organizational positions, exercising legally regulated rights and obligations.

Respect for human rights is becoming a basic platform for practicing social work. The focus is shifting from needs to rights; from individual and social factors that endanger the individual well-being, to political and legislative measures to protect and support the social and civil rights of the users. In this environment dominated by the culture of the targeted service to groups of users, social work is viewed as ethical rationality. Social workers are involved in a complex process of identifying and addressing individual needs to available resources. The individual work with users focuses on the personal contact and communication, the protection of their interests, and the use of psychological techniques to support their choice. Individual work breaks through the prism of the community in which the individual is localized. The key to social work is its attitude towards the right of respect, self-determination and self-management of the assisted persons and families (Jeffery 2011: p. 96).

### **3. National projections of the transformations in social work and social services**

Social work was legitimated as a practice in Bulgaria in 2002 in the Law on Social Assistance (MLSP 2018). It is defined as *"a professional activity to improve the mutual adaptation of individuals, families, groups and the environment in which they live. It is a complex of support activities aimed at achieving a better quality of life, dignity and responsibility in people, based on their individual abilities, interpersonal relationships and community resources"*. According to the legislative framework, this is work oriented towards the low-income and vulnerable groups of the population and is mainly related to protection against poverty, social exclusion, violence and discrimination; promoting the employment of the assisted persons and families; implementing the transition from institutional care to community-based services; improving the scope and quality of social services. Social work also addresses people's social relationships and attempts to restore the disrupted links between them and the environment by stimulating the vital forces and abilities of the assisted persons themselves. It is seen as a catalyst for their power and abilities to have power over their lives, make their choices, bear responsibility for themselves and their family, and benefit from the various opportunities essential to human development. Social work is seen as an instrument for controlling inequality and social change.



In practice, this work is performed by social workers who on its basis provide social assistance and social services, carry out integration and protection activities. The field of their professional expression outlines the model of social work in Bulgaria. It is formed in accordance with the national policy on social assistance and protection of vulnerable groups of the population, built according to the requirements of the EU membership. The model, institutional and normative, is related to the social assistance system and the context of the implemented social policy.

Social work is primarily a matter of managing and distributing resources and services for children and families, people with disabilities, the elderly, the long-term unemployed, the Roma population. The complex nature of their problems necessitates expanding the potential of social work to cover a wider range of needs; connection and flexibility between social benefits, integration and protection services and activities; improving the scope and quality of social services. The support model for them is to maintain an optimal variety of support activities *that provide participation in employment and access to resources*, rights and services to prevent the risk of social exclusion and poverty; *creating conditions and guarantees* for equality, independent life, quality development of the personality. The technological characteristics of the work of professionals involved in social work are also changing. They are increasingly faced with a choice as to the type and nature of the support they provide: material - immaterial; in the form of immediate care or activation; on the basis of assessment of the individual needs rather than belonging to a particular category.

The adopted national model of social work meets the national socio-economic, cultural and political realities, taking into account the European determinants, related to reasonable sufficiency, maximum efficiency and economic effectiveness, transparency, accessibility and accountability. The approach of work to the assisted persons and families in Bulgaria is slowly but substantially reorientating from bureaucratic to customer-centered and to the customer's individual needs. Change is difficult to achieve if we relied on the mechanical imposition of the proposed foreign models of social work. They should be approached after careful analysis (taking into account differences in societies regarding ethno-cultural traditions and philosophy of life, levels of material well-being), modification and adaptation to the Bulgarian environment, and adaptation to the traditions, experience and preparation of the social workers.

Over the years, the professional profile of the social work professionals in Bulgaria has changed dynamically in order to synchronize the social legislation in the country with that of the EU and the adoption of European standards in the social sphere. It is being built on the move by looking at intersections between practices in Bulgaria and in other EU member states. Social workers have occupational traits that correspond to the adopted national model of social work. Their professional profile is a function of the social practice. It is formed by *combining the universal with the national-specific in social work*. The common in social work is based on the values that apply to all who practise it. It is built on its purpose as well as on its professional philosophy. The national-specific takes into account the specific social, economic and institutional conditions in which social work is practised. It is reflected in the national visions of social work expressed in a number of normative documents, government strategies and programs (ASS 2018a; ASS 2018b; ASS 2018c; MLSP 2013a; MLSP 2013b; MLSP 2013c; MLSP 2015; MLSP 2018), as well as in the influence of the

links and the interaction between the processes of identification, institutionalization, internalization and unification, generated by the socio-economic transformations in society on the development of social work in Bulgaria.

The professionally significant characteristics of the Bulgarian social worker are formed under the influence of *political factors* (implementing a policy on social inclusion and poverty reduction); *economic factors* (low rates of economic development), *management and institutional* (slowing the optimization of activities in the public sector, overloading the social sphere with significant for the country's economic capacity social commitments); *social* (population impoverishment, strong social and income differentiation, deterioration of health status, increase in the number and intensity of risk factors in the population's life); *demographic factors* (decrease of the relative share of the working-age population). These factors characterize the environment and set the framework for social work practice in Bulgaria.

*The detailed study of the established practice* in the social assistance system shows that Bulgarian social workers are specialists engaged in solving problems related to poverty, social exclusion, unemployment, age, poor health. They have features similar to those of the social workers in other European countries. They can be summarized as high professional qualification, knowledge of social practice, good understanding of interpersonal interactions, development of qualities such as communicativeness, analytic, objectivity, tolerance, responsibility to work. Their work, however, still bears the marks of the problem-following interference that aims at limiting the "damage" rather than preventive work and mobilization of all concerned. The social worker in our country focuses mainly on the customers' problems and less on their resources and capabilities. This puts the social worker in the position of a problem solver rather than a professional whose role is to direct, assist and support people in finding their own solutions. He/She carries out various activities that can generally be defined as *activities providing access to social services and resources*. As far as the psychological support activities are concerned, they are not well represented.

Social services are provided on the basis of social work in Bulgaria. These are activities *"in support of the persons for social inclusion and independent way of life"* (ASS 2018c). They are provided in the field of social assistance. Through them, the society's care is implemented for the most vulnerable groups. The supported persons and families receive care, security, support, protection, information, advice that allow them to maintain their physical and social functioning in difficult times, and prevent them from falling into extreme poverty and social exclusion. Social services help users cope with daily routines and participate fully in key areas of public life. These services are a set of activities aimed at preserving or improving the quality of life of individuals. They are designed to minimize, recover or compensate for their deficits. Social services are provided in accordance with the people's individual wishes and personal choices, following the individual assessment of the needs and on the basis of an individual support plan developed by a multidisciplinary team.

Bulgaria implements a policy in the field of social services aimed at creating conditions for independent and dignified life of elderly people and people with disabilities by providing of quality, affordable and sustainable long-term care services tailored to the users' individual needs (MLSP 2013; MLSP 2018). The political efforts are focused on building a service network in the community and in domestic

environment to provide deinstitutionalisation of adult care and support of families with increased responsibility for the care of dependent family members; on fostering synergies between social and health services, including the development of innovative cross-sectoral services and the implementation of an integrated approach to service delivery. The guiding principles in the development of social services are the principles of: 1) placing the user at the center of the service, respect for his/her rights and dignity and inclusion in the decision-making process; 2) accessibility, transparency and non-discrimination in the construction and provision of services; 3) efficiency and effectiveness of services, cross-sectoral interaction; 4) prevention of institutionalization; 5) sustainability and long-term effect of the results achieved. (MLSP 2013, MLSP 2018) This changes the model of social work in care services (full dependency) to support (activation, taking of responsibility).

The study of the established practice in the field of social services for elderly people and people with disabilities shows delays in the process of deinstitutionalization and outlines challenges related to:

- *greater supply of institutional forms of care than the provision of community support.* Social services are targeted primarily at people with mental disorders, people with mental retardation and multiple disabilities, elderly people, as the focus is on the people who do not have effective family support – either they have no relatives or their relatives do not want to take care of them in their home environment. Currently, there are 161 specialized institutions. Of these, 82 are retirement homes, 27 homes for mentally retarded people, 13 homes for people with mental disorders, 14 homes for people with dementia, 21 homes for people with physical disabilities and 4 homes for people with sensory impairments. There are 499 social services functioning in the community, incl. 286 services of residential type - protected housing and family-type accommodation (MLSP 2018).

- *unequal territorial distribution of social services and unsolved problems with material resources and financial support.* The material base of social services is formed mainly by the building stock, which is largely adapted for the purposes of social services. New social infrastructure is being built but it is not sufficient to cover the expanded needs of the population for supportive community services. Social services funding, despite having increased over the years, is still insufficient. The defined financial standards cover the material provision of services at a not very high level. The living conditions in the specialized institutions are not satisfactory. Particularly worrying is the quality of care in the specialized institutions for people with mental retardation and mental disorders.

- *the network of social services in the community is not sufficiently developed.* The services provided in home environment are personal assistant, social assistant, home assistant and home social patronage, and in the community - day care centres for people with disabilities, centres for social rehabilitation and integration for people with mental disorders and for people with mental retardation. Services provide support primarily for the implementation of everyday activities of domestic nature and the compression of deficits in social contacts. There is a gap in support services in the community and in home environment related to the provision of specialized services with an enhanced element of health care. Providing such integrated care for now is a

challenge to the social and health structures in the country (Pulova 2012: pp. 83-85). In this respect, serious deficits are found in the services for people with dementia and the home-based services for elderly people with permanent disabilities and chronic illnesses, as well as in the services to support informal carers - counselling, temporary care (various forms of daily and part-time care, in order to relieve the family in daily life and at weekends).

- *social services are not well orientated towards the needs of the local community.* The introduction of community-based services does not have a clear mechanism that includes a study of the real needs and the planning of the necessary resources. This makes the process rather chaotic. Municipal strategies for service development are often prepared formally. They include services that do not always correspond to the local needs but are provided with state funding. As a result, there are social services in the community behind which there are not real users. In an effort to overcome this, a national map of the social services in the Republic of Bulgaria and maps of the social services in all municipalities has been developed.

- *user involvement in the process of providing the service.* In various regulatory and departmental documents an orientation of the social services to the user is declared and the user's active role in the service delivery is emphasized. In fact, the social service provider has a leading role. The user is active in the preparation, implementation and control of the individual plan, as well as in its updating. When assessing the needs of the user, the focus is not always on the particular person - needs, desires, preferences, but on what the relevant structure can offer in the given situation. It is not uncommon to "fix" the user in a ready-made scheme. The active user involvement in the process of choosing a particular service, its planning, delivering, controlling, and assessing, the user's real needs is currently more an intention than a real fact. The user is more likely to be treated as an object of the service rather than as its subject. This is due to the long-standing attitudes of both users and providers that the content of social services focuses mainly on the care without requiring the active participation of the users themselves in the process of providing it. This leads to the transfer of the institutional approach in the social services in the community and the lack of progress in the users' integration.

- *the need for clearly defined quality standards.* The quality of social services for the elderly and the people with disabilities is set by standards that are too general. They have a framework character and define thresholds for providers' commitments. Providers are obliged to provide to the elderly users: normal living conditions - hygienised, illuminated and heated premises, healthy and nutritious food; medical supervision and assistance in obtaining medical assistance whenever necessary, various daily activities; freedom of choice in organizing leisure and personal contacts. In the case of standards, the emphasis is on satisfying material needs. There are no standards for social work - for quality, efficiency and workload.

- *staff shortages, staff turnover, need to improve the motivation and qualification of the staff* involved in the service sector. The composition of the staff depends on the needs of the user that the social service meets. In social services for the elderly people with disabilities and chronic diseases the emphasis is on the provision of concrete practical assistance, mainly of material nature - personal care, everyday household

activities, social contacts. This determines the high proportion of support staff who performs immediate service. The positions are occupied by persons without qualifications or with low classification in the field of social services. However, the quality of the service requires the establishment of a personal relationship between the user and the carer, as well as finding individual solutions for each particular case. This requires the support staff to be trained, as the training, in addition to the technical training, required for the qualified performance of the service, should include interpersonal communication training. An established practice is the positions to be occupied under subsidized employment programs for long-term unemployed. This leads to shifting the focus of service delivery - from the user (achieving individual results related to quality of life) to the staff (providing incomes). The social workers carry out activities related to the management of the service provision process. This peculiarity of social services determines the comparatively low relative share of social workers from the total number of staff working with elderly people and people with disabilities. It is necessary to take into account that social workers are usually in contact with the elderly people with disabilities and their families when they are in a complex and crisis situation. They acquire in their everyday working life a great deal of experience that reinforces their confidence that old age is a time of difficulty, and that disability aggravates old age. This increases the risk of stereotypical perceptions and loss of sensitivity to the needs of elderly people and leads to increased difficulties in communicating with them, acquiring habits for manipulation, and increasing hostility to them by accumulating work experience in the field of social services (Yorgova, Pulova and Mileva 2011: p. 83). Improving the motivation and qualifications of the professionals in the field would reduce discrimination and ensure adequate support for elderly people with disabilities and chronic illnesses in an optimal balance between care and activation.

#### **4. Methodological notes**

According to the National Statistics (NSI 2011) almost 61% of the people with permanent disabilities are aged 60 and over. The majority of them have a combined pathology. The leading diseases include diseases of the blood vessels, neoplasms, bone and connective tissue diseases, endocrine disorders, nutrition and metabolism disorders (NSI 2015). This provokes the research interest in social services for the elderly with disabilities.

The existing social services orientated towards this group are mostly targeting elderly people who do not have effective family support. They are primarily designed to provide care and certain amenities. Ensuring good quality of life is achieved by *providing appropriate support and care* to overcome age and health constraints, as well as by *improving the environment* - housing, food, hygiene, access to various activities that are satisfying and meaningful in their daily routine, relationships with the staff, access to information, and keeping in touch with friends and family. The support received from the elderly users does not necessarily have to meet their needs, but also it should be provided in a way which does not prevent them from fulfilling their routine duties, facilitates them in maintaining social contacts, preserves their sense of independence, and does not deprive them as personalities.

This outlines parameters such as *choice, control, attitude of staff, facilitation* as determinatives in the work of social workers and other professionals involved in the services for the elderly with disabilities. (see Table 1)

**Table no. 1.** Areas that form the foundation of good practice in the social work with elderly people with disabilities

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <b>Choice</b>            | Experts should provide elderly people with practical assistance and information, in a scope and at a level that allows them to make choices to meet their needs.  |
| <b>Control</b>           | Specialists should respect the lifestyle and preferences of the elderly people and support them in their efforts to actively participate in the decision-making process related to the services provided to them. |
| <b>Attitude of staff</b> | Specialists should act with care, respect the elderly, be friendly and responsive at every stage of their work with them.   |
| <b>Facilitation</b>      | With their work, specialists should facilitate elderly people.  |

Source: Adams 2010: p. 157

The **objective** of the study is to identify the main problems and challenges of the social work with elderly people with disabilities, users of social services.

## 5. Material

The study was conducted in the municipality of Veliko Tarnovo between June and July 2015. It covered two groups of specialists. The first group included social workers from social services for the elderly with disabilities, and the second group - municipal experts and managers of social services for the elderly people with disabilities.

At the time of the study, there were 17 social services for people with disabilities, including 6 for elderly people with disabilities aged 60 and over.

## 6. Main results

### 6.1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the interviewed people

The majority of the surveyed persons were up to 45 years of age with a length of service in the field of social services up to 5 years, with higher education. 80% of them worked in community-based social services for the elderly with disabilities with a loss of working capacity above 70%. Only 7% of the surveyed persons were men. They occupied expert positions in the municipal administration.

A strong feminisation (93%) of the staff was observed.

### 6.2. Opinion on social services

For the majority of the surveyed social workers, the criteria for access to social services for the elderly with disabilities were adequate to the services profile. They had predominantly positive assessments of the service provision organization. According to them, the services were well balanced by type, number, volume and duration of activities. As far as the technology of services is concerned it makes an impression that social workers focused on the relationship with the elderly users. They valued them as predominantly positive. Regarding the question whether the activities met the needs of the users, social workers considered that there was relatively good compliance. However, they shared that users had higher expectations for rehabilitation and medical supervision.

Regarding the choice of service, 64% of the interviewed social workers believed that users had such an opportunity. However, for ¼ of the surveyed, the opportunities

of the elderly people were limited due to the nomenclature of activities which was not very varied. It is noticeable that municipal experts were more critical of the design of the services, the organization and the technology of their implementation.

All interviewees emphasized that community-based social services for the elderly with disabilities were well-staffed. They had staff that were sufficient in number and with the necessary qualifications. Social services in the home environment - personal assistant, social assistant, home assistant were inadequate and limited in scope. Opinions on the material conditions and the financing of services were predominantly positive. 73% of the surveyed people were dissatisfied with their remuneration.

According to the surveyed social workers, the quality of social services depended to a large extent on the qualifications of the specialists, the remuneration, the personal motivation and the state policy with regard to the people with disabilities. The government policy was most often associated with health and pension system deficits which reflected the users' expectations of social care toward integrated health care and material security. For the surveyed municipal experts, the quality of the social services depended to a large extent on the state policy, the municipal policy, the motivation and qualification of the staff, the legislative framework regarding the social inclusion of people with disabilities and social services. The observed differences between the groups of the surveyed people are due to the positions they occupy in the process of providing social services.

### **6.3. Opinion on social work in the social services**

Social work in the social services for the elderly with disabilities and chronic diseases includes mainly supportive (compensating) activities. The nomenclature of these activities is not particularly varied, allowing for a non-wide range of needs related to the physical survival (need for food, shelter and clothing), health and physical safety, organization of daily life and social contacts. Social workers play an active role in social services. They are primarily engaged in activities related to collecting and providing information from and to the elderly users; receiving additional information about the user from other professionals and institutions; facilitating users' adaptation to the social service and helping to communicate with staff and other users. Their work with elderly users is on an individual and organizational level.

The social services that are delegated by the state are provided with methodologies and working instructions. 82% of the surveyed social workers stated they were guided by them at work. Nearly 2/3 of them were critical to the departmental regulatory and methodological base. They considered that the professional instruments introduced with it were not fully adequate to the specifics of the target group they were working with, and they needed to be further developed. There are no methodologies for all social services that are local activities. There is a need for methodological assistance and training to make an individual assessment of support needs.

73% of the respondents considered that the administrative burden and the control of their activity were increasing. They felt limited in their freedom to act by the requirements to adhere to an officially accepted order of consecutive action in fulfilling each of their tasks. This is not accepted unequivocally, although it is predominant that the observance of the prescribed "good practice" rules and procedures guarantees the effectiveness and efficiency of the adopted professional decisions. The main objections

were not against the rules in principle, but against the frequent changes of these rules and the increasing bureaucracy in the implementation of the activities. According to the established practice, social services are given individual planning for each user based on an assessment of individual capabilities and support needs. The model of the individual plan is standardized. This brings about the unification of the work-related documentation in all sections of the social assistance system. All surveyed social workers included the user when drawing up the individual plan, albeit to varying degrees.

The majority of them stated that they were likely to take into account the elderly users' perception of the provided service, but only 54% would change the individual plan if the users insisted on it. This suggests a lack of flexibility, a formal attitude towards the design and the implementation of the individual plan and raises doubts about the extent to which elderly users actually participate, choose and control the provided service.

#### **6.4. Professional development of social workers**

Of the surveyed social workers 73% were satisfied with their professional fulfilment. When referring to the expectations for the job with regard to the professional fulfilment, higher expectations were reported by 27% of the social workers. 18% of the respondents stated they felt disappointed to varying degrees and determined in their intention to change the field of work if they were given the opportunity. The group of the dissatisfied people consisted mostly of women working at the Day Care Centre for People with Disabilities, with up to 5 years experience in the field of social services and a significant general experience in the social assistance system.

This suggests dissatisfaction and disappointment with the professional activity. This is probably due to the socio-economic conditions, personal life circumstances, not enough strong motivation or decreasing motivation in the process of professional fulfilment as a result of the problems in the practice.

All surveyed social workers participated in various forms of continuing vocational training - short-term training, qualification courses, exchange of experience. They stated that they perceived the enhancement of their professional competence as an irrevocable obligation. A sustained professional behaviour and an attitude toward continuous professional development have been built in social workers.

The data suggest that the prevalent part of the surveyed social workers like their job but have serious remuneration requirements.

#### **7. Conclusions**

The changes in social work are a reflection of the changes in society and the economy. They correspond to the socio-economic, cultural and political realities. The changes follow the course of public service reforms, which are under way, based on the principles of: user orientation and service individualization, quality, efficiency and effectiveness, service integrity, financial accountability and transparency.

Social work is mainly related to the provision of social services. It also plays an important role in ensuring the user's involvement not only in the direct delivery of the particular service but also more generally in the design, organization and control of social services. Social work is entrusted with the difficult task of achieving more



accurate identification and addressing the needs for accessible resources while ensuring more diverse, better quality social services.

The development of social work is characterized by market and management orientation and mixed economy. Social work operates within strict administrative frameworks, subject to intense regulations and requirements to ensure the user's choice and control of the services used. There are doubts that this reduces social work to the implementation of limited, highly bureaucratized and subordinate to modern information technologies, normative activities. Activities mainly focused on risk management for individuals and families with complex needs.

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# Labor market between the requirements and expectations of the employers and graduates of higher education

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## Abstract

The quality of an educational system is reflected not only in the instructive performances of the educational actors, but also in the degree in which it ensures an adequate professional integration. The undergraduate of today, the graduate of tomorrow needs an as accurate as possible information regarding the labour market, which cannot be achieved only by individual means, but also by resorting to carrier counselling services.

The motivation of this research is closely connected to the improvement of the level of communication between the two aspects – on the one hand the academic one, both by its finite products, and by facilitating access to carrier and economic counselling, and on the other – the opportunities that the cooperation between the two aspects might offer.

**Keywords:** *competencies; employer; graduate; labour market; professional selection; career.*

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Present Context

Europe's labour market is influenced by the economic changes in the world, first of all by the increase of unemployment of the young, which is in the range of 15.9 – 21.9%. European policies (the Amsterdam Treaty 1997, the European Strategy for Employment and the Lisbon Strategy 2000, the Memorandum of permanent learning 2001) aim at cutting down unemployment by developing a functional economy, access of all persons to education and efficient carrier counselling systems, development of required competencies of the young graduates for jobs.

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## 1.2. Labour Market

Labour market dynamics, some of the professions losing ground and others emerging, present economic conditions, all justify the use of career counselling and orientation; in their desire to be involved and build up a profession, the young need support and to understand the way labour market works, and need to be able to identify the opportunities provided by it.

Labour market is the “framework where job demand and supply dynamically interact with workforce demand and supply” (Szilagyi 2008).

In *Combating poverty and social exclusion. A statistical portrait of the European Union 2010* for the 15-24 years old range, very different employment rates have been noticed from one country to another, ours being the last but one in the list.

**Table no. 1.** Unemployment rate per age and sex(%)

| Country        | Employment rate<br>15-24 years old | Employment rate<br>15-24 years old per gender |              |
|----------------|------------------------------------|---|--------------|
|                |                                    | M   | F            |
| EU-27          | 7.6%                               | 40.4%   | 34.6%        |
| Ireland        | 71.7%                              | 70.1%   | 73.5%        |
| Netherlands    | 69.3%                              | 69.8%   | 68.8%        |
| Norway         | 57.3%                              | 56.5%   | 58.1%        |
| Great Britain  | 52.4%                              | 53.8%   | 51.0%        |
| ...            |                                    |   |              |
| Bulgaria       | 26.3%                              | 29.3%   | 23.1%        |
| <b>Romania</b> | <b>24.8%</b>                       | <b>29.1%</b>                                  | <b>20.2%</b> |
| Hungary        | 20.0%                              | 23.2%   | 16.8%        |

Source: EUROSTAT (2010) *Combating poverty and social exclusion. A statistical portrait of the European Union*, p. 23.

Another important research at European level that involved only the young has been done by Gallup Org., within the Euro barometer: *Employers' perception of graduate employability*, 2010, a survey covering 27 European states in firms with more than 50 employees. It shows that for instance the main domains in which higher education graduates are integrated in the labour market are: engineering, business and economic sciences, communication and IT.

The interest for the opinions of the employers/people of business is a constant for the research at national level in Romania. Numerous investigations revealed important aspects regarding both levels of organization (public and private). Let us remember for example the research *Angajatorul român (public și privat) și piața forței de muncă* (2008)[The Romanian Employer(public and private) and the Labour Market] done by TNS SCOP for the Romanian Government. The research results, before the economic crisis, had an ambivalent tone: the respondent's perception was that there is an excess of specialists of the labour market (40%), but the evolution of the labour market makes recruitment difficult(64%). Similarly, the respondents felt that a possible restoration of the labour market should be based on the reconversion of the employees (66%), attraction of the workforce from rural areas (56%), or attraction of the workforce from those who left the country to work abroad (67%). The negative comments included: lack of qualified workforce, lack of interest for work, emigration

of the workforce etc. The same research pointed out that most of the Romanians are employed for an unlimited duration (88%), leading to a lack of mobility or lack of flexibility of the work programme.

Another type of research in Romania directly referring to the young is concerned with the insertion of the graduates in the labour market. In this sense, we mention the DOCIS- project, "Development of an operational system of qualifications in Romania's academic education". The research brings about a series of significant information and prefigures in a first stage possible future educational policies. Their aim can only be beneficial in a possible balance of the demand and supply in the labour market.

All the results of the above mentioned research prove the more and more serious interest for the employability problem area, for the equalization of the ratios between demand and supply on the labour market, for a better monitoring by the universities of the situation of their own graduates, for making curricula more adaptable.

## **2. Objective of the study**

The general objective of the research is, on the one hand, making undergraduates sensitive to the necessity of their being actively involved in various professional contexts, of their concern to look for feedback regarding the activities run, in order to have a clear and integrated image of their own persons as active people on the labour market, and on the other, the possibility of improving the level of communication between the field of education and of the business world, in view of initiating mutual projects in the years to come, having as finality the increase of the level of employability of the University of Petrosani graduates.

## **3. The hypothesis of the study**

We estimate that there are no significant differences between the labor market needs and the outcome of the educational system.

## **4. Methods**

### **4.1. Research Design**

The instrument used for collecting data is a quantitative questionnaire. The research based on the quantitative questionnaire was structured on 21 questions for the employers and other 25 questions for the graduates, of which 8 were common for the two lots of subjects, by which comparable results have been constituted between the requirements and expectations of the two parties involved in the labour market and the work hypothesis has been validated. Statistical data processing was done using SPSS program.

Similarly, the results obtained as a result of processing the questionnaire constituted the basis for the next step, namely the development of a counselling plan by which the future graduates might improve their competencies and model their attitudes in agreement with the employers' expectations.

In view of collecting and interpretation of research data, the following aspects have been considered:

- Graduates' opinion on the benefits of the counselling and professional orientation services from their universities;
- Graduates' perception on their professional direction and development;

- Factors of professional /indecision;
- Potential motivating/de-motivating factors of their first job;
- Competencies perceived in relation to their own professional course;
- Employers' expectancies and modalities to attract candidates from the university graduates, for their vacant jobs;
- Skills/competencies considered by the employers for recruitment;
- Activities requiring specific competencies for university graduates;
- Limits but also opportunities existing on the present labour market.

## **4.2. Participants**

The study has been carried out in June-July 2016, in Jiu Valley, with 290 employers, representatives of the most important companies in the area, activating in fields such as: economy, public administration, social services, industry, IT, constructions, mass media etc. and 290 graduates from the University of Petroșani and beneficiaries of the services of the Centre of Counselling of the University, their greatest part being licensed in a single speciality.

## **5. Results and discussions**

### **5.1. Carrier Counselling**

The process of carrier counselling is bidirectional, starting from the expectations of the beneficiaries related to the services that could be offered by a carrier orientation centre. The necessity of using carrier counselling and orientation services along all the years of schooling is positively appreciated by more than one quarters of the graduates interrogated, this measure being essential in order to succeed in life. As primordial stages in building a carrier, more than 70% of the interviewed people assign an important role to carrier counselling services for self awareness, professional exploration, professional decision and development, but also in successfully building a carrier plan.

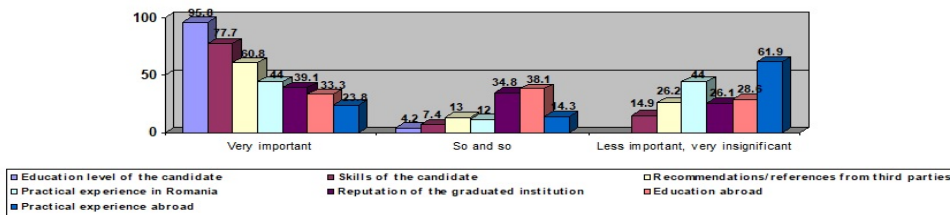
Concrete professional orientation and counselling activities, in which more than half of the graduates in the study took part, mainly concentrated on open discussions about professions /vocations and carrier choice(more than 40%), counselling sessions within the Centre of Carrier Counselling, stages of practical training in a firm/institution (28% both), and volunteering activities(almost one fifth). The percentage is relatively low, a possible explanation being that the activities intended to graduates counselling regarding their professional course being in an initial phase.

### **5.2. Recruitment Process and Sources of Information**

The candidates' recruitment process is based on the use of a variety and modality of attracting graduates from higher education towards available jobs. From the answers given by the employers of the top firms in Jiu Valley, more than 40% are based either on recommendations (48.3%), or on direct approach of the candidates (44.8%), and more than one quarter are based on information found on job sites. Unfortunately only 10% attract the candidates by promotion actions in university centres.

Fig. 1 shows that most of the employers participating in the study consider that the candidates education is very important (95.8%), but also their skills (77.7%). Recommendations in favour of the candidate are appreciated by more than 60%, and the reputation of the higher education institution is appreciated by approx. 40% of the respondents.

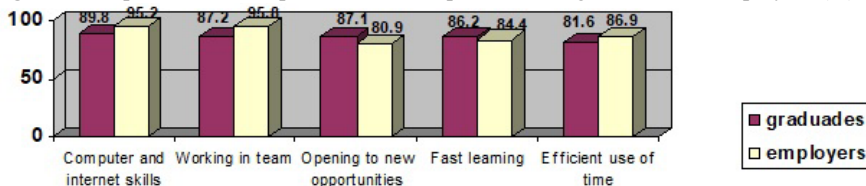
**Fig. no. 1.** Importance of the following aspects in the recruitment process (%)



In view of obtaining as detailed information as possible regarding competencies and knowledge expected by employers to be found with University of Petrosani graduates, we have been looking both for key competencies, proposed in a Recommendation of the European Parliament, and for competencies/knowledge that are specific to domains of companies involved in research.

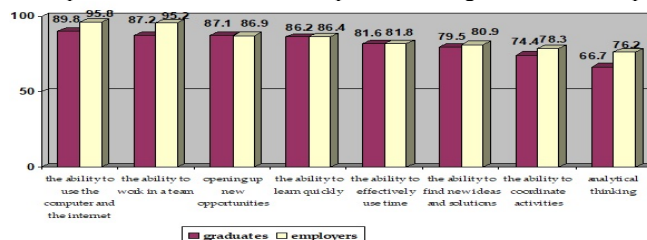
Out of a list of 18 abilities/competencies subject to analysis of both university graduates and employers in various domains, with whose help we intended to see the level of self knowledge of the young at graduation, on the one hand, and on the other, the suggestions of the representatives of Jiu Valley labour market addressed to higher education institutes in Romania regarding training these competencies among their educational products.

**Fig. no. 2.** Importance of competencies in the opinion of the graduates and employers (%)



Out of the responses of the respondents, in a hierarchy of the first eight points in the order of importance, we notice the same skills, with negligible differences. However, the percentage is averagely slightly higher in the evaluations made by employers regarding all the 18 skills/competencies. This is explicable also due to the fact that, as they describe themselves, most of the graduates are in a process of knowing themselves, being at the level at which they should practice various competencies in a safe context, learning about them, discovering their skills, but also their weak points related to the carrier they wish to build up.

**Fig. no 3.** Importance of abilities in the opinion of the graduates and employers (%)



It is important to point out the percentage differences regarding evaluation of analytical thinking skill, (66.7% among the graduates and 76.2% among the employers), a potential explanation owing to a different level of maturity and life experience.

Tables 2 and 3 highlight the mean of the answers of the graduates and the employers, and the data presented in them support the study hypothesis, with no significant differences of opinion between the two groups of respondents.

**Table 2.** Mean of the answers of the two groups of subjects regarding the importance of the activities necessary for the accumulation of professional experience

| Status respondent | The importance of activities involving the manipulation of objects, machines and tools in the accumulation of professional experience | The importance of research and investigation of phenomena in different fields and in different forms in the accumulation of professional experience | The importance of less structured, artistic activities that involve creativity and self-expression in the accumulation of professional experience | The importance of activities involving interpersonal relationships, helping others, educational activities in the accumulation of professional experience | The importance of entrepreneurial activities, involving initiative and coordination of one's own activity or a group in the accumulation of professional experience | The importance of repetitive activities that involve the systematic and orderly manipulation of data or objects in a well-organized setting and defined in the accumulation of professional experience |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| Graduates         | 3.46  | 3.74  | 3.26  | 4.08  | 4.36  | 3.64   |
| Employers         | 3.58  | 3.72  | 3.28  | 3.88  | 4.27  | 3.59   |

**Table 3.** Mean of the answers of the two groups of subjects regarding the agreement on various statements related to professional competencies

| Status respondent | Agreement with the statement: employers are more interested in the skills of the graduates and the previous work experience, and less the graduate specialization or the prestige of the university | Agreement with the statement: for both graduates and recruiters, the competences acquired in the curriculum occupy a secondary place in relation to transversal competencies | Agreement with the statement: In finding the first job, the competencies of teaming in a team are more important than those acquired in the study programs | Agreement with the statement: the knowledge and skills that employees need at the workplace are acquired at the workplace, and less during academic studies | The agreement with the statement: how to present the interview and personality are the factors that have the greatest importance in getting the first job | Agreement with the statement: employers place the knowledge of a foreign language and the computer skills are of equal importance to the way the interview is presented and to the type of personality | Agreement with the statement: in the opinion of the recruiters, the results of the bachelor's examination and the reputation of the university are not at all important in the employment decision |
|-------------------|---|--|--|---|---|--|--|
| Graduates         | 4.41  | 3.59   | 3.79   | 4.03  | 4.23  | 4.10   | 3.41   |
| Employers         | 3.70  | 3.17   | 3.50   | 3.88  | 3.79  | 3.68   | 3.30   |

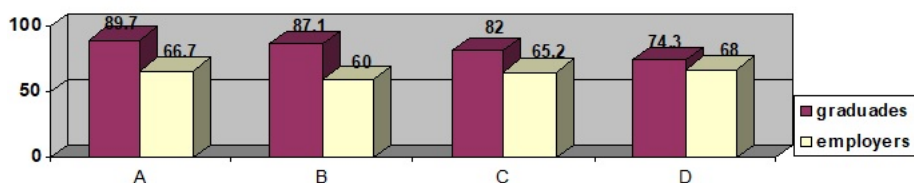
### 5.3. Professional development

Figure 4 points out another comparative analysis between the two lots of subjects, highlighting the fact that the hierarchy of the first four places in the order of importance is approximately the same, with small differences, but with the



specification that the more important numerical percentage is found in the assessment made by the graduates.

