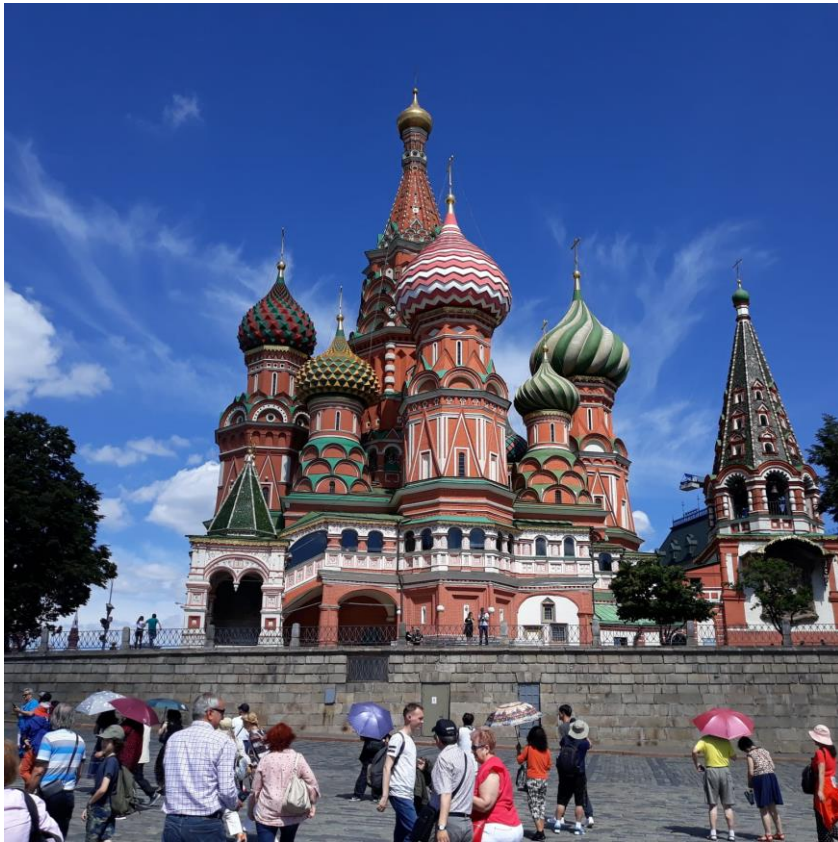


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ORDINARY CITIZENS' POLITICAL COMPETENCE

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Abstract: *In spite of the observable abundance of demonstrations, marches, occupations, civil disobedience, creation of "movement parties", associative commitments, online petitions, non-violent direct action, mobilization via social networks, these citizens' "autonomous political practices" are still seen as useless on the grounds that they lie at the margins of the framework set by representative institutions. These practices should be apprehended in a different way. This article aims at substantiating the fact that the current political order is shaped by the confrontation between two equal sources of legitimacy: that which emanates from the official institutions of representative government and essentially relies on election and delegation; and that which arises from the "wild" activism people get involved in to oppose discredited authorities and sometimes succeed in regaining control over the powers who define and implement public policies.*

Key words: *protest movements; political legitimacy; ordinary conception of politics; citizens' autonomous political practices; political competence.*

Civil uprising in Algeria prompting the resignation of a former President; high school pupils striking for climate change in Europe; endless Yellow Vests protest in France; election as President of Zuzana Caputova in Slovakia and of Volodymyr Zelenski in Ukraine; demonstrations against corruption in Romania and Bulgaria; mass rallies in Khartoum eventually leading to the ousting of Omar-el-Bechir; etc. The mere mention of this short selection of events which occurred in 2019 between the months of March and May hints at a change steadily taking place in the political realm: citizens express their will to directly challenge those who govern in order to impose by themselves a new direction on the way public affairs are handled. The strength of this resolve is evidenced whenever crowds take to the streets to oppose discredited powers (sometimes successfully expelling them peacefully); whenever NGOs, collectives or associations force governments to negotiate new rights or reverse measures deemed unacceptable; whenever people use civil disobedience, direct non-violent action or occupations to advance their claims; whenever political "movements" emerging outside the party system compete in elections to win seats in parliament and claim participation in an executive; or whenever novices in politics are elected at the head of a state and defeat the candidates of the establishment.

In spite of their undeniable successes, these displays of “wild” activism are still seen by commentators and analysts as devoid of any political value on the grounds that they lie at the margins of the framework set by representative institutions. And when they are tagged as “populists”, they are presented as a danger to the stability of society or to democracy (Ogien & Laugier, 2017). These judgments betray the fears of those who think that responsibility for public affairs must be entrusted to professionals who know how to effectively manage them. Taking such a stance fosters the common belief that ruling a country should not be remitted to ordinary people since they lack the necessary skills in state administration, are unable to grasp the complexities of the common good and ignore the issues at stake in politics.

Yet this disparaging belief is at odds with the fact that citizens strikingly demonstrate their ability to organize themselves and collectively implement forms of political action that cogently challenge decisions and non decisions taken by those who govern (Bachrach & Baratz, 1970) at the local, regional, national, transnational or global level. Acknowledging the extensiveness of this fact should otherwise allow to contend that the current political situation of democracy is defined by the coexistence of two sources of legitimacy : that which emanates from the official institutions of representative government and essentially relies on election and delegation; and that which arises from what may be called the citizens’ “autonomous political practices” - autonomous in the sense of detached from any tie with official organizations like parties or unions and showing no interest in conquering state power. The emergence and development of such practices give more credence to a proposition: ordinary citizens are socially endowed with a full political competence and their conception of politics and democracy are in the main correctly informed and morally grounded (Ogien & Laugier, 2014). This is the claim I would like to substantiate in this article.

1. The citizen’s political competence

Since its foundation in Athens, the very possibility of democracy has always been objected to since such a political regime was doomed to be undermined by demagogy, interest coalitions, oligarchic proclivities, pervasive instability or indecision (Ismard, 2015). In modern times, democracy is contested for other reasons: the professionalization of the electoral process (resorting to *evidence proved politics*) which eventually deprives the “sovereign people” of their power of control over those they choose to govern ; the experience of the ballot which finally shows that voting never brings about a substantial change in the dominant order; the advent of a destructive egalitarianism which ruins all sense of hierarchy and merit (Schnapper, 2014) and propagates the mistaken idea that citizens are allowed to claim an inalienable right to “have rights” (Arendt, 1982).

Giving an ultimate ruling on the true nature of democracy seems to be an hopeless pursuit (Muller, 2011; Dupuis Déri, 2016). One should better consider that the sheer idea of democracy has introduced in the public space an irreducible tension between the promises of equality it encompasses and an equivocal apprehension of the social effects this promise nourishes and would produce if achieved. This tension, which is probably doomed to never be fully wiped out, inheres in the famous maxim: the government of the people by the people for the people (Hébert, 2018). For, since time immemorial, there has been a debate about what is this “people” in whose name a government rules; about how to meet all the legitimate needs of the members of a society without doing harm to anyone ; and about who should be allowed to govern : the people or an expert executive? The way in which these issues have been provisionally resolved two centuries ago is by establishing a system of representative government which mandates a small number of persons endowed with the legitimacy conferred on them by suffrage to decide on matters related to the common good (Manin, 1995). It is this model which is now being challenged or presented as completely obsolete, while the very principle of representation is sometimes harshly questioned (van Reybrouck, 2014).

Antagonism between rulers and governed is and has always been an endemic feature of the political life of state societies (Breugh, 2008). But the widening gap between these two protagonists has taken on abyssal proportions in the public space of post-World War II democratic regimes as people have suffered the devastating effects that austerity policies have had on their lives. There is no longer any doubt that the liberal potion administered to the State has led to an extravagant increase in inequalities, the suppression of social and political rights acquired during the era of the welfare State, the growth of mass unemployment and precariousness, the deterioration of working conditions, the aggravation of corruption, the enforcement of competition as a principle of social regulation (Suleiman, 2005). And as these detrimental features have seldom been mitigated by changes in power following an election, the conviction that politics has become the preserve of a limited circle of right or left wing professionals who all concur with excluding citizens from deliberation and decision-making has become common sense (Katz et Mair, 2009).

Under these conditions, no wonder that elections have lost much of their legitimacy and that the consent of the governed has stopped to be blindly granted to those who have won the polls. In some amazing cases, trust in a newly elected power has been disavowed a couple of weeks only after the vote. Such a staggering ingratitude on the part of the “sovereign people” – as expressed by the majority of the electorate – has been presented as proof of ordinary citizens’ infantilism or irrationality. Why not see it as a manifestation of their will to put in practice their right of control over the undertakings of the government and the administration ?

Now, for many commentators, allowing citizens to exert such a thorough vigilance on those in power is excessive and unbearable. They contend it should be

denied in order to “let a government govern”. Others see people’s mistrust of their representatives as a sign of deadlock, pathology, fatigue or “crisis” of democracy. And some are prone to contend that a large number of constituents are “bad” citizens who refuse to honour their duty out of unawareness or lack of education. This argument begs a question though: does something as a bad citizen exists? This is the issue this article intends to discuss by calling into question the idea that what academics call “political socialization” brings about obedience to the law, adequately fulfilling the rights and duties attached to citizenship or consciously casting votes to elect representatives. Yet as compliance to these norms of citizenship do not systematically prevail, one should wonder whether or not an individual gets a democratic frame of mind through education only?

Though citizenship is a status individuals are endowed with when they are born, what this status implies hereafter is bit by bit and casually discovered in their daily life commitments as citizens. On this account, one may claim that there is a difference between learning what democracy means and entails through being taught at school and fulfilling the obligation to act as a citizen in a democratic regime. Such a difference points to the fact that two modes of getting acquainted with citizenship jointly operate : formal education of the rules of democracy and mastery of the practical knowledge one should demonstrate when accomplishing the rights and duties attached to citizenship in everyday democratic life. Where does the difference between these two ways of knowing what ought to be done lie?

2. Knowing as Process

C. S. Peirce claimed that knowledge is the product of an inquiry triggered by a doubt about an object or a fact and in the course of which the relevance of initial assumptions are continuously tested and verified (Peirce, 1877). As such, knowing refers to a logical and rational process carried out in immediate relation to the satisfaction it brings about – satisfaction in terms of proper completion of an ongoing action. In Peirce’s perspective, knowledge (be it scientific or ordinary) is doomed to be vague and incomplete, always reframed to handle emerging doubts which set new conditions of satisfaction to solve an issue (Chauviré, 1995).

Dewey has extended Peirce’s conception of inquiry applying it to what he called “social inquiry” – i.e. “solving public problems” (Dewey, 1984). According to him, “what is required to direct and conduct a successful social inquiry is a method that develops itself on the basis of reciprocal relations between observable facts and their results”. And he gave a name to this method: democracy. For Dewey, this method is put in practice whenever concerned people join a “community of inquirers” and collectively engage in solving a public problem through following a series of logical steps. Dewey’s model of social inquiry unfolds in three stages : 1) an undeterminate situation is “had” ; 2) a problem is created ; and (3) a solution to the problem is elicited that is mutually seen as satisfying. The entire procedure is carried

out by implementing an experimental form of reasoning, i.e. relevant elements are selected, endowed with specific attributes and ordered for their use in and for action. Then the robustness of the successive outcomes is step by step tested and warranted. Any inquiry therefore obeys its own logic and has two dimensions to which the people involved in its achievement must constantly pay attention : the first one is applying the rules of experimental reasoning ; the second one is ensuring the continuity and fluidity of gestures, words and events that constitute the action in common which results in getting the problem solved - though the fallibility of this transient solution is still admitted (Dewey, 1989).

In Dewey's view, the end result of an inquiry is less important than the process through which it has been reached. Accordingly, Dewey does not reduce democracy to a given type of political regime. Its bedrock is the capacity to make use of "reflective thinking" when being part of a community of inquirers and demonstrating its collective intelligence. In this light, democracy can be seen as a practical knowledge people express when they act as citizens.

Now one of the questions this experimental conception of democracy raises is where the mastery of these procedures does come from? Or, more precisely, what are the respective parts played by education (instructed knowledge about the nature and functioning of a political regime called democracy) and experience (acquired command of acceptable ways to act as a citizen in a specific institutional environment) in the fabric and implementation of such practical knowledge?

3. Experience as practical knowledge

According to Dewey, education's first aim should be endowing children with a command of the rules of reflective thinking. A command that would later allow them to appropriately contribute to the many inquiries they will have to carry out to secure the reproduction of a true democratic order

For Dewey, the conformity of an action to what it should be - its normativity - does not stem from a series of constraints society imposes by force on individuals who would mechanically comply with their prescriptions. In other words, normativity is not conceived of as deterministic, but regulatory: norms are seen as criteria that individuals use to act in a way that is adjusted to a given "end-in-view". These criteria serve as guidelines for inference and action in the course of a practical activity and have two properties: they are integral to the situations in which they are made use of and are rediscovered each time again in the use made of them for the purposes of an ongoing inquiry. However, Dewey rarely goes into the details of the necessary conditions to be fulfilled in order to achieve each step of an inquiry and pays little attention to the epistemic capacities individuals have to master in order to carry out an inquiry together, to foresee the consequences they have to consider and to finally devise a solution to the problem at hand. Similarly, neither does he account for how these criteria are known to the inquirers nor does he explain how and why they are

led to assess their validity when they have to be called into question.

To complement Dewey's dynamic conception of knowing, I would like to ponder on the respective parts played by formal education and lived experience in the fabric and implementation of the practical knowledge an individual has to make use of in order to act as a skilled inquirer. For the sake of our discussion about ordinary citizens' political competence, the problem of where does practical knowledge spring forces to inquire into the ways instructed knowledge about the nature and functioning of democracy as a political regime and the rights and duties attached to citizenship on the one side, and familiarity with the political life as it is practiced in given institutional environments on the other side intermingle to constitute a sound basis of intelligibility of what is going on

A rough description of the constitution of practical knowledge would distinguish four layers which are in tight relation one with the other:

- 1) the first one derives from the existential familiarity with the social world that every individual experiences, from early childhood to adulthood, through sheer participation to a community in which one is raised and in which one learns mastering ordinary language and its uses. This existential familiarity combines differential (depending on the environment) as well as universal (common principles of rationality: non-contradiction, causality, reciprocity, responsibility, etc.) elements.
- 2) the second one is acquired during the daily commitment in the countless universes of action which an individual comes to be engrossed in (family, school, business, public services, medicine, places of leisure, etc.) and allows in turn an appropriate use of the rules organizing the myriad of interactions people get involved in.
- 3) the third one comes from formal education and the many specialized trainings an individual is subjected to during lifetime.
- 4) the fourth one is related to the expertise individuals accumulate in the routines of ordinary activities and gives it a special touch.

According to this rough picture, practical knowledge can be seen as a compound which merges theoretical, abstract, instrumental, affective, emotional and sensory elements that can hardly be analytically sorted out. A substantial part of this knowledge directly derives from the prior acquaintance individuals have with the social worlds in which they are used to act in. Now, one may claim that such acquaintance provides them with a command of the requirements an action in common summons them to abide by according to the role they play in it. And as such a command can be thought of as shared by all the partners involved in a situated interaction, one may conjecture that this is what may account for the fluid accomplishment of coordination between them.

To sum up: while Dewey's theory of inquiry gives a decisive place to the implementation of experimental reasoning for the sake of problem solving, it does not really comment on how individuals apply it. In his perspective, the intelligence of

individuals is less important than the collective intelligence that is deployed during the inquiry. As he states:

“A more intelligent state of social affairs - a state that is more driven by intelligence - would not improve the original endowment [of each individual] in any way, but it would raise the level at which the intelligence of all operates. The height of this level is much more important for the judgment of public concerns than are the differences in intelligence quotients.” (Dewey, 1984: 313-314)

Dewey nevertheless acknowledges that, in contemporary democratic societies, public problems require the mobilization of specialized knowledge to identify them and to point to the most rational solution possible in terms of its consequences. While this work of identification and proposal may be the prerogative of experts, the decision must not be left to them only. Final decision should be taken by the ordinary citizens who are concerned by a problem which prompted their constitution as “public”; and the competence which is required of these ordinary citizens just amounts, according to Dewey, to being able to understand the information these experts produce and organize their collective inquiry on the basis of the relevant data these experts should exhaustively and willfully provide them. A question still remains unanswered: where does such a competence come from?

4. Citizenship in Action

As the ancient Greeks pointed out, every society is constituted and lives at the crossroads of two fields of social activity: politics, which is a specific sphere of practical action the purpose of which is the constant establishment and adjustment of the institutional framework in charge of the functioning of government, representation and participation; and the realm of the political, which is this other sphere of practical action the purpose of which is to establish and foster an order of social and power relationships between people leaving together within a given political entity whatever the particular community they belong to (Finley, 1976; Klimis, 2018).

The distinction between politics and the realm of the political is not clear-cut: between these two spheres of practical action, the back and forth is permanent. The way in which life in society is organised in the daily involvements of individuals in social relations of work, cooperation and reciprocity – i.e. the realm of the political – is the crucible in which the collective mores that give politics its nature and tone are forged. It is also in this realm that citizens’ claims for rights, freedom, dignity and security are expressed; and here too that the institutional arrangements that reflect the state of morals are prefigured. In modern states, while it is in the realm of the political that any demand for the deepening of democracy emerges, for it to become common law, it must necessarily be brought to the level of politics, which is the only one allowing for turning such claims into legislative or regulatory statutes.

The life of any society therefore beats to the rhythm of this back and forth; and all its members (whether “national” or not) take part in this collective activity which consists in renewing, by continuously adjusting them, their collective ways of life and the social and political relations that bind them. This activity is what can be called the “political work” a society does on itself. It therefore allows recognizing that all members of a society are cogent practitioners and explorers of politics; and that if they are, it is to the extent that they simply acquire, by necessity, a more or less elaborate and thoughtful knowledge about the form of social and political organization in which they live, and a more or less articulated idea of the one in which they would like to live. In a word, ordinary citizens are able to discover together what the relationships that bind them should be.

On this account, democracy cannot be reduced to a political regime in which election and delegation are the cornerstone, but is accomplished in the actualisation of the principles of equality, autonomy and pluralism that ordinary citizens give life to on a daily basis. In other words, democracy should be seen as a form of life as much as a political regime (Ogien, 2015).

Sociology and social anthropology have by and large demonstrated that the power enjoyed by those who govern is never absolute: the activity of government (even in the case of tyranny) is always carried out under the inquisitive or amused gaze of citizens, which forces rulers to take into account, in a more or less resolute way, what the governed say about how the administration of public affairs should be conducted (Balandier, 1967). What characterizes a democratic regime is the fact that the range of forms of political action that express this view is abundant: election, partisan opposition, trade unionism, petition, public debate, opinion polling, demonstration, strike, but also abstention, boycott, moderate or symbolic use of violence, civil disobedience, without excluding riot, revolt, insurrection, and without forgetting slander, rumors, sarcasm, irony or indifference. The mere existence of so many different forms of political action and the fact that all of them are regularly made use of according to given circumstances is a good reason to assume that ordinary citizens know when, how and why they should collectively select the one they find most appropriate to stake a particular claim and hopefully get satisfied. In other words, that they master a sufficiently sound practical knowledge about the workings of the regime under which they live which qualifies them to express political demands on legitimate grounds.

In support of this proposition, some arguments can be drawn from the empirical analysis of the uses citizens make of all sorts of extra-parliamentary political actions. At one end of the spectrum are forms of nonviolent action adopted by activists who either fight against the development of GMO’s by mowing corn or beet fields to demand the cessation of this type of open-air cultivation; or set up tent camps in the streets or requisition empty buildings to push for the Right to Housing; or trespass private property to denounce governments’ inaction toward the urgency of climate change. Resorting to these modes of protest aims at publicly question the

legitimacy of public policies that allow the sowing and consumption of plants that are supposed to pose a serious threat to humanity; or do not meet the existential needs of the homeless; or allow the forthcoming of climate breakdown, biodiversity loss and ecological collapse. This kind of illegal action is generally implemented as a means to strengthen the power of an association or a NGO as they are implied in an ongoing negotiation or to back up the struggle of a parliamentary opposition to pass a legislation. Other forms of illegal action can also be made use of to advance a political claim, like engaging in direct violence (deliberate clashes against the police, looting, or looting during authorized demonstrations), sabotage or assassinations (as during the post 1968 “years of lead”) in order to allegedly put an end to a system of domination they abominate.

At the other end of the spectrum are forms of political action that reject the use of violence but deliberately organized outside the representative system. This is the case, for example, of the commitment of citizens who spontaneously assist migrants without documents, even if they are informed of the risk of being prosecuted and punished, or of being subjected to harassment by the police or the judiciary. At a higher level, this assistance can take the form of political action that seeks to force the public authorities to stop repressive measures against illegal migrants, to put an end to the arbitrary nature of the regularization procedures or to revise legislation on illegal aliens. A last type of non-violent political action is civil disobedience, which consists in deliberately committing an offence by refusing to fulfill a legal or regulatory obligation on the grounds that it is shameful, degrading, unjust or that it puts a public service in jeopardy or even more denies democracy.

This brief review of the some forms of political action ordinary citizens are able to resort to shows that politics cannot be reduced, as Dewey’s conception suggests, to the implementation of a method of solving social policy problems. Part of the problems that citizens in State societies face are founded on disagreement and dissension about the ends that the community to which they belong should pursue. And one may argue that inquiries that focus on these ends are different in nature from those which are concerned with an “end- in-view” adjusted to the solving of a particular public problem.

To sum up: one may claim that every citizen knows, by the mere fact of living within the bounds of a State, what is the political order he is involved in. In other words, an ordinary conception of politics manifests itself in all forms of the practical judgment that ordinary citizens (or groups like trade unions, associations, collectives, etc.) make about the ways power is being exercised and the participation or representative procedures that associate them with this exercise. In other words, the political order prevailing in a society cannot be considered as if it were totally detached from the daily lives of its members.

Conclusion

The notion of political competence accounts for to the fact that when individuals act in common in a situation defined as political, they have to refer to obligations they know they should better abide by – even though they are free not to do so. Where do they get this awareness of normativity from ? First of all, from the ceaseless attendance to the social worlds they have been raised in, since very early childhood. On these premises, the intelligibility of things as they happen can be seen as a “natural” phenomenon - assuming that nature is social through and through. We all probably accept the idea that the each and every environment of action in which we find ourselves in the changing circumstances of daily life never presents itself to us as a totally indecipherable chaos. They are, in a certain sense, “always already” known to us. That is why we do not have any problem to directly engage in action with others on the basis of our ordinary familiarity with what should happen in them. And if this is so it is because such a familiarity incorporates a series of guidelines specifying how one is to relate to others in a given situation. The fact that individuals succeed in mutually eliciting coordination of action in common stems from their making an approximately correct use of these guidelines.

To conclude, I will come back to the topic of this article and claim that the practical accomplishment of citizenship fundamentally derives from the familiarity individuals get with the innumerable ways of acting as a citizen in the many situations in which endorsing this role seems relevant. This is eventually how ordinary citizens acquire the political competence they currently make use of to give life to democracy as regime.

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REFUGEE CRISIS IN LESBOS AS A STATE AND A STATE-CORPORATE CRIME

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Abstract: *The critical criminological thought can and has to discuss on the relation between crime and migration issues. By invalidating the myths that constitute common rhetoric in political and media analysis—through which repression policies become stricter and stricter-state crime, the crimes of bodies of official and unofficial social control against refugee and immigrant populations and state-corporate crimes are coming into light. A fundamental question arising is whether or not the planned or enforced State policies can become or are the real crime. The present article first makes some theoretical assumptions on the issue of State crimes against migrant populations and state corporate crime and then seeks to examine the application of those theories in practice through a case study: the recent refugee crisis in Lesbos.*

Key words: *migration; refugee; crime; state; criminology.*

1. Migration and the role of critical criminology

The critical criminological discourse should ask questions concerning the root of the problem and not the superficial empirical explanation of the connection between criminal pathogenicity and population displacement. Looking for a structural reality brings us in front of the assumption that the State institutions of formal social control define and address crime, legalizing retrospectively these options, by using as an excuse both the ratio of the media and the specialized scientific discourse. Especially, the issue of connecting moving populations and crime has developed a wave of misunderstanding, which is reflected in conventional criminological researches, and is also reproduced and maintained in the wider society through the fear of victimization. Quantitative researches of “gangs” of migrants (White et al., 1999; Collins et al., 2000) and over-representation of migrants in crime are considered statistically unreliable, since one cannot prove a direct causal relationship (Mukherjee, 1999). In addition, they do not take into account the over policing of migrant populations and discrimination against them deriving from the mechanisms of justice (Cunnen, 1995). Furthermore, such a ratio is maintained almost two centuries, as shown in the research of Pearson (1983) for England in the 19th century and Gleeson (2004) for Australia at the end of the century, culminating

in the researches of the School of Chicago in the first half of the twentieth century, and guided much of the subsequent U.S. research and theory (Taylor et al., 1973).

The critical criminological discourse is not only criticizing the continuous production of relevant research findings. It raises questions such as, why the state operates selectively in order to define an act as criminal by setting aside other operations that cause social harm, many of which are produced by the state and its institutions in the expense of displaced populations? Questions like the following are highlighted by the “new criminology” thinking: Why are immigrants and refugees over-represented in official victimology statistics (Poynting, 2008)? Why crimes against migrants are not recorded by official agencies of social control and are not treated the same way with crimes against victims who are non-immigrants (Poynting and Noble, 2004)? Why the state does not face the same way accidents (sometimes fatal) with immigrant victims (Tombs, 2007; Hocking and Guy, 2008)?

Especially on the issue of refugees and asylum seekers, the critical criminological discourse has started to ask questions such as why the “developed” countries with a lower number of refugees (in relation to the “developing”) are characterized by the most as oppressive and repressive policies (Pickering, 2008)? Why the policies carried at borders by the official social control oppress human rights without relying on international agreements and laws (Wonders, 2006)? How some specific governmental policies target refugees as a vulnerable population causing social damage and revealing the failure of the state welfare systems (Crawly, 2001; Hathaway, 1991)?

The critical criminological discourse has begun and needs to manifest interest in highlighting the issue of crimes of the state against refugee populations. The act of the entrance of a migrant into a country is automatically been characterized as illegal, without even the recognition of the basic rights recognized by the criminal law procedure. We put forward the following general research hypotheses:

- How the structure, function and specific practices that take place in detention centers (such as prolonged detention, living conditions, the response by the agencies of formal social control, and methods such as body control) cause harm to detainees (Silove et al., 2000), with special reference to unaccompanied minors (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 2004) and in private detention centers (Pickering, 2008).
- How non-repressive policies, as part of a welfare policy, cause problems of exclusion from health services, education, employment, etc., by essentially preventing the enforcement of announcements concerning integration/inclusion and attain these people as outsiders, making them vulnerable to the operation of formal social control (Esmaelli and Wells, 2000; Fitzpatrick, 1999; Fitzpatrick, 2000, Gibney, 2000).
- By what means does the policing at the border operate and if the border control is not simply a response to uncontrolled movement of migrant

groups, but an ongoing process (Weber, 2006) which changes the character of the border, and reconstructs the nature of structural powers beyond established and recorded in official legal documents formalities of national sovereignty, international relations and universal human rights (Aas, 2011). In this problematic area issues of the surveillance of the body are brought, and body can be an identity that can serve as key access (or exclusion from) modern society (Aas, 2006).

Concerning the Greek reality, and according to what is mentioned above, the question of how a formal migration and refugee policy, determines the terms “deviation” and “crime”, in relation to migrant populations, should be clarified in a historical and social context. Special emphasis should be given on the fact that terms and control bodies are used that have been developed in the early twentieth century in order to reproduce the police of non-assimilation and illegal immigration (Georgoulas, 2009).

In terms of a scientific approach to this phenomenon there is a need to put specific research questions concerning the crimes of the state against migrants, by participating in the above mentioned critical criminological debate, and respond by presenting a case study, which also aims to initiate a future criminological research orientation in Greece.

A first attempt was published in 2013 about another case study, the Refugees and Immigrants Detention Center of Pagani in Lesbos. Seeking to study more effectively crime policies on migrant populations in Greece a participant observation took place from April 2009 to March 2010 in Pagani detention center located near the town Mytilene at Lesbos. Our research was about living conditions, the role of the Greek police and detainees’ rights (police violence, the right to be informed, communication of the detainees with people of their choice, protecting health of the detainees), arrests in the sea – testimonies, the detention of asylum seekers and the discouragement by the authorities for making an asylum application and the detention of unaccompanied minors. Our main question was related to the need for the critical criminological reason to manifest interest and highlight the issue of crimes of the State against migrant populations. We gave particular emphasis to the question of how the structure, function and specific practices that take place in detention centers (such as long detention, living conditions, treatment by the agencies of formal social control etc.) are causing harm to the detained populations, and become, ultimately, a hidden, non-treatable, but substantially the real crime (Georgoulas and Sarantidis, 2013).

2. About state-corporate crime

In recent years the international academic community has made an effort to define and scientifically test the term “state-corporate crime” that may replace and be more specific than the term “white collar crime”. It is a term that, from a political

and a research point of view, corresponds to what we narrow it down as “corruption”, but with two important differences:

The first difference lies in that there is an effort to criminalize this act from the point of view of protecting human rights and social harms. Crimes are not only the known “street crimes”, but these acts as such, which, according to studies, involve much more loss of life, physical or other harm, loss of property, money, from respective registered murders, attempted murders, theft-robbery, etc. The need for criminalization of these acts is connected both with the need for appropriate orientation of formal criminal policy (law, police, administration of justice) and for the awareness of citizens, consumers, workers and social movements.

The second difference lies in the revelation of the true nature of this crime and thus in the orientation not only of crime prevention but also of political and social action. The interdependence of the state and corporate capital, either by converting directly public money into private (i.e. contracts) or by providing facilities and specific policies (i.e. laws, decrees, etc.) is the way that the heart of our capitalist society operates and therefore the root of this crime.

The term state-corporate crime is not a neutral term, from an evaluative perspective, but rather a product of a very clear politico-ideological decision against a theoretical dilemma that is created by the historical tradition of criminological theory and research, and the prospects in judicio-political and social field that are opened by this specific research.

The concept of state-corporate crime has just gone the third decade of its first public appearance in a scientific text, while its use - as it has not become commonplace among scholars remains quantitatively limited. It was launched through a series of presentations at conferences by Kramer and Kramer and Michalowski in 1990, in which the first written version was introduced in 1992 (Kramer, 1992) and concerned a case study. The general idea was that there should be particular emphasis on the field of the state and businesses interaction that produces serious criminality and not to be examined separately as it had usually been treated until then, that is, as state crime and as corporate crime.

According to what has just mentioned Michalowski and Kramer (2006) gave a comprehensive definition of state-corporate crime as follows: illegal or socially harmful actions produced by a mutually strengthened interaction between policies or practices of political institutions of governance and those of economic production and distribution.

The research carried out within this context use case studies, employing secondary data from official documents and records or from investigative journalism (Kauzlarich and Mathews, 2006), whereas the analysis that is usually at a micro-sociological level lacks a “pure evil perpetrator” as it involves complex organizational arrangements that make the motives and purposes of government and business entities involved inconspicuous (Liederbach, 2010). This very important crime, because it relates to human rights violations, is a systemic problem and not the result

of individual actions, and just as such it is defined as (something that is) linked with the ownership or management of a capital accumulation process.

Within this context we could incorporate two complementary dimensions, when we talk about political ties of governance and institutions of economic production and distribution: first, major multinational companies and supranational government organizations and, second, institutions of “civil society”, that is, non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

More analytically, Friedrichs and Friedrichs (2002) mention the “crimes of globalization”, thus providing another interesting dimension to the issue. These crimes refer to forms of social harm to entire populations from political supranational institutions, such as the IMF and the World Bank. The imposition of the top-down policies and economic programmes that are consistent with the interests of powerful countries and multinational companies have effects on and even cause casualties in human lives mainly in “developing countries” (Rothe et al., 2006). Usually, such things as “Debt Repayment” programmes lead, as Green and Ward (2004) have shown us, to political instability, then to paternalistic or clientelism systems of governance that are the nest of the organized crime, corruption, authoritarianism, state repression (Georgoulas and Voulvouli, 2015), use of torture, and even of possible genocide.

This globalization and its crimes refer to the influence not only of supranational financial institutions and multinational companies but also of NGOs (Chace-Dunn et al., 2000; Mazlish, 1999). In the neocolonial situation or the postcolonial state, as called by Gupta (1995), where we have been living, there is a continuum between businesses, the state and the “civil society” that in essence makes the boundaries between them blurring; the continuous interaction that eliminates autonomy and the limits that are a “normal” situation that have been neglected in literature.

Even more in the period of modern economic crisis, the contraction of welfare state intervention leads to further involvement of NGOs to meet these needs. But the change is not only quantitative but also qualitative. As a consequence of this change and the increase in NGOs’ role as a mere provider of social services, there have been the marginalization of the contenders of actions of such organizations and the weakening of features such as the proximity to local communities, the mobilization of citizens and lobbying for changes in targeting policies (Simiti, 2014). However, this development does not signal the strengthening of civil society; it rather signals the incorporation of the existing agencies, which will ultimately survive the economic crisis, within a context that will be distinguishable for deference of retreating from self-expression and promoting social demands.

On the contrary, these NGO-intermediaries reproduce the features of traditional charity (e.g. disconnection of the aid provided from empowerment actions of beneficiaries, disconnection of individual needs from social needs, emphasis on moral obligation, promotion of donors) (Simiti, 2014), while at the same

time the development of clientelism between specific organizations and the central or local political power favoured the appearance of cases of corruption or financial mismanagement, as several relevant publications have shown (Gibelman and Gelman, 2001; Greenlee et al., 2007).

3. Migration to the Aegean islands the last years

In the summer of 2015 some of the Aegean Islands (mainly *Lesbos, Chios, Kos, Leros, Samos*) received a huge influx of refugees, which by far exceeded existing capabilities in reception and hospitality. Typically, only last July Lesbos received nearly 55,000 refugees/migrants, while the number of arrivals on the island in 2014 was almost 12,000 and in 2013 less than 4,000 refugees/migrants¹.

It was a real humanitarian crisis, a situation that could have led to an unprecedented tragedy if hundreds of volunteers hadn't been mobilized and hadn't offered their unconditional and continuous solidarity to those who come from war zones across the Middle East, Central and Southern Asia and North Africa and were heading towards Europe.

Meanwhile, the painful events that have been unfolding in countries of the Balkan Peninsula and Central Europe, and the ensuing urgency for "handling" the great refugee flows to northern Europe, seem to have led the EU to a new strategy of "refugee management". This development does not bode anything good for the future. The main objective of this strategy is to dramatically decrease the refugee / migrant flows, and for this purpose the so-called "Fortress Europe" should be reinforced.

This goal is served by specific and centrally planned European policies that are to: (a) make a clear distinction between "refugees" and "migrants"; (b) strengthen FRONTEX, and the forces that deter sea travel as well as to "militarize" sea borders both in the Aegean and the wider Mediterranean Sea; (c) create "hotspots" on the Aegean islands and elsewhere, aiming at an administratively effective separation between refugees and migrants; and (d) to appoint Turkey as the regional "policeman" so that deterrence policies are strengthened and crossing the waterways in the Aegean Sea can be discouraged. Thus, it becomes conspicuous that the EU, in the face of the huge humanitarian crisis with victims hundreds of thousands of refugees/ migrants, has chosen to stick to the hard logic of previous years, that is, (a) the logic of a hermetically "sealed" fortress that allows a very small and targeted number of persecuted people from war-ridden countries in Africa and Asia to come to the European land; and (b) the logic of these people's assimilation and their direct incorporation into the cheap labor market (of Germany and other countries) as a "reserve army of labour".

¹http://www.astynomia.gr/images/stories/2014/statistics14/allod204/statistics_all_2014_methorio.pdf. (accessed: May 2019)

At the same time, drastic cuts in funding for food and health programmes by international organizations (e.g. the United Nations High Commission for Refugees) has worsened the already critical situation of refugees throughout the Middle East, and will surely create even larger refugee flows into Europe²

Furthermore, the distinction between “refugees” and “migrants” has been proven completely groundless, since it is based on an outdated conception of geopolitical reality that ignores contemporary developments. Nowadays, wars have completely different characteristics compared to those in the 1950s, a period during which it was defined administratively what constitutes a “refugee” or a “migrant” at an international level. How can one classify (and handle) as “economic migrants” people who, under the burden of war and terrorist threats, experience the fear of persecution, starvation, extermination, or simply do not possess the necessary means to educate their children? By what criteria a person coming from Afghanistan or Iraq is not a “refugee”, but only an “economic migrant”? Who defines the content and limits of an unbearable life? Does the guilt of the EU's leadership make it forget very easily how long-lasting are the consequences of wars and other conflicts that Europe itself had instigated? How can people's efforts to take refuge to other countries, hoping for a sustainable life, be divided between “documented avoidance of risking death or persecution”, on the one hand, and “improving their living standards”, on the other hand?

Who decides who will live and who will die, either within their countries or in the “civilized West”? Who holds the power of life and death over the persecuted of this planet? Shouldn't various clichés terms found in international law regarding the status of refugees, such as “well-founded fear of persecution” make us reflect on and try to define what “fear”, “justified fear” and “persecution” mean for those who experience those extreme situations? Who gives the right to the EU to decide which *countries, nationalities* and *ethnic groups* may be excluded from the “refugee” status, implying that the members of the respective population groups are not entitled to feel unbearable conditions of life in the countries of origin? How can whole populations be collectively identified as “economic migrants” but not as “refugees”, even when the existing refugee law prescribes that the procedures for recognition of a “refugee” status should take into account the special conditions of each individual (likelihood of persecution), and this recognition is, above all, a humanitarian act?

Such a policy is a state crime, a violation of human rights. According to Amnesty International report for Greece (2015-6)³, the dramatic increase in arrivals of asylum seekers and irregular migrants on the Aegean islands pushed an ineffective

²<http://www.unhcr.gr/nea/artikel/cee62eadb22d1a47dda45b5a49f9bda7/ypati-armosteia-oie.html>.

³ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/europe-and-central-asia/greece/report-greece/> (accessed: May 2019)

first reception system beyond breaking point. Allegations of torture and other ill-treatment and excessive use of force by police persisted.

More analytically:

- More than 612 people, including many children, died or were unaccounted for in the crossing when the boats carrying them capsized.
- Several refugees and asylum-seekers reported instances of violent push-backs. Push-backs also continued at sea. Eleven push-back incidents were reported to have occurred at the Greek-Turkish land and sea borders (from November 2014 till the end of August 2015).
- The already ineffective first reception system proved incapable of adequate responding to the dramatic increase in refugees and migrants arriving on the Aegean islands
- Reception conditions on islands such as Lesbos and Kos were inhuman... insufficient tents, lack of food and poor hygiene conditions
- Unaccompanied children were often held with adults and remained in detention for several weeks under poor conditions. Conditions in immigration detention areas, including police stations, often amounted to inhuman or degrading treatment.
- Obstacles to accessing asylum procedures remained for both detained and non-detained asylum-seekers.
- On several occasions between August and October, riot police on Lesbos reportedly used tear gas and beat refugees and migrants waiting to be admitted for screening at the Moria immigration detention Centre and those being registered in Mytilene port.

Furthermore, in visits to Lesbos from April 3 to 9, 2016, Human Rights Watch⁴ found that the police-guarded camp on the island was holding a wide array of people with special needs, including women with young children, pregnant women, unaccompanied children, elderly men and women, and people with physical and psychosocial disabilities. None of the detainees had proper access to health care, sanitation facilities, or legal aid.

The Moria facility on Lesbos, with more than about 4,000 people, is surrounded by fence topped with barbed-wire. Conditions at Moria deteriorated rapidly due to the fear, frustration, over-crowding, and lack of services. When Human Rights Watch came to Moria took some interviews⁵. One detainee interviewed through the fence said he was lucky to sleep in a tent. "This is because I came two weeks ago," he said. "Whoever comes now sleeps outside, and the toilets are really dirty. You go inside and you can't even take a breath. The food is disgusting and the

⁴ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/04/14/greece-asylum-seekers-locked> (accessed: May 2019)

⁵ Ibidem.

water is dirty. Both me and my friend have skin problems from washing in this water and drinking it.”

Amnesty International⁶, which visited Moria on April 5, 2015, reported that the packed facility was holding people with disabilities, pregnant women, and a large number of children, including a baby with health complications from an attack in Syria. Only three doctors were regularly available to provide medical care.

Nothing changed the following years after the EU- Turkey migration deal (18 March 2016). According to Amnesty International’s Annual Report 2016/7, more than 434 people died or were reported missing while trying to cross the Aegean Sea. Moreover, the deal allowed for those arriving on the Greek islands via Turkey to be returned to Turkey without a substantive examination of their claims. There was evidence that at least eight Syrian refugees were forcibly returned to Turkey. Reception conditions for refugees, asylum –seekers and migrants stranded on the islands were overcrowded and insanity; they provided inadequate security and people faced uncertainty about their future. Those seeking access to asylum procedures met with serious obstacles including being unable to lodge their asylum requests through Skype or only after repeated attempts. Allegations of torture or other ill-treatment during arrest or in immigration detention persisted⁷.

In the evening of 24 November 2016, a gas canister used for cooking in Moria camp exploded and led to the death of a 66-year old Iraqi woman and a 6 year-old child living in the adjoining tent. The child’s mother and 4 year-old sibling sustained serious injuries and were transferred to a hospital in Athens. Two months later the deaths of three men in Moria camp (January 2017) brought home the risks posed by the appalling conditions thousands of asylum-seekers and migrants are enduring: overcrowding, freezing temperatures, lack of hot water and heating, poor hygiene, bad nutrition, inadequate medical care. All due to the organizational failures of the EU-Turkey deal, a deal that European leaders seeing in it a blueprint for new migration deals with other countries but closing their eyes to its flaws, its criminogenic nature (Amnesty International 2017).

4. NGO’s involvement as a state corporate crime

Moreover there have been reported incidents on state- NGO –corporate crime. Let’s describe analytically what happened mainly in Lesbos, concerning the NGO, local authorities’ relationship.

The first phase began in the middle of summer 2015, when dozens of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) massively arrived on Lesbos to support refugees,

⁶ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/04/greece-refugees-detained-in-dire-conditions-amid-rush-to-implement-eu-turkey-deal/> (accessed: May 2019)

⁷ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/europe-and-central-asia/greece/report-greece/> (accessed: May 2019)

who were arriving by the thousands on the island on a daily basis. Some NGOs actually contributed to refugees' relief, others used their presence on the island to make a profit. Last August, the journalists who were on Lesbos used to say that it was enough for one to have some photos with refugees from the coast of Lesbos, a website and a bank account so to solve one's financial problem.

It is a lie that the Greek State was caught napping last summer and lost control of refugee flows. The truth is that it knew very well what was happening on Lesbos, Chios, Kos and on other Aegean islands. And there was entire service available that the state could utilize to manage the situation; it is the General Secretariat of the Aegean and Island Policy (former Ministry of the Aegean), a service that knows perfectly the insular Greece. The General Secretariat could have been used from the first time that the problem was raised. It was a conscious choice that the General Secretariat was not used. Besides the NGOs, individuals, employees' associations and political union collectives that were not receiving any funding from anywhere created refugee support structures; they just wanted to help their fellow people.

The next period, which began late September 2015, it was the period during which the recording of NGOs that were based on the islands and in mainland Greece commenced. A series of meetings between state actors, NGOs and local and regional agencies took place. It was the period that the state was preparing for a cleanup. It wanted to banish pesky volunteers, those who are not funded by the state budget or European Union funds because they had the bad habit to talk too much, give information to journalists about refugees' mistreatment and to reveal how government mechanisms were operating; sometimes they gave crucial information to refugees, too!

The third period started in mid-November 2015 and continues till today: the state forced small NGOs to come under the umbrella of larger ones and indirectly or directly threatened them that if they disobeyed they would be forced to leave the country.

It is conspicuous that the refugee issue management tested a new way of how the state was operating. Funds were allocated to NGOs, but they were also able to act as what is called the social state. The official state did not take the responsibility to provide food, housing, clothing, health care to refugees. Thus, it avoided hiring staff, which was necessary to carry out the specific tasks. On the other hand, the NGOs had every chance to move quickly to bring staff and volunteers from abroad, to hire employees from the local unemployed people. Thus, an amalgam of labour relations was formed, including unpaid work, poorly paid work, unpaid overtime, contracts that are renewed every month or every three months. Labour contracts were defaulted, threats made to the employees that if they spoke they could not be able to find work in another NGO. Of course, there have been CEOs who are being paid with monthly salaries of 4,500 euros.

At the same time, the NGOs can solve other issues, such as hiring friends and voters of the government parties, local and regional authorities. Naturally, it is hardly forgotten that there must be compliance with the parliamentary balances in such cases! They can also placate local communities by renting buildings, financing local mass media or certain journalists etc.

That it has been conscious choice of the Greek government to replace the welfare state with a “benevolent” civil society is illustrated by the recent formal legislation to deal with the refugee crisis with Law 4375/2016, Article 11, paragraph 9, which states that “If the effective operation of the Regional Services of Reception and Identification is hindered due to the lack of adequate or appropriate personnel, handling individual processes ... may be assigned for a certain time based on the applicable regulations for public accounting in agencies of civil society that meet appropriate quality and safety standards ... The cost of the award may be covered by the state or co-financed or other resources”. In all the above discussion money is too much and procedures are opaque⁸.

⁸ From my personal experience as a municipal councilor in the Municipality of Lesbos, in constant councils, I have witnessed such events that led me to send the following letter to the relevant Minister:

“Open letter to the Deputy Minister of Migration Policy, Mr. G. Mouzalas, Mytilene, 04/04/2016

Dear Mr. Minister,

I hereby address you, requesting clarification on two important issues on the management of funds of European programmes of the refugee crisis. According to official transcripts of the recordings of meetings of two recent municipal Lesbos councils (which I am attaching you), under the European URBAN programme, Ministry of Migration Policy suggested / recommended actors (specific NGOs and Universities), even the name of a colleague Professor, who will reclaim and manage two programmes, totaling 11.2 million Euros for integration actions for refugees and migrants. As you will see in detail, in the official minutes of the recommendation of the responsible Deputy Mayor, according to which the participation of Lesbos Municipality in the default partnership was requested, there are expressions, such as: “the direct award was required ..”, “We were proposed the name of the Professor ...”, “there was a suggestion for the agencies which were to be involved ...”, “there was guidance from the Ministry”. I would like to ask you whether during the submission of competitive European programmes – funds and before the end of the final filing date, “you guided”, “indicated”, “required”, or “suggested” specific individuals and agencies to form a partnership between public and private sector to claim and manage a very large amount (of money), or, what is officially referred to in the respective municipal councils of Lesbos (March 2016) is false”. This open letter is unanswered, till today.

5. (Not) an epilogue

Nowadays, as far as the refugee issue is concerned, the European continent is confronted with a big dilemma, which entails two opposing perspectives. On the one end, we have the neoliberal alliance of *political* and *economic oligarchy* with *racism* and, sometimes, *fascism*. State crimes and state-corporate crimes are part of this agenda, as illustrated above.

On the other end, we have the forces of *solidarity* to refugees: democratic citizens, ordinary people: the “underdogs” of Europe. Those of us who belong to the *solidarity* side need to fight to prevent the militarization of sea borders and the setting-up of “hotspots” that will decide who will stay and who will return back to a situation of continuous risking of one’s life. At the same time, we are called for fighting both to open up legal and safe migration channels to Europe, and to immediately stop the wars and disasters that cause massive exodus of the civilian population. Uncovering and addressing state crimes and state-corporate crimes is part of this agenda.

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MEASURING OUTPUT POTENTIAL AND OUTPUT GAP OF ALBANIA

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Abstract: *This paper uses HP filter and production function of the Cobb-Douglas form to measure and compare output potential and output gap. We find that Albania's economy is performing near or above potential. Both the univariate and the multivariate ways result in similar results. We use a two-sided smoothing lambda of 100 for the HP filter. The results lead us to conclude that the policy interest rate of the Central bank has not been as low to stimulate economic growth as we have been led to believe. Central Banks measures of output potential of 4% seem to be higher than the recent data suggests. More studies should be performed to measure neutral interest rate to conclusively say that a lower policy interest rate should be pursued by the central bank.*

Key words: *output gap; economic potential; hp filter; Albania; Monetary Policy.*

1. Introduction: Potential output of Albania

Potential output is the real level of production that can be achieved by using the factors of production available in a stable inflation economy. Measuring output gap has important application in calculations future inflation and as a result the appropriate response through monetary policy. Generally, the levels of output above that of the potential are seen as inflationary pressures. In such a state the economy is using its means of production at a higher speed that raises the costs of capital.

But when economy is performing in levels lower than that of the potential that is a sign that monetary policy may be too tight and should become more accommodative to bolster the economy at potential.

There are no studies for measuring output gap mostly because of the lack of economic data for Albania. But also because output gap is an unobservable variable and as such is very difficult to measure. There are three approaches to measuring unobservable variables. First the univariate approach is the most popular. This approach relies on actual economic data and requires less information.

Second is the structural methods that use economic theory to through the production function to

Albania has had an average growth rate of 4.4% in the last 18 years, between 2000 and 2017. Although growth rate has been quite volatile with a high of 8.3% in 2001 and a low of 1% in 2013. During the 2009 and 2015, the years during the financial crises and the aftermath of that crises the growth rate had a 2.2%.

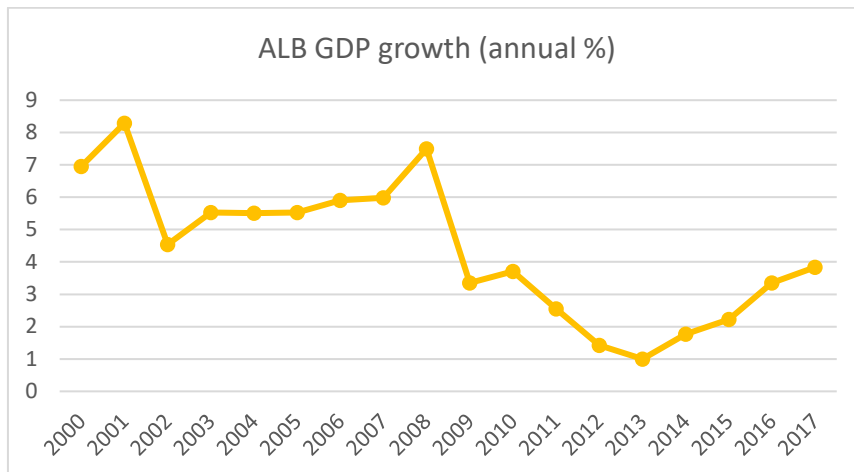


Fig.1. Albania GDP growth (annual % from previous year)

Source: World Bank Data

In 1991 Albania passed from centrally planned economy to a market economy. This explains the sharp downturns and up turns in the first decade marked by high corruption and civil unrest, as the one in 1997. Economic model, one based on consumption, helped with the instability.

Measuring output potential and deviation from it is paramount for monetary policy and fiscal policy. Potential output helps us understand how the economy is growing and the divergence of actual output from potential output. Cyclical factors or the fluctuations of potential output may affect actual growth of GDP.

GDP potential and GDP gap are important data on conducting monetary policy. After the policy makers know the economic potential, they can derive from that the neutral rate of interest, or the natural rate of interest. Yellen (Yellen, 2015) defines natural rate as the interest rate that will not expand nor contract the monetary policy when the economy is functioning at or near potential. Natural interest rate fluctuates in the same direction with the economic potential. When we observe a decline in the potential economic growth, we observe that the same things happen to the natural interest rate.

Albania's economic growth declined, as seen on figure 1 while monetary policy has been expansionary with lowest historic REPO rate of 1% (REPO rate being Bank of Albania policy interest rate), but at the same time inflation has maintained at levels lower than target. This means that monetary policy has not been as expansionary as policy makers at the Central Bank believe. Had the economic potential been like the rates of around 7% we would have seen much higher level of inflation than the 2 % average.

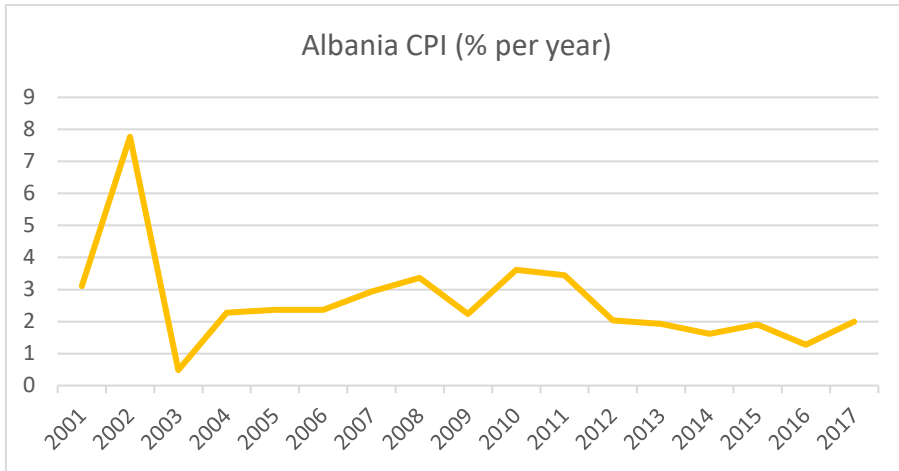


Fig. 2. Albania CPI % per year
Source: World Bank

Speaking on “The future and the economic challenges of the banking sector” Central bank governor Mr. Sejko answered the question on the progress of economic development. Mr. Sejko states that Albania economy grew at near potential of 4%. He bases his optimism for the positive future development on 2 indicators. Firstly Mr. Sejko bases his positive outlook on the past developments. Economic growth had it’s lowest point in 2013, 1% and since then growth has picked up and remained positive, as seen in figure 3.

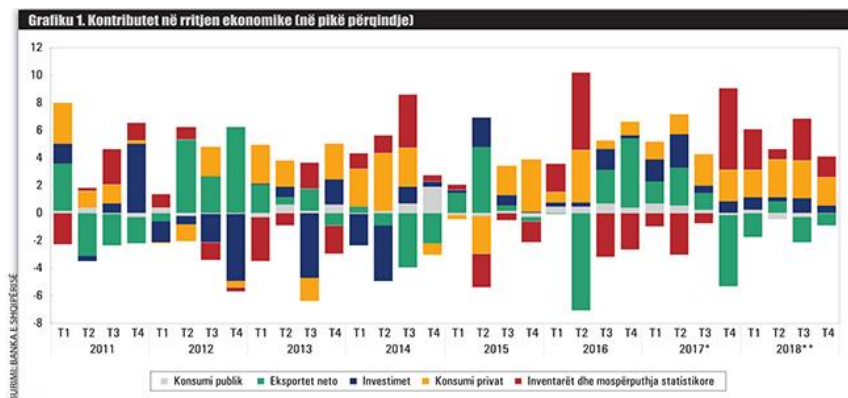


Fig.3. Contributors of sectors in economic growth – Albania
Source: Bank of Albania

Secondly Mr. Sejko sees the supportive elements of our economy working in favor of growth. Elements like monetary policy, improvement in economic development of our largest trading partners, Greece and Italy and improvements in

the balance sheet of families, private sector, banking sector and public sectors, will contribute to a sustained growth near potential.

Question is if 4% is actually the economic potential of Albania. This anchor needs to be supported on statistical data.

Before we go on to update measures of economic potential and output gap, we want to treat the methods that measure these indicators.

2. Methodologies for measuring economic potential and output gap

In this section we would like to review the literature methodologies for measuring potential output and output gap. Bersch and Sinclair (Bersch and Sinclair, 2011) divide the methods of measuring these indicators in two main categories:

2.1. Univariate Output Gap Measures

A. Linear Trend

According to this method output gap is measured as the deviation of output from a simple linear trend.

B. Hodrick and Prescott (HP) Filter

This is the most commonly used tool to measure output gap. HP decomposes economic growth, Y_t in two parts: growth part (Y_t^*), which is akin to output potential, and cyclical part, G_t , which is the output gap.

$$Y_t = Y_t^* + G_t$$

HP filter is a two-sided smoothing method. This means that it minimizes fluctuations on both the cycle and the trend growth. As is stated in Bersch & Sinclair (2011) λ determines the extent to which variability in the trend as compared to the cycle is allowed for; higher λ makes the cycle and trend smoother. For quarterly data, the standard value for λ is 1600 and has been calibrated for U.S. GDP data. As seen by the discussions in Canova, 1998, developing countries need to have smaller λ s because of the higher fluctuations in trend. Bersch & Sinclair (2011) use different λ s of 8, 40, and 1600 to see how sensitive the measured output gap is.

Univariate methods, although easy to use require long series of data of actual output. Also, as is supported by Kota, (Kota, 2007) statistical methods can't explain structural changes in the economy and these changes are commonplace in developing economies like Albania's.

2.2. Multivariate methods

The univariate methods depend on a time series that requires long series of data and doesn't take into account other economic information.

An alternative to univariate methods, like the HP filter treated above, is the production function approach. This approach uses capital stock, labor force and technological changes to supply information on potential output. According to this

method, potential output is measured as a supply side and gives the potential level of the economy if all production factors are fully utilized.

As Havik et.al (2014) and Kota (2007) state this approach focuses on the supply potential of an economy and is linked more directly to the economic theory but the disadvantage is that it requires assumptions on the functional form of the production technology. Havik et.al. (2014) put the connection of the production method in a figure as below:

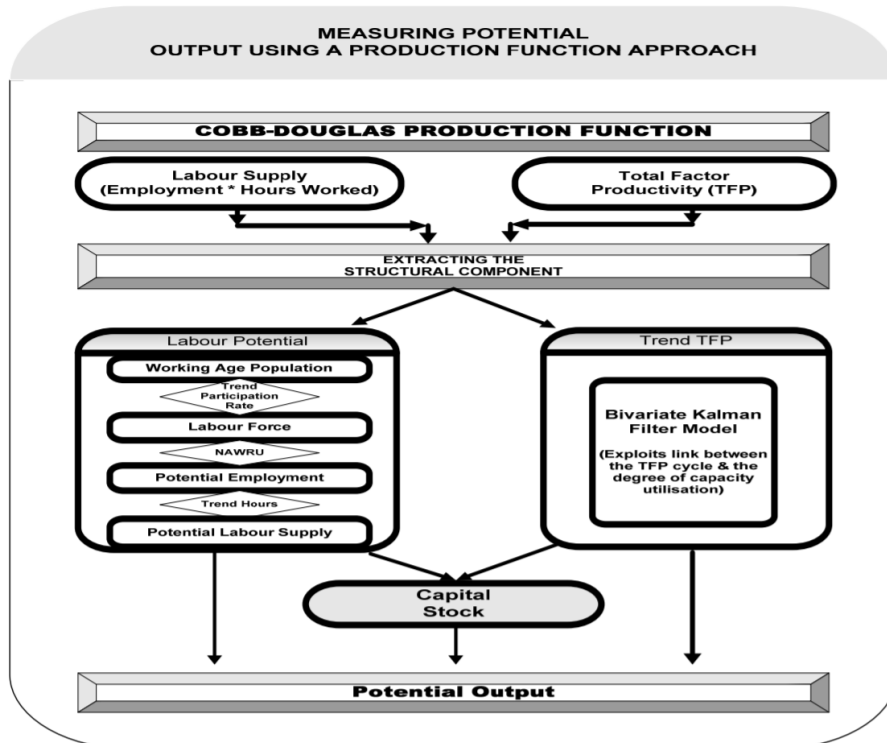


Fig. 4. Measuring potential output using Cobb-Douglas production function
Source: Havik et.al (2014)

Cobb Douglass is a simple functional form that uses data on employment and labor force, capital stock and elasticity of production factors. The mathematical form is given below:

$$Y = TFP \cdot L^\alpha \cdot K^{1-\alpha} \tag{1}$$

Where Y is the GDP and I given as a combination of factor inputs: labor (L), capital stock (K) and TFP is the total factor productivity. The output elasticities of labor and capital are represented by and respectively.

3. Data

We use yearly data available for Albania’s GDP from 1981 – 2017. To measure the output potential we use the HP filter. Other methods have been used with similar results thus we rely on this filter to measure the potential output and the output gap.

We use the lambda of 100, in accordance with Kota (2007), Bersch & Sinclair(2011).

HP Filter results:

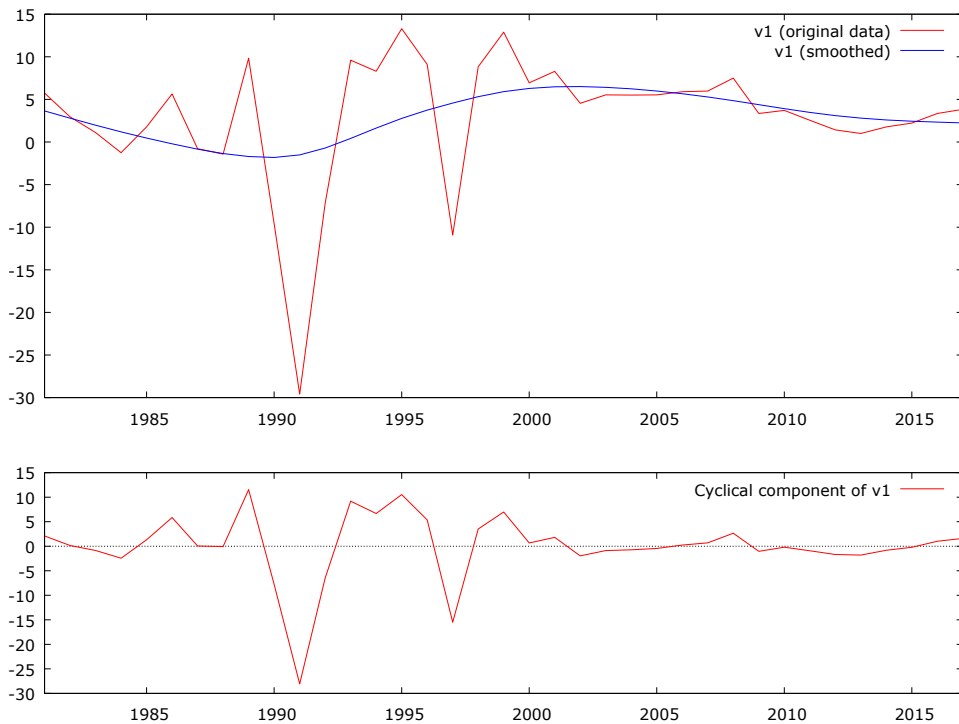


Fig. 5. Albania output actual and potential 1981 – 2017

Source: Bank of Albania and the author’s calculations

Output gap measured by production function

More studies should be done in the future to see if results produced by the production function with the Cobb-Douglas function result in different results. Our results through Hodrick-Prescott method produce very similar results to the Cobb-Douglas production function.

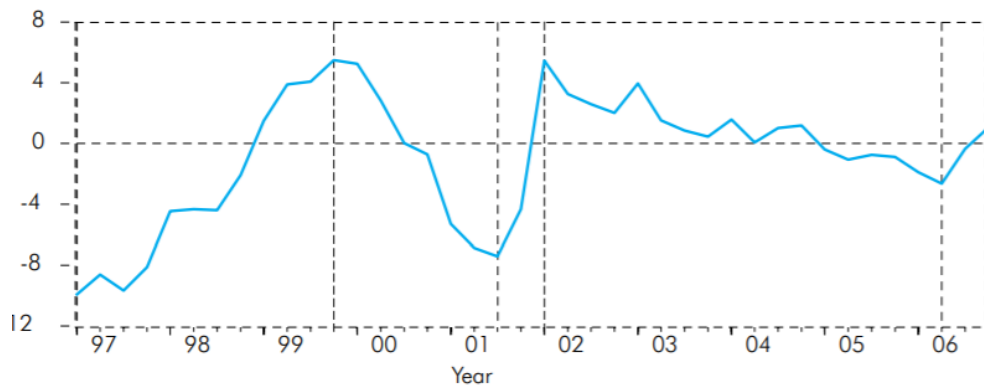


Fig. 6. Peaks and troughs in output gap through production function
Source: Kota, 2007

4. Potential output and output gap in Albania

According to HP filter the annual potential growth in 2017 is 2.2%. This method results in a much lower potential output then the one the Central bank of Albania seems to be operating under, 4%. Interest rate of 1%, the REPO rate may be low if we assume the 4% potential growth but is not low enough for an economy, such as Albania’s where the potential output is 2.2%. If we use GDP deflator we will find that there is a much smaller real growth rate.

Similar results are achieved by measuring potential output and output gap in the study by Kota(2007) that takes in into account the period between 1996 and 2006:

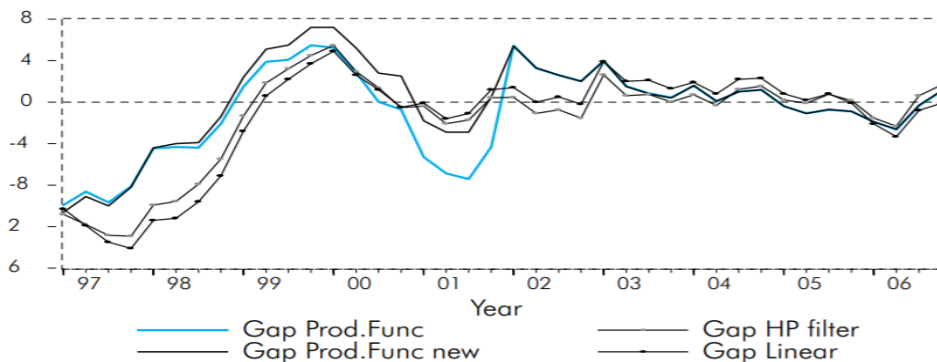


Fig.7. Output gap according to the three methods and the new production function
Source: Kota, 2007

Conclusions

In this study we decompose GDP data using HP filter. We find similar results to other methods like production function. Data show that Albania is operating at or above the output potential of about 2.2%. This information helps Central Bank policy makers better understand and respond through monetary policy. REPO rate of 1% may not be as accommodative to the economy as previously thought because potential output has fallen to historic lows. As results who the potential output is at the lowest point in 25 years. Monetary policy has not been as quick to reflect to the situation, the policy interest rate has not been as loose as we've been led to believe. Central Banks measures of output potential of 4% seem to be higher than the recent data suggests. More studies should be performed to measure neutral interest rate to conclusively say that a lower policy interest rate should be pursued by the central bank.

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CRIMINAL ANTHROPOLOGY: AN EPISTEMOLOGICAL ESSAY ON REPRESENTATIONS, NAMING AND CONTEXT

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Abstract: *This article presents a variety of literature related to the vast field of criminology and more particularly to its epistemology. The content is focused on the emergence of this discipline, while tracing the path to its scientific aspect. This work, based on the history of criminology, aims to synthesise the scientific debates between criminologists from different schools. The latter raises two main points: the chronological order of the names proposed by "criminology", in particular the preliminary idea relating to "criminal anthropology", and the scientific trend, which underlines the origin of criminology, which has become a scientific discipline to date.*

Key words: *criminology; epistemology; anthropology; criminal anthropology.*

Introduction

Beyond the epistemological debate on the nature of the crime phenomenon, is it a normal or pathological social phenomenon? (Durkheim, 1970). Crime has always been a privileged object in the construction of knowledge in the social sciences and humanities, to the point that several academic disciplines, fields of research, corpus of knowledge and specialists of all kinds have marked its link with criminological scientific knowledge.

The designations and expressions that have been adopted to give rise to the expression "criminology" by authors, scientific, academic and State institutions are diversified. These proposed designations relate to criminal sciences, criminal sociology, criminal psychiatry, criminal anthropology etc.

In the context of criminal anthropology, several authors adopted this name in the second half of the 19th century. This reality appears clearly in the review of the "review of criminological literature". In books and studies, there are amalgams, "conceptual and contextual», which have adopted the notion of criminal anthropology. The latter, in turn, remains marked by great ambiguity.

The first criminologist to raise the issue of this amalgam was Alvaro Pires¹. Its epistemological exhibition on the history of criminology shed new light on this scientific field.

1. Various representations of criminology

This section presents the history of criminology, as well as its different representations. Indeed, since the birth of the Italian positive school (Lombroso, Ferri and Garofalo) at the end of the 19th century, at least three major representations² of criminology have been conveyed by different authors in this field.

1.1. First representation

This representation, probably the oldest, is the one that considers criminology as a branch of another science. The choice of "mother science" then depends on the theoretical preferences of each particular author.

In addition, this representation was conveyed, among other things, by at least two of the main representations of the Italian positive school (it should be mentioned that the Italian school at the time was indeed dominated by scientific debates) (Renneville, 1994 : 186).

For example, Lombroso once considered criminology as a subdivision of biology. On the other hand, Ferri saw it as a branch of sociology. It is for this reason that he entitled his book " The Criminal Sociology " (Pires, 1995 : 14). This representation is being more and more rejected today.

1.2. Second representation

This is an autonomous science of an interdisciplinary nature, in the same way as other human and social sciences. This autonomy was supported in two relatively different ways. Some authors have tried to demonstrate that criminology is like other human sciences (theories, concepts and methods are part of a field of their own). According to this view, criminology would not be confused, but would maintain close links with criminal law (Szabo,1967 : 41) and with three main sciences: biology, psychology and sociology. But the number of these supporting sciences changes according to the authors (Pires,1995 :13-14).

¹ Canadian criminologist, sociologist, epistemologist, lawyer and professor at the University of Ottawa in Canada. he is interested in the sociology of law and social control as well as in the methodology of research.

² The first three representations of criminology were previously indicated by Ellemberger (1965). He reports a fourth representations that was deemed less important by Alvaro Pires, who presented another recent representation of criminology, which became more important after the 1970s.

Other authors have argued that the scientific autonomy of criminology can be based on a kind of synthesis and integration of knowledge produced by basic disciplines such as biology (Llorca, 2005), psychology and sociology, that criminology has the task of synthesising rather than doing research (Pires, 1995: 15) In this context, the authors often use expressions such as "science-crossroads", "science-synthesis".

1.3. Third representation

This representation considers criminology as a "field of study" (field of criminology), or a "body of knowledge", composed of scattered knowledge, and yet dealing with a common theme.

1.4. Fourth representation

Alvaro Pires proposed a new representation. The author stated: "We will not strictly speaking retain any of these positions, but rather propose a new representation that integrates and goes beyond the last two...".

The author considers that criminology is not quite an autonomous science, but that it is not exclusively a field of study either. Indeed, it attributes to criminology a dual status: it is both and paradoxically a field of study and a complex activity of interdisciplinary knowledge, both scientific and ethical (Pires, 1995 : 16) by nature. The Table n°1 briefly summarises this dual image or status of criminology:

Table 1. Double status of criminology: field / knowledge activity

CRIMINOLOGY STATUS	DEFINITION	CRITERS	ESTABLISHMENT DATE (OR LIMITS)
Study field	Various knowledge of deviance and social reaction.	Any contribution that is related or relevant to the theme of the field. E.g.: texts by classical lawyers and reformers, 19th century psychiatrists, statisticians such as Quételet, sociologists such as Durkheim etc..	In some respects undetermined and "negotiable"? unavoidable: from the 17th century onwards with classical thinking.
Knowledge activity	Idea for a special project of interdisciplinary knowledge (scientific and ethical) on the criminal issue (including the creation of a teaching discipline).	Only contributions that identify themselves or appear to be related to the major characteristics of the criminological knowledge activity.	In principle determined or determinable. With the Italian Positive School in the last quarter century.

Source: Pires , 1995, p 31.

2. Naming chronology

It is important to note that the term "criminology" has had a historical chronology of names. The latter were proposed by Bierne (1993) and Calerence (1959) and adopted for a relatively long period of time (more than a century), until the term (criminology) was finally adopted. The main names have been published in the following order: "criminal anthropology", "criminal sociology", "criminology" and "criminal biology", as well as the terms "criminal science" and "criminal policy" (Pires : Op.cit : 43)

3. Why a criminal anthropology?

With respect to this name, Alvaro Pires said: *"We found no reference, not even hypothetical, to a first use of this expression. This is the name that was first used in Western Europe from 1880 onwards to designate what is now known as criminology. While the term (criminal anthropology) was also used in the title of an article and some reports, it was less a general manual on criminology than the treatment of a particular issue."*

For example in the works of: D. Dortel, É. Laurent, C. Lombroso, this name, which also referred to the Italian positive school, is parallel to the "criminal anthropology" (Pires, 1995 : 46-47).

However, the tendency of this school was somehow linked to the thesis of heredity and biology (Gassin, Cimamonti and Bonfils, 2011 : 181). That is why Alvaro Pires considered that there was a change in "concept and meaning" regarding the term "criminal anthropology" at that time.

Ellemerger (1965) noted that "Lombroso occasionally referred to criminology as "criminal anthropology" (Baral, 2017). This one would be a branch of anthropology. However, it is not quite clear if the author defines the full meaning of the term.

At the time, beyond a series of shifts in meaning, anthropology was defined as the discipline that studied the human being physically or as an animal species (Pires, 1995: 14). This probably explains Ellemerger's approximation of biology.

Conclusion

For more than a century, criminology, as scientific knowledge related to criminal phenomena, has undergone several stages in its name. But it is important to stress that the adoption of these designations has been linked to the cultural and institutional tradition of each country, and to the intellectual journey of each author.

Most of these authors and criminologists agree that scientific criminology was born of a "criminal anthropology", which developed towards the end of the 19th century in Western Europe. However, the term "criminal anthropology" adopted by

these authors, as well as the context of these studies, seem to have slipped (a shift in the meaning of the word anthropology). A shift that will later be criticized by contemporary criminologists.

It should be noted that the context of these studies is not specifically anthropological, but rather that there is a strong presence relating to the penal question, as well as sociology, forensic medicine³, biology, the borrowing of psychiatry and psychology, which correspond to a fairly constant relationship with deviance. In other words, criminal anthropology is gradually developing around these scientific disciplines, which play an important role.

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THE DIFFICULT TRANSITION TO UKRAINIAN DEMOCRACY FROM INDEPENDENCE UNTIL THE ADOPTION OF ITS CONSTITUTION

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Abstract: *In 1991, with the disintegration of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the emerging states had to face a major change in all areas, not only political but also economic, social, administrative, etc. Among the main challenges that these countries had to assume was the entry into the democratic field, unknown to them. This had to be done through the implementation of a system that validated the new situation of these countries. One of the key aspects of this transition was the elaboration of a democratic constitution, since, although in the communist regimes there were constitutions, it is necessary to remember that these were simple fictions under the Communist Party. It can be found one of these cases in Ukraine, which, since its declaration of independence on 24 August 1991, had to gradually begin this unprecedented path within its borders. From this moment, a long road began for the resolution of the post-Soviet conflicts inherited from the previous era, until the achievement of a new Constitution for Ukraine on June 28, 1996. It is therefore necessary to analyse in depth how the Ukrainian democratisation process went up to the consolidation of its constitution. An exhaustive interdisciplinary analysis will be carried out of all the problems faced by Ukraine in order to complete this process, which was accomplished out in all the ex-Soviet republics with greater or lesser success.*

Key words: *Ukraine; democracy; Kravchuk; Kuchma; post-Soviet conflicts.*

Introduction

The disintegration of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics –USSR– in 1991 marked the beginning of a new stage in Central and Eastern Europe, centred on the path towards democratic transitions. This change, which was new for these countries, was to be directed in the search for a solid and resilient democracy that would give them international recognition after decades under communist power. One of the most important steps towards this was the achievement of a constitution that would endorse these transitions. As can be seen in the following table –table 1–, since the end of 1990 a progressive proliferation of constitutions began to develop in all these countries.

Tab. 1. Central and Eastern European countries and the year in which their Constitution was adopted during the 90s.

COUNTRY	YEAR ADOPTION OF THE CONSTITUTION
Serbia	28 September 1990
Croatia	21 December 1990
Bulgaria	12 July 1991
Latvia	21 August 1991 –1922 Constitution restored–
Macedonia	21 November 1991
Romania	8 December 1991
Slovenia	23 December 1991
Yugoslavia	27 April 1992
Estonia	28 June 1992
Slovakia	1 September 1992
Montenegro	12 October 1992
Lithuania	25 October 1992
Czech Republic	16 December 1992
Russia	12 December 1993
Belarus	1 March 1994
Moldova	29 July 1994
Bosnia- Herzegovina	14 December 1994
Ukraine	28 June 1996
Poland	2 April 1997 (provisional 1992)
Albania	28 November 1998 (provisional 1991)
Hungary	1949 Constitution modified several times –in 1989 it changed its name from People’s Republic to Republic–

Source: author’s own elaboration.

Likewise, the table shows that not all countries had the same speed in developing their new constitutional regime. Regarding the country we are dealing with in these pages, Ukraine, as the author Flores Juberías (2002, p. 157) affirms "the questions of national identity and the symbolism of the new State, its economic system, and its institutional structure delayed for years the approval of the new constitution".

As the table also shows, Ukraine was one of the last countries to approve its constitution. If we leave behind the exceptional case of Hungary that continued for years to keep the 1949 Constitution¹, Ukraine could be considered the last of the countries in the area to adopt a new constitution. This is because Poland and Albania, which adopted their constitutions in 1997 and 1998 respectively, had provisional constitutions since the early 90s. So, considering this delay as a starting point, it is necessary to carry out a thorough analysis of the events and the situation both internal and external that was taking place in Ukraine during the first years of its democratic transition so that the adoption of its new constitution will be delayed until 1996.

¹ At the end, a new Constitution was approved by the Hungarian Parliament on 23 October 2011.

But an initial point must be made, since apart from the natural problem that existed from the change from a Soviet model to a capitalist one, it was united that Ukraine had not existed previously as an independent country. Except for the attempt between the years 1917-1921, which finally led to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic became one of the founders of the Soviet Union by signing the USSR's Treaty of Establishment on 22 December 1922 (García Andrés, 2018: 88). However, in the same way, an advantage can be also noticed –or not– for its democratic transition that many of the other ex-Soviet republics did not have, since it is the point of union between the West –Europe– and the East –Russia–.

1. The Government of Leonid Kravchuk: the first years of Ukraine's independence (1991-1994)

1.1. The path to Ukraine's independence.

Since Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in 1985, the political and economic situation in the USSR worsened to a point of no return. Already in the last years of the 80s of the 20th century, the nationalist movements in the Soviet republics were drawn with greater force. Nevertheless, Ukrainian independence came so abruptly and so unexpectedly that had enormous consequences for the future of the country (Motyl, 1993: 50).

By the mid-1980s many of the republics had begun their nationalist uprisings to gain independence from the USSR. Following the same path, Ukraine, on 16 July 1990 a Declaration of Sovereignty was approved in the Supreme Soviet (Socher, 2006: 152), more than a year before the dissolution of the USSR. Already in 1991, specifically between 19 and 21 August, events accelerated with the attempted coup d'état against President Gorbachev. The coup d'état failed, but the effect was that the state itself disappeared (López-Mendel Bascones, 2011: 2). Three days after the failure of the coup, on August 24 of the same year, Ukrainian Parliament celebrated the approval of the country's declaration of independence. That same day, Kravchuk informed Parliament that he had left the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR and the Politburo (El País, 1991a). From that moment on, Kravchuk affirmed his candidacy as an independent candidate in the first free elections for the presidency of the Ukrainian Republic. At that time the need for continuity or not of the USSR was strongly debated. Among Gorbachev's plans was to make a new treaty for the Union, which, however, the Ukrainian Leonid Kravchuk was the first leader of the republics to reject it. As Jacques Sapir (1993, p. 11) asserts "the conditions that presided over the end of the USSR in 1991 no longer foreshadowed a rapid return to political stability".

Following the declaration of independence by Parliament, a referendum was held among the Ukrainian people to endorse the decision of their parliamentarians. This event took place on 1st December 1991, the same day that the first elections of the new independent era were held in Ukraine. As the newspapers of the time

stated, 90% of voters proclaimed their desire to break ties with Moscow, and nearly 60% placed their trust in Kravchuk (El País, 1991b) as Ukraine's first democratic president.

As far as independence is concerned, only except for the Crimean Peninsula, in the rest of the regions more than 80% of the votes were in favour of independence. As for the election of the president, it was not necessary to hold a second round, since in the first round it obtained a large majority –table 2–, in almost all regions of the country. The election of Kravchuk in December 1991 by universal suffrage showed that Russians living in the eastern part of that country seemed to want to assimilate with the remaining population (Sapir, 1993: 129), by the moment.

Tab. 2. Results of the 1991 Presidential Elections.

CANDIDATE	POLITICAL PARTY	% VOTES
Leonid Kravchuk	Independent	61.59%
Vyacheslav Chornovil	People's Movement of Ukraine	23.27%
Volodymir Gryniov	Ukrainian Republican Party	4.7%
Levko Lukianenko	Party of Democratic Revival of Ukraine	4.5%

Source: author's own elaboration from Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

1.2. Problems during the first years of democratic transition in Ukraine

As mentioned above, following the approval of independence in the referendum and the election of Kravchuk as president of the new Republic of Ukraine, Ukrainian refusal to sign the new treaty for the Gorbachev Union was confirmed. Therefore, one of the first uncertainties that arose in the new state was the relations that were going to take place between Ukraine and Russia, that is, between the two most important countries of the former USSR. Russia was counting on being the heir to the Soviet legacy reformulated in the Russian Federation, but Ukraine's transition was more uncertain.

From that moment on, a series of tensions that had to be resolved in order to achieve a full democratic transition were highlighted. These included: the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States –CIS–; the definition of terms referring to the Crimean Peninsula; the status of Sevastopol and the Black Sea Fleet; and the major economic crisis Ukraine faced after its independence.

➤ *Creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States.*

In view of Kravchuk's refusal to sign a new treaty, an agreement establishing the CIS between Belarus, Russia and Ukraine was initialled in Minsk on 8 December 1991. Considered the heiress of the USSR, but with a clear difference that it wanted to impose: all the republics that integrated it were independent and sovereign. This agreement was endorsed on December 21 of the same year also by 8 other former

Soviet republics² in the Kazakh city of Alma Ata. It was agreed that this community would be destined to maintain a certain coordination in economic, political and military matters (Marcu, 2005: 94), for the mutual aid of the new republics that had arisen. The final consequence of these agreements was the dissolution of the USSR with the resignation of Gorbachev on 25 December 1991.

The main problem within the CIS was Ukraine's concern about Russia's intentions to maintain its power, as if it were merely a continuation of the USSR, with a simple change of name. These discrepancies became more visible within the CIS Summits, especially on 22 January 1993 when the Charter of the CIS was signed. In this case, neither Ukraine, Moldova, Turkmenistan adopted this Charter, and Azerbaijan was present through mere observers. Ukraine was very favourable to this vision of transience, fearing that the Russian Federation would use the CIS as an instrument to impose its hegemony, it did not accept any role for the CIS other than as an instrument of civilised divorce between the former Soviet republics (Blanc Altemir, 2004b: 61).

Thus, it can be said that Ukraine has never wanted the community to achieve a greater degree of integration between the former Soviet republics, because of doubts about Russia's intentions towards them. While for Russia, in contrast, one of the biggest problems was that if Ukraine heels towards the West and decides to leave the CIS, it could cease to have a *raison d'être* (Soto, 2002: 130).

➤ ***Situation on the Crimean Peninsula.***

One of the first problems arises even before the independence of Ukraine is the issue of the Crimean Peninsula³. In view of the worrisome situation the USSR was going through, the inhabitants of Crimea held a referendum, which took place on 20 January 1991. In which the overwhelming majority of voters –93.26%– pronounced themselves in favour of the reconstruction of the Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic as a subject of the USSR and member of the Treaty of the Union (Sánchez Ramírez, 2016: 475). A year later, on 12 February 1991, the Ukrainian parliament recognized Crimea as an Autonomous Republic within the State law of Ukraine. However, with Ukrainian independence and the dissolution of the USSR, the matter took a radical turn.

Moreover, it should not be forgotten that, from the first moments of Ukraine's independence, Russia has wanted to focus attention on claiming historical

² In addition to the three founding countries of the CIS added Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, followed in 1993 by Georgia. However, the history of this organization will have its ups and downs with exits and entrances from its members.

³ It should be remembered that the Crimean Peninsula was given to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1954 by Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev in commemoration of the historic Treaty of Pereyaslav of 1654, by which the Soviets considered much of present-day Ukraine to have joined the Russian Empire.

rights over Crimea in order to proceed with its annexation (Requena, 2014: 10). However, on 19 November 1990, the presidents of the supreme Soviets of Russia and Ukraine, Yeltsin and Kravchuk had signed a treaty of friendship⁴ by which they recognized them as sovereign States and committed themselves to respect their territorial integrity (Blanc Altemir, 2004a: 50). So, the only possibility Russia had was to cover the independence struggle on the peninsula and encourage its leaders against the central government of Ukraine.

When Ukrainian independence was proclaimed on 24 August 1991, concern over the peninsula began in the Russian parliament. It even came to raise the debate on the legality of the 1954 cession of Crimea to Ukraine⁵. The argument that had more defenders was that Crimea would be part of Ukraine, provided that this country was within the borders of the USSR. Although Ukraine did not make any statement on the matter, the first steps towards a secessionist movement on the Peninsula were beginning to be heard in Crimea.

Finally, its membership in Ukraine was negotiated in exchange for a large degree of autonomy, making it the only region with the status of Autonomous Republic (Cardone, 2014: 141) in Ukraine, with legislative, executive and judicial powers on 29 April 1992. In spite of this, only a few days later, on 5 May, the Crimean Peninsula was declared independent and a secessionist Constitution was put into effect. Both events were rejected by the Ukrainian parliament, which after complicated negotiations managed to return it to its integration into Ukraine as an Autonomous Republic. In such a way that the incipient secessionist movement, driven by sectors of the Russian population, to proclaim the independence of the peninsula, was controlled by the Ukrainian government in May 1992 (Czech Godoy, 2008: 159). However, the situation became complicated again from 1994 onwards, as will be analysed later on.

➤ ***Status of Sevastopol and the Black Sea Fleet.***

The city of Sevastopol⁶, on the shores of the Black Sea, is the location of the Black Sea Fleet, which in the Soviet years depended on Russia and Ukraine. After the disintegration of the USSR in 1991, there was a new confrontation between the two previous countries to define the dependence of the Fleet. The problem was that Moscow always remembered the special status Sevastopol was given as a Soviet city

⁴ This agreement had to be ratified later, but it was not until 1997 that Ukraine and Russia ratify it.

⁵ In this sense, it should be remembered that, after the dissolution of the USSR, this transfer from Crimea to Ukraine was seen from Moscow institutions as a historical error, whereas for Ukraine it was a historical necessity for the future of the Slavic country.

⁶ This city is located on the Crimean Peninsula and was founded by the Russian Empire in 1783. From that moment it became the most important port of the Black Sea and a symbol for the Russians, since it was a very significant place in the Crimean War –1853-1856– and in the Second World War –1939-1945–.

when Khrushchev transferred Crimea to Ukraine in 1954 (Emerson, 1999: 118). That is to say, it was considered an administrative unit of its own and directly dependent on Moscow, while the rest of the Crimean Peninsula belonged to Ukraine.

One of the first steps towards the resolution of this conflict was taken within the newly created CIS, in which Russia proposed its demands regarding the Black Sea Fleet, something that was always met with Ukrainian reluctance.

In 1992, the conflict resumed due to Ukrainian interest in creating a navy of its own based on the fleet, something that was not well seen by the Russian government of Yeltsin. For this reason, the Dagomys Agreement was signed in June of the same year, in which a moratorium was granted to decide the future of the Black Sea Fleet. This agreement was reinforced in August with the Yalta Agreement, which gave until 1995 the deadline to form the fleets (Bonet, 1993). However, in September 1993, in the city of Massandra, it was agreed that the entire fleet would pass into Russian hands and the part that corresponded to Ukraine would be delivered as payment of what this country owes Russia for the gas and oil it receives (Fernández, 1994). However, it was not until the next legislature when this issue was resolved, as will be seen in the next section.

➤ ***Economic crisis in Ukraine.***

Once independence had been achieved by Ukraine, Kravchuk government proceeded to release most of the services for privatisation. However, privatisation consisted in the high officials of the extinct Communist Party each electing a few *koljos* and *sovjos* and registering them as private property, to continue exploiting them according to the methods of before (Lamsdorff, 2003: 137). In the same way, one of the most serious problems was the maintenance of the political and economic elites in most of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and that feed on members of the old leading nomenclatures (Taibo, 2002: 149), as it also happens in the case of Ukraine.

This initial problem was compounded in subsequent years by the serious energy situation in Ukraine due to its dependence on Russian gas; and the great economic crisis that had been taking place in Ukraine since 1990. The situation worsened in mid-1993, when a powerful wave of strikes plunged into the industrial *oblasts* of eastern Ukraine (Boycott, 1995: 177). Ukraine's most industrialised area – Donetsk and Luhansk – demanded Kravchuk government for a sound strategy for economic recovery, as well as a closer rapprochement to the policies coming from its Russian neighbour. The end point to the demonstrations of industrial workers from the east of the country came after the call for presidential elections in June 1994.

In the words of author Ian Bremmer (2006, p.145) “Leonid Kravchuk's reluctance to pursue structural reform, scuttled the polity-wide hopes for post-independence prosper. Populations in Russian-speaking eastern Ukraine and Crimea

–having originally voted in favour of independence wide stress of economic collapse. Likewise, Ukrainian ethnonationalists increased their fervour”.

2. Government of Leonid Kuchma: change in Ukraine.

2.1. Presidential elections in 1994.

The second presidential elections in Ukraine since independence were called in 1994, due to all the problems faced by President Kravchuk during his term of office. The turning point, as we have seen, was the mining strikes in eastern Ukraine, coupled with the bad economic situation, and increasing differences with Russian policies. In these elections the main candidates to be elected were the incumbent president, Leonid Kravchuk, and his opponent Leonid Kuchma. Kuchma was prime minister in the Kravchuk government since October 1992 (Harasymiw, 1996: 130), although he resigned in September 1993 due to the deep crisis facing Ukraine and the political decisions of President Kravchuk.

During the electoral campaign, Kravchuk defended classic ideas of Ukrainian nationalism against his rival, Leonid Kuchma, who advocated sovereignty, maintaining good relations with Russia at the same time as with Europe, making Ukraine the nexus between the two entities and respecting aspects of Russian culture present in Ukraine (Granados, 2007: 156). Kuchma's position served to increase his level of popularity in Ukraine, especially in eastern regions of the country. The first round of elections took place on 26 June 1994, and the candidates who went on to the second round were the long-awaited Kravchuk and Kuchma, the latter scored 6 points less than the president at that time –table 3–. However, the situation changed in the second round⁷ held on July 10 of that same year, in which Leonid Kuchma won.

Tab. 3. Results of the 1994 presidential elections.

CANDIDATE	POLITICAL PARTY	% VOTES –1 st round: 26 June 1994–	% VOTES –2 nd round: 10 July 1994–
Leonid Kuchma	Independent	31.2%	52.1%
Leonid Kravchuk	Independent	37.6%	45%
Oleksandr Moroz	Socialist Party of Ukraine	13.3%	-----
Volodymyr Lanoviy	Independent	9.6%	-----

Source: author's own elaboration from Electoral History.

⁷ In the presidential elections of June 1994 –unlike in 1991– none of the candidates reached the majority of 50% plus 1 to appoint him as president, so a second round had to be held between the two most voted candidates.

This victory by Kuchma had important consequences overall Ukrainian territory. On the one hand, with this victory he was able to calm any movement in the eastern part of Ukraine, since as Kuchma himself said in the electoral campaign, among his proposals was a rapprochement to Russian policies. However, although the situation improved in the eastern part of Ukraine, there was also a strong division among the Ukrainian population, as the western part of the country was not satisfied with Kuchma's policies towards Moscow.

In fact, this contrast can be seen in the regional results of the second round of the 1994 elections. In them, it is observed how the winner in the eastern regions was Kuchma –with higher results in Donetsk, Luhansk and Crimea–, while in the western areas the winner was Kravchuk. This caused a huge fracture between the two areas of Ukraine, as the eastern area is more likely to strengthen relations with its Russian neighbour, while the western region prefers a rapprochement with the European Union⁸.

2.2. Resolutions of previous conflicts

➤ ***Commonwealth of Independent States.***

Thus, with Kuchma's victory, there was a rapprochement of Ukrainian positions within the CIS. Thus, relations between Ukraine and Russia improved from the beginning of Kuchma's mandate, in which Ukraine accepted almost all the proposals coming from Moscow. In fact, the electoral successes obtained at that time by political figures and forces –Kuchma in Ukraine, Lukashenko in Belarus, the Agrarian Party in Moldavia– supporters of a closer relationship with Russia have ratified the latter's central position (Taibo, 1995: 227). As a result, Kuchma's closer policies towards Russia improved relations between the two countries.

➤ ***The situation on the Crimean Peninsula.***

With regard to Crimea case, after a two-year period in which the situation was more or less relaxed, the conflicts started again at the beginning of 1994. This year, the first autonomous elections were held in Crimea, in which five of the six candidates called for a return to Russia and promised a referendum on the issue, which was never held (Checa Godoy, 2008: 159). The winner of this election was Yuri Meskhov, who won 73% of the votes in the second round of the 1994 presidential election in Crimea (Katchnoviski, 2015: 82). Meskhov restored the Crimean Constitution of 1992, and even in May 1994 approved again another declaration of independence, with the support of the Crimean Parliament.

But it must be remembered that in the presidential elections of 1994 the winner was Kuchma, who was more prone to understanding with Russia. For this reason, the resolution of this new conflict in Crimea had to wait until he was sworn

⁸ This situation today is a matter of great international concern, particularly because of the conflict that has been developing in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions since 2014.

in as president of Ukraine. With Leonid Kuchma's victory, the previous actions were progressively abandoned, and in November 1995, the Crimean Parliament adopted a new Constitution declaring its integration in Ukraine. This fact is undoubtedly related to the external position of the new president, much closer to Russian policies than his predecessor Kravchuk.

➤ ***Status of Sevastopol and the Black Sea Fleet.***

The other issue that remained to be closed was the Black Sea Fleet. Although it was understood that with the 1993 Massandra Agreement the case had ended, the interpretations of the same agreement were different in Ukraine and Russia. Nevertheless, after the 1994 elections and Kuchma's electoral victory, there was a progressive rapprochement with the Russian position. A Sochi Agreement was concluded on 9 June 1995, which laid the foundations for the final agreement on 29 May 1997, which would have a 20-year duration.

In this agreement Ukraine rented to Russia three roads located in Sevastopol, in addition to port infrastructure, an airport and various facilities, for a period of 20 years. Russia therefore undertook to pay an annual rent of \$100 million for 20 years (Bonet, 1997). With this important advance, the roads were opened even more so that only two days later, on 31 May 1997, the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between Ukraine and the Russian Federation was signed in Kiev.

➤ ***Economic crisis in Ukraine.***

This last issue of the Black Sea Fleet with the payment of this rent began to solve in a way the great economic crisis that Ukraine was going through, since the debts that it had with Russia in relation to the gas and oil that it sold to it were eliminated. And even Ukraine in exchange would receive a 30% reduction in the price of Russian gas (Álvarez Rubia, 2004: 7). In this way, the deteriorated Ukrainian economy improved weakly, and it had to wait a few more years to improve.

2.3. Adoption of the Constitution in 1996

Although it is true that the first draft of the new Constitution of Ukraine was announced on July 1, 1992, subsequently submitted to referendum, it was not accepted (Maciaszek-Llaneza, 2013: 119). In addition, the succession of problems detailed above further delayed the matter. With the arrival of Kuchma in the Ukrainian presidency and his position in favour of greater relations with Russia, the internal situation in the country improved and the negotiations for the approval of the new Constitution were restarted.

At the end of 1994, President Kuchma proposed a law titled "On State Power and Local Self-Government in Ukraine". Generally known in its final form as the "Law on Power," this legislation would provide a temporary resolution of the key problems [...] (D'Anieri, 2007: 129). However, in June 1995 an agreement was reached granting

the president extraordinary powers while a new constitution was being discussed (Taibo, 1998: 71). This agreement was maintained until the Constitution of Ukraine was finally adopted on 28 June 1996.

Conclusions

The path towards democratic transition in Ukraine, and more specifically until the adoption of its Constitution in 1996, has shown in these pages that it was very complicated. Because of the importance of the issues that Ukraine had to resolve in the early years of its independence, the constitutional issue was somewhat side-lined. At the time of the adoption of the Constitution, only the Black Sea Fleet issue remained to be settled, but it was already on its way to being resolved, as it was in 1997.

It is necessary to realize that the events that were taking place in Ukraine in these years had behind them the shadow of its past as a Socialist Republic, since most of the problems it had to face came from the Soviet heritage. At the same time, it can be observed that behind each of the problems Ukraine had was always present the Russian Federation. Thus, since the fall of the USSR in 1991 Russia has presented in Ukrainian politics with the Crimean question, the status of Sevastopol and the Black Sea Fleet, with the major economic crisis aggravated by the debts owed to its neighbour country, with policies within the CIS as a mechanism for the former Soviet republics to meet under Moscow's watchful eye.

Moreover, as we have seen, although in the referendum for its independence it was supported by the population of all regions of Ukraine –to a greater or lesser extent– the division of the Ukrainian population is obvious. It has been demonstrated in the presidential elections of 1994 in which the western part supported Kravchuk, while the eastern part supported Kuchma. Differentiating the interests of each part of Ukraine in relation to its Russian eastern neighbour or its European neighbour, much more marked at the present time.

However, despite the good attempts, it has been demonstrated that Ukraine has not been able to apply the democratic rules prevailing at the time, and as shown by the difficult situation in which the Slavic country currently finds itself. The limitations on the development of a democratic state in the early days of an independent Ukraine are therefore evident, which have also been dragging on to the present day.

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THE DECISIONAL SYSTEM FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF PREUNIVERSITARY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract: *The educational management has a multiple, decisive character: social – the good functioning of the educational institutions; pedagogical – the accomplishment of basic functions of the educational system, formation of personality; systemic-compliance with the general management system; economic - satisfying the company with labor resources; multidisciplinary - the interference of information from different fields during the educational act. Some interpretations lead us to the complex management of the educational management, claiming that in their activity the school principals must accomplish all the tasks submitted to the education and society system. Through this prism, the educational management requires the school header functions such as: the continuous improvement of the activity, the implementation of educational policies, the rational valorization of the pedagogical resources, the psycho-pedagogical counseling, etc. The school managers set the objectives, the strategies and the policies, represent the organization in relations with the central and/ or the local government, being responsible for the overall decision-making processes of the organization. They are interested in developing long-term plans, the main responsibility being to guide the work in the future, to formulate objectives and strategy at the educational institution's overall level, to facilitate and stimulate the organization's adaptation to change and to monitor relations with the community or the company in which it operates.*

Key words: *decision making system; pre-university education; school managers; education.*

Introduction

Educational management is manifested at different levels: the macro-management of the education system and the educational process, by country and by level: European, national, local; intermediary - the management of school organizations, which refers to the coordination of educational structures by top managers in education, from the minister to the school principal; micro - management of student classes that analyze the way in which lessons and classes are organized by operational managers in education (teachers).

The issue of educational management has a special significance in the context of a modern society consisting of a set of organizations that regulate or facilitate almost all aspects of human existence. In this context, it is increasingly accepted that school should be seen as a complex type of organization, a system with a set of own goals, with a certain distribution of power and authority, with specific functions and responsibilities, consisting of the necessary integrated parts which allow them to function in an attempt to achieve their goals.

We therefore consider that the levels at which management is manifested in an educational establishment are the same as in any functional organization, namely:

- top management (leadership);
- middle management (level of committees/departments/compartments);
- first level management (college student level).

From this perspective, educational managers are people who, by using a set of laws, principles, methods, etc., depending on their personal abilities, lead a certain hierarchical level of the school organization to achieve the goals pursued.

In this respect, the specialty literature presents the following order of types of educational managers:

- kindergarten teacher, primary school teacher: leads the didactic activity at the level of a collective - class or group;
- head teacher: conducts educational activity at the level of a class or group of students;
- speech therapist teacher: conducts the process of language training and psycho-pedagogical assistance specific to pupils and parents at the territorial and county level through logopedic and inter-school centers through logopedics;
- counselor teacher: conducts the psycho-pedagogical activity of pupils, teachers and parents at the territorial-county level through the psycho-pedagogical and inter-school assistance centers, through the psycho-pedagogical assistance offices;
- methodist teacher: conducts the methodical activity at territorial and county level through the Teaching Staff Houses and at the inter-school level through the methodical committees;
- director: leads the activity of an educational unit on a global level;
- school inspector: conducts inspections of various types: school, general, territorial inspections.

In the educational environment, the success of the managerial approach is conditioned by the fact that the teachers have certain categories of competencies that are directed to the management, coordination, organization, communication, resource management, but also competencies that are dependent on the plasticity of their personality.

2. Roles and competences in educational management

From research in the field (for example, those of Henry Mintzberg) (Mintzberg Henry, 1998: 231-240) it has been noticed that managers devote much of their communication time-to meetings, telephone conversations, correspondence solving, etc. and that they have certain responsibilities (within or outside their organization) that do not fully fall into the category of managerial functions. The conclusion of these studies was that the manager activities define three categories of roles, each of these groups being subdivided into subroles:

Table 1. Categories of roles

Interpersonal roles	Representation
	Leader
	Binder
Informational roles	Monitor
	Dissemination
	Speaker
Decision making roles	Entrepreneur
	Mediator
	Resource distributor
	Negotiator

Each of the 10 managerial roles has its importance in the overall workforce of the managerial structures, thus:

- **Representation:** attending ceremonies, official meetings, events, etc. Although it does not seem to have much significance, this role consumes an important part of time for a manager.
- **Leader:** Establish a working environment where employees work together to the optimum level to achieve the organization's goals. It is a very important role for the manager because it involves the interaction with the staff and the complex skills.
- **Binder:** maintaining relationships and contacts outside his/ her department, with other managers from other departments of the same organization or other organizations.
- **Monitor:** Identify and select the most useful and relevant information from the many formal and informal sources (reports, minutes, mass media, specialist magazines, rumors, etc.). Managers who fail to fulfill this role correctly are left to be influenced by unreliable sources of information, overwhelmed by a huge amount of information that consumes them very precious time and makes inappropriate decisions.

- **Dissemination:** Sending relevant information, values and beliefs to the organization's staff so that there is good communication at all levels.
- **Speaker:** the authority to speak as a representative of the organization.
- **Entrepreneur:** Promoting change at the organization level, implementing new ideas, identifying new opportunities and starting new projects. It is the most important decision-making role of a manager, involving the assumption of the risks of major decisions that produce/ not significant changes to the advantage of the organization.
- **Mediator:** Reducing tensions and conflicts and resolving crisis situations at various levels of the organization.
- **Resource distributor:** the correct allocation of resources (money, time, equipment, workforce and space) according to objective criteria and identified needs.
- **Negotiator:** Making decisions in situations where issues related to resources, contracts, mergers, etc. are negotiated.

An old controversy between specialists relates to the educational ability of managerial skills. In other words, managers are inborn or can they be created by education? Talent and natural inclinations undoubtedly have an important role, but becoming a manager is the result of a process of personal transformation. Expanding the perspective and conception of the world and life, raising the level of consciousness, discovery of the right motives and principles create the necessary premises for becoming a person capable of leading others, that is, a person who deserves to be followed by other people and they are in the care and not subordinate. People who are optimistic, who are easily connected with others, who are organized, communicate excellently, are endowed with intuition and empathy, showing strength of character, who have a developed sense of social communion and who develop the necessary technical skills are clearly advantageous in the occupation and successful fulfillment of managerial functions. Given the complexity of work and the impact it has on the organization, modern management is a process that involves a set of competencies ranging from those related to the use of information technology and statistics.

Managerial competence is highlighted by the ability of leaders to carry out their specific activities to the standards adopted by the organization. The complexity, diversity and intensity of the manager's activity differs depending on the position in the hierarchical level, the compartment / field of activity, the profile and size of the organization. In the educational environment, the success of the managerial approach is conditioned by the teachers' holding the following categories of competencies:

Communication and networking skills:

- communication and relationship efficiency of the managerial approach;
- adjustment to unforeseen situations for the operational problem solving;
- solving conflict situations, following investigation, mediation and negotiation to ensure a climate of trust and accountability.

Psycho-social skills:

- value the individual and group competencies of the interlocutors with the aim of establishing effective communication;
- adopting an appropriate behavior in the relations with the interlocutors in order to achieve a collaborative climate.

Competencies to information technologies use:

- integration of information for the creation of a database useful for the managerial act;
- value the information in the database in order to make decisions in accordance with the realities specific to the educational environment;
- using computerized information technology and technologies to make the activity more efficient and ensure its quality.

Management / coordination and organization skills:

- designing activities in order to achieve a quality educational approach;

Evaluation competencies:

- setting the objectives and evaluation criteria with respect to the principles of total quality;
- using the evaluation techniques and tools specific to the educational process;
- evaluation of the educational approach in order to identify the necessary training of the personnel.

Administration and management resources:

- managing the material and financial resources according to the priorities of the managerial plan in compliance with the general and specific legislation;
- management of the decisional act by taking responsibility or delegating responsibilities within the working groups;
- selection of human resources according to the specificity of the unit.

Institutional development competencies:

- analyzing the educational context in which the institution operates in order to design an adequate institutional development strategy;
- designing the institutional development strategy;
- promoting national and European values in education through programs and partnerships.

Self-management competences:

- evaluation of their own activity in order to increase the quality of the managerial act;
- selecting the training path for career development in accordance with the personal aspirations and the specifics of the institution.

3. The decision characteristics and the role of managerial decisions in pre-university education system

Decision making is the central activity of a manager; all other activities are carried out to ensure that the decision has already been taken to implement and monitor its effectiveness.

Managers should decide when and to what extent their subordinates will be involved in decision-making, as employee involvement determines the quality of decision-making and participation in decision-making.

Managerial decision in education is required at all levels of the system and the learning process. Its pedagogical specific quality is marked at the level of managerial decision: effective, efficient, prospective.

The effective pedagogical decision implies the managerial responsibility assumed in establishing the objectives of the reference activity. We take into account the responsibility shown by the school manager employed as a decision-maker at different levels of the education system (school inspector, school organization director, professor, teacher-head master, teacher-advisor, teacher responsible for methodological committee, etc.) in correctly designing education/training objectives that can be effectively and socially achieved by the end of the reference activity.

Effective pedagogical decision engages the responsibility of the school manager who must ensure the achievement of the objectives of the reference activity. In any case (school inspector, director, professor, etc.) will involve the “five mental skills” required in managerial leadership for:

- a) “optimal time organization at the level of assessment: initial (diagnostic and predictive) - continuous (formative) - final (summative);
- b) “focusing on external contribution, adapting efforts to results, not to the work to be done”;
- c) focusing on “their strengths” and those led “and on the strengths of the situation”;
- d) targeting major areas or priorities “where a higher field will produce remarkable results”;
- e) stabilizing effective system-based decision-making as a reference activity strategy, avoiding its fragmentation “in several decisions, meaning making wrong decisions”. (Drucke, 2007: 40)

The efficient pedagogical decision implies the optimal valorisation of pedagogical resources (informational, human, didactic-material, financial) existing in a managerial context (of top - the ministry of education, intermediary - school inspectorate, basic - school organization, class of pupils etc.), throughout the reference activity, within a particular education/ training cycle, partially or fully carried out.

Effective pedagogical decision engages the optimal valorisation of existing pedagogical resources within a managerial process that requires, in a normative sense: (Drucke, 2007: 124-141)

- a) focusing on generic issues, solvable through strategic solutions, not procedural adaptations;
- b) defining the specifications needed to solve the generic problem, set between “minimum goals” - “limit conditions”;
- c) adopting the strategic solution “from what is right, not from what is acceptable”, so as not to “omit important things and lose any chance to formulate a useful answer”;
- d) the application of the optimal strategy solution, which “must correspond to the capacity of the people called to do it”;
- e) the integration of the strategic solution within a reverse link circuit (external feed-back initiated by the educator-manager, internal feed-back initiated by the educated) “in order to ensure the continuous verification, in relation to the real events, of the expectations they are at its foundation”.

The prospective pedagogical decision implies respecting the managerial function of positive anticipation of future results, achievable in relation to the nature of the assessed domain (pupil, pupil class, concrete education / training activity, school organization, educational system / territorial, national, etc.) and the time spent throughout the education/ training cycle and at the end of it.

A. Decision classification

Decision types are categorized into four main categories, as follows:

- strategic decisions,
- operative decisions,
- administrative decisions,
- programmable and non-programmable decisions.
- **Strategic decisions** are basic, complex, long-term, reflecting the organization’s major goals.
- **Operative decisions** are taken in the short term, they are repeated, so they are routine.
- **Administrative decisions** focus on establishing authoritarian and communication lines.

“The programmable ones are taken by computer. Some scheduled decisions are repetitive, others are routine decisions. For repetitive learners, education units

have written and unwritten policies designed to simplify decision-making, save time, and allow good work coordination. Routine decisions are not necessarily simple.

Non-programmable decisions are taken by man under unstable conditions or in single situations. To solve these problems there are no pre-established procedures either because they have not been met, or because they are very important and complex". (Tîrcă, 2011: 128)

A good manager has the ability to make unscheduled decisions, and the time allocated to making these decisions increases at the expense of the time allocated to programmed decision-making, which is the main concern of other teachers in the school unit with various lower responsibilities.

After the horizons of the organization's activities, the decisions can be: (Joița, 1995: 97-98)

- *strategic* (for more than one year);
- *tactical* (refers to activity or sub-activity, for periods shorter than one year);
- *current* (they are the most frequent and aim at achieving specific, specific tasks, consisting of tasks and tasks, the reference periods are shorter, respectively several weeks).

In relation to the level at which management is located, the decisions are:

- at top level;
- at medium level (methodical committees, workshops, etc.);
- at a lower level;

By their frequency, decisions can be:

- periodically (at defined intervals);
- randomly (at irregular intervals);
- unique (exceptional character).

The ability to predict classifies decisions in: anticipated; unpredictable. In relation to decision-making competence, there are: full decisions; informed decisions.

The sphere of coverage highlights the existence of individual decisions; collective.

B. Decision-making factors

The undertaken investigations have shown that the most important constituent elements of the decisional situation are: the decision-making factor or the decision-maker and the decisional environment.

The decision-making factor or the decision-maker is represented by "a manager or a managerial body which, by virtue of its objectives, tasks, competences and responsibilities, takes the decision in that situation". (Nicolescu, Verboncu, 1997: 206)

The decisional environment "consists of all the endogenous and exogenous elements of the organization, which make up the decisional situation, characterized

by the manifestation of some direct and indirect influences on the content and the results of the managerial decision". (Nicolescu, Verboncu, 1997: 206)

In the decision-making process, the primary factors of the decision fall into interdependencies, which are reflected in the characteristics of the decisional situations that they generate. Mainly there may be three situations: certainty, uncertainty, risk.

The certainty is characterized by the maximum likelihood of achieving the objective pursued using the intended way. The elements involved in the decisional situation are of the type of controllable variables, their characteristics are known, and their evolution can be accurately anticipated.

Uncertainty occurs when the probability of achieving the goal is high, but the way in which there is a need to do has serious doubts. Such situations involve a large number of variables, with few exceptions controllable, some insufficiently studied, hence the approximate anticipation of their evolution.

The risk occurs when the objective is achievable, with an appreciable probability of realization, but there is great uncertainty as to the most appropriate ways to proceed. An appreciable share of variables is uncontrollable and even the evolution of some of the controllable variables is difficult to predict.

4. Stages of the decision-making process in pre-university education system

The rational decision-making process consists of a series of steps that managers follow in choosing the alternative considered optimal. These steps are:

- 1) *"Identifying and defining the problem* is the first step in developing strategic decisions. At this stage it is necessary to recognize the situation that requires the strategic decision (made in time and space), by specifying the component elements and the persons or compartments of which it is part, determining the degree of novelty of the problem, an operation that can indicate to what extent the experience and the previous processes are also useful in the directions in which efforts must be made to complete the knowledge and working methods
- 2) *The correct definition of the problem* creates the premises for the proper specification of the objective. Quantitative techniques can be used to measure past achievements and anticipate the evolution of future factors and conditions.
- 3) *Determining alternatives or decisional variants*, how to achieve the goal. For this purpose various techniques of harvesting ideas are used, such as: sinectic, brainstorming, Delphi technique, etc. At this stage it is essential to gather the main information characterizing each possible course of action and their logical ordering. To this end, lists containing the elements indispensable to the evaluation of the identified alternatives, highlighting the potential advantages and disadvantages of each of them, are drawn up.

- 4) *The decision process continues with the implementation of the decision.* This stage must be prepared with a lot of attention, particularly for decisions that bring about radical changes in the organization's activities.
- 5) *The decision-making process does not end once the decision is implemented, but continues with the evaluation of the results obtained.* At this stage it is determined the extent to which the fixed objectives have been met, the causes that generated the possible deviations, the unpredictable factors that have put their mark on them". (Gherguț, 2007: 80)

5. Component elements of the decision-making process in the pre-university education system

The key elements of a rational decision-making process tailored to school unit conditions are as follows:

- a) "Decision-making aims to solve problems related to the effective development or development of the activities of the school unit.
- b) The quality of human factor work is essential for the effectiveness and efficiency of the decisions made.
- c) In decision-making environment factors not only those in the organization but also those exogenous who intervene in the given issue are included.
- d) The influence of the decisional environmental factors is manifested at each stage of the decision-making process, indirectly through the decision makers. This way of influencing the decisional course again highlights the importance of the human factor in decision-making, its considerable influence on the effectiveness of the organization.
- e) In the last two stages of the decision-making process, the influence of the decision-making environment is manifested directly. The results of the decision-making process depend not only on the quality of decision-making and the efforts of the decision-making center, but also on the joint action of environmental factors, whose evolution can not always be accurately predicted, especially in situations of risk and uncertainty. There is a direct, univocal relationship between the environmental factors and the evaluation of the results, in the sense of influence of the decisional environment on the assessment of the effects of the decision.
- f) The model is a concretisation of the systemic approach of the decision-making process in the organization. Each stage serves as a premise or basis for departure for the next.
- g) At the end of the model, interdependencies that exist between decisions are suggested". (Nicolescu, Verboncu, 1997: 217)

Such a model is theoretically useful in that it provides a coherent picture of the decision-making process as a whole, on the main elements and contemporary phases, as well as on the correlations between them. From the point of view of

practice, its usefulness is that it can be used in the training and refinement of school managers and specialists in pre-university education.

6. Raising and modernizing the decision system

As a result of the investigations carried out, several requirements have been outlined that the decision must meet in order to effectively fulfill the multiple functions of the organization. These requirements are (Nicolescu, Verboncu, 1997: 217):

- 1) "The decision must be *scientifically proven*. In order to achieve this major goal it is necessary for the managerial staff to have both the knowledge, the methods, the techniques and the necessary decision-making skills.
- 2) The decision must be *empowered*. This requirement is to be understood in a double sense. Each decision is required to be adopted by the management body in whose service task it is expressly registered.
- 3) Each decision must be integrated, *harmonized in all decisions adopted or designed* taking into account the organization's strategy and policies. Integration of decisions is required to be done both vertically and horizontally, guaranteeing the realization of the principle of decision-making and action. Vertical integration refers to the correlation of decisions made by each manager with decisions taken at higher hierarchical levels. Horizontal integration refers to the correlation with decisions related to the other involved activities with which they are in interdependence relations.
- 4) The decision must fall within the optimal design and implementation period. In order to ensure that the decisions conception and implementation, in particular strategic and tactical decisions are enrolled, an optimal approach to management is required in the optimal period.
- 5) The proper decision formulating is an essential condition for effective enforcement. The decision must be formulated in a clear, concise manner and contain the objective and main operational parameters, it must indicate the objective pursued, the mode of action envisaged, the resources allocated, the decision-maker and the period or period of application".

7. Decision methods and techniques used in the pre-living education system

The adoption of complex decision-making decisions is made possible by using a wide range of decision-making methods and techniques that facilitate the choice of the optimal variation, each of which is embedded in a particular decision-making model.

Depending on the volume, structure and quality of information they receive, decision models can be: (Nicolescu, Verboncu, 1997: 219-221)

- ✓ "deterministic (centered on information with high precision); non-deterministic; probable."

The use of these methods and decision-making techniques leads to an increase in the degree of rigor and implicit effectiveness of the decisions adopted, differentiated according to the typology of the decisional situations involved.

Decision-making methods and techniques can be grouped, depending on the type of decision-making situation involved, into three categories:

- ✓ *methods and techniques for optimizing decisions in certainty*: global utility method, additive method, Deutch-Martin algorithm, decision table, decision simulation;
- ✓ *methods and techniques for optimizing decisions in uncertainty*: optimistic technique, pessimistic technique, technique of optimality, proportionality technique, regression minimization technique;
- ✓ *methods and techniques for optimizing risk decisions*: the decision tree, the mathematical expectation method.

Depending on the objectives pursued, the methods applicable in pre-university education can be grouped into three categories:

A) Methods of execution

“In order to motivate staff, the institution can provide material rewards for outstanding achievements in its own activity with the help of indicators systems to raise awareness of employees of educational institutions towards the realization of general public interests.

In order to determine citizens to observe and execute administrative decisions, democratic states can offer conditions: political, legal, economic, social, in accordance with the rules of the rule of law (the method of cointerest and persuasion) or the constraint method when appropriate. Economic information and information campaigns are needed to present economic and social policies”. (Brezoianu, 1991: 98)

B) Methods of organization and operation

“We consider it useful to give a brief overview of the five methods of organization used in the state administration and implicitly in the school institutions: the method of rational organization of administrative activities; sitting method; effective management method; the method of capitalizing on work experience; the appropriate method of structuring the program.

We mention that the hearing method is used whenever necessary (the length of the session may vary from 15 minutes to 2-4 hours in relation to the issues debated, the number of participants depends on the method used and the type of decisions taken).

The quality of the decisions depends on the accuracy of the methods used. For effective schooling managers, they need to know very well: their work; social reality; social interests; specific laws; the people they work with.

The method of structuring the officers' program leads to increased efficiency of their work through: comfort, open organizational climate, adequate technical endowment etc". (Brezoianu, 1991: 120)

C) Methods of research

"They impose the diagnostic analysis by: documenting/ investigating the area being approached, causal analysis of data/ information using the cause-effect diagram, identifying deficiencies and positive aspects, formulating proposals for improvement". (Sfez, 1997: 510)

In decision-making processes, a particularly important place is the manager's risk attitude. These types of risk curves of the decision maker depend on the resources employed, the level at which the risk decision-making process has reached, and we have: the risk aversion curve, the risk predominant curve, the risk preference curve with modifiable stake. So, depending on the resources employed, the risk aversion manager needs the highest security probabilities. At one point he makes no more decisions than 100% safe.

In a school, it is important that any person in a leadership position has a set of qualities, skills and knowledge on which to make decisions. Among these qualities we mention: flair, self-control, intuition, sociability, communicativeness, honesty, ability in leadership, ability to understand. The style of the manager's management depends on the success of the educational establishment in which he operates. "The golden rule of any effective action (so the key to success in school leadership) is to combine control with the guidance of those involved in implementing decisions, against the backdrop of a work-centered climate of personal initiative and responsibility" (Jinga, 2008: 140).

Conclusions

The particular importance of decision-making processes in all management processes imposes a permanent concern for strengthening the capacity of pre-university education institutions to develop quality decisions that lead to increased efficiency and competitiveness.

The quality of decisions in a school organization depends on many variables ranging from the level of training of managers to how to structure the authority within that organization. Within a school organization, due to the complexity of the activities carried out, several types of decisions can be developed and applied in terms of grouping criteria.

Knowing the particularities of these decision-making categories is important not only from a theoretical point of view, but perhaps from a practical point of view, because their correct resolution and decision-making depend on the proper choice of methods and techniques.

The decision is to choose a possible alternative. It is a matter of managerial choice and competence, by decision, the manager decides on the modalities of the practical action meant to lead to the achievement of the designed objectives and triggers these actions.

All managerial activity can be summed up, in essence, in a chain of decisions. The complexity and growing diversity of the environment in which the public organization (school) actively generates problems that require resolution and enforcement. The limited nature of human, material, financial or informational resources implies a certain responsibility in achieving the objectives according to the most advantageous ways of allocating and using them.

The decision is found in all the functions of the management, while the quality of the adopted decisions influences significantly the effectiveness of the educational process of the educational units:

- forecast ends with the decision on the objectives and directions of action;
- organization ends with the decision on the forms and methods of organization;
- coordination ends with decisions to harmonize staff and activities;
- training ends with decisions on incentives motivating staff;
- control ends with corrective decisions in order to achieve the objectives.

Decisional variants involve a lot of creative managerial thinking, often consulting experts, data collections, selective research / analysis, quantitative analyzes that are evaluated and compared on the basis of decisional criteria, in order to make the most rational decision.

Even the environment (the state of nature/ objective conditions), represented by all the internal and external conditions, can be influenced by the decision-maker (only described, anticipated) and influences the consequences of a decisional variant and, implicitly, the decision.

The evaluation allowed the managers of the educational institutions to learn from experience, thus increasing their ability to take and implement effective decisions. The focus on evaluation has enabled problem solving to become a dynamic and continually improved activity. Each decision-maker managed to build a feed-back system containing information on the state and implementation that underpinned its adoption.

Based on this system, the decision-maker (the director and the board of directors) can correct the decision-making process, or it can return to the decision-making process itself, which will have a positive, positive effect on the performance and efficiency of the managerial process.

In conclusion, the decision is nothing more than choosing a possible alternative. It is therefore an issue of choice but also of managerial experience involving, on the one hand, the knowledge of managerial theory and especially the decisional techniques, and, on the other hand, the knowledge of the school's problems and of the specific ways of solving them.

Thus, the golden rule of any effective action (ie the key to success in school leadership) is to combine control with the guidance of those involved in implementing decisions, against the backdrop of a sustained work climate, personal initiative and responsibility.

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AGAINST THE EMPEROR. ANALYSIS OF THE STUDENT PROTESTS EVOLUTION DURING THE REIGN OF HAILE SELASSIE I (1960-1974)

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Abstract: *Contrary to popular belief, African populations have been able to force, through social protest, numerous changes in their societies. One such example is Ethiopia, where its last emperor, Haile Selassie I (1930-1974), faced fierce opposition in the streets during his reign, specially the one boosted by students. This study focuses on how student protests in the country have evolved since 1960, what were the causes of their development and what impact they had on the government of the Ethiopian negus. Finally, it will be analysed whether the protests against the emperor were connected with the 1974 Revolution and the military coup that provoked the coming to power of the Provisional Military Government of Socialist Ethiopia, popularly known as Derg. In order to carry out this research, a detailed review of the bibliography has been conducted as well as an analysis of the period's newspaper and graphic material related to student protests.*

Key words: *Ethiopia; social movements; Haile Selassie; protests.*

Introduction

Contrary to popular belief, Africa has not been that static space, populated by immobile and passive societies, but rather social movements have become an indissoluble part of its history, especially since the colonisation promoted by Europeans. In fact, the African continent has a history full of massive protests: the colonial powers had to face resistance movements that later became national liberation movements, in addition to a whole series of strikes led by trade unions, street demonstrations and protests in the countryside. In addition, the seizure of power by single parties and dictatorships also brought an important part of the population to the streets, especially when the economic situation and austerity measures hindered social progress (Arnould, Tor & Vervaeke, 2006: 1).

A paradigmatic case is Ethiopia where social pressure was particularly evident among different sectors such as peasants, students, teachers and urban workers especially since the 1960s. Of them, we have chosen to analyze how the student protests evolved because we consider that this was a group with a capacity for constant and intersectional mobilization with other social movements. In terms of time, this article analyzes the evolution of the movement between 1960-1974. The chosen time period is justified because it is framed in the last years of the reign

of Emperor Haile Selassie I (1930-1974) It is precisely in this framework that the rapid development that was conceived in the student movement at both ideological and strategic levels is visible. In order to carry out this analysis, this work has been divided into three phases: the first is based on the awakening of the student movement and its first actions after the coup d'état of 1960; the second coincides with a period of consolidation of the structures of the movement and its radicalisation (1966-1973) and, finally, the third phase focuses on the role of students during the 1974 Revolution.

Throughout this research, the evolution of the Ethiopian student movement, the causes that led to its alteration over 15 years, its relationship with other social movements with which it shared time and space, its position with respect to the structure of the Ethiopian Empire and the figure of Haile Selassie I and the extent to which this group facilitated the outbreak of the 1974 Revolution have been deeply studied.

1. The awakening of the ethiopian student movement (1960-1965)

Haile Selassie had been crowned emperor in 1930 and except for the brief parenthesis of the Italian invasion (1935-1941) remained in power almost four decades (Pankhurst, 1983: 148-156). The emperor controlled directly the whole country, with the exception of Eritrea, which, due to its historical characteristics, had its own institutions. If Eritrea had state status and was linked to Ethiopia in the framework of a federation, had its own Parliament and political parties, Selassie dismantled one by one these institutions and ended up turning the country into a mere province of the empire around 1960. This event had repercussions on the country's subsequent historical processes since, together with social protests, the empire had to face guerrilla groups opposed to the Ethiopian administration (Hrbek, 1993: 151-152). Thus, in 1958, the Eritrean Liberation Movement ("Mahber Sheweate") was founded, a clandestine movement that defended Eritrea's independence and began to operate in urban areas. In 1961, armed struggle began with the creation of the Eritrean Liberation Front (Tseggai, 1976: 26). Furthermore, in 1963, in the Ogaden region, a revolt was started by part of the Somali population demanding the independence of the region and its possible annexation to Somalia. In January 1964 a brief war began with this neighbouring country and although Ethiopia came out victorious, signing the peace in March of the same year, this reflected the multiple problems faced by the crown (Arconada Ledesma, 2018: 97).