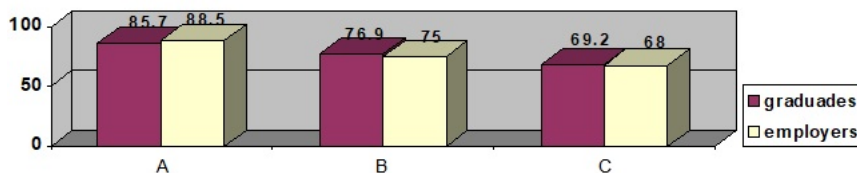
**Fig. no 4.** Importance of the following aspects in the opinion of the graduates and employers (%)



- A-The manner in which one presents himself/herself at the interview and their personality are factors of great importance in getting the first job  
 B-The employers consider that knowing a foreign language and computer skills are equal in importance with the manner of presentation at the interview and type of personality  
 C-The employers are sooner interested in the competencies of the graduates and their previous work experience, and less in the speciality in which the candidates graduated or the prestige of the university  
 D-The knowledge and skills required for the graduates at the workplace are acquired in the job, and less during the academic studies

The comparison between the two lots of subjects of the study points out a perfect match of the hierarchy of activities intended to accumulation by the graduates of professional experience. Thus, in a percentage of over 85%, both graduates and employers rate first in the process of acquiring professional experience, entrepreneurial activities, which involve initiative and coordination of one's own activity or of a group's, followed by activities involving interpersonal relationships, helping the others, educational activities, appreciated by more than three quarters of the respondents.

**Fig. no 5.** Importance of the following activities for accumulation of professional experience by graduates (%)



- A-Entrepreneurial activities involving initiative and coordination of one's own or a group's activities  
 B-Activities involving interpersonal relationships, helping people, educational activities  
 C-Research and investigation of phenomena in various fields and in various forms

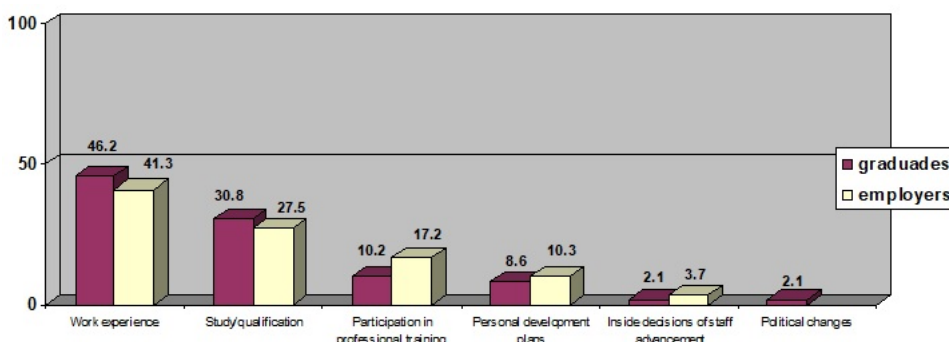
For the young at the beginning of their carrier, access to as much information as possible regarding the employing company, the expectations regarding the ideal candidate is important.

A candidate will convince by his /her personality, experience, the way he/she looks at his/her professional advancement, aptitudes showing that he/she might bring a plus value to the company. A common factor regarding the expectations of the employers is volunteering, involvement in various activities during the education years, stages of practice. Participation in these activities is looked upon by the employers as a way of gaining experience.

The same work experience is seen both by the graduates and the employers as key-element in carrier promotion and advancement, followed by the level of qualification attained, but also the existence of a personal and professional development plan, first of

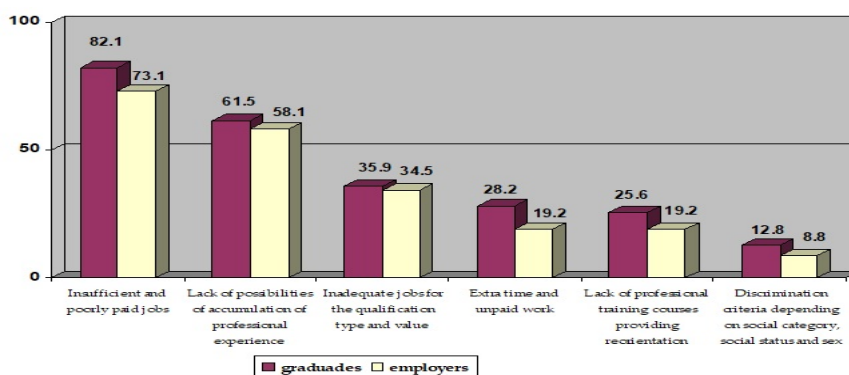
all by participating in training courses (figure 6). This compatibility of ideas between the two lots of subjects supports the hypothesis of the study.

**Fig. no. 6.** Carrier advancement possibilities, in the opinion of graduates and employers (%)



#### 5.4. Present limits of labour market

**Fig. no.7.** Labour market limits in the opinion of graduates and employers (%)



The comparison between the two lots of respondents points out a relative similarity of opinions regarding the limits existing in Romania's labour market, the idea that supports the hypothesis of our study. Thus, the variant with most of the choices, both of the graduates and of the employers, is represented by the problem of insufficient and poorly paid jobs. One should mention however, that with the graduates, among the aspects mentioned as limits of the labour market, we may also find lack of possibility of accumulating professional experience, a requirement that is absolutely necessary for hiring, but also the existence of jobs that do not match the value and type of qualification, an aspect which should be in the attention of the universities.

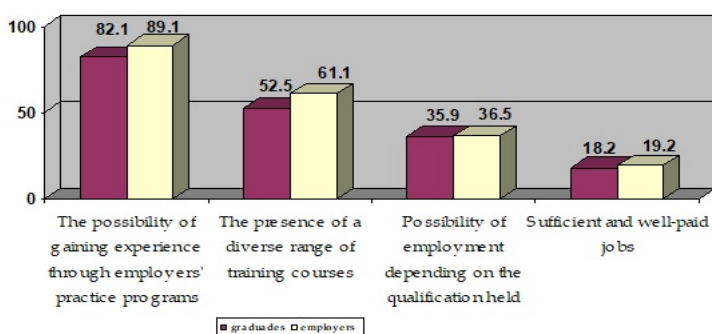
#### 5.4. Opportunities existing on the labor market

The data presented in Figure 8 show the success of the action taken by the companies involved in the pilot study, involving students interested in long-term internships, resulting in graduates with higher education, experienced in the workplace

and motivated to remain active actors in the labor market work in the native country. In order to halt the emigration of young people with higher education, not only the labor market must be flexible and adaptable, but also the educational offer of higher education, the collaboration between the two environments being the essential condition for an adequate insertion on the labor market.

Granting the merit and the responsibility of the academic environment for the development of professional competencies is highlighted in both groups of respondents. On the one hand, it is the percentage of one third of those who declare the inconsistency between the graduated specialization and the availability of jobs (figure 7, figure 8), and on the other hand the broad opinion shared by employers, according to which the educational system needs to adapt its curricula and offer the future labor force anchored in the realities of the labor market.

**Fig. no.8.** Labour market opportunities in the opinion of graduates and employers (%)



## 6. Conclusions and recommendations

The hypothesis on which our entire research was based, namely “We estimate that there are no significant differences between the labor market needs and the outcome of the educational system has been partially confirmed.

For the young at the beginning of their carrier, it is important to have access to as much information as possible regarding the employing companies, and the expectations of those on the ideal candidate, this being the main reason of maintaining an active partnership between the two media – academic and economic, its final goal being an increase of the level of employability of the university graduates.

Summing up, we could say that although there have been many attempts to reform the education system, through the formulation and development of various programs and methodologies, in order to ensure sustainable development, many of these did not have the expected effect, yet it is an important step, a starting point for developing an innovative way of organizing the educational structure.

In our opinion, when it comes to reforming education, we must mainly focus on the evolution of education time of each level, from preschool to postgraduate and analyzed strengths and weaknesses. Like suggestions reforming the educational system, we go on the idea of highlighting strengths and balance between practical teaching and theoretical methods, focusing on the practical side, the introduction of counseling programs to help each preschool, student or student in a direction appropriate to him, be

helped to make the right decisions through clear arguments, taking into account their desires, passions and talents. Also, another point to be correlated with the above, we could talk about the efficiency and the way of teaching, which, in our opinion, should be dynamic, based on innovation and interactive methods.

Universities have the necessary capacity to develop the intellectual framework in support of practical applications on the concept of sustainable development. Higher education institutions, as academic leaders, have the capacity to agree on academic disciplines on large and complex issues, to mobilize resources, to create incentives and programs for skills development, and most importantly to lead by example in to promote and implement sustainable development education.

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# Supervision as an opportunity to create a sustainable attitude towards the assisting process

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## Abstract

Professional social assistance requires well-trained specialists. They know both the methods of social work and social skills. In auditorial terms, the training of social workers goes on a curriculum. As students come into practice, they do not always go smoothly. The idealized idea of how the assisting process actually takes place often collides with reality. A clash of the minds prepared by academic teachers with their hearts unprepared for the problems of others; a clash between their expectations of being useful with knowledge and skills and lack of life and work experience; a clash between their willingness to help and the rejection of aid; a clash of thinking about how you should help and the feeling that it is not enough or wrong; a clash between what you have learned and what you have not yet learned; clash with hesitation - how do I do, which method to choose? Clash with the actual weight of the customer's supervision is a way of supporting and providing feedback to students about social work. Supervision is a method of assessing the degree of preparedness and offers opportunities to fill the gaps. Sophisticated students have the courage to cope with real social work. They are not left alone in the fight with conscience and hesitation. Supervision is a way to create sustainable attitudes to the assisting process that finds the links between learning and social practice; between knowledge and skills; between the expectations to deal with yourself and the ability to find support in colleagues. In addition, supervision provides an opportunity to strengthen the self-esteem and the prestige of the social worker in the community he is working with lems.

**Keywords:** *supervision; social worker; sustainable attitude; students; students*

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## 1. Introduction

Professional social work requires well-trained specialists. They know both the methods of social work and social skills. In auditoria terms, the training of social workers goes on a curriculum. As students come into practice, they do not always go smoothly. The idealized idea of how the assisting process actually takes place often collides with reality. A clash of the minds prepared by academic teachers with their hearts unprepared

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for the problems of others; a clash between their expectations of being useful with knowledge and skills and lack of life and work experience; a clash between their willingness to help and the rejection of aid; a clash of thinking about how you should help and the feeling that it is not enough or wrong; a clash between what you have learned and what you have not yet learned; clash with hesitation - how do I do, which method to choose? Clash with the actual weight of the customer's supervision is a way of supporting and providing feedback to students about social work.

## **2. About the supervision**

Supervision is a method of assessing the degree of preparedness and offers opportunities to fill the gaps. Sophisticated students have the courage to cope with real social work. They are not left alone in the fight with conscience and hesitation. Supervision is a way to create sustainable attitudes to the assisting process that finds the links between learning and social practice; between knowledge and skills; between the expectations to deal with yourself and the ability to find support in colleagues.

In addition, supervision provides an opportunity to strengthen the self-esteem and the prestige of the social worker in the community he is working with lems.

Supervision is the process of interacting the supervisor with the novice specialist, in which the student shares the experience gained in teaching practice, asks questions and receives emotional support.

Supervision is a unique creative technique for training social workers. It is the continuation of the textbooks, the living contact with the labor-induced doubts, worries and questions.

The functions of the Supervisor are: Training / Information / Supporting / Assessment / Controlling / Instrument for Crisis Intervention.

The supervisor is the regulator, the actions, expectations and attitudes of the trainee. It "tunes" to a certain perception frequency. He is the translator between the student bench and the workplace.

The curriculum is included in the bachelor's plan for full-time / part-time training of two years

The focus is on group supervision, ie. the supervisor is a facilitator of learning by using the mechanisms and dynamics of the small group, using the Williams focal-length matrix. Through it, I find out where the student is in the process of learning.

Exemplary Option for Supervision in the second course "Social Activities":

Sharing - an announcement of group supervision information - what happened during the week, what is the need for supervision

Decision - on which case I am basing today's supervision

Working with the specific case - narration, video, questions of the participants, sharing of feelings. I do not ask questions in any way - I listen and return to the focus of the topic. No personal experience; without speculation and criticism. I'm moving to the group. Eventually, the "author" of the case commented on what was said to be useful.

### ***End of group supervision.***

This is an option for group supervision.

The method does not exclude the individual approach to the student. The groups have similar speculations, confronting practical social work. The surprise of how

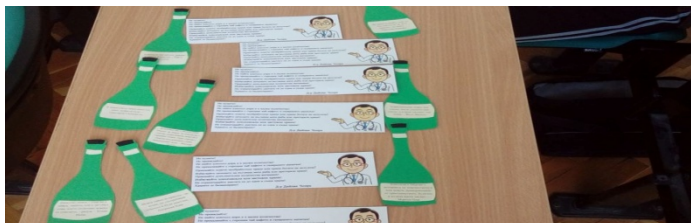
poverty, unemployment, illness, death, loss, dependence, inequality or other social challenge look like is a general, group imprint. But understanding and understanding it is a personal experience for every student. It carries different feelings, creates a different attitude to the process as a process. Therefore, it is important for the student to receive support and guidance, as well as an appraisal of the transition between knowledge and knowledge of work. It is important to share the experience, compare with colleagues and get a comment from the supervisor. It is a feedback that can become a lasting attitude to the helping process, materialize the knowledge and transform it into social experience. And social experience gives courage to the future social worker that he does manage to be useful. This experience is expressed in professional confidence, and it is "contagious". It is passed on to colleagues, it also gives confidence to customers who find it and accept it as security and persuasiveness. And the road from security to social security is short. In fact, I'm talking about training in assertive behavior, which is the best source of benefits in social work.

***Option for individual supervision.***

Dragomira, 4th course, "Social Activities".

Dragomira goes to practice in the USSR. A child with mental retardation is entrusted to her care. She says she likes it. Children from the center do not behave well with him. Dragomira is aware of the social work skills. It is good. But he is not aware of how to apply empathy as a complex skill in the specific case. It is doubled, hesitant, and sensitive to the subject of its small client. I place hopes of individual supervision, which includes the group as a second customer to regain confidence. I put Dragomira on her own. To depict without words, not limiting the methods and means that will use assertive behavior. Dragomira comes to the supervision with a desire to show what she has invented. Shows a graph that, in her view, depicts assertiveness. The group watches with interest. The graphical mode depicts the interweaving of the client's interests with the viewpoint of the social worker. According to her, the intersection of both circles / that of the client and the other of the social worker / depicts assertive behavior. From her comment, it became clear that she had discovered what she had missed before. The group commented on the drawing. There are suggestions for other images. There are also many implications from their impressions of social practice. I give positive feedback to Dragomira. I do not have the correctness of the chart. My way is important to me. And the road is faithful when you are confident.

**Picture no. 1.** Option for group supervision with individual exposure.



***Second course, regular "Social activities", "Dependencies".***

When students are confronted with new social problems that they are unaware of because of their short life experiences, supervision is a must. Such a topic is dependencies. At lectures, the theme has been worked on in most aspects - alcohol, drugs, nutritional dependencies, and so on. They know that „Addiction is a behavioral syndrome in which the use of a psychoactive substance or the making of an action dominates the individual's motivation and where self-limitations are ineffective (loss of control). This process conquers the individual so much that he starts managing his / her life. The individual becomes helpless in his dependence. Voluntary efforts have been weakened and unable to counter addiction” (Budeva 2014), and “Addictive behavior is a dependency to a psychoactive substance, or an activity or a relationship, which distracting anything else, and has serious consequences for mental and physical health as well as broken relationships” (Budeva 2014), but when they go to a social institution of student practice and have a specific case, the reactions are different. Reactions vary, but group stress is common. Every individual reaction deserves oversight. Possible similar reactions, for example. disgust, disgust, regret, unwillingness to accept, perplexity, or others that are alike. But the experience is individual and specific, always personal. That's why I'm supervising a common problem, but I'm looking for every single exposure.

Picture 1 shows one such exposure. This is the personal point of view of a student second course on "Alcohol dependence". Different statements on the topic have been applied - from textbooks mostly, but there are also statistical samples and sentences. This accumulation of thoughts is "designer" solved in colors and applications. So the student accepts the problem, looking for the beautiful shape that compensates for the ugliness of content. Positive feedback from the group is immediate after the presentation. This is a highly effective way to create sustainable attitudes towards dependencies in general.

***Second course "Social activities", part-time training.***

Subordinate students are more adept at practice, they know it because they work in it. That is why they often come up with ready-made questions waiting for specific answers. In social work, unlike mathematics, there are few algorithms. It works with people and no software has been developed for that. We have knowledge, sometimes experience, but we do not have a problem solver calculator. The lack of specificity often makes students more reactive and ready to argue without having a specific thesis simply because of the argument. Their supervision has other topics. Social problems are not new to them, but they rarely feel unhelped by social legislation that does not empower them, the family who does not understand their difficult choices, the clients, etc. We work for support with them. Group supervision is the way to see that their colleagues have the same problems, not the same, the same dissatisfaction. In these group supervisors, I mostly work to create an attitude. A lasting attitude towards the existing social reality in which they lead not a single and not an end in itself struggle. They have the support of their colleagues, and often the inspiration and enthusiasm coming from them.

***Supervision of Masters "Social Activities"***

The Master's course in Social Activities is designed to build on the knowledge and skills of graduates of this or another specialty and already practicing the profession in



various aspects of the social sphere. Most often these are people who achieve their specific post-graduate goals. I.e. their training is not self-centered but pursues a certain realization. Because "Social work is the "front door" to publicly funded care" (Yorgova 2011).

The supervision of master students is different, but the principles and effect remain the same. Differences arise from the fact that these students have acquired some confidence and self-esteem based on their current realization; Sometimes they have believed and more that puts their actions in the risk area. The supervision of the teaching staff is largely in the control and evaluation function of the supervisor. It is essential to give them feedback - the correctness of their actions is essential. Supervising them for the look in which they see their prophecies and mistakes. I use group supervising. The group is a corrective and a mirror in which they see their actions; the group is also a protector and a community to which they belong. Supervision of the teaching staff takes the control and evaluation function of the supervisor; The group is also a growth motivator for the competitive environment in which it is set.

The bulk of the supervision is extremely logical. Every open theme is the gateway to many disputes that they have already had the opportunity to analyze on their own. Here, the supervision fully reveals the phenomenon of "chain reaction". Everyone involved in the conversation provokes the second and third... So, until a personal insight comes - sometimes common to the group, sometimes individual but equally significant. Here the role of the supervisor is to "keep the thread", i.e. do not allow the inclusion of new themes until they have run out of the current, as the risk of supervising being a "gathering" is great. I mean, there is a tendency to solve a multitude rather than a problem that is not violent within a supervision.

Interesting is the supervision in another specialty of the direction - "Entrepreneurship in the social sphere". „About 5,000 are social enterprises in Bulgaria" (Todorova 2018), so the development of this specialty is our priority. „The priorities of the Action Plan are to raise awareness of the social economy, to create supporting structures for the social economy and social enterprises, to provide information for the social economy, to create favorable conditions for education, to study and study the social economy and to create a favorable environment, stimulating the development of the social economy" (Todorova 2018). They gain practical experience mostly in social institutions offering a different social service. The specificity of speculation requires, in addition to the classical knowledge that is characteristic of social work and some others, shaping entrepreneurship and economic innovation. The eclectic of the specialty requires more precise knowledge of the services in the public sphere, for which they are theoretically prepared. Entering social care facilities, students have an attitude of working in them but are not yet prepared to clash with the fact that each service they offer is aimed at a user who is actually real and comes with his problems. These problems materialize in front of them and from the theoretical socio-economic knowledge they become their daily care. Poverty takes the form and dimension; disease and disability become visible; discrimination is tangible.

Another element of supervising future social entrepreneurs is the training of skills developing innovation. Here is the place to create an attitude of creation and discovery, searching for the new niche market. That is why we are working hard on the ability to take out of the known and the limitations; to look for new opportunities to solve old problems. In this aspect, the supervision is extremely strong. It removes from

each student even unapproved qualities and emphasizes the development of the right ones. Next benefit of supervision is the ability to work in a team that is important to any social entrepreneur, since the time of individual entrepreneurship has long been depleted by content. Here the exclusive assistant is the group as the main building block of each team. Group supervisions are not only useful, they also create a sense of satisfaction with the choice.

From what has been said so far, it is clear that supervising students only brings benefits to creating a sustainable professional attitude to the support process supported by knowledge and skills, but also by setting up the problem that you always have support and the possibility of emotional unloading. The truth is that supervising happens to encounter unwillingness to accept, or even anger, and sometimes silence. The social deficits that most often provoke these reactions in the student are related to the deficits of the modern public attitude. The hardest to work is the violence in all its forms; work with prisoners and the care of terminally ill.

Violence. Meeting with clients experiencing violence is extremely difficult to accept. It is hard to understand in itself that people can cause violence. This is a paradox; contradicts humanity; contradicts the overall attitude and worldview of a student prepared to serve people. The students' natural response is non-acceptance of violence; desire to escape from the subject; impossibility to maintain self-control.

Their non-acceptance finds different means of expressions of supervision. Anger. Angers are also reactive, sometimes aggressive. Aggression, however, exhausts them emotionally, without giving them the opportunity for adequate response, thought and help.

Denial is the "face" of non-acceptance. "I'm denying the case" to "I'm not for this job" for those more prone to generalizing.

Silence. Non-acceptance is sometimes expressed without words. Because of the lack of words to express you; because of the embarrassment of this taboo theme; or just as protest.

No matter what the reaction is, supervision is imperative. As a corrective of behavior; such as group support and feedback.

Death and illness are the other unacceptable topics. Teachers of "Social activities" are aware that they exist, but these topics cause them to be logical for the supervisor's reactions tied to non-acceptance. Adaptation to working with these topics requires patience and persistence in superstition. In order to be able to reach a level of "non-acceptance" to a level of "accepting does not mean to agree" at a certain stage of their studies. Controversies and ambivalence are constant "guides" of supervision.

Prisons are poorly preferred by social workers."It is also recommended that rapid investigations be made on complaints about ill-treatment by law enforcement officers" (Petrov 2011). These are my personal impressions, my modest experience in them. Investigation areas and prisons, as well as psychiatric hospitals, are not among the top candidates for job application by the graduates of "Socials activities". Supervision is one of the tools to change this situation. The fear and the difficulties and the lack of conviction that the protection of human rights is important in this field of social practice should be a permanent object of supervision. There are no exceptions and worries, such as "how good I am by helping bad people" and other public stereotypes that students are not rarely involved with. Or underestimate the human rights of prisoners, because of prejudices and other public attitudes.

These are few of the reasons why students have difficulty in accepting their role as social workers working with prisoners.

### **3. Conclusion**

In literal translation, supervision means "look from above". That is why it may often be a whine as a pure social function management. Yes, supervision is a form of control over the quality of social work. Makes it more visible and controllable. But it's not just that. It is a "privilege" for helping professions. That kind of supportive support they get to work well and make sure that is the case. It is also a "compliment" for customers. Thanks to her, they can rely on quality social services. Generally speaking, supervised students have two kinds of benefits. First, they can shape their knowledge in a concert. Ie. to see "how it works", the lessons learned, and to turn it into a system of professional help. Thus, they find support in the learning process - they receive theoretical tools based on social practice and knowledge of how to use them. Through supervisors, they can reconcile their learning practice. The reliance relies on this attitude of the helper, which we call self-reflection. Ie. Creates attitudes related to self-control and search for an external professional assessment to correct if the assisting process is needed.

On the other hand, the supervisor allows the student to become aware of their feelings, of the assistance process, to understand them, to take advantage of them, turning them into empathy. It is useful for the patient to freely "ventilate" the emotions he experiences, which are usually controversial but real.“ (Fercheva 2011). To summarize, supervising students from "Social Activities" is a connection between the conscious knowledge and the emotions that arise from them. It helps the student to be preserved, not to "overheat" in this highly emotional work by continuously improving his skills.

By guessing about the supervision and attitudes it creates - in the consumer, in society, in the client; cutting out the problems faced by the supervisor and the trouble areas, creates an impression of complexity and difficulty that I will now try to change. Supervision is, in fact, a complex process aimed at solving difficult problems, but supervising itself creates a sense of ease. The supervisor is not the only one and exhausts a source of resources in the supervisor's supervision. He can, and must, rely on the competencies and experience of supervisors, which makes his work a supportive activity. Indeed, students in "Social Activities" still have no professional experience, and their skills are at different levels, which may entail greater expectations for the supervisor. One should not overlook their social experience, which is also a usable and inexhaustible resource in supervising. I compare supervision / to create an attitude of lightness / orange peeling in a room. A white orange, but everyone senses the smell of citrus in the room. My personal attitude to supervision is to stay away from the opportunity to be the expert in group sessions. I delegate this role to the group itself. Thus, my expectations for resolving the current problem are complemented by new, surprising, continuously generating opportunities from the group's ideas. In this sense, I am going to be a participant rather than a group sessions leader. Despite my many years of academic experience, I continue to be impressed by the many opportunities for giving and receiving feedback that group supervisors have. Removed without being able to re-join a group leader, the group self-regulates and multiplies its capabilities of generating solutions and mutuality. For me, I only have to keep track of the feedback

received; to give it; to search and summarize again. This allows me to increase my dullness; leaving me time for the details that if I fully engage in the process would be avoided. So far I discussed the benefits of supervision. We should not overlook the fact that these benefits may not occur or are minimal if we succumb to some inherent risks to the routine. Generally speaking, I can bring them down to two - assessment and counselling. The temptation is great. By working with obvious problems from the side, whose development is pragmatic, we may be tempted to give advice. The experience prompts us to convey the right decision. And the group expects us to do that - to give advice, to make a decision, to experience. Councils are redundant, they do not allow supervisors to grow, prevent them from being creative, they downplay their value as a group. Ratings also do not help. The positive ones are not harm, but the negative ones are associated with condemnation, and condemnation causes protective reactions that prevent supervisors from helping.

From what I have said above, I can conclude that supervision is valuable not only for those working in the social sphere. It is also an essential tool for training social workers. Creates a true attitude towards the assisting process and promotes the quality of education.

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# Perception of the Jiu Valley families on poverty: Multidimensional approach

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## Abstract

Poverty is one of the constant preoccupations of social work, becoming a priority issue that must be solved. Poverty is a complex concept, which may include economic, political and social facets. According with World Bank (2011), poverty is pronounced deprivation in well-being, and comprises many dimensions and it includes low levels of quality of life, low level of education, low level of health, low incomes and the inability to acquire the basic goods and services necessary for survival with dignity. Throughout the world, poverty appears as a simultaneous consequence of inequality of opportunities and of misbalanced distribution of resources, insufficiently controlled. This poverty issue has acquired an increasing importance in Romania, being generated by the economic, social, psychological educational dysfunctions, obviously leaving its print on the quality of family and children's life. This study investigates four analysis dimensions of poverty, namely perception of the Jiu Valley families on poverty, causes of poverty, effects of poverty and measures for combating poverty, with the help of the method of the semi structured interview applied to a investigation sample made of 70 families in the Jiu Valley, Hunedoara county. The results of this survey reflect the fact that the perception of families on poverty differs according to the features of the investigated families.

**Keywords:** *family; poverty; perception; issues; social work; measures*

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## 1. Poverty. General issues

Poverty is considered a state of deprivation, with a living standard below some minimal level (Calvo and Derco 2008: p. 29). Poverty can be considered "a lack of well-being, including a specific set of circumstances precarious always characterized by a permanent lack of financial resources which trigger other serious restrictions and limitations: poor people often suffer from poor health, risks to be unemployed live in poor conditions, are often characterized by a low level of education and training, have an unbalanced social network, do not have good family relationships and insecure residential status " (Caritas 2010: p. 15).

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The eradication of poverty and hunger represents globally one of the millennium goals set out at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2000, which will contribute to sustainable development. Under the responsibility of the international community, specific objectives have been formulated and adopted to help ensure new dimensions of sustainable development and, implicitly, human development. In addition to the eradication of poverty, other objectives are also specified to ensure universal primary education; promoting gender equality; reducing child mortality; improving maternal health; combating diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis; ensuring sustainable development; elaborating a global partnership for development (Ștefea, P. and Pirtea M.). One of the initiatives forwarded by the EU to fight poverty is Europe 2020: A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, which aims to take 20 million people out of poverty by 2020. The EU measures poverty and social exclusion by using the composite indicator, i.e. "poverty and social exclusion risk" (AROE), which measures relative poverty. This indicator includes three sub-indicators: "poverty risk", "severe material deprivation" and "very low work intensity" (Salvați Copiii / Save the Children 2016: p. 11).

In the European Union, according to the latest Eurostat data, almost 25% of the EU citizens are at risk of poverty or social exclusion (Eurostat 2014/2/1). "According to other Eurostat indicators (2014), there are considerable variations among the EU Member States, and in six countries, namely Bulgaria (22.3%), Romania (22.2%), Spain (21.8%), Greece%, Croatia (21.1%) and Lithuania (20.0%), one fifth or more of the population was considered to be at risk of poverty, so we find these situations alarming" (Andrioni 2018 EN).

Inequality is the main cause of poverty and social exclusion of families and children. At present, 10% of households in Europe earn 31% of total the revenue and hold over 50% of the total wealth, and the gap between the rich and the poor is deepening in many countries (Salvați Copiii / Save the Children 2016: p.6).

According to the World Bank's study entitled *Poverty mapping in Romania*, it is highlighted that Romania ranks second in the EU in terms of risk of poverty or social exclusion, with 41.7% of the population being affected. One of the five headline targets of the Europe 2020 strategy is to reduce the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion by 20 million until 2020 (World Bank 2014).

In Romania, the economic consequences have been fully reflected on the social increased poverty in the area damaging the quality of life (Onica, Mihăilescu, Andrioni, 2016, p. 655). Romania, even if is an European country confront with a high level of poverty, reported at different category of population (gender, age) and this fact could be a very important alarm signal for different stakeholders which should be responsible for improve the living standards of the Romanian population (Andrioni and Popp: 2014).

The conclusions of the study entitled *Directions of the Influence in the Equation Family-Society, Isolation-Poverty*, (Popp and Andrioni 2014), shaped the idea that poverty has drastically increased in Romania after December 1989. The negative economic growth in the period 1997-1999, together with the deepening of social discrepancies between the rich and the poor, has led to the almost doubling of the number of the population living under the poverty threshold in the second half of the 1990s (Ibidem). After 2000, however, one witnessed a reduction of the population

living below the poverty threshold, and until 2003 we witnessed the return of a 25% poverty rate. The weight of the persons affected by severe poverty, i.e. the persons who do not have sufficient means for ensuring a minimum quantity of calories each day, was constantly situated above the 10% level after 1997. (Popp and Andrioni: 2014).

Poverty is a multifaceted concept, which may include social, economic, and political elements. Absolute poverty, extreme poverty, or destitution refers to the complete lack of the means necessary to meet basic personal needs such as food, clothing and shelter (Unesco 2015). Poverty is a complex issue that cannot be ignored, regardless of whether it is viewed from differently dimensions (Andrioni and Popp: 2014).

Poverty and social exclusion represent a violation of human dignity. Poverty limits human rights as a whole and deprives human beings of their dignity. The Human Development Reports point out that poverty is more than a lack of income - it is deprivation in relation to several dimensions.

The multidimensional nature of poverty, in particular social aspects such as housing poor health poor or time poor, needs to be understood in order to create more effective programs for poverty alleviation (Unesco 2001).

The 1997 Human Development Report on Poverty defines it as a deprivation of all the values the human being can have or embody. The term of human poverty is intended to delimit this multiple deprivation from the narrow sense of poverty in monetary terms, a conventional definition limited to deprivation as regards income and consumption.

Poverty focuses on needs or deprivations with unfavorable consequences on the perception of life quality, human dignity, or self-respect.

The links between the different dimensions of poverty can be determined and trained each other in a descending or ascending spiral that leads either to the trap of poverty or to escape from this trap. Extending human capacities and ensuring human rights through social response measures can thus provide people who identify or fall within this category the power to overcome poverty.

In Zamfir's opinion (1995) there are two dimensions of poverty: an absolute dimension of poverty (obvious shortages), characterised by an inadequacy of primary needs: food, dwelling, clothing, health, insecure and fearful and dimensional relative, which takes into account the time, the place, the specificity of the community.

People who are not employed on the labour market trigger the highest risk of poverty for their families and over-indebtedness can lead to relative poverty. There are a number of indicators such as inflation rate, gross domestic product, human development index, education level, etc., which are reflected in the life quality of children and their families (Popp and Andrioni: 2014).

## **2. The facets of poverty at the interface with social response measures**

The concept of poverty crosses several dimensions that intertwine and interact. From a conceptual point of view, the problem of poverty can be addressed from an economic, social, psychological and educational perspective.

*The economic perspective* shows the correlation between the causes and effects of poverty generated by the lack of incomes or insufficient earnings with repercussions on the individual, the family or the community, addressing the economic resources and the earning possibilities of the poor, referring in particular to income and wealth that are considered the main causes of poverty. This perspective attempts to address

poverty by improving access to financial mechanisms that can help generate and earn income (employment, loan access).

*The social perspective* shows the correlation between the causes of poverty and the effects of poverty on the level of the individual, family, group and society. This perspective focuses on needs, individual or collective issues, societal values and norms influenced by poverty, the repercussions of poverty on participation in community activities, integration into political life, changes and transformation of social roles etc.

This perspective seeks to diminish or reduce poverty by improving the access to social protection measures meant to contribute to a better individual or collective life quality.

*The psychological perspective* focuses on the psychological effects of deprivation. They include the reduction of self-esteem and self-confidence, low levels of expectations, and a diminished motivational level. This perspective tries to mitigate the unfavorable impact of poverty on the individual level through mechanisms destined to improve the motivational and aspirational segment or through psychological support mechanisms.

*The educational perspective* highlights the inequalities faced by children due to the socio-economic status of their parents, especially their level of education. The children whose parents have very low levels of education (pre-primary, primary or secondary) have a substantially higher probability of being exposed to the risk of poverty or social exclusion compared to those whose parents have secondary and higher education levels (high school and post high school) (Salvați copiii / Save the Children 2016: p. 17).

Furthermore, a low level of education of the adults in the household determines a low level of income, independent of other household characteristics. Education is the only chance for the children of these families to overcome the status of poor person in the future. The children from poor families in many cases have a low level of education due to higher rates of school non-participation, so they have their chances of school success diminished because of the lack of family support. Most children who drop out of school or do not attend school at all come from poor families with social problems.

### **3. Methods**

For the topic, the interview was an essential method of collecting data from respondents through direct interaction with them. The interview consisted of 22 open questions delimited in four dimensions of analysis:

1. the dimension related to poverty perception;
2. the dimension that highlights the causes of poverty;
3. the dimension that focuses on the effects of poverty;
4. the dimension of measures to combat poverty.

This study investigates four analysis dimensions of poverty, with the help of the method of the semi structured interview applied to a investigation sample made of 70 families in risk situations in the Jiu Valley, Hunedoara county.

The selection of the investigative group was based on lists of families in risk situations provided by the social services in the Jiu Valley, Hunedoara County.



#### **4. Results**

The results of this survey reflect the fact that the perception of families on poverty differs according to the features of the investigated families.

*As regards the first dimension of analysis* on poverty perception, this dimension includes a set of open questions pertaining to the perception of respondents on the definition of poverty, its description and the way in which it influences the respondents' living standard.

Among the most illustrative descriptions of poverty received from the respondents, the following are highlighted: "it's like a burden which makes me incapable of raising my children in a decent manner", I., 40, single-parent family with three children, husband deceased; "the inability to feed my children", M., 53, with 11 children, husband deceased; "a difficult problem, lack of money, lack of material goods", V., 34 years of age; "not to be able to offer our grandchild a better life", Ghe., 70; "not to have money for anything", B., 50; "poverty for me as a mother is a feeling of insecurity, it means worry, stress, especially when you have children who go to school and you find no job", C., 42 years of age; "poverty for me means that you do not have as much as other people, it depends how everyone perceives things, I consider myself modest but not poor, I'm from the countryside, I work but I do not have a big salary, luxury or designer clothes, it was hard for me too, but I fought at least not to beg", 54; "poverty is difficult and a torment", T., 48 years of age; "lack of goods, a very low salary", G., 32; "I think a person is poor when he or she has no condition, money, with worries, homeless, with no food, with nothing to wear, endures cold and hunger.. those who have food and a home are not poor, if they know how to use their money and work for a decent living", H., 29 years of age.

We remark that poverty is associated with the lack of financial resources (in the opinion of 50 respondents) and material resources (in the view of 65 the respondents), with unemployment (from the perspective of 15 respondents), with feelings of insecurity (40 of the respondents), with negative stress (for 7 respondents), with other categories of shortages (in the view of 35 respondents).

As for the ways in which poverty influences the living standards of the respondents, we remark that 10 of the investigated respondents do not think they are poor, as they claim: "we are not poor, in a way or another we have a slice of bread" or "I'm not really poor, I have a house, I have clothes and we do not have many things, but we live as we can, with modesty", and 60 of the 70 respondents believe that this social plague leaves its mark on families, generating deficiencies in its functionality. Thus, we highlight below some of the respondents' most significant answers: "inability to buy new clothes for children", L., 31 years of age; "we have wardrobes with doors about to fall, old furniture, we have struggled, we have received aids and we have made debts in order to get one thing or another, we struggle, but we survive", G., 38 years of age; "my children's daily needs are not satisfied, it's very hard to raise 11 children alone", M., 53; "the low salary and the absence of my husband complicates my position as a parent, my children need school supplies, clothes, computer and food", D., 35 years old.

In most cases (85% of the situations investigated), the answers provided by the respondents reveal the idea that poverty invariably influences the lifestyle of families, generating shortcomings for 47 of the respondents, problems for 80% of the

respondents, the inability to provide the daily necessities to the family members (80% of respondents), financial loans (40% of respondents), insufficiency or lack of financial resources for the basic necessities of daily living (80% of the respondents), inability to provide the daily bare necessities of the families (40% of respondents).

As regards the second dimension of analysis related to the causes of poverty, this component identifies everyday problems, causes of poverty, the influence of poverty on family or community relations.

Among the most important daily issues mentioned we encounter problems regarding the lack of jobs in the area (55% of the respondents); low monthly wages (40% of respondents); invoice payment issues (80% of the persons investigated); the small amount of food allocated to family members (65% of respondents); heating in winter (75% of respondents); the inability of families to provide children with a daily snack for school; poor management of financial resources (65% of respondents); the shortage of housing conditions (55% of respondents).

The lack of financial resources, the lack of food resources generated by insufficient food for family members, the lack of jobs and the inability of family members to get employed on the local labour market, a society neglecting the problems faced by families in difficulty, the irrevocable loss of a partner, the incapacity to pay the debts is considered as the cause of poverty, by the majority of the respondents.

As for the perception of respondents about the impact of poverty on intra-family relations and relationships with other members of the community, we remark that the investigated persons do not associate poverty with the deficient relationship with other persons from the extended family or from the community, some of the aspects highlighted by the respondents being illustrated in the following statements: "I do not think that poverty influences the relations with other people in the family or in the neighbourhood", J., 48 years of age; "health, not poverty, prevents us from getting along with our close relations", V., 58 years old; "it is not difficult for me to get along with my neighbors or other relatives because they are in similar situations", N., 37; "children feel marginalised in their school entourage because of poverty, but in the area where we live we have no problems regarding the relationships with other people", H., 36 years old.

With regard to the third dimension of the analysis focusing on the multidimensional repercussions of poverty, it illustrates aspects of the difficulties perceived in the family subsistence expenditure (70%) and family support in the keeping the children in school (58%), marginalization of children in the school environment (30%), misunderstandings and intra-family conflicts generated by the lack of financial resources (45%), limitation of families to the bare minimum (85%), the incapacity of families to renovate and modernise their homes, or to acquire household appliances or equipment (30%), lack of understanding and intrafamily conflicts (85%), psychological implications on individuals (35%), and so on.

Among the most illustrative affirmations related to the effects of poverty we may mention: "quarrels, depression, nerves", P., 47 years of age; "we have problems because of poverty but this is something normal", J., 48 years old; "we often have arguments triggered by the lack of money", G., 38 years of age; "sometimes because of poverty there is not even bread on the table, not to speak about the debts we have to pay". D., 35.

As regards the dimension of measures meant to combat poverty, this component identifies the respondents' perception about the concrete ways of supporting families in

difficulty by the public institutions or other organisations. Thus, on the basis of the answers provided, the following measures are underlined: "children's allowances", D., 35; "money allocated to children by the mayor's offices", G., 38 years old; "employment in a stable job", H., 29 years old; "we are too old to know these benefits, we get help from our relatives and neighbours every now and then", Ghe., 70 years old; "we receive goods packages around the holidays", D., 35 years of age; "the day care centre regularly helps us with food and school supplies for the children", J., 48 years old.

## **5. Conclusions**

This study investigates four analysis dimensions of poverty, namely perception of the Jiu Valley families on poverty, causes of poverty, effects of poverty and measures for combating poverty.

Indeed, poverty is pronounced deprivation in well-being, and comprises many dimensions and it includes low levels of quality of life, low level of education, low level of health, low incomes and the inability to acquire the basic goods and services necessary for survival with dignity.

The impacts of these economic measures are currently being felt in full, amplified by the lack of alternatives for ensuring jobs for unemployed. Successive stages of economic restructuring operated in the Hunedoara County and implicitly in the municipality Petrosani lack of alternative investments that have generated a continuous major negative impact among the population. Economic consequences have been reflected on the social, accentuation deficiencies damaging quality of life in the area (Andrioni and Schmidt 2011: p.26).

As a result of the current economic situation, the lack of job alternatives, the registered unemployment rate, and the undeclared unemployment in the Jiu Valley, many members of the community do not have the necessary resources to meet the fundamental needs. The poverty is the lack of resources needed to meet the subsistence needs or the inability to meet those needs considered to be minimal for an individual, this poverty being considered absolute if individuals in a community cannot afford the minimum subsistence level (Andrioni 2017).

The repercussions of the Romanian economy in the last decade have generated an increase in poverty among families, with negative effects on future welfare. The lack of jobs has severely restricted employment opportunities for adults and the young generation in Romania and in the area where the research was conducted. The general degradation of the economic situation was topped by the disorganisation of the family associated with extreme poverty. These have amplified intra-family misunderstandings, lack of interpersonal relationships, children's risk of marginalisation or neglect, maltreatment, which severely limits their ability to socially engage in adult life, and social participation is largely conditioned by family support. Due to the fact that the family occupies the central place in a child's life, in the family environment, the personality and the essential features of its character influenced by the behavioural patterns of adults, the acceptance of values, the discovery of the inner and outer universe, the family environment represents the foundation of the child's personal future development axis, poverty negatively influencing and shaking the foundation of the child's formation and its subsequent educational and professional ascension.

In these past years, disastrous effects have been identified as a result of the inability to bear the subsistence costs on the at family level. Debt accumulation pushes families into desperate situations with fewer chances of overcoming, the major risk being the loss of housing. The non-payment of public utilities affects the family and other occupants who have contact with the family, and the disconnection of many families from the communal heating system and even from the water and electricity networks due to the impossibility of payment confers poverty an image difficult to accept in a modern society.

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# Labor market between the requirements and expectations of the employers and graduates of higher education

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## Abstract

In recent years the demographic situation of population in Bulgaria is marking negative trends: reducing the number, low birth rate, high mortality rate and progressing ageing. At the end of 2015 the number of disability people in the country, over 16 years of age has reached 729 thousand, and the disability children up to 16 years of age - 45 thousand. That leads to increasing necessity to create and develop integrated healthcare-social services, considered to the wishes and opportunities of the persons to live an active, individual and qualitative life at home and community that should also respond to their diverse needs and support.

The continuous treatment of sick min bed person encounter a number of difficulties on one part for the person himself/herself, his/her family as well for those rendering help and support. The transition of patient from medical establishment to home is difficult process, requiring preliminary preparation. There is not a practice in Bulgaria when discharge a patient to give instructions how to prepare his/her home for coming back, with regard to arrangement, place of bed, furniture in premises etc. as well the opportunities being offered in the social sphere, concerning services, used at home and outdoors by beneficiary.

In recent year the governmental policy is with emphasis on increasing the number and types of social services, directly targeted to disability people. An Act for social services is under way of preparation that should respond to the challenges, related to the process of de-institutionalization and providing of long term assistance.

**Keywords:** *training; social services; disability people; situation; perspectives*

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## 1. Introduction

Teaching of students is a two-way process, consisting of two types bilateral activities /teaching – activity of lecturer and learning – activity of student/, resulting in mastering a system of knowledge by learners, professional skills and habits and create personal merits, in that number ability for self-training, under the supervision of the lecturer. Each of those activities has its characteristics and manner of organization.

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Teaching is a two-way process and composed of two main subjects: lecturer/teacher and students. They are related and mutually imparting. Lecturers are carriers of scientific information, students receiving, processing and complementing it.

That process is aimed to solve three main tasks:

1. The first task is related to master the required knowledge, skills and habits for independent professional activity.
2. The second task is related to development of individual and professionally-significant personal qualities.
3. The third refers to formation of readiness and need to continue education, self-education, self-training and self-upbringing.

It could be concluded that by education and training functions is required to make sense of their unity at the inter relationships. At the same time there could be performed the teaching functions thru combination of three significant pedagogic phenomena that include:

1. The activities of lecturer/teacher;
2. The activities of student;
3. Self-improvement of participants in teaching and learning process.

Regarding the higher education, the law in Bulgaria provide complete autonomy of the activities in the universities. The system of higher education organize training after secondary education to obtain following educational-qualification grades:

- „bachelor” - duration of training at least three years and obtain 180 ECTS credits.
- „master” - duration of training depending on requirements of curriculum, at least one year after recognition of educational-qualification grade „bachelor” and 60 ECTS credits or after five year course of training and 300 ECTS credits.
- training for recognition of educational and scientific grade „doctor” is included as last third grade in national qualification frame for higher education.
- the system of higher education in Bulgaria includes 51 higher schools (37 governmental and 14 private), in that number 44 universities and specialized higher schools and 7 independent colleges. The great number of high schools results in reduced supervision on part of government on their quantitative increase. In recent decades a massification of higher education in many countries, incl. Bulgaria is to be seen that resulted to multiple increase of the number of students. That process provides wider access to higher education.

The University education in the country seeks to good quality and is improving, considering the rating system for evaluation according the program accreditation. Despite that there a group of indicators, the rating system and program university accreditations that cannot influence in short time schedule, as they are related predominantly to the economic development of the country. The results of the evaluation system of the specific specialty or higher school are benchmarks for quality of education and the place of that school among the others. Those methods of evaluation are not always objective and place some schools or given specialties in unequal positions. The meaning of the university rating should serve for on part to the prospective student as benchmark and on the other

part direct the governmental policy of higher education as method for comparison of the universities and index for defining the „government procurement“.

Despite the wide access to higher education there are existing in the country social and ethnic groups where the share of those completed higher education is low. Even among the total population the share of completed higher education is low which contradicts the needs of the economy, mainly for qualified personnel who are to help the country to develop. The principal challenge to increase that share is to reduce the number of young people who has not completed secondary education.

A great challenge is the demographic condition of the country. Bulgaria face a catastrophe due to unprecedented ageing of population, low birth rate etc. The procedures of the National agency for accreditation and evaluation (NAAE) are complicated. Many of them are constantly in a process of accreditation (program, institutional etc.). That additionally complicates the process and creates additional work for the employed in VTU and hinders their stereotype activities. At the same time some of the criteria for accreditations are subjective and do not allow efficient evaluation. A greater consideration is required at the evaluation min order for important measurable criteria of the graduates for respective higher school. The normative regulations in force create monopolistic status of NAAE, the recognition of accreditation from foreign agencies in practice being impossible. Negative consequences for the system of higher education:

- reduced number entrance examination students ;
- increased number of failed students (predominantly from minority groups);
- increased number of discontinuing education students;
- restricted possibilities to be employed, due to filled in vacancies by elderly people;
- increasing emigration etc.;

Disproportions on the labor market – During the period of financial and economic crises, the configuration and structure of the labor market in Bulgaria changed extremely in unfavorable trend. An alarming proportion of shrinking for search of work force in the branch is recorded.

The problem is not only in the alarming quantitative decrease of the young people, finding work in the country but also in the wide spread demotivation among young generation for employment to important spheres of country's economy.

Despite the fact that many of the entrance examination students in Bulgaria are oriented to higher schools in other countries, some of the professions being studied here are applicably targeted actually to those of the country, related to economic factors etc. and international universities cannot compete them, regarding quality, but can compete them regarding their applicable-practical nature. The study of specific social subjects is one of those trends, that is, the subject of study is characteristic predominantly for our country in terms of economic, social and other reasons, mainly of family nature.

## **2. Characteristics of the learning process**

The learning process with students for how work with disability people is has the following characteristics:

- Focus – leading purpose is the professional training of student, formation of skills and qualities, that contribute to his/her professional employment situation and



satisfy requirements of society, that is, disability people are an integral part of that society and represent a considerable share of it.

- Integrity – all components of learning process/objectives, tasks, content, methods, means, forms and results / are interrelated and subjected to the objective.
- Bilateral nature – has two parties, two principal subjects – lecturer and student, who exercise various activities, united for a common cause.
- Dynamics– modify the content, the actions of the subjects in learning process and the subjects themselves.
- Conducted in real life conditions (healthcare establishments, social establishments in and outside the community etc.) – that creates opportunity to apply various approaches at organization and performance of the teaching methods, depending on specifics and organization of the work in given social or healthcare establishment.
- Risk nature – real working environment is hiding dangers /attending to beneficiaries with various diseases and characteristic conditions / a source of various stressing situations. In the process of training they encounter a multiple stress factors that are related to performance of their professional duties, the work with the beneficiary himself/herself as well, their families.
- Creative nature – requires creativity on part of lecturer as well on part of students. It is demonstrated in improvement and updating of the content, forms and methods of teaching process.

### **3. A peculiar feature of learning process is the participation of the disability person**

The disability person as participant in teaching process is personality with his/her own character, physical and psychic abilities, needs and convictions that determine his/her behavior at various interrelations. With his/her fears and attitudes, as well sentiments to health and disease, to multidisciplinary team, he/she can help as well compromise the pedagogical intentions of the teacher/lecturer. There is an impact also of factors, as: age, sex, social status, healthcare awareness, type and degree of impairment. The consideration to those specific characteristics in practice means constant re-organization of the teaching process.

To make clear the peculiarities at training students to attend to people with disabilities it is necessary to have clear picture for his/her profile– who is a person with disability; who is elderly person; what diseases are characteristic for disability persons and result in permanent disability, what are the specific features when attend to elderly disability persons; what options we have to work with them, as well many other questions that should be discussed, prior to the practical stage of training students to work with those persons.

The social workers render social assistance to persons with disabilities thru providing various types of bonuses – compensations, allowances, pensions, services and protection from social insurance, social aid, labor law, health and safety labor conditions as well cooperation for using number of taxation and financial reliefs.

The challenges before the specialists emphasizes the necessity the invalidity due to permanent impairments to be studied, discussed and reduce/prevent thru various programs and measures in that number prophylactics on global scale and in view of

demographic trends of population aging and ontogenetic changes in the process of aging there shall be always disability persons.

The implementation of individual approach to attend to disability people requires on part of perspective social workers to possess a number of theoretical knowledge and practical skills to attend to those persons.

#### **4. Profile of a person with impairment, subject of training for students from specialty „Social activities“**

According to a statement of WHO the health is „overall physical, mental and social well-being, not just lack of disease and disability”.

The main elements of objective well-being include conditions of life for people and their opportunities to realize their potentials and according WHO „the equal chance for health is part of the real well-being (WHO 2018).

Over one milliard people all over the world have some type of impairment, about 15% of then world's population. Between 110 and 190 millions elderly people encounter considerable difficulties at functioning (WHO 2018). Around 80 million people, who live in European Union (EU), have some kind of impairment (FRA 2011). Over 30% of people over 75-years of age are restricted to some degree and over 20% are seriously restricted. The percentage of people with disabilities ids increasing with the ageing of population in EU.(European Disability Strategy 2010-2020) In Bulgaria at the end of 2015 The number of people over 16 years of age with disabilities has reached 729 thousands and children up to 16 years of age with disabilities are 45 thousands. (Труд и социална политика 2017)

Within the meaning of the Act for integration of disability people:

1. "Disability/impairment" is every loss or damage in the anatomic structure, in physiology or mentality of certain individual.

2. "a person with permanent disability " is one, who the result of anatomic, physiologic or mental impairment is with permanent reduced possibilities to perform activities in manner and degree, possible for health man and medical authorities have established a degree of reduced workability or defined type and grade of disability 50 or over 50 percent. (ЗИХУ 2017)

The notion "disability/impairment" summarizes a great number of various functional and social restrictions that exist among the population of every country. The people may have physical, intellectual, sensory impairments as well suffer multiple diseases. The impairment, as well the change in the health status could be temporary or permanent.

Within the meaning of the Act for integration of disability people every loss or damage in the anatomic structure, in physiology or mentality of certain individual is considered as impairment. A person with permanent disability is one, who the result of anatomic, physiologic or mental impairment is with permanent reduced possibilities to perform activities in manner and degree, possible for health man and medical authorities have established a degree of reduced workability or defined type and grade of disability 50 or over 50 percent. A person should receive the status "invalid" ("disabled") as a result of comprehensive, medical-social approach, because the expertise of the disability and /or impairments and consequences of them, in personal-

psychological, social-economic and social-political consequences that impact the individual, his/her family, social networks and social groups he/she is involved and the entire society. The reasons that lead to invalidity, as well the consequences of it should be studied, investigated and offer policies for its prevention to provide access, conditions for social inclusion of invalids etc., that is, the social category "invalids" and social problematic be integrated in appropriate way to the social planning of life in communities. That's why it is important "invalidity/disability" and "invalid/disabled" to be formulated so that provide the opportunity to perform the social planning at the absence or minimized labeling and/or stigmatizing of the persons, inflicted by disability (ИВКОВ 2007).

The impairments of the persons (over 16 years of age) is proved by local (OEMB) and National expert medical commission (NEMB) by medical expertise for permanent reduced workability. The expertise for permanent or lost workability includes determination of: grade of permanent or lost workability in percent to a healthy person; the need of alien help for certain time, time of disability and date it expires, initial date of permanently reduced or lost disability (date of invalidation), as well the contradictions for work.

An obligatory element is the time/period of disability and expiration date – could from one to three years and determined in dependence the nature of impairment and possibilities to restore the workability of the person.

Persons who cannot work again are determined disabled for life. In case of multiple impairments, some not defined, the period of disability is determined specifically for the case 1 to 3 years.

People with disabilities depend constantly on the assistance of other people (assistants, helpers), to attend to their daily routines, to exercise activities, related to maintenance of personal hygiene, feeding, dressing and undressing, hygiene at home, activities outdoors, at the work place, settlement of administrative issues etc.

The family plays an important role at formation of beliefs and expectations to health and the disease – how to define the symptoms, period of illness, treatment in medical establishment, at the home of the sick, organization of priorities and how shall the cares for the person be provided. The cares for a sick person impacts not only attending physicians and medical staff but the family of the person. In many cases the treatment depends on the proper approach of treatment and organizing of the cares.

When speaking for continuous cares (at home) there should be considered that those persons are taken care of relatives and friends and if accepts that 10% of the population have impairments (certain type and degree of disability) that means around 25% of the population is occupied from the cares for those persons. People taking care of seriously sick persons perform exclusively heavy and responsible activities and still there is not a mechanism in force in the country to support them.

In Bulgaria, the main cares for those persons is provided by Projects as „Alternatives”, „Assistants for disability persons” etc., but those are scheduled programs that could not pretend for quality of provided services due to various reasons-lack of training for the employed for the short time of programs. Those mechanisms on part of the government to manage the situation is not effective to improve the autonomy of disability persons and members of their families, placing them in passive role and position of dependable people. The Emphasis of national

policy is directed rather to provide employment of permanently unemployed persons instead to the cares for disability people, so in artificial way re-qualify low educated, permanently unemployed persons into carers, the support for those in need, pushed in the background.

A tangible deficit is obvious for sufficient number of social services in community that respond adequately to the needs of the target groups– persons with disabilities as well people over 65 years of age, which leads to the presence of great number waiting for accommodation in specialized institutions and social services of residential type. (ACPI 2017)

The providing of social services for people who cannot satisfy themselves the vital needs is regulated by legislation. According the Social Aid Act (3CPI 2017), art. 16. para 1, social services are activities in support of persons for social inclusion and independent manner of life and provided to community in specialized institutions that are based on social work with healthcare and social nature. The providing of social services is exercised upon individual assessment of the needs for support that supplement the possibilities of the person and trace a trend to the service provider about the specific supporting activities within the frame of the social service according reported problematic issues or impairments and on the base of individual plan for support (3CPI 2017), elaborated by multidisciplinary team.

In recent years services provided to persons who need them are directed mainly to reduction of unemployment and restriction of the budgetary expenses for social aids. The recruited persons lack the required theoretical and practical preparation to render those services and a greater part of employed are the relatives of disability persons who think that their cares for the disability relatives have to be remunerated.(Spasova 2018)

In the period from 2007 to 2017 Bulgarian state used to offer a set of services, implemented and funded by European social fund, Operative Program „Human resources development“. The services are governmentally delegated activity and related to implementation of projects (План за действие за периода 2018-2021) for providing of services in home environment - „Personal assistant“, „Social assistant“ and „Home helper“, to support elderly disability persons, solitary people with chronic diseases who are in partial or entire impossibility for self-servicing and/or in risk of social exclusion.

It is said in Convention for the rights of disability people, that they have right to independent lives and inclusion to community (CRPD). That right, stated in The United Nations Disability Rights (CPSU) refers to all people, despite their age, abilities, nature of impairment or intellectual disability. That means, everyone has opportunity to live and participate in the community, he/she has chosen. People should participate in decisions taking for the cares and/or support they receive and have complete control of their lives. (Деинституализация и живот в общността 2007) The surveys showed that life in community stimulates independence and personal development. (Grunewald 2003)

## **5. Discussions**

The standing statement that invalidity is health problem and need of medical cares is a policy of the past that imposed attitudes and practices in society for isolation of the disability person.

The continues treatment of sick person in bed cerates a number of obstacles on one part for the person himself/herself, his/her family as well for those rendering help and support. The transition of patient from healthcare establishment to home is a complicated process, requiring preliminary preparation. There is no practice when discharge a patient to give instructions for coming back again at home regarding various arrangements – place of bed, furniture in rooms etc. as well opportunities the social sphere offers, concerning services, provided at home of beneficiary or outdoors. (Kancheva 2018)

New policies, strategies and normative regulations create conditions and prerequisites for more different attitude to disability persons. Those persons should be valuably included in public life in dependence of their specific abilities. The policies and national legislation for disability people is considered to the Constitution of Bulgaria, as well the principles, formulated in number of international documents as Standard rules of UN for equality and equal chances for disability persons and the Frame Directive for equal treatment of EU.

A fundamental document is National strategy for equal opportunities of disability people, elaborated and adopted in 2003. It is intended for „establishment of such status in Bulgarian society and state where the following principle shall be complied with:

- People with disabilities to have opportunity to participate valuably and actively in public life;
  - Considering the rights and ultimate interests of children with disabilities shall be the primary consideration in all actions:
  - People with disabilities shall be supported in their intention to lead independent lives according their own understandings and wishes;
  - Receiving equal rights, people with disabilities assume equal responsibilities;
  - The occurrence of impairment to be prevented or secure aid for its overcoming, thus evading eventual complications or alleviate perspective consequences;
  - Any form of discrimination, based on impairment is not permissible.
- (Национална стратегия за равни възможности за хората с увреждания 2003)

These major principles find formulation in consecutive changes of legislation and legal regulations, significant attention being paid to integration of disability persons to employment environment.

## **6. Conclusions**

In recent years the focus of social policies of the countries from the European Union, in that number Bulgaria, is targeted to people with disabilities: providing of equal opportunities, integration in all spheres of the public life, employment, life in community thru deinstitutionalization and development of social services, improve the quality of life of that category of persons. The multi aspect nature of problems, related to disability persons are challenges before the professionalism of specialist, employed to attend to them. The social workers are those who have key role for solvation the problems of disability persons as assisting specialists. That's why the training for work with that target group is a specific process, that requires formation of certain attitudes on part of lecturer, students as well disability persons who are part of the practical preparation for perspective social workers.

The training of students from specialty „Social activities” who are to work with disability persons is prerequisite for qualitatively implementation of the policies, oriented to those persons.

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# Work-family positive spillover

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## Abstract

Human life has been largely divided in all its periods between work and family in varying proportions, and each time the persons directly involved have managed to find at least a functional if not happy, way of joining the two. Now, although technology has replaced human labor both in the profession and in the private life, humanity complains more than ever about the lack of time. That is why a considerable amount of research focuses on the work-family relationship, trying to bring light and provide examples of good practices and optimal solutions that will facilitate a harmonious work-family relationship for as many people as possible, and the theme of the work-family conflict is part of the agenda of any scientific manifestation.

In this paper we aim to complete this dominant perspective according to which professional and private life compete for the individual's resources through a complementary approach to the relationship between private and professional life, presenting the positive aspects of the balance also. We will bring to light the results of several studies that deal with work-family facilitation, analyzing the positive valences that multiple roles have on the individual's functioning in the organizational environment, professional satisfaction, family relationships and general satisfaction.

**Keywords:** *work-life balance; multiple roles; family; positive spill-over*

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## 1. Introduction

The Personal and professional life seem to compete for the resources of the individual, when this theme is viewed from a functionalist, psychoanalytic or evolutionary perspective. "Trade-off" or "conflict of roles/ role conflict" were the key terms that defined the relationship between the two domains (Goode 1960; Kanter 1977; Greenhaus 1985). The first conceptualizations in this area are being developed since the 1950s, following the increasing involvement of women in the workplace (outside the home).

Since then, however, major changes have been made with regard to the roles of the two spouses, their professional activity and the relationship between the two scenes of existence – work and family. Thus, women who have a job spend less time with

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domestic duties and care and education of their children than fifty years ago, while men spend nowadays more time with such domestic activities than did their predecessors (Bond, Galinsky and Swanberg 1998). In spite of these changes, gender differences in this view persist, although researchers expect an evolution towards convergence (Bond, Galinsky and Swanberg 1998; Barnett 2001: p.781).

From empirical research we notice that there are data that confirm the classical theories of role conflict (Goode 1960; Frone and Russell 1997), but we also note the recurrence of studies that highlight the beneficial effects of cumulating roles, for both women and men, such as well-being or feeling less touched by physical or mental stress-related symptoms for those dealing with several roles, compared to those with fewer roles. (Thoits 1992; Crosby and Jaskar 1993: p.143).

In an attempt to explain this distribution of empiric research data, researchers have proposed several models, various factors, identifying variables that have a mediator or moderator effect on the work-family relationship. These models were born on the basis of empirical evidence and they all have explanatory value, although none of them is not unbeatable or exhaustive, as is usually the case in social sciences. Even studies that work with representative samples (secondary data analysis) at state or continental level, such as the data provided by the General Social Survey (GSS) or the WCS (Working Conditions Survey), fail to fully explain the variability met in practice.

## **2. Historical Review**

The first theorizing attempts of the work-family relationship started from the view of a strong segregation between genres and proposed the model of two distinct spheres (of work and family), from whose interpenetration the work-family conflict arose (Canter 1977). The well-known family sociologist, Talcott Parsons, believed that the maximum effectiveness of couples is achieved when each of the two partners is specialized in his/her field, using his/her own aptitudes, the husband carries out work outside the house, while his wife works inside the house (Parsons 1949). The high stability of the families at that time, the clear delimitation of the roles of the two partners, certainly contributed to the formulation of this model.

This functionalist perspective views the roles of the two couple partners as stable, each of them specializing in one of the two areas and thus contributing to the optimal fulfillment of family functions. The theory outlined above was applicable to the middle class of the 1950s, but the rising pace of the years that followed, the involvement in work of not only women who were financially constrained, questioned its applicability, as well as the functionalist projection, for which is hard to find correspondent in reality.

The gender-role ideology has an important word to say regarding this aspect, if we think, for example, at adding the professional role to domestic duties and those related to children in the case of a couple with a traditionalist ideology. For such situations, overload, role conflict already have fulfilled the prerequisites of appearance. Additionally, evolutionist and sociobiological guidelines saw men and women as two totally different constructs of nature, opposite, while males were dominated by competitiveness and aggression, oriented to out-of-home action, their partners were focused on caring for their loved ones, and their home. Thus, it was assumed that the

increasing involvement of women in paid work outside the home would contribute to the emergence of stress and related problems for women (Goode 1974).

These initial attempts to clarify the field did not take into account the similarities between the two sexes, many of the presumed differences in skills, preferences, competencies, or even personalities of women and men being rather socially conditioned (Barnett and Hyde 2001: 784) and socially constructed. Moreover, there is evidence that both women and men choose family roles - partner (spouse) or parent before the professional one, and the hierarchy is similar for both sexes, concluded Thoits (Thoits 1992). The results of the same study showed that the persons engaged in multiple roles, both women and men, felt more satisfied and reported higher levels of well-being than those who had fewer roles and also were confronted less with physical and mental health problems. The same results have been obtained in other researches that bring to the fore the benefits of multiple roles. (Barnett and Baruch 1985; Barnett and Marshall 1993; Simons 1992).

### **3. Sources of perspective change**

Thus, from the perspective of evolution over time, we cannot fail to notice the shift from conflict theorizations and studies that quantify its negative effects on family life, professional and marital satisfaction, health (resource conservation theory - Marks 1977; Greenhaus and Beutell 1985, for example), to complementary visions that bring to light the state of well-being, present in those who combine professional and family roles (expansionist theory - Barnett and Hyde 2001). These differences may be due to the increased involvement of women in work and hence their access to financial resources, a source of independence and power, from a conflictual perspective, which allows them to negotiate tasks and obligations and share them with their partners.

On the other hand, a second source causing this change might be that social patterns are evolving, so gender gaps portrayed by the media (relating to the two partners' housework and professional roles) are getting more faded, and such principles as non-discrimination and gender equality and equal opportunities are clearly formulated. Corroborating this remark with mass-communication theories, especially if we refer to Bandura's theory of modeling and Cooley's social expectation paradigm, we can reason that social models built on the similarity between the two sexes are echoing consumer behavior. Bandura, starting from social learning theory, sees mass media as an agent in the socialization process, being a source of accessible and attractive models for any kind of behavior. According to Cooley, relations between people are based on mutually accepted rules. Thus, the mass media directly shapes the public's behavior through the roles, hierarchies, models and information they propose, because people choose a way of considering the expectations and reactions of others.

The fact that the public is exposed to an increasing diversity of possibilities for both women and men, seen as unusual some time ago, changes the definitions in time of the unconventional. Women are now state presidents and heads of government (although hundreds of years ago were not even entitled to vote), security officers, policemen (jobs characterized by physical force, classically attributed to men), men can work as chefs, nurses, or educators (professions where women are still dominant, but the gender gap continues to decline).

Another source of change can be the policies and practices of companies, which, in order to keep valuable employees, convinced of the strong relationship between work-family balance and professional performance, seek to provide employees with as many facilities as possible in order to keep them engaged and also contribute to reducing absenteeism and even staff fluctuation. These measures aimed at harmonizing work and personal life are brought together under the umbrella concept of "family-friendly practice". This includes flexible working hours, flexible working places, various part-time contracts, childcare facilities (nurseries, kindergartens, daycare centers at the employer's premises), subsidies for children or dependent elderly people, while when it is not possible to take care of them at the employer's headquarters, we can mention the possibility of granting additional leave under certain conditions and the list remains open, as organizations are always looking for ideas that will bring them the involvement and loyalty of valuable employees.