Parallel to this absolutist change in Eritrea, which was aimed at avoiding at all costs its independence, Selassie launched a series of political reforms aimed at washing the face of the autocratic imperial system. From 1955 Ethiopia became a "constitutional monarchy" with quasi-representative institutions. In order to legitimise this transformation, a reform of the 1931 Constitution was made that allowed the creation of a parliamentary system in which the emperor elected the

Prime Minister and in which political parties did not exist. These reforms, although they did not generate a real change in the Ethiopian feudal system, did end up opening a debate that was reflected since the mid-1960s, when the feudal values of the old aristocracy were opposed to the democratic values defended by the new classes of workers and wealthy families (Keller, 1981: 541).

It should be noted here that, until the 1960s, the imperial system had not faced any kind of opposition, which was undoubtedly due to the high popularity of Haile Selassie after the liberation of the country in 1941. The images of that moment perfectly reflect the euphoria of the Ethiopian people and the celebrations of the emperor's return to Addis Ababa¹. However, in the early hours of December 14, 1960, Mengistu Neway, commander of the imperial guard, and his brother, Garmame Neway, provincial governor and intellectual, took advantage of the fact that the emperor was travelling in Brazil to carry out a coup d'état. They quickly took control of the Imperial Palace in Addis Ababa, arresting the emperor's eldest son, Prince Asfa-Wasan, as well as the Ministers of Trade, Defence and the Interior. The coup was joined by most of the imperial guard and other leaders such as Colonel Warqenah Gabayahu and Police Commissioner Tsege Dibu. That same morning, a proclamation issued by Prince Asfa-Wasan, acting under duress, denouncing the country's poor economic situation compared to other African countries, announced the formation of a new government headed by Asfa-Wasan and promised the beginning of a new era. The response of the university students was immediate, demonstrating in the streets of Addis Ababa in favour of the new government (Clapham, 1968: 495).

Before the coup d'état the students had not demonstrated in favor of a change in government, so it has traditionally been considered that the coup d'état also meant the birth of the student movement and the beginning of the struggle against the emperor. However, this support should not be understood as the search for a radical change in the imperial system. The fact that the person chosen for leading the change was a member of the royal family reveals the predilection of the military to keep the crown as an easy way to legitimise change and the students' interest not in overthrowing the imperial system as such, but in achieving real democratic openness. This is visible in a student publication of December 16, 1960, which specified that the new government would promote "freedom of speech, of the press, and of political parties"². Nevertheless, democracy was never mentioned by the coup plotters. In addition, the students became a beacon of opposition to the emperor since they were, with the exception of some military personnel, "the most outspoken and visibly the only consolidated opposition group" (Balsvik, 1985: 13).

¹ British Pathé. 13 abril 2014. Haile Selassie Returns to Addis ababa from exile (1941) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=akChOvfHADs&t=32s>>.

² News and Views, 16 December 1960, published by the students of the University College of Addis Ababa.

In spite of the short-lived success of this putsch, the truth is that the Neway brothers only managed to control the capital, since no other uprising had taken place in the rest of the provinces. As of December 15, confrontations began to take place between the rebels and the military loyal to the regime. The emperor entered the city two days later, definitively aborting the coup d'état. An estimated 300 people died, most of them civilians surprised by the fighting (Clapham, 1968: 496). But why this uprising? In part it has to do with the expectations of national development that Haile Selassie had promised when she returned from exile in 1941. After almost three decades in power, the emperor had failed to keep these promises and had generated a wave of frustration in a significant part of society and especially among some circles of intellectuals and senior army commanders. However, as we have already seen, the coup failed for lack of support, which can be understood for two reasons: on the one hand, the emperor's semi-divine status and imperial tradition, and on the other, the lack of proposals that sought real change, such as the abolition of the feudal system (Adamu & Balsvik, 2018: 267).

Although the coup failed, this event gave way to a new period of reorganization among social movements. The first part of the 1960s gave rise to various minor protests and gave greater prominence to the student groups that maintained their protest center on the campus of Haile Selassie I University. Similarly, rural revolts were increasing since 1960 due to poor social conditions in the countryside and the preservation of the feudal system in the hands of an old aristocracy, which prevented access to land. In fact, a meeting point between the countryside inhabitants and the students was the struggle for the abolition of the feudal system headed by the emperor (Cowcher, 2018: 47).

Although it is true that the land was still in the hands of the aristocracy, a modernisation of the agricultural sector began, with intensive farming and large-scale cultivation driven by foreign companies, which led to an increase in the number of workers hired. Most of this production went to urban markets or for export, which became a contradiction for a country that suffered from frequent shortages. In addition to the countryside, the student movement found another ally arising from Ethiopia's mild economic transformation, focused primarily on urban spaces, but also on the countryside. In the cities, the relative industrialization of the 1960s generated a new social class, a working class that began to organize. In fact, in 1963 the Confederation of Ethiopian Labour Unions (CELU) was formed, the first trade union in the country with a fairly moderate position far removed from socialist theses (Ottaway, 1976: 471-474). The role of women's associations was also strengthened during these years. Although this is an issue that still needs to be investigated further, the fact is that the data reflect that women did participate in social movements, although their role was smaller than that of the men who led the protests in all sectors. However, it is essential to reflect the role of associations such as the Ethiopian Women Welfare Association founded in 1935, the Ethiopian Young Women's Christian Association which was born in the 1950s, as well as the Armed

Forces' Wives Association which was most active of all (Burgess, 2013: 98-99).

What can be affirmed is that between 1960-1965 social movements were quite moderate and did not represent a real threat to the status quo. The student movement maintained a rather prudent stance, which was due in part to the good conditions in which university students lived. In fact, before 1965, the system succeeded in co-opting most students by offering them relatively well-paid bureaucratic positions, which prevented them from giving political effect to their modernizing ideas. In addition, most students did not want to risk their good standing. This explains why between 1960-1965 there was greater organization within the movement, but this was not reflected in massive street protests (Brietzke, 1979: 26). Moreover, although the different social groups held a common position regarding the need to change the old regime, the 1960-1965 period was not characterized by a union between the different movements (Haile-Selassie, 1997: 86). The situation was very different from 1965 when the students, more radical and with a greater presence in the streets, began a new phase of protest and, in clear support of the camp, began to use the slogan "Meret Larashu", translated as Land to the Tiller in English (Cowcher, 2018: 48).

2. From lessons to streets. Maturity and radicalism in student protests (1966-1973)

In the second half of the 1960s, Ethiopian students became radicalized and joined the wave of protests already shaking large cities in the United States, Europe, and other African countries. If between 1960-1965 the student protests in Ethiopia were aimed at achieving democratic improvements such as freedom of the press and the legalization of free trade unions, by the end of the decade their demands were more in consonance with Marxist precepts and advocated a socialist reorganization of the system. Everything that had the stamp of the West came to be considered imperialist and colonialist, with a clear rejection of the policies of the United States and its allies. An example of this anti-imperialist stance occurred on March 30, 1968, when several students boycotted a fashion show promoted by the University Women's Club. The students, who attacked the retinue of models, important women of the elite and the wives of the ambassadors with stones and eggs, clamored against Western fashions that "prostituted Ethiopian and African cultures" (Lemma, 1979: 34). In addition, students were increasingly militant and attended demonstrations, many of which turned into violent clashes against the police. The emperor tried to calm the spirits and quell the demonstrations through methods already used, such as the television speeches on the unity of the country (Asserate, 2015).

Despite this, young intellectuals and students were the first to question the legitimization of feudalism and imperial absolutism, which later became a rejection of any system where the monarchy was present, including the constitutional one. Since 1965 the protests in front of Parliament were growing and recurrent, with strong messages against the emperor. In fact, the students distributed pamphlets

attacking his figure openly and defended radical social, economic and political reforms that broke with the established system (Koehn & Hayes, 1978).

But what was the reason for this radicalization? Several authors have referred to the causes that propagated extremism among students. Thus Ottaway (1976: 476) emphasized the socioeconomic factor. Most of the students came from "urban families of traders, clerks, policemen, lower-level government employees - in other words, the Ethiopian petty bourgeoisie. On the other hand, relatively few of these students came from the really wealthy and important families, whose children were likely to be educated abroad. In other words, the student body in Ethiopia, although by no means representative of the population, was less skewed towards the upper classes than one might expect". This was partly because the low number of students allowed the university to cover tuition and basic needs such as accommodation and meals. In addition, obtaining a university degree until the middle of the decade ensured a position in the state administration and, consequently, access to the country's elite.

Nonetheless, the situation changed sharply at the end of the decade. By 1968 the administration was saturated and could no longer absorb the new graduates, which created enormous frustration among the young people. The worsening economic crisis at the end of the decade affected the solvency of the university. Students constantly complained about the deterioration of libraries, laboratories and classrooms, as well as the overcrowding of residences and the deficient supply of food. In addition, the number of students had increased during the decade and the university system had been unable to adapt, aggravating the situation year by year. By 1965 the agglomeration was beating all records, which was associated with the fact that no new infrastructure had been built since the 1950s (Kedebe 2008: 170). Faced with this image of deterioration and economic crisis, the emperor strove to disseminate the virtues of a modern country led by a leader who based his government on progress³.

In addition, other authors such as Kedebe (2008: 13) have highlighted different factors related to the autonomy that existed within the University. Certainly, the students had an unprecedented situation in the reign of Haile Selassie: greater flexibility and openness, giving them ample scope to form associations, discuss the regime openly and publish pamphlets and journals. In the late 1960s, however, freedom of expression and university association was suppressed, setting the students' spirits on fire. However, despite the suppression of rights, the emperor tried to vindicate to the world (and especially to Western countries) the image of a modern and benevolent monarch.

Lemma, on the other hand, highlights the link that is created in the change

³ British Pathé. 13 april 2014. Progress in Ethiopia (1969), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ewJbZjfKBFE>.

of decade between imperialist positions and Marxist-Leninist ideas, favoured by the greater flexibility of the regime towards the university. Students developed a strong anti-feudal position. This character was so intrinsic to the system that it led them to take anti-imperialist positions, especially in relation to international imperialism, which had become a threat to national liberation movements. The radicalization reached such an extreme that, in January 1968, during the visit of U.S. Vice President Hubert Horatio Humphrey, students marched shouting slogans against the Vietnam War, hanging an effigy of President Johnson and carrying anti-U.S. signs. In addition, in 1969 protesters demanded the US Peace Corps (an agreement between Ethiopia and the United States that had filled U.S. teacher colleges) to be expelled with fairly violent means such as throwing stones at Peace Corps headquarters in Addis Ababa and throwing gasoline bombs at the embassy (Lemma, 1979: 38). Parallel to the expansion of anti-imperialist ideology, a heightened interest in Marxism-Leninism evolved. The fact that university professors ignored Marxism-Leninism ended up making it an object of attraction among students, who began to discover it on their own (Kedebé, 2008: 13). Likewise, within the logic of the Cold War, students began to feel comfortable with anti-Americanist postures, totally opposed to capitalism, gradually approaching communist ideology.

The movement further developed its character of solidarity with other sectors, which later affected its ability to converge with other protests. In addition to the well-known empathy towards the peasants and the anti-feudal struggle, the students, as reflected in the "Challenge"⁴ bulletin, mobilised against the so-called "Shola Concentration Camp". This institution was promoted by the government to empty the streets of Addis Ababa of vagrants and marginal sectors, especially in view of the celebration of the founding of the OAU in 1963. Thus, in 1966 some students secretly visited the facilities and, horrified by what they had seen there, made it public. Demonstrations in favour of the closure of the centre were not long in coming and it is estimated that around 2000 people took part in the demonstration.

In the face of massive student protests and continued criticism of the system and especially the crown, the emperor ended up using repression as a weapon to quell the revolts. This only confirmed "the general pattern: in opting for a repressive policy, the imperial government only succeeded in antagonizing students further and pushing them into the hands of radical students. repressive regimes give radical groups audience and attraction and end up propelling them to the leadership of discontented students" (Kedebé, 2008: 179). Thus, it can be said that the protests reached a new high point in 1969 and the government responded with increased repression by using water cannons and baton charges to dissolve the demonstrations. In addition, magazines such as *Tagel* (you must struggle) were

⁴ Ethiopian Students Association in North America (ESANA), *Challenge*, 6 n°1 (August 1966), p.75-77.

banned from publication and the university was temporarily closed. In addition, on December 28, 1969, one of the leaders of the movement, Tilahun Gizaw, was assassinated in the vicinity of the campus. Although this episode was not clarified, the rumor of his assassination at the hands of the imperial police spread rapidly, increasing anti-government protests (Asserate, 2015).

It must also be borne in mind that, by the early 1970s, the student movement was the only well-organized and active social movement that maintained a pulse against the emperor. The New York Times echoed this situation in 1970: "Aside from the student movement, there is no organized political opposition in Ethiopia. Political parties are illegal, and the labor unions are in an embryonic apolitical stage. The students have put land' reform at the top of their list of demands, which include expansion of education, freedom of speech and of demonstration, abolition of the detention act and more social welfare, measures. Their conflicts with the authorities have often resulted in bloodshed and widespread detentions" (Howe, The New York Times, 1970). As a result, they began to see themselves as agents of change, rather than subjects of the emperor. However, the intention of the students was not to extend the protests beyond the boundaries of the university and education in general (Ottaway, 1976: 476). That is to say, it was not planning to generate a revolution as such in which all the people participated. A fact that, on the other hand, would have been very complicated because the majority of the population continued to suffer the consequences of illiteracy. It is evident that, although his slogans went against the emperor, the main objective was to recover good conditions in education and work possibilities that had been disappearing due to the rampant economic crisis. This situation, however, changed in 1974.

It is true that, since the late 1960s, the protests began to leave the University, with high school students joining in. This politicization of the younger students had a lot to do with the norm, imposed by the Ethiopian University Service, whereby university students had to work for a year in the provinces, especially as professors. This fact facilitated the rapid diffusion of the social movement outside the University, increasing awareness among the students of the institutes. Likewise, student agitation was also mixed in the field with anti-feudal and land tenure policies. The immobility of the regime and the lack of social, political and economic reforms convinced the students that the system had to be radically changed. To this end, they defended the constitution of a new regime based on social equality and obviously promoted through Marxism (Adamu & Balsvik, 2018: 268).

3. The role of the students during the 1974 Revolution

It must be mentioned here that throughout this section that the development of the revolution will not be only analysed, but we will also focus on the role played by the students, which is, after all, the ultimate objective of this analysis. The Revolution finally broke out in February 1974. The continuous student

protests, begun in 1960, were joined by different sectors with disparate interests. Although it has traditionally been exposed that the spark that ignited the spirits was the increase in the price of gasoline in February 1974 (Brietzke, 1979: 216) the truth is that the causes have deeper roots.

First, Ethiopia's economic and social situation was already catastrophic before 1974, which materialized in the great famine of 1973. Although the country had already experienced other famine episodes between 1958-1959 when an estimated 100,000 people died, more than two million people were affected in 1973. But, in addition, the government tried to ignore what was happening and in fact kept what was happening hidden from public opinion. Since March of that year, many peasants have moved to the capital to ask for help. However, the demonstrations were repressed, highlighting the government's position on this problem. The students, along with some professors, decided to investigate what was happening in the Wollo region. They returned to the capital with images of what was occurring and began to broadcast them. Three of the teachers who were part of this project were arrested (Lemma, 1979:40). The student movement, with its long history of solidarity, proposed that part of its daily food be distributed among the refugee peasants, to which the administration opposed. In addition, many peasants were expelled from the city and those who managed to stay were relocated to marginal areas, amplifying an existing problem. This treatment of people who asked for something as basic as food was opposed to the banquets that were held in Addis Ababa in June 1973, to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the founding of the OAU⁵. To this terrible event was added unemployment in the cities and the countryside, inflation, the lack of oil and the worsening of the most basic comforts (Keller, 1981: 543).

Evidently, along with the causes of the revolution, we should ask ourselves why such a social explosion did not take place before. Firstly, until 1974 there was no urban or rural mass movement that could illuminate the revolution. It seems evident that once the protests became massive and organized among different sectors with the aim of overthrowing the system, it could not survive (Hiwet, 1984:33). Until then there had been a strong student opposition, but it was not enough to generate a massive mobilization that would put the system against the ropes. Somehow, the policies carried out by the emperor and his Prime Minister ended up constructing different social groups opposed to the instituted order. These groups included peasants, workers, merchants, students and also soldiers (Markakis, 2016: 94). Thus, it seems clear that, in addition to hunger, the economic crisis and widespread instability, other factors such as a cholera epidemic and rising inflation were added, as basic consumer goods such as rice and bread and gasoline doubled in price in just

⁵ Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP). 1974. "Ethiopia: Famine and Revolt" MERIP Reports, 27: 23-25.

three months. Thus on February 18 the streets were already taken by taxi drivers, students, unemployed, urban workers and teachers. The repression suffered by the demonstrators between February 18 and 24, with 20 people killed and 560 arrested, was the straw that broke the camel's back⁶. The emperor was aware of the size of the protests, already turned into revolution, when some military joined the protests a few days later. The loss of military loyalty was a very hard blow to the stability of the regime (Keller, 1981: 544).

By the end of February Haile Selassie was aware that the situation was out of control and that for the first time since 1960 the danger of losing the crown was a reality. The emperor therefore announced a series of reforms and forced Prime Minister Aklilu Habte-Wold to resign, a measure without comparison as he had been in office since 1961. Lij Endelkachew Makonnen took over the post of Prime Minister from that moment onwards and began his mandate with the promise of reforms, including land distribution (Kedebbe, 2008: 8). It is precisely at this point that students became the key to keeping the flame of revolution alive. The promise of new measures to alleviate the bad economic situation, together with democratic reforms such as the creation of a multi-party system, a new constitution and freedom of expression, convinced some sectors to abandon the revolution, especially among taxi drivers, workers and peasants (Brietzke, 1979: 218-219). However, the students were aware that they had become a key part of the revolution and regained their role as agents of change. They were determined to see the end of the monarchy.

In order to do so, they soon pointed out as traitors to the revolution any sector that wanted to withdraw from the protests. Student activism was key to maintaining the revolution during the first weeks of Endalkachew's government. The most radicals saw in his figure an extension of the status quo since he was part of the aristocracy. It was precisely the students who soon demonstrated against the new government with pro-democracy slogans and against the Prime Minister, even burning his effigy on March 11 (Lemma, 1979: 41). By then the students were suspicious of all those who did not support the end of the imperial regime and the revolutionary process they were undergoing. Nor did they trust the growing role that the military was beginning to play since April, when they formed the Coordinating Committee of the Armed Forces, Police and Territorial Army, popularly known as Derg, which began to occupy the political and public space (Darch, 1976:13).

Admittedly, the military began to occupy the public sphere, but also the political arena, and succeeded in leading a revolution that until then had been conducted by civil society. The Derg carried out a series of purges in June, arresting different officers, parliamentarians and even members of the imperial council, the army and government ministers. Finally, Prime Minister Makonnen was deposed with the excuse that his leadership had increased the instability of the country and

⁶ *Ídem.*

was replaced on July 22 by Mikael Imru, a member of an aristocratic family, but with a long socialist reputation (Ottaway, 1976: 479). The revolution ended when Emperor Haile Selassie I was definitively deposed on September 12, 1974 (Balsvik & Ronning, 2018: 270) although protests against the Emperor remained active even after his dismissal⁷.

Conclusions

From this analysis it is not difficult to extract a series of reflections on the evolution of the student movement in the period 1960-1974 and the role played by this social group over almost 15 years. Although this study has maintained the traditional division of the stages through which student protest passed, the truth is that not a few new conclusions have been drawn.

First of all, it is evident that the student social movement followed a logical evolution since its birth in 1960. After the coup d'état that year, the students woke up, demanding democratic changes and greater freedoms, within an imperial framework. From 1965 onwards, the spread of socialist ideology, the economic crisis, the worsening of living conditions and the university, the rise in unemployment and the lack of expectations generated a logical radicalization. From 1965 onwards, students were aware that the lack of reforms was stagnating their possibilities and that Haile Selassie I and the imperial system was ultimately responsible for these problems. Finally, this radicalization reverted to a revolutionary process in 1974. Although this evolution is logical if we compare it with other student movements such as the Spanish student movement against Franco's Regime or the French May protests, the fact is that the Ethiopian student movement had an unusual characteristic: even before its radicalization they supported a coup d'état that sought to dethrone the emperor in 1960.

But were the students really looking to overthrow the imperial system? Or were they looking for the emperor's office to be replaced by someone willing to carry out democratic reforms? It is evident that in 1960 neither the military who carried out the coup, nor the students, had foreseen the end of an imperial regime. This was visible in the election of Prince Asfa-Wasan who had the aim of legitimizing the coup, but also of keeping the royal family in power. Equally, the euphoria of the moment may well have led the student movement to support the military attempt, without stopping to think beforehand what they were endorsing. As we have already seen, the military never spoke of democracy, nor of parties, nor of freedom of expression.

In addition to evolution, the student movement played a key role in social awareness. Although it had its limits, especially if we think that the majority of the

⁷ Associated Press Archive. 19 September 1974. "Student demos against Haile Selassie continues", <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L9tcnRIJWul>.

population was illiterate and forms of communication were very limited, they managed to reach different social groups such as peasants, urban workers, secondary school students or their own teachers, for instance. This was undoubtedly due to their intersectional character, supporting demands from other social movements such as the reform of peasants' land with the slogan "Land to the Tiller" that we have already mentioned or their enormous solidarity with disadvantaged groups such as the prisoners in the "Shola Concentration Camp". In a way, these links were generating a space of protest and camaraderie that facilitated the social outburst in 1974.

Students also assumed their role as agents of change from 1965, which enhanced their ability to lead the protests against Haile Selassie and made visible the need to transform the established system, gradually spreading to other sectors. However, it cannot be said that the students started the revolution of 1974, nor that they played a leading role in it. In fact, they were the first to be surprised by the social outburst. With the analyzed data, it is evident that the revolutionary process was initiated by the hand of the taxi drivers due to the rise of gasoline. It did not take long for all the social movements against Haile Selassie I and the corrupt system he headed to join in. However, the student movement was key to maintaining the flame of the revolution from February 28 onwards when the first governmental change took place in almost 15 years with the election of Makonnen as the new Prime Minister. Despite the promised reforms, the students were clear that their goal was none other than to overthrow a system that had been making promises for more than a decade that never materialized. The rejection of the new Prime Minister ended up spreading among other social sectors, including those who, with the announcement of new reforms, were determined to abandon the revolution.

Therefore, we can affirm two facts. Firstly, that the Ethiopian student movement had an unusual origin, when it began to organise itself after a coup d'état that they themselves supported. And, secondly, that its solidarity and intersectional character and its continuous opposition to the emperor Haile Selassie, generated a space of confluence with other social movements and other sectors that allowed a social outburst as never before seen in the history of Ethiopia. However, it should be noted that the students did not lead the revolution, but rather became the last piece of a puzzle that once completed, germinated and promoted the 1974 Revolution.

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THE INSTITUTION OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR) BASED ON COAL MINING COMPANIES STAKEHOLDER

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Abstract: *In Indonesia, stakeholders have not been significantly used as the basis for CSR institutional development, especially in coal mining companies which mostly related to environmental problems and felt by the surrounding communities. This study aims to formulate the form of CSR institutions based on stakeholders of coal mining companies. Formulation refers to the results of the analysis: stakeholder views on CSR, and concerning normative, cultural-cognitive, regulations, and CSR organizations. The research were data collection in 2016 and 2018 through interviews and observations with a triangulation validation test. The data sources are key CSR forum members and six of stakeholder groups. The analysis results for the CSR institutions consist of the normative pillar, there are CSR partnerships, state compliance, and CSR as community rights as well as the cultural cognitive pillars, there are the reputation and glory of CSR. On the regulative pillar, there are regional regulations concerning CSR. The formulation of CSR institutions includes CSR partnerships, as normative pillars; the reputation and glory of CSR as a cultural cognitive pillar; and regulators, supervision, awards, and sanctions as a CSR regulative pillar. The pillars are the basic principles of CSR, the vision of CSR, CSR organizations in the form of CSR Research and Development Organizations.*

Key words: *CSR; Institutional; Companies; Mining; Stakeholder.*

Introduction

Indonesia has one of the largest natural resources, namely coal mining, which must be utilized for the people's welfare (Prasetyo, 2016:24; Rinaldi, 2017:12). However, on the one hand, the management of natural resources has not been full for the people's welfare. On the other hand, there have been gaps between interests, profits of mining companies with the need to improve the welfare of local communities, environmental damage, damage to water and forest resources (Eko, 2013:257; Kitula, 2006:407; Abood, et al., 2015:59; Pandey et al., 2016:372). Companies, therefore, as part of society and the environment must realize that the success achieved is influenced by the community and the environment around the company. Companies are required to carry out an action that cares more about the community and the environment in the form of Corporate Social Responsibility (Subhan, 2017:49; Nelly, 2001:15).

CSR in the last decade has increasingly increased as a priority and the development of CSR is needed according to the weaknesses found (Manjula, et al., 2014:3; Visser, 2010:107). On one side the CSR institutions of developing countries still have weaknesses institutional (Mohan, 2010:132; Welker, 2009:151). On the other side, in the case of Indonesia stakeholders have not significantly used as the basis for the development of CSR institutions, especially coal mining companies that are mostly related to environmental issues (Yang, 2009:159). The company must maintain its relationship with stakeholders by accommodating the desires and needs of its stakeholders, especially stakeholders who have power over the availability of resources used for the company's operational activities (Arenas, et al., 2009:178).

Based on the above arguments, this research explores the stakeholder views of coal mining companies regarding CSR institutions. Coal mining is mainly related to environmental impacts. The final goal of this research is to form of corporate CSR institutions based on stakeholders of coal mining companies in Tapin Regency, as one of the districts in Indonesia that has great potential for coal mining as the main mining commodity. Tapin Regency has a production capacity in 2017 of 518,210,075. m3, which has been mined by 29 coal mining companies spread across 6 sub-district locations.

1. Literature Review

1.1. Institutional CSR

Institutions according to Scott (2014:56) and Djelic (2005:26) have various dimensions ranging from restraining social structures, symbolic elements, social activities, resources, social stability lands, and makers of various social meanings. All dimensions are in the circle of normative, cognitive-cultural, and regulative movements as the institutional core that guides social behavior interactions.

According to Scott (2014:57), definition normative is a basic adherence to individuals and groups in carrying out social obligations as well as a basis for binding social stability, and cognitive cultural understanding is the meaning that is mutually understood between individuals or groups in an institution that runs by imitating each other's meaning so that the existence of trust together that makes sense in an action. While the understanding of regulative is a basic adherence by individuals and groups to obtain social benefits and benefits derived from the existence of regulations and at the same time as a basis for social order (Jackson, 2010:65).

In this study, CSR is the existence of corporate resource use activities based on legal, economic, ethical, and philanthropic aspects above that have relationships with stakeholders to contribute to the welfare of the community and are oriented to environmental sustainability.(Dahlsrud, 2008; Caroll, 1991:2009; Muhle, 2010; Brown, 2012). Therefore, the CSR institution is the whole existence of CSR normative, CSR regulations and cognitive-cultural CSR related to the form of organizing CSR.

1.2. Stakeholder

Basically, stakeholders are those who receive impact and or impacted by an organization's decisions and actions. Therefore, the impact of the decision allows for stakeholders to be engaged, which consequently impacts the success and failure of the organization (Jones, 2010:72). The stakeholders, besides primary, also secondary such as some communities, NGOs, and regulators that grant legitimacy to corporate activity (Crilly, 2011:523). Diego et al., (2012:197) introduced stakeholders in mining companies consisting of categories, namely: Government, civil society groups, the mining industry, international financial organizations, and the headquarters of mining companies in developing countries.

In this study, we will explore the relationship of CSR organizations as decision makers and activities with CSR stakeholders as receiving impacts and/or can influence CSR organizations. According to several studies that, stakeholder CSR relationships, in accordance with their respective roles, can be as suppressors of interests, giving moral and regulatory legitimacy as well as scientific justification (Basu, 2008:127; Yang, 2009:156; Bakanauskiene, et al.,2016; Hirschland, 2006:6)

2. Method

This descriptive qualitative study has used a type of case study that has not controlled the object of research and focused on explaining the current situation by digging data and analyzing it that is relevant to the formulation of research problems (Hancock, 2017:16).

This research was conducted in three stages, namely: three months of preliminary research in 2015 forwarded actual research in June 2018 and January 2019 in Tapin Regency, South Kalimantan province. Primary data at the initial stage using a questionnaire were obtained from informants. The second stage through observation and in-depth interviews were obtained from four community groups, three from local government officials, three from the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD), one of the mass media, two from academics, two from NGO and two managers of CSR forum representing six of coal mining companies. Reliability and data validation is done by the source and data triangulation method (Miles, 2009:241).

3. Finding and Result

3.1. Realization and Views of Stakeholders on the CSR Program

The CSR programs must be directed at efforts to resolve the problems and needs of the surrounding community for the long-term interest (Brammer, et al. 2012:61). The CSR forum for coal mining companies consists of CSR managers as five of representing coal mining companies. The main tasks of the CSR forum are: (a) Addressing the problems of the relationship between each company and the

community and making a CSR program agreement; (b) Respond to the policies of the Tapin District Government as well as proposed activities from the community related to CSR. (c) Creating and implementing joint activities for improving CSR management.

The following are data on the implementation of the profile of CSR programs for coal mining companies in Tapin Regency which cover five fields of education, health, socioeconomic, religious and environmental fields as in table 1.

Table 1: The profile of CSR programs in 2017

Fields (Objectives of Strategies)	Programs
Education (Providing assistance to increase resources to the community)	Scholarship assistance for outstanding students and poor students
Education (Improve the positive image of the Company)	Provide opportunities for students to practice work at coal mining companies.
Social economy (maintenance activities, a large number of non-skilled workers are needed that cannot be met internally).	Organizing short education for graduates of High School Skills regarding operation & maintenance of manufacture.
Religious (improve the company's positive image aimed at the religious community)	Provide (a) finance of hajj to religious leaders; (b) financial assistance and/or material for the construction of places of worship.
Environment Conservation (to overcome impacts arising from mining operations so as not to damage the environment)	Selection and installation of environmentally friendly waste processing equipment.
Environment conservation (Greening around the company's area)	Providing assistance to horticultural plant seeds for the community
Health (improve the quality of life of people around the company's area)	Clean water program in the location of Pulau Pinang Village with the Water Treatment Process program for the needs of 195 households

Understanding the vision of CSR is an important part of knowing CSR orientation. The perspective of the Regional Government and DPRD that, the vision of CSR carries out the obligation of the company to provide funds that can be used by regional development programs according to the policies of the Regional Government.

The perspective of non-local government stakeholders (community groups, NGOs, mass media, and academics) views the vision of CSR, the company's obligation to empower the use of company resources to overcome the problems of communities around coal mining locations through community empowerment. The data shows, the disparity of stakeholders in the CSR vision.

3.2. Institutional Reality of CSR

3.2.1. The Normative pillar

The views of the corporate CSR forum are based on partnership norms that contain the value of togetherness by empowering corporate resources for community welfare and environmental conservation. Local Government stakeholder views that CSR is a state norm that places the community as recipients of CSR programs. The non-governmental stakeholder view that CSR is a community rights norm.

3.2.2. The Cultural-cognitive pillar

According to the government stakeholders that cultural-cognitive CSR is the belief in the glory of CSR with rationality that carrying out state orders as obedience will get recognition from the state. For non-government stakeholders that cultural-cognitive CSR is also the glory of CSR. However, by the rationality that the company fulfills the rights of the people will gain the legitimacy of the good of the community. The CSR Forum believes that the company will gain a reputation from the state and society.

3.2.3. The Regulative pillar

Regulative of the Tapin District Government on CSR that contains the organization of Tapin Regency's Corporate Social Responsibility Work Team (CSR Team) in accordance with the Tapin Regent Decree Number: 188.45 / 009 / KUM / 2018 concerning the CSR Team with the main tasks: assisting the Regent of Tapin in organizing CSR in Tapin Regency; (b) to identify the needs of development programs and public services to be synchronized with CSR programs in Tapin Regency; (c) accommodating business initiatives about the proposed CSR program in Tapin Regency and (d) carrying out monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the CSR Program in Tapin regency. In practice, the CSR work team has not been effective in carrying out their duties. This is because there are no organizational sub-units to carry out the main tasks of the CSR Work Team. Another reason is that the CSR Work Team has difficulty coordinating with the company. The difficulty is caused by the management viewpoint of the CSR forum that, the CSR Team's policy on CSR programs has different targets for CSR areas and target community groups, so the targets are also different in achieving community harmony with coal mining companies.

3.3. The form of formulating CSR institutions based on stakeholders

Formulation of the form of CSR institutions is based on stakeholder studies of coal mining companies and the CSR forum of coal mining companies in Tapin Regency can be described as follows:

1. Stakeholders can become the institutional basis of CSR through pillars: (a) CSR norms: The good value of CSR partnerships; (b) Cultural-cognitive CSR: Rational

belief, a reputation, and glory of CSR; (c) Regulative CSR includes Regional Governments as regulators, supervisors, awards, and sanctions on CSR.

2. Management of CSR with institutional forms, namely: CSR Research and Development Agency with a description as follows:

1) Name of institution: "Research and Development Agency for CSR (Badan Penelitian & Pengembangan CSR – BPP CSR).

2) CSR principle

The principle of CSR institutions in Tapin Regency namely: Legal certainty; Public benefits; Togetherness; Openness; Partnership; Balance; Harmony; Integrity; Justice; Agreement; Sustainability; and Environmental insight.

3) CSR Vision

The CSR vision framework is: "Ignition of Community Empowerment, Environmental Conservation, and Reputation of CSR in Tapin Regency".

4) CSR mission

Achieving the vision will be pursued with a mission framework, namely: (a) Establishing harmonious relationships between CSR stakeholders; (b) Coordinating participation and synergizing government programs and corporate CSR programs; (c) Monitoring and evaluating the implementation of CSR programs; (d) Conduct research and development of CSR programs.

5) The main tasks of the BPP CSR are: (a) Provide input to the Regional Head of Tapin Regency (Regent) for CSR program policies and strategies; (b) Conduct mapping of target beneficiary areas in CSR programs and socializing to stakeholders; (c) Communication and consultation, coordination between stakeholders and companies related to planning, implementing and monitoring evaluation of CSR activities. (d) Monitor and evaluate the implementation of the company's CSR program; (e) Conducting research and development of CSR programs on an ongoing basis; (f) Provide recommendations to the Regional Head of Tapin Regency (Regent) regarding reputation and sanction awards according to the latest results of monitoring and evaluation.

6) The scope of the BPP CSR program: Health; Education; Social religion; Social Economy; and Environment.

7) The organizational structure of the BPP CSR.

The organizational structure consists of units: (a) Steering Committee and responsible person (Chair and Deputy Chairperson); (b) Executive Committee (Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Secretary); (c) Divisions: program planning; monitoring and supervision; research & development of CSR programs; operational.

8) The BPP CSR Board: (a) Steering Committee and Responsible Agency: Head of Regional Government of Tapin Regency; (b) Executive Committee: The leaders of the Regional Government Unit, Head of companies, Elements of

Higher Education, NGO elements; elements of social religious organizations, elements of company workers, and elements of the mass media; (c) Part of supporting organs:

Based on the description of formulating the institutional CSR based on coal mining stakeholder, it can be described as shown in figure 1.

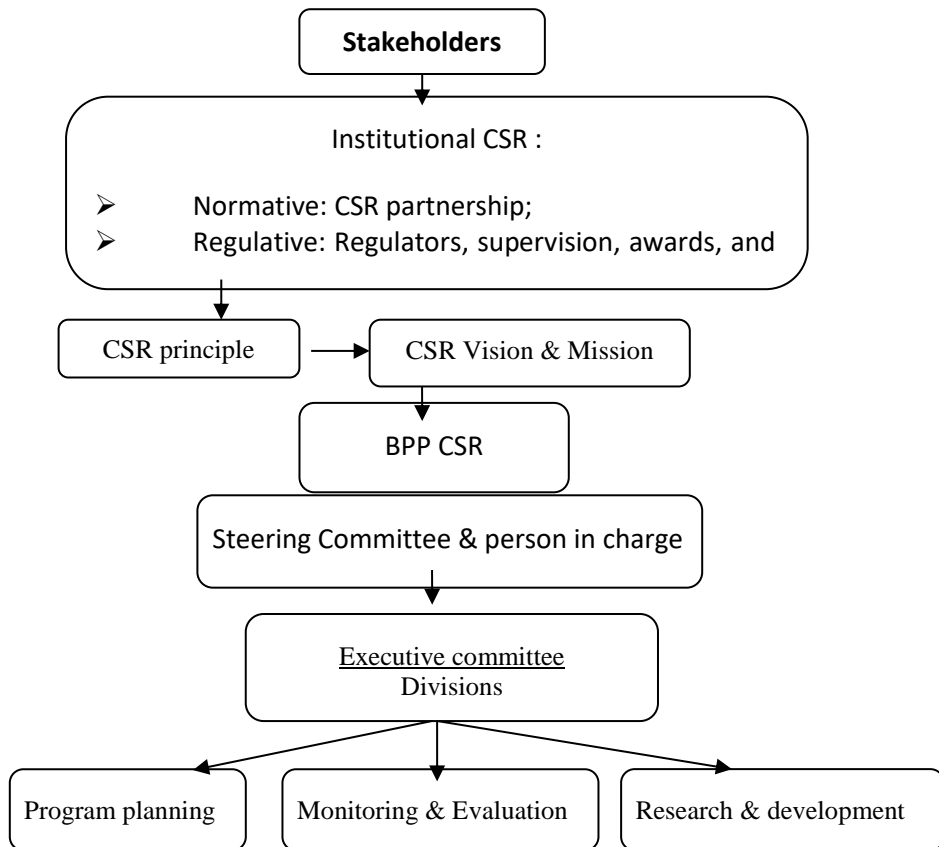


Fig. 1. The form of the institution of CSR based on coal mining companies stakeholder

Conclusion

Based on the description of the analysis above, it can be concluded that the existence of stakeholders view of coal mining companies in the Tapin Regency region towards the vision of CSR experiences a disparity of orientation between the perspective of CSR as a source of regional development funds and CSR as the company's obligation for community welfare. Likewise, on the pillars of CSR institutions that the pillars of CSR norms, on the one hand as partnership norms and the other side as state norms and as community rights norms. In the cultural-cognitive pillar that there are a reputation and glory of CSR with recognition of the

good that comes from the state and society. On the regulative pillar, there are regional regulations on CSR. All data findings have provided a basis for formulating of form CSR institutions based on coal mining companies stakeholder. The form of CSR institutions in Tapin Regency is (a) CSR partnership as a normative pillar; (b) The reputation and glory of CSR as a cultural-cognitive pillar and (c) regulators, supervision and awards and sanctions for CSR as the regulative pillar. All these pillars can form the principle, vision and mission of CSR and organizations CSR in the form of CSR Research and Development Agency.

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REMEMBERING FORSELF-PORTRAYAL. FROM POSTMODERN ABSENCE OF CANON TO GENRE AMBIVALENCE AND DECLINE

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Abstract: *The phenomenon of self-portrayal resulting from accumulations and developments during the Italian Renaissance period is under discussion in this text through the optics of Postmodernity. Changes that have occurred with the progress of technique in mirror positioning - auxiliary equipment in self-portrayal – have led to a radical change in the ways of creating and perceiving of self-portrait. Conditionally transmitted in self-portrayal, the "Casimir Effect" helps to understand the notion of self-portrayal decline. Postmodern self-portrayal represents not only the creator but paradoxically it includes the viewer within itself too, in a more general sense, its potential audience as well in one with the events in which it is encompassed as a phenomenon.*

Key words: *self-portrayal; myth; nfinity; Casimir effect; postmodernity.*

When an artist, after determining his individuality, conspiratorially decides to resist anonymity, the family tree of portraiture divaricates. From today's point of view, self-portrayal, which, as a conscious and autonomous artistic practice, we associate with the Italian Renaissance, arises subversively and secretly.¹ In its deconspiracy, besides Vasari², we also refer to a helpful, often telltale mediator.

¹ *Examples include: Masaccio's self-portrait in "Raising the Son of Theophilus"; self-portraits of Botticelli, Pinturicchio, Perugino and Cosimo Rosselli (in the Sistine Chapel); Philippine Lippi (Brancacci Chapel); Cosimo Rosselli (Sant' Ambrogio, Florence), Melozzo da Forli or Marco Palmezzano ("The Entry into Jerusalem", Loreto); Self-portraits in altar paintings: Mantegna ("Presentation at the Temple", 1545, Berlin), Ghirlandaio ("Adoration of the Magi", 1488), Perugino ("Adoration of the Magi", approx. 1476); Self-portraits "hidden" behind sacred characters: Taddeo di Bartolo (in the image of Thaddeus the Apostle); Andrea del Castagno (in the image of St. Luke the Evangelist, San Tarasio Chapel, Venice, 1442); Mantegna portrays himself in the form of a giant sculptural head (Ovetari Chapel, Padua).*

² *Giorgio Vasari (July 30th, 1511 - June 27th, 1574) is an Italian painter, architect, writer and historian. He remains in history as a writer because of his remarkable "The Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors and Architects" - a three-part biography book devoted to the life and work of Italian Renaissance artists. The book was published in 1550. Vasari was the first to use the term "Renaissance" (rinascita) in printed text. In 1568 he rewrites and expands "The Lives..."; includes a treatise on the technical methods used in the arts and adds engraved portraits of artists.*

Mirror helps the artist to see and build the desired vision of his own image. Through it he carries this image into a drawing with an attached starvation in the eye and a strangely reinforced asymmetry. Collectively considered, as a running action in the flow of time, self-portrayal reminds us of the myth of Narcissus, unlocking the urge for it sown doom and ending. In this sense self-portrait can be interpreted as a result of a meeting between two mirror surfaces – the eyes of the artist and the mirror as an object. A hedonistic and beautiful hypothesis remarkably reminiscent of the Buddhist postulate about the two mirrors, creating *infinity* even when there is nothing between them, as long as they are located one against the other.

The creation of art, and in particular of self-portrait, in the present time we belong to, happens in conditions of postmodern absence of rules. The negative attitude towards established canons is a distinctive feature of postmodern theories and practices (Lyotard, 1996, p.8). Since the end of the fifteenth century, when in the multiple artistic centers of Italy the uniform typology of portrait is worked out, over a sufficient amount of time distance, the inspirational poetic portraiture is gradually sacrificed, at the expense of the universal questioning of postulates and norms. "If we simplify things to the extreme, we can assume that "postmodern" is mistrust in meta-histories." – says Lyotard in the introduction to "The Postmodern Condition", and adds: "This mistrust is a consequence of the progress of sciences; and progress implies it in turn." (Ibidem). The disintegration of "big stories", which coincided with the collapse of authorities, according to Lyotard's findings, is replaced by "little stories", while pleasure and enjoyment become the highest value and purpose of culture.

In the introductory paragraph, we refer to the word *self-portrait*, along with the notions of *myth* and *infinity*, rationalized as metaphors. With the use of these intellectual figures, we aim to activate both the idea of creation and the hypothesis of the end of self-portrayal. Is the common use of myth and infinity with regard to self-portraiture – a phenomenon that has appeared on the artistic scene since the Renaissance – appropriate? Part of the answer to the question, which includes an explanation of the notion of myth, we can find in Levi-Strauss³. According to him, "myth always refers to events in the past ... But the meaning of myth is that these events occurring at a certain point in time ... exist beyond it. The myth explains both the past and the present but it explains the future too" (Levi-Strauss, 1996). The French anthropologist associates myth with an imaginary type of "time-consuming" technology that reminds us of Kronos⁴ in turn, the god - the personification of time that leads to death.

³ Claude Levy-Strauss is the son of a portrait artist.

⁴ From Ancient Greek: Χρόνος - Time

The second concept, infinity⁵, which we have already metaphorically and daringly "pushed" in this text between the mirror-eye and the mirror-object, is a non-definable philosophical abstraction. In an attempt to justify the mirrored Zen metaphor with which we made an analogy to self-portrayal, in post-modernity times - "a consequence of the progress of sciences", we come to the startling hypothesis of power, generating from nothingness. It is introduced for the first time by the Danish physicist-theorist Hendrik Casimir in 1948. The Casimir effect postulates that gravitation⁶ brings toward one another two parallel mirrors placed in a vacuum. If we provisionally relate this "gravitation" between the mirrors to self-portrayal, we can activate a hypothetical model by which to distinguish the stages through which the transformation of the mirror-object, drawn by mutual attraction with the mirror-eye, passes. As everyday users or consumers⁷ we are already dependent on some of stages specific features of technology and devices that integrate into themselves modified mirror variants. Moreover, as participants and/or witnesses from a near distance of acceleration in the processes of convergence between physical and physiological mirror, self-portrait artists are overtaken by an unforeseen risk - falling into cognitive dissonance⁸; the state of collision in their consciousness between aesthetic norms, knowledge, belief, attitude, or creed with contradicting visual information flowing without a disruption from the dynamized environment which blocks their ability for identical cognitive perception. Then comes a phase in which artistic intuitions do not work, and the psychological arrow of time⁹ is unbalanced. When the Renaissance artist successively shifts his gaze from the mirror to the board

⁵ *In modern science, physics avoids the use of the term "infinity", and in certain cases it is replaced by the condition "without any boundaries."*

⁶ *"What will happen if you put two parallel mirrors opposite one another in a vacuum? Your first reaction is likely to be - "nothing." In fact, however, the two mirrors will attract one another simply because of the vacuum between them. This startling phenomenon was first foretold by the Danish physicist-theorist Hendrik Casimir in 1948, and nowadays carries the name of Casimir effect, and the corresponding force between the mirrors is known as the Casimir force", Astrid Lambrecht, a summary to: "Casimir Effect - Power from Nothing ", Physics World, Vol. 15, No. 9, 2002*

⁷ *Celebrities' posts at Instagram often collect millions of "likes" and tens of thousands of comments, by turning the cameras towards themselves to demonstrate their faces and bodies, as well as their own self-perception.*

⁸ *The term is introduced by Leon Festinger in 1956 in the book "When the Prophecy Fails". It describes a situation in which the individual is more inclined to "adapt" reality to his belief than to accept new facts that contradict them.*

⁹ *In his book "A Brief History of Time. From the Big Bang to the Black Holes" Stephen Hawking analyzes the arrows of time by summarizing them up like this: "But there are at least three arrows of time that distinguish the past from the future. These are: the thermodynamic arrow, the direction of time in which chaos is growing; the psychological arrow - the direction of time in which we remember the past, but not the future; and the cosmological arrow - the direction of time in which the universe expands and does not shrink. "*

and vice versa in order to observe and gradually achieve the desired and /or the perceived self-image into a self-portrait, then all the events, the stages of self-portrayal, follow the natural direction of time. With the technical devices, this sequence is destroyed. Although the direction in which we feel that time is flowing, suggests that we will remember the past, but not the future, the mirror-reflected moment that appears subversively (with the help of devices) in self-portrayal, creates a meta-feeling that separate events from the future are settled in the past in a destructive pursuit of incitement a paired self-image. Self-portrayal can be seen as a happening - a result of a subjective state of mind or a situation in which the artist and subsequently the viewer too at the same time experience conflicting feelings. In postmodernity, the Casimir effect is formally transferred in self-portrayal in a paradoxical way – through a predetermined legitimacy it presents the image of each of the two merged mirror-opposites. This is a presentation that resulted in meaningful incompatibility. If, in the Renaissance, self-portrait is a branching out of the trunk of the portrait genre, it becomes, in time, its ambivalent double; self-portrait ceases to present only its creator, it incorporates the viewer too and, in a more general sense, its potential audience together with the events in which it fits in as a phenomenon. Through this meme Casimir effect which we described, after "passing" through postmodernity, self-portrait from a relative of the portrait, in its final phase it fluctuates¹⁰ freely in the visual field of art. The accompanying this "passing" genre fluctuations and emancipation are only indicators in the anamnesis that harbingered the risk of extinction.

We find logical the relation compatibility - incompatibility between the characteristics of postmodernism and those of self-portrayal phenomenon to reveal its complete and correct diagnosis. Therefore, theoretically the assumption that self-portrayal is in decline, requires that we consider the practices of its creation in the light of peculiarities and the signs of postmodern time, i.e. to give an anamnesis¹¹. It

¹⁰ *Fluctuation (from Latin: fluctuare – variation, wavering) is a random deviation from the average (usually equilibrium) significance of physical magnitudes characterizing a system of large numbers of particles. In physics, fluctuation susem at hematical apparatus related to variations or dispersion of random quantities. Fluctuations are caused by quantum-mechanical effects and are generally indelible. Fuctuations can be mentioned also when we speak of temperature sover a prolonged period of time. The quantum field the or yproves that, inaccordance with the principle of uncertainty in the physical vacuum, virtual "particles" (separate energy) with opposing spins are constantly born and disappear, which cause the so called zero fluctuationin the field. Spontaneous wave emission is part of the list of known effects attributed to these zero fluctuations. This jitter effect with spontaneous waves of energy is called vacuum fluctuations and is a deviation from the state of rest. This rest in the vacuum is a probabilistic informational potential or, in other words, mentality at rest (cogitality - from lat. Cogito - think).*

¹¹ *Anamnesis, case history, or medical history (from Greek: αναμνησις – "recollection", "remembrance") is a medical term used to denote detailed and consistent receipt of information from the patient or his or her relatives about the nature of the disease.*

is also possible this remembering to be a commemorating of a residual image with no recognizable content, but when looked at from the horizon of hypermodernity¹² it reminds us of retrospection with a postmodern key.

The above-mentioned absence of canon in art, as a distinctive feature of postmodernity, is expressed both in the eclecticism and diversity of artistic languages and styles, as well as in intertextuality, manifested in citation and parody. The irony and kitsch thrive in conditions of overproduction of art made possible by technical progress and new technologies. The main aesthetic binary oppositions loose importance, high and mass art merge, and the relation between designated and meaningful (sign) is a matter of agreement. This insight is significant in the field of art because it questions the modernist and romantic understanding of the uniqueness and originality of art created by the artist as an individual act. The loss of national identity is only a link to the compromised idea of authorship (Foucault, 2016). Adding to the interactivity and gaming essence of art, as well as the pursuit of an entertaining and diverting character, we understand that irreversible things happened in the sphere of art. How do they relate to self-portrayal and is it, as a phenomenon, able to prophylactically protect its manifestation (the self-portrait) from dementia¹³ and collapse?

One way to approach the answer is to trace the process of self-portrayal, in our intriguing time, through the look of an "inner man." Without hesitation, we choose Andy Warhol as an "informant", a leading representative of pop art, popular with applicable to the current self-portrayal insight, that "in the future everyone will be world-famous for 15 minutes." He created multiple, based of photography¹⁴, series of self-portraits using screen printing technique. Through them, Warhol gives us, kind of, his own look of "a dedicated" to his personal world man, and more generally to the world of his contemporaries - artists. At the Museum of Andy Warhol in Pittsburgh, from samples of photos from his early youth period, which can be seen as the forerunner of contemporary "selfie", to the dramatic self-portraits-serigraphy, created in the last year of the life of the "king of pop art" are preserved. Through the changing images we can observe the cultural fixations of the artist but we can also trace their relevance to the reflections of the above-mentioned distinctive features of postmodernity in art. Experimenting with his own image, Warhol bequeathed us self-portraits-syntagmas, distinct semantic units-markers of what is happening with self-portrayal in an artistic time devoid of canons. The serigraphs-self-portraits of

¹² *Definition of the new situation from the beginning of the 21st century, introduced by the French philosopher Gilles Lipovetsky. In 2004, in co-authorship with Canadian philosopher Sebastian Charles he published "Hypermodern Times," a book dedicated to time-diagnosing issues.*

¹³ *Dementia is a syndrome characterized by multiple disturbances of cognitive functions, without affecting consciousness.*

¹⁴ *For his screen printed works, Warhol takes pictures with an early model of Polaroid, maintained in production for him specifically*

Warhol, which create different and context-specific meanings, sublime¹⁵ in the series of self-portraits dating back to 1986, completed only months before his death. One of the last created – a self-portrait with a distorted face and hair stranded in all directions, passes through the silk of the sieve, not only his late vision of himself, but his premonition of death too. In our view, Warhol's later self-portraits are an act of para-theatricality¹⁶ too, only subconsciously switched to a regime of a protective mechanism. Self-portraits - a fading echo of the phrase "canon is death" - the doctrine of postmodernity.

A six centuries-old solitaire – a myth planted in the Renaissance garden of portrait, the self-portraiture fades away into the fuzzy boundaries between audience and the work in postmodernity. Will there be room for it in the jungle which burst out of chaos of dynamic contexts in the art of hypermodernity¹⁷? In his autobiographical book "Tristes Tropiques" (1955), Levi-Strauss combines anthropology, travel memories, and philosophical reflections on the relationship between cultures and nature and, more generally, on humanity and humanism. Doesn't the answer to the question raised by us lie in the paraphrase of one of his pessimistic conclusions: "The world began without a man and it will end without him"¹⁸?

¹⁵ *Sublimation is a physical process in which solids pass directly into vapors. The solids pass into vapors without melting. By cooling the vapors, the final product is produced, a material in solid state again. There is a concept in psychology introduced by Friedrich Nietzsche, which was used to interpret the spirit as a reflection of libido. Sometimes it is considered a type of defense mechanism.*

¹⁶ *Polish director Jerzy Grotowski crosses the boundaries of theater and moves on to para-theatrical experiments devoted to the study of "active culture," in which there is no separation between the artist-performer and the consumer of culture, and the discovery of "the poet" in everyone who renounces the convenience of conventions, and wishes to participate in a joint creative act.*

¹⁷ Gilles Lipovetsky. In 2004, in co-authorship with Canadian philosopher Sebastien Charles published "Hypermodern Times"

¹⁸ Vyara Popova, in her new book on photography (East-West, 2018), interprets Paul Virilio's interests in technology and art. Her conclusions, in our view, can also be attributed to self-portrayal: "According to dromologic revolution of modern technology, once the space is annihilated, remains only the dimension of the eternal *now*. This is a virtual "eternal now" - like the actual God's eternity. A screen (virtual such - considering the computer screen) *eternal now* which remains completely indifferent. Since there is no past to which one might relate to, there is only a collection of databases. Therefore, if there is no past, there is no memory too; its lack, however, undermines self-identification. But the future is also reflected from the horizon through a *duration* that is constantly here and now. Since there is no future, there is no projection on the horizon of time. Thus, the timelessness of the real becomes a jail for the Ios, bombarded with images. ... Visual contamination of consciousness produces dizziness and vertigo, which vertigo escalates, supplemented by a lack of physical space experience. This obsession provokes hallucination: the difference between the real and the

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imaginary cracks. Dominant visual illusory also leads to a sense of unreality - as is the case with the denial of bodily incarnation."

THE GEOPOLITICS OF REPRESENTATIONS: DEFINING IS RULING STUDY CASE: SOME OF A NATION'S MAIN LINES OF REPRESENTATION ABROAD – ANTON GOLOPENȚIA

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Abstract: *What if considering culture, the fifth theater of strategic operations? - the fourth being the cyberspace, alongside with air, ground and sea traditional theatres of operations. The fifth theatre of operations is, more precisely, about controlling/defending/targeting the cultural space of a society, the DEFSPACE. This is the realm of the Geopolitics of Representations, the distribution of culturally vectorized power over a certain geography. Some of the invoked theories are Lacoste/Gourdin' Geopolitics of Representations, Goffman's stigma, Buzan's societal security, Putnam's social capital. In the end Anton Golopenția's revolutionary theory of state cohesion will be briefly resurfaced. The short schema of "defining is ruling" is the following: any state is glued around to a certain idea – the "idea of state" where its culturally defined DNA of legitimacy is stored. This glue effect is manifesting itself through the processes of bonding and bridging, the stronger they are, a stronger social capital a country has. The stronger the social cohesion (social capital) the better it is the national security status. One of the main inhibitors of bridging and bonding is stigmatizing, the process of debasing the collective self-esteem by manipulating certain definitions at the macro-cultural level, in particular. Anton Golopenția's approach towards building the idea of state at the spiritual level is of particular interest, since he writes down in very close detail the main axis of representing the idea of state.*

Key words: *geopolitics; culture; symbols; national security.*

1. The Premises

Anton Golopenția, one of the founding fathers of Romanian Geopolitics, stated after his German professors (Hans Freyer, 1933 apud Golopenția, 2002: 13) that "ruling is planning", or, I would say, defining is ruling. Given the legitimacy of state based on its social function as protector of the public interest, I propose the

following basic operationalization of “defining is ruling”, as premise for further discussion on the subject matter:

1st: protecting/targeting citizens means defending/attacking their national identity, too (Smith).

2nd: the national identity is at the core of the legitimacy/idea of state (Buzan/Smith).

3rd: protecting/targeting a society and its citizens is also about the definitions of which the relational structure of society, its (national) identity are made of.

The First and the Second premises are in the general line of argument specified by Anthony Smith. Smith states very clearly that *there is no legitimacy of power without serving the nation*:

In the nowadays context of globalization “... nations and nationalisms are necessary, if unpalatable, instruments for controlling the destructive effects of massive social change; they provide the only large-scale and powerful communities and belief-systems that can secure a minimum of social cohesion, order and meaning in a disruptive and alienating world. Moreover, **they are the only popular forces that can legitimate and make sense of the activities of that most powerful modern agent of social transformation, the rational state.** (A. Smith, 2007: 4, underlines added)

The Third premise is about the main logic of the Geopolitics of Representations which is discussed further on. It is about its practical (political and strategical), theoretical justification, and its object of analysis: about the ideas that shape power over a certain territory. In the same time, the Third Premise points at the weakest point of defense during peacetime: the collective identity, specifically, *national identity*. Since the collective identity is the framework of social relationships, including individuals and the state, we may say with Anthony Smith: “Today national identity is the main form of collective identification. Whatever the feelings of individuals, it provides the dominant criterion of culture and identity, the sole principle of government and the chief focus of social and economic activity.” (Smith, 1991: 170)

I will unfold the premises in the Argument below.

2. The theoretical framework

The Geopolitics of Representations is about the power of defining space. As Yves Lacoste (in Gourdin, 2016) stated about the power of ideas which are able to shape territories:

“In order to understand a conflict or a geopolitical rivalry, there is not enough to chart its game, but its rationale, the ideas of its main actors, especially when it has complex causes, each of these having an impact on the spiritual realm it represents. In Geopolitics, the role of ideas – even of the fake ones – is huge, for they

explain, alongside with the material items, the strategic choices. This kind of ideas we will call *representations*...”¹

Close enough, Barry Buzan was demonstrating that the “idea of state” is at the peak of the state structure itself, along with the “physical base of the state” and the “institutional expression” of it (Buzan, 2000 (1991): 75). Moreover, the representation of the state itself, *as a mass imprinted idea* is at the core of the state:

“Without a widespread and quite deeply-rooted idea of the state among the population, the state institutions by themselves would have great difficulty functioning and surviving. ... Tracing the essence of the state to the social level gives us a major clue about how to approach the idea of national security. If the heart of the state resides in the idea of it held in the minds of the population. Then that idea itself becomes a major object of national security.” (Buzan, 1991: 39).

Long before them, Anton Golopenția was convinced that the Encyclopedia and the Atlas are the best instruments to “accommodate the individual with his nationhood, life and the world...” In 1938, Anton Golopenția wrote: “Our nationhood is enriched not by another Romanian Encyclopedia², but with an Encyclopedia *of* Romania. ... It is not an alphabetic dictionary of definitions and data ... It is about this round representation of this political individuality whose name is Romania. ... Those who are scientists must know much of everything ... The others need knowledge suited for each of them. Knowledge able to clear their life horizon: to place them in the nationhood, life, the world. ... The enterprise of Saint-Simon and Comte, who believed that beyond science the scientist has the mission of *reorganizing* the conceptions and criteria for the social action, it is more necessary than ever.”³ (Golopenția, 2002: 133).

¹ “...pour comprendre un conflit ou une rivalité géopolitique, il ne suffit pas de préciser et de cartographier ses enjeux, il faut aussi essayer [...], surtout quand les causes sont complexes, de comprendre les raisons, les idées de ses acteurs principaux [...], chacun traduisant et influençant à la fois l'état d'esprit de la partie de l'opinion publique qu'il représente. Le rôle des idées – même fausses – est capital en géopolitique car ce sont elles qui expliquent les projets et qui, autant que les données matérielles, déterminent le choix des stratégies. Ces idées, nous les appelons des REPRÉSENTATIONS...”

² *The Encyclopedia of Romania* in 6 projected volumes was printed in 1938-1943. Under the coordination of Dimitrie Gusti, the head of the Bucharest Sociological School, only four volumes were finished. The project was the first and the last Romanian project of this kind.

³ The full Romanian text:

“Neamul nostru se îmbogățește, nu cu o altă *Enciclopedie* românească, ci cu o *Enciclopedie a României*. Lucrarea aceasta nouă nu urmează tradiția deschisă prin marea *Enciclopedie* franceză a lui Diderot și d’Alembert [1751]. Nu e un dicționar alfabetic de definiții și de informații. ... Ci înfățișarea unitară a acelei mari individualități politice care se cheamă România. ... Ceea ce poate prilejui *Enciclopedia României* întrece, însă, cu mult ceea ce are de dat o *Enciclopedie-dicționar*. Cititorul ei, cel care o citește din scoarță în scoarță, de la vol I la al VI-lea – căci se cere citită și nu consultată – se familiarizează cu chiar viața nației românești. ... “Cel ce e de meserie om de știință trebuie să știe despre multe și despre toate,

I will present some his key points for a nation's *practical* representation abroad in the Study case below.