The fourth category of factors would be represented by social and legislative policies, such as the introduction of longer maternity leave, mother and child protection laws, including at work, medical leave for taking care after the sick child, parental leave for child care up to the age of two and three in the case of children with problems (in Romania, for example), granting allowances and emoluments to parents or tutors for raising children.

The current demographic connotation that characterizes both Romania and Europe has led to alarm signals regarding low birth rates. In an attempt to counterbalance the aging of the population by introducing legislative measures to help create a favorable context for deciding to have children for young couples, the EU Member States responded in a differentiated way to the recommendations of the European Commission (Council of the European Union 2011: 9). These recommendations are seen in the light of the EU 2020 Strategy, which sets certain employment rates for both men and women.

Somehow related to the same category of factors, is the development of childcare facilities and the social work system, by setting up centers for elderly care, especially those with medical problems, by developing state systems or creating private ones, more performant, facilities that allow couples with jobs to focus on their professional role. In economically advanced countries (Western Europe), social welfare systems keep pace with development in other areas and are often characterized by performance and reliability.

In this equation, which attempts to explain the meeting in higher proportions of positive spill-over in empirical studies, rather than conflict, especially in more recent studies, we cannot question the technological evolution. This is responsible for the simplification of household activities in particular, the automatization of many of them, easy access to food and other utilities, for example. In addition, the possibility of permanent connectivity, rapid, almost instantaneous transmission of information supports the implementation of family friendly practices, but also the connection between family members, organization and synchronization between them.

#### **4. Positive spill-over**

In The positive spill-over concept has been used by several researchers (Edwards and Rothbard 2000: pp. 178-199; Hanson, Hammer and Colton, 2006: pp. 249-265). It

was defined by Hanson and colleagues in the process of building and validating a scale to measure positive spill-over as representing the "transfer of positively valanced affect, skills, behaviors, and values from the originating domain to the receiving domain, thus having beneficial effects on the receiving domain" (Hanson, Hammer and Colton, 2006: p. 251). Conceptually, this term is related to "work-family enrichment", "work-family positive interactions" as we have previously shown (for more details, see Pogan 2016: pp. 213-214). We can see the work-family facilitation or the positive relationship between the two areas as emerging from the humanist vision (Gordon Allport or Carl Rogers) or from the perspective of self-efficacy (Bandura).

Barnett and Hyde have attempted an inductive approach to work-life relationships, also taking account of gender and propose an expansionist theory (Barnett and Hyde 2001: p. 784). The first principle of their theory says that the cumulation of roles is beneficial for the representatives of both sexes, and involvement in one area does not automatically exclude the strong commitment to the other. The authors, however, acknowledge that certain loading limits exist when talking about multiple roles in the sense that their number should be taken into account, the time needed to perform each of them, causing overloading or other negative effects. The key that they think should be used to understand this is the quality of roles, not necessarily their number, or hours of work, thus proposing a subjective, interpretive, not objective, perspective, according to which quantification passes in the background.

Based on the large sample of data from the Wisconsin Maternity Leave and Health Project, the research paper of Hyde and collaborators showed that work and family engagement are positively correlated for women, even significantly, while for their male partners no significant relation emerged (Hyde, DeLamater and Durik 2001: p. 10).

There are a number of studies that confirm the positive relationship between multiple roles and physical and mental health, lower rates of depression and stress, fulfilled couple life for both women and men. Thus, after a literature review, Crosby (Crosby 1991) noted that women involved in multiple roles are less confronted with stress than those in other categories. Based on a representative sample at national level for the USA, women's well-being was positively correlated with the professional status - whether employed or not (Russo and Zierk 1992: p. 269). The relationship identified by the authors does not tell us anything about causality. Family life, couple health, also seem to be related to the employment status of the wife, as divorce proved to have higher rates in couples in which the female partner had no earnings (Ono 1998).

When speaking about multiple roles for men, we first think about adding the parental roles to the others, outside the house, usually assigned to them. Research shows that the role of father, partner (husband) and employee, all have an equal contribution to men wellbeing (Barnett, Marshall and Pleck 1992). Moreover, recent studies (Christiansen and Palkowitz 2001; Coley 2001) consider that the parental role for fathers has gained more faces in the last decades, compared to mothers. Nowadays, we see fathers as engaged in childcare as their female partners, even mass media promotes such models and legislation has changed, establishing certain rules for parental leave for fathers (for example, in Romania, fathers have to benefit from at least one month of parental leave for growing and baby caring for their children before the age of two – CIC in Romanian).

We can see that gender differences tend to diminish, as cultural norms regarding the roles of the two spouses also changed towards convergence and the gap between the role prescriptions for men and women minimizes.

When shifting our attention towards possible mediators and moderators of the relationship between work-life balance and positive outcomes, we notice the occurrence of buffering, as a moderating process, in different studies (Barnett, Marshall and Pleck 1992; Voydanoff and Donnelly, 1999). One role may action as a buffer for the negative experiences and outcomes of the other, as concluded Barnett and her team – the family role for men influenced their perception of stressful work experiences (Barnett, Marshall and Pleck 1992).

But not only personal roles come in this equation with a positive impact, professional role was also found as buffering the work-life relationship. One example to sustain this assumption is the study of Voydanoff and Donnelly (Voydanoff and Donnelly, 1999), which showed how job satisfaction and marital happiness were found to work as buffers for the psychological distress of taking care of elderly dependent adults (parents).

Multiple roles can also be a source of building self-efficacy (Bandura and Bussey 1999), offering different opportunities to experience success and expended frame of reference (Barnett and Hyde 2001: p.788). Although multiple roles can also be sources of facing not only success, but also failure, disappointment, they still offer the opportunity to build increased self-complexity. Starting from Lenville's theory for social cognition, Barnett and Hyde consider that "the grater the individual's self-complexity, the more that individual will be buffered against the negative effects of stressful life events and consequent effects on depression" (Barnett and Hyde 2001: p. 788).

Furthermore, many studies have concentrated on the benefits of dual-earners couples, both from financial perspective, and also from a social and psychological view, as they speak about similarity of experiences and gender-role ideology. Analyzing the financial aspect, is obviously that the added income should reduce the stress and pressure for the working husband and also contribute to less marital stress, while financial problems have been related to marital conflict. Empirical data show us that the couples in which the wife is unemployed are two times more likely to divorce than those with the wife having medium earnings, while for women with above average venue, the chances to separate increased only 1,3 times more (Ono, 1998).

Going beyond financial aspects, it is expected that the similarity of experiences for the two working partners will facilitate their interactions, the couple communication, contributing thus to their relationship and marital satisfaction and stability. This in turn will action as a buffer for professional problems or childcare difficulties. We can mention here the taxonomy of Duxbury and collaborators, who speck about job and career (Duxbury, Lyons and Higgins 2007). While the first term only refers to revenue-generating activity that responds to immediate financial needs, the career involves intrinsic satisfaction, but also high-level education and responsibility, rewarded financially and intrinsically.

According to the taxonomy, we can talk about the dual career couple, characterized by the fact that the two partners have highly specialized or managerial positions that provide them with consistent financial gains but are also accompanied by "psychic rewards". It would be expected that the similarity of roles in this family would

increase marital solidarity and reduce conflict, assuming that the two partners are more likely to identify with one another, to understand their aspirations, demands, and difficulties. The authors assume that the dual-career family enjoys the highest potential for equity of professional and family roles, due to the similar resources of the two partners, which gives them equal positions from which they start negotiating the roles, but also by the possibility to get out of the relationship more easily when one of the partners is unhappy because he/she does not depend (financially) on the other. In this type of couple, researchers also expect the highest degree of work-family conflict, settled either by postponing or canceling the decision to have children, or by passing one of the partners, usually the wife, from the career to a revenue-generating job, which also allows for maternity, step that places the family in a different category, that of the neo-traditional family. For the wife of this type of marriage, family tasks have priority over professional ones, at least temporarily, until the children are not dependent any more or until transferring responsibilities to another person - grandparents, nanny, which allows the female partner to migrate from the job category to career.

Nevertheless, gender-role ideology has a strong influence on the way each of the spouses and the couple will interpret each life situation. For example, a father with a modern gender-role ideology will be happy to take care of his children while his wife is working long hours, while another one, more traditionalist, will feel frustrated.

The discussion returns again to role-quality, which proves to be influenced by the gender-role ideology. We have to mention here that besides the personal gender-role ideology, the differences concerning it between the two spouses is very important, as many decisions, time arrangements concerning childcare, households or working schedules are taken by the two partners, and a large gap between their perspectives about these aspects will lead to conflict and dissatisfaction for at least one of the two partners.

Another benefit of multiple roles is the increase opportunities of receiving social support, from coworkers, spouse, superiors, extended family. Social support was proved to buffer job related stress, even in low-income situations (Belle 1992), marital problems, or other life challenging situations. For example, previous research showed that social support received from the wife will attenuate psychological distress for men with poor quality jobs (Barnett, Marshall and Pleck 1992).

## **5. Discussions and conclusions**

From a methodological point of view, we must note a limitation of the conclusions based on the studies mentioned above, that is the fact that these studies are correlative, which means that they do not address the causal relationship, meaning that the question remains: the involvement of women in work influences in a positive way their physical and mental health, or rather health conditions their involvement in work (those who suffer from medical problems cannot have a job or need to work under a reduced program)? Noticing this unanswered question, Hyde and her team attempted to clarify this clue through a longitudinal study to see if mental status could be a predictor for employment or unemployment after eight months, for women (Hyde, Klein, Essex and Clark 1995). Her research didn't confirm this hypothesis, but we can bring into discussion whether eight months are enough for studying this relation or not.

We have discussed above about several mediating and moderating factors of work-family relation, factors that can explain the positive spill-over between personal

and professional life. But we have to say that when dealing with multiple roles we cannot forget about upper limits, meaning that individuals' resources are limited (for example time), the number of roles we can handle properly is not infinite. Otherwise, may appear symptoms as overloading or distress.

Another aspect worth mentioning is that many of the above discussed factors are related and sometimes determine each other, which means the relation between them is bidirectional. Furthermore, sometimes are dependent of other ones, such as educational level, the type of job, the level of income, working schedule, or extended family, for example.

As we discussed in the beginning of this paper, human life has been largely divided in all its periods between work and family in varying proportions, and each time the persons directly involved have managed to find a way of joining the two. Now, although technology has replaced human labor both in the profession and in the private life, humanity complains more than ever about the lack of time. Work-family relationship represents one area also affected by this lack of time and several resources, fact that determined social sciences researchers to address this domain.

The purpose of this paper, as stated, was to complete this dominant perspective according to which professional and private life compete for the individual's resources through a complementary approach to the relationship between private and professional life, presenting the positive aspects of the balance also. We brought to light the results of several studies that deal with work-family facilitation, positive spillover and sustain the expansionist theory, analyzing the positive valences that multiple roles have on the individual's functioning in the organizational environment, professional satisfaction, family relationships and general satisfaction.

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# Attitudes of Bulgarian teachers towards the introduction of civil education in schools

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## Abstract

In 2018 the European Commission announced the project for its new youth strategy with a focus on engaging, connecting and empowering young people. In the future strategy the importance of civil education for the young people is once more underlined. Following the trend and in response to the current challenges since 2016 Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science has conducted several policy changes towards an augmented role of the civil education in the school system. The last change voted is the introduction of a new, separate subject Civil Education in high-schools starting from 2020/2021 school year. In this context, the paper presents the attitudes of Bulgarian teachers towards the civil education in schools based on the empirical data gathered in the frames of a national research conducted in the period February-May 2017. The report also covers the specifics of the changes in the educational system in Bulgaria concerning civil education in a comparative context with other countries in the European Union. The objective of the report is to provide an overview of the general attitudes of Bulgarian teachers of all school levels towards the importance of the civil education and the form in which it should be presented to students in the school institutions.

**Keywords:** *Bulgarian teachers; citizenship; Social Sciences; Civil Education; Bulgaria; attitudes.*

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## 1. Introduction

The paper presents the attitudes of Bulgarian teachers towards the civil education in schools based on the empirical data gathered in the frames of a national research conducted in the period February-May 2017. The report also covers the specifics of the changes in the educational system in Bulgaria concerning civil education in a comparative context with other countries in the European Union.

The objective of the report is to provide an overview of the current state of the changes in the educational system in Bulgaria concerning civil education and the

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general attitudes of Bulgarian teachers of all school levels towards the importance of the civil education and the form in which it should be presented to students in the school institutions.

## **2. Specifics of the changes in the educational system in Bulgaria concerning civil education in a comparative context with other countries in the European Union**

Since the installment of the democracy in the country in 1989, the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science is in constant search for ways to improve the existing educational policy and practice in the country. This is especially true for its desire to cover and follow the societal changes through the transitional period to democracy and to support the building of a European identity for the young people after the membership of the country in the European Union in 2007. Furthermore challenges such as the globalization of the world and the mobility of the young people, the pressure from the augmented migration and the necessity of the modernization of the teaching practices, based on the contemporary issues and menaces force an even more active transformation of the system and place the focus on the necessity and the importance of civil education.

In this logic a completely new regulation was adopted at the end of 2016 regulating the state educational standard for civil education in Bulgaria. Ordinance No. 13 of 21.09.2016, on civil, health, environmental and intercultural education was promulgated in the State Gazette, issue 80 of 11.06.2016 and entered into force on 11.10.2016. The Ordinance defines all the basic elements for the implementation of the education, including its objectives, the forms in which it can be realized, the results to be achieved and the guidelines for the institutional policies for support of the civil, health, environmental and intercultural education. The Ordinance stipulates that the civil education is implemented in all educational institutions on the territory of Bulgaria and is part of an interdisciplinary complex including the health, environmental and intercultural education that should provide the students with social, civil and intercultural competences as well as such related to health and the maintenance of a sustainable environment. The civil education according the policy document is aimed at forming civil consciousness and civil virtues and is connected with knowledge about the structure of a democratic society, about the rights and obligations of the citizen and with the skills and readiness for responsible civil behavior.

The Ordinance stipulates that the classes of civil, health, environmental and intercultural education within the educational institutions are carried out at class time, including in the frames of the forms of student self-government that are practiced within the educational institution. This type of education should also be applied in all other learning activities, including in the workshops and within the framework of general activities in support of the personal development. Studying the subject of civil education in grades XI and XII is based on a provided by the Ministry of Education and Science curricula and plans. According to the Ordinance, the independent subjects providing preparation in the field of civil, health, environmental and intercultural education are entered in the school documentation with the respective quoted names or with another that demonstrates the thematic scope of the specific subject matter as well as the interrelation with the other elements of the complex.

The civil, health, environmental and intercultural education in the classroom is realized through activities to ensure the group development and dynamics of the public class unit and to stimulate participation at all levels of student self-government. It is also stipulated in the Ordinance that besides the teachers, the activities of individual institutions within the educational institutions can be realized by guest lecturers from competent institutions, NGOs or public figures, but only in the presence of the class teacher. The Ordinance translates the planning and prioritization of educational institutions, which should analyze the needs of the school community and set their priorities related to civil, health, environmental and intercultural education to be integrated and aligned with the institution's strategy. In line with their strategic priorities, educational institutions define institutional policies that support and implement disciplines from the educational complex. It is important to note that the Ordinance (Article 17) stipulates that the practices of the individual institutions supporting civil, health, environmental and intercultural education should also include incentives for active participation of adolescents through multi-faceted practices tailored to the specifics of their age, including:

- student self-government and representation, in all its forms and at all levels available to the relevant age, including stimulating their leadership skills;
- planning, organizing and implementing voluntary initiatives within and outside the educational institutions as well as other forms of non-formal learning and skills development through doing;
- expression of personal opinion and position through the existence of school media produced by pupils without limitation in their form and used communication channel;
- planning, organizing and implementing school campaigns aimed at promoting and raising awareness on health issues, tolerance, social sensitivity, human rights, environmental protection, and others related to the complex's themes;
- celebrating school holidays and events, including national and international holidays;
- inclusion and implementation of peer-to-peer trainings and clubs and informal interest groups;
- performing mediation and mentoring;
- studying pupils' opinions, attitudes and expectations about the process and content of school education, and suggestions about school life;

The Ordinance provides that institutional policies should include activities for the development and maintenance of the multicultural environment by preventing marginalization and self-grouping or ethnicity-based grouping.

In 2018, the Ministry of Education and Science continues its efforts to maintain the up-to-date curriculum on civil, health, environmental and intercultural education by updating the existing ordinance. Between 15 August and 14 September 2018, a public consultation was held on the content of the submitted draft Ordinance No. 13 of 21.09.2016 on civil, health, environmental and intercultural education. According to the Ministry of Education, these changes are necessitated by the need to ensure the training of students on the current national and world public issues, including the introduction of the concept of e-government, and the enhancement of media literacy,

awareness of corruption, discrimination and inequality, and by improving the quality of learners' knowledge and skills related to road safety training and education. With the current amendment of the Ordinance, special topics have been raised to enable the principles and objectives of e-government to be introduced and the opportunity to be involved in its application for personal and public purposes, the principles of separation of powers and the rule of law and raising awareness of human rights as a framework that can serve to combat injustice, corruption, discrimination and inequality. Again in August 2018, the Ministry of Education and Science announced that the program for the subject "Civil Education" is already ready for students in the 11th and 12th grades of the 2020/2021 school year. The subject "Citizenship Education", according to the announcement, is aimed at forming a political culture and practical orientation of the students towards the modern democratic state, the division of authorities and structures and their rationalization. Civil education, by including in the curriculum topics of politics and democracy, rights and responsibilities, identity and differences in society, power and the state, economy and global issues, as well as the provision of a partisan environment within the educational institutions, in which provides practice for future active participation in civil society at subnational, national and transnational levels.

The proposed programs are fully in line with the draft Youth Strategy 2019-2027 presented by the European Commission in May 2018. Priorities of the period are announced to provide an opportunity for young people to build their own lives, build their sustainability and secure life skills to cope with a changing world, encouraging them to actively engage in public life, preventing the exclusion of young people and ensuring that they are involved in policy-making processes across sectors. Specifically, the changes concern Member States' recommendations to stimulate young people's engagement by providing skills for participation through youth work, youth parliaments or simulations, civil education actions and media literacy through synergies with formal education and public authorities, as well as their interconnection through the use of technologies and pedagogical practices, in order to increase the accessibility and respectively develop skills for digital work in all young people. The strategy defines three areas of action: engaging (encouraging the participation of young people in democratic life), linking (bringing together young people across the EU and beyond to promote volunteering, learning mobility, solidarity and intercultural understanding) and empowerment (support for the empowerment of young people through quality, innovation and recognition of youth work).

According to Eurydice Report Citizenship Education at School in Europe – 2017 and in the context of the current educational practice of the Member States and candidate countries of the European Union, Bulgaria is a part of 13 countries using a combined approach to civic education, including it as an integral part of other subjects for a longer period of study (3-7 grade) and transition to a separate subject at a later stage (11-12 grade). In Bulgaria until 2018 the integration of civic education was in the subjects of social sciences. With the introduction of e-government education and media literacy in 2018, it is also an integral part of ICT training. Regarding the content of the training in civic education and the independence in defining the topics presented, Bulgaria is one of the 20 educational systems that have defined both general objectives of the training itself and specific ones and expected educational results.

With regard to the provision of extracurricular activities, Bulgaria is one of 28 education systems offering recommendations for all types of activities that are directly related to the citizenship dimension. These recommended activities include environmental ones like education for sustainable development, sports activities, artistic activities, including integrating media literacy, participation in international online networks, participation in political life, visits to political institutions, youth parliaments or participation in elections, participation in debates and dialogue with a view to acquainting and engaging young people in political issues, processes and structures, volunteering with community organizations and others. In Bulgaria, as well as many other countries, an emphasis is placed on entrepreneurship education as an active form of training that builds skills and attitudes related to civic education. In the context of the analysis, it is not taken into account whether these activities, clearly separated from the curriculum, are provided separately by community organizations such as NGOs and youth clubs or in cooperation with schools. As already outlined, the provision of extracurricular learning activities is an essential part of the overall approach in Bulgaria to teaching civic education, enabling it to develop skills and values in the area of citizenship, especially through volunteer activities chosen by them themselves. Bulgaria is also one of the 27 education systems that provide national programs for extracurricular activities, initiated or recommended by the highest level and at least partly funded by the education authorities and accessible to a large part of the relevant geographical area.

In examining the opportunities for participation in school self-government, an excellent practical experience for the learners about the essence of the democratic process, in Bulgaria as well 22 other countries, have included in their legislation recommendations for providing conditions for student self-government at all levels of education. Such a change also occurs in Bulgaria, with the 2015 Pre-school and School Education Act expanding the recommendations for student councils to include primary schools and introducing the right of student representatives to participate, albeit without the right to vote, in the school council, who is leading decision-making on key solutions for schooling. The overall increase reflects a positive and important step towards the inclusion of even younger children in the democratic process and the building of participating habits through their school life from an early age. Another important activity to stimulate participation in school self-government for all learners is the translation, publication and dissemination of the Student Self-Governance Handbook of the Organizational European Bureau of Student Self-Government in September 2017. The publication is prepared in Bulgarian language in cooperation between the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the National Youth Forum and the Sofia School Council. The aim of the initiative is to provide a toolbox and a set of good practices for building sustainable student councils and parliaments as a major tool for qualitatively empowering students and involving them in decision-making processes. The handbook contains specific information on the process of forming, organizing and managing student councils and parliaments as well as motivational introductory elements aimed at stimulating active participation of students in school self-government and the community as a whole. The Author of the Guide - Organizing Office of the European Students' Councils (OBESSU) is an independent non-profit platform for cooperation between national student alliances active in secondary education and vocational education in

Europe, which represents the voice of the pupils towards European decision- decisions, political institutions and other stakeholders in the field of education.

In terms of assessment of the achieved educational results by the students in the field of civil education Bulgaria provides only general assessment guidelines applicable to all subjects. Bulgaria is one of the seven countries that do not recommend or organize by 2016/2017 the conduct of external evaluation in civil education at any of the educational stages. The other countries are Greece, Croatia, Luxembourg, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Finland and Norway. The external evaluation is done by evaluators who are in no way involved in the assessed learning activities and report to a local, regional or national body. The evaluation they make is focused on the realized activities, not the specific contractors of each of them. The evaluation of this kind aims to monitor or improve the quality of the school and / or the results of the pupils and the findings are presented in a general report that does not include individual information for the evaluation of the individual teachers. In terms of civil education, such assessment is useful to improve the relevance of the learning environment with the necessary prerequisites for effective teaching and practicing the same.

In Bulgaria, as well as predominantly in the EU, civil education is taught by teachers, specialists in other subjects such as history, politics, social sciences / sociology, philosophy, etc. There are also no specific guidelines for the necessary qualifications that teachers should possess in order to teach it. In Bulgaria, the teacher of civil education in Bulgaria needs to have acquired higher education and professional qualification as "teacher" in specific areas in order to be able to take up the post and teach the subject (introduce from 2020/2021 school year). In the currently discussed policy change several other thematic field of study would be introduced as qualifications suitable for a civil education teacher, including Law education.

### **3. Methodology of the study**

This report presents the empirical data gathered in the frames of a national research conducted in the period February-May 2017 with the objecting of studying the attitudes of Bulgarian teacher towards the integration of marketing techniques in the teaching practice in civil education in the country.

#### *Organization of the study*

The methodology of the conducted survey is based on a preliminary prepared standardized questionnaire administered via a soecialized survey online platform. The participating teachers involved are selected on a volunteer basis. The questionnaire survey tool used was prepared in the objective of studying the attitudes of Bulgarian teacher towards the integration of specific marketing techniques in teaching civil education in schools and thus includes more questions than those presented in the current report. The questionnaire used consists of 12 closed questions suggesting a specific answer and 2 open questions.

The target audience is teachers working in Bulgarian schools. According to the the information provided by the National Statistical Institute, the total survey population in 2017 can be estimated at 79 200 people. In the submitted study, took part a total of 118 teachers from all educational levels. The submitted survey is not representative. Its results have been used as a basis for planning further extended studies on the possibilities for integration of interdisciplinary approach in teaching civil education in Bulgaria.

### Profile of the respondents

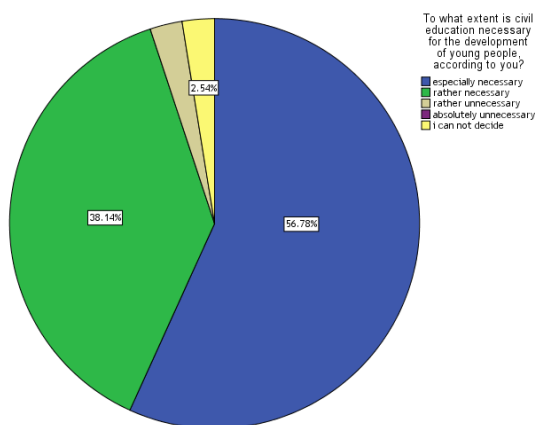
The majority of respondents at 86.4% are female and 13.6% of them are male. This differs greatly to the general sex distribution in Bulgaria but is expected due to the strong feminization of the teaching profession in the country. According to Eurostat research published in 2017, 85% of all teachers in Bulgaria are female. In this sense the sex distribution of the sample corresponds to the distribution by sex of the general population studied.

The majority of the teachers who participated in the survey (59.4%) currently live in a big city: 11.9% in the capital of the country and 47.5% live in a regional city. 29.7% of them said they live in a small town, and only 11% - in a village. This unequal distribution reflects the uneven distribution of the population in Bulgaria, where almost 80% of people are concentrated in small and big cities. 30.5% of participating teachers have 5 or less years of experience in the profession, 9.3% of them have worked in schools between 6 and 10 years, 18.6% have 11 to 20 years of work experience, 26.3% worked for 21-30 years in the educational system and 15.3% have more than 30 years of experience. 57.6% of the respondents teach on high-school level and 42.7% of them teach in elementary.

### 4. Attitudes of Bulgarian teachers towards the importance of the civil education

In the objective to understand better the attitudes of teachers towards the civil education and its integration in the school system in Bulgaria, the respondents were questioned on the necessity according to them of such an education for the personal development of the young people. 56.78% of the teachers state that civil education is especially necessary to the youngsters and 38.14% believe it to be rather necessary. Only 5.08% of them see it as rather unnecessary and 2.54% cannot decide (Fig. 1).

**Figure no. 1:** Graphic representation of the distribution of teacher according to their attitude towards the necessity of teaching civil education for the personal development of young people



The teachers stating that the civil education is rather unnecessary are all female currently living in a regional city. The majority (66.7%) of them have between 11 and 20 years of experience as teachers and 33.3% of the teachers have between 21 and 30 years in the school system. This shows that it is mainly the more experienced teacher's

representatives of older generations that are rather skeptical at to what extent civil education benefits the students. A possible reason for such a negative attitude might be the general disbelief in the personal development of teenage that some the teachers in Bulgaria hold usually explained by the existing generational gap between them and the young people and the controversial values of the two groups due to this gap. Another possible reason for such an attitude is the constant change in the content of the civil education in Bulgaria already described in this report, which brings an hesitation about to what extent the civil education does cover not only the knowledge and skills necessary but also the societal values required for an effective socialization later on.

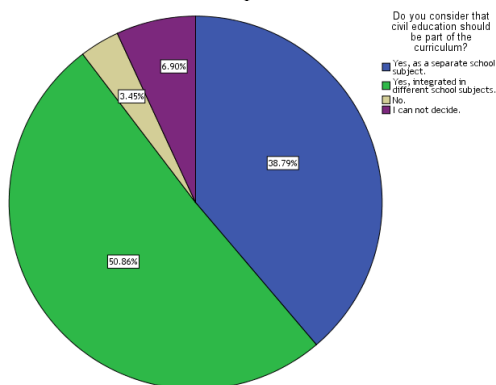
In conclusion it can be said that as the data states there is a highly positive attitude among Bulgarian teacher towards the civil education as an element of the personal development of the young people in the country.

### **5. Attitudes of Bulgarian teachers towards the form in which civil education should be presented to students in the school institutions.**

In the perspective of the current changes in the educational system in Bulgaria, the study focused on measuring the attitudes of teachers towards should the civil education be included in the school curriculum and if yes at what form should it be done. Two main forms were presented as options: to be included as a separate subject or to be integrated in other subjects. It is important to note that as mentioned already civil education currently is integrated in other related subjects in the school curriculum. In this sense the question is pointed at whether teachers support the current state of civil education in the curriculum or have a positive attitude towards the envisaged changes in 2020/2021 school year.

38.79% of the respondents share that according to them civil education should be introduced as a separate subject in the school curriculum in Bulgaria. 50.86% stated that it should be integrated in the different school subjects. 3.45% of the teachers declare that it should not be included in the curriculum at all and 6.9% cannot decide (Fig. 2).

**Figure no. 2:** Graphic representation of the distribution of teacher according to their attitude towards the form in which civil education should be presented to students in the school institutions.



As the data shows over half of the respondents support the current form in which civil education is taught in Bulgaria: integrated in different subjects mainly in social



sciences. The majority of women respondents (52% of all women) stated that civil education should remain integrated in other school subjects, 36.6% of them state that it should be a separate subject, 2,9% declare that it should not be taught in schools and 8.5% cannot decide on the matter. Exactly half of the male teachers that took part in the survey believe that the subject should be separated, 37.5% of them that it should remain integrated in other subjects, 6.2% that it should not be included at all and 6.3% cannot decide.

Several possible reasons for such an attitude might be related to the fact that the curriculum of students in Bulgaria is already surcharged and the introduction of any further new subjects in it should only mean more time in school for them and less time for extracurricular activities. On the other hand it is possible that teachers would prefer to not have any new subjects introduced in the curriculum in the fear that such introduction would require a diminishment of the hours for other subjects taught by them and might be a risk for their own job position.

Based on the data presented, it can be concluded that the majority of teachers do not support the newly introduced educational reform on introducing civil education as a separate subject for the graduates in school year 2020/2021.

## **6. Conclusions**

Since 2016 the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science in the constant change of the policy concerning the teaching of civil education in the schools in the country trying to catch up with dynamic global processes and the challenges of the competences required for an effective socialization and civil participation in such a context. With the last reforms in the educational policy in the country civil education is to be introduced as a separate subject in schools for graduates starting from school year 2020/2021. The current study has defined that the predominant part of teachers in Bulgaria do consider civil education necessary for the personal development of young people but the majority of them do not support the newly imposed educational reform on introducing civil education as a separate subject for the graduates.

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# Internet and Third Age in Romania

## – An exploratory study

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### Abstract

Research shows that older adults respond differently to mediate communication than younger adults. These age differences result from both generational differences and life-span development. Seniors face new challenges in the case of the present displacement in the study and practice of medical communication. The present study draws on the hypotheses related to health-related Internet use by seniors and try to validate them in a specific context - the Romanian society. The sample of seniors included in the analysis was made of ten persons aged +65 years old who used the Internet not only to obtain daily information and to socialise with their friends but also to search for health-related information. The results showed that Romanian seniors still do not consider online health information to be as reliable as inter-personal communication with their GP. At the same time, Romanian older adults are overloaded with the sheer amount of information available on the net and tend to “simplify” it by checking that information with medical staff (e.g. GP, nurses). As our set of interviews Romanian seniors have a lower desire to control their own health care by themselves and remain deeply dependent on the interpersonal medical communication with GPs, family, pharmacists, friends.

**Keywords:** *Seniors; Online communication; Interpersonal communication; Health-related information*

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### 1. Introduction

*Today it is generally accepted that the Internet provides a large source of health-related information for patients. Much more, as the Internet becomes a growing source of health information, evaluating the quality of the web-based health information is of a paramount importance (Powell and Clarke 2002). Starting from the fact that older adults respond differently to online communication than younger adults, some researchers argued that seniors face new challenges in the case of the present displacement in the study and practice of medical communication (McMillan and Macias 2008). This displacement is a movement from a paternalistic model of patient-*

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*provider information toward enclosing the medical and human values in the process of decision-taking of informed patient in medical interaction.*

As the official documents of the European Commission showed (European Commission 2015), effective communication with older adults about new policies and ICT-based solutions is a key factor in turning the expenditures into secure investments. The existing literature points out those older adults respond differently to mediate communication than younger adults (McMillan and Macias 2008). First, older adults use media differently than younger adults: The digital divide still pertains and older adults perform fewer activities online and have lower levels of digital literacies, including e-Health literacy (Campbell 2009; McMillan and Macias 2008). Much more, older adults differ in their responses to content and form characteristics of mediated communication and associate internet use with different benefits (McMellon and Schiffman 2002; Shapira, Barak and Gal 2007; Gatto and Tak 2008; Mellor, Firth and Moore 2008; Karavidas, Lim and Katsikas 2005).

In Romania the population is growing older at a rapid pace in the last decades, as the statistics showed (Institutul Național de Statistică 2015). In 2015, 15.5% of the Romanian population were children under 14. 60% were people aged between 15 and 59.24% were people between 60 and 80 years old and 4% are seniors (over 80 years).

Meantime, in the last years, the Romanians' access to the internet increased. Thus, in 2016, 69.7% of Romanians aged 16-74 years used the Internet (Institutul Național de Statistică 2016). Despite this rapid development of population's access to the online communication, the share of the seniors that use internet at least once a week is very small, only 13% in Romania - as compared with an average of 45% for the EU member states (Eurostat 2017).

As the rest of the former communist states from Eastern Europe, before 1989 Romania had adopted a *Semashko* model of the health system (Doboș 2008), and the financing and management of this system were completely under the state's control. Romania's post-communist evolution in the field of health had involved several attempts of decentralisation of the management of the national health system, for a better administration of hospitals and for a better use of financing of the system. The Romanian Health System is organized at present on two levels, national level and regional (county) one, with the territorial division of the country. The Ministry of Health that has the role to set the objectives and directions of work in this system, and the County Public Health Directorates are responsible for putting in practice the health-related decisions at the central level. However, the health system remained highly centralized, with the Health Ministry having more functions than coordination and supervision. Even though there has been a whole process of decentralization, there are interferences on the implementation of certain programs at regional / local level, a phenomenon perpetuated since 1999, when the model of organizing the system, the *Semashko* model, was changed (Vlădescu, Scîntee, Olsavszky, Hernández-Quevedo and Sagan 2016). In financial terms, there is a tradition of under-financing the health system, and in 2013 only 5,3% of GDP was redirected to the system, while the European average was around 10,1%. More specifically, about 767 euro (PPS) per capita was spent in the health system, while in the European Union the average was 2988 Euros (PPS), but it is appreciated that these 767 euro is a tripling of the sum of the average at the level of 2003 (European Commission 2016). The successive

strategies that were adopted in Romania for reforming the health system included the dismantling of the old system that provided only a tiny fraction of the country's GDP was allocated to health. Because of the low salaries and the poor equipment of the hospitals, the Romanian doctors were not motivated and appeal for most of the time at bribe (Vlădescu, Rădulescu and Cace 2005).