The Geopolitics of Representations is another elites' important job. From this point of view, this Geopolitics may be part of the broader Sociology of Elites, as an instrument by which the space is organized, defended, cared of by judiciously making use of a certain stock of ideas. As the president of the Romanian Academy, Ioan Aurel Pop stated: "The elites cannot build out of nothing a nation, but they can organize a nation. The same way the Church of Densus⁴ is made of Roman materials, the same way the modern nationhood – organized and fortified by our political and intellectual elites – is built upon the rocks and bricks of «aspirations, longings, aversions, passions and needs» (Alexander Davila), all of them belonging to the «old tradition», i.e. from the depths of a nation."⁵ (Pop, 2019: 32)

Now we may easier understand the next ingredient to this approach to the Geopolitics of Representations - introducing Goffman's Stigma: what happens with a nation's security if the bricks of its identity are hijacked, molested, diminished? The Goffmanian mechanics of stigma stress the fact that stigmatization is related to the process of *estrangement*. Stigma does not operate without a target. Its favorite target is *the stranger* or makes the other feels like a stranger. "While the stranger is present before us, evidence can arise of his possessing an attribute that makes him different from others in the category of persons available for him to be, and of a less desirable kind – in the extreme, a person who is quite thoroughly bad, or dangerous, or weak. He is thus reduced in our minds from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one. Such an attribute is a stigma, especially when its discrediting effect is very extensive; sometimes it is also called a failing, a shortcoming, a handicap." (Goffman, 1986: 2).

I will consider the Goffmanian paradigm from a geopolitical point of view by considering the following problems:

ca să nu-l găsească nepregătit cererile. Ceilalți au nevoie de cunoștințe potrivite lor. De cunoștințe care să le lămurească zarea vieții lor: să-i situeze în neam, în viață, în lume. ... Se scrie și se tipărește azi numai în perspectiva omului de știință. Analitic și fragmentar. Întreprinderea unor Saint-Simon și Comte, care credeau că, dincolo de munca în specialitate, omul de știință are misiunea de a *reorganiza* concepțiile și criteriile diriguitoare ale acțiunii, a devenit și mai acut necesară azi."

⁴ One of the oldest still standing in Romania, the St. Nicholas Church is still in use and it was built at the beginning of Middle Ages from stones taken from the Roman Capital of Dacia – Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, being built on the site of a Roman temple, or by converting a pagan Roman temple

⁵ "Elitele nu pot construi din nimic o națiune, dar pot organiza o națiune. Așa cum biserica de la Densus este făcută din materiale romane, la fel edificiul numit națiune modernă – organizat și fortificat de elitele noastre politice și intelectuale - are drept pietre de temelie și cărămizi «năzuințe, doruri, vise, ure, patime, nevoi» (Alexandru Davila), care vin toate din «datina străbună», adică din adâncul existenței acestui popor."

1. Estranging a country/state from its people, or from some of its relevant demographics, at least.

2. Stigmatizing the image of the country/state for its own citizens by making it to look pitiful.

These two will be developed in chapter 4. I will pinpoint some of this mechanism below, by discussing the idea of state.

3. The state: its fundamentals

The state is an elaborate institution with a very large corpus of theories and approaches, including geopolitics. What I intend to stress here, from the standing point of Geopolitics of Representations, is that the difference between a weak and a strong state lies with the

- power of the idea of state,
- and the using of it.

We remember the Buzan's "component parts of state": "the physical base of the state", "the institutional expression of the state" and "the idea of the state" (Buzan, 1983: 40). A weak state has a less coherent society. This is why the national security lies more with societal security than the military power of numbers in tanks, police-force and so on: "The principal distinguishing feature of weak states is their high level of concern with domestically generated threats to the security of the government. In other words, weak states either do not have or have failed to create, a domestic political and social consensus of sufficient strength to eliminate the large-scale use of force as a major continuing element in the domestic political life of the nation." (idem: 67)

Krasner (2006: 153-155) put it more clearly: what makes a state to be itemized as a *weak state* is its ability to serve the public interest in an institutionalized form. Lacking good governance, that is strong, capable institutions is one of the most evident traits of the weak and failed states. The opposite of the weak state is not necessarily *more power*, but *good governance*.

Summarizing, *good governance*, as the institutionalization of the idea of state by serving the public interest is another pragmatic aspect of the Geopolitics of Representations. A state cannot have good governance, that is strong and capable institutions serving the public good, without a solid idea of state appealing to its people. The idea of state is not only but also a public relations product. It is a byproduct of the social capital, of the society in itself. The main blocker of its production is a set of bad definitions of the social space, the most toxic of it being *stigma*.

4. Defining is ruling. The DEFSPACE

The Geopolitics of Representations is about controlling the cultural definitions of a certain space or society. I will use the shortcut DEFSPACE to denominate the object of this geopolitics.

The Geopolitics of Representations belongs to the national security, to the “idea of state” (Buzan) precisely. It is the realm of strategic choices in the zone of education, the press, the ideologies and symbolic loyalties. And yes, like Yves Lacoste put it, it has the power of reshaping space. I would add: the most economical aggression is shaping the enemy’s territory by making him/her to mobilize his/her resources towards *your* goals. By hijacking the legitimate idea of state, that is, by stigmatizing it using high-profile intellectuals, journalists, politicians, from the target country. Make the enemy country being an enemy for itself. That would be the mantra of the Geopolitics of Representations seen from a country like Romania, a disputed territory by different toxic narratives of how to despise being Romanian.

The Geopolitics of Representations belongs to the capability of power projection of a state by vectorizing the collective mentalities at two levels:

1. Internally, by securing/targeting the idea of state;
2. Externally, by securing/targeting the favorability corridors necessary for the main political activity,

where the collective mentalities encompass the collective imaginary, the national mythology, the ideas of order and hierarchy, the general legitimacy of the political action.

The Geopolitics of Representations is a powerful tool for maneuvering, storing, and using the definitions regarding a target space, both internally (domestic policy) and externally (international relations). Briefly, Geopolitics of Representations is about protecting, securing or attacking a society *per se*, in order to protect/capture its state, at the level of ideas and public sentiments, using not only psycho-technology, but culture, its main definitions, to be precise. Like any branch of geopolitics, this one too, is about space, or territory. The main difference from the any other type of projecting power over a specific territory, as we already have seen, is the instrument of power: culture (definitions).

As regards the relationship between the objective and the hypothesis, it was attempted to maintain in the same sphere of study. Starting from the observations in the literature and the framework objective of the paper, we assumed that:

4.1. The instruments of defining in order to rule the society (a territory)

In order to control the DEFSPACE, there are several instruments available:

- The cultural process of defining institutions. Every institution has an image, related to its public functions, the most important being its *legitimacy*. The most important institution is the state, and the critical definition is Buzan’ “idea of state.” The definitions of institutions are *the*

space of the actual working-order. The complement of the idea of state is the *nationhood*, the idea of the collective identity called *nation*, including its history, supposed “mission”, the cultural complex of the “national mythology.” Nationhood is *the space* of the collective self-perception.

- The physical form of definitions – Atlases, Encyclopedias, representative books (or “narratives”), the media and some of the cultural activities. what we will call *physical vectors or representations*.
- The network vector – the sociologic of representations, that is, the social constructs, the commands and their jamming regarding certain ideas which are propagated by various social networks.
- *The psychological vector* – the collective sentiments, perceptions, around certain ideas, conceptions, paradigms.

4.2. Defining and the Power of Labeling. Who rules our definitions?

Defining a certain territory (culturally, historically, educationally, militarily, etc.) has the power of mobilizing/demobilizing the masses around a core of ideas on identity, most notably around the legitimacy of the state and the self-esteem of the person as part of its nation. The different types of definitions are power parts of the state (components of the state power). The Gusti School of Sociology was developed around the idea that the core of a nation is the “social will” carried out by people shaped by their own consciousness, that is, by cultural values: “Nationhood, according to the founder of the Sociological School of Bucharest, Dimitrie Gusti, is the people with the social will, the result of certain coherent and systematic manifestations, according with a goal system. ... Nationhood is an active social entity which put at work its framework of potentialities, resulting in political, juridical, economical and spiritual manifestations. Neither the society, nor the nationhood could be thought of without the social will. If the social will cannot express itself, the people is decaying to its primitive state, as a bio-historical potentiality.” (Baltasiu, 2007: 397)

The higher the cultural values, goals, or ideals, the clearer the difference between means and goals. Only an ethnic group with higher goals/cultural values mobilized through the social will constitute the nationhood. Otherwise, they are not an ethnic group, either, since an ethnic group is agglutinated around a common language and a set of customs, including the consciousness of a common blood (ancestry). The people are becoming a mere statistical population.

Populations are statistical agglutinations of individuals with no symbolic coherence. A community is downgrading to the mere statistical population status by weakening its collective identity, its national consciousness, mainly. The major factor contributing to the phenomena is the lack of a proper political project, to work for, and as a watchtower for what keeps people together.

By controlling the definitions belonging to the collective identity one can control the society.

4.3. The Negative Definition: Stigma (Goffman)

There are some bipolar terms on which the social equilibrium of a state is based:

- Trusty-Discreditable
- Dignity-Stigma

Stigma is the drastic weakening of the social (collective) identity by manipulating some key attributes, symbols, of the self-esteem. In order to properly manipulate them, that is, to effectively disarm culturally a society must be fulfilled two stages of *stigmatization*:

- Being discreditable
- Being discredited proper. (see Goffman, 1986: 2)

Both are converging into the action called *discrediting*.

Goffman: "The term stigma, then, will be used to refer to an attribute that is deeply discrediting, but it should be seen that a language of relationships, not attributes, is really needed." (Goffman, 1986: 109)

From a Geopolitical point of view, stigmatizing is dissolving the social coherence by discrediting the symbolic base of the social fabric. The sense of belonging is part of the personal identity, too. At the individual level, stigma means a very weak personal psychological state, as a result of the very low level of trust in the collective potential: "*there is nothing you can do here, in this country, with its people*" / "We have a beautiful country, it is a pity that is inhabited" / "Bypass God the Romanians" are some variations of the same mantra.

Having no trust or faith in the social fabric, there will be no durable bridging and bonding, that is, the social capital of that country will be dramatically affected.

Robert Putnam: "Whereas physical capital refers to physical objects and human capital refers to properties of individuals, social capital refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. In that sense social capital is closely related to what some have called «civic virtue.»" (Putnam, 2000: 18)

While bonding refers to the "strong in-group loyalty" (idem: 23), bridging is about "to connect with people unlike ourselves." (idem: 411)

Bridging and bonding can be operationalized by the statistical indicator of volunteering. There is no surprise that Romania has among the lowest score of volunteering in the European Union, with a serious drop in the last years. Take for instance one of the most popular activities: sports.

Putnam's bridging and bonding add further clarification, deepening the drama of dissolving the social framework. Concluding this chapter, I may say that, from a geo-strategic point of view, less bridging and bonding due to stigma mean

less loyalty to the idea of state, which, in turn, means less governability. There is a clear connection between Putnam’s social capital paradigm, Goffman’s stigma, and Buzan’s approach to societal security: stigma downgrades the quality of social connections, resulting in weaker social capital; less social capital means less trust and less mutuality which, in turn, translate into less institutional legitimacy (institutions are made of people). Less legitimacy due to downgrading trust and social bonding/bridging means also a weaker idea of state, which is, in turn, a national security problem.

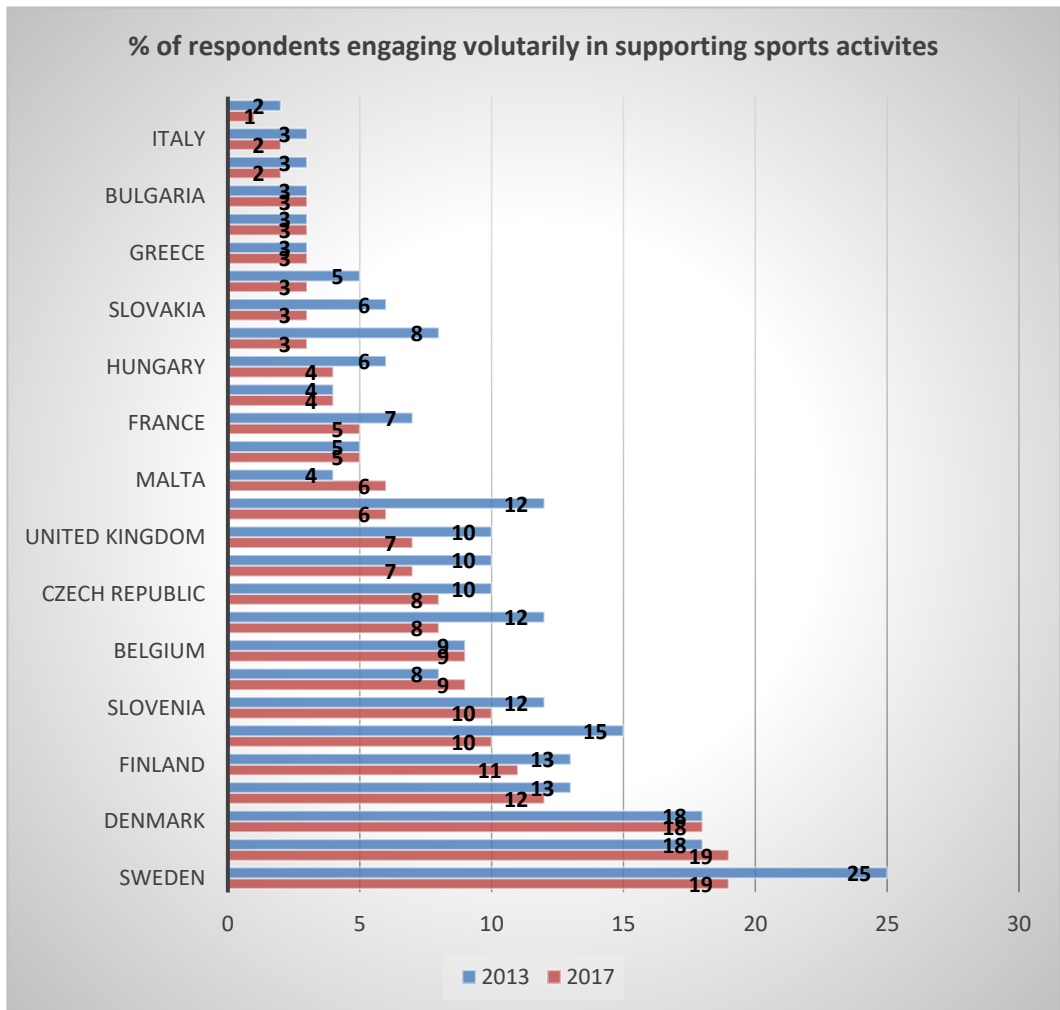


Fig. 1. Volunteering in the EU 28 (sports). Weak bonding and bridging translate into low volunteering. Bridging and bonding are main parts of the social capital which, in turn, is essential for national security.

Source: Statista.com.

5. Types of weak collective groups and societies

Here are some of the collective forms of action easier to manipulate using various forms of Representations, with a very sensitive DEFSPACE.

5.1. The invented community (Anderson)

Anderson's view on nationhood is not that powerful as, for instance, the Buzan's paradigm. For him, almost any community is invented, nation in particular. His theory can be useful in studying those estranged-of-themselves communities or some of the techniques of estrangement. Using stigma or other tools of debasement of collective identity is to commoditize the very components of the collective self, by making it a mere process of imagination, like any other piece of marketing: *an invented community*. Everything is imagined, that is, everything is questionable and replaceable. It becomes a commodity, *an object of doubt*. On the other hand, the invented community is not the byproduct of stigma only. It could be also the result of over-ideologizing the history, the national politics. From this perspective, inventing mythology in order to bolster the national feeling can be a treacherous adventure. In the meantime, the invented communities are easier to handle (manipulate) by discursive means, since they are the byproduct of a discourse with no real symbolical roots.

There are some traits of an invented community as observed in the field are:

- the coherence is based on the feeling of ethnic supremacism;
- of the utmost importance is the "ethnic reproduction" of itself, and
- in itself, the community promoting self-segregation by stigmatizing the Other;
- the collective expectations are excessively ideologized and historicized, the collective memory being overstimulated and the social action being almost exclusively oriented towards reinventing an overrated past (see Baltasiu et al, 2013).

5.2. The *Groupthink* effect (Janis) applied to large communities

Janis' group think is, in fact, a paradox: how a strong group is a weak one. The key factor is the nature of its cohesion, based on social pressure towards uniformity. In fact, there is the same difference between weak states based on the use of force and strong state based on social cohesion (Buzan, 1983: 66).

Group think is a concept coined by Irving Janis and refers to the "deterioration in mental efficiency reality testing, and moral judgments as a result of group pressures". (Janis: 1971). The most obvious factor here is forcing conformity which escalates into constrained unanimity. There is the context of group attraction and leaders' strong positions which hinder any critical analysis. "One of the most common [trait of groupthink] ... appears to be that of remaining loyal to the group by sticking with the policies to which the group has already committed itself, even

when those policies are obviously working out badly and have unintended consequences that disturb the conscience of each member. This is one of the key characteristics of groupthink.” (ibid.)

Group think has the following characteristics: the illusion of group invulnerability and that group cannot make errors; the effort to discard any contradictory information; stereotypical judgments against other social groups; pressure to adopt the dominant perspective; the self-reinforcing illusion of unanimity which in turns reinforce the dominant perspective; the so-called *mind guards* – individuals who take care to protect the group from contradictory or divergent information. (ibid.)

In certain circumstances, the more a community is invented the more is susceptible to display the *groupthink effect*, that is sensitive to the manipulation of representations.

An invented community is highly disciplined in a sense susceptible to act more like a herd than an organized network of individual actions based on consensus, since the rational individual thinking is almost entirely annihilated.

A country, like Romania is riddled with some communities confiscated by irredentist ideologies which have groupthink like behavior in the framework of an invented nationalistic community.

5.3 Romania between weak and invented communities

Romania’ society seems to be split between the two forms of weak society: stigmatized and invented. It seems that, from a geopolitical point of view, there is a serious issue of internal coherence. The societal security is at a historical minimum.

The consensus engine in a weak community alongside fear, could be auto-stigmatization, a kind of negative definition discussed above. The community has lost its self-esteem as a community and its leaders are seen as reproducing the patterns of self-stigmatization: “the country is in tatters”, “there is nothing we can do”, “the good things are foreign only” (mostly Western).

The weak community is on the verge of losing its structural coherence. I briefly pinpointed the issue when I discussed the bridging/bonding issue of the social capital. If the bridging/bonding pair is weak, the social coherence must be based on the negative side of sociality, such as fear and amnesia about the collective identity. *The practical aspect* of the negative identity issue is the mass migration of Romanians, the highest in Europe⁶, one of the highest in the world, comprising about half of the most active working force. When trust in your own society and state is at their lowest, there is an elusive loyalty towards the most important element of identity: your land. For emigrating means also in some case rejecting the symbols which are at the very base of your own state.

⁶ Official European statistics counts 19,7% of Romanians as leaving in other EU countries. The figure is the highest in the EU. (Eurostat, 2018)

What to do about this identity-issue? Anton Golopenția stated in the 30s of the 20th century a multilayered answer: economic, intellectual, political. At the core of the state efficiency, as protector of the public interest, and on the long term, lies *the spiritual unity* of the country (“unitatea sufletească”), and this should be operationalized by *special infrastructure works* able to effectively link the various provinces of the country (Golopenția, 2002 (1938): 346). The infrastructure’s role is to “stimulate de the Romanians initiatives” in order “to make use of the economic intelligence” of the people, to “sustain the development” of the local bourgeoisie and of the free lancers (liberal professions) etc. (idem: 344). But above all, there is an urgent need for: “Great myths and deeds, these are the only effective solution to the problem” of a solid idea of state. (idem: 329). Special cultural institutions like the Atlas and Encyclopedia are to be devised, as we already have seen (Chapter 2, and 4.1).

6. Case Study. How to (re)build the idea of state? Anton Golopenția

Anton Golopenția, one of the most capable members of the Bucharest School of Sociology (1918-1948), laid down the foundations of a veritable science of exhibiting a country abroad. Working with concrete and decoration, photos, statistics and special aesthetic arrangements, Golopenția sought actively to express the very nature of the country on a multilevel axis, consisting in symbols and facts. I consider the scheme presented below good for training in Geopolitics of Representation and for operating with the collective self-esteem. In fact, the manual below is to be seen as a starting point in dealing with a weak definition of identity, by effectively organizing it in the field.

In 1934, in a letter to the founder of the School, Dimitrie Gusti, the High Commissioner of Romania for the exhibitions abroad, regarding the necessary arrangements for the Universal Exhibitions in Berlin, Golopenția (2012: 397-408) stated that an international exhibition should:

1. Represent the whole nationhood;
2. Include all the ethnic areas, including the historical communities, not part of the actual state;
3. Have as a focal point the process of Unification of the Romanian provinces as the result of people’s will not the byproduct of chance;
4. Not represent the county as a “folklore reservation”: “We do not want to be considered a folkloric reservation. We have accomplished enough in the last 150 years [to show] ...” (Golopenția, 2012: 405)
5. Keep the public always connected “in fortissimo” with the exhibition (idem: 406);
6. Use statistics not per se, but as a diplomatic tool to keep alive the public attention;

7. Be considered a propaganda tool, not a scientific treaty of the displayed country;
8. Make use of specialists who know “what is all about”, “to whom to ask for info”, and “know how to use it”;
9. Not be funny nor too aesthetic per se but Romanian and energetic, in order to inculcate an attitude of special composure of gravity.

Of course, the Golopenția’ point of view is Romanian centered, related to the state effort to strengthen the legitimacy of the Great Unification of the 1918, which we nowadays are taking for granted, but we shouldn’t.

Further on, the above axis of representing the country should be centered around the following concepts of the *applied* Geopolitics of Representations:

1. The Space
2. The People (as an anthropo-ethnic reality)
3. The history of statehood as a series of *life* stories.
4. The present-day state *with* the socio-cultural *and* economical life.

Each of these directions is vividly described with the aim of properly represent a whole country in a relatively small time-space frame.

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UNMAKING MOTHERHOOD: ARGUMENTATIVE EVIDENCE FROM ROMANIA-BASED BLOGS AND MEDIA

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Abstract: *The current study inquires whether women's narratives and prescriptive comments related to the burden of being a mother echo socialization practices typical for these corporate cultures that implicitly promote a counter-maternalistic discourse by demanding on-call availability and total commitment from employees. The study relies on grounded theory, meaning that it starts from examples of arguments and dwells on empirical evidence to connect it to the conceptual framework and larger-scale theoretical input. It strives to determine women's vocabularies of motives on rejecting motherhood and to showcase how rational and affective language gravitates around the childfree rhetoric performativity. The netnographic analysis concerns 188 anti-motherhood comments posted on seven Romanian media (six blogs and one media article) with predominantly feminine readership. Informants' arguments are immersed in a corporate culture that is time voracious and hostile to motherhood. Argumentative streams and deliberative threads belong to the following thematic categories: feminism, heteronomy, neoliberal free choice and rational choice, uncontrollable and unpredictable outcomes, ecological concerns and incompatibility with lifestyle, overwhelming responsibility, time voracity and maternal role spill-over, lack of maternal skills, in-built career penalty, downshifting options and hedonistic outlook. These thematic categories are customized according to contributors' status (mother or non-mother) and biographical background. Due to work-family conflict, women face the dilemma of professional upskilling in the absence of children or professional deskilling subsequent to motherhood. Conclusions show the eclectic and multi-layered nature of discourse that combines (self) narratives with prescriptions, with a strong connotative dimension illustrated by a vivid vocabulary of emotional social imagery.*

Key words: *voluntary childlessness; agency; heteronomy; deliberation; netnography*

Rationale

At present the decline in natality affects both developed and developing countries in Europe. According to Eurostat reports (2017), Romania holds an intermediate position compared to other EU member states in terms of total fertility rate (i.e. the average number of live births per woman).

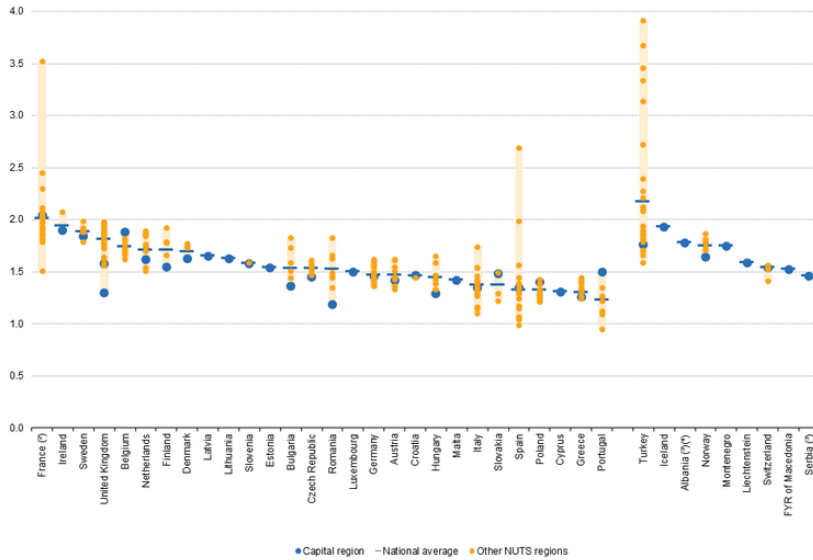


Fig. 1. Total fertility rates in EU member states and candidate states.

Source: Eurostat, 2017

A cross-section analysis of fertility indicators at EU-level valid for 2017 (Eurostat, 2019) reveals Romania has an above-average total fertility rate, with 1.7 live births per woman, whereas the mean age of women at the birth of their first child is of 26.5 years, echoing a traditional tendency of relatively early childbearing. It is the third smallest age in the EU, with only Bulgaria and Albania ranking slightly below according to this indicator.

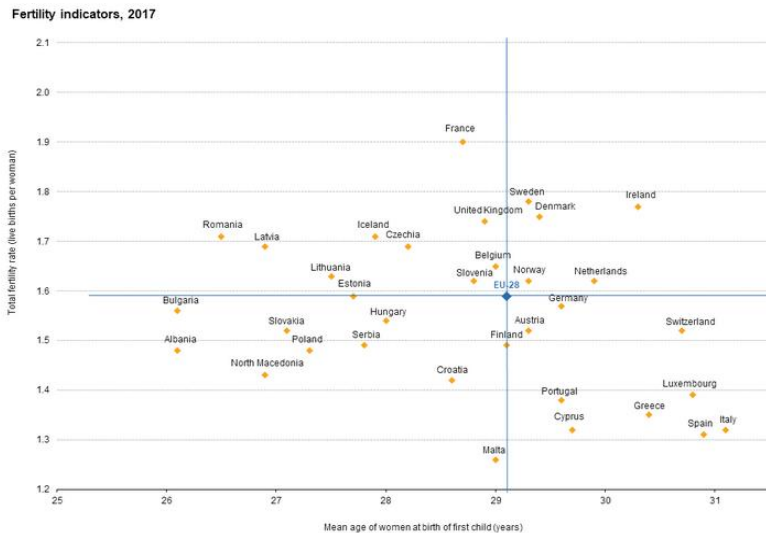


Fig. 2. Fertility indicators for EU member-states: total fertility rates and mean age of women at the birth of their first born (year 2017).

Source: Eurostat (2019)

Data patterns (INS, 2017) show an involution of natality rates for both rural and urban households in Romania, in 2017 compared to 2016. The decrease in the national average natality rate is of 0.5% in just one year, and the rates of decrease are relatively steady for urban and rural territorial units.

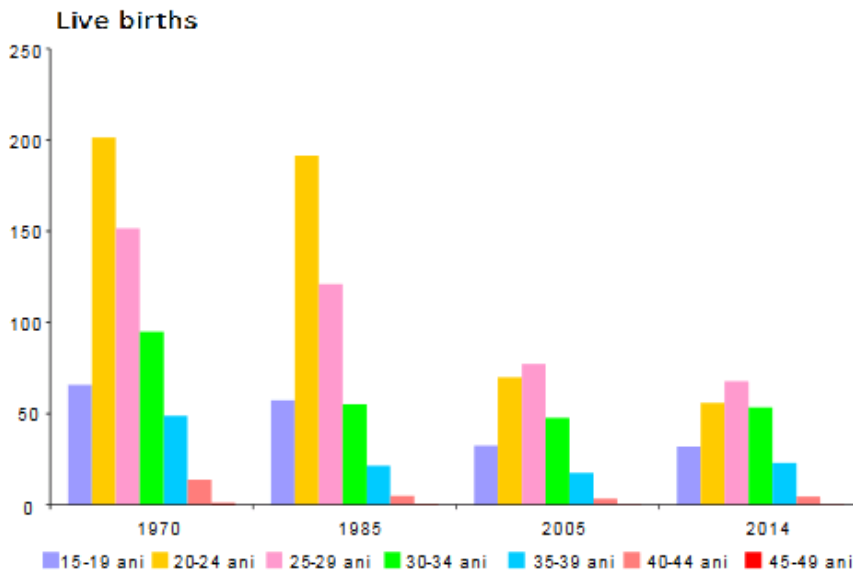


Fig. 3. Evolution in natality rates per age groups - 1970-2014.

Source: INS annual report 2015

A longitudinal analysis of natality rates in Romania from the mid-1970s to the mid-2010s indicates more than 60% decrease in 40 years: from an overall average of 19,7 live births per 1000 inhabitants in 1975, to 8,3 live births per 1000 inhabitants in 2014. This decrease is most evident for the lower age groups (20-24, 25-29 and 15-19).

Considering this demographic background, the study explores the discursive constitution of childfree identity for women who are blogosphere contributors. It searches for evidence-driven answers to the main question: How do women explain their choice to remain childfree? Associated research questions that derive from this main preoccupation are the following: What does the communicated decision to stay childfree tell us about deliberative means by which women define coherence and rationality across the decision-making processes? How do bloggers (as discourse builders and influencers) filter in and filter out, zoom in and zoom out the argumentative and persuasive dimension of elective childlessness, by choosing macro-scale (i.e. institutional) and micro-scale (i.e. individual) arguments to back up this decision? This argumentative and deliberative dimension is essential for depicting cognitively hard-wired processes and embedded assumptions by which

women reach a life-course decision that is still controversial, by conventional standards of social norms, and legitimize it to the world.

1. Theoretical outline

Within the advent of late modernity, numerous discourses suggest that kin networks are in decline, together with collective identities and the sense of affiliation and belonging that communities fuel (e.g. Wood & Newton, 2006). In nowadays versatile society marked by the strain of commodified time pressure (Adam 1995) and the volatile dynamics of liquid modernity (Bauman 2000), normative prescriptions lose strength, including those related to parental roles. A more fluid workplace policy centred on a more relaxed outlook on lifestyle diversity accommodates a reconfiguration of female roles and social identities, with caring fatherliness, help from extended family, outsourcing household devoted unpaid time and state support allowing women to devote time to their careers.

Allen and Hawkins (1999) discuss 'maternal gatekeeping', a process wherein a woman seeks to retain her power and control over the domestic sphere that she considers her only certain area of expertise and safe haven of self-validation. This risk-adverse practice hinders women's professional attainment. However, an alternative explanation for women's low rate of involvement in managerial positions can regard their different time use styles that contrast to masculinized workplaces where the long hours culture, after-hours networking and spontaneous unscheduled meetings infringe on family time (Bonnevile 2016). Hence, the childfree status appears as facilitating asset for women's on-boarding and retention in high commitment career paths.

The anti-natalist philosophy associates to time pressure and the 24/7 society (Levine, 1998). Work-intensive environments focused on high career attainment share the vision that simultaneity of multitasking takes precedence over its complementary stance of time discursivity, unitasking or successive duration. Meanwhile, the acceleration and densification of tempo and the pace of life leaves little-to-no time for contemplating parenthood, and less so for enacting it.

The debate over the motherhood penalty that impedes on professional development occurs especially in the context of high commitment careers. In this case, being a mother emerges as status that is too expansive personally, and overly taxing both relationally and vocationally (Laney et al, 2014). Empirical evidence confirms the intuitive hypothesis that highly skilled, highly paid women experience the largest motherhood penalty (England et al, 2016). The study furthers this line of thought by inquiring whether – and, if so, to what extent - women are aware of the barriers they face and have to overcome prior to having children. Is this anticipative knowledge limited and, if so, how do they negotiate and handle this limitation?

Mitigating conflict between care work with small children and first-time motherhood reveals a counter-narrative to the congruity of the two roles (i.e. child

care service professional and mother). Hence, the troubling reflexivity over intense emotional attachment reverberates in feelings of rupture, abandonment, pondering and rumination over choices on how to best accommodate relational and professional needs and to prioritize limited time resources (Thomson & Kehili, 2011)

Overlapping responsibilities across these two regimes of care (i.e. family and organizational) are divergent, since professionals such as nurses and social workers are expected to display a thorough, yet detached attitude towards their beneficiaries, aiming to avoid the risk of burn-out. Meanwhile, at home they display a more expressive attachment associated to positive emotions and wellbeing, as Grunberg and Matei (2019: p.18) reveal in the case of nurses working in the state healthcare system: "Ultimately, the separation between domestic and occupational life is framed as a distinction between two cultures of caring: caring for patients requires different modes of involvement than does caring for one's own children".

"A dialectic of resistance and accommodation" (Pickering 1995:22-23) proves helpful in exploring the argumentative dimension that women express concerning childlessness decisions. Women choose either an attitude of opposition or one of accommodation to the normative control that stereotypes exert over the idea that women are meant to be mothers and therefore childless women are emotionally and personally unfulfilled. Women who decide to remain childfree or mothers who argue for women's inalienable right to choose if motherhood is suitable for them have to fight against public prejudice and stereotypes, especially in societies tributary to traditionalist and segregationist ideologies. The stereotypical mindset tends to propagate in that it filters experiences and informational inputs. Hence, it overreacts to information that confirms the initial stereotype and downplays all contradictory evidence, making factual evidence difficult to penetrate in the world of prescriptive convictions (Lippmann, 1922). Stereotypes hence impact on social actors' capacity to interpret social reality and take their toll on simplified social cognition by creating mental shortcuts deeply engrained in the collective imaginary. The image of women with children has a prototypical function and performative value in that it legitimizes vocabularies of motives involved in the process of information classification and advanced processing (Ivan, 2013). All women are compared to this desired prototype of their reference category and those who do not fulfil the maternal condition run the risk of being undervalued.

Empirical pursuits in social work practice (Mihai et al., 2016) and academic work climates (Bonnevillie, 2016) discuss stereotypes as distorting cognitive reference points (Rosch, 1975), in the context of technology-based organizational change and ensuing reconfiguration of professional assignments. Change in all shapes and at all levels encounters resistance because it distorts taken-for-granted beliefs and forces stakeholders to reconsider stereotypes. The upside of tokenism is that encounters with atypical members of a category (e.g. women senior executives or celebrities who explain why they decided to remain childfree) can modify stereotypical cognition and attitudes (Hilton/Hippel, 1996).

The internalized requirement to publish as much and as often as possible affects women academics in particular because their culturally imposed domestic duties detract them from the steady concentration needed to perform a knowledge-intensive work (Bonneville, 2016). The motherhood penalty aggravates when job enrichment and job enlargement appear as mandatory career development strategies in the context of constant upskilling following the “more is better” and “up or out” ideology. Also in academia, the neoliberal age of individualized risk (Beck, 2000) manifests through fixed-term contracts and other dispersed temporary assignments. This job insecurity contributes to the decision to either postpone motherhood or cancel it altogether. Hence, academia embraces the gig economy across precarious work practices that permeate a promising discourse on entrepreneurial universities and academic capitalism (Nikunen, 2012). The gig economy operates by no expected loyalty from contracting parties (employer and employee alike), more job variety, fewer responsibilities, temporal and spatial flexibility. Job insecurity in today’s moving world influences the self-reported level of somatic health and subjective wellbeing (Nica, Manole & Brișcariu, 2016) and can be a deterrent against having children, not only due to a financial rationale, but also on account of increased levels of emotional despondency.

The unwillingness to disconnect feeds the psychological conflict that soars when women feel compelled to do it all. They are taught it is their intrinsic, irrevocable duty to be the main caretaker and be nothing short of excellent and exceptional in balancing all duties. Bonneville (2016) found women professors in academia expressed more anxiety toward their career prospects and career path compared to their male counter-parts, also more frustration about structural inequities (i.e. distributive and procedural justice) and work-life imbalance. They argue that the unlimited, unmitigated investment in career is an implicit, albeit sine-qua-non condition of this highly competitive, albeit meritocratic environment wherein women’s identity is not even primarily, but solely defined by the content of their work (Bonneville 2016; Aubert 2010).

Delving into the rationale for individual agency and heteronormative models of childless feminineness, Wood and Newton (2006) found Australian managers considered the work-life balance image as utopian and creating neurotic pressure to succeed in all arrays of life. The fact that mothers are statistically under-represented in top-tier professional areas of management, politics (Zamfirache, 2010) or research suggests childlessness (either biological or elective) is a facilitator or even a precondition for career success (Wood & Newton, 2006). Pursuing such time-intensive career tracks means sacrificing personal and family pastimes in a time-greedy corporate culture where not staying overtime, taking career breaks or any such discontinuity are displays of weakness, insufficient dedication and failure.

A post-structuralist analysis of identity work (Morison et al., 2016) performed in communities showed childfree persons respond to social stigma related to their elective childlessness by the strategic use of the choice rhetoric. As

such, their 'childfree-by-choice' script shapes their self-identity as responsible decision-makers characterized by autonomy and rationality. They advocate for reproductive freedom and challenge pronatalism on grounds of the necessary acceptance for diversity that includes the deviation from the conventional parenthood model. Whereas the above-mentioned research focuses on non-parents' opt-out discursive scripts, the current study involves women – both mothers and non-mothers (i.e. childfree by choice) as it intends to explore whether the deployed argumentation varies for the two categories.

The portrayal of the childfree status and its impact on discursive identity elaboration through critical feminist post-structuralism (Moore, 2014), also performed on e-communities (i.e. forums and blogs), generated three dimensions, respectively: naming, negotiating and enacting childfreedom. The last two dimensions were more challenging inasmuch as they led to nuanced, complex, contested and sometimes activist identities, and illustrated gendered power relations in terms of asymmetries and incongruencies. Childfreedom is the term coined to designate the elective status of non-parent (i.e. voluntary infertility), whereas childlessness generally associates to the incapacity to have children (i.e. biological, unintentional infertility). The discussion on childfreedom also brings forth the double standards associated to the decision to forego parenthood. For women, this decision is framed as rejection of motherhood, a far more aggressive, disruptive term compared to that used for men who refuse fatherhood (Moore, 2014; Terry & Braun, 2012). Twelve interviews with men who underwent pre-emptive vasectomies exhibited they rejected contemporary modes of involved fatherhood and their self-definition or identity work revolved around leading selfish, nonconformist lifestyles (Terry & Braun, 2012). Their self-referential discourse suggested they considered societal marginalization in their case to have negative connotations, as well as positive outcomes, in that they felt different, special and empowered in terms of reproductive control and neoliberal rhetoric of choice.

Pronatalist ideologies permeate also social attributions related to what is defined as authentic and appropriate or ladylike for a woman. Hence, intended audiences can judge as inauthentic and hypocritical a woman's discourse by which she explains why she chooses to remain childfree. The double standards apply also to the evaluation of self-referential discourse, as audiences filter authenticity through gender-biased lenses. To this point, a multimodal media analysis revealed public disapproval for a woman CEO who made budget cut-offs. The public considered her conduct as unladylike and questioned her authenticity, whereas a male CEO from the same field (banking) who took the same unpopular measures appeared as decisive in a situation requiring immediate action (Liu et al., 2015). Hence, "this attribution of authenticity is not stable, but is continually constituted through the enactment of embodied gendered leadership (...) embedded in a context that itself is discursively constructed" (Liu et al., 2015: 249).

Influencers have powerful voices from the position of role models in both pronatalist and antinatalist discourses. Corporate leaders take on the role of coaches in modules of ethical development in business education (Schmidt et al, 2009). Analogically, also celebrities presumably play their implicit part in informal interventions meant to raise women's moral awareness and mindfulness on life-course choices such as being a parent or not.

2. Method

The study explores blog posts and media article comments in women's magazines to elucidate argumentative lines that support the anti-natalist discourse. The study deciphers commenters' views using the qualitative interpretive framework of netnographic methodology relying on inductive thematic analysis. Netnography is an ethnography performed using online resources, that analyses discourse as language in use across an online text entity (Van Leeuwen, 2008). It gives special attention to rhetoric means by which informants make use of time-bound dynamics (e.g. flow of deliberation stages and impact of choice for the future) to explain their decision not to become mothers.

The steady demographic trend of childlessness is coupled with the ascent of the established middle class with high engagement careers. These double-career families, a.k.a. DINKY ("double income, no kids yet") are financially powerful couples with above average education and professional attainment who choose to postpone childbearing and childrearing indefinitely, most often permanently. The qualitative, explorative study delves into the discursive ethos of this target group to examine rhetoric means and semiotic repertoires by which they explain to themselves and the world the decision to remain childfree. Another target group of text contributors includes mothers who warn fellow women against the risks that motherhood elicits. The socio-linguistic tools of this secondary analysis focus on the denotative and connotative dimensions of verbal speech by scrutinizing blog posts and articles, both sources extracted from the Romanian media landscape. The qualitative thematic analysis of contributor-provided descriptors of voluntary childlessness decisions involves 14 blog posts and a total of 188 individual qualitative feedback stances (i.e. readers' comments) available via six Romanian blogs centred on a female audience: Kudika.ro, Smartwoman.hotnews.ro, Cosmopolitan.ro, Perfecte.ro, Qbebe.ro, Printesaurbana.ro. The seventh media source consists of comments to an article (entitled "Why not have children") posted in the Dilema Veche magazine, traditionally associated to an intellectual readership. Quotes are labelled according to the source and the identifier code of the article.

Their salience is estimated in relationship to their readership and to the reactions they elicit among audiences. Discursive repertoires refer to ideas and (counter)arguments that are socially reproduced through interpersonal and organizational interaction. The declarative intentions can be distanced from actual

practices, as was the case for school counsellors (Toth, 2016), however they prove fruitful for this investigation because they provide explanations about women's anti-natalist choices in terms of minority positioning in a high-stake lifestyle debate. Thus, the process of building these arguments is more important here than the behavioural outcome.

Thematic analysis captures and synthesizes argumentative practices, by envisioning language as immersive rhetoric and performative framing mechanisms that pass along meaning while transfiguring it (Wooffitt 2005). Hence, the study dynamically pieces together the social imaginary behind the childfree discourse in an attempt to streamline the sense-making work-in-progress constructed through discourse (Wood and Newton, 2006).

3. Empirical findings

The categorization phase of the thematic analysis revealed how the text contributors' comments spread over a large spectrum of rationales, with 11 thematic category headings and indicative quotes thereof (with attached excerpt code) synthesized in the following table:

Tab. 1. Thematic analysis of recurring discursive patterns in the netnographic argumentation against motherhood, and subjacent quotes.

<p>Career associated motherhood penalty to</p>	<p><i>When I imagine my future, I just don't see any [kids]. I love what I'm studying and I want to get the most out of my career. Whether that includes endless overtime, sleepless nights, relocating, and/or travel. (Kudika, B75)</i></p> <p><i>My kids would hate me, because I'd have to pursue my career, I can't hold back, and they would have to suffer because I sacrifice them and spend too little time with them. (Cosmopolitan, A62)</i></p> <p><i>Will I be able to get back on track or will I be left behind? I think, in my line of work, becoming a mother is the death of all career ambitions. (Qbebe, B23)</i></p>
<p>Neoliberal free choice</p>	<p><i>Some marry, others don't. Some struggle for a career, other lay low and take it light. Some have five children, others buy a dog, abandon corporations and move to the countryside. Each one feels fulfilled in his or her own way. (Kudika, B40)</i></p>
<p>Heteronomy</p>	<p><i>It's very frustrating, because I feel like people don't respect my decision not to have children as much as people respect the decision to have children.</i></p>

	<p><i>We don't have to all live in the same way. (Qbebe, B6)</i></p> <p><i>I admire my female friends with children – I admire their dedication and hard work. I'd like them to start admiring me in return. I work just as hard and am just as dedicated to my own way of life. We are all women. We should be celebrating difference, not creating barriers. (Kudika, B58)</i></p> <p><i>Unmaternal women are just as worthy of respect as maternal ones and they should have equal rights. (Printesaurbana, B14)</i></p>
Downshifting option and hedonistic outlook	<p><i>It certainly makes life much easier to remain childfree. If you want to have fun, that's the way to go. Because life is short and not meant to be difficult, but enjoyable. (Smartwoman, A44)</i></p> <p><i>Being a parent ultimately means consistently putting the child first. What about me and my selfish genes? What if I want to be first? (Cosmopolitan, A7)</i></p> <p><i>Why it's better to remain childfree? You go wherever you like, whenever you feel like it. You are free to spend your money for your own pleasure or development, for the benefit of your own soul. And when you're old no one will reproach you that you made mistakes. (Printesaurbana, B37)</i></p> <p><i>Things I'd have to give up on if I chose to have kids: The bike. Minimalism. Quiet. Sunday mornings poring over one or three of my many, many books... Dilema Veche, A22)</i></p>
Ecological concern	<p><i>I joined the zero growth movement. Children have the nasty habit of adding to the pollution with a massive carbon footprint, with their diapers and baby gadgets and garments and endless needs and whims. (Printesaurbana, B38)</i></p> <p><i>I am worried that the future of the planet, and therefore our children's future, is utterly compromised. (Kudika, B22)</i></p>
Lifestyle incompatible with childrearing	<p><i>I love to travel and relocate for work and pleasure alike, so a child would not fit in my plans. (Kudika, B9)</i></p> <p><i>From early morning till late at night I'm caught up in my job, I come home exhausted. I barely make time for myself, to sleep, eat, meet my basic needs, not to mention a child. (Qbebe, B21)</i></p>

<p>Lack of maternal skills or propensities</p>	<p><i>Not all women are pre-programmed with maternal instincts. I have had multiple encounters with children throughout life and it is always an awkward and anxious experience for me. (Dilema Veche, A36)</i></p> <p><i>I don't have the skills needed to cater for the weak ones, and I don't like to take care of kids. (Cosmopolitan, A34)</i></p> <p><i>I see children who are traumatized in their relationships with abusive fathers or over-protective mothers and I realize that these people should think long and hard before deciding to have children. They should judge whether being a parent suits them or is merely the result of societal pressure. (Printesaurbana, B80)</i></p>
<p>Overwhelming responsibility</p>	<p><i>I cannot cope with split energies, for me multitasking involved in childrearing is not an attractive lifestyle option. (Smartwoman, A42)</i></p> <p><i>Parenting is full of traps. You have to learn to separate from them, to detach yourself, because they are not your property, they don't belong to you, they should be left free to interact with other people and if they leave you alone when you're old and / or miserable, that's perfectly fine. So lot of psychological distress to handle another complicated relationship, arguably the closest, emotionally overloaded and most personal of them all. (Dilema Veche, A13)</i></p>
<p>Unpredictable and uncontrollable outcomes</p>	<p><i>It takes a saint to accept with infinite tolerance that kids will look how they look, learn what they learn, and be who they are regardless of us. (Cosmopolitan, A38)</i></p>
<p>Time voracity and spill-over of parental status</p>	<p><i>Having kids will adversely affect our satisfaction in the couple relation.</i></p> <p><i>As mothers, each day is a fight. Making good decisions for them, feeding them healthy food, nurturing their self-esteem, preparing them for life, providing them with defence and fight mechanisms, teaching them to make the difference between good and bad, ensuring they feel your unconditional love, being kind, gentle, appearing relaxed. (Smartwoman, A11)</i></p>

	<p><i>I think many of my friends would be better off without children. For them, the “nesting” period is latent, disabled time. They will resurrect and try to get their life back only when their kids will be grown-ups and empty the nest. (Cosmopolitan, A19)</i></p>
<p>Feminist manifesto</p>	<p><i>My body is also meant to do a lot of things; that doesn't mean I'm going to go run out and do them. (Printesaurbana, B55)</i></p> <p><i>It's that social pressure I fear, the one that pushes you, first discretely and apparently harmlessly, then with increasing aggression, until it crushes you, powerless to desist or resist. (Perfecte.ro, A23)</i></p> <p><i>We, women, are perfectly capable of figuring out for ourselves what we want from life, without society telling us what to do and when, what is right or wrong. (Smartwoman, B30)</i></p> <p><i>Women who decide they do not want children listen to their heart and also they listen to reason; they have the courage to live by their own rules. (Perfecte.ro, A19)</i></p>

The argument for the time voracity of the maternal status concerned the fact that it is expected to spill-over and propagate to other roles and has the tendency to monopolize a woman's time budget, and hence to seize and drain resources to the utmost. The thematic category of feminist manifesto brings forth comments that defy conventions about the appropriateness and the necessity of becoming a mother for leading a fulfilled life as a woman.

These media sources expose inter-woven discursive threads of different semantic granularity. The network of meaning and sense-making strategies of women who contemplate motherhood with mostly negative feelings is wired in a neo-liberal discourse of free choice, self-determinism, overruling agency and empowerment. The common ideology of childfree options boils down to the message of doing whatever one likes and decides, denying and defying social rules and conventions as coercive, outdated and harmful for self-enhancement and self-awareness. These detractors' wording choices feature figurative stances of metaphors, analogies, allegories, oxymorons and paradoxes. These figures of speech connect to the discursive attempt at cultivating discretionary, individually dispensable time capital and investing time in oneself.

When comparing the argumentative tactics of the two categories, it is noticeable how childfree informants tend to favour macro-scale motives and

philosophical rationales regarding their decision, whereas women who are mothers emphasize the personal-level anti-natalist reasons that include time pressure, social and career restrictions. Hence, the latter regard their maternal role as an ocean of endless chores, which implies the absence of personal free time, an irretrievable loss of wellbeing, a series of painful sacrificing, doubts and guilt, and longing for contemplative life, the “dolce far niente” as distant dream. From the 11 thematic categories of motives identified earlier, non-mothers mostly evoke the following: feminism, heteronomy, neoliberal free choice and rational choice, uncontrollable and unpredictable outcomes, ecological concerns and incompatibility with lifestyle. Meanwhile, mothers present self-biographical situational examples and specify rationales related to: overwhelming responsibility, time voracity and maternal role spill-over, lack of maternal skills, in-built career penalty, downshifting options and hedonistic outlook.

Apart from the burden of commitment, debate contributors’ moral reasoning exposes doubt in determining which act is (more) selfish: bearing children or refusing motherhood? Hence, some argue motherhood is an egocentric self-perpetuation, “*when so many kids out there in the world are orphans starving for food and affection*” (Cosmopolitan, A25). Another line of reflection against motherhood dismantles arguments for having kids like securing a social standing, having someone to fight for, avoiding regret later on in life, avoiding solitude, claiming that “All motives based on fear, not love, are so inconsistent and fickle” (Qbebe, B18).

The convergence point between philosophical and biographical (self-referential) arguments concerns the parental status as inescapable and incompatible with many other status-roles. Text contributors depict mothers as wearing multiple hats, overridden with guilt, anxiety and frustration, and in survival mode, fighting with clenched teeth to remain wired to a hectic life rhythm. Under these circumstances, drained of energy and enthusiasm, mothers “have no gratification and gratitude lesson to pass along to kids” (Dilemaveche, A31). Actual mothers insist on this perspective on the super-woman myth as neurotic ideology embedded into the social expectations regarding motherhood: “*I am in the smack-dab middle of motherhood and I feel lost. I feel time-sucked and threadbare. I feel like I’m responsible for carrying the world... There is no break. There is no quitting. There is no vacation. There is constant guilt. That reality is sobering and exhausting*” (Qbebe, A55).

Another testimony acknowledges that mothers are often denied the need of free time or downtime, which social norms regard more in terms of a luxury privilege than a legitimate right in their case: “*Our lives — and days — don’t have to be manically <filled>. After having my kids, I forgot how to be a human being, I was only an activity, a robot fending for their needs* (Printesaurbana, B14). Other text contributors also contest motherhood on grounds of the social labelling as motherhood as exclusive form of legitimate motherhood and quintessential

identifier for a woman: *“Many people are anxiously agonizing over the white space of childlessness. “If not kids, then what?!” They need to know. They need a box, a marker, a label, a reason, and an explanation as to <why> — and <what if> or <what instead>.* The normative pressure to have children is evident when women who decided to declare publicly that they intend to remain childfree find it difficult to “come out of the closet”, and the process seems similar to that of confessing alternative sexual orientations.

There is a polemic sense of tribalization in that pro-choice women view their pro-natalist counterparts as not educated and opposed to modern egalitarian gender practices. Feminist vocabularies of motives carry the idea that pro-natalists need to rethink their life script and reassess deeply rooted assumptions about parenthood: *“When we question pronatalist beliefs and see them for what they are – beliefs – we will also see that choosing not to reproduce is just as normal as the choice to reproduce”* (Perfecte.ro, A27). Feminist perspectives also insist on the double standards and illegitimate advantages that parents have, compared to non-parents, in terms of fiscal bonifications, tourism benefits or political facilities: Why are museums and galleries so dedicated to children’s activities that you can’t look at a painting in silence or have a proper adult-level information display? Why are childfree singles and couples discriminated against in pricing structures? (Cosmopolitan, A11), *“Why do politicians assume women are only interested in policies that involve children?”* (Perfecte.ro, A82).

Pro-choice contesters focus on the idea of individuation and empowering agency that they regard as opposed to belonging to communities or affiliation through lineage: *“All this idea of family, tribe or clan no longer exists, we don’t have to copulate and populate anymore”* (Qbebe, B20); *“No question of carrying on a bloodline: we’re happy to be in an evolutionary cul-de-sac. The world is a hostile, threatening place: aggression, unfairness and discrimination, pollution and climate change, lack of community belonging, empathy and solidarity, social polarization and inequality”* (Perfecte.ro, A26). Against the backdrop of environmental concerns over the wellbeing of children in a problematic future for the planet’s liveability, comes the idea of in-built obsolescence in a de-commodified future: that there is nothing left to inherit, as objects, as well as traditions and knowledge lose their value and quickly become outdated.

The public authorities’ involvement in handling childfree decisions reveal double standards that feminist contesters build on. Hence, one such case involved medical staff accepting pre-emptive vasectomies for men even if they did not have offspring yet (Terry & Braun, 2012), whereas empirical evidence shows women who did not have children were denied elective sterilization because society still regards the parental role as essential for women and peripheric for men: *“Doctors expect that, because I’m in my 20s, I’ll soon change my mind. They assume that once I hit 30, or when my friends start having babies, that’ll be it. I find it quite offensive. As is*

the idea that it's not fair on all those poor women who want children and are unable to conceive." (Cosmopolitan, A54).

Comments also focus on work-life incompatibility for mothers, relying on the idea that these are two parallel social worlds: *"If you don't have a career, you cannot afford a child, and if you have one, you don't have time to attend to a child. So there's no way out, you cannot win."* (Dilemaveche, A29). From this vantagepoint, childbearing presumably hinders intellectual development, and narrows career options: *It's a very narrow, shallow world, that of children. It takes a special kind of everyday saint to deal with all of the mind-numbing mundanity and intellectual atrophy that soon sets in*" (Kudika, B31). Exceptionalism comes into play here, with emotional resilience, patience and the relational intricacies and mother-child intimacies seen as tokens of heroism or sainthood.

Also, the unpredictable, nomadic lifestyle of liquid modernity is assessed as inappropriate for a child who needs comfort and security. Informants feel the burden of cognitive dissonance that comes with the high social pressure to play the part of a perfect mother in a challenging individual and social context: *With kids comes the pressure to be perfect, to make perfect choices (from best kindergarten, to parenting, to healthy cooking). How can I be expected to give a child the life he/she deserves? As unsure as I am, I would hang my identity on it, or offload my insecurities into my children. try too hard to "mother," putting too much of themselves into it, I'd just take it too seriously*" (Perfecte.ro, B33).

As is the case in Hilton and Hippel's (1996) research, informants use the points of views of childfree celebrities to undermine social stereotypes about pro-choice women. The need for deliberate reasoning and careful soul-searching in the case of deciding whether or not to have children highlights the need for mindful deliberation as a trope of self-discovery journey and quest for introspection: *"I don't feel inferior for not having kids, it's part of who I am. I know I'm not destined to be a mum. It is equally important in life to know what you're meant to be as to discover what you're not meant to be"*. (Elizabeth Gilbert, in: Qbebe, B40). The next quote illustrates the incompatibility of the maternal status with personal preferences and pastimes, as well as, once again, the need for strategic deliberation and data-driven pondering over alternatives: *"I like kids, but not for longer periods of time. They are adorable, funny and sweet, but after playing with them I get headaches. When I was 5, I wished I had 100 dogs and 100 kids. Meanwhile I realised this wish was born more out of external stimuli. I'm not ready to be a mum. Being a biological mother isn't part of my experience"* (Kim Cattrall, in: Qbebe, B36). The intricate dynamics of decisional ambivalence and deliberation is scrutinized as follows: *There were moments when I wanted kids and moments when I felt grateful and relieved I had none. I'm an emotional wreck when I part with my dog for more than one day. I don't know how I could handle saying goodbye to my kids every morning to go to work* (Angelica Houston, in: Qbebe, B37).

Conclusions

The analysed empirical evidence suggests maternity is only an accessory, not a key attribute to the multi-fold valences of the feminine condition. Informants' express the unavailability or unwillingness to fit career choices around family needs, or to navigate the challenge of priority setting. There are worries that work-intensive, time-consuming caring responsibilities reduce mothers' professional productivity and ambition, leading in turn to career penalties e.g. slowdown in advancement, refusing job-related travel and relocation opportunities. In this dichotomist view, motherhood is counter-meritocratic and counter-performance, breeds professional underachievers, follows an ascription-based system of achieving status that goes contrary to career enhancement. This career-motherhood polarization is one discursive facet that strengthens Vair's (2013) rejection of the discourse of balance as feasible ideology.

Discourse points to the issue of ascription: women strenuously oppose society telling them what to do and they are aware about the superimposed normalizing mechanisms that make discretionary choices instead of them. By means of reflexive deliberation, they want to make sure that the motherhood status is elective and not prescribed. In so doing, women informants question the thin fabric of a hegemonic ideology, exposed to contradictions, paradoxes, ambivalence and ambiguities.

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INFLUENCE OF DIFFICULT MINING LABOUR ON THE INCREASE OF ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

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Abstract: *Alcohol drinking in the mining environment is demonstrated by certain researches that were conducted in areas with this socio-economic profile. In this study we want to highlight the following aspects: the socio-cultural determination of alcohol consumption; the worship of alcohol as the expression of a popular culture; the motivation of excessive alcohol consumption through hard physical work that requires such a "therapy" for the recovery of forces; the negative influences of alcohol drinking on the family. This study is based on a socio-anthropological research performed in several stages. The methodological aspects are explained in the study based on the statistical results obtained by applying a sociological questionnaire to a sample of 843 subjects (active miners, all male). The study hypothesis is the following: difficult mining labour causes an increase in temptations to consume alcohol over the levels generally acceptable in the social environment. It is necessary to analyse the phenomenon of alcohol consumption because it has turned into a "cultural" pattern, hiding a reality with serious medical, family and social consequences in general. This survey aims at raising the awareness of community-level decision makers, but also at reducing alcohol drinking. Professional prevention campaigns are required, but they are still lacking. There are no specialists able to change the distorted collective perception of alcohol consumption, but they have to be trained and involved in a specific social work activity.*

Key words: *family; society; cultural pattern; the tradition of alcohol consumption between "normal and pathological"; the alcoholic.*

1. Alcohol consumption as social- cultural determination

We ought to ask ourselves: *why the alcohol consumption culture?; why the alcohol consumption culture in the mining milieu?, why the alcohol consumption culture in the Jiu Valley mining milieu?* There are three questions that naturally originate from the title of this study, and they have, through the answers they may receive, the purpose of a scientific approach to the analysis of alcoholism from general to particular. We do not necessarily propose solutions, but we want to

present a profound phenomenology based on sociological research. The statistical results we have obtained are *in se* a quantified alert signal in figures. Behind these figures, however, there is a much more dramatic reality summarized in the very phrase "the culture of alcohol consumption". We asked ourselves why alcohol consumption is considered a "culture"? We know that a culture is defined by the values that have been proven over time. When alcohol gradually turns into alcoholism, we cannot speak of values, but of non-values, with serious social consequences. Then, in fact, the expression "alcohol consumption culture" is an upside-down culture, one triggered by any intoxication state of society. Generalized drunkenness brought about by alcohol in a community is comparable to other types of "intoxication", nevertheless it has its peculiarities producing a special image in the social field.

Generally speaking, it is accepted that the phenomenon of alcohol consumption is determined by factors extrinsic and intrinsic to the people who join the ranks of ordinary consumers. Thus an important extrinsic factor is the social and family environment in which consumer patterns are created. An intrinsic factor is the genetic predisposition, sometimes neglected by those who analyse the phenomenon of alcoholism. For a clearer perception of this phenomenon, we need to proceed to a brief analysis of its specific concepts.

Abuse. The meaning we have in mind is the excess in the consumption of substances which can lead to addiction, including alcohol. A complex definition of abuse is found in Esther Gwinnell, M.D. and Christine Adamec (2006): *„Excessive use of a substance, whether it is alcohol, tobacco, prescribed medications, or other items. Individuals who exhibit an abusive behaviour may escalate their behaviour into an addiction, which includes both a physical and psychological need to carry out the harmful behavior repeatedly. Some individuals can abuse drugs, alcohol, and other substances on one or more occasions without behaviors developing into addictions. This does not mean that substance abuse is harmless. For example, an individual could drink to excess and subsequently cause a severe car crash leading to loss of life. Alternatively, a person could have unprotected sex with many individuals over a short period of time and contract a sexually transmitted disease that he or she may subsequently spread to others”* (p.1).

Alcohol abuse. Alcohol abuse is an excessive use of alcohol that ultimately leads to addiction. Excessive alcohol consumption may result, according to Esther Gwinnell, M.D. and Christine Adamec (2006: 1), to issues of the following type:

1. Incapacity to fulfil social responsibilities: "They fail to fulfil their responsibilities at work, school, or home" (Ibidem: 5).

2. Excessive alcohol consumption causes the loss of reflexes and accountability through actions that lead to accidents: "They drive or operate hazardous equipment while under the influence of alcohol" (Ibidem).

3. Drunkenness can lead to a series of antisocial acts: "They have been arrested for an alcohol-related problem such as driving while intoxicated or assaulting another person when drunk" (Ibidem).

4. Excessive alcohol consumption leads to the deterioration of family relationships: "They drink, despite family or personal relationship problems that are either created or worsened by the excessive drinking" (Ibidem).

The abuse of alcohol as well as of other substances create a negative condition for consumers who settle over time, as Kathleen Bradbury-Golas points out: "Substance abuse harms the body not only from the use of the substance itself but from the negative lifestyle behaviors in which the user participates. Poor nutrition, tobacco smoking, insomnia, and lack of exercise all impact on the physical well-being of a person" (2009: 3).