The present article tries to see how Romanians seniors use Internet for information and what the characteristics of health-related internet use are for Romanian seniors.

As the research question we have the following:

*What are the main characteristics of the health-related Internet use for Romanian older adults?*

## **2. The theoretical framework**

*The existing literature (McMillan and Macias 2008; Campbell 2009) points out some of the main characteristics of the seniors' online behaviour. According to McMillan and Macias (2008) seniors use internet to send mails to friends and family (e.g. "to socialise"), to read (the Internet is an invaluable resource which replace the library), to recognize that the information are erroneous and to worry about the quality of online information and to prepare for the visit to the doctor or to fill in the gaps left by doctors.*

Among the factors that influence the use of net by seniors, the researches made on this topic had noticed: 1. the higher socio-economic status for the seniors; 2. a higher educational level (tertiary and post-tertiary education level) and 3. to be so-called "young old" (that is, 65-70 years) and not "old old"(that is, over 85 years old) (Campbell 2009; McMillan and Macias 2008).

*As compared with the research on risk and benefits of using the internet for children and youth, the number of studies devoted to older adults' benefits related to online activities is rather small. The list of benefits identified by McConatha, Schnell, Volkwein, Rile and Leach (2003) contained, for example: an increased levels of life satisfaction; better mental functioning; activities of daily living and reduced levels of depression. Other studies on this topic showed that the benefits of the Internet based activities for the seniors are: the experience to be a part of the online world (Shapira, Barak and Gal 2007); the empowerment of feelings (McMellon and Schiffman 2002); the development of a positive effect on self-esteem (Gatto and Tak 2008); the opportunity to increase the amount of contacts with others (Mellor, Firth and Moore 2008) and the opportunity to sustain social networks (Karavidas, Lim and Katsikas 2005).*

*The development of health-related internet had brought also some challenges for seniors. First, the health-related information found on the internet is frequently using languages that are not familiar to the lay audiences, the websites or web-pages using technical language and scientific language more frequently than before. Much more, many search engines do a poor job of identifying appropriate and accurate information, and this is extremely evident in the case of older users. Older consumers often have trouble knowing which information is accurate (and which is not) and, in addition, few computers have new characteristics (touch screen, voice activation system etc.) which could them make easier to use by seniors.*

Among the barriers for internet-use for seniors there are: limited access to the internet due to old computers or slower and cheaper connection at the internet, limited access to new technologies and fewer technological skills; difficulties in using some functions of the computer due to illness (e.g. the link between arthritis and the use of mouse computer) and difficulties to read online information on the computer (Lambert and Loiselle 2007).

*In a meta-analysis of the research made on internet health-related use by seniors, McMillan and Macias (2008) assessed that internet is an invaluable resource for health for several reasons. Among them is the fact that the internet is a two-edged sword when seniors look for specific information and, also, the fact that on the internet they can find online information of high quality.*

When addressing the issue of health-related behaviour and older adults, Sommerhalder, Abraham, Zufferey, Barth and Abel (2009) had assessed that the proliferation of online health information available for the patients is controversial due to the fact that patients are overloaded with the sheer amount of information available on the net.

Despite the fact the more and more medical and health-related information is available online Wicks (2004) noticed that for answers related to their health, seniors tend to look primarily to interpersonal sources (General Practitioners, family, pharmacists, friends).

On the other hand, as the results of the National Health Survey showed (Choi 2011), the frequency of visits to the family physician or general practitioner was associated with seniors' higher rates of access to online health information. Furthermore, as Fiksdal, Kumbamu, Jadhav, Cocos, Nelsen, Pathak and McCormick (2014) pointed out, in the healthcare one could record an increase in the internet use for communication between patients and providers, and this frequently took place often through personal health records.

### **3. Hypothesis of the research**

As the hypothesis of the present article we have the following:

*H1: Seniors use the internet as a starting point for general information related to health but when it came to make informed decisions about health care they adhere to physician-centered care model (Campbell and Nolfi 2005).*

*H2: The more a senior as a patient learns from the internet about her/his illness, the more likely she/he is to ask questions derived from Internet consumption to his/her physician (Frederikson and Bull 1995).*

### **4. Elements of methodology**

The article was based on a research project which used the semi-structured interview as the main method of research. The guide of interview included thirty-one questions on the topics of health-related internet uses.

The set of data included in the analysis were collected in face-to-face interactions between January and June 2017 in Bucharest (Romania). The sample of seniors was made of ten persons (seven women and three men), aged over 65 years old, who used the Internet not only to obtain daily information and to socialise with their friends but also to search for health-related information.

**Table no. 1.** Samples structure for the respondents included in the analysis

|                              |  | Female   | Male  |
|------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Age                          |  | 65-70 years old<br>71-75 years old   | 65-70 years old<br>71-75 years old            |
| Gender                       |  | 7 persons  | 3 persons                                     |
| Occupation before retirement |  | Professor<br>Technician<br>Professor<br>Technician<br>Doctor<br>Economist (Accountant)<br>Economist<br>Professor | Engineer<br>Technician<br>Lawyer<br>Professor |
| Education                    |  | University<br>High-school  | University<br>High-school                     |
| Residence                    |  | Bucharest  | Bucharest                                     |

Source: Own data of the author

We have analysed our interviews using the qualitative content analysis (Miles, Huberman and Saldaña 2014; Graneheim and Lundman 2004). After they were made in respondents' Romanian native language, the interviews were transcribed, translated into English language and the analysis was made alongside the common questions used in the interview's guide. The qualitative content analysis implied operations of theoretical categorization and codification, contextualization, decodification of significance, conceptualization, discovery of regularities, explanations and causal connections, formulation and verification of the conclusions and preservation of theoretical coherence (Miles, Huberman and Saldaña, 2014).

## 5. Analysis of the results

*As the set of data showed. the general way in which seniors are searching for health information is a relatively simple one. They are searching by using search engines (Google) and they avoid specialized sites or medical blogs and websites.*

S1: Generally I googled so, when I'm looking for health information I googled, I'm looking for them [...] I've just found them by chance or some medical information just appears to me. They appear on social networks as ads, others appear to me as ads on different sites. Google also has a system; if you have just entered a word, somewhere it will start to give you information all the time about similar sites or similar information on which word you have previously searched for.

S3: Google is the easiest. Whenever I have a curiosity or I need information, Google is the perfect help. Generally I search for things and words on Google, I really like surfing the internet and gathering information from different domains.

According to our respondents, the main reason behind this type of online search is the fact that it is easiest, it has more accessible character and that it does not require special abilities:

S5: I do not have an explanation... that's ok, it's more convenient, more usual.

S9: It is more convenient and I feel comfortable.

For Romanian seniors the search for health related information is related to treatment of disease and illness' symptoms. Only few of them want to know other things in addition, such was the case with information about hospitals or the medical system and doctors in general.

S3: I'm especially looking for references to drugs and diseases, but drugs especially interest me. Well, let me see, I know what I'm saying, I'm more of a naturist, but I do not know whether they're good or not.

S7: I'm looking for illnesses, and drugs, not hospitals... not always for me. Well, the reason is the need to know more on those topics.

S9: I'm looking for references to drugs, references to doctors and the effects that certain treatments have on different people. I do this because it is the thing that interests me and I think it helps me for the deeper understanding of the various diseases.

But when it comes to use the health information found on the internet, half of the sample included in our analysis (five Romanian seniors) do not want to talk to their doctor about this type of information. They invoked as main reasons for avoiding this discussion the high status that doctors have in their eyes and the feeling that such subjects can not be discussed in a doctor-patient meeting:

S2: *I have never talked to my doctor about the information found on the internet. It was just a piece of information that I used strictly personally.*

S5: *No, no, I can not afford to talk to my doctor because it is not well to do that, it is not civilized.*

*How is the relation between online information and face-to-face information structured? As our respondents had declared they still have put the stress on medical advice first. In other words, when they have talked to doctors about health information, they always consider the physician's opinion - be it a family physician or a specialist – as the most trustful (and not the information found on the internet).*

S1: *Yes, we talked and the doctor had a calm, gentle reaction. He encouraged me to follow the advice of physicians in defiance of the information found on the internet because they were trained for that to be a kind of God on earth for us. Physicians exist for the good of man.*

S7: *I talked to some and my doctor told me they were not good. He told me that I had to take only what he wanted, that is what he gave the recipe I can not get what I want. It's a very good reaction because we, the elders, take as granted sometimes some things and that's not right, he [e.g. the doctor] is right.*

*While appreciating the usefulness of health-related information on the internet, seniors assessed that the reliability of this type of information remained clearly inferior as compared with the information a physician can offer in face-to-face meetings:*

S4: *I clearly do not rely on the internet and I clearly do not rely on the information... that is, not only on the information given on the internet. The Internet is small room in a house, which is sometimes forget, sometimes remains in a corner. Yes, it is useful, but it is not the only information available. You can still find doctors to discuss serious problems, do not run after "horseshoe horses dead" on I do not know what blog or site.*

S6: Yes, the information can be trusted but not entirely. From my point of view, the information provided by the doctor is basic, is the most secure.

*Meanwhile, there were some Romanian seniors who had admitted the fact that they sometimes follow health-related treatments found on the internet. In this case, as they have declared, they refer strictly to natural medicine and not to allopathic one - the latter being the field of doctors in whom they have full confidence:*

S10: I've been asking for strictly natural medicines that I found on the internet after talking to a pharmacist. To give you an example, this is the case for the liver's medicine, such as "Bilidren".

*Another way of using internet is to communicate with the doctor (family or specialist) via the Internet (mail, Skype etc.). Only three seniors had declared that they do that in exceptional or special situations, when they use the phone and discuss with their doctor:*

S3: *I tried to communicate with an ophthalmologist by email and I really wrote it in a mail and I did not get a reply of any kind or later, even though I insisted and tried to be as clear as possible on the issue I had. So I went there and I discuss with him.*

S4: *I always speak with my doctor at the phone. I do not use Skype at all and I prefer to talk over the phone in general. I find it more personal.*

S7: *No, I'm giving her a phone to schedule me. Well, we're talking on the phone or I'm going straight to the cabinet.*

*Putting the medical advice at the "core" of health-related information and using mainly ace-to-face communication with doctors had lead to an extremely low degree of online feed-back towards the medical system – whether it is positive or negative. Only one senior had declared that she had online rated some medical services, and this happened due to the fact that she was satisfied with them:*

S3: *I once online rated the clinic where I had an eye (cataract) surgery. I was pleased and I give them a high mark.*

S5: *No. I do not like "to get out of the house" and it does not seem right to denigrate doctors because they definitely are a kind of Gods on earth.*

## **6. Conclusions**

When addressing the issue of health-related behaviour and older adults, as McLellan (1998) showed, patients are overloaded with the sheer amount of information available on the internet. In the same line, Sommerhalder, Abraham, Zufferey, Barth and Abel (2009) have assessed that the development of online health information available for the patients is controversial due to the fact that patients are replete with the sheer amount of available online information. As regards the motivation for searching for health-related information, the researches showed that seniors use media in order to reduce the uncertainty felt in important domains of their lives (Freimuth, Stein and Kean 1989), to understand the world around them (Dervin, Ellyson, Hawkes, Guagnano and White 1984) and to cope with the stress and its effects (Wilson 1999).



As our data showed our first research hypothesis was confirmed by the data. Romanian seniors use the internet as a starting point for general information related to health but when it came to make informed decisions about health care they adhere to physician-centered care model. In fact, the results confirm Caress' thesis (1997) that seniors' locus of control is external. In the case of a person with an external locus of control this person assumes that some aspects of his/her life (e.g. health) are controlled by powerful others (e.g. doctors). This was obvious in the case of Romanian seniors we interviewed who assessed that doctor's advice was more reliable than online health-related information. In the same vein, our results confirm Breemhaar, Visser and Kleijnen (1990) assumption that older patients are more likely to let their physicians to make decisions regarding their treatment.

*On the other hand, the second research hypothesis was not validated by the data. In other words, if a senior as a patient learns from the internet about her or his illness, he or she was not eager to ask questions derived from Internet consumption to his or her physician. As such, the interviews with Romanian seniors did not confirm Mullen, Min and Velez's thesis (1992) that stated that there is a direct relation between health-related online information and the degree of information requests from a patient. In fact, in Romania, the more a senior patient learns about her or his illness, the less willing she or he is to ask questions to his or her physician.*

*Our data showed some peculiarities of the health-related internet use for Romanian older adults. The most important is the fact that Romanian seniors still do not consider online health information to be as reliable as inter-personal communication with their doctors. Despite the fact that they were overloaded with the sheer amount of information available on the net, Romanian older adults tend to "simplify" it by checking that information with medical staff (e.g. General Practitioners, specialist doctors or nurses).*

Another important general result from our analysis is the fact that Romanian seniors proved to have a lower desire to control their own health care by themselves and remain deeply dependent on the interpersonal medical communication with General Practitioners, family, pharmacists and / or friends.

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# Employability skills and competencies of young people in Albania

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## Abstract

The young population is, one of the most important human resources for the socio-economic development of a nation. However, many young people around the world face challenges in accessing labor market. Young people tend to be more vulnerable and disillusion in livelihood opportunities. Employment, economic status and education levels are the three main factors that influence migration intentions of Albanian youth. There are discrepancies between the skills required by businesses and fields of study of graduates. In many cases, employees do not comply with the work they perform. The vocational education and training system is still a big construction site. Albania doesn't have yet have a coherent system in place, which "links and matches with labor market requirements, attracts participants, strives towards European standards, and thus contributes to economic development and poverty alleviation.

**Keywords:** *employability; skills; competencies; young people*

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## 1. Introduction

The 2011 Population and Housing Census recorded 2.8 million residents in Albania, with an about equal number of males (50.1 percent) and females (49.9 percent). The number of youth aged 15-29 amounted to 704 thousand, representing just over one quarter (25.2 percent) of the total population. With around 363 thousand men and boys aged 15-29 against around 342 thousand women and girls in the youth age group, males are with 51.5 percent a little more represented among youth than among the total population. The largest overrepresentation of males is among 20-24 year olds (52.6 percent against 47.4 percent females).

The population decline from 3.1 million people in 2001 to 2.8 million people in the 2011 census implied a reduction of 8.8 percent in the last inter-census period. The two main demographic processes of fertility reduction and large-scale emigration that caused this population decline, together with increasing life expectancy, also had a major impact on the age composition of Albania's population.

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The 2011 Population and Housing Census recorded 704 thousand people aged 15 to 29, making up 25 percent of total Albanian population. In absolute numbers, the youth population increased between the 1979 and 1989 censuses, and reached a highest number of 921 thousand. After the 1989 census the absolute number of young people has decreased as the result of the combined processes of replacement by smaller birth cohorts and large-scale emigration (INSTAT and UNFPA 2015).

The young population is, one of the most important human resources for the socio-economic development of a nation. This category of population has the courage and the energy for proposing innovating ideas and progressive mechanisms in all socio-economic domains. However, many young people around the world face challenges in accessing labor market.

Youth unemployment and youth employment opportunities are viewed as an important policy issue for many countries. Young people tend to be more vulnerable and disillusion in livelihood opportunities negatively affects the ability of young people to embark on an independent and full life course. Young people are also particularly affected by the present economic crisis (ILO 2012) and widespread youth unemployment may be an important cause of social unrest, affecting communities and the society at large.

Getting the first job has never been not an easy process in a labor market non controlled by the state (which is the case of Albania after 1990). Currently it is becoming a major challenge and can prove a lengthy endeavor. Moreover, the prolonged jobs crisis also forces young people not only to wait more for their first job, but also to be less selective about the type of the first jobs they are looking and accepting.

Currently youth in Albania have a relatively high risk of unemployment, as indicated by the data of Labor Force Survey. Due to a gloomy macroeconomic situation, of dual labor markets, and of an education and training systems that lack elements of employer involvement and hands-on work experience, Albanian youth often face a protracted period of career instability (Hackaj 2015).

Current youth transition patterns in Albania look complex, mixed and long. Young people move frequently in and out of the labor force, they start mostly in low-qualified jobs that very often have nothing to do with their diplomas & qualifications. This practice often involves backtracking and blending of statuses employee–student especially in the current times of education reform, economic crisis and technological turbulence – which make the analysis of the trajectories from school to work even more difficult.

Holding a stable position in the labor market, and even remaining in employment, is not an easy task for young people, given the difficult macroeconomic situation. It must be noted that industrial structure and the economic crisis has resulted in a greater skills mismatch in the labour market, as there has been an increase in the proportion of university graduates taking up jobs that require only upper secondary education. This phenomenon is best illustrated in Albania by the high numbers of university educated youth working in call centers, and the exponential rise of this sector (Hackaj 2015).

The high rate of unemployment among young people has always been a problem for the economy of the country. According to a study by M. Ekonomi and Gj. Filipi, "the economic development of Albania has not been accompanied by an equally strong

rate in terms of creating jobs, the most affected by this situation have been the young people and in particular those with a low level of education” (Ekonomi and Filipi 2008). The data show that they are not very active in the labor market. According to the National Strategy for Employment and Training, 2014-2020, the rate of labor force participation among young people aged 15-24 it seems that is very low (27.4%) (NSET 2014). No doubt that for the economy, it is a loss in the human resources.

The census-based attendance rates shown in indicate that school attendance by primary-school age children (age 6 to 11) is almost universal and that of children of the lower secondary school age (12 to 14) is just slightly lower. Beyond this compulsory education programme – corresponding to age 15 to 23 – attendance rates drop, especially after age 17, at which many students decide to either continue with higher education or to drop out of the education system. With 45 percent of 19-year olds still attending education, Albania is considerably below the EU average of around 60 percent (Eurostat 2015d). The respective percentages for persons 24 year old are 11 percent in Albania and around 25 percent in the EU countries.

It is noticeable that up to upper secondary education, the attendance rates for girls and boys are very similar, but that girls drop out somewhat more often. The net attendance ratio for girls in upper secondary education, as recorded by the 2011 Population and Housing Census was 67 percent, while the corresponding figure for males was 72 percent. However, young women tend to pursue further education to a higher degree than young men. The female net attendance ratio for tertiary education, as recorded by the 2011 Population and Housing Census was 34 percent, while the corresponding figure for males was only 25 percent.

The educational level of the Albanian youth is increasing rapidly. There has been an increasing enrolment of youth in universities, from 122 thousand in the academic year 2009-10 to 174 thousand in 2013-14. This also translates in consistently rising gross enrolment ratios (GER)<sup>4</sup> in tertiary education. In the recent years, the number of female students has been higher than that of the male ones for the universities, which in 2013-14 amounted to 57 per cent (INSTAT and UNFPA 2015).

In the life course, the youth ages usually signify the conclusion of education, but for many at the same time also the transition to employment and the establishment of a professional career. Yet young people have been hit particularly hard by the effects of the financial and ensuing economic crisis. The 2011 census, and in particular the recurrent Labor Force Surveys (LFSs) provide a wealth of information to evaluate the situation of youth on the labor market. Most of the findings indicate that in terms of both employment and unemployment, youth constitute a population segment with highly specific and compelling needs, with intricate gender and education linkages (INSTAT and UNFPA 2015).

## **2. Situation of young people employability in Albania**

Over the year 2015 (INSTAT 2016a), the number of unemployed in Albania is 223,864 persons. The unemployment rate for the age group aged 15-64 years old is

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<sup>4</sup> The Gross Enrolment Ratio for a specific level of education is the number of students enrolled in that level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population in the official age group corresponding to that level of education.

17.5%. The unemployment rate for males of this age group is 17.5% and for females is 17.4%. Male unemployment rate is 0.1 percentage points higher than females. Compared to the previous year there is a decrease of the unemployment rate by 0.4 percentage points. Youth (15-29 years old) unemployment rate is 33.2%, (32.3% for males and 34.7% for females). Compared to the previous year, youth unemployment rate has increased by 0.7 percentage points.

35.8% of the population aged 15-64 years old is economically inactive. Pupils/students (37.7%) dominate the structure of the population outside labor market. In this age group, 12.1% are not looking for a job because they believe that there are not available jobs.

Among the economically inactive female population aged 15-64 years old, 10% are discouraged workers, 31% are pupils/students or in further training, 15.5% are in retirement or early retirement and 27.1% of them are fulfilling domestic tasks (INSTAT, 2016, a).

Over the year 2015 (INSTAT, 2016, a), youth aged 15-29 years old neither in employment nor in education or training account for 32.8% of all youth population. In this group, 40.8% are unemployed. The other part is outside the labor force because they are discouraged workers (15.2%) or fulfilling domestic and family responsibilities (17.5%) or for other reasons (26.5%).

Comparing youth who are neither in employment nor in education or vocational training by sex and their status in the labor market, it is noted that males are more active than females (52.5% of males are seeking for a job and are available to work, while for females this percentage is 30.5%).

The number of student graduates for 2015 has increased compared to previous years. Likewise, the ratio of female graduates to male graduates for 2015 is higher, 64% females compared to 36% males. The main areas of study, as measured by numbers of graduating students from tertiary education, are: business science, administration, and law, accounting for 29% of all graduates, with 59% of them being female and 41% male.

For the academic year 2014/15 there was an increase in the number of graduates of upper secondary education, compared to the previous year. Graduates from State Matura were 51.4% female and 48.6% male; 88% completed general secondary education and 12% vocational education (INSTAT 2016b).

INSTAT report (INSTAT 2016b) shows that most young people (15-24) are working as contributing family members (58.3 per cent of total youth employment), with young women slightly more likely than their male peers to be contributing family workers (65.2 per cent and 53.6 per cent, respectively). This in turn has significant implications for girls' and women's social security status and entitlements, including coverage by health insurance and old-age pension, and negatively impacts on their general social security and economic independence throughout their life.

Persons with disabilities, youth at risk, and Roma and Egyptian minorities as more at risk of socially exclusion than other population groups, including the risk of exclusion from the labor market (MSWY 2015). Only 10% of businesses report to have hired at least 1 people with disabilities. The major number of businesses that employed people with disabilities belongs to manufacturing, water supply, sewage, waste and the medium and large size businesses (ILO 2014).

Administrative data from the National Employment Service (NES) has, over the years, indicated a considerable increase in the number of unemployed jobseekers registering for vocational education training (VET) courses, with considerable gender differences. There are 30% more registered unemployed male jobseekers in vocational education training courses than females. Meanwhile, there has been an increase of almost 90% of female unemployed jobseekers that participate in employment promotion programs. In 2015, unemployed female beneficiaries in employment promotion programs outnumber their male counterparts almost two to one (INSTAT 2016b).

At the beginning of the transition period, the share of students attending vocational schools was as high as 60%. Whereas the general education system survived the transition structurally and was ‘only’ challenged to develop into a quality system in line with international standards, the vocational education and training system collapsed. With the disappearance of state enterprises, vocational education lost its orientation and its natural partner.

Thus, with the beginning of the transition, Albania had to rebuild vocational education and training from scratch. Like in almost all walks of life in Albania, the serious civil uproar in 1997 in the aftermath of the collapse of a pyramid saving scheme, widely destroyed first achievements of transition. In many respects, including vocational education and training, the transition process restarted in 1998 almost afresh.

Starting from the early 90ies, Albania has received substantial and continuous international support to various dimensions and aspects of vocational education and training, including support to systems reform and policy development.

19% of the total enrolled students in secondary education are taking part in Vocational education and training (VET), with males accounting for 79% of the total number of students attending VET (INSTAT 2016b).

Agriculture remains by far the most important sector of economic activity in Albania in terms of employment. The LFS 2011 indicates that 44.1 percent of working persons is employed in this sector, followed by market services (20.7 percent)<sup>5</sup> and non-market services (15.9 percent)<sup>6</sup>. For youth, in particular for young women, the agriculture sector is even more important for employment opportunities (for 51.1 percent), in many instances for contributing family workers. This sector employed around 157 thousand youth in 2011. Market services and construction together absorb 37.0 percent of the employed male youth (65 thousand men), whereas market and non-market services together accommodated 30.1 percent of employed young women (39 thousand), particularly in administrative functions.

In 2014, the agriculture sector employed only 38.1 percent of working youth (13 percentage points lower than in 2011). Also the construction sector lost a noticeable share of, foremost male, employed persons (4.2 percentage points), whereas the market services and manufacturing sectors relatively increased in importance (respectively with 10.1 and 4.2 percentage points). It should be noticed that all economic sectors decreased in terms of absolute numbers of employed persons<sup>7</sup>, due to the overall shift from employment to unemployment and particularly inactivity (INSTAT and UNFPA 2015).

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<sup>5</sup> Trade, transportation, accommodation and food, and business- and administrative services.

<sup>6</sup> Public administration, community-, social- and other services and activities.

<sup>7</sup> With the possible exception of the manufacturing sector.



Skill mismatch is one of the main challenges faced by economies. Empirical evidence shows that, in far too many cases, workers are not well-matched with their current jobs. Some are over-skilled for their current jobs – they are capable of handling more complex tasks and their skills are underused – while others are under-skilled for their current jobs they lack the skills normally needed for their job. Under-qualification is likely to negatively affect productivity and the quality of work. The mismatch rate for tertiary-educated youth workers was very high – 33.5 percent in 2011 (INSTAT and UNFPA 2015). As this is the group with the highest education, a mismatch here implies that people are over-qualified for their job. Such high mismatch rates are an indication of either labor markets with high unemployment or a bad fit between the education system output and labor market demand, or a combination of both. LFS 2014 data show an increase in the level of skills mismatch, which is a trend consistent with other countries in Europe during the economic crisis (ILO 2014a).

It should be noted that the presented mismatch measure is based on qualifications rather than on skills. The Albania Skills Needs Assessment 2014 indicated that – from the perspective of businesses, the main problem was not so much the level of qualification, but more the appropriate of type skills obtained in education and training that was lacking (ILO 2014b). However, this again points out to the importance of improving the relevance of education curricula and acknowledging that vocational and tertiary qualifications are no guarantee for employment or decent work.

In addition to the openly unemployed, many young people are in employment that is insufficiently productive and rewarding, as indicated by the share of 14.2 percent of the youth labor force that is underemployed. Together with the unemployed, this results in a share of 36.1 percent of the youth labour force – 142 thousand people that are not gainfully employed. In this case, young people are faced with various problems besides not being employed. In the study conducted with university youth in Albania, young people are facing the risk of internet addiction due to skill mismatch (Taylan & Agallija, 2016, s. 11). A similar situation is also experienced in Turkey. According to the research done in Turkey, young people have to migrate due to not being educated in accordance with local conditions. This is one of the most important factors in the emergence of over-growing cities (Yazıcı 2017: p. 12).

Another indicator to measure the untapped potential of youth is the proportion not in employment, education or training (NEET). These youth are particularly at risk of both labor market and social exclusion, because they are neither improving their future employability through investment in skills, nor gaining experience through employment. The NEET rate of Albania in 2011 indicated that 30.0 percent of the persons aged 15-29 did not engage in employment, education or training, which is very high compared to the EU countries. The series of LFSs show a gradual increase in the level of NEET, from 27.4 percent in 2007 to 34.5 percent in 2014.

Employment, economic status and education levels are the three main factors that influence migration intentions of Albanian youth. Young people with only primary level education are more eager to migrate (55 per cent) than youth with university degrees (34 per cent). Remittances are estimated by the World Bank to constitute 8.5 per cent of Albania's GDP (Document of the European Bank 2016).

### **3. Institutional involvement in youth employment**

Several employment promotion programs (EPPs) have been implemented in Albania since 1999, with the aim to reduce unemployment and informal work, increase worker employability, and move workers into regular non-subsidized employment. At the time of the 2011 census, four main employment promotion programs were implemented by the National Employment Service (INSTAT and UNFPA 2015):

1. Programme of encouraging employment of unemployed job seekers in difficulty, including long-term unemployed receiving social assistance, individuals receiving unemployment benefits, newcomers on the labor market, persons age 18-25, persons over age 45 years with secondary education or less, people with disabilities, Roma people, and return migrants who face economic problems.

2. Programme of encouraging employment through on the job training

3. Programme of encouraging employment of unemployed job seekers graduated from Albanian and international universities.

4. Program of encouraging employment through the institutional training

Despite the fact that youth has very high unemployment rates compared to other age groups, only the first of these programmes mentioned above included youth among its target groups. More recently, three additional programmes are being implemented, of which one (Programme 6 mentioned below) specifically targets youth

5. Programme of encouraging employment of unemployed female jobseekers from special groups

6. Programme of encouraging employment of unemployed youth aged 16-25 entering the labor market for the first time (later extended to youth up to age 30).

7. Programme of encouraging employment of people with disability.

An assessment of the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of employment promotion programmes in 2014 (Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth 2014) concluded that in view of the persistency of youth unemployment, the effectiveness of youth employment promotion programs was considered questionable. A further conclusion was that there should better differentiate programmes according to the needs of specific target groups (both the companies and jobseekers) through diversifying the programmes and/ or creating new ones

Vocational education and training (VET) policy development would have to follow such a vision. The vocational education and training system is still a big construction site. Albania doesn't have yet have a coherent system in place, which "links and matches with labor market requirements, attracts participants, strives towards European standards, and thus contributes to economic development and poverty alleviation"(SADC 2011). But it has a number of bricks and elements potentially contributing as puzzle stones to future systems design.

The Law on Employment Promotion Law no. 7995 is the basic law on employment in Albania. VET and on the job training are considered as main ways for promoting employment of job seekers and young adults. According to the Law no. 7995 the VET system must not lead to social exclusion, it should be supportive for vulnerable groups and therefore the distribution mechanisms of subsidies must allow

target group oriented financing<sup>8</sup> under special conditions. Career guidance is another important aspect stipulated in the Law no. 8872. The laws assigned the Ministry of Labour and Social Assistance and Equal Opportunity (MoLSAEO), transformed today into Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth (MSWY), and the Ministry of Education and Sports (MES) as bodies in charge to work out directives to support the development of guidance services. The Law stipulates that VET is a service not only for the unemployed jobseekers, but also for the employers and it is implemented through courses or participation in working processes. The law envisages that the training can be provided through public and non public training centres and it regulates the modalities for participation fees to be paid by trainees in order to attain the training courses in public centres. The Law allows the stimulation of enterprises by employment offices through subsidizing or crediting their activities in order to provide VET for the unemployed. Also, the Law envisages that special groups in need pay differentiated training fees or be provided with free of charge training services.

In 2014, the Employment and Skills Strategy 2014-2020 was adopted, with the overarching vision to have by 2020 a competitive economy and an inclusive society that are built on: “Higher skills and better jobs for all women and men”. The aim of the strategy is to integrate economic, educational, formative and entrepreneurial, producing an action plan, which aims to draw Albanian society unemployment stalemate. The strategy has at its center the growth of decent work opportunities through effective policies of the labor market, providing quality education and vocational training for youth and adults, promoting inclusion and social cohesion, and strengthening labor market and qualifications system. This strategy recognizes that an increase in men and women employability would involve making sure that they acquire the skills, knowledge and attitudes that will allow them to find work and cope with unpredictable labor market changes throughout their working lives. Great importance is attached to the linkage between employment and the VET system focusing the Governmental actions on facing this challenge.

The Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, within the framework of the National Development and Integration Strategy (2014-2020) and taking into consideration public consultations findings developed this National Youth Action Plan (2015-2020). The aim of this plan is: to develop and coordinate cross-sectorial youth policies in education, employment, health, culture and youth participation enhancement in social life and decision making processes. The goal of the strategic objective “Youth employment through effective labour market policy” is to increase youth employment through effective labour market policy, to improve the regulatory framework, to support start up programmes focused on youth entrepreneurship, to extend courses provided in Vocational Education schools, and to establish competitions that promote innovative ideas. A novelty of the plan is the recognition of professional practices and internships and certifications and the recognition of diplomas and professional skills gained in the countries where youth may have emigrated or have been employed.

Another novelty of the plan is the patenting of the ideas or the protection of youth businesses and enterprises through the patent protection scheme (copyright).

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<sup>8</sup> For instance registered unemployed, repatriated, handicapped, female vulnerable of trafficking, Roma long term unemployed etc.

This would not only result in the promotion of youth to exercise these professions and to develop better working practices, but also in the introduction of innovative ideas and a variety of professions for which Albanian youth might not currently have adequate knowledge or skills.

In addition to direct support for youth professions and businesses, this plan also foresees the strengthening of young people and youth organizations managerial capacities through the provision of trainings and summer school courses in management and leadership fields, and also through the provision of legal and financial consultation for young people and youth organizations that have or would like to establish a business.

The National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI) presents the national vision for the social and economic development of Albania over the period 2014 to 2020. Increased employment opportunities and establishment of a consolidated, safe, flexible and inclusive labor market is one of the most important elements of the NSDI. The strategic priorities and objectives mentioned in the NSDI aim to increase to 20% the share of young people who perform professional practices in the public and private sector versus 2011; to conduct training programmes "to guide young people towards labor market demands and develop their skills"; to encourage initiatives and partnerships between public and private institutions in order to involve the private sector in the development of active employment programmes, and organize Job Fairs.

A social innovation that has been implemented and documented in the country is Youth Albanian Postal Service (YAPS). YAPS was initiated in 2001 and initially it employed 40 young people coming from orphanages, young disabled and those belonging to minorities. Its objectives is to hire and train young marginalized and neglected people, in order for them to manage a Social Business, to create self-esteem and confidence in young people and create the conditions to switch to a higher level of education. YAPS was established under the auspices of UNICEF, with the participation of the Social Center "Don Bosco" and a group of companies. Big corporates as Coca Cola, KPMG, Vodafone Albania or the Embassy of the United States of America are regular clients and some of them are also YAPS board directors (EFESEIIS and European Union 2014).

YAPS social businesses promote the novel concept of using the efficiency and in-built sustainability of free markets to generate social wealth. Through the instrumentality of commercial enterprise individuals previously considered liabilities of the State and prone to a series of costly risk factors (drug abuse, domestic violence, unemployment, HIV/AIDS, etc.) have been translated into wage earners contributing financially to the state and producers of social profits that are re-directed toward social needs. In addition, and perhaps the greatest contribution to social wealth creation is the powerful effect on deconstructing social stigmas against the disadvantaged, minorities, disabled and homeless that normally cause a double burden for vulnerable groups. Homeless and disabled YAPS workers have eloquently described the sense of empowerment they have experienced as a result of participating in productive work experiences (YAPS Albania).