Addiction. In a general sense, addiction is a total or partial lack of autonomy. Alcohol addiction of an individual represents a certain state of the individual in which a permanent mechanism of consumption settles in as emotional need: „*The emotional and often physical need to perform a certain behavior, whether it is consuming large quantities of alcohol, taking illegal drugs, or acting on other compulsions. Some experts use the word "dependence" as a substitute for „addiction*” (Gwinnell, Adamec 2006: 2).

As Kathryn H. Hollen shows, addiction creates a complex state for those concerned: „Addiction is a complex disorder whose principal diagnostic feature is a repeated compulsion to take a certain substance or indulge in a certain behavior despite negative consequences. As an addicted person increasingly begins to rely on the object of addiction for physical or emotional gratification, he or she tends to neglect other, healthier aspects of life” (2009: 2).

2. Veneration of alcohol - the expression of a popular culture

When alcohol addiction occurs, this substance becomes a drug and must be treated in this way, without any circumspection. This attitude is all the more necessary as alcohol gets to be revered, becoming a kind of element of a popular culture. As Griffith Edwards shows: „*The veneration with which one regards alcohol in a drinking-supporting culture determines every person who develops in that environment to appreciate more and more the pleasures of alcohol and less and less the risks of consuming alcohol. The psychological packaging invites him to drink all the time and neutralizes the warnings about the danger he is exposed to*” (2006: 41).

The history of alcohol use is long and this is the reason why this drink is a cultural element of humanity that has a certain mythological load. For example, Dionysus Zagreus's entire mythology would be meaningless except for the use of alcohol and even abuse of consumption. This is surprised by Griffith Edwards, E. Jane Marshall, Christopher C.H. Cook: "Alcohol is a beverage which is rich with symbolic significance when used in social, cultural and religious custom and ritual. Its

properties have been familiar to countless peoples around the world for thousands of years. However, it is also a drug that has important pharmacological and toxic effects, both on the mind and on almost every organ and system in the human body” (2003: 30).

3. The mining milieu causes an increase in alcohol consumption

A mining milieu is mainly represented by an area that has a predominant mining economy. The Jiu Valley can be considered to have been such a mining environment for a long time because the basic economy is represented by the extraction of coal. Economic consequences have been fully reflected on the social increased poverty in the area damaging the quality of life. These negative aspects have induced an accumulated economic and psychological discomfort to the individual level (Andrioni, Goian, 2011: 7). Prior to the creation of this industry, we can talk here only of a primitive rural local economy, without too much importance beyond that area. For a clearer understanding of the situation here, we reproduce the four images of the miner that appear in the book *The aporias of Gilgamesh's youth. Philosophical research* (Hirghiduş, 2016): „A first image is that of the miner of the early mining period. Accepting heavy and dangerous work, he gained some freedom and somehow escaped the servitudes of a society in whose hierarchy he was ranked last. To the question: Who are the miners from the beginning of mining in the Jiu Valley (the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century)? - a relatively simple answer can be given: the mining population is an amalgam of ethnicities (Hungarians, Germans, Italians, Romanians, etc.). Over time, Romanians have begun to dominate. The Romanians came from outside the Jiu Valley to work in mines, but locals were also hired (the “momarlani”) because the mines offered much better possibilities than the practice of mountain subsistence agriculture. Over time mixed families have emerged through the marriage between the “barabe” and the “momarlani”. The mutual reluctances have been mitigated over time, but there is still a negative image of the ones about the others.

A second image of the miner was built during the interwar period, when his figure became a strong one. The long series of strikes for economic and social claims has turned the miner into a true struggler. Work in mines has begun to be regarded with respect, even if it always demanded sacrifices of human life.

A third image of the miner is formed in the socialism years. He is part of the working class which, according to the slogans of the Romanian Communist Party, was the leading class. The figure of the miner becomes very strong and representative of the Romanian economy and society. Because the Jiu Valley continued the tradition of strikes, even though at a much lower level than the interwar period, not everyone could become a miner. There was a permanent

control of the Securitate over miners, but this control could not prevent some events unwanted by the state-party.¹

A fourth image of the miner is the post-December revolution one, deformed by a state policy. Paradoxically, the miner has become the synonym of an evil that must be eliminated”.

4. Methodological aspects of the sociological approach

The target population is represented by the miners who live and work in the Jiu Valley and who are active. Their number has dropped sharply over time. If in the 1990s there were more than 70,000 miners (at a certain moment even 90,000), their number dropped dramatically after the 1989 revolution. The most dramatic decline in the number of miners occurred during Victor Ciorbea's government (December 12th 1996 - April 17th 1998) when about 30,000 miners were laid off for the so-called mining restructuring. There followed successive layoffs that led mining to collapse. Currently there are 5,144 employees in the mining sector and the adjacent sectors (services, thermal power plants), but only 3654 of them work in the mines in the Jiu Valley (Lonea - 742, Livezeni - 854, Lupeni - 1096; Uricani - 300; Vulcan - 662). Of the 3654 miners, we extracted a sample of 843 male individuals. The sample is based on linked quotas (studies, age, mining length of service, marital status). The research was carried out in September 2017 at the five mines in the Jiu Valley. We used the indirect survey because it was easier to fill out the questionnaires. With the permission of the mines top management, we explained to miners who came out of the shift, in the Appeal Hall, how to fill in the questionnaire. The sociological questionnaire is made up of 32 questions, of which 26 are actually questions related to alcohol consumption, the other questions being related to the identification of the subjects of the research. The questions processing (for obtaining frequency and correlation tables) was done through the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) 17.

According to statistical data, the distribution of 843 subjects was made:

- **By age:** below 30 years of age, inclusively– 13.3% (112 subjects); 31-40 years of age – 32.9% (277 subjects); aged 41-45– 47.2% (398 subjects); over 45– 6.6% (56 subjects).

- **By length of service in mining:** up to 10 years inclusively– 23.5% (198 subjects); 11-15 years – 32,9% (277 subjects); 16-20 years – 37% (312 subjects); over 20 years – 6.6% (56 subjects).

- **By studies:** vocational school – 53.9% (454 subjects); high school – 36.3% (306 subjects); college – 9.8% (83 subjects).

¹ Such as the miners' strike of 1st-3rd August 1977, one of the most powerful movement of communism contestation in Romania.

- **By marital status:** married – 56.7% (478 subjects); de facto relationship – 26.8% (226 subjects); single/widowers – 16.5% (139 subjects).

- **By the number of children in their care and support:** one child – 16.6% (140 subjects); two children – 27% (228 subjects); three children – 16.6% (140 subjects); four children– 13.2% (111 subjects); more than four children– 10.1% (85 subjects); childless – 16.5% (139 subjects).

- **By the mine and locality where they work:** Livezeni Mine – 22.9% (193 subjects); Lonea Mine – 20% (169 subjects); Lupeni Mina– 29.9% (252 subjects); Uricani Mine – 10.2% (86 subjects); Vulcan Mina – 17% (143 subjects).

5. Presentation of the sociologic survey results

The sociological research has highlighted multiple aspects of the motivations that lead the miners to drink different alcoholic beverages. The presentation of these motivations is necessary in order to understand why alcohol is always present in individual, family and social life.

Heavy physical labour - a reason to consume alcohol over the limits accepted as normal

Heavy physical work is often associated with strong men. The miners have often thought of themselves and still see themselves as strong men, who, united, can do everything. As a result, they can drink alcohol anytime because alcohol is often associated with strong men, like in the 2002 Stalinskaya vodka advertisement², where this alcoholic beverage is presented in a natural environment where men and wolves compete for territory domination. Men will dominate because they have the power to consume vodka, as shown in the voice message that doubles the imaginary reality: "Stalinskaya - for the strong."

Heavy physical labour can constitute imaginary scenarios in which those who practice them are like Hercules, who can hold the Earth on his shoulders if he wants to. Such an assignment of an unlimited force is also common to many miners when they look at themselves. This terrible force is associated with bodily and spiritual health that can only be potentiated by higher alcohol consumption. Drinking alcohol over normal limits is a sign of power, and some develop this image through their resistance to alcohol, the ability not to be dominated by it, by the reinvention force, and by the power to stay sober irrespective of the amount of alcohol consumed. Miners must see their own image as something out of the ordinary that cannot be compared to anyone, possibly only to those who are like them.

² <http://www.youtube.com/watch?=4kdYpZW8gMg>, available online: May 2019.

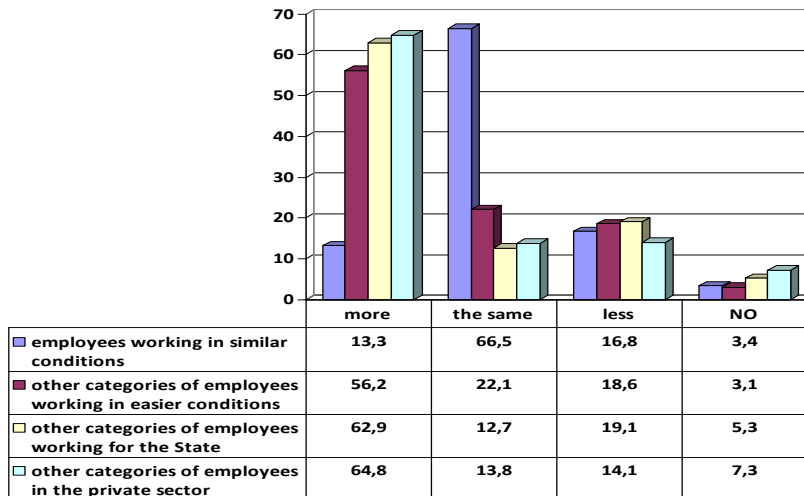


Fig. 1. Miners consume alcoholic beverages in comparison with other categories of employees... (%)

The perception of miners who responded to the sociological questionnaire is that in working conditions similar to those in which they work, drinking alcohol is the same for 66.5%. This appreciation can be regarded as a respect for those who are similar to them. The image of "strong people" also emerges from the comparison with other categories of employees, as follows: miners consume more alcoholic beverages than those working in less difficult working conditions (56.2%), than other employees working for the State (62.9%), than the employees working in the private sector (64.8%). So alcohol is associated with heavy labour and its consumption becomes a rather powerful motivation, a kind of flag to be paraded around with pride. It is clear that there is a definition of a time-consolidated status that makes the mining profession an exemplary one that requires respect. It has been proven that there is a truth in this regard, considering that the miners are regarded as a category of people who drink themselves into stupor, as the saying goes. But the image that others have of the miners is mostly negative, a picture deformed especially during the period of regression of mining, the falling of this occupation into collapse.

In the respondents' view, there is a direct link between the increase of the number of alcohol consumers and the heavier work conditions. For a percentage of 59.5%, the extent to which hard work conditions lead to an increase in the number of alcohol consumers over the normal limits is very high + high. This reinforces once again the view that alcohol consumption should be accepted in certain special situations, such as the ones in which miners work. Alcohol consumption is determined by causes that are related to personal and social factors. These factors often outline a so-called "culture" of alcohol consumption.

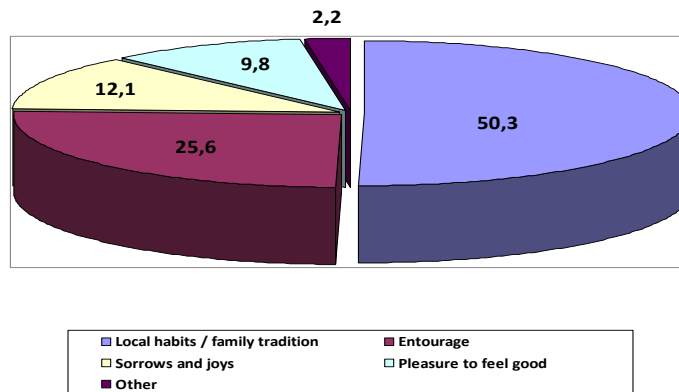


Fig. 2. Main reason determining the alcohol consumption (%)

Most of the miners questioned, 50.3%, believe that the main reason for alcohol consumption is represented by the local customs and the family tradition. Or, alcohol drinking is a custom of the place when you analyse the Jiu Valley. This habit is not necessarily specific to this area because we find alcohol consumers in many places in Romania, Europe or the world in general. Socially-based habits create strong patterns that have too long been conducive to social behaviour. A change in social mentalities about alcohol consumption is cumbersome and needs a very long time. The habit of drinking alcohol before and during meals or after meals is also referred to as an act with medical connotations because it would create a better digestion, an affirmation that is often false. This custom is well established in the social world of the Jiu Valley and is not necessarily determined by the practiced trade, the social origin, the social category. It comes from a common perception that moderate alcohol consumption may have first and foremost positive implications, even in the prevention of serious illness.

On the family level, things are not different from the social environment in general, but here is a certain distinction and a certain hierarchy of families in terms of alcohol consumption, the most accepted alcohol category. Thus, in the families of locals in the rural area of the Jiu Valley (called momarlani), the most commonly consumed beverage is the fruit brandy obtained by natural fermentation and produced within the household. But the "momarlani" are big consumers of other beverages as well in the absence of home-grown brandy (often because of fruits shortage). The other inhabitants of the Jiu Valley, pejoratively called "barabe", i.e. "venetici", people come from other regions, not natives, got accustomed in time with the customs of the place, but also brought from their home villages or towns specific habits related to alcohol drinking. As a result of the observations we have conducted, it seems that miners, no matter what province they come from, are no bigger drinkers than the locals. On the other hand, the majority of the "momarlani"

have been and still are directly related to mining because their employment in mining has created an important opportunity to earn more money.

Another cause that should not be neglected is the entourage of the miners when they drink alcohol. This is a very important form of socialisation and most friendships are determined by it. The social environment is influenced by entourage, which appears as an important form of maintaining community-level relationships. But in this respect the men's world is not pure because a fairly large number of women go to the pub with their men or other acquaintances.

As we have noticed, most miners, when they finish their shift and come out of the mine, be it day or night, go to the taverns kept opened especially for them, located in the proximity of the mines. Some have one glass, others several glasses. Many people spend hours drinking alcohol, sometimes forgetting about the family, getting drunk, but rarely exhibiting antisocial behaviours. The miner even in these cases does not necessarily become a brute, despite the fact that this negative image has often been propagated among the public opinion throughout the country. It is important to observe the real motivations of alcohol consumption immediately upon leaving the shift.

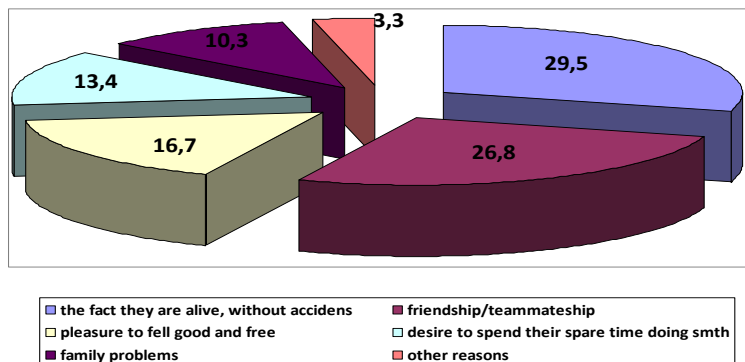


Fig.3. The main cause of alcohol consumption by most miners as soon as they come out of the shift (%)

Drinking alcohol becomes a necessary evil after all because it is a compensation, a sort of tribute paid to life itself. Accidents in the Jiu Valley mines have been quite numerous, with loss of life or lifetime mutilation. Entering the shift for miners working in underground mining is always a bet with life. For them life is the supreme value, but they take risks in order to have a better living, to have enough money to live a decent life from this point of view. It is not surprising in this context that a significant percentage of the questioned miners, 29.5%, argue that they use to drink out of joy, celebrating the fact that they have escaped and come out of the mines alive. Life for them becomes a exchange currency and, paradoxically, they keep on doing so, but when they start their shift underground they do not have the absolute certainty they shall come back alive to join their loved ones. It is a kind of

sacrifice for the spirit of the earth, as mining catastrophes (Hirghiduș, 2016) are considered. I have written somewhere this significant fact about miners' lives: "Man is defined by his earth to which he has a multitude of attitudes, from veneration to curse. Miners' life is, in this sense, the most suggestive because they are touched by the "curse" of the earth more than the medieval peasants. If the land he cuts out to take its riches is barren, then this can bring him to the brink of bankruptcy. If, on the contrary, they find abundantly what they seek to accomplish their economic purpose, their families will thrive. But the relationship between miners and earth is not just an economic one. Economy is nothing more than the possibility of having things and enrolling in a certain kind of civilisation." (Ibidem: 264) Miners are tied to the Generic Spirit of the Earth (Ibidem: 265), whom they see in the Holy Martyr Varvara. As a matter of fact, when entering the shift to disturb the innards of the earth, the miners do not penetrate a Godless world, but a mythologically populated land: "Among the governing gods of the mine, we may mention: God (The Lord of the World, the Great One, the Lord, the Old Man, the Wise Man), Jesus Christ, Saint Peter, Holy Hope, Santa Claus, "Valva Baii", St. Varvara, the Sun, the Mineral Spirits, the Devil, the Demons of Underground Flames etc." (Ibidem: 260) It is enough motivation to consider a person's and a colleague's life sufficiently protected, even if personal fears do not disappear definitively. As a result, alcohol consumption on the exit from underground shift seems to be normal, in the natural order of things, with the consent of the tutelary gods and protectors of the miner's life. The other causes: friendship, freedom, family – become secondary in the general plane of life, but not deprived of importance.

Excessive alcohol consumption - among the main causes "guilty" for the breakdown of families

There is always a pretext for daily consuming alcohol in the miners' families. A 30.2% percentage of the miners questioned admit that their families are always consuming alcohol, which means that women drinking alongside men and children are affected by this toxic environment from the point of view of health and moral behaviour. Excessive alcohol consumption often leads to violence within the family (as admitted by 69.6% of respondents), but also within society (as 73.5% of respondents declare). A high percentage of the surveyed subjects, 83.5%, know enough cases of families that have broken up because of excessive alcohol consumption. The attitude of accepting alcohol consumption as a normal fact is also reflected in the assertion that "drinking a glass of alcohol a day is not a tragedy." A total of 53% of the subjects fully agree with this statement, and only 23.3% disagree with this statement (these are the subject who never drink alcohol: 196 subjects of the 843 questioned).

The so-called alcohol benefits may be summed up in the aspects listed below:

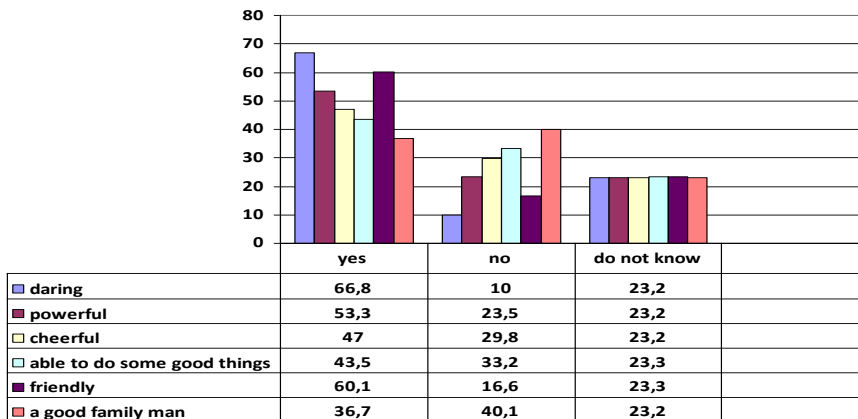


Fig.4. The man who consumes daily one or two glasses of alcohol becomes more... (%)

We notice that ordinary miners drinking alcohol every day have a positive image of alcohol consumption, one which makes them "real men". Most of them think they are more daring (66.8%), more friendly (60.1%), more powerful (53.3%), more cheerful (47%), more capable of doing certain good things (43.5%). On the other hand, alcohol consumption in the opinion of 40.1% does not make them better family men, which highlights the fact that miners are aware of the dangers of alcohol consumption on the family.

In the Jiu Valley mining environment, all categories of alcoholic beverages are consumed, but there are preferences for some of them, which preferences are probably determined by their price.

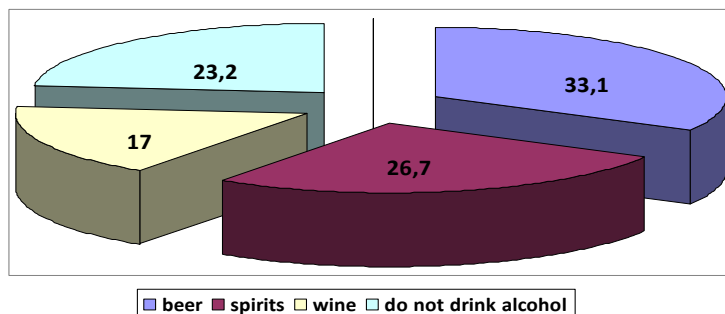


Fig.5. Favourite beverage (%)

The preference for certain alcoholic beverages creates addiction to them. Beer is ranked first by 33.1%, the second rank is occupied by spirits, for 26.7% and the third rank is taken by wine, for 17%.

As for the quantities of alcohol consumed by miners, they are well above the national average. For example, drinkers who prefer beer have declared that they drink at least 1-2 litres of this beverage per day when they leave the shift. The main reason is to clean the dust they swallowed in the mine from their throat. Miners who

prefer spirits are also well above the national average because they consume at least 150 millilitres of alcohol a day. Wine consumers are more moderate, declaring to drink only two litres of wine per month.

As it resulted from our sociological research, there is a 23.3% percentage (196 of the 843 persons questioned) who do not drink alcohol at all. The causes are mainly religious for 57.1%, and the other causes are: poor health, family interdictions, lack of temptation to consume alcohol.

Conclusions

The conclusions of this study confirm the idea that a certain tradition of alcohol consumption has formed over time in the mining milieu. This tradition only takes into account the so-called beneficial consequences and does not take into account the serious negative consequences (deterioration of health, deterioration of the family environment, danger to children in alcoholic families).

The motivations of daily alcohol consumption confirm the hypothesis that a hard work environment determines addiction to alcohol. Thus, most miners consume alcohol in very large quantities compared to the national average, which makes them possible alcoholics. And, yet, there are quite few cases of miners who do not carry out their job duties or who end up in rehab. They are accustomed to drinking daily at the exit from the shift, but do not neglect the job that brings the only income for the family.

In the context in which alcohol is a common presence for most miners, it becomes an element of a culture that we call "a reverse, upside-down culture", with negative effects on the family and the social environment in general.

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THE FIRST FEMALE PRIME MINISTER OF ROMANIA IN THE FOCUS OF THE NEWS: FRAMES IN THE NATIONAL MEDIA COVERAGE

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Abstract:

Since January 2018, the government of Romania is headed by a woman, the first female prime minister in the history of the country. Beyond other controversial issues relating to the political situation in Romania, especially those in connection with the frequent changes of prime ministers in recent years, media covered the appointment of Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă as premier with special scrutiny, paying attention to details that were not regarded as such in the case of the prior appointed male prime ministers. Thus, discussions could be encountered in the press, on themes mostly related to women, like how does this person dresses, how is her hairdo, or what man she owes her success. This paper deals with the analyze of the media coverage of the topics related to the first woman in a political executive leading position in Romania, such as her nomination and her political activity and public appearance in the first months in office. Based on the results of a content analysis of the Romanian online news, the frames used by the national media in their coverage of these topics are investigated, the major themes on the subject are identified, and the main patterns of media coverage are delineated.

Key words: *female Prime-Minister; Romanian Government; content analysis; media coverage; frames*

Introduction

On January 6th, 2018, Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă was nominated as Prime Minister by the Executive Committee of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), party to which she belongs and that won the parliamentary elections in Romania on December 11th, 2016, with approximately 45% of the votes.

After the elections, the SDP formed a coalition government with the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats (ALDE). However, within a year, two governments, led by Sorin Grindeanu (4 January – 21 June 2017) and Mihai Tudose (29 June 2017 – 16 January 2018), were replaced as a result of disagreements between the prime ministers and the chairman of their party, Liviu Dragnea. While Mihai Tudose resigned, as a result of the withdrawal of political support from his party, Sorin Grindeanu was dismissed by a motion of censure tabled even by the parties that proposed and supported him for the position of premier, SDP and ALDE.

Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă was the second woman nominated by the SDP for the post of prime minister. Previously in December 2016, Sevil Shhaideh was herself nominated for this position, but the proposal was then rejected by the president of Romania, Klaus Iohannis. Mrs. Dăncilă's appointment in January 2018 as head of the Romanian government was controversial, not so much because she was a woman, but especially because she was already the third prime minister designated by the Social Democratic Party within only a year.

Yet, the fact that she is the first female prime minister of the country has not been ignored by the Romanian mass media, who started to discuss issues such as the extent to which a woman is suitable for this position, the ways she managed getting into power, or what and who is behind her ascension, etc. Also, beyond the usual media debates whenever a new prime minister is appointed, regardless of if a man or a woman, including references to political, organizational, administrative, strategic or economic qualities or virtues, the appointment of Mrs. Dăncilă has caused in Romanian media approaches and discussions that, in this form, did not appear in the case of the prior appointed male prime ministers: how does this woman look, how she dresses, how is her hairdo, what "female tricks" she uses, through what specific female strategies did she manage to have this rising political career or what man she owes her success? Etc.

This paper aims to analyse how the Romanian media approached these issues, and which were the prevailing discussion topics regarding both the appointment of Mrs. Dăncilă as prime minister and, further on, her activity and her public appearance in the first months in office. In this respect, a content analysis on the Romanian online news in the time frame of January – April 2018 was carried out. Based on the findings of this analysis the main features of the media covered portrait of the first woman in a political executive leading position in Romania are outlined.

1. Conceptual and theoretical framework

In the view of the constructivist perspective, to which the present approach is referred, people shape together their living environment through socio-cultural and psychological structures and devices and by establishing a social order in this environment (Berger and Luckman, 1966). Order is a biological necessity of people, but it is not part of the nature of things, so it must be created. The social construction of reality consists of the process of interpreting concrete events (physical reality), the result of this process (the social reality) being the common basis of communication and shared knowledge. Therefore, common knowledge is socially constructed and influences the definitions and interpretations of reality in the minds of individuals; this is how specific ideas, actions and knowledge are spread in a society. Human beings create the social world by externalizing and objecting their internalized and subjective meanings, experience and actions.

Within the constructivist paradigm there are several perspectives, among which can be mentioned the media-cultural constructivism, which attributes the function of “reality generator” to the individuals and the systems of the media, and the socio-cultural constructivism, which assigns this function to knowledge, communication, media and culture together (Weber, 2016). Whichever the perspective is chosen as a point of reference, the media are viewed in the present as a major factor in this process, as mass communication contributes significantly to building social reality and perpetuating some representations and categories that, although accepted as “natural”, are, in fact, social constructs. Besides, the basic idea with which the constructivist current appeared in the communication sciences, an idea that later was refined and reinterpreted, but without losing its essence, was that mass media do not describe an objective, actual reality in itself, as they construct it, the world set up through the news being a constructed reality (Neveu and Quéré, 1996: 10).

In sociology of journalism, the “social construction of reality” by journalists has become an idea that is no longer contested, but only debated and analyzed (Schudson, 1989). By translating itself into words and images, the reality presented in the media is no longer the reality itself, but a selected, interpreted, constructed one (Schlesinger, 1978; Weber, 2002). The act of making news is actually the act of constructing the reality itself, rather than making a description of reality (Tuchman, 1980: 12). The media are no longer seen as representing “the eyes from outside” who inform or relate about events, but are recognized as representing an actor of the events, an active participant in their construction, a “partner in the communication contract” (Charaudeau, 1992).

In this context, the term “media framing” is used to describe the process through which the media place the events and topics they relate to in a particular perspective or in certain “frameworks” (O’Sullivan et al., 1994). By framing to the events are given a field of meaning within which they can be understood (Severin and Tankard, 1992). Moreover, the media hints on events and topics can also be used by the people to make sense of their experiences and social situation (Baran and Davis, 2014). “Frames” are “patterns of cognition, interpretation and presentation, selection, accentuation and exclusion” (Gitlin, 2003: 7) of some thematic aspects, ways of structuring the elements that build up a media discourse (Beciu, 2011). Frames used by the media in stories contribute to defining problems, diagnosing causes, making moral judgements, and suggesting remedies. Hence, media frames call the attention to some things while obscuring others (Entman, 1993). The reality presented in the news can rarely be an accurate representation of reality, because by simply choosing the topics, by relating them from a certain angle or point of view, by using certain sources, by the constraints determined by working practices, etc., journalists construct the reality through a selective process, without necessarily meaning that they intend to distort the truth (Graham, 2015). As such, without being by all means scrupulous chosen, the frames for a given story represent the effort of

the journalist to convey a story in a direct and meaningful way (Iyengar, 1987). News frames are frequently grown out of shared cultural narratives and myths, reflecting on them, and resonating with the larger social themes to which journalists tend to be keenly sensitive.

Mass media play thence a key role in shaping opinions and values in democratic societies, especially in the field of politics (Iyengar, 1991; McCombs, 2004; Baran and Davies, 2014). By preponderant covering the political actions and actors, both through informative and deliberative contents, media form into an active participant in building political reality, including the representation(s) of power, government, political leaders, be they male or female and so on.

The media coverage of Romanian female politicians has been approached from different perspectives, among which there can be mentioned here: the analyses of their media framing on the occasion of the various elections (Dan and Iorgoveanu, 2013; Roventă-Frumușani and Irimescu, 2018), as well as those of the visual self-framing during the election campaigns (Cmeciu and Pătruț, 2014); examining the preponderance of the trivializing framing, the tabloid one, of women in politics compared to men in the same field (Dan and Iorgoveanu, 2013); their media coverage in glossy magazines (Surugiu, 2012); the analyses of the construction of the public image (Roventă-Frumușani, 2015) and the ways of self-presentation and self-exposure, often in an erotic manner, of the female politicians, through the means and communication opportunities offered by the Internet, such as personal blogs, Facebook pages, etc. (Băluță, 2010; Roventă-Frumușani and Irimescu, 2018), as well as the approaches that aimed to analyse the extent to which some female politicians (as was the case with Elena Udrea) willingly present themselves through the exposure of their own body in the media as sexual subjects/ objects of sexual desire – symbols, in their view, not just of the sexual power, but of the political power too (Surugiu, 2012; Kaneva and Ibroscheva, 2014).

3. Methodology, objectives and research questions

Being regarded to the wider theoretical paradigm of socio-cultural constructivism, the research approach presented in this paper can be placed at the intersection of the studies on media framing, specific to the sociology of journalism (Borah, 2018) and the analyzes on the social construction of various topics of general public interest, specific to the constructivist sociology. Methodologically, the study can be placed on the line of researches that use content analysis to make inferences in systematic identification and emphasizing the features of messages (Deacon et al., 2010; Altheide and Schneider, 2013; Krippendorff, 2018).

The general objective of the research, whose results are presented in this paper, was to identify and analyse how the first female prime minister in the history of Romania was (re)presented in the online national and regional media, starting with the date of her nomination for this position of power and continuing with the first

months of the office. Thus, at a general level, the purpose of the research was to delimit the media constructed image of the prime minister of Romania in her first months in this (the highest) position of executive power. In this regard, there have been followed all the media covered aspects, from her political ascension, her political relations, her nomination and the context in which it took place, the appointment, the actions and the activities as prime minister, but also all other elements addressed and/ or highlighted by the media, such as gender characteristics (including physical appearance, whatever it involves) or, more broadly, her personal characteristics.

The central research questions were: What are the topics covered primarily in connection with the nomination, appointment and political activity of Mrs. Dăncilă as premier? What are the topics covered mainly in relation to this person, at a general level? Is the first female prime minister in the history of Romania, only because she is a woman, more often/ intensively media covered as “object”, as opposed to a man, under comparable conditions? Which are the frames used by the Romanian media in their coverage of all these subjects? In order to answer these research questions, I chose to analyse the media construction, namely the coverage of the themes related both to the political and personal issues relating to the first female prime minister in Romanian history.

The method used was the content analysis, which included both qualitative and thematic elements (Anderson, 2007; Altheide and Schneider, 2013; Vaismoradi, Turunen and Bondas, 2013), and implied the application of the basic principles of content analysis (delimitation of analytical units, working with categories, etc.) in two qualitative methodological processes: the inductive development of categories and their deductive application (Gunter, 2000; Mayring, 2000). The grid of analysis comprised 18 items, each with a number of categories ranging from two to 15. Depending on the unit of analysis, the categories were either exclusive (with only one possible category to choose, as in the case of items related to the type of media, type of the article, the tone of the article, the main appeal of the article) or multiple (such as in the case of items respecting the topic of the article, the issues mentioned, etc.).

The corpus of analysis consisted of press articles selected from national and regional media in Romania in the online version. Regarding the procedure for sampling the articles included in the research, in the online search engine www.google.com I used the keyword “Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă”. In the Google menu, I chose “News” and in “Tools” I selected “Recent” in order to be able to delimit the time frame. This was determined by choosing “Custom Range” and limiting the search to the time interval from January 15th to April 15th, 2018. The media articles of the first sixteen pages resulted from the Google search were included in the analysis. The total number of articles included in the analysis was 162. All considered entries were exclusively online Romanian press articles, in Romanian language.

4. Results

In the following section are presented and discussed various findings of the research. There are brought into focus especially the topics and the issues mediatized in connection with the first Romanian female premier, as well as the main aspects with regard to the characteristics of media coverage.

4.1. Media covered topics and issues

The content of the articles included in the analysis has been assessed in terms of the topic addressed, the subject approached as the main issue discussed, and the various aspects that were mentioned in the article, without necessarily being the main theme. Because in some articles not only one major topic was dealt with, but several (see Table 1), as well as not one, but several of the issues highlighted in Table 2 were found in some of the articles, the results are presented using not percentages, but gross numbers.

Tab. 1. The main topics or subjects of the articles analyzed.

Topic of the article/ the main subject addressed	Number of articles (n=162)
Prime minister's political agenda (events, meetings, statements, interviews, visits, etc.)	75
Mrs. Dăncilă's mistakes, faux pas, gaffes, solecisms, gaps (in general)	59
Nomination/ appointment of the first female prime minister of Romania	57
The linguistic (un)skills of the prime minister in the Romanian language (blunders, solecisms, gaps, mistakes)	38
Corruption in connection with Social Democratic Party	27
The political strategy of the prime minister (or/and of her cabinet)	21
History of her political and/or professional activity	20
Lack of premier's political/ strategic/ administrative/ organizational skills; inabilities in terms of political strategy	19
Incompetence of the Social Democratic Party (in general)	19
Prime minister's political activity (generally)	16
Mrs. Dăncilă's outward appearance (clothing, accessories, hairstyle, makeup, etc.)	15
Her economic strategy (or/and of her cabinet)	12
The linguistic (un)skills of the prime minister in English (blunders, solecisms, gaps, mistakes)	8
Wealth of Mrs. Dăncilă	8
The (positive) fact that a woman has achieved to occupy a position of political power/ leadership in Romania	6
Her political/ strategic/ administrative/ organizational skills/ abilities	1
Others	12

As can be seen in the Table 1, the main topics covered in the articles analyzed can be delimited in several categories. A first category comprises relatively neutral and common topics in the context of the journalists' covering political life in general, and of the appointment of a new prime minister in particular. Thus, more than half of the articles analyzed had as one of the main themes the current political activity of the premier: 75 articles were related to her meetings, visits, events, viewpoints, stands, statements, interviews, etc. and 16 articles covered her current political activity at a general level. Other topics that can be also included in this category are: her nomination and appointment as prime minister of Romania (theme covered in 57 articles); the political strategy (of her and/or of her cabinet, topic in 21 articles), the history of her political and/ or professional activity (20 articles), and the economic strategy (of her and/or of her cabinet, in 12 articles).

A second category of topics that were frequently covered includes less neutral themes, many of them (such as the language skills) being less common in the context of media coverage of the nomination and appointment of a prime minister. For the most part, these topics have been negative and critical media coverage of the premier. Thus, 59 articles had as one of the main themes the mistakes, faux pas, gaffes, solecisms or gaps of the prime minister in general – both speech and cognitive blunders (due to lack of knowledge and general culture, poor understanding of terms and concepts, etc.), and blunders in terms of diplomatic protocol. 46 articles treated as the main subject the premier's lack of language skills: faux pas, solecisms, mistakes and gaps (as for grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, etc.) mainly in Romanian (topic in 38 articles), but also when speaking English (in 8 articles). Other main topics of the articles that can be included in this category are: Mrs. Dăncilă's lack of political/ strategic/ administrative/ organizational skills, her failure and inability with regard to political strategy (19 articles dealt with this theme), as well as the wealth of the premier (her and that of her family, accumulated by questionable means – a topic centrally discussed in eight articles).

This latter topic has often been addressed together with another one: the corruption in relation to the Social Democratic Party, to which Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă belongs (central theme in 27 articles). In many of the articles that referred to the prime minister's wealth, there were made links between her political rise in the SDP, then as the head of the Romanian government, and the generous amounts donated by her and her husband to the Social Democratic Party – a way to do political career through corrupt means. In addition to corruption, another set of issues related to the SDP were related to the party's incompetence, in particular to the inabilities of its current leaders to run Romania (topic in 19 articles).

Finally, two other categories of topics discussed by the media referred again exclusively to the prime minister, but not to her political activity, her strategies, etc., but: a) on the one hand, to her external appearance (such as how she looks, how she dresses, her hair, eyelashes, makeup, etc.), Mrs. Dăncilă being often treated in these articles (15) as an "object", both in a negative and a positive way (the latter one

particularly in tabloid newspapers); b) on the other hand, to the (positive) fact that a woman has come to occupy a position of political power/ leadership in Romania, such an approach being uncommon in the articles analyzed, but still present in six of them.

Tab. 2. Aspects or issues mentioned in the articles analyzed.

The article mentions:	Number of articles (n=162)
Controversial statements or actions of the prime minister	73
Mrs. Dăncilă's inability to express herself correctly/ to speak correctly	53
Her incompetence (political / professional, etc.)	46
Aspects of her lack of political intelligence	42
The impact of SDP governance (negative aspects)	36
The fact that Mrs. Dăncilă is inappropriate for the position she occupies / inadequate to represent Romania	33
The fact that she is an obedient political actor/ a political "puppet"/ "marionette"	30
General, unspecified reference to her outfit/ posture (how she "looks", how she "presents" herself)	16
Aspects related to Mrs. Dăncilă's hairstyle	14
Controversies regarding justice and changing the laws of justice	14
The (positive) fact that Romania has for the first time in history a female prime minister	13
The fact that the premier owes her political rise to questionable means (relations, donations to SDP, etc.)	6
How Mrs. Dăncilă dresses/ aspects regarding her clothing	4
How she makes up/ aspects related to her face/ makeup	3
Aspects referring to her sex appeal	2
Aspects about her intelligence (in general)	2
The fact that the prime minister owes her political rise to some "feminine" ways/ "female tricks", or simply being a "woman"	1

Table 2 presents in detail various relevant aspects that have been mentioned in the articles, without necessarily constituting their main theme. As above stated, due to the qualitative and thematic character of the content analysis, the categories were inductively developed based on the evaluation of the content of the articles. The results obtained show, as seen in the table, that the most frequently mentioned issues in connection with the prime minister after her nomination and in the first months in office have been marked by criticism or revealed negative personal elements: her controversial statements or actions (mentioned in 73 articles); her language mistakes, faux pas, blunders, gaps (in 53 articles); her incompetence (political, professional, etc. in 46 articles); the lack of intelligence (in 42 articles); the fact that she is not suitable/ capable for the position of premier (in 33 articles). Other

issues, also negative, linked Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă to the SDP: for example, in 30 articles there was mentioned, in one form or another, that she is the political “marionette” of the SDP’s controversial leader Liviu Dragnea and/or that she is an obedient person, “servile”, “subservient” to him (which would explain her ascension in this position of power). Moreover, the authors of 36 articles also highlighted in one way or another how SDP governance, including that led (more or less) by Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă, harms Romania, and 14 articles mentioned the controversies on justice and on changing the laws of justice in favour of the corrupt members of the governance and generally of the SDP.

Various aspects related to the outward appearance of the first female prime minister of Romania have been specified in relatively numerous articles: aspects of how she generally looks (in 16 articles); how she has the hair-do (in 14 articles); how she dresses (in 4 articles); how she makes up, what “tricks” does she use for her face (in 3 articles); what sex appeal she has (in 2 articles).

Many of these topics, which have not much to do with the premier’s competences, are found in articles as criticism and especially irony of the journalists referring to Mrs. Dăncilă. Among the topics in this category there is, for example, the comparison that the journalist and writer Cristian Tudor Popescu has made, starting with Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă’s hairstyle at the time, in a telephone interview at the Evening Journal on January 16, 2018, on Digi24 TV channel, between the premier and the monkey specie hamadryas baboon. The comparison itself, the interview in its entirety (in which C. T. Popescu made also other statements that could have been considered defamatory), the rapid own ex officio referral of the National Council for Combating Discrimination (NCCD) regarding the journalist’s statement, the fine that the journalist was given by the NCCD, as well as the ironic response of C. T. Popescu to the fine that he received (and which he later contested), were taken over and discussed in numerous articles from different media, some of them having the same title, such as: *Cristian Tudor Popescu compared Viorica Dăncilă with a monkey – VIDEO*, published on 17.01.2018 on the websites: *Știri pe surse*, <https://www.stiripesurse.ro/>; *Știri de Cluj*, <https://www.stiridecluj.ro/>; *B1 TV*, <https://b1.ro/>. The prompt own ex officio referral of the NCCD was noted and addressed in articles such as *CTP, Viorica Dăncilă and the baboon. How does the journalist defend himself against NCCD’s accusations (Digi 24 HD*, <https://www.digi24.ro/>, 19.01.2018), and his fine of 1,000 lei was discussed later in articles such as: *The baboon and the Teleorman* (published on the opinion platform *Republica*, <https://republica.ro/>, 01.02.2018) or *“Hamadryas baboon”. The reaction of C. T. Popescu after he was fined by NCCD (Digi 24 HD*, <https://www.digi24.ro/>, 01.02.2018).

Some media have also ridiculed the look and the fashion taste of the prime minister, by comparing her with a peasant woman or a housewife, or even calling her “fish wife” (*țață* in original in Romanian), a pejorative word used to designate a tasteless, vulgar woman: *The secrets of fish wife Viorica, the new premier proposed*

by SDP (the news website *Flux 24*, <https://www.flux24.ro/>, 16.01.2018) or *The peasant woman Vasilica – Viorica is a lady beside Cosette* (the newspaper *Național*, <http://www.national.ro/>, 18.01.2018).

And yet, most of the positive remarks in the Romanian media about Mrs. Dăncilă referred to her outward appearance, especially her fashion taste and her hairstyle. In other words, what in most media was criticized and ironized, in some other media was praised or appreciated. It is worth mentioning that most of these positive remarks about the outward appearance of the prime minister can be found in articles published in tabloid newspapers, characterized by a journalistic style based on sensational news, gossips and rumours about celebrities and public figures, as well as by excessive use of attracting attention photos (Burluson Mackay, 2017). Such an article, with a title containing the exclamation “*Look what an elegant premier we will have!*”, was published on 19.01.2018 by the tabloid *Click!* (<https://www.click.ro/>), with numerous photographs and explanations about premier’s preferences regarding clothing and accessories. Figure 1 shows the beginning of this article:



Fig.1. The homepage of the article *Look what an elegant premier we will have! Viorica Dăncilă loves accessories and handbags*, the website of *Click!*, 19.01.2018.

Source: <https://www.click.ro/> Screenshot from: <https://www.click.ro/news/national/uite-ce-premier-elegant-vom-avea-viorica-dancila-ador-a-accesoriile-si-gentile>

Copyright: Click! / Inquam Photos / George Calin

<https://inquamphotos.com/photos/bucuresti-viorica-dancila-psd-83548>

Image reproduced with permission from owner.

Other tabloid newspapers drew the attention, also in a positive way, to Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă’s change of hairdressing, as in the articles: *Viorica Dăncilă*,

change of look. The designated prime minister changed her hairstyle (Libertatea, <https://www.libertatea.ro/>, 23.01.2018) or Radical transformation of look. How the appointed Romanian premier, Viorica Dăncilă, publicly displayed herself! (Cancan, <https://www.cancan.ro/>, 23.01.2018). The same change was also noted in other media, such as the television channels PRO-TV and Kanal D, although in a more neutral way than in tabloids: Viorica Vasilica Dăncilă, change of look before occupying the chair of Victoria Palace (PRO-TV, <https://stirileprotv.ro/>, 23.01.2018), respectively How did the nominated premier, Viorica Dăncilă, appeared at a meeting with UDMR's leaders. Everyone noticed this change (Kanal D, <http://www.stirilekanald.ro/>, 23.01.2018).

Although no comparison was made with the media coverage, in the same conditions (nomination, first months in office) of a male prime minister, it can be said, that, probably, the outward appearance, the clothing, the hairdo, etc. of a man do not attract the same attention of the media, being much less frequently mentioned by journalists. A possible conclusion, which requires further research to confirm it, is that media attention to the external appearance of a person in a position of power is much greater when the person is female, thus confirming the social gender-related expectations and roles: a woman, even in a position of power, must “remain a woman”, that is, she should strive “to look good”; in the case of a man, if he is a good leader, makes good decisions and has the desired results, the external aspect is more or less negligible.

4.2. Aspects concerning the media coverage of the first female prime minister of Romania

The type of media in which the articles were published, along with the type of articles are the first items that characterize the coverage of the analyzed topic. As can be seen in Table 3, most of the articles were published on news websites (47 articles, i.e. 29 %), followed by articles on websites of television stations (35 articles, i.e. 22 %), and articles published online by newspapers in the broadsheet-format (30 articles out of 162, i.e. 19%). The articles from other media (websites of radio stations, regional/ local newspapers, aggregated websites, tabloids, news agencies, opinion websites/ online platforms, reviews/ magazines, and women’s magazines) accounted also for a total of 30% of the overall analyzed items, the proportion of articles in each of these media being below 10%.

Tab. 3. Types of media in which the articles analyzed were published.

	Type of media (n=162)	Number of articles in:	%
1	News websites	47	29
2	Websites of TV stations	35	22
3	National newspapers in broadsheet-format	30	19
4	Websites of radio stations	11	7

5	Regional/ local newspapers	10	6
6	Aggregate websites	9	5
7	National newspapers in tabloid format	8	5
8	News agency	5	3
9	Opinion websites/ online platforms	4	2
10	Reviews/ magazines	2	1
11	Women's magazines	1	1
	Total	162	100%

Next, the belonging of the analyzed articles to certain categories was investigated. As seen in Table 4, most of the items were articles of analysis, which means articles that gave a more detailed approach to the topic, analyzes and views of the journalists. From the total of 162 articles, 35 (i.e. 22%) were of this kind, while 33 articles (i.e. 20%) were reportages, meaning those articles in which a particular topic or event, related to the investigated theme, was reported and analyzed, sometimes "on the spot". On the next place were the simple news (26 items, meaning 16% of the total), that is, those news in which the topic was treated or reported, usually succinct, without the journalist analyzing or expressing his/ her opinion, followed by opinion articles (24, i.e. 15% of the total) meaning those articles in which reflections and a well-defined and expressed opinion of the journalist were presented. Other types of analyzed articles were: 17 review articles (10%), i.e. those articles that provided a retrospective or recapitulative perspective on the topic or summarized the current state of knowledge/ understanding of the subject, targeting the general public; 12 articles that analyzed previous interviews or online postings (e.g. on Facebook or other social media); eight overview articles (5%), that is those articles that combined the synthesized content of several specialized articles into one broad-spectrum article; six television programs (4%), meaning videos along with written texts (news or/and analyses), and one interview (1%).

Tab. 4. Types of the articles included in analysis.

	Type of the article (n=162)	Number	%
1	Articles of analysis	35	22
2	Reportages	33	20
3	Simple news	26	16
4	Opinion articles	24	15
5	Review articles	17	10
6	Articles analyzing previous interviews or online postings (e.g. on Facebook or other social media)	12	7
7	Overview articles	8	5
8	TV programs (videos and written texts – news or/ and analyses)	6	4
9	Interviews	1	1
	Total	162	100%

Other points of interest for researching the media coverage of the subjects related to the first female prime minister of Romania (investiture, political activity, public appearances, but also any related news or analyses, e.g. including those about her personal characteristics and achievements) were to what extent the articles were written in a logical or an emotional manner, leaving that impression when they are read (see Figure 2, which show the main appeal of the analyzed articles), respectively the extent to which the articles were written in a neutral tone, or rather in an dedicated/ engaged tone, whether positive or negative (see Figure 3).

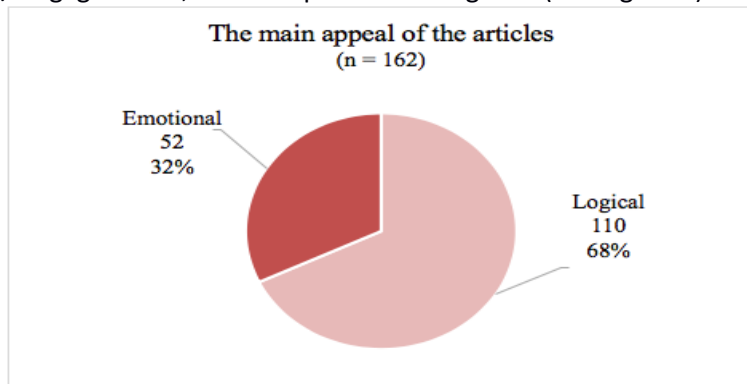


Fig. 2. The main appeal of the articles analyzed.

According to the research data, 110 out of 162 articles analyzed (i.e. 68%) have used arguments or descriptions based on logic (e.g. invoking verified data, scientific facts, real history cases, etc.), while 52 articles (32% of the total) were written in an emotional style, the arguments or descriptions presented being based more on emotions, on the appeal to fear, myths, prejudices or even sophisms. The articles were coded according to the dominant arguments used by their author.

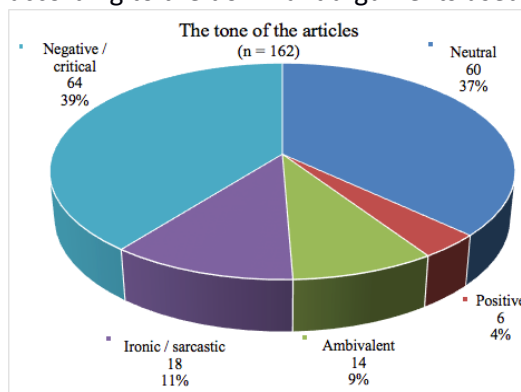


Fig. 3. The tone of the articles analyzed.

Figure 3 illustrates the tone in which the articles regarding the first Romanian female prime minister, after her nomination and in the first months of her term, were written. As can be noticed, most articles (54%) had a dedicated/ an engaged tone: only 4% were written in a positive tone, while most of them (39%) were critical, having preponderantly a negative tone; in addition, as distinguished during the conduct of the content analysis, which led to the inductive development of the analysis categories, some articles, apart from the negative or critical tone, had distinctively an ironic or sarcastic tone (this was the case of 18 articles, i.e. 11% of the total).

In a neutral tone there were written 60 articles (37%), while in 14 articles (9%) both neutral or positive, and critical or negative elements were used, and therefore they were assigned in the “ambivalent tone” category. In this regard, the articles were as well coded according to the prevailing tone used.

Discussion and conclusions

The purpose of the research presented in this paper was to evaluate the mediatization and the media construction of the first female prime minister in Romania’s history, starting with her nomination for this position and continuing with the first months of her mandate. Through the content analysis method, the main topics, themes and aspects covered on the subject were delimited, and the various features of the media coverage, such as the type of articles, their prevailing tone and style, etc., were outlined.

A first finding about these aspects is the predominance of the negative, critical, and even ironic/ sarcastic tone of the articles that had the first female Romanian premier as a subject. It is worth mentioning that this critical and ironic tone was determined, in most of the articles analyzed, not by the fact that it was about a woman, but by the fact that this person has made, since the beginning of her term of office, numerous blunders in the political action. The national and local press in Romania did not consider her and did not (re)present or media construct her as a strong and capable person, who managed on her own to have an ascending political career and to accede due to such qualities in the highest executive position in Romania. Instead, most articles highlighted the lack of her qualities, her deficiencies on multiple areas, her failures, as well as the dubious or at least suspicious means and motives, such as the consistent donations to SDP, which led to her political rise. She was not media represented as a model of a strong woman, but rather as a model of a docile, obedient female, servant to the interests of a strong man who in fact leads not only a party, but also Romania.

Without doing anything to change the image of women in Romania or at least to show her qualities and her own authority and power, the female prime minister, as she is covered by the media, appears rather as the opposite of a strong woman, completely or at least largely under the control of powerful men, who make the

decisions behind the scenes and have, in reality, the power. According to many media, through her actions, the female Romanian premier has shown that she unconditionally supports the party leader's interests and that her purpose is to obey and implement his plans (such as those relating to the changes to the Penal Code). Such facts have determined many of the articles' authors to portray her as not the holder of a position of power, but only as a political "puppet".

As regards the topics covered primarily relating to the prime minister, besides those concerning political activities, there are to be noted the themes that highlighted her blunders and mistakes, especially the linguistic and logical ones, but also those of thinking and knowledge. According to information from the media, Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă, both as a European Parliamentarian and as Prime Minister, has made many faux pas, gaffes, solecisms, errors and provoked a lot of awkwardnesses, showing many linguistic loopholes, but also deficiencies as concerns logic, and political and general culture. As a result, it can be said, that her media coverage, both in the first days after the nomination, as well as on occasion of her appointment and in the first months of her term of office, turned into a real "hunt" of mistakes and blunders, who have become in many news the leitmotiv associated with her actions and her person in general. In this context, many of the articles analyzed had a critical and ironic tone regarding the female premier, being a way to banter and, in some cases, even to insult her.

The investiture for the first time of a woman as prime minister of Romania has raised, therefore, the interest of the media, discussions and debates on various political and personal aspects. However, the fact that, for the first time in its history, Romania has a female prime minister, it has not been highlighted as such in many mass media, but other elements, rather controversial, were predominantly emphasized and debated.

As has been stated, the media frames call the attention to some things while obscuring others (Entman, 1993). According to the data of the present study, the main frames in the media coverage of the first female prime minister in Romania, as evidenced by the content analysis carried out on her appointment and in the first months in office, were the negative and controversial aspects, but not those related to her gender, but those related to her subordination and political obedience to some political leaders who run in fact the country, out of the shadow, as well as those related to her political inability and incompetence, illustrated by the numerous political blunders, linguistic faux pas, and diplomatic protocol gaffes. Furthermore, it can be said, as shown by the research results, that the only frame that is set out by the premier' gender and which has also been used often in the media coverage of Mrs. Dăncilă, this time not only in a negative, but also in a positive way, was her outward appearance. Thus, 15 of the analyzed articles addressed the external appearance or semblance of the prime minister as the main topic, and other articles also mentioned subsidiary such issues.

Although no comparative analysis has been made with the case of a man in the same situation, it may be presumed that the media would not have given the same attention and interest to the outward appearance, fashion tastes, clothing, accessories, hairstyle, makeup or eyelashes of a man. Although some of these were criticized or ironized in some media, paradoxically, in others – especially in tabloid newspapers – they were appreciated and praised, and in fact, they were among the few positive aspects publicized in relation to the first woman in the position of prime minister of Romania. Taking into account the quite significant interest expressed by the media for her external appearance, one can say that the first female premier in Romanian history has been media covered, perhaps more intensely than a man in comparable conditions, as an “object”, only as a result of her gender.

Research limitations

Finally, it should be noted, that the study whose results are presented in this paper has, as any sociological research, some methodological and research design limitations, which to some extent can influence the results and their interpretation. Further research on the same subject would be required to verify fidelity and establish the validity of the data, as in any content analysis research. Moreover, other additional research questions and analysis directions on this topic require further investigations. Therefore, all the conclusions drawn must be considered within these limitations.

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JACQUES ELLUL: A NOOLOGICAL SOCIOLOGY OF MODERNITY. SHORT OVERVIEW

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Abstract: *Man is a social and a personal being, but is also a spiritual one. He does not live concerning himself only with material or problems, but try to understand his own existences, and the existence of the world. One issue that affects his existence on all these levels is the problem of evil. The problem of evil is pervasive and is not easy to discern or to tackle it accordingly, though one should not allow himself to think evil consists in the wrong structure of society. Evil lurks moreover in the soul of man, but his soul exists and moves in society. And it is associated with the problem of liberty. Evil and liberty belong together. The sociology of Jacques Ellul, his sociological work and his theological, offer some insights in the matter at hand. The evil can be named according to him the technological system, or le système technicien. This paper offers some insight in Ellul's conceptions and adds some insights from other thinkers, so that it may become clearer what he means, and where the roots of this technological system or technological man lay. His views on technological society are true, and such things existence of explicit transhumanist theoretical positions, or the social changes that are imposed upon the societies today do attest his views.*

Key words: *Ellul; technological society; spirituality; sociology; modernity; evil.*

Aristotle defined man as a political being, meaning by that, what today is called a social being, that is not a specifically activity in the polis. But man cannot be seen strictly as a -product of the interaction of social, economic forces, or as his attempt to survive in a hostile world, for which he is not biologically prepared to face. Man, as such is also a cultural and spiritual being, and a true understanding of man, be it philosophical or sociological, should take this into account. Man is defined by a noological dimension, and his activities do reflect this even without conscious intent. There is a noological outlook present in the modern attitude. This outlook has been detected and described by many people, but one of the most original and radical in his judgment about it is Jacques Ellul (1912-1994). The main thesis of this paper is that his views, along other insight that other thinkers have to offer, such John Locke, or present-day German theologian Eugen Drewermann or the Dutch author Adrian Pabst, for example, offer a hermeneutical key to understand modernity and the meaning of humanity and freedom that lies behind it, and the completely negative import of those. The collective or social dimension of man's existence can not be ignored, but it is better to assume that the social relations are also the product of

the human psyche, be it personal or collective, and that these social relations can social and historical conditioned but not grounded in these circumstances (Drewermann: 1988 II, p. XLIII).

Contemporary man is the result of a change, a true revolutionary change that happened in the 17th century, and that comes to frictions these days. These changes introduce a new understanding of human condition, change that expresses itself in a new understanding of human condition. Everything man does is supposed to come from its own self-interest. Human condition, after Jean Rohou (2002: 13), represents the state in which people come to enter after they are born, so the totality of relationships between the person as desiring, feeling, etc. subject to institutions, values, transcendent forces and themselves. The relationship to itself is also modeled through values, models, symbols etc. These totality can change and will change, sometimes very quickly and it is possible to beget a society where to opposed system co-exists side by side. The official network of values, institution, norms and behavior and an unofficial one of ways of thinking, behaving and so on. That happened in the 17 centuries, but continues also today. This revolution of thought and feeling amounts to a break in the history of man (Mairet 1997: 19). The contrast is between a social conception of man and an individualistic one, which entails different views not only about the human person, but about nature, world, what is permissible and what is not. These two systems go through each person. This revolution is the basis of the future technological system that engulf man, as Jacques Ellul shows. It is the basis of the abstract system of thought that has modeled and still does the contemporary world. This revolution has replaced the past or classical way of understanding things, that is the vision of a world which entails an order that is superior to man, in which man has to integrate, and to which it belongs some other transcendent purpose. This order was preceded man, and the whole of society aspired to wisdom or redemption in this divine order, and order that was communitarian in its being. What was good, true or beautiful was defined by this order, and did not depend upon the will of man or mankind. The new order, the modern society replaced this order with the will of man, a will to dominate and to satisfy the wishes of mankind. Nature and world are things that have to be conquered and mastered, and also man has to free himself from tradition, dogmas, natural communities, and to build a society which is a society of free individuals, so people abstracted from their context and without any characteristics properly. The world of man has now only one law, a law that he gives it to himself without taking into account a law that has nonhuman origin, like the natural law in the Middle Ages, or the law of Dao, if one peek at the Chinese culture. The new fundamental principle can be called the principle of sovereignty, be it the sovereignty of the group or the individual. The past comes to be seen as an inheritance that has to be disposed of, because it hinders progress, that is the reconstruction of man and society which aims at attaining happiness. This new moment in history of mankind can be named as the moment of instauration of liberalism (Rohou 2002: 15). But generically it can be

dubbed modernity, though liberalism is only one way of attaining or expressing modernity, at least from a political and social point of view (Spitz 1997). The family and the bloodlines were seen as the basic unit of society, a thing that has changed. Now the individual with his wishes and desires is the basic unit, it is *der Mittelpunkt, der neue Maßstab aller Dinge*. He, and his wishes are king that command absolute. Nothing is allowed to resist his or her desires: country, family, etc. And the state has to act accordingly, punishing the people that do not agree with the wishes and desires of a minority, and criminalizing the discourse that doesn't agree. The right and the vision of justice have become subjective. And freedom has been defined as power to do something without being hindered by someone else. This conception has found an expression in John Locke's works, especially in *An Essay on human Understanding* (1995), where freedom is defined in terms of power. Even the notion of power derives from the exercise of human will (1995:163-164), from observing the changes happening to these inner objects that are the ideas. The experience of our will gives us an access to the idea of active power, of power that generates change.

Therefore, will appears as the faculty that generate change, a change that can be produced by human agents. Power sits henceforth at the center of Locke's philosophy, be it metaphysics, epistemology or political philosophy. Will is the power to do whatever someone wants to do, and as such it pertains not to knowledge but to action (Locke 1995: 166). This action can refer to an object or to a thought, and its proper aim would be the achievement of dominion. Lifting an arm is such an action that achieves dominion on a part of the body. So willing implies dominion and accomplishing a change in something. The faculty of will is put in motion by uneasiness, that is by a situation or a state that has to be removed. Something has to move the will in order that it start working, but this varies according to each individual. The will is no longer moved by the transcendent Good of theology or classical philosophy. The will determines what counts as good and what not (Schindler 2017: 28). For the English philosopher good and bad, wrong and right depend in the last instance on the will of man, though he asserts that they depend on the judgment of God, in a truly voluntaristic manner. Good and bad become powers, and they depend upon the perception of man regarding what may produce pleasure and pain (Schindler 2017: 29). Both good and evil are reduced to their empirical effects, and also to their significance for the direct and unmediated perception. Nothing can be said on their content which from now on will vary. Here the basis of relativism is set, though it can be argued that the basis had been set by William Ockham or by the western Church, when it accepted the philosophical dogma of absolute divine simplicity, which conflates divine nature/essence with activities and divine persons. This dogma has never been accepted by the Eastern Church, but it could be argued in another paper that the reduction of human person or essence to the power of choosing has its root in this absolute divine simplicity dogma. This is what the western political philosophy has done, it has reduced man to the power to choose

(Locke, Kant, etc.). For Locke, and for man henceforth there is no *summum bonum* as telos of its life. Whatever pleasures is happiness (Locke 1995: 189), and man through action and technology has the means to acquire or produce it. No more objective Good or Goods in the world, and no more hierarchy thereof. For Locke existence is not motivated by the Good, but by running away from the unpleasant, so by searching pleasure. But the will possesses also the veto power.