#### **4. Youth employability skills and competencies**

Early labor market experience is very important for young people and their transition into adulthood. In fact, regardless of the content of the job, early labor market experience can be very useful for learning the values and norms of work, for discovering and developing the work ethic and for an earlier acquisition of experience which may be useful once in the labor market. Here an important role is played by the active employment policies.

Current youth transitions from school to work in Albania are complex. The demand for young workers is conditioned by the structure of the industry & services sector and its stage of modernization, the knowledge of the owners and / or HR managers on the manpower needs of the company, the situation & functioning of the labor market mechanisms, and the overall system of interaction of employers with the education system. As indicated by high percentage of youth unemployment, for youth the access to labor market is quite difficult and characterized with high rates of lowly-paid and precarious jobs. Youth in Albania often have a long period of career instability due to (Hackaj 2015):

- Difficult macro-economic situation of the country and the own growth;
- Dual labor market biased heavily in favor of insiders;
- Education & training systems that lack elements of the involvement of employers;
- Education & training systems that lack components of hands-on experience.

One in five Albanian young people (Cela, Kamberi and Pici 2015) reports to have been engaged in a voluntary activity in the year 2014, signaling a slight increase from the survey in 2011 where this number was just 16 percent. The usual activities and initiatives in which young people engage as volunteers are 'cleaning up public and green spaces' but there is an increase also in the volunteering to give free lessons of computer and technology use.

The lack of practical skills in relation to market requirements. There are discrepancies between the skills required by businesses and fields of study of graduates. In many cases, employees do not comply with the work they perform. Some are overqualified for the work they do - while others are not quite qualified for their work. Under-qualification is likely to negatively affect the efficiency and quality of work. Over-training may result in loss of skills and resources that are used to acquire these skills. Furthermore, the over-qualified workers earn less and are dissatisfied with the work, what also affects the performance of the company. From a business point of view, the main problem is the suitability of the type of skills acquired in education with what is required by them. This highlights the importance of improving the education curricula. However, it should be noted that the education and training system in Albania lacks among other the elements of employers' involvement, and work experience during studies, it leads young people to a period of instability during their careers (Hackaj 2015: p. 17).

Albania's labor market is very flexible because the legal context allows the enterprises to hire and to fire easily. Young people are employed very quickly and develop their skills while are working. The searching for work by young people remain a personal initiative, there are no special mechanisms to be used by youth.

Youth has the lowest participation rate in the labor force. Reasons for this attitude are several, as; greater participation in higher education, their discouragement to look for work, the lack of practical skills in relation to market requirements, lack of work experience, etc. Many studies have shown that the main difficulties of young people in finding a job are associated with large mismatches between skills possessed by them and skills demanded by employers (Sela 2016).

The data gathered (Cela, Kamberi and Pici 2015) in this study reveals that having an internship or any period of practicing skills is not a common occurrence among youth. Only 17 percent of them report to have been engaged in an internship. The majority of young people think that they will have to go through a waiting period before being able to find a job upon the completion of their studies. 26 percent of them are pessimistic about the prospect of finding a job.

Young people believe that the most important factor in being able to find a job is their acquaintances and friends which can favor them in securing employment. According to the collected answers education and professional skills play only a secondary role and have the same value as political connections when finding a job. When choosing a profession young people are mostly considering the revenues that will bring and after that the stability of the job. Young people value more externalities in their quest for a job such as friendly or political connections which rank higher or at least equal to factors that relate to the individual merits such as education and skills (Cela, Kamberi and Pici 2015).

The data from the study developed by the Beyond Barriers (2016) shows that young people employed mentioned that the engagement as volunteers previous to the actual job, had been considered not only an assent from the employer, but as well as a chance to develop new skills, extend networks, build CVs, try new vocations and gain experience. The participants expressed that their volunteering participation had improved their self-confidence, filled time and gave them an opportunity to use their skills. As experiences of volunteering were mentioned the participation at the school governance bodies, activities conducted by a local organization, and the engagement in the activities of religion organization.

Participants were asked regarding their perception on the possible skills young people should possess to have a comparative advantage in the labor market. This produced a range of different answers. Many of the answers focused on aspects of personality, such as correctness, honesty, enthusiasms at work, working under pressure, meeting deadlines, with people, managing difficult situation. Communication skills of various kinds were mentioned by all respondents.

Comparing employed and unemployed respondents, management skills were reported predominately from the employed young people as important skills to overcome barriers to unemployment. Additionally, technical skills related to the job were also mentioned from the latter. It was also reported lack of entrepreneurship skills among young people to create new jobs, and to start their own business.

All young people recognize that they need to improve their skills and develop new. The unemployed reported difficulties to identify skills that need to develop; this relates to the fact that they lack experience in the labor market. Young people who have been part of the labor market have a better understanding of the skills they need.

Some of the skills that they feel they must develop are the following: communication, public speaking, negotiation, self-control, increase self-esteem and motivation, etc.

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# European Union regulations on combating the terrorism

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## Abstract

The EU Directive 2017/541 on Combatting Terrorism, the aim of which is to harmonise Member States' legislation criminalising terrorist offences. The proposed Regulation builds upon the Commission's Recommendation on illegal content of March 2018. The Recommendation remains in force, and all those who have a role to play in reducing accessibility to illegal content - including terrorist content - should continue to align their efforts with the measures identified within the Recommendation. To ensure the removal of illegal terrorist content, the Regulation introduces a removal order which can be issued as an administrative or judicial decision by a competent authority in a Member State. In such cases, the hosting service provider is obliged to remove the content or disable access to it within one hour. In addition, the Regulation harmonizes the minimum requirements for referrals sent by Member States' competent authorities and by Union bodies (such as Europol) to hosting service providers to be assessed against their respective terms and conditions. Finally, the Regulation requires hosting service providers, where appropriate, to take proactive measures proportionate to the level of risk and to remove terrorist material from their services, including by deploying automated detection tools.

**Keywords:** *European Union; Regulations; terrorism; security; Directives; Member States*

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## 1. Introduction

Recently, the European Union had to deal with a new wave of violent actions, the most terrible one being the terrorism.

Terrorism had changed a lot over the years, but the main goal of terrorists remained the same, meaning to impose fanatic ideologies and/or influence decisions using violent acts and terror.

Although, some of the European Union countries, such as Italy, Spain or The United Kingdom (i.e. Le Brigate Rosse, IRA (Irish Republican Army), ETA (Basque Homeland and Liberty)), have had experienced similar violence in the past, the terrorist

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organizations were national ones and driven by political reasons. In our days, the EU had to face an international terrorism driven by ideological fanatic reasons.

The most problematic fact of all is that almost all the recent attacks were organized from outside the EU but carried out from the inside. To be more specific, the terrorist actions were orchestrated from the Middle East, mostly Iraq or Syria and executed by EU countries citizens with family roots in that area.

The new terrorism it is very hard to counter because of its individual forms, such as knifing people on the streets or investing crowds on the pavement. Why is so hard to counter? Because we do not have to deal any more with organized and planned ahead actions to strike a large mass of people, such the 1995 Tokyo Sarin attack, or the 9/11 hits on the twin towers. Today, all it takes is an automobile, a lorry or a knife, a converted fanatic, a burner phone and the damage is done. An important influence has also the social media witch is very hard to control. The new terrorism is based on the fanatic abomination that “every victim” counts. So, it is not important anymore to damage once in a considerate proportion, but it is fulfilling for the fanatics to accomplish more attacks with even one victim.

In this context, for this new provocation, the authorities in each country, but also the European Union as a whole had to act, to take proper measures to combat this new kind of terrorism. It is harder and hard to counter such threatens in a globalized world, in an organization based on freedom of movement, human rights and non-discrimination. Of course those authorities, but mainly extremist parties in countries with undoubtful democracies had to find an escape goat, someone to blame for this nonsense. And the blame felt on the emigration (Cristina Ilie Goga 2014: pp. 195-196; Porumbescu 2018: pp. 41-48), on people seeking shelter from oppressive regimes, some of them exactly form the regions or countries where terrorists had seized some kind of power thru terror.

“The new terrorism” (Șerban 2018: pp. 25-26) has been defined as “transnational, asymmetrical, based more on religious factors, global, with militants willing to provoke the adversary great damage, with more loss of life”. If Al Qaeda had and has “cells in the Middle East, Asia and North Africa, these were present until 2001 also in Europe and the United States” (Schmidt 2005: pp. 50-65; Biro 2013: pp. 231-247). The extinct Middle East, from the area defined by American experts, “from Morocco to Pakistan, has been considered the epicenter of terrorism” (Schmidt 2005: pp. 50-65; Biro 2013: pp. 231-247). The common element of these networks “has been identified, by a large part of European and American public opinion, with Islam”. Thus, there is a perception that “religious fundamentalism was the most frequent motivation for contemporary terrorist acts” (Smith 2002: pp. 72-81; Biro 2013: pp. 231-247). As a typology terrorism can be classified from a “geographical point of view (domestic, international, non-state, sponsored by the state, fratricide); from the objectives (political, non-political, quasi-terrorism, politically limited, state official); from the modes of action (revolutionary, political, nationalist, based on a cause, environmental, sponsored by the state, nuclear, genocidal)” (Schmidt 2005: pp. 50-650; Biro 2013: pp. 231-247).

The new terrorism is a “practice of transnational groups with a religious base, which affects more civilians, but also the compatriots and those of the same religion that the attackers” (Horowitz 2010: pp. 33-64; Biro 2013: pp. 231-247). In the last “few years, starting from the 1980 attacks in Lebanon, up to London, Paris or

Barcelona, we can see an increase in the successful suicides attacks that were very successfully spent” (Horowitz 2010: pp. 33-64; Biro 2013: pp. 231-247). Globalization as a phenomenon is not a new thing (Horowitz 2010: pp. 33-64; Biro 2013: pp. 231-247). It has existed from “historical times, from the first attempts of human communities to cross the borders known through trade, geographical discoveries or territorial conquests”. “Attempts to regulate this inter-connectivity are of recent date”. As a phenomenon, “the Government was developed later than globalization” (Chanda 2007: pp. 21-27; Biro 2013: pp. 231-247). Today, “globalization is promoted by more than 65,000 multinationals that make up the global market along with international peacekeeping forces, humanitarian aid workers and environmental protection activists”, etc (Biro 2013: pp. 120). The presence of the “clear signs of globalization and the creation of informal rules to regulate certain sectors have not accelerated the formation of global governance”. In “1948 the World Health Organization” (World Health Organization, WHO Constitution, 1948) was created together with the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) (Biro 2013: p. 120).

## **2. Analysis of the European Union 2017/541 Directive on combating terrorism and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA and amending Council Decision 2005/671/JHA**

The reaction or the counter-reaction of the European states was far too slow and came far too late in order to prevent some of the terrorist attacks that occurred recently.

One of the measures taken by the European Union came in 2017 by Directive (EU) 2017/541 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2017 on combating terrorism and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA and amending Council Decision 2005/671/JHA (Directive (EU) 2017/541 of the European Parliament and of the Council).

The new Directive brought important aspects into attention, such as punishing the financing of terrorism, the use of social media for terroristic purposes, activities in connection with the *foreign fighters* (“nationals who travel or attempt to travel to a State other than their States of residence or nationality, and other individuals who travel or attempt to travel from their territories to a State other than their States of residence or nationality, for the purpose of the perpetration, planning, or preparation of, or participation in, terrorist acts, or the providing or receiving of terrorist training, including in connection with armed conflict”) (United Nation Security Council Resolution 2178/2014), or how to take care of the victims of a terrorist attack (Directive (EU) 2017/541 of the European Parliament and of the Council).

Regarding the definitions on the acts of terrorism, the EU Directive states: “Acts of terrorism constitute one of the most serious violations of the universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity, and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on which the Union is founded. They also represent one of the most serious attacks on democracy and the rule of law, principles which are common to the Member States and on which the Union is based” (Directive (EU) 2017/541 of the European Parliament and of the Council).

Also, the European Union Directive explains some of the terms related to terrorism: “‘funds’ means assets of every kind, whether tangible or intangible, movable or immovable, however acquired, and legal documents or instruments in any form,

including electronic or digital, evidencing title to, or interest in, such assets, including, but not limited to, bank credits, travellers cheques, bank cheques, money orders, shares, securities, bonds, drafts, letters of credit; ‘legal person’ means any entity having legal personality under the applicable law, except for States or public bodies in the exercise of State authority and for public international organisations; ‘terrorist group’ means a structured group of more than two persons, established for a period of time and acting in concert to commit terrorist offences; ‘structured group’ means a group that is not randomly formed for the immediate commission of an offence and that does not need to have formally defined roles for its members, continuity of its membership or a developed structure” (Directive (EU) 2017/541 of the European Parliament and of the Council).

The Directive explains even the term *Terrorist offences*: “attacks upon a person’s life which may cause death; attacks upon the physical integrity of a person; kidnapping or hostage-taking; causing extensive destruction to a government or public facility, a transport system, an infrastructure facility, including an information system, a fixed platform located on the continental shelf, a public place or private property likely to endanger human life or result in major economic loss; seizure of aircraft, ships or other means of public or goods transport; manufacture, possession, acquisition, transport, supply or use of explosives or weapons, including chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear weapons, as well as research into, and development of, chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear weapons; release of dangerous substances, or causing fires, floods or explosions, the effect of which is to endanger human life; interfering with or disrupting the supply of water, power or any other fundamental natural resource, the effect of which is to endanger human life; illegal system interference, as referred to in Article 4 of Directive 2013/40/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council (19) in cases where Article 9(3) or point (b) or (c) of Article 9(4) of that Directive applies, and illegal data interference, as referred to in Article 5 of that Directive in cases where point (c) of Article 9(4) of that Directive applies; threatening to commit any of the acts listed in points (a) to (i). The aims referred to in paragraph 1 are: seriously intimidating a population; unduly compelling a government or an international organisation to perform or abstain from performing any act; seriously destabilising or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country or an international organization” (Directive (EU) 2017/541 of the European Parliament and of the Council).

Regarding “Offences relating to a terrorist group, the Member States shall take the necessary measures to ensure that the following acts, when committed intentionally, are punishable as a criminal offence: directing a terrorist group; participating in the activities of a terrorist group, including by supplying information or material resources, or by funding its activities in any way, with knowledge of the fact that such participation will contribute to the criminal activities of the terrorist group” (Directive (EU) 2017/541 of the European Parliament and of the Council).

Regarding the offences related to terrorist activities such as *public provocation to commit terrorist offences* (spreading messages meant to incite people to commit offences related to terrorism or glorification of such acts), *the recruitment for terrorism* (demanding a person to commit or participate to the commission of terrorist acts), *providing/receiving training for terrorism* (teaching/learning how to use explosives, firearms or other weapons, including dangerous substances with the purpose of

committing or participate in committing a terrorist act), *travelling or facilitating travelling for the purpose of terrorism* (travelling with the purpose of committing or participate to the commission of terrorist acts) or *financing terrorists* (“providing or collecting funds, by any means, directly or indirectly, with the intention that they be used, or in the knowledge that they are to be used, in full or in part, to commit, or to contribute to the commission of terrorist activities”), the Directive in its art. 5 to 12 enforces on member states to treat it as “criminal offences when committed intentionally” (Directive (EU) 2017/541 of the European Parliament and of the Council).

The Directive also stipulates measures against offences related to terrorist groups and other offences related to terrorist activities. In this matter, aiding and abetting, inciting and attempting are also punishable (Directive (EU) 2017/541 of the European Parliament and of the Council).

Regarding the penalties for natural persons, the Directive stipulates in its Article 15 the following: “1. Member States shall take the necessary measures to ensure that the offences referred to in Articles 3 to 12 and 14 are punishable by effective, proportionate and dissuasive criminal penalties, which may entail surrender or extradition. 2. Member States shall take the necessary measures to ensure that the terrorist offences referred to in Article 3 and offences referred to in Article 14, insofar as they relate to terrorist offences, are punishable by custodial sentences heavier than those impossible under national law for such offences in the absence of the special intent required pursuant to Article 3, except where the sentences impossible are already the maximum possible sentences under national law. 3. Member States shall take the necessary measures to ensure that offences listed in Article 4 are punishable by custodial sentences, with a maximum sentence of not less than 15 years for the offence referred to in point (a) of Article 4, and for the offences listed in point (b) of Article 4 a maximum sentence of not less than 8 years. Where the terrorist offence referred to in point (j) of Article 3(1) is committed by a person directing a terrorist group as referred to in point (a) of Article 4, the maximum sentence shall not be less than 8 years. 4. Member States shall take the necessary measures to ensure that when a criminal offence referred to in Article 6 or 7 is directed towards a child, this may, in accordance with national law, be taken into account when sentencing” (Directive (EU) 2017/541 of the European Parliament and of the Council), while Article 17 talks about the *liability of legal persons*: “1. Member States shall take the necessary measures to ensure that legal persons can be held liable for any of the offences referred to in Articles 3 to 12 and 14 committed for their benefit by any person, acting either individually or as part of an organ of the legal person, and having a leading position within the legal person, based on one of the following: a power of representation of the legal person; an authority to take decisions on behalf of the legal person; an authority to exercise control within the legal person. 2. Member States shall also take the necessary measures to ensure that legal persons can be held liable where the lack of supervision or control by a person referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article has made possible the commission of any of the offences referred to in Articles 3 to 12 and 14 for the benefit of that legal person by a person under its authority. 3. Liability of legal persons under paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Article shall not exclude criminal proceedings against natural persons who are perpetrators, inciters or accessories in any of the offences

referred to in Articles 3 to 12 and 14” (Directive (EU) 2017/541 of the European Parliament and of the Council).

The Sanctions for legal persons are stipulated under Article 18: ”Member States shall take the necessary measures to ensure that a legal person held liable pursuant to Article 17 is punishable by effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions, which shall include criminal or non-criminal fines and may include other sanctions, such as: exclusion from entitlement to public benefits or aid; temporary or permanent disqualification from the practice of commercial activities; placing under judicial supervision; a judicial winding-up order; temporary or permanent closure of establishments which have been used for committing the offence” (Directive (EU) 2017/541 of the European Parliament and of the Council).

The measures against public provocation content online are stipulated in Article 21 as following: “1. Member States shall take the necessary measures to ensure the prompt removal of online content constituting a public provocation to commit a terrorist offence, as referred to in Article 5, that is hosted in their territory. They shall also endeavour to obtain the removal of such content hosted outside their territory. 2. Member States may, when removal of the content referred to in paragraph 1 at its source is not feasible, take measures to block access to such content towards the internet users within their territory. 3. Measures of removal and blocking must be set following transparent procedures and provide adequate safeguards, in particular to ensure that those measures are limited to what is necessary and proportionate and that users are informed of the reason for those measures. Safeguards relating to removal or blocking shall also include the possibility of judicial redress” (Directive (EU) 2017/541 of the European Parliament and of the Council).

The title V, starting with Article 24 makes important statements regarding the Assistance and support to victims of terrorism: “1. Member States shall ensure that investigations into, or prosecution of, offences covered by this Directive are not dependent on a report or accusation made by a victim of terrorism or other person subjected to the offence, at least if the acts were committed on the territory of the Member State. 2. Member States shall ensure that support services addressing the specific needs of victims of terrorism are in place in accordance with Directive 2012/29/EU and that they are available for victims of terrorism immediately after a terrorist attack and for as long as necessary. Such services shall be provided in addition to, or as an integrated part of, general victim support services, which may call on existing entities providing specialist support. 3. The support services shall have the ability to provide assistance and support to victims of terrorism in accordance with their specific needs. The services shall be confidential, free of charge and easily accessible to all victims of terrorism. They shall include in particular: emotional and psychological support, such as trauma support and counseling; provision of advice and information on any relevant legal, practical or financial matters, including facilitating the exercise of the right to information of victims of terrorism, as laid down in Article 26; assistance with claims regarding compensation for victims of terrorism available under the national law of the Member State concerned. 4. Member States shall ensure that mechanisms or protocols are in place allowing for activation of support services for victims of terrorism within the framework of their national emergency-response infrastructures. Such mechanisms or protocols shall envisage the coordination of

relevant authorities, agencies and bodies to be able to provide a comprehensive response to the needs of victims and their family members immediately after a terrorist attack and for as long as necessary, including adequate means facilitating the identification of and communication to victims and their families. 5. Member States shall ensure that adequate medical treatment is provided to victims of terrorism immediately after a terrorist attack and for as long as necessary. Member States shall retain the right to organise the provision of medical treatment to victims of terrorism in accordance with their national healthcare systems. 6. Member States shall ensure that victims of terrorism have access to legal aid in accordance with Article 13 of Directive 2012/29/EU, where they have the status of parties to criminal proceedings. Member States shall ensure that the severity and the circumstances of the criminal offence are duly reflected in the conditions and procedural rules under which victims of terrorism have access to legal aid in accordance with national law. 7. This Directive shall apply in addition, and without prejudice, to measures laid down in Directive 2012/29/EU” (Directive (EU) 2017/541 of the European Parliament and of the Council).

The Article 25 contains remarks regarding the *protection of victims of terrorism*. In this matter the “Member States shall ensure that measures are available to protect victims of terrorism and their family members, in accordance with Directive 2012/29/EU. When determining whether and to what extent they should benefit from protection measures in the course of criminal proceedings, particular attention shall be paid to the risk of intimidation and retaliation and to the need to protect the dignity and physical integrity of victims of terrorism, including during questioning and when testifying, while Article 26 talks about the Rights of victims of terrorism resident in another Member State: 1. Member States shall ensure that victims of terrorism who are residents of a Member State other than that where the terrorist offence was committed have access to information regarding their rights, the available support services and compensation schemes in the Member State where the terrorist offence was committed. In this respect, Member States concerned shall take appropriate action to facilitate cooperation between their competent authorities or entities providing specialist support to ensure the effective access of victims of terrorism to such information. 2. Member States shall ensure that all victims of terrorism have access to the assistance and support services as laid down in points (a) and (b) of Article 24(3) on the territory of the Member State of their residence, even if the terrorist offence was committed in another Member State” (Directive (EU) 2017/541 of the European Parliament and of the Council).

The final provisions state that the Member States “shall bring into force the laws, regulations and administrative provisions necessary to comply with this Directive by 8 September 2018. They shall immediately inform the Commission thereof. When Member States adopt those measures, they shall contain a reference to this Directive or shall be accompanied by such reference on the occasion of their official publication. The methods of making such reference shall be laid down by Member States. 2. Member States shall communicate to the Commission the text of the main measures of national law which they adopt in the field covered by this Directive” (Directive (EU) 2017/541 of the European Parliament and of the Council).

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# Reaching a Multidisciplinary Assessment Service for the Social and Behavioral prophylaxis with Q-methodology

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## Abstract

The present paper explores the situation and development of a Personality Socio-Behavioral Tendency in the focus group of school leaders and highlights the need of a sustainable change and organizational structures for the classification, prophylaxis and prevention in schools. We aim to describe the utility of a novel Taxonomy as the multidisciplinary assessment as an overall taxonomy rather than the DSM, in the multidisciplinary services within schools.

The research was conducted in the interaction of literature with the operationalization in context, through a quantitative and qualitative methodology as Q methodology.

The study revealed that there is not only a strong positive relationship between Pathogenic Beliefs and Personality Organization but also that school leader's display increasing symptoms of "a *maladaptive behavioral tendency*". Leaders with high levels of Neurotic Personality Organization, which has the highest frequency in the factor weight of the mental component, have also higher chances for coercive behavior than leaders with Borderline Personality Organization. Data were analyzed with PQ Method software processor.

At the end of the article, we outline some suggestions for the development of a structured multidisciplinary assessment of psycho-social problems supporting leaders in schools, the function, style and personality ego strength features in supporting education and health.

**Keywords:** *psycho-social prototype; multidisciplinary assessment service; q-methodology*

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## 1. Introduction

What is referred today as a Q methodology was introduced for the first time in the Journal “*Nature*” by the physician and psychologist William Stephenson in 1935. Stephenson served at the time as the assistant of Charles Spearman, the inventor of

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factorial analysis. In this letter Stephenson treated his observations for the development of analytic factor by

Spearman, Thomson, Pearson et al. to facilitate the assessment and manipulation of core traits, would be established in a new ontologic frame named the systematic study of *subjectivity*.

Q methodology was designed to explore the subjective dimension of issues where different viewpoints are expressed. The term Q methodology to Brown (Block 1961) is further explained in the article "*Correlating Persons and not Tests*", "*Foundations of psychometrics: Four Factorial Systems*" and in another work as "*Alternative Viewpoints for the Correlations between People*" (Block 1971).

Q methodology was invented in 1935 by the British psychiatrist and psychologist William Stephenson (1935) and is often associated with a quantitative analysis toward factorial analysis. Beyond statistical procedures, what Stephenson (1953) claimed to develop was expressing subjectivity given in every situation-e.g. in poetry interpretations, perceptions of the positive role, political behavior, health care, alcoholic drinking etc. Is the life lived on the point of the person who lives that is being observed in quantitative process and subjective in the sense that Q methodology operates in the qualitative research. Q methodology "*combines the power of tradition of the quantitative and qualitative research*" (Gordon and Stoffey 2014) and in various aspects brings a bridge between the to (Sell and Brown 1984).

The instrumental basis of Q methodology is the Q technique that employs the rating of a series of statements that range from agree to totally disagree (Lorr, 1978)

Q-sort technique proposed by Stephenson (1953) was studied systematically by Block (Block 1971).

This is a measurement technique with an application extension in describing qualitative data.

It consistent on a set of statements, each describing a behavioral or psychological feature of an individual or situation. Q-set is compound of a series of statements, the number of which depends to cases, representing a behavioral or psychological aspect of the person or medium. As assumed by Jones, Cumming and Pulos (1993) the content of Q set may be renewed according to the research objectives. Q-sort is an impassive method of evaluation so statements are rated either within cases (ranging from the most characteristic to the least characteristic of the person or medium) with the purpose of gathering specifications or differentials.

In the psychotherapeutic research, Q-sort technique was primarily used to assess treatment outcomes (Jones, Cumming and Pulos 1993). Block proposed the construction of the Q method based on the relative variables in concern and on the construction of statements through variance analysis in order to verify the observed characteristics (Block 1961). In Q methodology, the subject is the center of interest between two routes that relate with different aspects of Q:collected data in the form of Q-sort, correlations and factorial analysis among persons on the rankings. Q-rating as form of data collection, was developed by Stephenson not only to increase the expression of subjectivity but, also to deal with a new form of data analysis, treating participants as variables and not cases. n Q methodology participants are asked for a series of statements that represent a variety of opinions and perspectives on the phenomenon being studied. Range statements may be used to design a Q set m

(Thomas and Bass 1993). Each statement is marked numerically in a unique sheet of paper. Participants choose cards as the instructions of the researcher. For instance, an instruction can be related to the division of cards into three groups: if the person "*agrees*", "*disagrees*" or is "*neutral*" to the statement proposed. Participants continue to select cards according to these groups and thus select statements that they agree, not agree and so on. Each completed template is recorded as data. A statistical program software PQ Method is used to facilitate factor correlations, distribution pyramid, or Q-sort to identify an enumeration of the factors, which represent forms of participants understanding. The Q technique can be used either for evaluation purposes in the psychodiagnostics.

## **2. Method**

As primary expressed, Q methodology study groups of participants that rank a series of statements in Q, received as gestalt and subjective dimension of fulfillment. These Q statements might be analyzed as interpersonal correlations to design a fewer set of factors (concourse). Each of the factors identifies a higher inter-correlation grid of Qs that express a shared view on the examined issue. For the purpose of the present study, we have selected a number of 1000 subjects, mainly Leaders and Directors of the Education and Social Sciences field. We made a preliminary meeting where it was clearly explained the method and procedures and after the subject's approval we delivered the Q-sort test electronically to every participants. Each subject was requested to complete the test according to his or her personal viewpoint in a Likert scale. Subjects randomly chose statements in a distribution of 3, 5, 8, 12, 16, 18, 16, 12, 8, 5, 3. As the subject had compiled the Q-sort, we recorded the number of ranked statements in a matrix.

All validations have shown that PQS has collected data from Gestalt Methods, Rational-Emotive and with Client in Center (Jones, Cumming and Pulos 1993) as well as Psychodynamic and Cognitive – Behavioural ones (Jones and Pulos 1993).

Each Q-sort test held statements constructed to measure Personality Level, the Influence of School Environment and Community and Leadership Style of the individual according to their functions. Records of statements constructs were gathered by the literature review of "Object Relations" and "Personality Level" research and scientific articles on the practices of teaching and learning, resource data from chronicles related to school leadership and records widely reported in media for school situation and teachers in the Albanian context.

There were defined 4 fundamental constructs where statements were placed according to the level of representation and psychologic prevalence, environment or leadership style they convey. Alignment and categorization of data were conducted independently for each city whilst rating of statements according to prevailing category is the same. Construct of statements related to the identification of personality level was supported by the guiding professors in accordance to the key focus and supporting assessment instruments of the study.

## **3. Results**

In the evaluation for the analysis of pre-testing records of the study we have collected the following supporting results:

Reliability of test-retest for the nine scales varies from .77 to .89 ( $p < .001$ ). Alpha coefficient for scale is .95 that reveals a high consistency. The average correlation between Q-subscales was .67. The averages of the individual scales vary from 4.73 to 6.63. The mean of the total scales is 5.76 ( $SD = .62$ ). Data analysis revealed a high stability and internal consistence. Severity of reliability symptoms of test-retest is .87 ( $p < .001$ ) which also reveal a strong and high stability. From testing the reliability of participants, validation for the Overall Personality Organization scale was .92 ( $p < .001$ ); for the Overall Severity and Personality Disorder was .89 ( $p < .001$ ); for the 9 capacities of Mental Functioning ranges from .77 to .89 ( $p < .001$ ); and for Severity of Symptoms was .87 ( $p < .001$ ). All the PDC constructs revealed strong correlations with MMPI-2 scores (Gordon and Stoffey 2016). While the symptoms referred by the subject do not represent a correlation with the known diagnostic criteria as e.g. Major Depression (in DSM-IV-TR) his/her mental function does not affect Personality functionality and thus, the individual should be better treated as Personality with a Depressive tendency.

In the present research, we aimed to design a Personality Prototype that was developed according to the response of concourse to factors after weighing each unit. We established a limit of  $\leq 0.4$  for the significance of weigh to each response. In detail, the data of the results may be found in the chapter of the data analysis of the present work. The outcomes of Q refer to a holistic identification of a viewpoints range related to the issue. Q statements were selected according to their psychological significance for each participant (variable), then, the statements that hold the highest value in weighing will be ranked on the top and those with the lowest weight on the end. We have selected a concourse of 1000 subjects, mainly related to the field of Education and Social Sciences. Leaders and directors of the institutions were presented with the research procedure and after their appovement, we delivered the Q-sort test requesting them to assess their response-opinion into the Likert shale. As the subject had compiled the Q-sort, we recorded the number of ranked statements in a matrix. We could classify a majority of heterogeneous statements as "homogenous for an individual" (Stephenson 1936). In this study, we have designed a starting concourse of 100 statements in the testing phase that were factored to 77. As Q is focused on the correlation of responses of the individual, statements were designed for both categories of leaders and directors of educational institution in a tot of 154 statements.

In the Psychodynamic and Social Prototype (Gordon and Stoffey 2014) evaluation for the analysis of pre-testing records of the study we have collected the following supporting results:

Severity of reliability symptoms of test-retest is .87 ( $p < .001$ ) which also reveal a strong and high stability. Correlations between Pearson variables revealed a positive correlation among variables (teachers and directors) and statements related to the personality and leadership style (Q.2, Q.5, Q.24). Factorial analysis for all 50 subjects reported the creation of 17 factors, from which 4 were considered stable on a level of 0.75 -0.85. These factors were considered significant and were reported for the further pyramidal distribution Q. In both extremities of distribution there were a position of statements from much characteristic (on the right) to the least characteristic (to the left). The data gathered on stability and significance in pre-test helped us in designing

the final test Q in two versions, for teachers and school directors with a definitive number of statements 77.

Collected data were initially added in the dataset of Q divided for each unit. Further, through Q software, there were designed the orthogonal variables and matrice among subjects.

#### 4. Conclusions

Every category of population is affected at different degrees by stressing events and the psychological and social consequences it provides. The relation with the other object-subject is equally important in defining one's psychological outlook. Educational and Social Sciences leaders are probably the part of public in Albania, least studied in the context of mental health and improvement of psychopathologic parameters for raising efficiency and efficacy not only for the individual but also for the entire society. Assessment from subjects for the statements posed in the concourse of the mixed methodology Q, allowed subjects to develop a personalized relationship with each state as defined by the statement but, also to maintain an independent and important identity as variables to their own research. The use of the technique was not only effective in the data elaboration and research, but as alternative approach that could be used in the scientific research and extensively in our statistical data system. Social sciences Leaders perceptions on personality, behavioral trend and leadership style, are significant for a comprehension of these parameters but, also to outline some points from which to develop a strategic middle or long-term plan.

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# Minor's Hearing in Legal Civil Procedures

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## Abstract

Listening to a minor in a civil litigation is governed by the Romanian law and presents particular conditions as opposed to hearing an adult person. Civil litigation concerning minors (divorce, child custody, establishment or cessation of placement) obliges the court to adjudicate only with the minor's hearing if he is 10 years old. Therefore, the court will settle the civil litigation only after the minor has been heard in that case. In some cases, if the competent authority considers it necessary to settle the case, the minor who has not yet reached the age of 10 may be heard. In this case, unlike the minor who has already turned 10 years old, the minor's hearing is voluntary, and the competent authority determines to what extent it is necessary to the case.

According to Article 264 (2) of the Romanian Civil Code, the minor's right to be heard implies the possibility of him asking and receiving any information, according to his or her age, to express his opinion and to be informed of the consequences he may have if it is respected, as well as the consequences of any decision concerning him. Furthermore, the minor may request to be heard and any rejection of such a request must be motivated by the competent authority. But everything the child says will be taken into account in terms of age and maturity.

Listening to the minor should avoid producing any negative effect on his or her mental condition, and it is for the competent authorities to take all necessary measures to ensure the child's mental integrity. The Civil Procedure Code also regulates how the minor will be heard, namely in the council chamber, with or without the presence of parents, guardians or other persons, depending on the circumstances of the case.

**Keywords:** *minor; child; hearing; legal civil procedures*

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## 1. Introduction

Considered by its vulnerability, determined by its physical and intellectual immaturity, but also by its undeniable recognition as a full-fledged law subject, the child participates inherently in judicial proceedings, including civil matters. The complexity of the social relationships in which the child manifests individually, but also as a group, determines a variety of judicial situations.

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Thus, the child becomes an active participant in the judicial procedure and not just his subject. He may participate in this capacity in judicial cases concerning the dissolution of his parents' marriage, accompanied by his custody (Article 396 Civil Code), in the modification of measures concerning personal or patrimonial rights between parents and children, even acquiring the capacity of plaintiff, under national law, if he has reached the age of 14 in this last category of cases. The child may be present (possibly with other children) in the procedure of sanctioning the violation of his / her fundamental rights, as provided internally by art. 29 of the Law no. 272/2004. The quality of the plaintiff may also be the property of the child in actions to establish parental affiliation, denying paternity, challenging paternity recognition, or establishing paternity outside marriage (Article 423 Civil Code).

The child is an active participant and the main subject of the procedures for introducing or modifying a special or alternative protection measure or adoption under the provisions of art. 125 of the Law no. 272/2004 and art. 17 of the Law no. 273/2004 on the legal status of adoption. Also, the involvement of the child in the decision-making process concerning him concerns the procedure for his return in the case of illicit cross-border travel or his illicit detention, assumptions underlying the civil legal concept of international kidnapping of children.

The diversity of the court cases in which the child is involved is enuntiative, claiming in a correlative way the right of the discerning child to express his opinion freely in any matter concerning him, his opinion being considered in relation to his age and degree of maturity (art. 264 Civil Code).

The regulatory legal framework raises the question of the concrete determination by the magistrate of the way of listening to the child in a particular situation. The enumeration made to illustrate the diversity of judicial assumptions that require the presence and participation of the child is not exhaustive, because the complexity of its social life, the many aspects of the child's manifestation determine an endless horizon of the causes in which the child can fully express his opinion in dealing with issues that concern him or where he is a witness. This variety cannot be overlooked in rigid legislative patterns, much less in the context in which the dynamics and the evolution of society as a whole are registering an accelerated pace.

## **2. Hearing stages**

### **2.1. Hearing's preparation**

The preparation of the hearing / interviewing consists of all the activities carried out in advance of the actual listening, centered on ensuring the technical, informational and psychological framework of listening, intended to ensure its best results (Schaffer 2005: p. 257).

If the court deems it necessary, it can call the child in front of her to listen to him. The hearing takes place only in the council room, in the presence of a psychologist and only after a preliminary preparation of the child in this respect (Art. 95 of the Law 272/2004). Hearing of the child who has reached the age of 10 is mandatory and is done in compliance with the provisions of art. 24 of the Law 272/2004 and art. 264 of the Civil Code, with the exception of cases concerning the establishment of a special protection measure for the abused or neglected child.

Consent to adoption of a child who has reached the age of 10 years is given to the court, during the permission of adoption. Adoption cannot be granted without the consent of the child who has reached the age of 10. Prior to expressing consent, the direction in which the child reaches the age of 10 shall reside and inform him, taking into account his age and maturity, in particular the consequences of his adoption and consent to adoption, and draw up a report on this. (Article 17 of the Law no. 273/2004)

## **2.2 Notification of the child**

Pre-notification of the child is one of the measures for assisting children to improve the communication and understanding of the judicial proceedings in which they are involved and whose duration lies between the initial contact and the upper limit of the loss of its necessary character.

The prior notification of the child is a procedural act addressed to him who consists of making him aware of the invitation to appear in a particular case in order to express his point of view (his position or, as the case may be, his own opinion), on a determined aspect or its deposition.

### **2.2.1 Procedures where the child is subject - active participant or a part**

The child as part in the proceedings will be quoted according to his age, in person (and in this case he will be quoted also by the legal representative who approves the documents) or only by his legal representative, the citation cannot be handed over to a child under 14 years old. (Art. 85 of the Civil Procedure Code).

By the act of notification, however, the child is invited to participate actively in the procedure. From a practical point of view, the notification can be made directly by means of an invitation addressed to the child, expressed in words accessible to him, by adapting the vocabulary according to his level of intellectual development. The invitation must be clear, concise and done in such a way that it does not cause fear. It will include the mention of the subject matter, the invitation to come and express its opinion, the indication of the place and time of its presentation, the possibility of being accompanied by a close, trustworthy person, as well as the contact details of the court, in order to be able to request explanations and clarifications.

The notification of the child is usually carried out, as a rule, indirectly, through his legal representative, personally present or through his lawyer, before the court. It is summed up in such cases, at the request of bringing the child. This is the case, especially when there is no suspicion of manipulation of the child. Indirect notification can also be made through the Social Assistance and Child Protection Departments, especially in situations where the child has been abused or neglected, and a special protection measure or a child's adoption are required. The advantage of such a method is to facilitate the realization of another sub-stage of training, namely the pre-training of the child.

The direct way of the invitation is, however, the best practice in the field, because it gives the child's right to be considered as a full subject in the civil judicial procedure and not just as a "small citizen with small rights", the child being a proactive participant in court proceedings and not just a subject. This invitation method is the first element of contact with the child, thus establishing the socio-judicial relationship, based on premises for direct dialogue, availability and accountability. (Albuquerque 2014)



In recalling the same considerations, when judging that the request to obey the child less than 10 years old is well founded, the court will proceed as previously indicated. The refusal to grant such an application will result in a response address made in the same simple manner, including the reason for rejection of the request. (National Authority for the Protection of Children's Rights 2006: p. 85)

### **2.2.2 Procedures where the child is a witness**

The Civil Procedure Code stipulates invariably, the citation of the witness or even his or her assignment, as well as the possibility of hearing the witness to his dwelling. (Article 313 of the Civil Procedure Code) These legal provisions, which also concern the minor witness, are repealed in part by the Law 272/2004, enshrines the prevalence of the principle of the best interests of the child, in any measure, of any kind, concerning his bringing mandate as a constraint measure is obviously contrary to this principle and can be replaced by the provision of specialized services, such as legal and psychological counseling, in order to determine its presentation unless other alternative means are identified, such as presented by the Code - listening at home (Article 142 (3) of Law 272/2004). In this regard, the non-application of the judicial fine, the minor witness, corresponds to the modern conception of the child's hearing. (Art. 313 of the Civil Procedure Code).

Given the flexibility and rigor that characterizes procedures with children, there is a need for the good practice of accompanying the minor witness summons, the invitation having the content.

## **3. The proper hearing**

This stage of the listening process highlights and gives concrete content to the child's right to express his opinion freely on any matter concerning him, as well as other rights in the matter: the right to prior information, the right to be treated with dignity and compassion, the right to effective specialist assistance, the right to be protected against discrimination, the right to be protected from the vicissitudes of a trial and the right to safety

### **3.1 The hearing place**

Before listening to the child, the hearing place must be individualized. This requirement needs the special arrangement of waiting areas appropriate to the child's listening. According to art. 11, point 30 let. d and point 31 let. b of the Guidelines on Justice in Matters involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime, courts should be provided with separate waiting rooms for children and specially arranged private interview rooms and the court configuration should also consider the child. The viewing or access to these spaces by other persons, such as persons accused in the proceedings or those who have committed an act under the criminal law, is forbidden.

The magistrate will consider the minor to wait in such spaces and to present himself at his call. (William 2006: p. 20) Establishing the place where the obedience will take place is another measure imposed by art. IX of the Guidelines on Justice in Matters involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime - annexed to the indicated resolution entitled "Right to Affective Care" in paragraphs 2, 3, 24 and 25. It consists in the individualization of the place of hearing.

Psychological studies have shown that one of the factors influencing children's memory is the context of the hearing. The Romanian judiciary system does not offer these recommended facilities, in which case the Romanian magistrate must observe the time set for the beginning of a child's hearing so that it does not prolong a situation that is burdensome for him. (Lyon 2005: p. 20)

The proper place of listening must be a specially designed space for this purpose, because the court procedure and the court configuration can be intimidating for the children, causing them fear or causing them to be refractory to dialogue. In the absence of an optimal room to facilitate communication between the magistrate and the child and to reduce the stress of the child, it is preferable to have a court room, even a smaller room, where those present can sit at the table. (National Authority for the Protection of Children's Rights 2006: p. 85). In procedures where the child is an active subject or part of the hearing is done in the Council Chamber, and in proceedings in which the child is a witness does not necessarily to be heard in the Council Chamber.

Art. 28 of the Law no. 272/2004 enshrines the right of the child to respect his personality and individuality and the fact that he cannot be subjected to physical punishment or other humiliating or degrading treatment. On the other hand, the child should be given special treatment of an adult before the court, given his bio-psycho-somatic peculiarities. For these reasons, listening to a child witness will have to be done in the Council Chamber, declaring the non-public hearing, by extension of the scope.

Alone, the hearing of the child in the Council Chamber does not meet the stated requirements to ensure the best conditions for the child. It is the task of the competent entities to ensure the minimum facilities required by the international standards in the field.

### **3.2. Hearing time**

At the time of setting the date and time of listening, the child's school schedule must be taken into account. Preferably in this regard, it would be that the day of listening is set when the child does not have school hours or when it has fewer. In any case, the daily schedule of the child must be taken into account, and it is not recommended to disrupt his daily rest and food program. Account will be taken of the specific needs of each child.

The law model in question, Justice in Matters involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime - Model Law and Related Commentary, by art. 28 lit. i. says that the time of listening is scheduled in that part of the day corresponding to the child's age and maturity. An obedience that ignores these recommendations can cause a child's fatigue, dissatisfaction and reluctance, and is not useful from a judicial perspective as it will not provide the best possible results.

### **3.3 The presence of other people at the time of the hearing**

Ensuring an appropriate climate for the child at the time of its hearing in civil proceedings requires the determination of the framework of those whom are present is claimed by the law or desirable at the time of the child's hearing. There is an obligation to develop and implement measures to make the listening easier for the children and to improve communication and understanding with them.

The implementation of these measures requires that the child will be accompanied by a trusted person, who may be a specialist or a family member close to the child. Given that by the age of 6 to 7, children are very dependent on the people around them and the assurances they provide, it is desirable that the chosen person should be part of or specially trained in communication with the child, to prevent such vicissitudes as well as new or secondary trauma. It is not possible to designate the support person among those who define their relationship with the child by authority, those who have antagonistic interests over the child's, as well as those who are the subject of the hearing. (Luca 2005: pp. 205-208).

The support person will be chosen by the child. According to art. 16 of the Statute of the Resolution, the support person will be determined by the child, possibly together with the parents or his legal representative, if the concrete circumstances do not exclude this possibility among those who already have a special relationship with the child. If the first hypothesis is not the case, the support person may also be appointed by the magistrate on the basis of prior consultation of the child or of the persons mentioned, giving due respect to the sex of the person to be designated, referring to the child's particular features.

So, the trusted person can be the legal representative of the child himself, a member of the extended family or another person close to the child. In the case of appointment, an appropriate period of time for approaching the child may be allowed. The support person will be notified of the date and place of the hearing. In the undesirable situation of the repeated hearing of the child, great importance is given to the principle of continuity, in the sense that the same contact person accompanies the child during the whole procedure.

The functions of the support person are to ensure the emotional balance of the child, provide him with the relevant information of his call, familiarizing him with a language appropriate to his degree of cognitive development, with the peculiarities of the procedure: for example, he can explain the role of a magistrate, the configuration of the waiting areas or the listening room, where it will stand. Such a reference person will constitute for the child a guarantee of confidence and security in the context of experiencing contact with unknown, difficult and austere judicial procedures. The child's trustworthy person is the person who will inspire them calm, trust and soulfulness, and will remove their emotions, related anxiety. It will provide them in a sensitive manner, the assistance that the child needs during the entire judicial process, his role being to help, support and counsel the child (Luca 2008: p. 22).

Particular care should be taken to ensure that the minor is not influenced or manipulated. The support person will be able to consult with the parent or legal representative of the child, the lawyer representing the child or the direct magistrate (especially in the absence of a child's lawyer) and will be able to request, when it deems necessary, the adoption of measures to support the child. During the hearing, the trusted person will be able to stay close to the child, eventually, if necessary, hold him by the hand. If the minor is small, he can also be held in the arms or knees of the trusted person.

Listening to a child in the exercise of his fundamental right to speak is not a procedural means of administering any evidence, but only an instrumental way of revealing the child's opinion about a problem that concerns him. The European

Convention on the Child's Rights permits from this point of view the possibility for the minor to be heard alone, but this possibility is not identified with the confidentiality of the outcome of the hearing, since the parties may have access to certain parts of the information or to the whole of the opinion expressed, if the intern law permits so.

Where the child's legal representative also has the status of a part, the foregoing considerations shall be applicable. When this dual quality is not met, the legal representative of the child - the parent, the guardian, the curator appointed, a natural or legal person designated in the procedures for establishing a special protection measure, may be present at the hearing only if the court considers that this would not affect the requirement to ensure safety and a relaxed, reassuring and trustworthy atmosphere for the child. It is necessary to hear the child in the absence of a legal representative, because the presence of more people at the time of listening can inhibit the child, creating an anxious state. This way of listening is compatible with the requirement of a non-ritual listening procedure for children. The presence of a psychologist in the child's listening process is necessary because, as a child development specialist, he can provide, as such, important information to the magistrate both before listening to the child's development level but also after listening, about the psychological perspectives of the behavior and information provided during the listening period. (Luca et al. 2005: p. 23)

In cases of child abuse, the psychologist's role within the multidisciplinary team is a very important one, it will be a discrete presence in listening to the child, following his behavior and interactions, after a screen with a unilateral or at least rear view of the child without interact with him or the audience magistrate. Internal legislation imposes the mandatory presence of the psychologist in multiple situations. The area of civilian causes of children is, however, much wider, requiring a child to be generalized by a psychologist during listening, but also for a correct assessment of the outcome of listening to the child.

The child has access to legal counseling and legal assistance services. Although the necessity of appointing an office lawyer for a child victim is more stringent in criminal proceedings, it cannot be ruled out in civil cases when deemed necessary. The appointment of an office lawyer for the child does not determine his mandatory presence in the child's hearing, the presence decided by the magistrate is made in the superior interest of the child. The office lawyer has a role similar to the child's legal guardian or judicial guardian, the role of defending the child's interests by ensuring a qualified defense.

In the case of a child with disabilities or who does not speak the Romanian language, the presence of an interpreter will be ensured, through which one can communicate optimally. During the listening, media representatives or other foreign persons can not assist. We appreciate that from the point of view of the people present at the moment of listening to the child, optimal obedience involves the presence of a child support person and / or a psychologist or other specialist in child development psychology, the magistrate will assess on a case-by-case basis the need for presence to other people.

#### **4. Conclusions**

Listening to a child is a procedural act that translates into practice as the child's fundamental right to be involved and to express its opinion in any decision-making

process that concerns him. It also determines the obtaining of relevant information for the correct assessment of the measure that needs to be taken in relation to a child in the actual situation, thus ensuring the full respect and full realization of all other rights of the child. Performed by a specialized magistrate concerned with preserving the best interests of the child, listening will be a non-ritual experience for the child, whether or not he is the subject of the procedure or part thereof, or whether he has only the witness. The magistrate must obtain in advance the information relating to these items in order to be able to support the child in expressing his opinion or statement in order to provide him with the assistance measures complained of by his particular situation and to be able to fully understand it. It requires the use of a gentle, calm, friendly tone throughout the listening. Lack of experience, unmatched thinking, and misunderstanding of all things and events by children are factors that affect their perception, memory, and ability to play the circumstances, feelings and opinions.

The magistrate hearing the child should be aware of the fact that a child in front of him faces two major sources of stress: first, the stress caused by the interview situation, determined by the attempt to follow and understand the magistrate, to expose his opinion and the effort of expressing himself before an unknown person.

The analysis of the expressed opinion is made in the light of certain predetermined criteria. The minor's opinion will be able to determine by the magistrate's filter, defining elements of choosing the most appropriate measure to serve the best interests of the child. In judicial practice, it was appreciated that as singular, in the absence of other consistent evidence, the child's statement can not in itself constitute a sufficient basis for the solution. The analysis of the obedience will be done by the magistrate and, in the case of the judicial control courts, on the basis of the minutes drawn up as a result of the hearing, a procedural act in which the way of listening is recorded.

The provisions transposed from the European and universal law into the Romanian law system, the incipient specialization of the Romanian magistrates, the awareness of the need for interdisciplinary activity and cooperation in the field of minor's justice, as well as the elaboration of good practice guides in the field are necessary initiatives in the current framework.

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# Social Security and Insecurity

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## Abstract

The endemic production of risk factors connected to the sudden processes of globalization generates in society a widespread climate of emergency, dissatisfaction, and the awareness of having no tools to deal with sources of threat that are not only local but also global.

**Keywords:** *Social security; Social insecurity; risk factors; citizens; Constitution; crime*

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## 1. Introduction

The current state of modern societies is characterized by the rapidity of the transformations and by the continuous metamorphoses concerning the global contexts. A constantly evolving social change that, in large part, is opposed to the closed and circumscribed vision theorized by the founding fathers of sociology, who read social change as a delimited process capable of reaching a fixed and visible point, with well-defined contours.

In conjunction with the contemporary process in progress, incessant and difficult to contain and control, the speed of events is such that it suddenly determines and changes the uses and lifestyles of each social actor. It follows that the current processes of globalization are not always perceived by the reference company as actions that necessarily lead to new and positive realities, favoring opportunities, interconnection and elimination of socio-cultural barriers together with technological processes.

In this scenario of imminent post-modernity, a process of globalization emerges and takes root as a vehicle for possible pitfalls for society itself; think, in this sense, of the unpredictable processes that characterize modern societies, often without some minimal form of control, or the processes that can constantly lead to security crises, favoring risks and states of uncertainty.

The endemic production of risk factors connected to the sudden processes of globalization generates in society a widespread climate of emergency, dissatisfaction, and the awareness of having no tools to deal with sources of threat that are not only local but also global.

The state of social disorder that results in it pushes the citizen to claim his right to individual as well as community security through an ever increasing demand for social control.

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At present, contemporary societies, in a climate in which the perception of risk and generalized fear is increasing considerably, constantly seek the right interpretative keys to reach and consolidate an acceptable standard of social security.

In light of what has just been introduced and after a careful analysis of the existing literature, this contribution will try to propose an interpretative and behavioral paradigm on urban security and public order (Cifaldi 2012: pp. 372-380); furthermore, the reverse of the coin will be tackled, observing how the lack of security has as a possible consequence the state of terror and fear.

The daily debate on the need to guarantee public order and the constant attempt to preserve the safety of each individual citizen, as per constitutional dictate, have always been constant in every state apparatus, today more than in the past. From a strictly literal point of view, security is referred to in the Constitution a total of ten times: five within Part I (Rights and duties of citizens)<sup>9</sup>; five within Part II (Organization of the Republic)<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> See the art. 13, third paragraph, Constitution: "In exceptional cases of necessity and urgency, indicated strictly by law, the public security authority may take provisional measures, which must be communicated within forty-eight hours to the judicial authority and, if not validation in the following forty-eight hours, they are considered revoked and remain devoid of any effect "; Article. 14, second paragraph of the Constitution, which within the limits of the freedom of domicile establishes that they can be provided only "not in the cases and ways established by law according to the guarantees prescribed for the protection of personal liberty"; Article. 16, first paragraph, Const. : "Every citizen can move and stay freely in any part of the national territory, except for the limitations that the law establishes in general for reasons of health or safety. No restrictions can be determined by political reasons "; Article. 17, third paragraph, Const. : "Meetings in public places must be given prior notice to the authorities, who may forbid them only for proven reasons of security or public safety"; Article. 41, second paragraph, Const. : The private economic initiative "can not be carried out in contrast with the social utility or in such a way as to damage safety, freedom and human dignity".

<sup>10</sup> See Articles 117, second paragraph, lett. d), Cost., which provides for matters of exclusive legislative competence of the State: "defense and armed forces; state security; weapons, ammunition and explosives "; Article. 117, second paragraph, lett. h), Cost., which indicates among the exclusive powers of the State: "public order and security, excluding the local administrative police"; Article. 117, third paragraph, of the Constitution, which provides for matters of concurrent legislation State-Regions: "protection and safety at work"; Article. 120, second paragraph, Const. : "The Government can substitute itself to organs of the Regions, Metropolitan Cities, Provinces and Municipalities in the event of non-compliance with international norms and treaties or with community legislation or serious danger to the safety and public security, that is when they require the protection of the legal unit or economic unit and in particular the protection of the essential levels of benefits concerning civil and social rights, regardless of the territorial boundaries of local governments. The law defines procedures to ensure that substitute powers are exercised in compliance with the principle of subsidiarity and the principle of loyal cooperation "; Article. 126, second paragraph, Const. : "With the motivated decree of the President of the Republic are disposed the dissolution of the Regional Council and the removal of the President of the Executive who have performed acts contrary to the Constitution or serious violations of the law.



## **2. Network security and its complexity**

The point of discussion, which will be addressed in the coming years, is the challenge of understanding and managing the digital revolution already underway. Every minute, in fact, in the world there are hundreds of thousands of searches on Google and 'post' on Facebook, which contain information, which reveals what we do, let's try and think: who we are. With the development of the Internet of Things within less than ten years we will have 150 billion devices and sensors, 20 times more numerous than men on Earth, connected to each other and with people in an immense global network. Then the amount of data will double every 12 hours. And everything can, at least in principle, become more 'intelligent'; soon we will have not only smart phones but smart homes, smart factories, smart cities, smart cars; and the question is: will we humans be smarter?

Over the next 20 years we will have an incredible amount of data and more people able to acquire them in a fraudulent way, as happened in Germany in January 2019, where personal data, mobile phone numbers, private chats and, in some cases, even the extremes of identity documents were hacked and illegally published via Twitter in a cyber-theft that hit German politics: the most serious hacker attack in the history of Germany.

The politicians involved go from Chancellor Angela Merkel to the President of the Republic, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, deputies of the Bundestag, but also regional and local representatives. Among the politicians most affected the leader of the Greens, Robert Habeck.

The victims (865 politicians in all) belong to all political groups except one: the far-right party Afd. The stolen data was published on a Twitter account called "Security Researching - Artists, satire and irony". Not only politicians but also other public figures (such as singers, actors, journalists, etc.) were involved. To deal with the situation, the German cyber-defense crisis cabinet, made up of the Federal Office for the Defense of the Constitution, the agents of the Federal Criminal Office, and even the national secret services of the BDD, met in emergency. The material has been published "in episodes" every day on Twitter, starting during the Christmas holidays 2018.

The German government has spoken of "a very, very serious attack" and has specified that among the widespread documents there would be no "sensitive materials", adding that some false ones could have been published. The account that published them was promptly closed.

It is not the first time that a hacker attack hits German politicians: at the end of 2017, the security forces had detected a case of hacking in style against many Members of the Bundestag. Three years ago, however, hackers had put the internal network of parliament out of action for days. As always there are those who defend our data, one of the most significant experiences is represented by the work done by Troy Huant, security expert, also known for having created the site have been pawned (<https://haveibeenpwned.com/>) where anyone can verify if their email account has been hacked. In addition, there is a database (collection # 1) where all information on violated sites and accounts is entered and anyone, for free, can check if it has been hacked and then added to the list.

### **3. Security and collective awareness**

Beginning in the mid-1990s, the expression zero tolerance began to spread throughout the United States. This terminology, in a short time, spread to different States, and began to be used in a plurality of areas to indicate a particular attitude and manifestation of one's firmness in relation to categories of transgressors and their actions.

The success and the consequent spread of the expression is due, in particular, to the political propaganda that, the then mayor of New York, Rudolph Giuliani (1994-2001) made during his election campaign together with the Commander of the New York Police Department, (NYPD), W. Bratton.

The future mayor considered it of primary importance and urgency to reorganize in the city of N. Y the plan of control and management of security, on the agenda, was the first point to find an immediate and effective solution. In order for the new management plan to give its fruits, it was essential to compare and modulate its proposals with W. Bratton, whose experience gained in the field would have helped to bring out the critical points, the weaknesses, the limits that existed every day in the struggle to crime.

At the work table, Giuliani also wanted GL Kelling (Kelling and Wilson 1982: pp. 29-38), an American scholar and criminologist who, in the eighties, had conducted numerous sociological research, publishing, in 1982, an article designed to change the perspective of observation of petty crime phenomena and their interpretation.

It was the Broken Windows Theory, or The Broken Glass Theory, born on the basis of some experiments conducted in the United States during the Sixties, at the University of Stanford, by the American social psychologist F. Zimbardo; the study concerned "the psychological effect that the conditions of degradation and abandonment of urban areas could trigger in the perception of the safety of individuals" (Malizia 2016: p. 50).

So Kelling talked about his new theory: "If a window is broken and left unrepaired, all of the windows will soon be broken. (...) One unrepaired broken window is a signal that no one cares, and so on (Pomilia 2015: pp. 29-38).

"The theoretical approach is based on the belief that the more a territory is subjected to simple" deviant "behaviors, for example acts of incivilities, the more likely there are to be more serious criminal acts" (Malizia 2016: p. 50).

The main hypothesis, according to what was commented in the literature and by the author of the mentioned intervention, is based on the belief that in an urban area, where there is a building in a state of neglect with damaged windows and windows, if not provides to repair the breakages, shortly thereafter will trigger typical mechanisms of abandonment, so the urban degradation that as a domino effect, will favor the emergence and the occurrence of other criminal behavior. A sudden intervention by the control institutions that guarantee public order could prevent this from occurring, at the very least limiting subsequent damage.

In the meeting that Giuliani organized he wanted to verify if it was possible to assign to the police the task of maintaining order in the streets through actions that could consist also in the removal of beggars and washers (Caneppele 2009: p. 14), that is to face even those urban disorder behaviors, both physical and social, which generated a sense of fear in the citizen, contributing to increasing urban insecurity.

Shortly afterwards we realized how increasing fear for crime situations was directly proportional to environmental and social disorder. Citizens began to take different attitudes, renouncing their usual habits, and coming to choose to avoid public spaces as much as possible because they were perceived as unsafe.

The fear and uncertainty of moving through the streets of one's own city, of one's own neighborhood, threatened to cause a decrease in the environmental surveillance that every citizen did unconsciously.

The disorder, "understood as the violation of rules established by a community for the use of a space or a common good" thus becomes a constant closely linked to the need to ensure and guarantee to a community the presence of public order. In the period between 1990 and 1999 the expression zero tolerance was widely used; this terminology inevitably indicated a new way of organizing and planning the activity of American law enforcement agencies.

R. Giuliani was preparing to experiment with a new paradigm of a political, but also social, paradigm, which contemplated a different way of applying and regulating safety regulations on the territory.

It became imperative to analyze and study the responses and signals of the new policy, which the social setting returned daily, but above all to know how to interpret them to provide increasingly efficient urban security.

Observing social actors and their behaviors was equivalent to understanding the choices, the needs, the renunciations, indicators on which the new models aimed at guaranteeing safety and ensuring social control on the territory would be calibrated and regulated.

In the wake of what was happening in the United States with Giuliani, also the English Prime Minister, T. Blair (1997-2007), in his first mandate he put security on the agenda, also influenced by the thought of the sociologist and friend Antony Giddens, main theorist of the so-called third way. As in the 1990s, even in today's society, the need for security is always a priority, a primary need of the citizen demanded loudly.

Ulrich Beck (2000) has understood the emergence of a risk society as a passage of the processes of de-radicalization and individualization, which marks a fracture from a not fully realized modernity characterized by the classical industrial society. So Beck defines contemporary society as a risk society; according to the author, the feeling of insecurity as well as fear and uncertainty are phenomena that are directly and sociologically linked to the processes of globalization and individualization.

Frank Furedi (2006) goes beyond the thought of Beck and Giddens; according to this author, in fact, public opinion becomes aware of the consequences of modernity. He identifies a "culture of fear" that characterizes our societies, "fear" not only understood as a perception of lack of security, but as a cultural metaphor of manifestation of the growing uneasiness about our existence in the world.

Zygmunt Bauman (2007) argues that contemporary society is a society of uncertainty, overturning the thesis of Sigmund Freud who, in his essay "Das Unbehagen in der Kultur" (Bauman 2007), translated into Italian, with the title "The discomfort of civilization", argued that 'civilization' was an exchange: a value held in high esteem is sacrificed for another, equally essential and sacred, that civilization brings safety: a condition free from the many dangers that come from nature, from

your body and from other people. In other words, civilization frees from fear, or at least makes the fears less terrible and intense than they otherwise would be. In return, it places restrictions - sometimes heavy, as an oppressive regime, always unpleasant - on individual freedom. Human beings are not allowed to pursue anything they desire from the bottom of their hearts, and almost nothing can be pursued in the desired way. The instincts are held to restrain or completely suppressed: an unhappy condition, governed by psychological distress, by neurosis and rebellion. The most common deviations and deviant behavior, Freud suggests, arise from the sacrifice of a large part of individual freedom in exchange for anything that serves to guarantee us, collectively or individually, greater individual security.

We could summarize Bauman with the condition of his problematic "global" actor, in the three strictly complementary oxymoron's of "insecure security", "uncertainty" and "unsafe safety". While the Italian language would tend to summarize them under the unifying category of 'insecure security', the English language allows us to grasp three more precise meanings, even if referable to a common condition. "Insecure security" has a mainly social value and refers to the condition of virtually precarious work and to an increasingly threatened social "security". The 'uncertain certainty' has a cognitive meaning and refers to the inherent risk of every economic dimension of the global society, while the third oxymoron could be rendered with "safety at risk".

#### **4. Paradigmatic historical passage of security**

Today, after many years, we can say that, in the aftermath of the fall of the Berlin Wall, the drafting of the International Charter of Child Rights and protests in Beijing (Tiananmen Square), all events that took place in 1989, the world was changing significantly. After the attack of the Twin Towers in September 2001 in New York, the contingent situations linked to Islamic terrorism certainly did not help to remove the fears inherent in a frightened community (Şerban 2018: pp. 23-30). Unfortunately, the management and planning of public order control must also cover scenarios that are not exclusively so far-reaching. Public order must also be guaranteed in much more circumscribed situations; sports events or concerts, strikes, places (D'Ambrosi, Barresi and Cifaldi 2004: p. 3) where the concentration of men is numerous, as during the G8 in Genoa, but also in environments where you usually live a sort of apparent social tranquility.

It is therefore necessary to redesign and propose new paradigms of public order in the light of the numerous events of which, perhaps, we have been witnesses and direct and indirect victims.

#### **5. Concept of security and public order**

The Dictionary defines security as an objective condition free from dangers or capable of making the risks deriving less serious.

The term derives from the Latin *sine cura*, that is, without worry, a simple expression that encompasses the heart of the action of the State, that is to guarantee and ensure a peaceful life for its citizens.

Public security is the objective condition of a state in which individuals are guaranteed the smooth running of their activities.

Security understood as public security extends and overwhelms the concept of public order, ie all those procedures to ensure and guarantee the development of events where there is a concrete and high possibility that there may be unrest (D'Ambrosi, Barresi and Cifaldi 2004: p. 3).

In the Constitution, the public order is referred to several times and for various reasons, in isolation or in connection with other elements (safety, safety, morality, etc.); therefore, the rule, which belongs to the order prior to the Constitution, is eliminated, according to which public order played the immanent limit of each civil liberty, and introduced the most analytical criterion that distinguishes and qualifies the discipline of each freedom in relation to specific public interests. Thus, for example, reference is made to safety as a limitation of freedom of movement (Article 16) and freedom of assembly (Article 17), to public safety as a limitation of home freedom (Article 14) and freedom of assembly (Article 17). In the Civil Code, public order is taken as one of the limits of lawfulness to the exercise of private autonomy. According to the art. 1343 of the Civil Code, the cause of the contract is unlawful and produces the nullity of the contract when it is contrary to mandatory rules, public order or morality. In the Criminal Code, public order, on the other hand, is considered as a limit to a material activity, which as a rule constitutes exercise of a fundamental freedom. In this context crimes against public order (articles 414 ff.), Public safety (articles 422 ss.) And contraventions concerning public order and public tranquility (articles 650 ss) are contemplated.

## **6. Fear as a response to non-security**

The definition of fear: an emotional state consisting in a sense of insecurity, loss and anxiety in the face of a real or imaginary danger or in the face of what or for what it is or believes to be harmful; more or less intense according to the persons and the circumstances, it assumes the character of a strong and sudden disturbance when the danger presents itself unexpectedly, takes it by surprise or in any case appears imminent. Today fear is understood as a limit to action, ie a subject that limits their daily activities (eg going out at home in the evening, going to the cinema, shopping, taking a vacation, planning a weekend etc.) creating a series of side effects such as granting to the underworld night spaces of cities, not to move the economy itself and above all an increase in social inequalities where the gap between legality and illegality becomes more and more pronounced. So we could create an axiom: insecurity is about fear as economic depression is about illegality. [I: P = DE: IL]

In a research by ISTAT it is estimated that the perception of Italians of fear is 27.6%, it is a percentage of those who feel little or not at all safe when they are alone on the road maybe in the evening; if you prefer, the fear makes 10.3%, so much the proportion of Italians who feels insecure to stay home alone in the evening hours. There are those who do not go out, who buys a gun and who turns armed knowing he must cross a dark road. This is what ISTAT has said, which has elaborated data on the perception of security by Italians, updated to the 2015-2016 two-year period. The percentage of Italian regions: Lombardy, 34.9%; Lazio, 33.9%; Puglia, 32.9%; Tuscany, 30.2%; Abruzzo, 30.2%; Campania, 29.5%; Emilia Romagna, 26.3%; Veneto, 26.0%; Umbria, 25.3%; Sicily, 23.6%; Calabria, 22.5%; Molise, 21.1%;

Liguria, 20.3%; Marche, 19.8%; Friuli Venezia Giulia, 19.6%; Sardinia, 14.5%; Basilicata, 13.6%; Valle d'Aosta, 12.9%; Trentino-Alto Adige, 12.4%.

We generally speak of insecurity because we believe that in this context the most specific relationship between crime and fear must be considered: even for this reason, even though it is a far more common term, we do not limit ourselves here to talking about fear of crime, since between the phenomenon of fear and the criminal phenomenon not all authors recognize such a direct relationship, even in the case in which phenomena a relationship exists. It is certainly true that, in classical criminological literature, crime is conceptualized as a dependent variable: it is the crime that must be explained, what the reasons are sought for. The overcoming of this approach opens, therefore, in itself, a large space for research: the consequences of the crime, first of all the reactions of the victims and then the changes in the lifestyles of the people in general, become the object of interest and of study.