Man doesn't have to accept whatever comes to his senses and must not jump to action. This seems to be the source of all liberty (Locke 1995: 184-185). It means the autonomy of the will, its power not to be determined from outside, a kind of spontaneity. Even inborn preferences or things that normally are not thought to be under our control, will become targets of the will (Locke 1995: 190). Every determination seems now to get the status of an external determination, of heteronomy, so its effect on the human will could be suspended. Every determination becomes a kind of self-determination (Schindler 2017: 38). If I feel uneasy living in one place or under a certain political regime, that is my responsibility. That happens because I haven't used this power to suspend the uneasiness or not suspending it by leaving the place/emigrating. Nothing can determine someone without that person's consent. So, one becomes responsible for things he didn't or were not in his power. Every external determination becomes a kind of choosing. Every determination becomes a choice in this system, and every lack of exercising this power of the will, will be equated with not choosing. The only thing that determines volition or will it be the will itself. The will represents a kind of transcendent power, and something different from the determinism of natural laws, and responsibility can now be attributed for not doing some actions. Somehow man becomes a kind of *causa sui*, and an unmoved mover - so basically God (Schindler 2017: 40). Therefore, one comes to the idea that man is somehow outside the normal causal laws of nature, and that it can exercise a special kind of causality.

This capacity is seen as a condition for taking right and rational decisions, that is decisions that are looking to increase the good, or to obtain good, that is pleasure. Reason has become utilitarian. It no longer means the capacity to discern and contemplate the eternal truths that are the basis of our existence, but a pleasure and utility calculator, that tries to avoid unpleasant consequences. It is no more the capacity to transcend ourselves and get in touch with reality and its foundation. It becomes just a process of choosing, an instrument with no content or completely indifferent to the content. Choosing becomes a kind of technology, coherent in itself, but with no moral content, just like the technological system in Ellul's work. An act of choosing can be perfect ration and totally immoral, which was not the case in the classical understanding of reason. Now a rational agent is the agent that recognizes what it is and accepts the consequences of his choosing. The will's power of self-determination is not affected even by God, by his power of judgment. The wrong doer that accepts the consequences in front of God is still a rational agent. This modern interpretation of freedom, that Locke set forth, is a freedom for good or evil,

while in the classical sense true choice and rationality meant choosing good or the Good. This freedom is compatible with the technological system, which is impervious to moral, denies other values than itself, and transform and incorporates whatever it touches. Freedom in modern sense is power, potentiality, and increasing freedom means increasing the potentiality to actualize acts. But, being a power, a potentiality it still needs an object to actualize itself, and becomes the search of more power, and since happiness implies modifying something according to one's representation of pleasure, seeking happiness means trying to suspend or abolish every external determination, which now appear as self-determinations of the will, so as *alienations*. It is a quest without ending, being a quest of infinite power. The state comes to play a very important role in Locke's conception, despite what liberalism thinks. Since natural relation of men imply the reciprocal encroachment of freedom, since freedom and rights mean power, the state establish the limits of the legitimate use of power from the individual, the so-called freedom), but since everyone is prone to disrespect these limits, the state must intervene. And when one discovers other want and desirers that apparently do not affect other ones, the state must intervene to allow for these new desires to be fulfilled and therefore to create new rights that will be considered natural or inborn, and therefore to forbid everything that will get in the way of actualizing these rights. So, the state cannot be minimal, but must intervenes strongly, and will have to prescribe what one has to think and feel so that these new discovered rights and liberties, that are nothing but power to abolish an uneasiness, can come through even if there are objections against them, or the majority will be against them.

One of the most original French thinkers of the twentieth century was the sociologist and also protestant theologian Jacques Ellul, a very original thinker whose work encompasses many areas, a thinker that foresaw „almost everything”. His understanding of modern society, and of modern man can be epitomized by his thought of what he called technology or *le Système technicien*. His ideas can be understood also from what has been until now said. The modern man wants to dominate and transform the world, and to satisfy his own wishes and desires. This way of being or made of consciousness can be summarized under the understanding of modern world and man in the work of Ellul. His main insight into modern and contemporary world is that the technology builds a kind of world unto itself and it structures the way man thinks, feel, relates himself to the world. Not only that, the technological system expresses a new way of being for man. The bourgeois is in itself a kind of technical man (Ellul 2017). The technical or technological man and the attitudes and values that he embeds is behind or manifest itself in all the philosophical or literary descriptions that were used to characterize the bourgeois.

The bourgeois epitomizes the modern man and the modern world and its being-in-the-world. The bourgeois has many faces, but it is hard to find end expose the real one. Neither greed, nor commerce are its main features. Money, or accumulating money belong to the bourgeoisie system but it is not all, and not the

main feature, and neither is the ownership of the production means (Ellul 2017: 64). The reality behind the bourgeois and capitalist way of life is prior to them. Ownership of production means has always existed. The bourgeoisie was not created by it, by private property. The money belongs into a value system, in a worldview, but it is only an aspect of it, not the whole thing. The reality that the bourgeois expresses is deep and difficult to see (Ellul 2017: 74-75). The most depictions and attacks on the bourgeoisie are the expression of false consciousness and bad faith, being the sign of a truly philistine consciousness, which characterizes the intellectual, and most of the critics of the bourgeois, in the opinion of Ellul. The bourgeois, and his mode of existence has these features: he thinks that his own existence is new, that it represents a progress, that the sense and the meaning of its existence is universal, and that his way of life contains an surpasses the past ones or others. His ideology is the ideology of happiness, and he also possess the feature of assimilating everything that exist besides or beyond is value-system; this is also a feature of the technological system as mode of being. It does not tolerate other values and integrates external values, destroying their meaning. Happiness has here a specific meaning. It is not the meaning that Aristotle assign to it in his Ethics. It doesn't mean *eudaimonia*. Bonheur means something totally different from its original meaning, which meant the intensification by a transcendent power of a human activity, implying the divine and human co-activity, not hedonistic fulfillment (Ellul 2017: 81-82).

Attaining happiness was not the aim of every society everywhere, but is the aim of bourgeois society. This ideology has deep roots though, and one can see that in Locke's work, in its hedonistic conception of good. For Ellul this ideology has expanded with the help of the development of industry, communication, together with the hope of prosperity and with the help of the activist individualism that went along with those. Wherever industry and commerce develop, also technology, and where prosperity or the possibilities of prosperities arise, there will be the ideology of happiness too. It thrives on the development and diffusion of prosperity, and technology, and it depends upon wealth and consuming wealth. It is also a strong motivator for work, and engaging in the cycle that produces wealth. Happiness builds the foundation of technicist world (Ellul 2017: 93). Just like the technology itself it covers all life, all conceivable activities and it assign value to it, because other transcendent values are excluded. The whole world is made up of things, things without mystery, things that can be manipulated. This is the world of the primacy of action and technology. Possession, private property is only a consequence of this way of being. What counts is possession of thing, dominion over them, building the means to build a world. Work an action are the most important (Ellul 2017: 110-112). The universe must be conquered and transformed through work. And this way of being requires technology and lead to a technological mode of consciousness that becomes all-pervasive.

Technology is required because modern man has no transcendent horizon, no transcendent value and seeks only itself and the realization of his wishes, obtaining a so-called happiness. This attitude produces a technology or a technological system that may be regarded as being all-pervasive, a kind of technological consciousness which seeks to obtain the most efficient order in all domains of activity: work, leisure etc. Technology embodies the traditional goal of all human thinking the overcoming of the distance between thought and world. Problem is that in the context of the technological system man is no longer able to control his destiny or even the technological system, which is use and efficiency in itself, and recognizes no other values outside itself. It is completely impervious to moral reasoning or moral reasons, so it accepts no moral criticism at all. This technological system does not appear out of thin air and need something akin to a host to survive. This host is a given society or a given culture. It evolves and grows without end just like a cancer cell and takes over its host becoming thereby the intention or maybe the consciousness of that culture. Technology becomes the universal mediator between man and everything, between man and nature, man and himself – let us think about the so called changing of gender- and denature whatever it touches. It transforms human thinking and feeling, it transforms desire itself, it becomes choice itself, the default value of choosing. Even the metaphor of man or brain is a computer that is used in cognitive sciences attest the truth of Ellul's views on the matter.

Though for Ellul the idea of a human nature is problematic, if he even accepts such a notion this nature was lost after the Fall from Eden, technology transforms human nature. Basically, if man has a nature it does not stay unchanged from the contact with the technology, or with the surrounding cultural medium, or it can be found what when it confronts and tries to get over necessity. So the nature of man seems to be something that either is worked out or it is revealed in confrontation with an opposing reality. Of course, technique and technology exist since the dawn of man, man does not live where he was supposed to, and as a being characterized by lack, a *Mangelwesen*, he needs technology and instruments. Otherwise he won't survive. Maybe the Fall has made him into a prosthetic being after all. But man has developed the technology so it becomes a means for utmost efficiency. Ellul defines technique and technology as a collection or universe of means which are used to attain an end with the most efficiency possible. Of course, these methods have to be rational. As technology is seen as a kind of consciousness or a mode of being, an ontological determination it can not be restrained to or identified to strictly technical application, be it using a hammer, or an iPhone, etc. Every activity can be transformed in a kind of mechanical device. Even such activities such as meditation are touched by the machine, one speaks about meditations techniques. Labor management, management as such, urban planning, administration are all manifestations of the machine. Doing politics has changed. The politician can not take real decisions. He has to rely on experts, on technicians so that he could do his

job. The machine represents the ultimate ideal of the technological system, which is not surprising since modernity tries to obtain a scientific kind of ruling of society, based on scientific laws, if possible formulated in mathematical form.

The way man thinks to himself or relates to himself has changed. Man becomes something abstract. The way the subject sees himself has changed. It is no longer the entire, the whole man with his body, but only the thinking abstract self, a position that was prepared by Descartes, or rather a a through his distinction between body and the thinking self. I am not the one with my whole body, but an abstract entity. Man is no longer a natural object between many. The consciousness makes one what he is. And this consciousness is no longer attached to attributes as male or female, to give an example. If I feel I am a woman, and I am borne male, that I must change body, I am a woman etc. What the technological systems pursues here is the identity without difference. This is an example of the way that the technological system has become the universal mediation between man and nature, man and himself, and expresses also the will to power. Every obstacle on the road to power/happiness must be removed. Changing the sex of one's body, although impossible since the DNA and the body's blueprint stay the same, give satisfaction to this quest for power. This attitude is expressed also in other form, in philosophical forms, one of which is the transhumanism movement (Pabst 2017: p. 174).

This ideology, now in an expressed form, intends on the basis of biotech, nanotech etc., to create a union between man and machine, to transcend humanity in the direction of singularity. Inherited order, tradition, boundaries that are corporality, biology are seen as unnatural boundaries, that deny the full development of humanity. These boundaries are according to the transhumanist point of view, irrational, and they imposed artificially upon our minds, and a technological enhanced humanity must take place of the old one. It is a denial of our reality, an expression of the will to power, and becoming God, transcending time and space. Denial of all the natural constraints is the first condition for attaining the aim. Life itself comes under the power of man, and its sacrality is thereby denied. Movies like the *Space Odyssey* are advocating exactly this vision, and in the last of the book from Arthur Clarke there is a union between the human hero Dave Bowman and HAL, the living computer (now redeemed), producing HALMAN, and both of them fight the defect Monolith. It is in my view a continuation of the way people like John Locke have conceived mankind and the faculty of the will, but is not something new. Though contemporary transhumanism is expressed in scientific and materialist language but its roots are deeper and can be found in alchemy, which is a kind of technology not to obtain gold, but to recreate in man a power that makes him equal to the Gods/or God himself (Livingstone 2015). So, an old religious and symbolic representation lies even at the heart of a seemingly modern endeavor.

The transhumanist ideal of uniting man and machine to attain a kind of godhood seems not far behind and maybe this is the force and ideal that hides in the technological system. Everything must be reduced to mathematical and logical

scheme, henceforth no room for spontaneity of man, no room for freedom. Everything has to become a problem, so that the utmost rational and efficient solution may be found. It is a bit like for a hammer everything is a nail. Technical operations are not technical phenomena. The last kind build on the first, that are really technique that are used in many areas, involving the body of the worker, and when learned can become spontaneous and natural routine. The technological phenomenon appears when consciousness intervenes and tries to find a better way to accomplish the task at hand the concern is not the tree that has to be cut down but the instrument. The concern of the technological consciousness pertains now to the artefact not to the object in the natural world. The idea of alternative ways to do something arises; therefore the rational calculation steps in to find the best means to achieve an end. These instruments become objectified reason, and the technology becomes a way of apprehending and judging the world, that denies or ignores differences or subjectivity.

The abstract technical man appears in the world. The world this man indwells is a world of embodied rational conception, which are not distinguished from the natural objects. From now on, the technological system becomes autonomous, automatic, self-serving, self-augmenting, universal and monistic. No other value-systems are allowed to coexist, to set limits to its development. Even what we call freedom, that is choice become technical. Usefulness is the main mark of value. But this usefulness is as universal and not particular, and reality is determined or is reduced only to the measurable and doable. Mystery is something that this technological system cannot tolerate, everything that is transcendent has to become imminent to it, must be reduced to the light of causal explanation. Truth is also reduced to evidence. The technological system cannot also tolerate or accept the sacred, though the technique itself becomes a kind of untouchable sacred, never to be put under scrutiny or doubted. Even things like destruction of natural family, marriage for all, and gender swap are expression of this system. For Ellul, the best expression of this technological nightmare is the city, which he opposed to Eden. Cain is the first one to build a city, attempting to provide a solid base for his existence outside the relationship with God. The City is technology, and, as he says in *The Meaning of the City* (2003: 17-38; 105) God views the city as an independent being from her inhabitants, a place in which dwell fallen powers. Technology is the expression of man's wish to become or attain Godhood, as transhumanist ideology attests (Pabst.2018), and is the expression of unadulterated will to power: man trying to put himself instead of God, trying to become the ontological principle of the whole existence.

This is the insight that the French sociologist and protestant theologian expresses in his works, reminding us that this quest for power does not bring liberty or happiness. But bring conflict and slavery, even in another form. What kind of freedom will someone have in a smart city (the future urban dwellings for humankind), where the city computer or watcher (the future version of the present

day experts/technicians/wise men) decide what he has to eat, vegetables instead of meat – because eating meat damages the environment, where one could get access to internet or to by a computer only one thinks only what is deemed politically correct? As solution to this predicament Ellul proposes entails an ethic of non-power, and the hope of the transcendent intervention, since only god can breach the closure of this technological system, the expression of the will of power and of sin, a notion that modernity tries to forget or to deny, but whose consequences can be seen plainly in the world. One can disagree with the theological foundation and proposal that Ellul makes, but the main insight - which the idea of the technological system supports, is this. Modernity represents the attempt of man to attain autonomy or independence, to attain mastery over nature or even space and time that is to become God. Another name for this is the former theological but now political concept of sovereignty. The consequences cannot be but bad. And here Ellul reminds us of Heidegger and his saying „Nur ein Gott kann uns retten”.

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HUMANISTIC-SOCIAL SCIENCES - A POSSIBLE SOLUTION TO THE IDENTITY CRISIS OF THE CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL SPACE

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Abstract: *The fact that Globalization has caused different identity crises cannot be challenged either by social scientists or by individuals lacking the slightest expertise in the field. But, unlike those who believe that the process of global homogenization could be the solution of these crises, we advocate, in the Gustian style of Militans Sociology, for the exploration of alternative solutions, depending on the collective mentalities of the various communities: European, Asian, African etc. So, we advance the hypothesis that these crises can have solutions provided that social sciences put them into the epistemological equation, with the specific analysis methods, techniques and tools and formulate real-time intervention solutions. Thus, besides the social sciences that have been limited so far to define the problems and make them a radiography the involvement of all social sciences is expected by formulating solutions, depending on community projects and on the specifics of collective mentalities existing in the local, zonal and national profile. Social sciences can provide qualified counselling for decision-makers, helping them to stop deciding based on impressionist opinions.*

Key words: *globalization; identity crises; social sciences; collective mentalities; decisional actor; alternative solutions.*

From a mythological perspective, invoked and awaited with miraculous solutions, the 21st century began with impressionist managerial hypotheses and contradictory paradigms generalizing an axiological crisis at the level of the global social space. This social identity crisis is reflected at micro level in an acute identity crisis of the individual who, unhappy with traditional institutions, seeks normative protection in organizational structures and alternative models: "in order to conquer a certain identity in the masses that chain him and suppress him ... the contemporary man tries the need to group himself, to escape from his collective ambience and from the pressures that direct him towards mediocrity. In order to allow his most legitimate aspirations to update, the man of electronic times seeks salvation in adherence to groups." The identity crisis, in fact, amplifies the need for social assistance. A relatively recent feature of the attempts to promote new identity resources of associative life is the grouping of non-governmental organizations in true alternative networks to ensure the social cohesion of the global social space.

Originally emerged as a result of civil society involvement in solving social problems that government organizations could not solve in real time, NGOs have proven their ability to employ important human resources in the activity of

redistribution of existing material resources in a certain moment at the level of global society. Starting from these issues, recent studies (Sagebil; Munteanu, 2007) contain the thesis that NGOs are the most effective levers of expansion of the contemporary social space. Increasing specialization amplifies the need for communication both in the professional environment and in the global social space, the "colonization" of which with new technologies leads to the permanent creation of alternative conceptual schemes centred on the promotion of flexible and reliable organizational structures. In practice, these are found in competing empirical hypotheses that praxiologically particularize the contemporary man's condition in the expanding social space by the institutional validation of new ontological relationships.

In the field of modern professional bodies, information is currently the newest and most competitive tool in the work of conceiving and designing an efficient social action. Integrated social design, avoiding both the rejection of perennial, multi-secular values created in the human sphere, as well as the technophobic attitude towards the accumulated multi-secular values in science and technology, enables the articulation of the whole social system on the rationality of the human.

The construction of "Future Possible" (de Jouvenel, 1968) for the purpose of innovating the socialization instances, simultaneously with the promotion of new instances, specific to the technological civilization, confers on the technological rationality a status of praxiological complementarity in the sense of permanent humanization of behaviour patterns promoted by the increased weight of the technique throughout the social space. In this context, information as a modern tool that makes the symbolic mediation between nature and society possible contributes in a good way to revealing the way "people get to know their historicity" projecting themselves anthropologically beyond the duration of the conjunctural responses to the demands of the environment, more and more protean and multiply conditioned.

On these coordinates, theorized for a long time as an anthropological solution of transition from prehistory to the true history of the human condition (Park, 1970), urbanization is itself a source of dysfunction and amplifies the need of social assistance, methodologically coherent and pragmatically articulated.

The city is the current synthesis of the anthropological projection of the technical phenomenon, demonstrating that in its construction, "the laws of reinforced concrete can reveal its civilizational effects only in compatibility with the laws of society and with the value of human relations". The city's projection operationalises the functional projection of human relations concretely determined by the dimensions of contemporary urbanism. The sociological research directions of human issues note that the depth of labour division imprints to social relations a new specificity: they are segmented and marked by utility. People get into the relationship almost exclusively because of the mutual need to meet the needs of their specific occupations, they meet as role-carriers, intensifying the "theatrical behaviour", and the big city favours even the extreme schematization of roles

(Redfield, 1947), but as institutions are crystallizations of social relations (Druker, 1978), it is considered that it would be ideal for urban institutions and structures to be an emergence of community aspirations, conjugating in this way with the efficiency of civic participation. The various development trends of the city confirm the idea that we have entered a real "urban era" in which the urbanization process proves to be irreversible at the planetary level, requiring sociological research to help determine the possible levels of possible urbanization (Gorham William, 1976).

In this context, the significant mutations in rural areas can only be practical arguments for the contribution of a "new ruralness" to the structural reshaping of the social space through a functional projection of concrete human relationships, to the odds of contemporary civism. We therefore consider an innovative reconstruction of the social space, purged by the alienating behaviours emissions.

The technological civilization has in this respect the aim of discovering axiologically the people who seek for themselves in the complexity of their times, a process in which the technique is not - and even less so in the future - an end in itself. It will remain an increasingly refined and efficient means of rediscovering the interior, enriched with the gnoseological and praxiological messages of technology, becoming a true attitude to Existence. Growth crises, both inside the technology and in the institutional structures that they influence directly or in a mediated way, demonstrate the episodic character of the current level of development, unfairly interpreted as a superlative threshold of social phenomenality.

Globalization, propagandistically promoted as an "irreversible sense of human society," is in itself a comfortable utopia, because for the moment it internationally prioritizes the problems rather than the solutions of those who promote it. An example is Romania's post -1989 situation: we have been promised that the transfer of sovereignty is a condition for the transfer of prosperity, but the result is another, namely, we have received a massive transfer of problems from the Western model; unemployment, drug consumption and trafficking, prostitution, poverty, organized crime, and so on.

For this reason, the voices of those traditionally willing to show reluctance to the Americanization (to which globalization is sometimes mistaken for in the collective mindset), as well as the voices of the new contestants increasingly threatened with the loss of identity or of the prestigious continental or world rating.

The increased reserve in relation to globalization, perceived more and more as a galloping Americanization, is also fuelled by the disbelief that representatives of a nation "without history" can lead exclusively the process of innovation of world history structures ignoring the multi-secular history of many peoples on all continents.

In addition, the proposal to use the "American patent" to federalize Europe is totally unrealistic: The United States is an emergence of the synergies of emigrants from almost all countries of the world, not of peoples; there singular individuals have

dissolved their identity in a process of many generations, not compact communities, as is the case with Europe.

Instead, Europe is a continent with national states, many of which were empires with multi-secular identity profiles that cannot be "melted" in any American-like *melting pot*.

What can Romania do with a social system that has recently emerged from a bankrupt managerial experiment on a historical scale and is looking for improved models?

With specific reference to social work, after 1989 Romania was basically "invaded" by contradictory paradigms: the Latin model (Italy, France, Spain, Portugal), the Anglo-Saxon model (England, USA) and the German model, but without taking into account the specifics of our collective mind. Thus, the collective Latin mentality is especially paternalistic, oriented towards the exclusive authority of actors in the range of authority of leadership, while the collective Anglo-Saxon and German mind is more centred on the individual and emphasizes diversity and the decentralization of institutional authority through the cultivation of local and zonal synergies. The uncritical assumption of the different influences (called by us "institutional Bovarism"- Buzărnescu, 1998) determined a normative entropy that reached a critical point and renders impossible the unitary management of the complexity of the social problems faced by our country. For this reason, for the coherence of the practice, a special *Treaty* should be drawn up, that would articulate a synchronous conceptual system not only with the European exigencies but primarily with the nature of the problems that will be put into the managerial equation by social actors with executive powers.

Researches have revealed that the social space manifests a true tropism towards entropy, especially during periods of restructuring, when the zero-degree priority is to promote new integrative demands. In this context, the need for qualified assistance of the actors involved directly in managing the meaning and amplitude of the ongoing transformations is felt more than ever.

Epistemological instances legitimate in providing qualified assistance are: psychology, social assistance, sociology and political science.

- **Psychology** focuses on studying the *individual as a self-producer in terms of his allocentric openings*, respectively it reserves competence to investigate man as the main producer of interpersonal relational context.
- **Sociology** studies *man in community hypostasis, namely in his capacity of social producer*: organizational structures, organizational and institutional cultures, managerial contexts, decision innovations, and so on. Starting from dysfunctions (structural asymmetries of the social space, anomalies, crises, etc.), sociology aims to reach the causes that determine the respective effects / dysfunctions to propose alternative solutions in order to optimize the social space in this case. Due to this fact, a sociological research, therefore, is an action research within the meaning of "militans sociology"

promoted by the great Romanian sociologist Dimitrie Gusti, which cannot be reduced to a simple description of the phenomenon studied; the explanation of causes that determine negative effects confers on research the status of a sociological document through which researchers can contribute to the qualified counselling of social actors within the range of authority of leadership. When the research is limited to a simple registrar recording of social dynamics, we are talking about sociography: **sociography describes reality, while sociology explains it through causes** in terms of formulating a social diagnosis focused on the qualified counselling of the decision; sociology does not substitute for the decision, but gives it realism and predictability in the pragmatic management of social problems. For this reason, sociology has been defined as "an indispensable ally of the efficient management of the structural complexity of technological civilization" (Buzărnescu ,1999).

Sociology therefore confers legitimacy to the real-time intervention to shield the causes that produce visible negative effects in real time: by analogy, similar to the patient who, although living on an "open cord" a certain energy dysfunction he calls disease, but he does not know which are the causes, and therefore calls for a qualified consultation that only a doctor can offer, we have the social problems that every citizen lives directly and perceives them with an acute psychogenic burden, but only through a sociological diagnosis the social problems can be put into the managerial equation to find realistic solutions. Keeping the proportions of analogy, as emotional reactions cannot heal the diseases of the physiological body of the individual, but only the therapy prescribed by the physician, for the social body/ social space the sociological diagnosis is the only lucid, responsible and effective intervention for the optimization of the social communities.

While sociology focuses predominantly on elements of social pathology, the *social work reserves exclusively the area of competence for correcting pathways of individual pathology*: assisting a person in existential difficulty or having special needs.

To this end, the professional body of the social workers consists of specialists with a consistent interdisciplinary formation in whose set of competencies the weight of the knowledge of psychological, sociological and management methodology is considerable. We have here in mind the management within the meaning of the English etymology: *to manage* = to have the ability to relate resolutely to problems; we dissociate ourselves from the engineering definition or from the belief of the creators of this term by which they simply understand the "science of leadership" (Dănăiață, 2001). Being a manager, W. Taylor said in 1903 (Taylor, 1903) implies having the ability to identify problems, their nature, the spreading area, and to produce alternative solutions: the professionalism of the manager consists, therefore, not in being a "boss", but in being innovative in the

sense of formulating solutions to problems generated by the dynamics of an organizational structure; to the limit of the dynamics of a community.

Thus, psychology gives the social worker the ability to "work with a person", to address the client as an individual in the perspective of his social reinsertion, after a prior knowledge of the complexity of the motivations and of the life project of the "case".

Sociology contributes to the supplementation of the social identity of the social worker, especially through the methods, techniques, procedures and tools of empirical research of the conditions, which make each individual in a special situation to be "homologated" as a social case.

Public relations, which became the "social management techniques" since the 1970s, complement the professional identity of the social worker involved not only in the client's particular problem, but also in the innovative relationship with local, zonal or national authorities.

In this context, the epistemic, methodological and praxiological complementarity between social work, sociology and psychology appears to be the starting point of a new type of unity in the diversity of qualified instances of diagnosis and practical intervention, both individually and institutionally.

In conclusion, social sciences, as epistemic images of a dynamic reality, although in constant conceptual and paradigmatic reconstruction, are the only instruments through which one can shield the identity crisis of the global social space, contributing to achieving a dynamic balance of social structures and providing pragmatic landmarks for individual's movement within the community space.

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THE EFFECTS OF COMPUTER GAMES ON ADOLESCENT PERSONALITY

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Abstract: *In recent decades, computer games have become a form of popular entertainment in modern society. As a result, many people, including parents and researchers, have asked questions about how these computer games affect their users. Most psychologists who have begun research on this subject have mainly studied the negative effects of video games, but this trend has begun to change in recent years, with researchers also turning to their positive effects. This research explores the role that video games play in young people's lives and how they can be used to improve mental health and well-being. But our research is based on the effects on adolescents, especially those related to self-esteem, sociability and anxiety. A lot of studies in this area are made on variables such as violence and aggression, but we wanted to look beyond them and try to analyze some features and concepts of personality that do not appear so often in research.*

Key words: *effects, games, computer, personality, teenagers*

1. The particularities of adolescent personality development

Puberty and adolescence, presented as a transition from childhood to adulthood, is characterized by the transition to adult life, where the adolescent must respond to family, political, professional demands, etc., often described as the most disturbed, the most stressful and more difficult of all stages of development. The adolescent period is also seen as tumultuous, contradictory, being described as a storm, also called "the age of crises". Here there is a major psychological development and stabilization of personality structures. G. Standley Hall, in his work in 1904, launches for the first time the opinion of the crisis character of this age, a feature that is shared by most field specialists. Specifically, there is a "storm and stress" stage that, in the opinion of the renowned American psychologist, suggests a perpetual oscillation between extremes, between exuberance and apathy, cruelty and sensitivity, diligence and laziness" (Munteanu, A., 2003: 234).

During this period we can notice and recognize the spectacular transformations that the individual traverses in all aspects on several levels. Of these, some authors suggest that two of the most important plans are related to the profession, the process of professionalization, and the area of adolescent relationships while other psychologists claim that exploitation of the social environment and clarification of vocational choices are the most important development directions of the period adolescence (Sion, G, 2007: 190). Drama and the crisis arise because the teenager fails to change from childhood to adulthood at once, oscillating between childhood and maturity. There are also a number of opinions that “in the future, adolescence will have a more dramatic configuration, with the increasing tensions of existence” (Munteanu, A., 2003: 235).

Emilia Albu formulates a definition of this period, the stage of adolescence “being dominated by the adaptation to adulthood, by the process of gaining identity, by the intense intellectual intent of the conduct” (Albu, E., 2007: 66). She argues that after the end of puberty, and during adolescence, there is an intense exodus from a tutelary, family and school society and a wider cultural and social life.

In Sillamy’s view, adolescence is defined as “the period of life that lies between childhood, which continues, and adulthood. It is an “ingrained period”, marked by body and psychological transformations that begin at 12 or 13 years old and end between 18 and 20 years old. These limits are vague because adolescence’s appearance and duration vary by gender, race, geographical conditions and the socioeconomic environment. Psychologically, adolescence is marked by the activation and flourishing of the sexual instinct, the shaping of professional and social interests, the desire for freedom and autonomy, and the amplification of the affective life. Intelligence is diversified, the power of abstraction of thought grows, particular abilities are specified. The function of adolescence is to recognize, in all the existing virtual virtues, the possibilities of each, which will allow individuals to choose a way and engage in an adult life. But it is also to discover more closely the human beings, oneself and others, and to establish new relationships with the entourage: distance from parents, closeness (fellowship, friendship, love) to those of peers. Adolescents constitute a social ensemble particularly rich in virtues and dynamics” (Sillamy, N., 2009: 15).

From a physical point of view, the adolescence period is bounded by puberty and maturity, sometimes described from puberty and ending in adulthood. During this period, rapid changes and significant increases in height and weight are noticed. “Due to the explosive and unequal growth, the teenager’s appearance is not always harmonious. This is why most teenagers are deeply concerned about how they look. Problems such as pimples, irregular teeth, greasy skin, glasses, all these things that may seem minor become real existential problems during this period, and girls and boys are also worried about it. Explosive growth is a challenge for the adolescent’s psyche, they must learn to adapt to the new appearance at a rate often too fast” (Sion, G., 2007: 191).

Once the adolescent stage appears, there are changes in vital activities, for example, appetite is generally good, even if some food whims appear. Sleep is easy to install and is comforting, but its rhythm is often disturbed due to the habit of learning at night. Healthiness oscillates, from 14 to 18 years old, except for the appearance of dermatoses, acne, and between 18-24 years old, the teenager becomes fragile, exposing it to a range of illnesses, such as asthenia, neurosis, etc.. Attitude to bath fluctuates in boys, in the sense of an obvious disinterest until 12 years old, which stops gradually after this interval. Also during this period, "the teenager has an interest in setting up his own room, the taste of the clothing being refined. Sexual maturity is complete and sexual conduct is usually organized" (Munteanu, 2003: 238)

The main issues that arise during the adolescence are related to personal identification (self-identification) or self-consciousness development, involving the identity of the ego and the placement of the subject in reality. (Schiopu, U., Verza, E., 1997: 219). These complicated difficulties arise due to changes in the system of requirements to which the teenager is subjected, but also due to changes in which the personality goes with its structures and substructures. Here many authors speak of an intensification of self-perception, which develops in several aspects: the body image, identification and consciousness of the ego, identification of meaning, role and sexual status, and especially of the social one. In general, perception and body image become critical, due to changes in silhouette, physiognomy and attitude.

Body image is at the center of the teenager's self-consciousness, without which identification can not be organized. "It's the time they stay in the bathroom, they look in the mirror (narcissism), identify ignored details of the forehead, neck, eyes, smile, etc. The mirror gains new functions. The wishes of retouching or masking various skin impurities or other types of issues become apparent, first of all in girls. These touches express the desire to adjust the body's self, the desire to appear agreeable and presentable, etc. At the same time, these adjustments are the shaping of the social and spiritual self. Often pubes in front of the mirror make grimaces, smiling, looking for the most different expressions they can reproduce. Pubertal narcissism is alternately critical and lenient, with sometimes devastating moments" (Schiopu, U., Verza, E., 1997: 219).

Affiliation to a particular family and group drives the adolescent to adapt and overcome infantile, frustrating, insecure and addictive situations. Vocational identity is also formed during this period, and together they establish the personality traits in which the requirements of aptitude and attitude expression become conditions of self-assertion. "Identity development is less spectacular in terms of dependence or in situations where infantile forms of independence are maintained. Forms of addiction, material, emotional (of comfort and belonging) and mentality (values) can cause frustrations and conflicts between the teenager and parents, diminishing the expression of the young's availability. This leads to rigid or lean behaviors that seal their way of how personality evolves" (Verza, E., 1993: 106).

Sensitively, the individual is subject to a decrease in all sensory thresholds, resulting in an increased sensitivity. During this period the visual and chromatic field is stabilized, the teenager acquires additional capacity to name the colors. For girls, a more developed odoriferous acuity is noticed, especially for perfumes. Also during this period there is a better ability to verbalise the inner feelings. (Munteanu, A., 2003: 238) Adolescents are able to organize and direct their own observations without need of help, and post-decay individuals use these observations in research. Representations are also made with greater ease in adolescents. They can have very rich representations in detail but also others with a very high degree of generality. It emphasizes the organization of representations around central ideas or concepts in a cognitive field.

Adolescents can easily represent structural and functional relationships between different kinds of elements. They touch very easily the high level of the generalizations in representation, the one of the figurative concepts. Those interested in the technique and who will specialize in post-adolescence in this field will acquire even greater skills of representation. Likewise, they can represent, in detail, significant aspects of as many structures and capture new features and functionalities. These imaging capacities are demonstrated both in solving practical tasks and at dream times that occur relatively frequently at this age.” (Crețu, T., 2005: 34)

The emotional life is tinted in adolescence, the individual emotions become more balanced. With openness to beauty, superior feelings (intellectual, aesthetic, moral) also appear. In contrast to the opposite sex, a particular opening occurs, the adolescence being considered the age of the most agitated love. The choice of the partner is often based on the parental model, and if this model is not acceptable to the teenager, the choice will work according to antinomic or random criteria. (Munteanu, A., 2003: 245) There is a wide and deep emotional resonance in relation to all the events that the adolescent goes through, from family (health, difficulties, quarrels, etc.), from school (notes, winnings in competitions and Olympics, teachers' opinions) and society, social, cultural, local, national, etc.). The emotional-expressive behaviors setting is more effective both in diminishing and amplifying them. The moral concepts develop, deepen and become the benchmarks for evaluating their own affective responses as well as others in the most diverse situations.

In specialized literature, researchers believe video games have a significant influence on adolescent self-esteem. On the other hand, opinions are divided. Some authors argue that video games help increase self-esteem because adolescents can embody a character similar to them in the context in which these games are stimulating without being too difficult (Lieberman, D.A., 1998: 87). The aforementioned author studied within the same research and the effectiveness of video games in informing sick children about how to take care of themselves. The study showed that informative play about diabetes encouraged self-esteem and

social support behavior, correctly and actively informed patients, and subsequently seen healthy behaviors and better outcomes.

Furthermore, it has been suggested that some of the most intense positive emotional experiences are triggered in the context of video games (McGonigal, J., 2011: 32). Gamers have called one of these positive “flow” experiences, which has been described as an emotional experience in which they are immersed in a rewarding intrinsic activity that offers a high degree of control and simultaneously evoking a loss of self-consciousness (Sherry, JL, 2004: 328–347). In psychology, “flow” experience has often been correlated with a series of positive outcomes for adolescents, such as commitment to high school and achievements, high self-esteem, and lower anxiety (Csikszentmihalyi, M., et al., 1993: 53).

However, if there is indeed a subgroup of players who have problems with self-esteem and establishing meaningful relationships with others, and therefore develops a problematic, addictive video game by which they manage to cope or escape these difficulties, then the lack of social skills may be at the root of this social problem. Consequently, a measurement of social skills and self-esteem could effectively predict problems arising from video games. Moreover, by investigating the relationship between social skills and the problematic interest in computer games, we can achieve a complete and concrete understanding of the social characteristics of passionate gamers (Loton, D., 2007: 54).

In his study Loton suggests that people who play video games and get high scores have a little lower self-esteem, are less verbally expressive, less comfortable in various social situations, and are better listeners and are more sensitive to social norms [...] (Loton, D., 2007: 55).

2. Computer games and their influence on the teenager’s personality

Since 1996, in the United States, researchers’ concerns have been noticed about the effects of computer use and pathological behaviors related to the use of the Internet. It is essential, however, to understand the term computer game or video game and how it differs from other types of media (eg books, television, movies). The distinctive feature is that video games are interactive: players can not afford a story. Instead, video games are designed for players to be trained by the game system and, in turn, games react to user behaviors. There are millions of video games that encompass a multitude of themes and objectives. These video games can be played cooperatively, in a team, or require only one player; may require other players physically present, or thousands of other players online and are played on various devices, consoles (eg PlayStation, Nintendo Wii etc.), computers or mobile phones. Because of their diversity in the many genres and the wide range of sizes they offer, it is very difficult to make a classification of them.

Over the past 10 years there has been an explosion in the number of research on the subject. This research has helped to better understand how video

and computer games affect players. Several researchers have made clear that “video games are influential teachers that have significant effects in several areas, some of which may be considered beneficial and others may be harmful.” (Prot, S., et al., 2012: 647)

Gentile and other researchers have proposed at least 5 dimensions for video game players to be affected. The games are multidimensional and the effects they have on the players are complex, different sizes are likely to appear for each size. The 5 dimensions are related to: the amount of hours played, the content of the game, the context of the game, the structure of the game and the mechanics of the game. (Gentile, D.A., 2011: 75-81).

Effects on the amount of hours played are related to lower academic performance and increased risk of obesity (Berkey, C.S., et al., 2000: 105). The violent content of video games is a significant risk factor for aggressive behavior, while the content of prosocial games can increase empathy and aiding behavior, educational games being able to form specific skills (Greitemeyer, T., et al. 2010: 211–221). The context in which video games are played can change or create new effects. For example, virtual team game can encourage collaborative behavior (Hamalainen, R., 2008: 98–109).

Research on the effects of the game structure shows that fast games within the “action” category can increase visual and spatial skills (Green, C.S., 2006: 1465–78). Today’s innovative video game mechanisms, such as the Wii controller, successfully promote physical activity and have even been used for physiotherapy.

The largest and best-understood field of research on the effects of computer games refers to their violent effects on aggression. The results of multiple experimental, correlative and longitudinal studies confirm that violence in video games can significantly increase aggressive thoughts, emotions and behaviors, both in the short and long term (Anderson, C.A., et al., 2007).

Studies suggest that computer games with violent content increase aggression, expressed by aggressive thoughts and emotions, even when stimuli physiological properties have been controlled. Video games can increase aggressive thoughts, offer positive attitudes towards violence, and help to set up a hostile awarding bias: the tendency to perceive the behavior of others as malicious (Anderson, C.A., 2000: 772–90). In the short term, exposure to violence in video games produces feelings of hostility and anger (Carnagey, N.L., et al., 2005). Even critics who investigate violent games support the findings about aggressive thoughts, the stimulation of aggressive behavior, and the decline in pro-social behaviors (Ferguson, C.J., 2007). For longer periods of time, such changes can lead to the development of an aggressive personality (Bartholow, B.D., et al., 2005).

These effects of violent games on aggressive behavior can be seen in a number of studies:

- To demonstrate the causal effects of computer game violence on the immediate increase of aggression, several experimental studies have been conducted. For example, in a laboratory experiment, the children and adolescents involved playing a violent game were more likely to destroy a virtual opponent using a loud noise by earning compared to those who played a nonviolent game. (Anderson, C.A., et al., 2007)
- Correlative studies have enabled researchers to explore the link between violent video games and real-life aggression. For example, adolescents who played violent games to a greater extent were more likely to be involved in physical battles. (Gentile, D.A., et al., 2007)
- Longitudinal studies have shown that the relationship between computer game violence and aggressiveness is taking place over time. For example, children who played violent games at the beginning of the school year showed more aggressive, physical and verbal behaviors 5 months later. (Anderson, C.A., et al., 2007)
- Meta analyzes combine the results of several studies and provide the strongest evidence that violence in video games increases the risk of aggression. An analytical meta-analysis in this field has concluded that there is significant impact of computer game violence on behavior, for any type of research or experimental plan. (Anderson, C.A., et al., 2010: 41)

Researchers have concluded that violence in video games leads to a desensitization of it, a decrease in empathy and aiding behavior. Desensitization in this case can be defined as a physiological and emotional reduction in the reaction to violence. Short-term exposure to media violence has been shown to produce a physiological desensitization in just 20 minutes, while exposure to video games has consistently led to chronic desensitization in the longer run. (Carnagey, N.L., et al., 2007: 489–96)

Another dimension of research about the effects of computer games on youth is the relationship between them and school performance. Several studies have found a significant negative relationship between the amount of time given to the screen (including television programs) and the school performance of children, adolescents and students (Sharif, I., et al., 2006: 1061–1070). In other words, large amounts of time spent in front of the screen are associated with lower school performance. An explanation of this situation refers to the substitution hypothesis, which states that video games and TVs replace the time that should be given for reading, themes, or other knowledge enrichment activities (Bushman, BJ, et al. 2001: 223–254). Some evidence has been found to prove the substitution hypothesis. In a nationwide study on a large sample of young people between the ages of 10 and 19, computer games players had 30% less reading than those who do not play video games (Cummings, H.M.M., et al., 2007: 684–689).

3. Research methodology

3.1. The objective of the research

The objective we have been pursuing was to identify the level of personality (self-esteem, anxiety, sociability) of adolescents passionate about computer games, and compare them to less playful teenagers.

To accomplish this goal, we followed a series of steps that helped us in our research: identifying valid psychological tools to assess self-esteem, anxiety, and sociability, administering them to a group of adolescents aged 14 and 25 years, the quoting of answers according to the instructions of the established questionnaires, the creation of a database and the statistical analysis of the data obtained, in order to identify some significant differences between the players who play very much and those who play less.

The objective outlined above is generalized by allowing an objective study and the formulation of concrete conclusions, from which research can be expanded and continued on several objectives. Because personalised research on computer games is numerous, more complex objectives and hypotheses have not been addressed in this bachelor thesis, serving as a starting point for other research based on the same subject.

3.2. Research hypotheses

As regards the relationship between the objective and the hypothesis, it was attempted to maintain in the same sphere of study. Starting from the observations in the literature and the framework objective of the paper, we assumed that:

- *Adolescents who are passionate about computer games and practice them for more hours are less self-esteem than adolescents who do not practice them.*
- *Adolescents who play computer games in an intense manner are more anxious than adolescents playing less or do not play at all.*
- *Adolescents who play computer games in an intense manner are less sociable than teenagers playing less or do not play at all.*
- *There is a correlation between self-esteem and sociability in adolescents playing computer games.*

3.3. Presentation of research methodology: research tools and sample

To collect data on anxiety, self-esteem and sociability, we applied 3 questionnaires:

- a) Spielberger's Anxiety Status-Trait Inventory, X1 Form. This inventory was carried out by Spielberger et al. (1970) and it is one of the most used tools for anxiety assessing.
- b) Rosenberg's self-esteem scale, originally developed to measure the global sense of personal value and self-acceptance.
- c) The cosi questionnaire, a sociability questionnaire we developed ourselves.

3.4. Participants sample

The group of subjects for this research includes a total of 736 participants, divided by age, sex, and hours spent on computer games. Thus, there were 674 boys and 62 girls, of which under 10 years old there were 3, between 10-14 years old there were 61 persons, between 14 and 20 years there were 521 people, aged 20-25 responded to 130 people and over 25 there were 21 people. According to the hours of playing, 136 people play under 7 hours a week, 201 people with 7-14 hours per week, 153 people with 14-21 hours and 246 people over 21 hours a week.

3.5. Analysis and data processing

Hypothesis 1: Adolescents who are passionate about computer games and practice them in a number of hours have a lower self-esteem than adolescents who do not practice them.

To confirm this hypothesis, we have compared computer game players according to the number of hours they play. Firstly, the study participants were divided into two groups: the number 1 in the table below represents adolescents in the sample who play less than 14 hours per week and number 2 represents adolescents playing more than 14 hours per week. The following table presents the results of the t-Student test for comparing the averages of two samples. We noticed that the scores on two questions are significant. Question 4 and 7 of the first questionnaire sounds like, "I'm capable of doing things just as well as others" and "I think I'm a valued man, at least like other people." For these questions, category 1 of players, those who play less, had a higher average than category 2, those who play for several hours. This means that gamers playing a limited number of hours have a higher self-esteem than those who play in excess.

Hypothesis 2: Adolescents playing computer games in an intense way are more anxious than adolescents playing less or who do not play at all.

Like the above hypothesis, in this case the sample of players was divided into two groups, the number 1 signifying the players with a limited number of playing hours and the number 2 representing the players who play excessively, very much. First, we used the t-Student test to compare the averages of the two samples to identify whether and where there is a significant difference between the two groups compared.

A significant difference was noticed for item 11 of the questionnaire. This question is addressed as follows: "I trust my powers" and it can be answered with a response scale ranging from "Never" to "Always". In the figure below we can see how the participants answered this question.

Although the difference between the two groups is not very large, it has to be taken as such. In this case, the hypothesis from which we started is invalid, adolescents who do not play computer games are more anxious than those who play for many hours. This idea is also supported by the theoretical part of this study, as there are studies and hypotheses that have confirmed that anxiety is greater in adolescents playing computer games, although many research also support the hypothesis to the contrary. In this study, computer games represent a distraction from the stressful situations the teenager encounters daily. During this period the adolescent has to cope with family, political, professional demands, etc., often go through disturbing, stressful and difficult situations. Among the innumerable activities and hobbies that adolescents can practice, a large number of them prefer to play computer games, compared to other teenagers who focus their attention on the real world, full of problems and negativity.

Computer games can also simulate stressful situations that the teenager feels challenging for anxiety. Many of these situations represent a new environment for teenagers, and by practicing these situations through a character, anxiety over the specific situation can decrease when it happens in real life. And this idea is another interesting hypothesis that could be studied later.

Hypothesis 3: Adolescents who play computer games in an intense way have less sociability than adolescents playing less or do not play at all.

Using the same method applied to previous hypotheses, to demonstrate that there is a significant difference between category 1, adolescents playing video games less than 14 hours a week and category 2, adolescents playing more than 14 hours per week. Firstly, we used the t-Student test for independent samples to see at what items it appears a significant difference. We found this difference in items 3, 14 and 15 that sound like, "I like to spend my free time alone", "I prefer to talk on the phone than to write messages / emails", "I like to invite a lot of people at my birthday". We continued with the table that shows the descriptive indices to conclude if the hypothesis is confirmed or not.

Below there are the graphs showing how teenagers responded to those questions where significant differences were recorded. The item in the next figure, for question 14, is reversed, and it is noticed how gamers who play computer games very much prefer to avoid any social contact offline, even by phone. Excited players prefer quiet birthdays with few people. Birthday parties often bring a lot of attention from the guests to the celebration. This suggests that players in the category that play more than 14 hours a week prefer to circumvent situations in which they have to socialize with a large number of people.

Statistical calculations have concluded that gamers who play computer games for more than 14 hours a week, sometimes more than 21 hours, have a lower sociability than players who play less. This is due to many factors. First, Simmel

defines sociability as “the ability to form offline social connections” (Simmel, 1949: 255). If players spend so much time in front of the computer, they lose out of the normal time they should have been given to other types of activities, especially those involving socialization. Many times, adolescents replace the time that should have been spent in the company of others with the online one. This idea is also supported by the theoretical part of this paper, especially the idea of “replacement theory” which claims that if a teenager plays a computer game, he can not be more careful about others, so he can not socialize anymore. Unfortunately, these two activities can not be practiced at the same time. One of the options must be chosen: video game or socialization. The repercussions of choosing video games can affect the interpersonal relationships of passionate players. These relationships are often neglected and sometimes disappear altogether. Not only neglect is the only consequence of choosing video games; many players only deal with topics related to their passion for video games when they have discussions with friends or people they socialize with. These discussion subjects are often taken to the extreme, the conversation partners wanting to interrupt the conversation and even get rid of the gamers. Finally, when the entourage approaches other topics, gamers tend to feel ignored and become irritated or even offended. But they do not realize that choosing them to play video games for a large number of hours leads to this unpleasant situation.

Hypothesis 4. There is a correlation between self-esteem and sociability in adolescents playing computer games.

The last hypothesis of this research examines whether there is a correlation between self-esteem and sociability of gamers. As can be seen in the table above, at the thresholds of significance $p < 0.01$ and $p < 0.05$, there is a correlation between self-esteem and sociability to a confidence of 95% and 99%, respectively. In the figures below we can overcome the histograms made on the total scores of the participants in the self-esteem questionnaire and what measures the sociability.

Everyone had the experience of trusting their own powers, basically, to appreciate oneself and find out their own worth. This means we have a positive attitude towards our own qualities, which we evaluate at a high level. We are affected by a feeling that shows us our own capacity, competence, and the power to do what we want. We compare favorably with others and can organize in our everyday life activities that are consistent with these feelings of self-worth. Also, every person knows what it means to go through a diminution of self-esteem. It is characterized by the opposite of all these positive elements described above, and results in self-disapproval, impotence, lack of power, and even depression.

If the self-esteem of a person is low, there is a tendency to withdraw from activity, reaching passivity. Such people try to find ways to normalize, to find a level of self-esteem ideal to be able to participate in daily activities and not only. But many

of these people are failing and looking for those moments that make them feel good about themselves. These types of moments and behaviors are truly anti-social: from drinking to drugs, from giving up school or working to depression and hostility to others. This retraction is self-destructive, and deviant behavior is social problems because it involves getting out of normal, responsible behaviors and going into exactly the opposite of them. When these types of behavior are aggregated, they become a social issue.

Self-esteem and sociability are two closely related concepts, people with high self-esteem are sensitive to the feelings and needs of others, accept social norms and do not want to trample others to succeed. Instead, a person with low self-esteem is dissatisfied when it comes to specific social relationships (Johnson, J., et al., 2011: 563-591). For gamers playing a large number of hours of study, self-esteem and sociability is lower than that of lesser-playing players. The study shows that these two variables analyzed positively correlate, which is also shown by the results of the previous hypotheses.

This information and calculations suggest that teenagers in this study who have a low sociability have a lower self-esteem. From personal observations supported by the theoretical part of the paper, we found that adolescents who prefer to spend their free time playing video games do not have time for activities that would increase them and positively influence self-esteem or sociability. If a teenager does not interact with different people or age-specific situations, he/she will not have the necessary experience later in life to cope with such situations. In general, sociability is a preference for being in the company of others, in opposition to loneliness (Cheek, J.M., et al., 1981: 330–339) and is based on the extent to which a teenager prefers to have more social relationships (Mounts, N.S., et al., 2009: 71–80). Especially in a social context, if the adolescent gamer is not sociable, he will never have the experience of a social group, so he will not have a high self-esteem in such situations.

Conclusions

Finally, the goal of our article, which consisted in identifying the level of personality characteristics (self-esteem, anxiety, sociability) of adolescents passionate about playing computer games and comparing them with less playful teenagers, was achieved by confirming three hypotheses four supposed. Confirmed hypotheses are about self-esteem, which is lower for adolescent gamers who play more hours than those who play less. The second confirmed hypothesis is related to the sociability of adolescent players, being smaller in those who play computer games intensely than those who play less. The third hypothesis argues that adolescents passionate about computer games have a higher anxiety than those who do not play, but this idea is being denied, gamers playing more have lower anxiety

than those who play less. The last confirmed hypothesis shows that there is a correlation between self-esteem and sociability of adolescent gamers.

The article claims that the three personality traits studied are affected by the constant play of computer games. This is not surprising because the teenage period is often influenced by the same kind of social activities and contexts that may or may not be beneficial to the teenager. This work demonstrates that computer games can bring benefits but also disadvantages to the teenager's personality. In general, it is important to keep some moderation in the activity of video games and not only. Finally, computer games are designed to recreate the user, to feel relaxed.

In our article, objectives and hypotheses are presented in a general, systematized way. This is due to their own desire to make a computer game study based on the Romanian population that will serve as a starting point for other research in the same field. We have tried to a concise and useful support for such future research. From personal observations on literature, we can say that this theme can be enriched on both theoretical and research side. The latter part can be restored to other age groups, such as adulthood, or you can focus on the different effects that computer games have on boys or girls.

An interesting topic of study would be to identify the level of personality characteristics of adolescents passionate about computer games based on the types of games they practice. We believe that each specific game genre would bring other effects and influences on adolescents.

Finally, we hope this paper will open new horizons and become the basis of other similar studies, or will solidify the understanding of the effects that computer games have on its users, regardless of age or gender. Deepening this article can bring significant benefits to the field of psychology and professions that are linked to this theme.

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COMPETITION POLICY AND ITS IMPACT ON SOCIETY

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Abstract: *The competition policy gets in the center of international relations in the last decades. One of the main reasons why competition is considered more and more is because of the European common market. We understand that the competition policy is very important in managing the market, but also we are interested to see how much importance it has in assuring social welfare. To see if the competition policy influences social welfare, first of all, we analyze the impact of it on the consumer and its behavior. Then we focus on the consumer behavior influence on the social welfare. After analyzing multiple papers, we get to the conclusion that the competition policy as a cumulus of rules and laws bring advantages to the consumer as a part of the society and that social welfare, understood as happiness and contentment of the society is influenced by the consumer behaviour.*

Key words: *competition policy; consumer; social welfare; EU; consumer behaviour*

Introduction

Competition policy has a long history. It got special attention after World War II when the European states have tried to rebuild their economy. The War brought many damages to the economy and to the production system, which was oriented on the war. Because of this, we got a production line focused on military goods and a war based economy. To get over this state of decadence, the European nations take little steps to overcome together the economic crisis. The common purpose triggered between the European countries a desire to collaborate more and more at the supranational level, that as a response they builded a supranational organization- the EEC. This step encouraged the states to remove their national boundaries to create a common market with free movement of persons, goods, services, capital, and labor. Once they made this huge step the market should have been controlled, the producers should have been respected some rules and as a result the supranational structure decides to focus on the competition as a domain that follows the antitrust practices, the monopoly positions on the market, the mergers that do not encourage the variety of producers, products, the good quality of products and so on.

The competition field is sustained more after the fusion of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC) and the European Economic Community (EEC) that together form a single supranational

organization named European Union (EU). With the EU growing role, the competition step by step is transformed in EU policy. It is respected and implemented in the Member states of the EU help to the competition law.

The competition policy is dedicated to protecting the consumer from the effects of the anticompetitive practices of the producers on the market.

Giving the significant role of the competition policy in assuring the consumer benefits, in this paper, we will concentrate on the impact of the competition policy on social welfare. We start the work with an analysis of the competition policy, its history, the EU role in following the application of the competition law in the European space. Then we focus on the impact the competition policy has on consumer behavior and its benefits. To prove that, we underline a few papers that after empirical studies get to the conclusion that the competition policy influence positively the consumer by encouraging the consumer spirit and by giving to the consumer a large variety of choices. After that, we concentrate on proving that consumer behavior is essential in assuring the social welfare. To bring evidence that consumer behavior contributes to guaranteeing the social welfare we compare the times where the consumer have had no influence on the market choices, and specialists held its role, with today role of the consumer on the market. Lately, this role has been taken by the consumer. We give some examples of the opportunities given to the consumer to appreciate the quality of the services and the role of the consumer in encouraging the production of quality products at good prices. At the end we shape a few more arguments that the competition policy influences the social welfare.

1. Main terms and definitions

Since 1957 when the four liberties were declared the question of competition was raised and as a result, we have competition law aspects in the Rome Treaties. Before this event the national states did not give enough attention to the competition aspect, but once the national markets merged in one single European market the presence of competition policy was required (Motta, 2004).

The European Competition Policy has its development moment from 1950 until 1990. The policy was influenced by many factors like economic crises, enlargement of the EU, the change of the EU structure and its role in international relations (Cini, McGowan, 1998: 16). Competition policy becomes more and more important in the social grace to its "role in developing countries, promoting the competitive environment, building and sustaining public support for a pro-competitive policy stance by the government" (Hoekman, Holmes, 1999: 10).

The competition was found as a needed policy in Europe when the monopoly tendencies were growing in such a big market. To stop the agreements between companies that restrict the competition, or the activities that encouraged the abuse of a dominant position, the merging procedures that forced some companies to

follow the rules of the biggest companies and so on, the EU initiated the competition policy. Its purpose was to encourage the business area to make the best products with high quality and with a most right price (European Commission, 2012). Beside these activities the competition encourages also the economy.

In 2010 Timothy Besley, Torsten Persson, and Daniel Sturm described the competition policy as a trigger of economic growth (Besley, Persson, Sturm, 2010).

Three years later, analyzing the ASEAN Member Countries, Cassey Lee and Yoshifumi Fukunaga observe that the competition policy indeed represent “a key area of emphasis to achieve a highly competitive economic region” (Lee, Fukunaga, 2013: 1).

Looking at the EU and its beginning, we may say that the competition policy represented a key point for economic development. We refer to the European Steel and Coal Community that at its origins was a frame for international cooperation to obtain a common development after the World War Two and to the EU that we have today (a more than just supranational cooperation- an organization that formulates rules, laws and transfers them to the national states).

The competition policy in Europe is a policy of the EU, initiated to protect the national states from unfair competition and to protect a healthy market activity. Besides that, the EU uses this policy to protect consumers. According to Alison Jones and Brenda Sufrin, the EU competition policy is focused on consumer welfare more than on total welfare (Jones, Sufrin, 2014).

Following the consumer and his behaviour, often the competition policy is tangled with competition law. To make a difference between them Jones and Sufrin show that unlike the competition policy, the competition law is focused on pursuing the good application of competition policy by the market actors (*ibidem.*). According to the authors, we may see the competition law as a mechanism of implementation of the competition policy.

In 1997 Elanor Fox concentrated on a comparative study by analyzing the EU and USA competition policies and law systems. She observes that in both regions, the “competition policy defend the consumer interests and protects the free movement of goods in a competitive economy”(Fox, 1997).

Looking at the above observations, we get to the conclusion that in the EU, as in other developed regions, the competition policy is a very important key to cultivate a healthy economy and wealthy society. About the last one, we may say that the European competition policy is concentrated on assuring that on the free single market the actors respect the competition law and that their activity will not influence the consumers badly.

Analyzing what the above authors mentioned in conjunction with competition policy and its purpose, we understand that the consumer represents the central actor in the competition field. The competition authorities and the European Commission are following the activities on the single market to be competitive to ensure that the consumer will get benefits.

In 2000 Joan Giese and Joseph Cote found out that the consumer is watched to be satisfied. The authors identify that no matter how many authors have tried to define the consumer, they stuck at their satisfaction as the primary characteristic (Giese, Cote, 2000). Often to establish if the consumer is satisfied with the service or product we have to evaluate them. The ability to assess quality increases the role of the consumer on the market in competition relations (Darby, Karni, 2010). In most cases, the authors refer to a single consumer that represents society.

In the present paper, taking in consideration that the competition policy helps the economy to grow and the consumer to be happy, we will concentrate on analyzing the impact of the competition policy on the social welfare. Therefore if we note competition policy as A, consumer behavior as B and society wellness as C. If A implies B ($A \subset B$) and B implies C ($B \subset C$) than according to the property of transitivity of the implication relation A will involve C ($A \subset C$). (Bodea, 2019: 12). To prove that competition has an impact on social welfare we have to show that the competition policy affects consumer behavior and that consumer behavior affects the social wellness. For that, in the next part of the research, we will concentrate on the first affirmation and the role of the EU institutions in promoting and sustaining the competition policy development and the right application of the competition law.

2. EU institutions and the Competition policy

The competition policy has a great history behind. It starts with international discussions on the subject. In 1997 Bernard Hoekman showed a part of the competition policy before 2000. The competition was seen as a necessity to develop international practices to encourage international fair trade after the declaration of the four liberties. The primary attention on the subject can be seen in the European states that have had the intention to develop a market with discipline, qualitative products and services and so on. A first intention to develop a strong organization on the competition subject was identified in the 1980s. The International Trade Organization (ITO) should have had the mission to follow the access on the market of the producers by following some rules. Unfortunately, the organization was not founded. Its activities were taken over by a General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

In 1993 we had an evolution of the subject that takes forward the competition. The international community is talking about 'Minimum Antitrust Standards.' All of the discussed ideas on the competition came as international rules of working. Therefore the competition was still a frame of discussions and recommendations. In 1995 the European Commission underlined the need of an international institution to follow the: horizontal restraints, and rules to watch on the competition standards (Hoekman, 1997: 1-3). Than Hoekman observes that the competition rules are not enough to follow a competition order.

The above observation were made by the EU that decided that in the common market to avoid the monopoly situations, the antitrust cases, the merges and so on, the community should follow some laws and being watched by some supranational institutions to apply these laws.

If the international level it is harder to work, at the European level the EU concentrated to apply a competition policy, to transfer to the national states competition laws in order to have a organized and fair common market. The EU changes in the competition field in matter of institution building. Cini and McGowan identify two types of EU institutions with an impact on the competition policy and authorities: main actors and peripheral actors.

The first type of actors is those that exert the most influence on the national competition authorities as the European Commission, Directorate-General for Competition, the European Court of Justice and the Court of First Instance. The Courts are central in establishing the legal path of the European competition by analyzing past situations and judgments (Cini, McGowan, 1998: 38-39).

The activity of these institutions constitutes mainly of restrictive practices in the competition and analysis of correct compliance to the restrictions.

We have to underline also that the EU concentrated from the beginning of the competition by mentioning it in its Treaties. Among the first articles on the competition policy was article 85(81) in the EEC Treaty in 1957. The article underlines "in general terms to catch almost all agreements between firms, including anti-competitive agreements between direct competitors and anti-competitive agreements between firms involved in different stages of the production/distribution/ marketing process within a market" (idem.: 60-61).

Today, competition law is more extensive. We have in Treaty on the Functioning of the EU articles from 101 to 109 with rules on the competition. These rules refer to "internet market, prohibiting anti-competitive agreements between undertakings, dominant market positions, mergers, takeovers" (European Parliament, 2018).

The European Commission still is one of the main actors in triggering the change at the national level, and the Courts remain important in chasing the change and the right application of it.

Once the EU developed, the competition law merged too to fold the new challenges and changes. The EU competition law was initiated to track the activities that do not lead to better qualities of products and diversity. The purpose of the competition policy and EU institutions that follow the right application of the competition rules and laws in the national states is to: "enhance consumer welfare and encourage functioning markets in the EU, to sustain the economic growth and the development in the areas that the competition can affect, to promote the culture in the EU and worldwide by supporting the cooperation between competition authorities across the globe, to reinforce the highest standards in the enforcement of the competition law (European Commission, 2019).

Knowing that the competition represents not only an essential subject for the EU but for the world, in the next part of the research we will concentrate on the impact of the competition policy on the consumer and its behavior.

3. The competition policy absence and the consumer

Even at the first look, we may think that the competition policy does not have a significant impact on the consumer but more on the companies that develop their activity on the single market, we will highlight the changes that the absence of the competition policy can have on the consumer and on the state activities.

We analyzed a few studies made on countries where the competition policy is not so important as in the EU, for example, Egypt and China. As a result of invisible competition policy, a substantial impact on the consumer can be observed and on the state activities too.

Justin Yifu Lin, Fang Cai, Zhou Li present the problems that China has encountered because of competition policy nugacity. The authors identify as a significant problem the state difficulty to manage the state-owned enterprises. A lack of competition policy causes the issue, therefore the proposed solution to overcome the question is "to create a level playing field so that market competition can provide sufficient information for the managerial performance of the state-owned enterprises and make the managers incentives compatible with those of the state" (Yifu Lin, Cai, Li, 2012).

Looking at the described problem, we can observe that the EU has tried to remove this problem from the beginning with the help of the *Acquis Communautaire* and with commercial agreements. This way, the candidate countries to the EU membership apply the EU required level of work, implement the EU rules, laws in matter of competition, quality and so on. For external actors that do not follow the membership, like China, in the matter of export on the EU single market, the EU imposes a quality of the products. If the enterprises from the Chinese market fulfill the requests, they can deliver their products in the EU.

We understand that if China has had a more strict package of laws in matter of competition and a strong competition authority to follow the excellent application of the competition laws - not only that it may have had a better economy grace to the successful commercial relationship with the World, but also because the local market would flourish by having a tendency to make better products, to bring a larger diversity with a better quality.

Unlike China, Egypt faces different kind of problems like the absence of consumer moves and lack of competition that is fair and effective. Ahmed Farouk Ghoneim identifies the factors that brought the described issues that caused the silence to the disappearance of the competition policy role. In the list of problems he enumerates: the absence of effective collective action in the competition filed, lack of a transparent framework for lawmaking, shortage of incentives of interested

parties to stimulate an adequate and fair competition and the lack of policy advocacy (Ghoneim, 2002: 6-13). These problems may be considered the key factors that have lead to a significant silence of the competition authority. The decreasing role of the competition authority is a negative change that finally lows the voice of the competition policy and leads to a market where the competition laws and rules are not considered.

We understand that the impact of the competition policy together with the competition authorities play a key role in maintaining a healthy market, promoting new ways of working, increasing the products quality and encouraging the economic growth.

Underlying the results of weak or absent competition policy in a state convinced us that the competition is a cornerstone of a flowering economy that harms the state activities by missing.

Besides the strong impact the competition policy has on the activity of the state and the economy, it may have the biggest impact on the consumer. T. Besley, T. Persson and D. Sturm in a 2010 paper highlight that "the lack of competition can be associated with "anti-growth policies" characterized by high taxes, lower capital, a reduced rate of respecting the right-to-work, low-income growth" (Besley, Persson, Sturm, 2010).

The competition proves to be very important in market management and for the consumer too. In the above-described study we observe that the changes the competition policy bring may support the consumer satisfaction or not in a direct way by increasing or decreasing taxes and prices, or indirect by growing or decreasing the economy.

In a study on the United Kingdom, Clarke I., Hallsworth A., Jackson P., Kervenoael R., Perez del Aguila R., and Kirkup M. have shown a different side of the impact that the competition policy can have on the consumers. The impact is direct and can be observed in the variety of choices that the consumer has. The authors find out that "competition often provides different models of choice and balance the dominant models of choice" (Clarke, and all, 2006: 29).

Earlier in 1985 Michael Katz and Carl Shapiro argued a similar idea. The competition policy together with competition rules contributes to market equilibrium and finally confirms the consumer expectations in mater of diversity and stable market (Katz, Shapiro, 1985: 439).

Another prove that the competition influences the consumer, in 1990, Hans-Werner Sinn underlines a case of the competition policy affecting the consumer directly. Similar to Besley, Persson and Sturm, Sinn analysis on Europe shows that the consumer could feel a weak competition policy in the case of direct taxation (Sinn, 1990: 1).

In 2005 Mark Armstrong and David Sappington develop a study on the same subject as the above authors, on the competition and taxation by analyzing the gas market. Armstrong and Sappington find that the tax is a result of the competition.

The authors analyze the additional competition and get to the conclusion that good competition will bring long-term gains for the consumers (Armstrong, Sappington, 2006: 18-19). In the case of producers that deliver to a large number of consumers, there is a case of growing the taxes or a situation where the quality can be questioned because of the monopoly position a company can take on the gas market. This way, the diversity of producers will encourage a stable and harmonized market where the prices are established by the competitive market, where the quality is a particularity to set the price. This aspect shows us that no matter how the competition influences the consumer (direct or indirect), its presence is favorable for consumers advantage form the market.

Another prove that bad competition policy cand have a bad influence on the consumer can be seen in Patrick Rey and Joseph Stiglitz paper. They find two situations in a market with a lack of competition that can have a bad influence on the consumer: "a) a situation with a perfect market equilibrium; b)a disequilibrium on the market where a producer will increase the prices to get to the market where the rival has a similar product and to decrease the price to have buyers. As a result, both responses lead to higher consumer prices" (Rey, Stiglitz, 1994: 26).

Looking at the above, we understand that competition has a crucial role in assuring consumer advantages. Therefore the Competition authorities should follow the consumer interest by one side and sustain the firms, producers, companies on the other side. The Competition Authority should have the role of a balance custom between the two important actors in the competition policy field.

Given the fact that we observed that the competition policy influences the consumer, its behavior and welfare, in the next part of the research we will demonstrate that the consumer behavior can have a great influence on social welfare.

4. Consumer behavior and social welfare

Often the social welfare subject is analyzed through the theory of social choice that links the social welfare to the decisional process. To understand what are the factors that affect the social welfare we concentrate first on its definition. In 1963 Arrow defines the social welfare as "a social ordering of alternative states of affairs for each profile of individual preference orderings over those states" (Sen, 2017). The definition illustrates social welfare through lenses on social choice and happiness. We agree with this definition, even though we will build another definition that explains the terms as we have it in mind when we are developing the research. We start from the concept of society, which according to the Cambridge dictionary is "a large group of people who live together in an organized way, making decisions about how to do things and sharing the work that needs to be done. All the people in a country, or several similar countries, can be referred to as society" (Cambridge Dictionary, 2019). According to the same source the welfare term is

defined as "a general state of health or degree of success of a person, business, country." The term is also seen as a "state of happiness or a state of having enough money" (ibidem.). Merging the definitions, as a result, we will have the social welfare as: a state of happiness by having enough money and goods of a large group of people that live together in an organized way and have common rules and laws.

Giving the above definition, in the next part of the paper we will concentrate on the factors that most influence social welfare.

First of all, we should underline that the consumer as individual is a part of society. Therefore the consumer welfare is a factor that contributes to social welfare. At this point, you may understand that we refer to social welfare as to the total welfare. From this reason, we will show the difference between social welfare and total welfare. The last term includes not only individuals that take decisions to buy something from the available choices, but also the producers and other actors as a part of the whole. Thus, the total welfare may decrease the welfare of the consumer as individual (Alboek, 2013). The social welfare may include a process of keeping the number of producers under control, because their growing number may cause a market explosion, therefore, an increase of the anti-competitive practices that finally may cut the consumer choices, the quality of the products and a significant difference of prices.

Consequently, we understand that the consumer behavior has a significant role in ensuring the social welfare by giving the consumer a large variety of choices, the best prices, the best quality and a right balance of quality-price.

Consumer behavior influences social welfare by imposing product standards. Hand in hand with the competition policy, the consumer behavior brings for the society the products and services quality and price on the table (idem.: 74).

We must observe that people have different preferences thus take different choices. Therefore we may never have social welfare in terms of total social happiness, because it may be at least one part of the society that is not happy about the market evolution. Starting with this idea, we concentrate on 'what may bring happiness to all the parts of the society'? We find that common for all the consumers is that they want the best offer; therefore they will take the choice that will bring them an advantage (Rob, Waldfogel, 2004). This makes us understand that to have social welfare we should have first a large variety of choices for different society parts or a society where the consumers have similar choices (Jorgenson, 1990).

Giving the fact that the competition brings with it a rise of the social choices on the market, we think that the society may be happy about the competition results because they are happy about the products or services they chose. From another side, concentrating on the similar choices, we observe that in the last period we have a more and more request for the 'BIO products.' The EU brought on the table the highest quality standards for the producers, which led to the appreciation of the consumers of the products with a good quality that does not influence their health badly.

Another example of consumer behavior role in establishing social welfare is the evaluation they give to the services or products they buy. For instance, the appreciation of the services of the cashier at the markets or evaluating the phone services of a phone company¹, or evaluating the work of a hospital² and so on.

From the above we observe a dual impact of the competition policy on the consumers: encourage similar choices, brings fulfillment to all the consumers by giving the possibility to buy good products for the reach as for the poor. This is one of the reasons why EU is concentrating more and more on the competition policy and consumer rights, and to protect consumer welfare (Alboek, 2013: 69).

The idea that the competition policy supports the social welfare is also sustained by Joseph Bradley, that in 1987 underlines that a basic aspect in assuring the consumer welfare would be to respect the competition aspect of antitrust law (Brodley, 1987: 1020).

We observe that the competition policy assures that the producers follow the competition rules by finally giving the consumers a large variety of choices and the consumer behavior as decision making from the multiple choices available influence the social welfare by encouraging the producers to give to the consumers the best variety of choices.

The fact that consumer behavior is a fundamental pillar of social welfare is sustained also by Richard Hugman. Hugman say that initially, we have had experts that established if the quality-price report was good. Lately, the competition policy of the EU empowers the consumer to take this kind of decisions by evaluating the products quality and finally by buying the products or services that have the best balance of quality-price (Hugman, 1998: 138).

After all, we observe that the consumer behavior becomes one of the main factors that assures social welfare in a market where the competition policy is respected. If the consumer is well informed about his rights and choices, if the competition is appreciated and brings to the consumer enough choices the consumer, as a part of the society will achieve the welfare state. Therefore each member of the society being in the same situation will contribute to the social welfare were comparing to the society variations of the salary we will have variations of products to offer universal access to the market to the poor society parts. The advantage of the competition policy would be that even for the poor, that buy the cheapest product, it will have a guaranteed basic quality imposed by the EU competition rules.

¹ As an example of consumer appreciation of the phone services visit the link: <https://forum.vodafone.ro/t5/Feedback-%C5%9Fi-sugestii/Chestionar-privind-calitatea-serviciilor-de-relatii-cu-clien%C8%9Bii/td-p/135092>

² For more details on the consumer role on the hospital visit the link: <https://www.reginamaria.ro/chestionar-de-satisfactie>

Conclusions

The competition policy was initiated to minimize the antitrust activities and to eliminate the dominant positions on the market, to liberalize the market, to correctly implement the state aid, to avoid mergers that have the purpose of controlling a part of the market. Its role is summed up to guarantee for the consumer a broad range of choices and right prices (European Commission, 2019).

We are asking ourselves if the Competition policy influences not only the consumer but the social welfare by training the consumer behavior. To see if it does, we concentrate first on analyzing how the competition policy can influence the consumer and its behavior. Then we analyze how consumer behavior can influence social welfare.

We define social welfare as a state of happiness and contentment of a large group of people identified as a society. As a result, our paper is resumed to analyze if the competition policy influences the happiness of society.

After analyzing a few studies on the competition policy we observe that the competition policy indeed has a great role in influencing social welfare. The consumer as a part of the society is modifying its behavior by the opportunities the competition policy puts to its disposal. Therefore the consumer behavior and its decisions finally contribute to social welfare so that the consumers support the competition that brings them multiple choices and guaranteed quality. The consumers by their choices show that they are not so different, that at the end their behavior is reduced to choosing the best product at the best price.

By having this attitude, the consumer encourages the competition on the market that provides a continuous variety of choices and better products at the best prices which assures the happiness of the society.

This paper can serve as a starting point for research subjects like the competition policy impact on the market actors, the competition and the evolution of the EU market, the EU competition policy and the future changes of the common market and so on.

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EMOTIONAL DISTRESS, ANXIETY AND SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS IN ADOLESCENCE

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Abstract: *Provenance and socioeconomic status have a large impact over the mental health in adolescence. The aim of this research is to identify significant differences in anxiety and emotional distress between adolescents with high socioeconomic status and low socioeconomic status. Previous research highlighted that low socioeconomic status is related to mental illness, stereotypes, low self-esteem, poor school-based social status, a feeling of hopelessness and high levels of anxiety and depression. A sample of 360 adolescents was assessed with Emotional Distress Profile (PDE), Endler's Anxiety Scales (EMAS-T) and a Socioeconomic status screening, made by the author. Results show, on one hand, that adolescents with low socioeconomic status have higher levels of both anxiety and emotional distress, and on the other hand, that anxiety strongly correlates with emotional distress. Practical implications of this research regard the self-assessment in adolescence, the better understanding of the role of socioeconomic status in one's subjective assessment of social rank, the importance of this assessment dimension in the development of autonomy and self-esteem, and the importance of these results for the development of effective interventions to improve the adolescent's mental health.*

Key words: *Emotional distress; anxiety; socioeconomic status; adolescence.*

1. Adolescence and development

Adolescence is a developmental stage that represents the border between childhood and adulthood (Sion, 2007). Adolescence can be a difficult time that can be characterized by a constant pursuit of a committed and consistent self-identity, which is one of the most important developmental tasks, as so many researchers have highlighted over time (Rose, 2012; Perkins, 2001; Arrington Sanders, 2013; Crosnoe & Kirkpatrick Johnson, 2011).

Development in adolescence is influenced by genetic, social, educational, cultural and geographical factors. These multiple influences make adolescence suitable for an integrative approach, in an attempt to understand the changes that occur during this developmental stage. Regarding the main traits of adolescence, the literature describes the following features that develop during this stage (Crețu, 2005, 2009; Adams & Berzonsky, 2009; Santrock, 2003; Tsai, 2012; Walker Russ,

2004; Verza & Verza, 2000; Bonchiș, 2004; Lerner, Lerner, Bowers, Lewin-Bizan, Gestdottir & Brown-Urban, 2011):

- abstract mental entities (knowledge, processes, skills and metacognition);
- the fulfillment of reasoning, by reaching the formal thinking stage;
- the dominance of hypothetic reasoning, the development of the ability of analyzing consequences;
- decision making skills, the critical and creative thinking;
- the enlargement of memory skills, of its active character and of the ability to correlate different information from various fields;
- the convergence of thinking and imagination and the development of the ability to create original products;
- the vocabulary, speech and dialogue skills, nonverbal communication skills;
- the ability of analyzing their personality, of acknowledging their complex emotions, of introspection;
- the strengthening of feelings, like honor, pride, dignity, self-respect, contempt or vanity;
- the interest for a certain career and vocation;
- the ability to set goals and achieve them through sustained efforts;
- gaining of independence and autonomy, exerting the ability to make choices, to self-govern and self-regulate;
- shaping a self-identity, a self-image and self-esteem;
- exercising roles and statuses;
- be part of different peer groups.

2. Social status and social class in adolescence

The term *status* means the position of a certain person or group in the society (Baudon, 1981, apud Zamfir & Vlăsceanu, 1998). Max Weber was the theorist that gave this term the significance of social prestige and considered that it can be examined through a ratio between political and social involvement of a person. His entire theory privileges analysis of social relationships in the competition for social and political power (Gane, 2005). Based on this theory it can be seen that economic features were those that usually determined status, on one hand, and status can be used as a strategy for economic growth.

For Ralph Linton (1936, apud Zamfir & Vlăsceanu, 1998), status means a collection of rights and responsibilities that an individual can have, based on his position in society. Every status is related to a certain reputation. And so, some statuses can be more valuable than others, and may bring their owners great advantages. Furthermore, people are usually judged and identified according to a basic status, which is a key-status based on which other statuses are interpreted (Bulgaru, 2003).

Voinea & Bulzan (2006) speak of various approaches of this concept: (1) the sociologic approach – Talcott Parsons highlights the complexity of statuses, talking about pairs like: doctor-patient, teacher-student, father-son, etc.; (2) the psychological approach – Jean Stoetzel emphasizes that status is an ensemble of behaviors that we can legitimately expect from others; (3) the anthropological and cultural approach – Ralph Linton suggests that status is a collection of rights.

As stated before, adolescence is a critical stage in which teens desire to achieve independence from parental authority, while they strive to make their own decisions. Young boys and girls face a multitude of constraints and responsibilities, incongruent due to the difference in biological and social maturation. If biological growth starts as early as 11 years old, the social development bursts somewhat later in life. Adolescents are consumers of financial resources during this whole stage. They usually don't participate in their family income, and this fact means that they don't own a socioeconomic status. Their status is usually transferred from their parents.

Socioeconomic status and social class is a measure of the combination between education, income and occupation. In Romanian society, the image of the adult is superposed on the one of the adolescent. The position of young men and women in their peer groups differs from one individual to another. While some adolescents may be leaders and enjoy their popularity, others are ignored or rejected.

In our society, the most accepted stratification system speaks about the existence of the next social classes (Marica, 2007): the upper class is represented by the very rich people; the middle class (*the white collars*) is represented by intellectuals, businessmen, teachers, doctors, etc.; the working class (*the blue collars*) is represented by people that perform manual labor; the lower class is represented by those that strive to survive and usually live in inhuman conditions. Social class influences the adolescent's life style and health condition. Health is an influencing factor that can allow a person to be part of the labor market, in order to ensure the needed income for satisfying his or her needs.

Social roles in lower classes are better outlined, since stereotypically, women take care of their children and of the household, while men are the ones that provide for their family. Parents tend to be more authoritative in lower classes, opposing a more democratic parenting style that characterizes the upper classes (Marica, 2007).

In conclusion, although adolescent's life differs based on the social class they belong to, the way that each individual acts and manages his life may allow him to accede higher or lower levels in the social hierarchy.

3. Emotional distress and anxiety in adolescence

Pașca (2006) suggests that emotional distress is a type of stress that disorganizes human conduct and has destructive effects of life satisfaction.

Emotional distress is the degree of physiological, psychological and behavioral deviation of an individual from his normal and healthy functioning. Emotional distress may be the expression of failure, of a failed confrontation between pathogens and people.

Emotional distress may be observed by different behavioral symptoms, such as (Gissens, 1990, apud Jelescu & Savca, 2009): impulsivity, irritability, inertia, somatic commotions, negative transformations in the quality of psychic processes, mood swings, and shifts in volitional efforts, motivation, behavioral contradictions and affected communication skills.

The most common stress factors in adolescence are (Adams & Berzonsky, 2009):

- biological changes of the adolescent's body,
- high expectations of the educational institutions,
- inferiority complexes regarding their own person,
- conflicts with teachers and friends,
- lack of balance in relationship with their family and the society,
- separation from their parents due to divorce or the departure of the parent in foreign countries,
- the existence of ill members of the family,
- frequently changing the schools,
- the satiation caused by extracurricular activities,
- financial problems,
- physical or sexual abuse.

Another incapacitating trait in adolescence is anxiety, which can be defined as insecurity (Sillamy, 1996), as an emotion generated by a peril, perceived as hard to foresee and control (Doron & Parot, 2006). Anxiety is related to fear, concern, neuroticism, panic, tension and agitation, that block an individual from his normal functioning and affects his life by creating discomfort (Fensterheim & Baer, 1984, apud Holdevici, 2011).

Golu (2010) states that adolescence is a stage of conflict, rebellion, anguish, stress, pressure and anxiety, derived from all the physical, emotional, cognitive and social transformations. During this stage, anxiety determines the inhibition of the behavior, the lessening of the own resources, the weakening of the efficiency and the emergence of communication difficulties.

4. Objectives and hypotheses

The main objective of the research is the identification of differences of anxiety and emotional distress, based on the socioeconomic status of adolescents. The hypotheses are:

1. We presume there are significant differences between adolescents with low socioeconomic status and high socioeconomic status regarding emotional distress.

2. We presume there are significant differences between adolescents with low socioeconomic status and high socioeconomic status regarding anxiety.
3. We presume there is a significant correlation between anxiety and emotional distress.

5. Sample and methods

The research was conducted in 2 stages. In the first stage, the sample consisted in 780 adolescents that were assessed with a Socioeconomic status screening made by the author. Based on the scores they obtained, we divided the sample into three categories: adolescents with high, medium and low socioeconomic status. In the second stage we used radicalized groups (see Sîntion & Călin, 2014) of adolescents with high and low socioeconomic status, that were assessed with Emotional Distress Profile (PDE) and Endler's Anxiety Scales (EMAS-T) from Cognitrom Assessment System. The sample consisted in 360 adolescents, 154 male and 206 female, from Constanța and Tulcea, aged between 17 and 19 years. The ethics of this study were ensured by obtaining the written consent of the participants and their tutors, as well as of the school principals.

The Socioeconomic status screening investigated aspects like: the frequency of trips, the popularity, the income, the ability to make decisions, the acquisition of expensive clothing, gadgets, the access to education and medical facilities, the position in the group of peers, the academic performances.

Emotional Distress Profile (PDE) is a questionnaire used to assess dysfunctional emotions, like fear and sadness and Endler's Anxiety Scales (EMAS-T) measures anxiety as a psychological trait.

6. Results

- 1) **Hypothesis 1** - *We presume there are significant differences between adolescents with low socioeconomic status and high socioeconomic status regarding emotional distress.* We obtained an asymmetric distribution of scores and we used Mann-Whitney U Test for independent samples. We obtained a mean rank of 32.58 for adolescents with high socioeconomic status and a mean rank of 45.42 adolescents with low socioeconomic status. The difference is significant at .000 ($p=.01$), meaning that adolescents with low socioeconomic status are more stressed than adolescents with high socioeconomic status.
- 2) **Hypothesis 2** - *We presume there are significant differences between adolescents with low socioeconomic status and high socioeconomic status regarding anxiety.* We obtained an asymmetric distribution of scores and we used Mann-Whitney U Test for independent samples.

We obtained a mean rank of 28.12 for adolescents with high socioeconomic status and a mean rank of 66.37 adolescents with low socioeconomic status. The difference is significant at .000 ($p=.01$), meaning that adolescents with low socioeconomic status are more anxious than adolescents with high socioeconomic status.

- 3) **Hypothesis 3** - *We presume there is a significant correlation between anxiety and emotional distress.* We used Spearman correlation coefficient. Its value (.453) is statistically significant at .000 ($p=.01$), which means that emotional distress and anxiety strongly correlate.

7. Discussion

The main objective of the research, the identification of differences of anxiety and emotional distress, based on the socioeconomic status of the participants, was achieved.

The first hypothesis identified significant differences between adolescents with low and high socioeconomic status, with the first ones more stressed than the others. Low socioeconomic status may cause negative emotional reactions due to the fact that needs cannot be properly satisfied. In Romanian rural areas, the socioeconomic development is scarce. Poverty is a real problem. There are situations of families that cannot satisfy even their basic needs, like food or shelter. Another category of needs regard the social status. Low income families belong to low social classes and their children cannot enjoy a better social position. Adolescents with parents that have a medium or high socioeconomic status have more resources as their disposal to manage difficulties in life and stressful situations (Moilanen & Shen, 2014).

They are usually stigmatized, judged and rejected by their peers. Băban (1998) states that popularity is a measure of social status. A rejected or partially integrated adolescent may endure negative emotions due to rejection, injustice and aggressive behavior of peers. Statistics show that rejected adolescents have a greater suicide risk. Furthermore, a study conducted by Green, Leyland, Sweeting & Benzeval (2013) shows that low socioeconomic status adolescents are predisposed to smoking and alcohol consuming at very low ages. Furthermore, many participants in the study come from families where parents (fathers usually) have great problems of exaggerated alcohol use, which put an awful lot of stress on the children. This kind of environment can affect the adolescents, making them more vulnerable and supporting the belief that they will never be able to change their life.

Another important aspect of high emotional distress among low socioeconomic status adolescents is the lack of money and decent incomes. Poverty can provoke conflicts in the family, attachment problems between adolescents and their parents, a general stressful lifestyle that can affect the adolescent's view over life and society.

The second hypothesis identified significant differences between adolescents with low and high socioeconomic status, with the first ones more anxious than the others. Anxiety can be the effect of different errors in processing information, which make people view different factors as unknown, unclear or menacing (Calvo & Cano Vindel, 1997, apud Boncu & Nastas, 2015).

Being a psychological trait, anxiety may appear in many occasions in life, and may support the emergence of anxiety disorders (Boncu & Nastas, 2015). It has two dimensions: cognitive and emotional-physiological. The cognitive dimension allows the emergence of uncertainty, of helplessness or of inferiority complexes. The emotional and physiological dimension comprises physical reactions like tension or sweat. Daniel David (2015) suggests that Romanian adolescents are less anxious than American teenagers, but anxiety is caused by different factors. In Romania, especially social processes and economic factors seem to favor the development of anxiety. This supports our results that show that teenagers with high socioeconomic status are far less anxious than adolescents with low socioeconomic status. Low income and poverty are definitely influencing factors. In the context of peer pressure, school environment, ambition, comparisons or family problems, anxiety in low social classes is greater.

In many situations, social status is a required condition to be accepted in a group. Not having enough money can generate stigmatization and rejection by peers, and also supports the bullying phenomenon. High socioeconomic status adolescents have access to the necessary resources that allow them to feel free to make mistakes, to begin all over again. In opposition, low socioeconomic status adolescents may fear wrong choices or missing certain opportunities in life. Furthermore, high socioeconomic status is an influencing factor of the development of positive self-esteem. Anxiety may also appear in the process of constructing the ideal self, by becoming a barrier in achieving a desired personal image. Obstacles that adolescents have to overcome while building their identity can also generate anxiety.

Furthermore, relationships in families with economic and financial problems are not always harmonious, because lack or low income generates stress and conflicts between family members. Thus, frequent conflicts between parents may be another cause of anxiety in adolescence.

Another explanation regards the national assessments and tests that adolescents have to take at the end of high school. Usually, high socioeconomic status adolescents have better results and performances, which allow them to access higher education institutions. In doing so, they can more easily prepare themselves for a profession. Low socioeconomic status adolescents may not have the necessary resources to go to a university and this is a reason for them not being able to get a well-paid job later in life. This conclusion is supported by Vernon & McMahon (2010) that state that people who don't have parental and economic satisfaction lose their reputation and experience anxiety.

The third hypothesis identified strong positive correlations between emotional distress and anxiety, fact that is also supported by other studies (Fumiko, Kurebayashi, Prado & da Sliva, 2012; Tudoran & Furtunescu, 2013; Cohen, Kamarck & Mermelstein, 1983; Misra & McKean, 2000; Rawson, Bloomer & Kendall, 1994). The two variables support each other and often can be mistaken for one another (Robu, 2011). Adolescents are a vulnerable category as they can face a feeling of diminished self-efficacy caused by both anxiety and emotional distress.

Conclusion

This study shows that socioeconomic status is a key-element that makes a difference between adolescents. The importance of the provenience environment and of the social and economic factors for the mental health of adolescents is highlighted. Furthermore, this study has other practical implications as follows:

- the importance of counseling in adolescence, provided by school psychologists and teachers,
- the development of a positive self-esteem, of healthy coping mechanisms and of autonomy in adolescence may be a key in managing stress and anxiety,
- the development of school programs that can enable adolescents to increase their resilience, at both organizational and personal level,
- the involvement of social and political institutions in the economic development of the rural areas in Romania, through better policies and programs,
- the importance of family support and a better cooperation and communication with adolescents,
- the importance of social mobility in allowing equal access and rights for all young people,
- the importance of adolescent's mental health for the future adult's wellbeing,
- the minimisation of the bullying phenomenon, the development of tolerance and acceptance of others among young people, starting in schools and continuing at societal level.

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MANIFESTATION OF CORRUPTION IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

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Abstract: *In the current context, the educational system in Romania faces a rather high phenomenon of corruption, generated among teachers as well as among students, pupils and, last but not least, parents. At the same time, it should be emphasized that this phenomenon should not be generalized, because, at the same time, the Romanian school has in its structure professors that are dedicated to their profession and honest teachers who want to reach performances with their students. Among the main factors determining this phenomenon facing not only the educational system but also the society as a whole are the economic factors, the lack of stability in legislation, the rigidity of the bureaucracy, and the lack of adequate education in the sense of scarce awareness by preschoolers, pupils, students, of the effects of corruption and the risk people who violate criminal law are subject to. The main corruption crimes and malfeasance while in office regulated and punished by the criminal law committed by educational staff are quite numerous and some of them shall be subject of the following analysis, such as: bribery (both in the form of offering and accepting), lobbying, receiving undue benefits and abuse of office.*

Key words: *corruption; educational system; teachers; crimes; causes of corruption; legislation.*

1. General Aspects of Corruption

In order to prevent corruption, it is imperative to know the legislation in the field of education and, not the last, in the field of anti-corruption as only by knowing the legal provisions in force, the entire staff in education will really understand the extent of the corruption phenomenon, but also the risks to which those who defy the rigors of the law are exposed.

The fact that Romania has adhered to a series of conventions and treaties in recent years has attracted the obligation of the Romanian state to harmonize the internal legislation with the European Union legislation, even if the degree of harmonization of the legislation is still questionable.

The role of teachers in the harmonious development of students is indisputable, as they have the obligation to convey to students through their teaching behaviors, values such as integrity and paying respect to the rules in force, but also to their peers.

As a socio-human phenomenon, education through the information it transmits during school time has as a final destination the development of the young generation, of man in general, in order to facilitate their integration into a society that is constantly changing.

According to Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948), education is an inherent right of man, and in the internal legal system it is known a constitutional guarantee, as it is referred to by the fundamental law of the Romanian State, the Constitution of Romania, in Article 32 named the right to teaching.

Currently, the educational process in Romania is undergoing constant process of "inspection" and has to face a number of negative aspects such as: overgrown classes, schools with inadequate buildings in terms of maintenance, lack of school materials, excessive bureaucracy, legislative instability, and the low level of teaching staff salaries.

Given the multitude of issues faced by today's school, the phenomenon of corruption is steadily increasing, and the effort put forward by the authorities must be one to fight and even annihilate it. Educational institutions aim at preparing a fair, tolerant and equal society, but the presence of corruption diminishes this role of education, directly affecting social cohesion. (Heyneman, 2002)

At present, corruption is the greatest challenge of our society, and authorities are trying to use the most effective methods of combating it, so both literature in this field and the jurisprudence have tried to outline this concept. Broadly speaking, corruption is a departure from the principles of morality but also ethics, but for a deed of corruption to be an offense and therefore to fall within the scope of criminal sanctions, it must meet the elements provided by the criminal law.

The Council of Europe Criminal Law Convention on Corruption, signed by Romania on January 27, 1999, defines corruption in the two ways of committing, both active and passive. Thus, Article 2 of the Criminal Convention of the Council of Europe refers to active corruption: "the promise, offering or giving, intentionally, by any person, directly or indirectly, of any undue advantage to a civil servant, for himself or for another, in order to fulfill or obtain an act in the performance of its functions".

Article 3 of the Criminal Convention also defines the passive corruption: "the intentional request or receipt by a public official, directly or indirectly, of undue advantage, for himself or for another, or acceptance of an offer or promise of a so useful in fulfilling or abstaining from performing an act in the exercise of his functions."

In accordance with the provisions of the Convention, these acts constitute corruption when they are committed by national civil servants, foreign public officials, national and foreign parliamentarians and international parliamentary assemblies, international officials, as well as by individuals representing international organizations.

2. Corruption and corruption offenses

The new criminal code, when conceptualizing the notion of offense in general, has taken into account both inter-war Romanian criminal law and European Criminal Codes. Therefore, the institution of the offense was defined according to the criminal code, in Article 15 1 as "the act provided by the criminal law, committed with guilt, unjustified and imputable to the person who committed it." The fundamental features of the crime result from the definition given by the Criminal Code, these being the typical, anti-judicial and imputability features. (Udroiu, 2015: 70). In order to be charged with the criminal responsibility of the perpetrator, the Romanian legislator compulsorily provided that the deed meets all the constitutive elements of a crime.

In the following, we will briefly present the corruption offenses foreseen and punished by the Romanian criminal law, as well as other offenses related to the service that may be committed by the educational staff.

3. Bribe taking

Bribe taking is regulated by art. 289 of the Penal Code and Article 7 of Law 78/2000, republished, which criminalizes a type variant, an assimilated variant, a mitigating variant and an aggravated variant. (Dobrinou, 2012: 527)

Pursuant to Article 289 (1) of the Criminal Code, the offense of bribe taking is "the act of an official who directly or indirectly for himself or for another claims or receives money or other benefits that he does not have a claim to, or accepts the promises of such benefits in connection with the fulfilment, non-fulfilment, urgency or delay of the accomplishment of an act that enters his or her duties or in connection with performing an act contrary to these duties.

At the same time, the Criminal Code contains provisions on the applicable sanctions, so the commission of bribery is punishable with imprisonment from 3 to 10 years and it is compulsory to forbid certain rights such as complementary and auxiliary punishment.

Also, after having consumed the criminal activity, the legal provisions provide for the confiscation of money, valuables or any other goods received, and in the event they are no longer found, equivalent confiscation is required.

An accentuated manifestation of corruption among teachers is also represented by the extra tuition phenomena, which has become a trend for today's education system students. In this situation, the active subject of the bribery offense, provided by the legislation in force, is the teacher in the class where the student is studying. Thus, teachers constrain students to accept tuition, gaining considerable sums from these harmful habits. Students who refuse or come from families who have no financial means to participate in these meditations receive scores much

worse than others, sometimes being in a difficult situation not to get the pass mark at the end of the semester or the school year at one or more many subjects.

Many of the teachers who practice such "meditations" motivate their behavior by the fact that the level of pay is rather low compared to other professions and, through them, they manage to outline their income.

In order not to generalize this phenomenon, which is steadily increasing, we also need to highlight those situations where certain teachers practice these tuitions free of charge with students after classes at school without looking for a patrimonial advantage. These situations must be welcomed, and the teachers in question must be given at least a moral gratitude.

4. Bribing

In the sense of the current criminal investigation, the bribery offense is the deed of a person who promises, offers or gives money or other unfair advantage to a clerk in order to fulfill, not to fulfill or to delay the fulfillment of an act regarding his duties or act contrary to these duties.

As far as the doctrine is concerned (Dobrinou, 2012: 541), "bribery is characterized by a corrupt action exerted by an individual on a civil servant or a person with service duties in the service of a public servant assimilated or any legal person."

In the case of this offense, the author, or the active direct subject is uncircumcised, which boardly means it can be any natural or legal person. Regarding the sanction that comes after such an act, the criminal law provides for the punishment of imprisonment from 2 to 7 years.

The situation is similar to that of the bribery taking offense in terms of seizure of money, valuables and other assets, and if they do not exist, the way of confiscation is applied by their equivalent. The ruler also provided a cause of non-punishment if the perpetrator denounces the deed before the criminal prosecution body had been notified.

In the case of bribery offense, the active subject is the parent of the child under the care and education of the teacher. So, there are often situations of so-called "masked" corruption, manifested by the gifts and little attention given on March 1 or 8. It should be noted that at first glance this custom has the purpose of respecting tradition, but in certain situations these small tendencies hide other aspects, such as offering these expensive gifts and not just symbolic to teachers in exchange for getting higher marks. There are situations where these "little attention" are offered, not only on special occasions, but in exchange for passing an exam or getting a higher mark.

5. Influence trafficking

In accordance to Article 291 (1) of the Criminal Code, the offense of trafficking of influence means: "claiming, receiving or accepting the promise of money or other benefits, directly or indirectly, for himself or for another, committed by a person having influence or misleading that he or she has an influence on a clerk and who promises to cause him to fulfil, not to fulfil, to expedite or delay the fulfilment of an act that enters his/her duties or to do an act contrary to these duties."

Those committing such offenses can be sentenced to 2 to 7 years in prison. Also, in the case of trafficking of influence offense, similar to other corruption offenses, the money, but also other goods received, are subject to confiscation, and if they are no longer available, the confiscation by equivalent is ordered.

Specialty literature (Dobrinioiu, 2012: 554-556; Udrioiu, 2014: 357-358), has synthesized three essential requirements for the existence of the crime.

"First of all, the perpetrator must have a real influence or let it be thought to have an influence on the clerk, this influence being, moreover, the determinant cause of the buyer's influence action. Secondly, the perpetrator must promise that he will cause the civil servant to fulfil, not fulfil, to urge or delay the fulfilment of an act that enters his / her duties or to perform an act contrary to these duties. Thirdly, the deed must be committed before or concurrently with the fulfilment, non-fulfilment, expedition or delay of the fulfilment of an act that enters the civil servants' duties, respectively, before or simultaneously with the accomplishment of an act contrary to these duties." (Fanu- Moca, 2014: 15-16)

In the sphere of these crimes there are the illegal ways of appointing and promoting teachers for political reasons and personal interests. There are quite often cases where teachers are appointed school principals with the help of the political factor. All these appointments and promotions that are made without regard to professionalism lead to a degradation of the educational act. Thus, teachers who teach are very poorly trained and vulnerable to corruption in the education system.

6. Influence buying

This offense is incriminated by Article 292 Criminal Code in the plain version and Article 308 Criminal Code in mitigating version.

The offense of influence buying consists in "promising, offering or giving money or other utilities for himself or for another, directly or indirectly, to a person who has an influence or i thought to have an influence on a civil servant, in order to cause him to meet, do not fulfil, urge or delay the fulfilment of an act that falls within the duties."

The punishment provided for committing such offenses is the prison from 2 to 7 years and, at the same time, the legislator also provides for the prohibition of exercising certain rights.

Also, in accordance with the provisions of Article 292 of the Criminal Code, paragraph 4, money, valuables or any other goods given or offered are subject to confiscation and, if they are no longer available, the confiscation by equivalent is, at the same time possible, not to mention about large-scale confiscation in accordance with provisions 112 ind. 1 of the Criminal Code.

The provisions of the Criminal Code refer to a cause of unpunishment of this offense. Accordingly, under Article 292 (2), if the perpetrator denounces the act before the criminal investigative body has been notified of that, then you are in a situation of non-punishment.

In the case of a person exercising, on a permanent or temporary basis, with or without remuneration, being either a natural or legal person, but in the service of a person referred to in Article 175 (2) or within any legal person, in accordance with Article 308 of the Criminal Code, the special penalty limits are reduced by one-third.

It is quite common in practice in the cases of this crime, the situation in which university professors' promise to other teachers, in exchange for useful materials to intervene among department directors, deans or even rectors, in order to help them start a university carrier.

7. Abuse in service

According to the provisions of the Criminal Code, respectively Article 297, paragraph 1, the offense of abuse of service constitutes of: "the act of a public official who, in the exercise of his duties, does not perform an act or fails to do so and causes damage or injury to the rights or legitimate interests of a natural person or a legal person".

The occurrence of such acts of service can be punished by imprisonment from 2 to 7 years and the prohibition of exercising the right to hold a public office.

As far as this crime is concerned, the active subject, namely the teacher in the exercise of his/her duties, fulfils or fails to perform an act or fails him/her badly. There were cases, according to the investigators, when during the national Baccalaureate exams the teachers in the committees overrated or counterfeited the papers in the examination subjects in order to obtain bigger grades for certain students. Thus, in such cases, the competent bodies accused the teachers in the examination commissions, of both the offense of abuse of office and the offense of false material in official documents.

Conclusions

The main significant factors of corruption identified in the education system are: legislative instability, inadequate pay, a poor system of assessment and promotion of teaching staff, insufficient and inefficient channels of continuous information, lack of legal culture in schools and, last but not least, the economic state of society. The legal framework that refers to the organization, administration and functioning of education in Romania is established by the fundamental law of the Romanian State, namely the Romanian Constitution, the Law of National Education no.1/2011 and the Government Ordinances.

Considering the complexity and the extent of the phenomenon of corruption in the educational system, which is even on a much wider scale in society, we consider it opportune to introduce in the curricula a legal culture subject beginning from primary education, so that everyone knows the risk to which they are exposed in case of law violation and to know the means of preventing and combating the phenomenon of corruption.

All these corruption-related acts of different circumstances alter the educational system on all levels and produce effects that propagate over time, passing from generation to generation, despite the fact that parents are the ones who have high expectations of the school that educates their children for society and the last has a very difficult mission in order to achieve the best results.

Corruption in the education system is detrimental to the young generation who is in training at school, and these acts of corruption regulated by the Romanian legislature in the Criminal Code must be strangled by all the necessary means. Thus, civil society, together with public authorities, must make a sustained effort to create ideal educational lives, which must be in line with the current and ever changing demands of the European Union. The legislation of our country, namely the Law on National Education no. 1/2011 refers in Article 2 paragraph 1 to the vision of education, a very important aspect, as follows: "The law aims at promoting a value-oriented, creativity, cognitive, volitional and acoustic capacities, fundamental knowledge, skills and abilities of direct utility in the profession and society."

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SOCIAL POLICIES PLANNING AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN SERBIA

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Abstract: *As a socialist country, Serbia has provided average services, although easily accessible: free education and medical assistance, funded rent for social apartments, as well as other subventions for other services (child care, transportation and food). These services were provided directly through statutory social agencies, but also through other firms, syndicates and social actors. Official social services (social protection, professional help and subsequent direct payments) were provided through a social work network (CSW) and through residential institutions. Even though joint philanthropic activity was poorly developed there have been a number of humanitarian organisations (such as the Red Cross) and associated organizations (such as associations for invalid people, for the blind, etc) involved in humanitarian work. Implementing social policies clearly was beneficial for community development and life quality growth (especially through the effects it had on demographics – increased life expectancy, decreased child mortality, a higher level of education, etc.) of both Serbians and the minorities living in this area, among whom are also the Vlachs. Although the minorities are variously structured and engaged in politics and, to some extent, take part in governing, they do not achieve own state organization, which is why they can only assume the role of monitoring governing institutions. Although great efforts have been made in developing and implementing social protection measures, social policies have failed to stimulate. For example, even though payment according to productivity has not been banned in companies, Yugoslavian work managed firms have tended to provide more equal wages than other firms. This led to increased evenness in income.*

Key words: *bullying; prevention; Romanian schools; strategies.*

1. Reforms in social protection and policies

Starting with 2000, the Serbian government has started reforms in social protection and policies. The main objectives have included:

- community care development, in order to reduce tensions on residential institutions and to create better services;
- stimulating the development of financial and local administration services;
- stimulating the human potencial of professionals in the statutory social services, in order to encourage community work rather than clerk-like attitude.

Approaches have included reform development (resulting in a national strategy for social protection development and initiative support, implemented through the Social Innovation Fund, SIF).

In order to test how these objectives are best met (in statutory services), data from all 135 CSWs have been taken from the annual CSW report on 2005. The information has been further analyzed and grouped in order to:

- compare the number of residential care users to that of alternative community assistance;
- compare the number of people receiving financial help through local administration to central government financed services;
- compare the number of people receiving help with payments to the number of people receiving employment assistance.

According to 2005 data, in the 135 social assistance facilities in Serbia (i.e. 5% of the total population) 407.045 people were served, which means that a small percentage of the population turn to CSWs when in need. However, the pressure has constantly increased. In the last three years the number of users has increased by 10% per year.

There are 2761 people working in CSWs. An employee supports 147,5 services users throughout one year. Out of the 2761 employees, 1875 are professional workers (the others being either managers or administrative employees), consequently the number of clients is 217 per professional worker. A great part of this activity involves administration and documents drafting, and so no time is left for prevention (professional workers on CSW constantly report that they are more administrators than social workers).

Services are provided for 19.250 users in residential care (irrespective the age), while 3700 users were reported in foster care, 749 in social housing, 3800 in home care and some 2000 in social and daily care. In conclusion, residential care is more used than community services for difficult cases (people in need of placement, shelter, or who cannot look after themselves). However, this is but a passive measure. For example, the beneficiaries of home care, who can sometimes prevent the need of residential care have increased by 20% since the previous year, and the number of residential care beneficiaries only by 2.5% (Cukic-Vlahovic, 2005).

Approximately half of the beneficiaries are receiving central government administered and financed service, while the other half are receiving locally financed services. Consequently, the system can be considered both **centralized** and **non-centralized**.

In addition, irrespective the funding source, almost 80% of the centrally financed services and 77% of the locally financed services concern direct payments (MOP, grants, unique assistance, etc.). This shows that services mostly concern payments; however, some services unrelated to payments have not been reported.

In conclusion, these data show that a transition is currently taking place:

- more services are being financed by the local administration;
- the number of community care services and that of social services beneficiaries is increasing.

2. The social protection law, community services and civil society organizations: social protection service in Serbia

The new Social Protection law was adopted in March 2011. The process of social protection reform, which started in 2001, received a new legislation frame and consistent support for a continuous development and establishing solutions for all areas.

Legal measures, among others, encourage the institutionalization process, that is the process of group protection and integration in a less restrictive environment, promoting community services and changing the position of services users.

The law established a new concept of social protection development, changed the position of the user as an active participant in all the processes related to him/her and brought in other social services providers.

The Social Protection Law stipulates a service system consisting in:

- **assessment and planning services:** assessment of state, needs, strengths or risks of users and other people involved;
- **daily community services:** daily room, home care, social canteens and other services that support the remaining of users within a family;
- **support for independent life:** social homes, personal assistance, independent life education and support for active participation of users in community;
- **therapeutic and social consulting services:** intensive services for family support during crisis; parent counseling, foster parent counseling; maintaining family ties and reuniting families; counseling on domestic violence; family therapy; mediation; SOS phone calls; other counseling and education activities;
- **placement services:** placement in the birth family, parent assistance, adoptive families for elder people; home placement; shelter placement.

Competency in creating and financing social protection services falls under the Serbian Republic competency, the Autonomous Region competency and local self-governing.

Within this division, local autonomy social protection services are:

- **daily community service**
- **independent life support services**
- **therapeutic and social education consulting services**
- **placement services (sheltering and others).**

This defines taking over local self-governing responsibility for right enforcement and meeting social protection needs, through community service development. Social assistance services under local self-government are most oftenly called community social protection services. They meet users rights to live in a natural environment, to integrate and develop in a social environment.

3. Social work services and their beneficiaries

Social protection services are programmes for providing support and assistance to people and families in need, for improving or maintaining quality of life, for reducing and eliminating the risk of unfavorable life circumstances, as well as for creating opportunities for independent life within a society.

In general, the objective of all local community services is meeting users needs in their natural environment, thus preventing employing services in a restrictive environment. This aim, depending on the group of users, is achieved through various activities, from keeping existent resources to developing missing knowledge and skills, which allow better integration of users into community. The content of services represents activities groups through which the desired results are obtained.

The social rights law offers a general definition of social protection: "A family or person that needs help and support to overcome social and existential difficulties and creating conditions to meet base needs. The users of these services fall into groups of children and youngsters (minors and young adults up to 26 years old), adults (26-65) and elderly people (65+). Details of certain services beneficiaries are provided by the regulation of detailed conditions and standards for providing social protection services.

Only when local self-governing officially establishes, through proper decision, a service and when safe financing sources, continuity and service availability are provided, when the decision defines target group, purpose, contents and receiving criteria, only then is social protection service within community founded according to social protection law.

The social protection system was based on a network of residential care facilities. These facilities not only offered placement, but were also used for education, professional training and protected work force employment (of disabled people). These offered orphans protection and also aimed at isolating children with mental or physical disabilities (Tobis, 2000, p. 5). Unlike former socialist countries, in Western Europe and in the USA, in the late 20th century, the professional public firmly required closing big residential facilities and developing community services. The main determining factor was the cost of this service, as different studies had shown that alternative care costs less than residential care (Ibidem, p.30). The data

in Serbia show the same tendency: the average cost for residential placement is 201 monthly¹, while the average cost for foster care is 152 (Lianin, 2005).

Nonetheless, community care is considered more beneficial, as in residential care there is no emotional attachment, nor an individual treatment, life has to be strictly organized and there is isolation and labeling (Milic, 2000). Furthermore, some research show that 1 out of 10 underage criminally offenders were raised in residential care (Tobis, 2000, p. 33). Specialised foster-like care development in daily facilities, admission centers, shelters etc. and care leaving programmes (that is all the services developed through SIF) have two complementary functions. They serve as mechanisms for maintaining communication and also allow successful reintegration into community of those who have left the care system.

In Serbia, there are currently 19000 people leaving in residential care. Amongst these are 2700 children under placement (including 1600 children with no parental care, 900 disabled people, and 200 underage offenders).

Due to the great efforts of the programme for developing foster care implemented by MoLESP, there currently is a larger number of children in placement institutions than in residential environment; in 2005 a number of 2900 children were under foster care. In 2003, the number of children increased by 60% , and that of foster parents by 70% (Grujic, 2005). This programme created functional areas all over Serbia, focusing on extending this form of social protection.

Shelters - the Center for Social Work (CSW) in Priboj, a town in a poor area of Serbia, opened a shelter for domestic violence victims through SIF funding. The shelter was successful as part of CSW. Over time, the number of beneficiaries increased, as domestic violence victims in neighbouring areas also asked for support. Although this was considered good credentials for the shelter, the large number of beneficiaries threatened the budget of the project. In order to ensure service flow, CSW initiated a process of regionalization of the shelter. In consultation with the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs and SIF, a list of service pricing was made and CSW started to charge these prices on behalf of the beneficiaries of services in the original shelters. This service is more efficient than institutionalized placement of violence victims and, in the same time, economically more viable for authorities (Kragujevac, Leskovac and Zajecar).

Home care – the NGO Lighthouse in Loznica received financing for home care services for the elderly. They collaborated with Primary Healthcare Center, the CSWs in Loznica and the neighbouring authorities (four of these). The Lighthouse managed the service and the CSWs, while the Health Center provided for the health. After one year, the medical nurses and carers were trained, the CSWs learned how to organize themselves and the local governments took over financing. The Lighthouse gathered

¹ The highest cost is placement of children with no parental care (238), followed by residential care (198), residential care of disabled people (167). These costs do not include health care, equipment or investments (Lianin, 2005).

actors from other three underdeveloped neighbouring areas and extended them. This experience shows once more that regions can be formed from the inside can even serve as a temporary form, and can be extended or reduced, according to necessity. There are at least five examples which serve to show how people can function within regional association when need be: Prijepolje, Vrac, Leskovac, Pirot and Valjevo. The alternative to this form would have been financing five independent services which would have cost more and could not have started, due to lack of management and professional training. NGO involvement in this case did not mean better management (in all cases CSW data were used, as in many programmes supported by SIF²), but this meant proper coordination and management.

These experiences have a major impact on future planning of social policies. If there are mutual interest matters (such as victims of violence protection, protection of the elderly) and solving them exceeds local administration possibilities, and they can be less efficiently solved by central administration, intercommunity associated activities will take place. If there are successful examples (and there are) that this activity accomplishes, it should be encouraged and facilitated.

Conclusions

The Serbian Republic does not have a well defined strategy to offer guidance for social protection development, which renders local planning more difficult. The legal project on system planning introducing mandatory planning will contribute to meeting this challenge. The programme for reforming labour force employment and social policies (2016), within the accession process to the EU5, as well as a programme for 2018-2020, emphasized redefining social protection priorities, considering that social assistance and financing benefits towards local administrations represent the biggest expenses for the government budget.

Social protection system reform which started in 2000 had as main objectives reducing poverty, addressing one result of the Yugoslavian division - the second biggest and longest hyperinflation in world history (1992-1994), international isolation and economic sanctions.

The main reason for social protection decentralization was the fact that the state cannot properly address citizen needs, especially with regards to social services. For the community, developing services for the elderly, the disabled

² Many authors stress that NGOs involvement in service provision can bring about better targeting. However, some argue that NGOs differ from reality in this respect (Clayton et al., 2000). SIF experience shows that better targeting cannot benefit NGOs providing services. The CSW most common activity, with various partnership projects (Caloevievic, 2004) was providing lists of beneficiaries, including membership and self-help organizations. NGO advantages are management skills, innovation and organization.

children, or people is a priority and it is difficult to estimate decision planning nationwide.

Within a decentralized system some services remain local, some central³, while others (such as shelters, mediation, or home care) are administered regionally. In order to establish such a system, there has to be either regional government involvement or institutional stimulation or intercommunity association regarding social policies. Even in their absence, the region could be seen as a right, and not an obligation, and creating regions from the inside has better results in social services.

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³ Experience shows that residential care should remain under central government management. If jurisdiction is locally transferred, there is no simulation for their change or closing, as these maintain increased employment rates (Fox & G testam, 2003: 19, 23).

THE BULLYING PHENOMENON IN ROMANIAN SCHOOLS

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Abstract: *Articles is aiming to conduct a systematic review of scientific literature on bullying phenomenon and tries to analyse its manifestation in Romanian schools. Bullying is a global phenomenon, usually neglected in schools around the world. The impact of the bullying is determined by the serious consequences not only for children who are victimized by aggressors, but also for those who initiate aggression. This is an important issue that will not be solved until a holistic approach (parents, teachers, specialists, local community, etc.) will address the reasons why children humiliate and intimidate others, and will identify the causes that trigger such behaviours. With the right guidance and training, children can acquire necessary skills to solve their problems instead of managing them by intimidating others. In order to provide such education and to successfully eliminate the aggression in schools, we must determine the causes and effects of school bullying. The most common causes of such behaviour can be the lack of empathy, egocentrism, pride, the superficiality of human relationships, and especially the exposure, assumption, imitation of similar patterns of behaviour - most of the time in physical or virtual environments.*

Key words: *bullying; prevention; Romanian schools; strategies.*

1. Introduction

In the fast-paced modern world, the informational leap may have negative effects on the child's emotional development. Children who do not have enough time to relax, enjoy their childhood, spend quality time with their family and friends can become very anxious, stressed, and can therefore develop violent behaviours. Children have different needs, such as being able to relax, play with friends and belong to a group and be accepted by them. Protecting children from all forms of violence, including abuse and neglect, is a truly global phenomenon and needs to be addressed by academics (M. Constantinescu, et al., 2017). Frustration due to the failure to meet those needs may result in aggressive behaviours, which subsequently turn into bullying behaviours. Studies (American Society for the Positive Care of Children | American SPCC) show that the incidence of aggressors is higher in dysfunctional families. However, a dysfunctional family does not always mean that the child will become an aggressor. However, a large number of bullies come from homes where there is little affection and openness. Often children witnesses to domestic violence, family of friends, brothers or other family members. Therefore,

children adopt such behavioural patterns and imitate their colleagues at school. Although aggressors often display an attitude of self-confidence and superiority, they are deeply insecure and inferior to other people. They treat others with contempt in order to feel better. Most children act aggressively non-intentionally; they just follow the example of behaviours of parents / friends / other negative models from the physical or virtual environment. When the aggressor does not feel resilient, he becomes overwhelmed by power and intensifies or prolongs bullying behaviours. The offense itself, "false power", becomes rewarding for them (attention gain and popularity, and the ability to make others fear them, the desire for power) and thus without specialized intervention, the bullying behaviours will continue. These inappropriate changes reinforce the aggressive behaviour pattern and encourage the aggressor to become harasser. Another psychological factor for bullying behaviours is the poor ability of children to adjust their emotions. Whenever people become angry and irritated, they learn to effectively manage their emotions to avoid injuring others. However, some children cannot control their feelings. In fact, anything can determine and make them to react excessively.

In this study, we proposed to define the concept of bullying and to make a qualitative analysis of the bullying phenomenon, to understand the causes, motives and mechanisms that trigger the occurrence of this phenomenon, to understand the magnitude of this phenomenon, what are the forms of bullying that can be identified in the educational environment and to develop some ways to prevent and combat bullying in schools.

8. Definitions and conceptual framework

For the proposed sociological investigation, it is absolutely necessary to clarify and define clearly the concept of bullying. "Bullying" is an Anglo-Saxon term, taken up in the Romanian Specialized literature without being translated; the close term in Romanian is harassment. Early research on school aggression that drew attention to its impact on students and the frequency of its daily occurrence were conducted in the Scandinavian countries (studies by E. Debarbieux, 1996, 1999). This concept is still a subject of academic debates, but it has definitely drawn attention to the victims (young people still in development and training, moment of psycho-emotional vulnerability) and its risks to young people. Our article is going to present the concept itself, by analysing the existing studies on the incidence of the phenomenon. Then we will focus on the consequences of this type of victimization. Defining the term "bullying" and its main indicators will be useful to develop a methodology to capture this phenomenon as accurately as possible and to develop effective and realistic recommendations for prevention and intervention in situations of bullying. In order to combat aggression, it is important to understand, identify and recognize the phenomenon of bullying, harassment, aggression, violence.

Bullying is often seen as a subcategory of peer aggression. Three criteria distinguish bullying from other types of aggression: power imbalance, repetition or duration of negative actions, and a deliberate will of injury. The research was initially directed to physical and verbal forms of harassment (Olweus, 1991; Olweus, 1993). Social or indirect forms of aggression have been identified in the nineties (Olweus, 1991; Olweus, 1993). In the 2000s, digital aggression, more commonly expressed as "Cyberbullying" was identified (Smith et al., 2002). Some researchers have addressed the impact of aggression on academic outcomes, but the findings differ. Glew et al. (2005) found that victims and victims of the victims (students who are involved in both victims and aggressors) had fewer scores on academic achievement measures. Smith and Sharp (1998) define this phenomenon as "systematic abuse of power" which involves repeated abuse of power in relationships (Smith, 2014). Gladden et al. (2014, p. 17) define bullying as "any unwanted aggressive behaviour(s) by another youth or group of youths who are not siblings or current dating partners that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated. Bullying may inflict harm or distress on the targeted youth including physical, psychological, social, or educational harm". "Aggression is a long, mental or physical violence conducted by an individual or a group against a person who cannot defend in this situation (Roland, 1989, in Mellor, 1990, 1991). The aggression action in the bullying behaviour has certain characteristics that distinguish it from a quarrel or a fight between colleagues or friends. Aggressors use physical force, have access to private information or popularity to intimidate, control, or harm others. Harassment is done deliberately with intent to injure, to produce psycho-emotional and physical damage; is repeated over a period of time, so it is not a single-situation behaviour, and is a misuse of power in the sense that victims have difficulty in defending or protecting against it. Theorists conceptualize it as a subcategory of aggression, where bullying is the assertion of power through aggression or intimidation (Craig, Pepler et al., 2000), being an abuse of social power (Smith, 2002). If the victim, the aggressed person repels or, at least, is not vulnerable and can defend himself, it can no longer be described as bullying behaviour, but rather is already an inter-aggressional behaviour.

Researchers have identified several types of aggression, which we synthesized as following: verbal (nickname, teasing, sarcasm, spread of false rumours / gossip, abusive or threatening comments, negative observations about culture, religion, skin colour, family, house, sexual orientation, etc. of a person); the release of negative comments about the appearance of one's / the physical body, clothing (making observations about disability or physical condition); isolation (unfriendly, unfair attitude, exclusion from the group, forcing to make friendship with certain persons); physical behaviours (hitting, pushing, engaging, harassing, applying physical beating, hiding or destroying a person, etc.), aggressive gestures (offensive and threatening gestures), harassment on-line (hate emails or threats). The main types of aggression (as mentioned in *Anti-Bullying Policy of the Our Lady of*

Mount Caramel Catholic Primary School, 2015) is based on: appearance (e.g. hair colour, body shape / weight, clothing) race / ethnicity (e.g. racial teasing, racial gestures), gender identity (e.g. transsexuality, gender identity other than gender-specific norms), home (classroom, free school meals, care), sexual orientation (e.g. lesbian, homosexual or bisexual (LGB) (real or perceived) (homophobia). This phenomenon must be seen as a community problem and not just a problem of the child, parent or teacher. Bullying is a form of aggressive behaviour that is systematically and continuously carried out by a person or a group of young people against a child/person who is alone and is relatively incapable of defending himself (O'Moore, Minton, 2004).

Bullying is often considered a phenomenon because the various manifestations of recurrent violence among colleagues go beyond the school environment, having consequences that extend to other areas or contexts such as family and / or society (Olweus, 2004). Also, bullying is not specific to a local community, a country, but encompasses most of the world's states, becoming an international problem. Data and studies are significant to confirm that the extent of this phenomenon at national and international level requires a closer analysis to study the phenomenon and understand how it is triggered, how it manifests, what is its impact in order to identify effective ways to prevent and reduce it.

9. The aetiology of the bullying phenomenon

Rashmi Shetgiri (2013) analysed and summed up numerous studies identifying a number of risk factors that could trigger bullying behaviours. These risk factors are related to the child, family / parents, group of friends / colleagues, community. In this article, we will list some of factors contributing to bullying behaviours such as: younger age of the child, presence of depression and / or other mental health problems, or emotional / developmental / behavioural problems, low academic performance, addictions, use of unacceptable substances, exposure to abuses and violence, high levels of anger of the child, and weak self-control and emotional control, use of bodily punishment by parents, lack of communication or communication difficulties between parents and children, parental anger, lack of parental supervision, frequent and violent conflicts within family, bad relationships with school colleagues, negative influences from colleagues, provenance from underprivileged economic environments or "insecure" neighbourhoods, etc.

The study undertaken by S. N. Georgiou (2008) and published in *The British Journal of Educational Psychology* states that maternal and paternal depression can influence the perpetuation of child harassment. Maternal depression is associated with aggression. This relationship can also be explained by negative interactions and also associated with aggression. In general, interactions between depressed mothers and their children are more hostile, irritable, critical, as confirmed by studies by I. Fihrer et al. (2004). A study (D. P. Farrington, 1993) found that children who were

tortured by their fathers when they were in school were more likely to have children who had been assaulted. Certainly undeniable a warm, affectionate environment will lower the chances of developing and learning aggressive, bullying behaviours. "Intolerable tensions between the individual and his home environment are the results of suffering and dangers experienced by the child. Instead of a joyful and collaborative attitude, the young child's attitude will be a fight, an attack or a waiver" (M. Constantinescu et al., 2016, pp. 1347).