In recent years, many empirical researches underline an unexpected gap between the two terms, advancing numerous hypotheses, mostly to be verified, among which some consider how crime has been used for decades as an explanatory register of insecurity that may arise elsewhere. How to say: those who are afraid, certainly fear of crime, those who feel insecure certainly lives the crime as a further drama, but its can not simply be called fear of crime. To this is added the contradiction that seems to cross the most specific research on victimization: the link between feelings of insecurity and objective violence is generally very weak, to the point of asking "could not be, after all, that the fear of crime does not has anything to do with crime? ". The legitimacy of the application does not exempt from having to give a scientifically founded answer, and from the need to "not exclude a priori (I would say fideistically) that there is also a relationship between the spread of social panic and the spread of crime".

## **7. Conclusions**

Surely the incredible growth of mass media and information technology has facilitated a widespread and effective dissemination of information. This places the individual at the center of an open system, where distances and traditional geographical and cultural boundaries enter into new dimensions.

The social actor is subjected to a constant "bombardment" of stimuli that has no equal in history. While this has undoubtedly contributed to greater dissemination of culture, knowledge and the achievement of innumerable benefits in terms of well-being, it has also led to some negative effects. Our newscasts or the pages of newspapers are essentially filled with crime and, where we talk about politics, the most common themes are illegal immigration, the security decree and economic uncertainty. All of this puts more fuel in a fiery climate, and the resilience coefficient remains low.

In the wake of these reflections and on the continuing need for security we must reverse the axiom: insecurity is to fear as the economic depression is to illegality [I: P = DE: IL], ie to create more security to create happiness (eliminating the fear) that will fuel the economy by bringing out legality.

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# **“Street children” phenomenon in the Romanian society**

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## **Abstract**

The phenomenon of „street children ”became more visible in Romania after 1989. Causes are related to family conditions: poverty, violence, alcoholism of parents, neglect or indifference leading to family break up. Another reason for the “street children phenomenon” is the child protection institutions, characterized by poor conditions and inadequate treatment received by staff. The vast majority of street youth live in groups because of the advantages of group life. The majority of street youth are consumers of toxic substances. The level of school education is quite low, many of them not knowing how to read and write, which explains the failure of school integration. Many street youth suffering from various medical problems due to limited access to health services. Much of street youth are exposed to sexual abuse and prostitution, especially girls. The main source of income is begging. The situation of economic exploitation among street youth is quite high. The current legislation is discriminatory for the street youth. Problems faced by street youth is the inefficiency of the system of social assistance. “Street children” stigma is unjust, but it continues to exist. The objectives of the investigation are: the influence of socialization agents (family) on why choosing the street life and detection of conditions which lead the child to choose life on the streets To achieve the case studies, we analyzed children's files which included: social inquiries made natural family child psychosocial children sheets, monitoring reports, psychological reports prepared by a psychologist.

**Keywords:** *street children; legislation; protection institutions; education; exploitation*

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## **1. Introduction**

The "street children" are the category of children living on the streets. They can be divided into several types according to different criteria: by time spent in the streets: permanent, casual, workers on the street; after the family situation and their relationships with parents; by area of origin. The numerical value of "street children" varies according to data provided by various studies and research, intervention

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programs. Numerical estimates both at institutional and governmental level are carried out by UNICEF, Social Integration Support Association, Save the Children, Open House, Ministry of Interior, Department for Child Protection etc. The causes that lead to the appearance of "street children": urbanization, inadequate social protection of low-income families, poverty, dysfunctional families, parents' maltreatment of children, decreased social control. There are internal and external risk factors that can lead to the "street children" phenomenon. Internal factors are connected to the proper functioning, organization and structure of "street children" origin families. External factors are in a close relationship with all the economic problems, with low interest for education and culture.

Although considered a criminal offense under Law no. 272/2004, begging has become a "business" and the only source of income for many families who use their own children for this purpose. Social Assistance offers a limited number of facilities for children and parents. Violence in public care and protection of children is also an important factor. The children are sometimes forced by their own parents to: begging, theft or prostitution to make various street work.

## **2. Problem statement**

The society sets the action and solving plan related to different problems depending on how you perceive and how to understand the social phenomena and depending on available resources.

Apart from the social perception they have specialists directly involved in work with them (psychologists, sociologists, social workers) there is social perception of other socio-professional categories, such as people working in the police or the medical field.

There are also social perception of the public be involved in social contracts with "street children". Media has provided over the years examples of systematic application of stigmata "homeless" or "beggars". Newspaper headlines, reports show disgusting images in the public eye, an attitude of rejection and disgust.

The group it is a new family of "street children." Their lifestyle and survival patterns are diverse. Ways to generate income can be: begging (79,1%), car washing (15,7%), thefts (14,4%), luggage carryin (9%), prostitution (6,3%), newspaper selling (1,3%), Other methods (15,9%). (Save the Children 2016).

## **3. Research questions**

The main legal provisions on child labor are found in the Constitution, the Labor Code, Family Code and the conventions and recommendations of the International Labour Organisation. Constitution establishes the following principles: forced labor is prohibited (Article 39, paragraph 1); exploitation of children, their employment in activities that might be harmful to their health, morals, or that would endanger their life or their normal developing are prohibited (Article 45, paragraph 3); children under the age of 15 may not be employed as employees (Article 45, paragraph 4) ; The new Labour Code, adopted on the 24th of January 2003 provides in Article 13 that the individual becomes able to work at the age of 16. Under the Constitution, Article 32, the state guarantees every citizen the right to education regardless of gender, race, nationality, politics or religion, without restrictions that might constitute discrimination or segregation. The law of education provides in Article 20, paragraph 4 that the National

Education Ministry can approve classes consisting of children who, for various reasons, did not graduate until the age of 14 the first four grades of compulsory education.

“Street children” live in conditions that people with normal families consider it awful, unbearable: cold, dirty and unchanged lingerie. The National Study regarding the “street children” situation 2015-2016 indicates the last medical examination to “street children”: current week (8,1%), current month (9,9%), in the last 6 months (9,9%), current year (16,6%), more than a year ago (55,5%).

#### **4. Purpose of the study**

“Street children” have cognitive deficiencies and weaknesses generated by discouraging the socio-educational institution of the family that took the family functions.

Most of the “street children” have missed the point emotionally, have a “neurotic” structure, manifested by intra and interpersonal conflicts.

Specific aspects of the “street children” behavior are: self-image diminished, aspirations for the future limited, the area bounded strictly limited in which the “street children,” live, the social relations chaotic, humiliation, mental insecurity, physical and verbal violence, the absence of identification used to determine the “street children,” “misperception of self-image, the presence of an inferiority complex about physical appearance, dress code, lack of family support.

The dirty clothes are an indicator of child adaptation to living environment (reference group), the rules and norms of social cohabitation imposed by membership, but, in relation to the general social frame, represent an indicator of inadequacy, of conflict between child and the environment. Communication and language are characterized by poverty (due to low information level, communication in general market, by images, concepts and ideas) and characteristic elements of street jargon. The main mechanism developed by young people for survival in the streets is aggressiveness.

Once in the street, the child is forced to choose one of the following alternatives: or he lives alone, isolated by the groups of children in the street, and then his chances of survival are reduced; or he integrates into a group where he will learn to accept other children's aggression or impose his own force.

Life risks in the street are numerous. Sexual abuse in Romania exploitation and sexual abuse of children have not been studied well enough by the professionals in social domain, or by the public authority. Thus, the absence of statistics on cases of exploitation and sexual abuse of children causes the ignoring and the minimizing exploitation and sexual abuse among children. Prostitution It is noted the tendency to engage in prostitution, especially for children who no longer have any contact with family, or have only sporadic connections with it. Prostitution is specific to girls. Some girls are determined in the street, from very young ages to procure the basic needs through prostitution. Police estimations indicate as perhaps 10% of the girls who live among “street children” prostitutes even from a very young age. (Source: The National Survey on the situation of “Street Children” 2015). So far most of the “street children” have experienced alcohol, tobacco and volatile substances, appreciated not to fall into the category of drugs, but that has devastating effects on health.

According to the National Survey about the “Street Children” Situation in 2016, a third (33%) of “street youth” is permanent consumers, while 16% are sporadic consumers of drugs and alcohol.

Smoking is a habit practiced daily by “street children” regardless of age, with children aged 6 and 8 years who come to consume a pack a day. The tobacco use leads to serious damage of the respiratory tract, and it lead to the appearance of tuberculosis.

Alcohol consumption is less frequent among "street children". The great majority of "street children" said they prefer to buy volatile substances, being cheaper than alcohol.

The purpose of this study is to identify the risks that cause some children to get into the streets and problems of the social assistance system in Romania.

## **5. Research methods**

In the realization of this study we identified the main the social assistant's skills: ability to persevere, ability to cope in situations of confrontation and to establish its authority, ability to get things moving, ability to get on and get to know the legal provisions, ability to work in a hostile environment, ability to work in a team, ability to establish interpersonal relationships, the social assistant should know the network of state institutions and NGOs, the social assistant must keep confidential data provided by the child, ability to know the value system of "street children".

There are the following issues in the social assistance system: social assistants are less skilled in the domain; dispersal of social assistance programs at the level of NGOs and public institutions and ministries, which had the time and the positive effects for the protection of those in need, such as encouraging volunteering and partnership. There were also negative effects of such an institutional-administrative fragmentation, resulting in a lack of coherence of activities, the impossibility of fixing priorities and hierarchy of needs for those in need, and the lack of programs that focused on family and child support; the decentralization of the social assistance system, which went in the opposite direction leading to wider social gaps area: the poorest have become much poorer, due to lack of own resources. In these areas social assistance could not be granted, occasional aid could not be provided, social assistance services could not be developed.

The large number of these children living in the streets is the legislation's deficiencies related to the child's protection.

Since many non-governmental organizations offer social assistance services, I have proposed to identify the types of services offered.

*“Save the Children” Organization*, outreach social assistance program in Bucharest -it has general objectives: promoting children's rights; reducing the number of abandoned children living on the streets and prevent or limit deviant behaviors; awareness-makers and public opinion on the urgency and necessity of social reintegration of children living on the streets; empowering the family on its obligation to raise and educate their children; recognition of the work the streets and street social worker status.

Specific objectives are: achieving and maintaining liaison with groups of children, with an emphasis on individual approach; identification of children contacted to enable social inquiry; specific problems in the street and a sense of urgency (medical and material problems); placing children in day care or residential centers (if places available to them); social inquiry in contact families of children and investigate possibilities for reintegration in the extended family (relatives of children); recreating

the relationship between the child and the family; integration of the child in the extended family (when reintegration into the family home is not possible); report Child Protection Commission case in order to obtain a decision of family custody.

“Parada” Foundation mainly aims to help disadvantaged children, especially street children and former street children. Foundation programs include: Assistance Street; day center apartments transit / emergency social apartments, service integration and training.

The actions taken under the programs of the Foundation: evaluating and analyzing the needs of "street children": family, social and school reintegration of "street children"; socio-professional reintegration of youth in need.

Street social assistance is offered as a mobile center of social and medical assistance “Parada” during the day and night, offering the following services: identification and knowledge of children, their social orientation and accompanying specialized agencies, information on rights, training opportunities, health care, information on hygiene- artistic workshops.

Types of support offered to young people, street children of *"Social Inclusion Support" Association (ASIS)*: help in removing the attitudes and behaviors of marginalized person, help in reshaping the value system of the language, help in finding a job, help in not giving up in case of temporarily or potential failure, medical aid (medicines and facilitate medical examinations), aid in contact with family and institutions. Projects carried out: Temporary residential center “Loc temporar de viață,” the social apartments.

The association “Gavroche House” aims to facilitate the integration of street child in the family (natural or adoptive), schools, and society. “Gavroche House” is a residential institution, which provides temporary protection for: children with deviant behavior who are in the streets, children at risk, street children with low internship in the street, which is not in the criminal investigation.

“Gavroche House” ensures social protection concentrated in three areas: healthcare; social reintegration, school, family; development of methods and prevention programs.

The objectives of the investigation are the following:

- The influence of socialization agents (family) on why choosing the street life.
- Detection of conditions which lead the child to choose life on the streets.

The assumptions of the investigation were:

- If the family situation is characterized by aggression, indifference, then the risk of becoming a street child is greater.

- The more the personnel in child protection institutions behave indifferently to the situation of the child, the more the child is motivated to avoid contact with care institutions.

- The more the level of cooperation between state institutions and child protection non-governmental organizations are higher, the better the chance for "street children" to be socially reintegrated.

The method used for obtaining the information was to analyze social documents and discussions with foundation staff on which we formulated case studies.

The social document analysis is a non-creative method the researcher uses after the social phenomena have occurred, so that their development has not undergone any change due to the study, presence or intervention analyst of social life.

Case studies were carried out in a Bucharest NGO dealing with recovery, integration and resocialization of "street children". The purpose of conducting the case studies was highlighting outcomes arising from partnerships between Governments and non-governmental organizations aimed at social reintegration of street children and the influence of family factors.

To achieve the case studies, we analyzed the following documents: copy folders of the staff of the shelters where they come from; copy folders made by social assistants from the Child Protection Departments; dossiers of NGO staff; Children's files included: social inquiries made natural family child psychosocial children sheets, monitoring reports, psychological reports prepared by a psychologist.

**Case number 1:**

Name, Surname: I.L.

Sex: male

Age: 17 years old

Birthplace: Bucharest

Background: family

Socio-economic situation of the family: couple: legally constituted

Father: worker, addicted to alcohol

Mom: dead

Brothers: No

Attitudes towards parents: negative, especially for the father because of mistreatment

Reason for leaving the street: mistreatment of the natural father

Gain sources: theft, begging

The school situation: 3 classes

Consumption of toxic substances: smoke 15 cigarettes a day

The attitude towards the police: negative

Background, measures of socialization:

The first run away took place at the age of 9 years culminating in the father's ill-treatment on alcohol consumption.

I. L. was institutionalized in a center for juvenile delinquents, and after a period of three weeks was moved to an orphanage where he ran away.

I believe that he had to be included in a program of counseling and psychotherapy because of the mistreatment given by his father in childhood.

**Case number 2:**

Name, Surname: G.M.?

Sex: Female

Age: 15 years

Birthplace: Bucharest

Background: family

Socio-economic situation of the family: couple: parents are divorced

Father: remarried

Mother: living in cohabitation relationship

Brothers: has a younger brother aged six years

G.C. lives with his mother

Attitudes towards parents: negative for both parents

Reason for leaving on the street: due to repeated rape of mother concubine

Gain sources: begging, prostitution

The school situation: 3 classes

Consumption of toxic substances: volatile substances two to three times a week

The attitude towards the police: negative due to disagreements

Background; measures: Following the divorce at age of 7 G.M.'s mother, G.M. ran away from home due to repeated sexual abuse of mother's concubine, a man who was younger than his mother.

Personal Solution:

- Establishing counseling sessions with both mother and child;
- Information on rights and the existence of socio-educational centers.

### **Case number 3:**

Name, Surname: E.I.

Sex: male

Age: 16

Birthplace: Bucharest

Background: family

Socio-economic situation of the family: couple: legally constituted

Father: permanently abroad

Mother: permanently abroad

Brothers: No

Attitudes towards parents: negative due to negligence and indifference of the parents

Reason for leaving on the street: indifference and poor parenting

The school situation: graduated 10 classes

Consumption of toxic substances: drugs

The attitude towards the police: negative

History and social rehabilitation measures:

The first run on the street was at the age of 9 years old having as motivation: she was bored at home alone while parents did not give her any attention. Despite the efforts of social assistants to save her due to an overdose E.I. died at the age of 16 years.

## **6. Findings**

Before 1989 the legal framework was established by Law 3/1970 on the protection regime for some categories of minors.

Since 1989 child protection legislative framework has undergone important changes: new administrative structures have been established and have been developed extensive legislation.

Administrative structures with responsibilities in child protection: National Committee for Child Protection; Department for Child Protection; Commission for Child Protection; Specialised Public Service for Child Protection; National Authority for Child Protection and Adoption; General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection; Public Social Services.

Law 18/ ratifying UN conventions on the Rights of the Child, Emergency Ordinance no. 26/1997 on the protection of children in difficulty, provide seven

protection measures for "street children": entrusting the child to a family, an individual or a private authorised organization; custody of the child for adoption; temporary custody of the child to the specialized public service; place the child in a family or a person; place the child in an emergency. Law No. 705/2001 on the social assistance system and Law no. 272/2004 declare the protection and promotion of rights of the child, by stating that the child's best interests will be taken in all actions and decisions concerning the children, whether undertaken by public and private authorities and children's rights will be respected without discrimination regardless race, sex, financial status, status at birth or acquired status.

Children's rights were in continuous attention of international organizations, since the adoption on 10 December 1948 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Children's rights were set out in the Geneva Declaration of 1924, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. During the General Assembly of 20 November 1989, the UN adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child, is under review and ratification by Member States.

Romania ratified the ONU Convention on the Rights of the Child in September 1990 by Law No. 18/1990. According to the Convention on the Children's Rights, all children's rights are based on several principles.

## **7. Conclusion and recommendations**

The phenomenon of street children "became more visible in Romania after 1989. Causes are related to family conditions: poverty, violence, alcoholism of parents, neglect or indifference leading to family break up. Another reason for the "street children phenomenon" is the child protection institutions, characterized by poor conditions and inadequate treatment received by staff. The vast majority of street youth live in groups because of the advantages of group life. The majority of street youth are consumers of toxic substances. The level of school education is quite low, many of them not knowing how to read and write, which explains the failure of school integration. Many street youth suffering from various medical problems due to limited access to health services. Much of street youth are exposed to sexual abuse and prostitution, especially girls. The main source of income is begging. The situation of economic exploitation among street youth is quite high. The current legislation is discriminatory for the street youth. The big problem faced by street youth is the inefficiency of the system of social assistance. "Street children" stigma is unjust, but it continues to exist. We can assert that all three hypotheses formulated are confirmed.

Diminishing the unwanted childbirth in the following ways: establishment of regional offices of family planning, coverage of contraception; advising mothers in maternity wards who intend to abandon their children, establishment of support services for families (violence, heavy drinking), improve the relationship between state institutions and NGOs, reducing social causes that lead to marginalization and exclusion of families and street youth by improving, establish a system for the identification and monitoring of "street children", setting up of prevention and taking new cases of street homeless youth, conditioning of social aid for families, develop training programs for independent living and training of those who will leave the protection institutions, providing unrestricted access to healthcare street youth,

increasing the role of the community in support and social reintegration of street youth, providing opportunities for disadvantaged youth to attend a quality school and, depending on the capacity to continue training school, the introduction of provisions in the legislation referring to street youth, the participation of a representative of the Police in the activities of social reintegration of street youth, conducting awareness campaigns aimed at teaching the police, media and community on the issue of street youth, preparation of specialists working in child protection.

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# Neurocriminology: a new paradigm

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## Abstract

The article focuses on the theoretical analysis of neurocriminology, a science that examines the biological and neurological variables related to violence and, consequently, crime. "Are they born or do they become criminals?" is the question of some scholars of the Positive School as Cesare Lombroso, Ferri, Garofalo who on the other hand have managed to give some answers and why not, new paradigms.

In the last ten years, in the scientific field, a new discipline has appeared with the aim, too, to seek answers regarding the initial question: neurocriminology.

**Keywords:** *neurocriminology; Lombroso; criminals; cortical cells; paradigm; human intelligence*

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## 1. Introduction

"Are they born or do they become criminals?" is the question of some scholars of the Positive School as Cesare Lombroso, Ferri, Garofalo who on the other hand have managed to give some answers and why not, new paradigms.

In the last ten years, in the scientific field, a new discipline has appeared with the aim, too, to seek answers regarding the initial question: neurocriminology.

In fact, neurocriminology belongs to the new discipline of neuro sciences, and has as its objective the study of biological and neurological variables related to violence and, consequently, crime. His intervention is to diagnose, prevent and intervene on violence in general and on crime, following the bio-psycho-social model of crime (Cifaldi 2004: pp. 60-65).

The brain studies conducted by Roger Sperry and Michael Gazzaniga underlined the hemispheric differences, corroborating the hypothesis that the only left hemisphere is able to support higher cognitive functions while the right, endowed with the same number of cells, would be incapable of carrying them out. This led to the conclusion that the number of cortical cells is not sufficient to fully explain human intelligence (Filograsso 2002: pp. 34-37).

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Numerous authors have focused on human neuronal characteristics, for example Gordon Shepherd proposed a neuronal model based on a comparison between the membrane and synaptic properties of hippocampal neurons of rodents and humans: its results indicate that the simple addition of some channels of calcium (from whose presence the excitability of a neuron depends) in the dendritic spine can lead to settling, at the level of the spines, of remarkably complex computational capacities and consequently of information processing capacity (Occhi 2015: pp. 30-35).

Authors such as S. Dehaene or S. Pinker, believe that every cognitive ability depends on a complex network or nervous module: in particular, they believe that the brain is wired for the functioning of language and mathematics.

Dehaene and Pinker support a modular conception of intelligence based on complex networks. The language module would depend on structures located predominantly in the left frontal and temporal lobes, Spatial capacity from the interaction of somatosensory and visual functions with the parietal structures of the right hemisphere, Mathematical capacity is instead associated with the left frontal region and the lobes parietals of both hemispheres. The parietal areas use visual-spatial representations of the quantity. The front areas allow arranging the numbers in ascending or descending order, to estimate and to perform calculations.

In recent years, biological influences and their interaction with the environment have been taken into consideration in research into violent behavior. In some cases, the genetic investigation combined with anatomical analysis techniques of brain function could contribute to the resolution of serial killings (Raine 2010: pp. 220-223). A study that strengthens the hypotheses of neurocriminology has analyzed 43,243 adopted children and 1,258,826 natural children confirming that the biological son of a subject convicted of a violent crime is more likely to commit a crime in turn. Overall, the results of various behavioral genetic studies document the existence of an inheritance of aggressive behavior in children, adolescents and adults. These results show that there is a genetic contribution to crime. In Italy at the moment, the position of neurocriminology, both in the academic and forensic field, is very critical. For many years criminologists have opposed the thesis that individuals have a genetic predisposition to violence, whose theoretical foundations arise from Lombroso's controversial theory (Jensen 1992: pp. 271-308). The amino oxidase or monoamine oxidase (MAO) are enzymes bound to the cofactor-FAD, belonging to the class of oxidoreductases. The genes encoding MAOs are located on the short arm of the X chromosome. When the gene is less active, people who have had a difficult childhood are ten times more likely to be convicted of violence or aggressive behavior. Also known as "warrior gene", whose function is to regulate serotonin in the brain and an alteration of the MAO-A genetic variant, it would be present in serial killings. However, this hypothesis is not confirmed by sufficient experimental tests.

Unlike humans, reptiles are not equipped with the part of the brain responsible for memory, socialization and emotions. Therefore, by saying that a serial killer would kill "cold blood", one could refer to the fact that the part of his brain that regulates emotions and socialization does not work properly (Woodworth 2002: pp.436-445). In this sense, he would behave like a reptile that kills without any remorse. Some recent neuroscientific studies have established that such anomaly would result in an increase in the probability of the occurrence of a number of behaviors such as: less control over

the limbic system that generates primordial emotions such as rabies, a greater psychological dependence on risk, a reduction of self-control, a poor ability to solve problems and an absence of empathy. The main brain areas related to aggression are: the amygdala, the hippocampus and the tegmental structures. The amygdala is a structure that belongs to the limbic system, which intervenes in the processes of regulation of behaviors, motivations, emotions, aggression, nutrition, learning, memory and sexual behavior. A study conducted by Yang and coworkers (Yang 2005: pp.1103-1108) observed, in criminal psychopaths, using magnetic resonance imaging, a 22.3% reduction in gray prefrontal matter. A significant example is that of the case of Antonio Bustamante, a serial murderer of Mexican origin, who then immigrated to the United States, who was acquitted by the death penalty because the defense showed images related to its cerebral functioning. Another case is that of Erbert Weinsten because, through PET and MRI, it was pointed out that he lacked a part of the prefrontal cortex of the brain, which is why the penalty imposed was significantly reduced. Raine was the first scholar to apply brain imaging techniques on criminals. Through PET it has been shown that a deficit in the functioning of the prefrontal cortex was present in serial killers. He carried out PET on 41 convicted murderers and compared the results with a control group of subjects of similar age and profile.

This study showed metabolic activity in different parts of the brain: the brains of the killers showed a significant reduction in the development of the prefrontal cortex compared to the control group. Despite some scientific evidence, therefore, of brain deficits in serial killers, this remains a field of research that must be explored more. Studies on the general population indicate that an increase in serotonergic activity reduces impulsivity, while a decrease in it increases the frequency and intensity of aggressive and antisocial reactions. Genetic studies indicate that the 5-HT1B receptor gene is related to impulsive and aggressive behavior in individuals with antisocial personality disorder and in alcoholic persons with intermittent blasts of violence (Rosen 2007:pp. 68-75). At present, in setting up a criminological profile of a serial killer, this parameter can not be taken into account as no ad hoc studies have yet been carried out. In general it is believed that dopamine, adrenaline and noradrenaline would participate as aggressive behavioral activators. The most obvious effects, which, however, have not been demonstrated on serial killers, show that a slight activation of the central noradrenergic system would stimulate aggressive attitudes. Norepinephrine affects the aggressive behavior at three different levels: endocrine, autonomous and central. At the current state of research it is not possible to establish a correlation between the two substances in question and the criminal behavior of serial killings. Hypothalamic damage can produce violent and destructive behavior and in some cases can cause an individual's inability to separate sexual arousal from violence. The role of the prefrontal cortex is directly related to social behavior such as violence and aggression. If this system is damaged, an individual may not have the ability to react appropriately to social expectations. If the temporal lobe is damaged, an individual may have amnesia, epilepsy and reduced threshold to violent responses, an element that could be considered in the judicial phase. The brains of some criminals would present a reduction in the development of the prefrontal cortex and, consequently, of the executive function of the brain (Davidson 2003: pp. 655-665). In 2000 a report by Richard Davidson of the University of Wisconsin reported how, through brain scans,

brain images of those who had been convicted of a murder, and who suffered from aggressive or antisocial disorders, showed a distinct brain activity compared to those who were considered normal. Davidson and colleagues found that brain activity in the orbital frontal cortex and in the anterior cingulate cortex was lower than normal or even non-existent. Approximately 70% of those suffering severe head trauma would develop aggressive tendencies. This does not mean that all subjects with a brain injury will become serial killings. The main diseases in which a surrogate component has turned out to be violence and / or aggression and in some cases murder are: alzheimer, epilepsy, brain damage (cerebrovascular accidents, cranioencephalic traumas and some types of tumors) and frontotemporal dementia. Some researchers argue that there is a relationship between the effects that a serial murderer causes to commit the murders and the effects induced by epileptic seizures.

From 2009 to today, neuroscientific techniques and behavioral genetics have been used on four occasions in the context of a criminal trial in our country. At the European level, criminal justice continues to be conservative compared to the endoprocessual use of such "new" scientific evidence.

The main category of techniques that see the individual as a real source of proof is that of neuroimaging (neuroimaging), within which he can distinguish himself by briefly between:

1. Structural or morphological imagery: computerized axial tomography (TAC), the first technique of computer-assisted structural neuroimaging, has been followed in more recent years by tomographic techniques of nuclear medicine, namely PET (P or sitron Emission Tomography) and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). In relation to the information obtainable, the structural techniques allow to identify brain deficits of a morphological-structural nature (for example, the presence of a lesion, of a volumetric anomaly, of a mass or of a morphological alteration).

2. Functional imaging: of central importance is the functional magnetic resonance, known by the acronym of fMRI (Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging), a technique consisting in the use of magnetic resonance imaging to assess the functionality of an organ or an apparatus in a complementary way to morphological imaging. It makes it possible to identify cerebral difficulties related to anomalies or peculiarities in the functioning of the brain structures investigated. From the 'operational' point of view, fMRI techniques measure changes in the local blood flow in the examined area, linked to the increase of cellular activity (in this case neuronal): an increase in flow therefore indicates an area of "activation" (Farahany 2009: pp. 180-186).

3. Techniques of "behavioral genetics": they study the genetic influence on behavior. In the forensic field, genetic tests are used to verify the presence of polymorphic variants significantly associated in the literature with an increased risk of certain behaviors (aggression, impulsivity, etc.). Through behavioral genetics it is, at present, impossible to explain individual behavior but only large statistical populations. Neurosciences and behavioral genetics, although distinct and conceptually autonomous areas of study, register numerous convergences and interaction plans, primarily because the genes of a subject condition his brain development. This therefore suggests an integrated study of what can be defined as "behavioral biology", so much so that the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAS), publisher of the

prestigious journal *Science*, promoted a dialogue between neuroscience and genetics behavior not only on a strictly scientific level but also on a policy level.

As for the neuroscientific techniques that are relevant to the acquisition of the declarative test, of particular relevance to the forensic use is the Implicit Association Test (IAT), an examination of the autobiographical memory developed by Greenwald and colleagues in a 1998 study to study people's spontaneous attitudes and opinions. It measures the strength of the associative bonds between concepts represented in memory or between a concept and a general evaluation. For example, I.A.T. it can among other things help to understand if a person is characterized by egalitarian or discriminatory attitudes towards a stigmatized social group (implicit bias). This theoretical principle was then adapted to be applied in the judicial field to the analysis of a single autobiographical memory (autobiographical I.A.T.). The a-I.A.T. it is a procedure that, on the basis of reaction times, tends to verify the existence of a trace of memory, of information, within the mind of a subject. The test takes place at the computer and requires the subject who is subjected to classify as quickly and accurately as possible the sentences that appear at the center of the monitor according to the categories "true-false" and "version of the defense-version of the accusation", activated by buttons on the right and left of the screen.

In a first step, the subject must classify sentences that refer to the moment in which he is carrying out the test (eg, "I am answering with a pencil"; "I am at the wheel of my car") according to the classification "true-false". In a second passage, at the center of the screen appear sentences referring respectively to the "version of the defense" and to the "version of the accusation", which describe the autobiographical memory that the subject claims to have and an alternative reconstruction that he declares to be a stranger. to one's own experience. In the following blocks the versions of the accusation and defense are combined with the concepts "true" and "false" and the subject must carry out the classification: «[i] n first the right button is used to choose the true and the left phrase to choose the false sentence. Then the combination is reversed (...) In this way we try to verify if the combination of "true" with the hypothesis of the accusation elicits a faster response than the combination of "false" with the defense hypothesis, or if the opposite occurs. In one of the two hypotheses tends to trigger a cognitive conflict, which results in a slowing of the motor response because the mind has to make one more step and, consequently, a greater effort, to be able to classify the sentences in a consistent way».

The thesis of the creators of this test (Gregg 2007: pp. 620-622) is therefore that according to which the so-called "natural" (or "compatible") memory would have rapid reaction times, while an increase, even infinitesimal, of reaction times and an increase in errors would signal that the subject had to overcome a "cognitive conflict" before giving an answer not in keeping with the memory actually present in his memory. According to these studies, analyzing the reaction times necessary to provide the answers, one could therefore obtain an evaluation that presupposes the logic of the compatibility of the memories: the lower the reaction times, the greater the reliability. Related to A-I.A.T. from a structural point of view it is the T.A.R.A. (Timed Ant agonistic Response Alethiometre), also directed to verify the presence in a given subject of a mnestic trace of a significant autobiographical event. This technique also involves the use of computers and is based on the "cognitive chronometry". It requires the

individual subjected to the test to classify an alternate succession of statements as "true" or "false" in the fastest and most precise way possible, by pressing one of the two indicated keys. The peculiarity of the T.A.R.A. it resides in the fact that it creates an artificial situation in which lying is more demanding than answering truthfully, thus increasing response times in the first case. This technique is still at an experimental level, although the first studies carried out showed a degree of accuracy close to 85%.

The ruling of Trieste (Belvedere 2011: pp. 1110-1115), was the first ever case of employment of neuroscience in the matter of judgment on imputability in Europe. An Algerian citizen, resident in Italy for years, stabs a Colombian citizen to death following a provocation, consisting of insults due to the ostentatious trick in the eyes of the accused, an expression of his cultural affiliation. During the trial of the first degree, the accused person is declared partially incapable of understanding and will on the basis of an assessment that he / she finds the existence of a severe psychiatric pathology of a psychotic type with impulsive and asocial traits, associated with lower cognitive and intellectual abilities to the norm.

On the other hand, the defense had sustained the total incapacity to understand and want the accused. The sentence is appealed by the defense, who complains about the erroneous assessment of the ability to understand and want and, in the alternative, the non-reduction in the maximum relative to the recognized semi-infirmity, and this for an underestimation of the severity of the disease from the defendant was affected. The appeal judge has a new appraisal pursuant to art. 603 c.p.p., entrusted to two scholars in the field of neuroscience.

Experts do not replace traditional methods, but they support neuroscientific knowledge: a descriptive diagnosis, accomplished at the outcome of a psychiatric interview and the administration of some internationally validated standard tests, follow, respectively, a diagnosis of a site carried out by means of the magnetic resonance of the encephalon aimed at detecting the existence of any morpho-functional alterations, and a diagnosis of nature based on molecular genetic tools. The brain MRI does not identify signs of structural changes. However, the experts found a reduction of inhibition to control the motor response, and the presence of a genetic polymorphism, ie the fact that the defendant is a carrier of the low activity allele for the MAOA gene (monoamine oxidase A) - called (MAOA-L) - which in the international literature is combined with a "significant increase in the risk of developing aggressive, impulsive behavior" if the subject is "socially challenged or excluded". The Court observes: "this" genetic vulnerability "is even more significant in the event that the individual has grown up in a non-positive family and social context and has been exposed to unfavorable environmental factors, especially in the first decades of life, psychologically traumatic or negative "(interaction between genes and environment). This detected "genetic vulnerability" would ultimately make the accused "particularly reactive in terms of aggression in the presence of stressful situations". In light of these findings, the appeal judge confirms the partial incapacity to intend and want, but with a reduction of the penalty to a maximum of one third, in addition to the recognition of generic extenuating circumstances.

From this paradigm arise new questions in a series of connected areas. Neuro-clinics, how to cure aggressive behaviors? At neuro-law, how to punish them? To

neuro-ethics, how far can we go? Questions that have a duty to confront to contain abuses that harm personal freedom.

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