The phenomenon of "bullying" has long exceeded acceptable borders, being increasingly present in Romanian society, even in the school environment, where children are supervised and where they operate in a microsystem. Bullying is not only a characteristic phenomenon of Romanian school, as we also find it internationally regardless of race, religion, gender, social status, physical status or age. This problem has been considered a phenomenon that has reached a global level. Mexico holds the world's first place on intimidation cases in compulsory education (kindergarten, primary school, gymnasium), according to OECD data (OECD, 2014). This problem is social and present; it has even become to be considered a global health problem because the school should promote a safe atmosphere in which children develop harmoniously. Some of the consequences of this problem in schools have led to poor school performance and / or school drop-out, and this situation affects not only school life but can affect other areas such as family life, community; an example of this is increased suicidal attempts of those who have been victims of bullying. Of course, suicide is an extreme image of what can cause this kind of dynamics among students.

The phenomenon of violence in schools has become one of the main objectives of public policies in recent decades. Europe and the United States are a reference point for the first major violence experiences worldwide: mass murder and suicide in the child and adolescent population. The growing influence of technology, anti-social groups, the use of illegal substances, as well as the poor development of community-based protection factors and the prevention of harassment behaviours can be identified as possible causes of the rise of bullying. These events have led to an increase in the number and new forms of aggression and violent actions in schools. In addition, the fast pace of the society we live in and the information flow, especially with regard to social environments, has made it difficult to identify and empower professionals to stand out when an aggression action occurs. Several studies (O'Moore, Minton, 2004; Dillon, 2015) show that a global trend of the current generation of children is to have more emotional problems than in the past. Research has been undertaken as a need to investigate the phenomenon from a different perspective, in a different context and to identify the best ways to solve the problem. It is well-known that aggression against children, especially those in residential care institutions, has a great amplitude and, despite the importance and extent of this phenomenon, is not diminishing, but on the contrary it is expanding. Moreover, it is important to update all the behaviours identified as aggression in our

days, because of the rapid development of technology, new and less known forms have been identified, such as cyberbullying. We strongly believe that, by training specialists working with children (teachers, educators, social workers), knowing how to identify different forms of intimidation and gaining skills and abilities to combat any aggression in schools will reduce the number of acts of bullying in the school community. Studies (M. Constantinescu, C. Constantinescu, 2012) identified the important factors of increased aggression in schools - teachers' poor communication skills with students, insufficient training in conflict management and combating violence, low motivation of the professor. The importance of developing good communication skills will eliminate frustration by satisfying individual needs (expressing and understanding each other), will validate the child and the parent (I recognize and accept you, I listen and understand you) that will imply acceptance and social inclusion (C. Dumitru, 2016) and will decrease the number of challenging and aggressive behaviours. These facts justify the need to develop and carry on in-service teacher education, to raise public awareness of all forms of intimidation of children, to develop activities to prevent these aggressions, and to promote children's rights for a safe and secure environment; to initiate programs to reduce the level of aggression in schools. J. Dillon (2015) draws attention to the importance of initiating prevention programs and the objective of empowering teachers with the tools needed to develop a culture "without aggression, without hatred" in schools and communities, because people are, in general, good and want to have positive relationships with others.

10. Policies and strategies for handling and combat bullying

Policies against bullying and harassment have been formulated (M. O'Moore, SJMinton, 2004) to minimize the risk of aggression by raising awareness and providing prevention strategies, and by providing concrete techniques to deal with any harassment behaviours in the event of their occurrence. The European strategy against bullying, recently summed up by the European Anti-Bullying Network (EAN), "Build the Future, Stop Bullying", adopts an inclusive approach to schooling. Anti-bullying policies aim to prevent aggression throughout the school community, including school staff, teachers, students, families, volunteers. European schools (Smith, et al., 2002) are legally bound to have anti-bullying policy, but the reports confirm the lack of coverage in important areas. In line with the European Anti-Harassment Strategy, schools should develop a harassment policy through strategies and measures to encourage good, positive behaviour and prevent any form of aggression among pupils and staff. Anti-bullying policies aim to prevent other negative consequences of aggression such as school failure and other inappropriate behaviours in terms of social relationships, self-affirmation, self-realization. Anti-bullying policies should include a set of clear measures on what is an act of intimidation, how to identify it, how to report it, investigate it and record

it, the roles of each actor involved (students, teachers, parents, community); and developing conflict resolution strategies and conflict management strategies, as well as preventing aggression behaviours.

Currently, there are no anti-bullying policies based on primary care, rigorously assessed. Some school interventions designed to reduce bullying developed, implemented and studied in Asia, Europe and North America, were systematized by D. P. Farrington et al. (2009). The phenomenon of bullying violates written and unwritten norms of society and the school community, enrolling in the category of negative deviance - defies the norms of the community and damages individual freedoms; includes social intimidation interactions using a specific offensive language and creates a social context of inequality of power where the victim is subjected to abusive socio-emotional treatment by the aggressor. Objectives of antisocial behaviour include actions that threatens the well-being of the person (physical, verbal, ethnic bullying), actions against other people's goods and personal belongings (criminal bullying) and actions against social coexistence (social bullying by exclusion and damage to a person's image). This type of school bullying is reported to the category of perpetrators and are included in the juvenile delinquency perimeter. In the case of this kind of aggression, it is possible to act legally, if the identity of the aggressor is known. The anti-social behaviours of bullying, that exceed the age of young age, cannot be included in the category of school bullying, but under the category of crimes or immoral acts - in which case they are not detected by social control. The criminal nature of the bullying actions overlaps with the deviant act during schooling after the age of 14, when the child responds criminally, but the categories of the act are restricted to the aggressive physical attacks, threats or dispossession of personal property. If the victims / aggressors are minors, they are accompanied by parents or legal guardians to respond criminally. There are states that have anti-bullying policies and laws that provide procedure for reporting, prevention and intervention, and schools are increasingly required to implement their own harassment prevention programs. Soon it will be the case of Romanian schools, because there are already legislative initiatives that prohibit behaviours that consist of psychological violence in the educational establishments and in all spaces for education and training. It is important to know that bullying takes place in every school, regardless of the type of bullying or scale at which the phenomenon occurs, but what matters and what makes a significantly difference between schools is how schools are managing it in everyday practice. In Romania, actions of raising awareness and promotion of activities to combat bullying started more organised in 2012.

National studies in Romania on the phenomenon of bullying in schools were not a priority, the phenomenon being reduced at the level of general signs and descriptions. Existing studies are directed at school violence (e.g. UNICEF, 2006). Dan Olweus, the most recognized bullying expert, claims that "a student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative

actions on the part of one or more other students). Research suggests that different forms of support can mitigate the effects of various types of bullying on psycho-emotional development. However, there are very few studies that have examined how different forms of social support could mitigate the impact of bullying on the mental health of the child and adolescent. Some studies (K. A. Fanti, 2012) suggest that family social support can be an important factor in protecting against the negative effects of bullying on the student health.

In view of the harmful effects of bullying behaviours, effective prevention and intervention efforts must be a priority. However, studies that investigate effective prevention and intervention strategies to combat bullying are not so numerous. Several studies addressing bullying prevention efforts suggest that attention should be focused on increasing empathy and adolescent self-esteem, reducing teenagers' problematic behaviours, promoting and cultivating quality parenting relationships, and reducing online time. For example, researchers who conducted a study (quoted by Charisse L. Nixon, 2014) with teenagers in Turkey found that those teenagers who were less empathetic were more at risk of engaging in bullying acts. The results of their study have shown that the combined effect of affective behaviour (e.g., the experience of someone else's feelings) and cognitive empathy (e.g. consideration of others) played an essential role in influencing adolescent engagement in bullying. Specifically, empathy about adolescent activation was linked to less negative behaviour. The results of this study suggest that future efforts to prevent and intervene will be geared towards increasing adolescent affection (for example, my friend's feelings do not affect me) and cognitive empathy (for example, "I understand why my friend might behave like this when this happens ") in an effort to reduce participation in aggression.

Recent findings also suggest that prevention efforts aimed at reducing bullying should address modalities of working on students' self-esteem as well as targeting difficult behaviours. The findings from the above-mentioned studies have shown that a low self-esteem of students will increase the risk of being subsequently involved in bullying behaviours both as a perpetrator and as a target. In addition, the more students have problematic behaviours (e.g. smoking, delinquency, aggressive behaviours), the more they will engage in various types of bullying behaviours. Based on these results, we can recommend to professional working with students to focus on students with such difficult behaviours as well as other psycho-emotional features mentioned above.

With regard to parenting, the article suggest that health professionals and educators should work to help students and their parents establish close relationships and care that include adult monitoring. Surely, agents of socialization (e.g. friends, family, and school adults) play an important role in child development and the formation of pro-social behaviours in students. The results of previous studies mentioned in our articles are very important and bring a series of significant data that can more effectively direct all prevention and intervention actions into

bullying behaviours. R. Shetgiri (2013) is making an interesting analysis of the hurdles prevention and prevention programs implemented and identifies some key features that can impact on the effectiveness of an anti-bullying program. We will list some of these features: programs should be based on the Olweus principles of a bullying prevention program; programs that include parent involvement; programs with a longer duration of intervention. The above author identifies other important components of anti-bullying programs: team meetings and meetings with parents, firm disciplinary methods, information for parents, teacher training, classroom management, classroom rules, anti-bullying school policy, etc.

11. Conclusion

Bullying is a global phenomenon with devastating effects on the socio-emotional development of our children. Teachers, parents, children and society need to be aware of this phenomenon and to know how to identify, report, and protect themselves from bullying. Intimidation is unacceptable because it affects the social and emotional well-being of students and should not be tolerated in our class, school, and society. National studies in Romania on the phenomenon of bullying in schools are very few and often they are limited to general signals and descriptions, but this has to change and bullying phenomena need to become a priority, because in schools where there is bullying, there will be no academic performance and achievement. Our study has succeeded in achieving its goals, because we have explored the conceptual notions of bullying, we have been able to identify and describe various types of bullying and to understand the difference between aggression and bullying. We have also studied national and international research to find out what has been achieved so far in this area to build some understanding of the causes and identify some intervention directions. The main purpose of the study to explore the phenomena of bullying has identified the alarming fact that many students are affected by bullying either directly or indirectly (as spectators). In order to have an effective response to bullying, we need to focus, reflect and discuss on bullying understanding and attitudes towards this phenomenon. Reflections on the results of the research conducted on the analysis of the already implemented intervention programs confirm that effective anti-bullying interventions cannot be limited only to the class, to a lesson or to the activities based on the curriculum. Anti-bullying initiatives cannot work alone, without the commitment of school administration, teachers and educators. Involvement of parents plays an important role. There is a need for an inclusive approach, not just an action that is limited to a school regulation, but rather a set of actions that will really be put into practice.

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PROSPECTS OF IMMIGRATION IN ROMANIA

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Abstract: *The paper focuses on immigration, which structures the contemporary world, highlighting multiple relationships and implications that make this phenomenon of a major importance, worldwide. We try to briefly present the conceptual framework of immigration and the prospects for immigration in Romania. Immigration in Romania is in the pattern of any migration in the start-up phase in Europe. The way in which Romania will manage to regulate this immigration will influence the evolution of the phenomenon over time. Lately, Romanian institutions and NGOs have managed this phenomenon effectively and positively. The legislation has been amended, respecting the European and international framework, so that the phenomenon is very well controlled by the authorities. As far as the Romanian state's policy on immigration is concerned, in the current context it will preserve the limits of the last years. The objectives of this research converge towards identifying the facilitators and the barriers that emerge in the integration of immigrants into the Romanian society, which is in a constant process of adaptation and transformation, socially and economically. In this context, the immigration phenomenon in Romania requires attention, even if its demographic impact is not significant, and foreign citizens registered with legal residence on national territory are below 1% of the total population. For Romania, immigration has proven to be a phenomenon with positive consequences, which contributes to the development of society.*

Key words: *migration; immigration; integration of immigrants; Romania.*

1. Conceptual specifications and delimitations on migration and immigration - classification and definition of terms

The issue of migration and immigration is a complex one, addressed in the specialized literature by various professionals, from many points of view. Thus, in his research on migration, Rentea (2013: 122-125) defines migration as "the moving process of the individual whenever it involves space - in terms of borders, which he/she must cross, time - the time spent outside the origin country, with a purpose - economic, studies, family reunification, humanitarian protection".

In Popescu's opinion (2006: 51), the migrant "is the person who, for reasons other than the fear of being persecuted in his/her own country, voluntarily leaves to reside elsewhere."

The World Migration Organization (IOM, 2019) considers the migrant to be "the person who moves from one place to another, crossing an international border

or moving within a state, away from his or her place of residence or family, leaving aside the legal status of a person, of the type of movement (voluntary / involuntary) and of the reasons that caused the movement without being established in a particular place."

Immigration, according to art. 2, letter. (b) of the (EC) Regulation No. 862/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council of the 11th of June 2007 on Community statistics on migration and international protection and repealing of the (EEC) Regulation of the Council No. 311/76 concerning the drafting of statistics on foreign workers, means "an action whereby a person establishes his habitual residence in the territory of a Member State for a period which is or it is customary for at least 12 months, after which, he/she had previously resided in a Member State or in a third country."

Immigration is "the moving of a person within a state. Some states define immigration as including only the people interested in permanent residence, but the current concept generally includes all non-citizens entering a state, either for a short visit or for the purpose of staying permanently" (Van Krieken, 2001: 422).

By virtue of the above mentioned, for us, as a member of European space, the immigrant is the person who comes from a non-EU country and who chose Romania voluntarily as a destination country for work, business, studies or family reunification. The term immigrant can be defined in both negative and positive sense. In the negative sense, the term implies that we are dealing with a foreigner, the immigrant being a person who enters the territory of a state and does not have the citizenship of the state he/she entered. In a positive sense, we can say that the immigrant is the person entering a country in order to stay for a longer period of time. The approach of the term *immigrant* from a sociological point of view is much more appropriate, as we can understand the factors, causes, social, economic and cultural effects of it (Otovescu, 2010: 609-610; Otovescu, 2016; Otovescu, 2017).

Lately, the notion of third-country nationality / citizen (RTT) is increasingly used. The International Organization for Migration states that RTT is the person who is in the territory of an EU Member State and he/she is not a member of any of these countries. In accordance with the UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) and the Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees (1967), the refugee is "the person leaving the country of origin because of persecution or fear of being persecuted on racial, religious, nationality reason as well as belonging to a particular social or political group."

Migration is the "process by which people change their place of residence definitively or temporarily" (Erdeli et al., 1999: 194). In this respect, international migration is defined as taking place outside the borders of a state, being motivated by the great economic gaps between states (Erdeli et al., 1999: 194).

According to Arango (2000: 283-296), migration is difficult to conceptualize, measure, or explain by building up theories. However, most definitions imply "referring to space (in terms of borders, internal or external, which a migrant has to

cross), time (time spent outside the home city or country of origin), purpose (economic, studies, family reunification, humanitarian protection, etc.) "(Rentea, 2013: 17). Moreover, the differences between the derived terms, such as emigrants, migrants and immigrants, are determined by the way a situation or person is judged.

Migration and immigration are a reality of our day. They are part of everyday life, requiring an analysis, an approach to the peculiarities of each category of immigrants. It is a continuous phenomenon, difficult to be managed and measured with precision. Officially, Romania is recognized as a transit country for immigrants, and a source country for international migration. As a result of economic, political and social developments, Romania has seen a positive and slightly oscillating trend in terms of immigration in the last decade.

No state in the world has remained outside the international migration flows, having the quality of either a country of origin, transit or destination for migrants, or all three attributes simultaneously. One has come to the conclusion that, through efficient management, migration and immigration can play a key role in the development and reduction of poverty, with clear benefits, which could be increased, and disadvantages that could be minimized.

2. Characteristics of immigration

According to the authors Andreescu, Andreescu and Bardas (2016: 161), the characteristics of immigration are the following ones:

- international migration affects almost all regions of the globe. Over time, migration has transformed from a regional process into a global phenomenon that is currently quantified at around 3% of the world's population;
- the definition of international migration as a definitive shift from one state to another is insufficient and today it only covers a part of the diversity of the phenomenon. "The various processes associated with globalization have accentuated the propensity for movement within international space; as proof in this respect, we can notice the increase in the number of people involved in international travel and the increase in the number of countries which, as origin or destination, appeared on the map of emigration" (Constantinescu, 2008: 280).
- recent data show that traditional immigration countries have also become emigration countries (Australia, Canada and the US); currently, developed countries are the preferred destinations of migrants;
- we can assert with certainty that the phenomenon of migration will never disappear, but it will develop new characteristics depending on the socio-political evolution of the world;
- the phenomenon is complex and dynamic, influenced by a number of factors both in the countries of origin and in the countries of destination. It is therefore necessary that the state's migration / immigration policy to be constantly updated, according to the new regional and international developments;

- the phenomenon should become a major area of study for authorities with competence in the field, so that the optimal positive effects for the country and, implicitly, for its own citizens can be maximized.

At present, the important features of international migration are the following (Stoica, 2011: 57):

- expansion of the number of emigration, immigration and transit countries, with flows of immigrants from new geographical areas;
- feminization of migratory flows as more and more women manage to reach their destination countries, due to the fact that there is an increasingly selective labor demand in favor of women's jobs in different sectors: services, medical care;
- the traditional distinction between countries of origin, transit and destination has become more diffuse;
- increasing the demand for the highly skilled labor, along with that for the unskilled workers, due to the segmentation of the labor market in developed countries and economic competition;
- increasing the volume of temporary migration for labor and circulatory migration;
- political control of the phenomenon.

The topic regarding the effects of international migration is rather controversial. There are differences even between experts. Thus, experts from the Copenhagen Development Research Center say that "there is no direct link between poverty, economic development, population growth and political and social changes, on the one hand, and international migration on the other" (Stoica, 2011:64). Also, Douglas Massey, the most important researcher of the phenomenon, appreciates that "international migration is not rooted in the lack of growth and economic development, but in the development itself" (Stoica, 2011: 64).

3. Consequences of migration

The consequences of migration upon the source countries are immediate and long-term, as highly skilled and qualified workforce leaves, displaying an imbalance in the labor market, affecting the level of the source country's budget. Foreign migration contributes to a certain extent, according to Constantinescu (2008), to population decreasing, Romania being mainly a country of emigration in a first phase after 1990, the presence of immigrants in Romania is now more obvious.

Regarding the consequences of migration / immigration upon the country / countries of destination, they are present for a long-term:

- immigrants are an important source of economic growth for a country;
- migration flows change the ethnic, racial and cultural composition of the receiving society;
- as immigrants fail to integrate into host societies, they are potential sources of social insecurity, degenerating, in some cases, into protests and violence;

- the most important changes occurred at the cultural level (culinary art, sports, art, media, fashion). For example, European and Romanian culture register mutations, from the meaning of national tradition, to that of human activities, in the broad sense of the word. This resulted into a mixed culture, a combination of the culture of the host country and that of the immigrants;

- immigration has altered the European political agenda and its priorities, contributing to the transformation of national and European institutions and organizations.

Migrants can be classified, taking as a reference the status of Member State of the European Union (EU), as migrants from the EU and migrants from the third-country category, non-EU (RTT) migrants.

Managing the migration process varies from one state to another. Through immigration policy, differences in admission of immigrants, integration, access to different areas of the host society can be created, leading to the occurrence of the so-called "civic stratification." The concept underlines the inequality created on the basis of the relationship between different categories of migrants and the destination state, the rights they are granted or denied, and the diversity of rights and legal residence.

Migrants do not equally enjoy the same rights, an important role in establishing them with the purpose of staying, the length of stay in the country of destination, the legal condition. Thus, a foreign citizen whose country of origin is an EU member will have a different package of rights and obligations compared to a foreign citizen coming from a third country. For example, immigrants from non-EU countries still face limitations of rights and opportunities in a destination state. Also, participation in the democratic system at national level is limited to the citizen status, and, thus, immigrants can not influence decisions that could affect them.

Full access to social rights is restricted in some countries, depending on the category of immigrants or the length of stay. Access to certain labor positions is only allowed to their own citizens (public functions) or access to the labor market of non-EU immigrants is limited to the country that offered them residence for this purpose while a citizen of an EU country has free access or facilities on the labor market of another Member State.

Migrants, citizens of the Member States of the European Union, are defined as privileged compared to those in third countries. Third-country migrants can enjoy indirect rights at EU level, due to their family status as a citizen of the European Union, bilateral international treaties (Joppke, 2001: 339-366). In the category of foreigners, citizens of the European Union Member States have become increasingly invisible; compared to the majority population, they no longer evoke complexities of inferiority (Diehl, Blohm, 2003: 133-162).

The different application of the legislation on foreigners within the European Union, depending on the category of migrants, may be a source of inequality and discriminatory practices. The most affected are the illegal migrants, temporary

migrants who, due to their purpose, are ineligible to obtain permanent residence (seasonal workers), migrants whose right of residence has been granted for family reunification (Rentea, 2013: 89).

As a social phenomenon that directly affects a significant part of the population, it is very important to know and highlight the profile of the migrant / immigrant.

In general terms, for immigrants, integration involves knowing the language of the host country (reading, writing), access to the education and labor market system in that country, possibilities to increase the professional mobility by raising the level of education and professional qualification, equality before the law, cultural and religious freedom, respect for the laws and traditions of the country where they live (Stoica, 2014: 51). At the same time, for the host society, migrant integration requires tolerance and openness, agreement to receive immigrants, understanding the benefits and challenges of multicultural societies, providing unhindered access to information on the benefits of integration, tolerance and intercultural dialogue, respecting and understanding the condition, the traditions and the culture of the immigrants, and the respect for immigrants' rights.

In Romania's case, given the lack of previous experience in the field, the still small number of immigrants, refugees and limited financial possibilities, it is clear that integration services and assistance are not entirely satisfactory, despite the efforts made in recent years to align with the international standards.

Even though Romania has so far distinguished itself as a country of emigration with a labor market that is less attractive to immigrants and which is of interest, rather from the transit point of view to the developed countries in the next period, given the EU membership, this quality implies the adoption of the rules and conditions of community life, Romania's attractiveness will grow and will turn into a country of immigration.

Immigration should not be seen as a negative aspect. It can contribute significantly to cultural exchange, economic development and the progress of Romanian society, as it can bring benefits to the countries of origin and migrant families. Immigration must therefore be seen as a process that must be managed and not as a problem to be solved.

In this respect, the main objective of the Romanian authorities is to maximize the positive effects and to limit the negative effects of immigration for our country and Romanian citizens.

That is why it is the responsibility of the Romanian state to establish clearly the categories of migrants that can be admitted and established on the national territory, according to national interests, but in close correlation with the programmatic policies and documents adopted at the level of the European Union, as well as respecting the rights of the migrants. Also, the Romanian state will continue to adopt pragmatic measures to prevent and combat illegal immigration

and to remove from the national territory those migrants who no longer meet the legal conditions of residence (Stoica, 2014: 92).

4. Perspectives of immigration

It is expected that globalization will increase international migration and put its mark on the characteristics of future migration systems. Current international migration is the result of social discrepancies between different regions of the globe and the labor market realities of the most industrialized countries. The countries of destination in the case of international migration are very involved in this process, providing conditions and circumstances in which international migration survives and even flourishes.

Immigration for better economic conditions remains a constant factor, but the potential of forced immigration, which has an upward trend, must not be ignored. People will be motivated to emigrate to protect themselves or their families or to escape from the economic decline of the society they live in. International immigration will continue to be stimulated by political, social and cultural rigidity or human rights violations, but also by the failure of governments in source countries to resolve the social problems of their citizens.

International migration is stimulated by the following (Stoica, 2011: 151-152):

- **tradition of migration** - the existence of political, social and economic relations between countries of origin and destination, including a tradition of migration, thus reducing the costs of migration, equating to encouraging this phenomenon;
- **the global expansion of the services sector** - migration from the developing countries to the developed ones will continue, as the need for qualified force in the services sector calls for this;
- **subsidies granted by the developed countries to farmers** – trained labor migration towards the developed countries with a performing agriculture;
- **massive cross-border migrations**, due to the fragmented tendencies of some countries;
- **decreased birth rates in developed countries** - current projections indicate a decline in population in developed countries; the simulations show that to compensate for the decline in Europe's labor force after 2020 and to maintain the level of employment constantly, a total of four million immigrants is needed annually. The admission rate in Europe is about one million immigrants annually. Demographic changes will be mostly driven by international migration; a partial solution to this problem would be to increase the retirement age in these countries by applying coherent employment policies, reforming the pension systems and increasing labor productivity;

- **population aging in developed countries** - the aging of active population and increased life expectancy lead to an unprecedented increase in the elderly population in developed countries.

The intensity of the challenges and the moment of their occurrence will depend on the domestic and regional context. The tendency to increase these stimuli, at least for the next decades, is real, the result being predictable. No country will be immune to the effects of the transition. The world will look different over the next 30-40 years. We support our idea on the realities of the past. In 1800, Europe had 20% of the world's 1 billion population, and Africa only 8% of this population. In 2000, the population of the two continents was roughly equal (Europe had 728 million, Africa 800 million). The projections for 2050 indicate a population of 660 million in Europe (representing 7% of the world's population at that time) and 1.8 billion in Africa (20% of the world's population) (Stoica, 2011: 152).

From a strictly economic point of view, the transformation of some countries of origin into destination areas for international migration will only take place in a small number of cases; developing countries that have achieved this jump to a superior level have been able to take advantage of the low labor costs and labor intensive exports. Most developing countries will, however, suffer adverse effects associated with development processes and will increase short-term export of labor force.

The strategies of developed countries wishing to improve their competitiveness will keep the labor force in developing countries, further widening the current economic gap between countries and regions of the globe.

Increasing demographic, economic and security differences between countries and regions of the world and the expansion of modern technologies in communications and transport will foster international migration, will help strengthening the role of immigrant networks and reduce the costs of international migration. In this context, there are prerequisites to reconsider the perception of international migration in the sense of transforming it into a largely random process, into an organized international business that involves a very large budget, engaging all the world's states, led by a group of people, organizations, agencies and institutions, all having an interest in promoting their own business.

The greatest challenge of the 21st century is how migration is directed to the security of states, but also to individuals.

As for the dynamics of immigration flows, there are expectations for a "natural increase" in the number of immigrants. In the perspective of Romania's accession to the Schengen area, serious problems of immigration management could arise. Thus, state institutions should focus on two categories of resources: a) endowment with equipment and technology at local and regional level; b) training for the improvement of human resources in all local / regional empowered institutions. Romania's new status by joining the Schengen Area could create additional responsibility for the Romanian state to secure the external borders of the

European Union and the achievement of the objective of combating illegal immigration. In this context, closer coordination of the efforts of the institutions with attributions in the regulation of immigration and the prevention of illegal immigration is required: the Romanian Immigration Office or the Border Police.

Migration, whether voluntary or forced, is increasingly connected to other pressing issues such as development, trade or human rights.

Conclusions

Immigration and migration are realities of our day. They are part of everyday life, requiring an analysis, an approach to the peculiarities of each category of migrants. They are continuous phenomena, difficult to manage and accurately measured. For the immigrant, integration consists in knowing the host country's language (reading, writing), access to the education and labor market system in that country, possibilities to increase professional mobility by raising the level of education and professional qualification, equality before the law, cultural and religious respect, respect for the laws and traditions of the country in which they live. At the same time, for the host society, migrant integration requires tolerance and openness, agreement to receive immigrants, understanding the benefits and challenges of multicultural societies, providing unhindered access to information on the benefits of integration, tolerance and intercultural dialogue, respecting and understanding the condition, traditions and culture of the immigrants and also respect for immigrants' rights.

In Romania's case, given the lack of previous experience in the field, the still low number of immigrants, refugees and limited financial possibilities, it is clear that integration services and assistance are not entirely satisfactory, despite the efforts made in recent years to align with the international standards.

If in the past our country had mainly a role as a transit country for the migratory flows from the Eastern states, on their way to the Western countries, with a high level of economic development, Romania has recently become, on every day that passes, also a destination country.

Current international migration is the result of social discrepancies between different regions of the globe and the realities of labor markets in the industrialized countries. The destination countries of international migration are very involved in this process, providing conditions and circumstances in which international migration survives and even flourishes.

Immigration for better economic conditions remains a constant factor, but the potential of forced immigration, which has an upward trend, should not be ignored. People will be motivated to emigrate to protect themselves or their families or to escape from the economic decline of the society they live in. International immigration will continue to be stimulated by political, social and cultural rigidity or

human rights violations, but also by the failure of governments in source countries to solve the social problems of their citizens.

It is obvious that migration and immigrants do not only contribute to the economic growth of the countries. Immigrants make it possible for people to interact with different traditions, habits and beliefs. This creates the premises for a continuous development of human society.

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PROCEDURAL GUARANTEES CONCERNING THE RESPECT OF THE CHILD'S BEST INTEREST

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Abstract: *The legislator has enshrined the rights of the child as human rights and transposes into national law the universal standards applicable to all children. There has been a general transposition from a child's needs regulation to a full legal valorization of their rights as a natural person undergoing protection and covering the child's entire person. The absence or insufficiently outlined characters of the child's discernment associated with limited life experience are legally compensated by a system of means of protecting both the person and the child's heritage. In scientific papers it is mentioned that, as a rule, in ordinary situations, the legal guardian is called upon to identify the direction of the child's interest and to decide accordingly. In all processes concerning minors (divorce, child custody, establishing or termination of placement) the court can not offer a solution without hearing the minor if he has reached the age of 10 years. Therefore, according to the provisions of article 264 Civil Code, the court of tutorship will settle the dispute only after the minor has been heard in the respective case. The purpose of this paper is to show procedural guarantees and psychological implications in the extraordinary situations in which the child can be found. Special situations arise from external forces generated by parents or others in civil society. The magistrate must ensure the trust that the relationship between him and the child should be based on. The hearing technique essentially pursues the observance of the general principles of the protection and promotion of child rights in close connection with the principle of truth finding by the magistrate.*

Key words: *child; best interest; protection; procedural guarantee; hearing.*

Introduction

The origin of the notion of best interest of the child comes from the realization that it is an individual who has needs and rights distinct from those of the parents. Therefore, his interest may be different from that of his or her parents or guardians, and it is normal for the child's interest to prevail over other interests when taking action on the child.

The minor's best interest is to keep it as long as possible in a normal and balanced family environment in the presence of both parents because the risk of breaking his soul balance is very high when he or she is entrusted to one or other of the parents. Therefore, after separation of the parents, the maintenance and

encouragement of the child's relationship with the parent who has not been entrusted to him becomes vital for his normal moral development.

Both in national and international law as well as in the practice of the European Court of Human Rights, the right to personal relations is enshrined as a fundamental right recognized both by the parent and the child, and the states are obliged to take positive measures for its effective realization. Personal relationships must be unrestricted, and their restriction is only necessary under particular conditions to protect the child.

The child's best interest is circumscribed to the child's rights to normal physical and moral development, social-emotional balance, and family life. The principle of the best interests of the child is also enforced in relation to the rights and obligations of the child's parents, other representatives, and any persons to whom he or she has been legally placed. (Article 2, paragraph 2-5 of Law 272/2004)

The family should be involved in any decision of the authorities regarding the best interests of the child. Authorities and the public persons are required to involve the family in all decisions, actions and measures concerning the child and to support the care, growth and training, development and education of the child.

Parental rights are at the same time obligations, which mean that parents are held to exercise parental rights. The exercise of these rights is done by parents through legal acts and deeds. Parental rights are native, based on the establishment of the parentage relations under the law. The child can not escape parental authority; he is in a relationship of dependence on parents. Parents are pillars of support in respecting and guaranteeing children's rights. They are the ones who educate, initiate and shape a conscious child's behavior. Parents' accountability suggests their awareness of what the child belongs to. Here the law can only recommend "specialized assistance to increase the capacity of parents to take care of children" (Article 42 paragraph 1 of Law 272/2004)

1. Parents hearing

Article 263 (3) of the Civil Code provides that procedures relating to parental and child relations must ensure that the wishes and interests of parents concerning the child can be brought to the attention of the authorities and that they are taken into account in the decisions they take. It is materialized by listening to them in the cases in which the judicial function "exercises the functions of the parents" in relation to their children (Avram, 2013: 463).

Listening to parents is expressly imposed by the legislator on how to exercise parental authority and gives parents the right to, in the absence of consensus on a concrete measure relating to the child, express their position before the judge in deciding which of the options expressed by parents has the capacity to better meet the child's best interest. The court can not opt for a different solution to those opposed to the parents than in cases where it would directly assess the object of the

claim, such as the case where the child aged 14 is referred to change the way it is taught, or professional training in the event of parents' opposition or in case of misunderstandings between parents regarding the extent of the child's maintenance obligation, the manner and modalities of execution or the contribution of each parent. In all other cases, the court listens to parents and decides on misunderstandings between them without being able to substitute for parents by imposing a solution. (Civil Code - Articles 486; 498; 499)

Parents' differences in parental authority exercises in their resolution, the procedural guarantee of their hearing by the court may arise in areas such as the establishment of the child's home, change of the dwelling of the child, the establishment and execution of the maintenance obligation, the relationship between divorced parents and their children, as well as on the assumption that there are differences with children about changing their teaching or vocational training or when the child is taken back from other people. (Civil Code - Articles 496; 497; 499; 396; 498; 495)

Parents should have the opportunity to be heard and answer the observations made during the court proceedings; the right to be heard correlates with the right of the party to a fair trial. Parents must therefore be legally represented in procedures such as taking social protection measures, be given access to the information on which the child protection measure was taken, even if it was not requested, and communicated the evidence. (Pivniceru, 2016: 68)

Parents involved in any judicial proceedings concerning the child should be given the opportunity to express themselves, correlatively to the court's obligation to listen. This means their right to be informed of all the legal and factual elements of the case, to effectively discuss all the legal and factual elements of the case in the whole of the proceedings.

2. Child's hearing

2.1 The child's right to be heard and informed

The child is a holder of rights but with incomplete autonomy in relation to adults. He has to participate directly in the judicial proceedings that concern him and helps to determine the best interests of the child.

The best interests of the child is legally guaranteed and one of the principles for ensuring and respecting the rights of the child is to hear his opinion and to consider it, taking into account his / her age and degree of maturity. (Civil Code - Article 264; Law 272/2004 - Article 6 Letter h.)

In the matter of the immediate return of children illegally displaced or detained in any State Party to the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, their opinion may be a consideration in refusing to return to the judicial or administrative authority, in the conditions in which he

opposes his return and has reached the age and level of maturity that makes it necessary to take his opinion into account (Pivniceru, 2016: 70).

The principle means to value the individuality of the person of the child to express his opinion freely on any matter that concerns him, without automatically incorporating the mature identity of his parents. The right to be heard gives the child the opportunity to ask for and receive any relevant information, to be consulted and informed of the consequences his opinion may have, and the consequences of any decision affecting him.

The distinction must be made between the child's right to be informed and heard in court proceedings and his right to express his opinion on any matter concerning him and the right of the child to be informed and heard in court proceedings and to express his consent in cases provided by law. The child has the right to express his opinion on any matter that affects his daily life, not just rights derived from his vulnerability or dependence on adults. If the first hypothesis addresses broad opinion on any issue of interest to the child, the hypothesis of listening to the child in court proceedings concerns the procedures in which he is hired or promoted directly or through his legal representative (Pivniceru, 2016: 70-71).

Listening to the child must be free, which means that expressing opinion means the absence of any pressure, influence or manipulation and refers to the child's own view of the situation in which he is involved, as well as informing the child about the decision that can be taken and its consequences. Listening is of a general nature and relates to any judicial or administrative proceedings which concern it and is compulsory in the case of a child that reach the age of 10 and can be ordered by the competent court or requested by the child in the case of the child who has not reached the age of 10, provided that listening is considered necessary or that the refusal to listen is motivated.

2.2 Child's mandatory listening

The hearing is mandatory in solving parental misunderstandings regarding the exercise of parental authority, in resolving the misunderstandings about restricting the rights of the child to maintain relationships with other persons with whom he has family ties, in cases of requesting the return of the child to any person who holds it without the right, to resolve the misunderstanding between parents regarding the establishment or change of the dwelling of the child, in the case of changing the way of teaching or vocational training, in the case of the court's consent to the parents' understanding of the exercise of parental authority, in the court ruling on the relations between divorced parents and their children and in the case of establishing the parent's separate ways of having personal relationship with the child after the divorce (Pivniceru, 2016).

2.3 Child consent

Distinct from the right to be heard, the legislator regulated and the child's right to express his consent. Requesting the consent of a child aged 10-14 is an exception to the rules on legal capacity. Thus, in terms of adoption, consent is a condition of the validity of adoption. The choice of the child in this situation is final and can not be remedied in any other legal way (Cod civil, Art. 463).

Participation of children aged up to 14 years in public debates in the case of audio-visual programs can only be done with their consent. Also, the religion of the child who has reached the age of 14 can not be changed without his consent and under the same age and consent of the child the special protection measures provided for, in the individual child protection plan, are established, but the court may pass, for grave reasons, over the child's refusal to express his consent to the proposed measure.

2.4 Child commitment

Except where the law requires the consent of the child, the legislator considers the child's involvement in any matter that concerns him, but the valorization of his opinion depends on his age and degree of maturity, the existence of discernment.

In favor of the child, it operates a simple presumption of his ability to formulate his own opinion. In this way, the judge must assess in each case both the degree of comprehension of the child and his ability to understand the implications of the given particular situation, whether the child is able or not to formulate an opinion of its own and independently. Therefore, the judge must re-evaluate the degree of maturity of the child that involves analyzing emotional, cognitive and social development. The fact that the opinion of the child will be valued only to the extent that, in the context of the child's development level, it can have the legal significance of a position that correctly represents his best interests. (Pivniceru, 2016)

In principle, the courts give positive meaning to the child's option, or motivate the reasons for which the child's opinion has not been taken into consideration. There are court judgments that do not add to the child's listening, although it occurred in the first instance, and the omission of assessing the position of the child results from the criticism of the judgment appealed against to the appellant, as there are also court judgments sanctioning the failure to comply to the right of the child who fulfilled the age of ten years, to be heard. (Pivniceru, 2016)

Listening to the child requires the judge's knowledge and psychological skills to facilitate a correct opinion expressed by the child, in which the judge should generally go through the following stages:

- a. Prepare the hearing, which involves building a relationship of trust between the child and the judge that hears it;
- b. Investigating the child's skills to make the difference between truth and lie, linguistic competence and linguistic style in order to assess the child's opinion;

c. Active listening to the child in order to stimulate communication with the child and to obtain the necessary information to improve the climate of discussion and to reduce the difficulty of understanding;

d. Free listening to the child's storytelling and asking questions, techniques whose use is likely to obtain the information necessary for configuring the child's opinion and the degree of maturity expressed." (Pivniceru, Luca, 2009: 16-28)

The judge must remember the child's sensitivity and the delicate situation in which he resides in the separation or divorce of the parents and the consequences that they imply on their existential universe, in which the judge must act with tact and use knowledge, skills and abilities of psychological nature to avoid traumatic consequences for the child. For these reasons, the content of court rulings in which the discussions with the child in the council's room are faithfully related, defeats the legal provisions on the listening of minors. If the judge decides not to participate in the hearing of the minor, it does not correspond to the requirements of the text, the detailed recording of the discussions with the child in the council room in order to become public through the court decision (Pivniceru, 2016)

The judge who communicates with the child, gaining confidence in him, must carefully consider the language used by the child expressing emotional states or attitudes. The child's sincerity with the judge can not be turned against the child, as a consequence of accurately telling in the court decision the discussions held together in the council chamber. In fact, this means generating the risk of exposing the child to a sense of guilt, he can feel responsible for the decisive character of his statement of the judgment. For these reasons, even if the conversation with the child has a high degree of fidelity in the court hearing, the child's opinion should be recorded with caution in the judgment, and the reasoning should only refer to the fact that there is a reasonable opinion of the child knowingly, a consequence of the public character of the judgment.

3. Psychosocial inquiry

The psychosocial inquiry is a consequence of the child's visibility in the protection of his rights and represents both an important procedural guarantee and a measure to protect the rights of the child, the state through its organs providing the judge with the necessary information about the child and its habitat. (Pivniceru, 2016)

The notion of tutelage authority used by the Civil Code expresses a function that the state has assumed in order to ensure a protection that meets the requirements of the Romanian Constitution. In this regard, the legislator appointed the mayor in his duties as a representative of the State and the function of guardianship authority. The legislator considered that this function should be exercised at the level of the local public administration through the executive

authority within the territorial administrative units. The reason was the proximity between these authorities and the community.

Regardless of the fact that the mayor directly or by delegation exercises the function of guardianship authority, the report of psychosocial inquiry is an act originating from a local public administration authority. The mayor or his specialty officer acts as a public official when exercising the function of guardianship authority, without the report of a psychosocial inquiry being classified as an administrative act, as it does not give birth, does not extinguish or modify legal relations. All that is found in this report can be countered in the process, the burden of proof being the one who challenges the results of the report. (Pivniceru, 2016: 78)

The obligation of the social inquiry is expressly regulated in the following situations:

„– establishing relationships between divorced parents and their minor children;

- resolving misunderstandings between parents about the exercise of rights and duties fulfilled by the parents;

- establishing and changing the child's home in case of misunderstanding between parents;

- changing the way of teaching or professional training required by the child in the case of parental opposition;

- establishing the extent of the support obligations towards the child, the manner and modalities of the execution, as well as the contribution of each of the parents in case of misunderstandings between them;

- decline in the exercise of parental rights.” (Pivniceru, 2016)

By regulating the psychosocial inquiry, the legislator extended his regulatory vision and added a new existing component. It was hoped that the elements of social investigation, economic and social status of the persons or the family context investigated would fully reflect the present status of the child and the family environment in which the court's intervention is requested, so that the measure taken by the court corresponds to the best interests of the child.

The minimum content standard of the psychosocial survey should include elements related to the economic, social, health, education, living conditions, risk behaviors identified in parents, children, and other persons in relation to which in claims keeping contact with the child. These elements will have to include subdivisions whose inclusion in the content of the report could provide the court with data and information about the child and its environment so as to contribute to identifying the best interests of the child. (Pivniceru, 2016)

Any situation regarding the child, which requires the intervention of a body of the legislative, judiciary or executive body, must be resolved immediately in order not to leave uncertain the situation of the child, a rule which is part of the common law established by the European Convention on Human Rights.

The State is responsible for the malfunctioning of its bodies and the effectiveness of the right to a court is part of the process and includes both the right of access to a court, that involves the analysis of the length of proceedings, and the right to enforcement of judgments.

Conclusions

Legal protection of the child is circumscribed to the concept of the best interest of the child, a reference matrix that covers all child-related regulation and which reflects on any measure that concerns it, no matter who it is. (Pivniceru, Luca, 2009)

At all stages, the judge must also show psycho-intellectual and moral-emotional knowledge. Listening is not a means of administering any evidence, but a means of revealing the child's opinion about the exercise of the rights that concern him. The judge must use a simple language adapted to the age and level of understanding of the child, adequate tone with avoiding the authoritarian tone.

The questions asked must be brief, clear and open, and the child should be treated with sensitivity and care, following the personal situation, needs, desires and feelings the judge will prepare for listening and before any interview. Legal representatives and advocates have the task of preparing the child before listening, explaining to him what is going to happen and what will he be asked, but without his emotional influence, and the judge must inform the child about the purpose of the hearing, how it will take place, the importance of the details to offer them and try, as far as possible, to establish a relationship of trust with the child, which can lead to the child being stress free.

The child's best interest is a legal requirement, which reflects the specific differences in relation to the child's development characteristics as well as the context of his life. The measures that can be taken in relation to the child should be individual and will be based on the child's personality, the social context in which they are located, the specifics of the measure and the identification of appropriate family alternatives.

The primary guarantee of the best interest of the child is based on the variable probation system according to each case. In the absence of a convention concluded between parents, the judge's decision will lay the basis of a new way of relationship between the child and each of them in the structure of the component elements regarding the subsequent development of the child.

To this end, the judge comes after the administration and evaluation of the evidence when the facts alleged or challenged by the parties will be substituted for the established factual situation to which the legal framework articulated around the best interests of the child.

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DEINSTITUTIONALIZATION OF YOUTH UNDER INSTITUTIONAL CARE: TRANSITION FROM INSTITUTIONAL CARE TO INDEPENDENT LIFE

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Abstract: *The present study analyzes the process of deinstitutionalization, as a transition stage in the life of youngsters who leave care system after turning eighteen. They are a vulnerable population at risk of social and professional exclusion, mainly due to lack of supporting services following their exit. The objective of this study is to introduce a few changes which have taken place within the child protection system, and also a few strategies for guiding and supporting this category, so as to include and integrate them into society and into the labour market. Also, to stress a social worker's role as a community facilitator in increasing the youth chances to adjust to independent life. Thus, after the 1990's, during the political and economic transition stage, significant changes have occurred in the provision of services to children and teenagers placed in state care. Placements have been restructured, more complex services have been added, child care professionals have been trained, social care standards have been redefined, legal frameworks and administrative structures have been properly adjusted.*

Key words: *youth; social worker; intervention; deinstitutionalization; reintegration.*

1. Introduction

Institutionalization has been thusfar the most common strategy for protecting children in need in Romania. Starting with 1997, when the new child protection system was introduced, significant changes have occurred in the provision of services to children and teenagers placed in state care. Placements have been restructured, more complex services have been added, child care professionals have been trained, social care standards have been redefined, legal frameworks and administrative structures have been properly adjusted. Policies and national legislation clearly state a child's right to grow up in a family, favoring biological families and underprivileged children, prioritizing foster care as opposed to residential one and supporting institution reform. Changes in legislation were made at the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Child care is admittedly a priority and efforts are being made towards improving services provided to them in a family-like environment. (Campean, coord., 2010).

There is, however, an age group which is still vulnerable and at risk-adolescents, who leave placements only to face difficult challenges related to health,

lack of jobs and housing, and thus risk addiction and abuse. Therefore, these young people must be properly trained for life outside the care system, in order to acquire useful life skills. Also, after exiting the care system they must be able to rely on the support of integrated services offered by the community in which they live, with uninterrupted access to education and healthcare. All these considerably increase their chances to successfully make the transition from residential care to adult life (Salvați Copiii România, 2006).

When youngsters leave institutional care, the first stage of the transition begins when they exchange rights for responsibilities and most of them cannot cope with the employer who expects a certain conduct, workplace, and workload. Consequently, they end up migrating between different social services givers (hot meals, weekly shower, shelter, clothing, resume writing, job search guidance) and fall into be it unwillingly, « the street rule », where they are extremely vulnerable, naive, trusting any promises and easily tempted into crime or improper behaviour. The most frequent problems with integrating youth into the labour market are: lack of qualifications, inability to follow rules or workplace, to respect hierarchy, to commit for a long period of time, lack of self-confidence, or trust in success.

After leaving care institutions and finishing studies, these young people find themselves in a society which is hardly prepared to give them the support they need during this transition stage, which renders most of them at risk of delinquency. Even though conditions in most residential care facilities are better than those in underprivileged families, the absence of parents and their emotional support have long-term effects. Young people who leave care can be easily tempted into delinquency, alcohol consumption, drug abuse, prostitution, organized begging networks.

Institutional policies with regards to social and professional integration of these youngsters are somewhat unclear, as beyond the statistical data offered by the Child Protection Service (Direcția Generală de Asistență Socială și Protecție a Copilului - DGASPC), which shows that there are young people integrated into the labour market, there are no special departments for this within the DGASPC, with trained professionals to follow standard work strategies. In addition, in most cases youth deinstitutionalization is a random outcome, not a planned, organized and guided one and after long-term institutionalization, they are vulnerable and insecure about social integration. the Presidential Commission for Social Demographic Risk Analysis (Administrația Prezidențială, 2009).

2. Transition from institutionalization to independent living / deinstitutionalization

Studies in Romania show that youngsters are generally ill prepared for the transition to independent life, one of the barriers being financial and emotional dependency on family. Young people tend to find socio-professional environment unfriendly, full of obstacles, difficult to cope with and they do not possess the

necessary skills to assess risk and manage crisis situations (Anghel, Dima, 2008). According to recent studies, socio-professional inclusion of youth is mainly affected by integration into the labour market, education background, living situation, health and social involvement (Neagu and Petrescu, 2017).

Each year, some 5000 young people leave institutional care, having to adjust to social and professional life (Muga, 2005). It is a stage difficult enough for every youngster, especially for those who have received state or private institutional care and are being cut off from their support. Many studies have found some irregularities with the child protection system in Romania, such as little or no preparation for independent life, unmatching rights and responsibilities, pressure from trained professionals who expect the young to instantly become adults, little or no professional training of staff to work with these young people, little professional satisfaction compared to workplace conditions and requirements etc. (Campean, 2004).

Children raised in institutional care in Romania, who have suffered severe social and emotional deprivation, have been profoundly affected, according to M. Constantinescu (2008), in their biopsychosocial-cultural development. Similar challenges are stated by Neagu and Petrescu (2017): inconsistent support services for post-institutional care youth and socio-professional integration programs; insufficient case management and skill training staff; segregation/exclusion of young people coming from institutional care in school as well upon employment; insufficient financial and psychological support for foster carers; poor social and professional integration services; poor guidance for independent living; lack of support for the development of social and professional services on the part of NGOs. In addition, youth aging out of the care system are expected to take the typical steps-education, career, housing, family. Once they leave institutional care, they cannot go back to their former residence, while the average young individual can return to parents in case of undesired outcome upon emerging into adulthood. This increases the gap and the number of disadvantages for young adults coming out of the care system (Boldis, 2018).

Absence of proper skills and of experience necessary to independent adult life is a common feature of 'graduates' from residential care. "Lack of experience in accessing different services outside their institution, poorly developed social skills, lack of a real family model, not being able to gradually take on responsibilities, as it usually happens within the average family, lack of social support to ensure basic needs after leaving the centre, are but a few of the most tragic realities that these young people face after leaving institutional care." (Constantinescu, M. 2008: 222)

We will further introduce a few aspects of life in residential care, which contribute to this problem:

- It is rare that these institutions offer the necessary role models. A mostly feminine staff is partly to blame. There are cases when, upon leaving the

institution, young boys and young girls especially have not yet used kitchenware.

- Residential care leads to dislocation from family, also in the case of children who are not orphan or who have not been completely abandoned (poverty being the reason for their placement in the facility).
- Institutionalization induces a state of dependency and a substantial lack of self-motivation. When everything is provided by someone else (food, shelter, personal items but also rules and routine), when even the slightest deviation from the required behaviour is punished, there is no wonder that youngsters face challenges in their adult life, which requires independence and determination. These findings reduce the shock of finding these children in penitentiaries and mental institutions;
- A tendency common to youth in care institutions is that of isolation within the community where they are placed. The situation is that much serious when the facility has its own kindergarten, school, sports centre, limiting contact with people from the outside world. Large facilities have centralized supply service (based on public auction), which does not allow children to go out to stores, the experience of shopping being limited to pocket money products. There are cases when even spending this sum is supervised and limited;
- Many facilities fail in teaching the children gestures, skills, day-to-day abilities necessary within society: talking on the phone, communicating with opposite sex people, preparing for an exam, or a job contest, and so on;
- "Most centres (with some exceptions) do not seem to be interested in teenagers' life after graduation" (Neamțu, 2003: 817)

Sadly, institutions do not follow up on their 'graduates', and their families do not look for them. Now they are truly being abandoned by their second family. Alone and confused, they do not know where to go and what to do. During the political regime prior to 1989, the institutional care system for children, though imperfect, worked - institutionalized children managed to socially integrate to some extent, after leaving the centre. They were found jobs in socialist plants, which usually had dormitories and canteens, thus being able to function according to their previous training and skills acquired during institutionalization, i.e. lack of independent life skills and the ability to independently plan their long-term existence. The need for permanent guidance and protection seems to be a common trait of youngsters raised outside the family.

Thus, according to John Bowlby (1953), in an average family the parents who initially take on all life responsibilities and their children's development, gradually transfer to them a part of these responsibilities and guide them into autonomy and self-awareness. They strive to instill and form the necessary skills to meet own needs with own resources and to plan strategies for this process.

These did not occur in placements where a small teaching and auxiliary staff hardly managed to raise children and meet their basic needs - thus not having the possibility (time, energy, training, or intention) to ensure efficient education and proper training for future life.

Lack of independent living skills often paired with lack of knowledge and acceptance of social norms, with youth in care, due to no contact with the outside world, which contributed to their rejection by and of society and trends today, increased endogrouping, tendency to consider the institution an ideal life model and peers role models difficult to leave. Often, young girls coming from residential care faced sexual activity problems, straying from the ethical norms of the socialist era and unintentionally becoming single mothers of illegitimate children with uncertain paternity or even abandoning unwanted children at the maternity ward.

Certainly, there were solutions to these problems: placing these children into orphanages or wards of children hospitals, with approval from authorities managing these institutions. Thus, the cycle continued, institutional care system being able to self-reproduce. All these prove that until December 1989 the system of institutional care for children, however unsatisfactory and flawed, somehow worked (Alexiu, 2001: 16-18).

Quick measures must be taken so that the cycle is interrupted. For this, sexual education and prevention of unwanted pregnancy is needed among institutionalized young girls. These young girls still suffering from abandonment are not going to be capable of taking care of a baby, being a child looking after another child without having the basic knowledge. This situation too will have the inevitable outcome- another abandonment. This abandonment is partly caused by the relationship and report with the baby's father. If for him this child is not important, it will not matter for her either and she will give him/her up. Child abandonment is also caused by the mother's inability to form emotional ties. She bonds with various people, without forming meaningful ties, as in an attempt to protect herself. She herself has been placed in an institution and she developed. She is expecting the same from this child. In order to stop this phenomenon self-image must be improved in institutionalized children.

3. Implementing strategies for family and social reintegration of youngsters leaving institutional care

One of the most important aspects of the social worker's intervention in preparing teenagers for independent life is the support for designing realistic life projects. Before everything, the youngster must be helped to discover what he/she wants. This role normally falls on family, even if its input is not oftenly direct. With institutionalized children this role is assumed by the social workers and the main positive consequence of their support is defining the adolescent's own identity. An important role assumed by the social worker is that of preparing these young people

for autonomous independent life. The social worker takes part in educating through educational programmes, more or less formal, while the family represents the natural environment of informal education. Education thus becomes a slow incremental process which permanently adjusts itself to each individual's needs and abilities. Achievement rewards is a continuous process offering a more valid mechanism of positive behaviour reinforcement than punishment, oftenly the most common technique in formal education (Pop, 2004: 45-46).

Strategies for integration after leaving institutional care

Two patterns of social relations are formed after leaving the centre.

- 1) Deinstitutionalized individuals with good chances of integration, and these are:
 - a) Young people taken on by Christian organizations which have supported them in finding jobs and helped them to acquire self-care and independent living skills, managed for the most part to internalize socially accepted norms and values and had good chances to optimal integration into society, with positive effects on their life and on society. The factors contributing to this success are: employing skilled staff in order to attain these objectives; offering good role models, to which selection of subjects among institutionalized people, with real chances of success, is added. We also consider that they have real opportunities of developing good social behaviours, with positive consequences on social and private life;
 - b) Young people who remain institutionalized after turning eighteen in order to continue formal education, on condition that they receive real support on the part of society;
- 2) Youngsters who have left the system without receiving any kind of support from society, the ones who do not even have a place to stay, live in the street, in parks, and in the sewers. They have little education and training, different ages, and a slight delay in cognitive development. Their main feature however, is group dependency, with which they do not want to part. Equally low chances have young people living in welfare homes, but do not have a permanent job and show the same group behaviour;
- 3) An intermediary group are young people who are not integrated into their own families and who have different chances of social integration, function of their original families. As most of these families face poverty, there is a great chance of following their pattern. These typical groups suggest different measures so that each of them receive social support according to their needs.

In the spring of 2006 *The National Strategy for Social Inclusion of Youth Leaving the Institutionalized Care System* was implemented. The target group of this strategy is represented by the young people coming from the child protection system

who at the age of eighteen are in juvenile halls or in penitentiaries, and also homeless eighteen-year-olds.

Law 416/2001 regarding minimum wage guarantees decent living conditions. In the National County Strategies on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction, measures are taken to support postinstitutionalized youth. "The programmes for postinstitutionalized youth have two main objectives: providing housing and jobs. With regards to living space, approximately one fifth are shelter-like programmes and fewer are welfare housing. For integration into the labour market, these programmes refer to training on the one hand and support in finding jobs on the other. Councelling and socio professional training programmes are the most frequent. They take place either in social service facilities, either within individual training plans" (HG no. 669/may 24th 2006, chap. II).

With regards to social economy, a priority in Romania is increasing employment for underprivileged people (MEFPS, 2009). Actions promoting the year 2010 as the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion emphasize raising public awareness about active inclusion. (*European Fight against Poverty and Social Exclusion*, strategic framework document, 2010: 4). Recent evolution of national social policies has lead to finding innovative and alternative solutions to meet needs of vulnerable groups, with the purpose to reduce multiple social exclusion. The strategy for promoting social inclusion, in *The National Strategy for Social Protection and Social Inclusion Report* (2008-2010), includes a second main objective : "Increasing employment for underprivileged people, which states that "development of the area with regards to SE can account as a first step [...]". (MMFPS, 2008: 23).

The problem of institutionalized young people and the efforts being made for their integration into family and society emphasize "the need for social intervention, for change of vulnerable people's situation through complete understanding of the needs these people have" (Constantinescu M., 2018: 109).

4. Conclusions

Most young people leaving the child protection system at a certain age do not have a family to go back to or a person to support them. This impairs the process of social integration of these young people, who are rarely supported in finding a job or a place to live. Institutionalization is currently the equivalent of isolation from social life, society abandonment, cosequently that of the Government, of the institution, of trained professionals, and of everybody really, adding to parent and family abandonment. Success with their integration depends on the involvement of all the factors influencing their wel-being, on support from the family and from the social worker/educator in starting independent life, on acquisition of skills necessary to independent life, on the opportunities offered by our society to find jobs and homes.

Institutionalization has a number of negative effects on social and professional integration. It is well known that during institutionalization children and adolescents are *used* to effortlessly receiving everything (food, shelter, clothing). Most of the times they do not know how to use money, are insecure and end up permanently needing someone (an educator or instructor in the care facility). Rules inside the care facilities do not usually allow involvement in activities for life skills acquisition, so they are not involved in facility chores (such as, for example, setting the table, cleaning it, cooking under adult supervision etc). Overprotectiveness can be a negative element in the development of children in the care system: centralized cooking and service of meals, laundry being done by the staff obstruct development of the child's autonomy and responsibility. Even though in care institutions conditions are, most of the times, better than in their families, deprivation of parents and their emotional support have long-term effects (Buzducea, 2013).

That is why the child/adolescent must be taken out of the family only in obvious cases of abuse or neglect. Their emotional and care needs are difficult to meet by an employee in a residential institution, who is more often than not overwhelmed by all the tasks he/she must carry out. It is not, however, impossible that basic needs be met in care institutions. Employment of trained professionals in such institutions is essential to creating a nice welcoming environment.

In Romania authorities are well motivated to work towards faster and more extensive deinstitutionalization, when it favours children/adolescents. The risks of an institutionalized child developing grave attachment problems are considerable, which is why they should preferably stay with the family or at least stay in contact. Institutionalized children are less adjusted. Because of labeling, their integration into a class is problematic. Sometimes adolescents develop violent behaviour, offensive language and lack motivation to study. The system dependency that-long term institutionalization creates, as well as insufficient awareness of own abilities, wrong self-assessment, mostly affected by low esteem are the factors leading to poor social and professional integration and sometimes total failure.

Young people coming from institutionalized care often live in a state of confusion and uncertainty about their future. Transition from care to adulthood is difficult, teenagers lacking independent life skills, and so the most weak are prone to crime. A part of them do not have families to support them, and most cannot rely on their families because of the long gap in their communication. They thus risk homelessness and street life.

This in turn leads to delinquency and crime, to unsafe public places, increase in sexual abuses, drug abuse and alcohol consumption. Street children/teenagers who steal, beg, or use drugs have become frequent images of big cities. Their presence, more oftenly shocking and offensive, determines people to negatively perceive them and they are sentenced to failure from the beginning (Pop, 2004).

In most cases, young people leaving institutionalized care cannot write a resume or attend a job interview. Job searching is also problematic as they do not

know who to speak to. Lack of counselling careerwise makes some of these youngsters train for jobs which no longer exist on the market, which does not help them find a job. Integration of young people into society and active life as well as reaching their potential represent key elements in reducing the risk of social exclusion. Young people who leave the child protection system represent a challenged social category with specific problems, representing a priority of the social care system during this stage in the development of the Romanian society.

Neglecting problems of the young people from the care system is to:

Encourage the homelessness phenomenon, as the number of youngsters leaving institutionalized care and ending up in the street is large, if we consider reports of many social workers dealing with street children or with youngsters who spent their childhood in a residential institution and ran away only to come back for a certain reason; street life, lack of rules and oftenly aggressive pressure represented a true mirage for many, compared to an emotionally deprived life, characterised by abuse and physical and psychological violence without basic resources.

Institutionalized children have more chances of recuperation compared to street children and not taking advantage of these extra chances leads to development of a parallel world in the dark area of society. Living off the books can become as big of a problem as working off the books. For young people coming from institutionalized care and ending up in the street will eventually start families in the street, giving birth to children with no social identification, biologically inadequate, with total lack of hygiene; in short, they will raise children who will not stand any chance.

Sentencing these young people to basic level of education and unemployment. Worklife, profession, are key elements, especially in the case of these young people who do not have any support from their families or other people once they leave care institutions. Their only resource, providing the chance of a socially integrated life, is education and professional training. Lack of their interest in career orientation, through forming work ethics values, often causes their abandonment in the street, with no chances. Even though these youngsters manage to create some kind of life on their own, the education and professional training handicap is still present, generating unequal chances which only increase the gap between them and more privileged youngsters. In many old government social care facilities still exist staff behaviours which foster lack of interest in their problems and hardships (Stativa, 2002). This phenomenon can be called *negative socializing*. All these aspects previously mentioned - exclusion, social factors, as well as consequences - only help to define a phenomenon in terms of a social problem, to assess its extent and severeness, to identify required actions and their extent, causes and consequences.

That is why it is extremely important, in achieving social and professional integration of youth leaving the child protection system, to consider the following objectives:

- creating a coherent and coordinated system of social inclusion;
- reducing marginalization and social exclusion risk;
- integrating into and actively participating in community life.

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