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CONTENTS

WELL-BEING AND GENERALIZED TRUST DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract: *After some brief introductory notes, this study reviews approaches to well-being and trust during the COVID-19 pandemic. After reviews, it includes the methodology and structure of the group of 1640 respondents involved in a survey carried out by us between November 2020 and January 2021. Among the research results, this study presents a series of data related to: self-assessment of well-being on the poor-rich scale and the main predictors involved; generalized trust (in people in general) and the perception of its evolution in the first year of the pandemic; the association between well-being and generalized trust and the association between well-being, trust and attitudinal compliance (defined by compliance with prevention measures and willingness to vaccinate). The research results led to the highlighting of an association between the perception of well-being and trust, on the one hand, and between generalized trust and compliance with prevention measures, on the other hand.*

Keywords: *perceived well-being, compliance, social capital.*

1. Introduction

More than a hundred years after the Spanish flu, experts were still studying its roots and social implications, particularly in terms of well-being. Thus, Mamelund (2018, p. 307) mentioned that the pandemic of 1918-1919 killed between 50 and 100 million people in three waves and that it was long argued that this pandemic affected all social classes equally. However, Mamelund notes, later studies challenged the earlier view of mortality and found higher mortality for the poor.

Personally, I have not identified any studies that analyse the issue of trust and social capital during the Spanish flu pandemic. However, such studies were not lacking in the approaches to the H1N1 pandemic (2009-2010). During the H1N1 pandemic, experts noted, social capital (measured by trust in government and interpersonal contacts as well as feelings of obligation, reciprocity, and cohesion) functioned as a predictor of vaccination intention, handwashing, and mask-wearing behaviours (Pitas and Ehmer, 2020: 943). Considering Italy during the H1N1 outbreak, Prati, Pietrantoni and Zani (2011: 761) argued, based on research, the importance of building public trust in promoting compliance with the recommended behaviours. Research done in other countries offered similar results: two important indicators of social capital – institutional trust in health services and generalized trust appeared to be independently associated with the intention to accept the H1N1 vaccine (Rönnerstrand, 2013: 853).

Some experts say that income inequality defines social stratification in health and mortality. For example, socio-economic disparities in H1N1 mortality have been attributed to different exposure to the virus, differences in disease susceptibility and differences in access to health services, with similarities also seen in the case of COVID-19, with high transmission and negative impact higher in the poor population due to overcrowded housing and working conditions (Elgar, Stefaniak and Wohl, 2020: 1). The cited authors also estimated that the

vaccination rate may also differ from one country to another, depending on income inequality and social capital (Elgar, Stefaniak and Wohl, 2020: 5).

After these introductory notes, this study will continue with a brief review of concerns of some specialists from various fields in relation to well-being and its dynamics during the pandemic, both at the level of the enabling factors and of the pandemic impact. Similarly, the issue of trust and social capital in general, general trust in particular, is addressed. Both how social capital and trust impacted the pandemic and the impact of the pandemic on trust and social capital are considered.

A special section is dedicated to the research methodology that substantiates our study. It is a survey based on a questionnaire carried out at the end of 2020 and the beginning of 2021, in Romania, with the participation of a group of 1640 respondents who completed an online questionnaire. The presentation of the structure of the studied group is followed by some results related to: self-assessment of well-being on the poor-rich scale and the main predictors involved; generalized trust and the perception of its evolution in the first year of the pandemic; the association between well-being and generalized trust and the association between well-being, trust and attitudinal compliance defined by compliance with prevention norms and willingness to vaccinate.

Our study ends with a series of conclusions and implications for intervention aimed at stimulating, by increasing generalized trust, compliance with prevention measures specific to a pandemic period (and not only!).

2. Well-being and the COVID-19 pandemic
2.1. Well-being at community, regional and national level

Approaching the theme of well-being yielded the most interesting results in analyses that promoted the community perspective on the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, the rural-urban discrepancies were frequently considered in the analysis of the links between the community and the spread/control of COVID-19. In Canada for example, as Ervin pointed out, rural communities had the poorest population compared to urban and peri-urban areas. Rural and remote communities had many marginalized populations who lacked sources of social power such as money and expertise. It was the Amish communities, the immigrant communities, the Native American tribes. On top of all this, mistrust of government has created barriers to health care, thus generating a unique medical ethics problem (Erwin, Aultman, Harter et al., 2020). Describing a map of the vulnerability and resilience of US communities, Peters pointed out that around 30% of rural US communities were highly susceptible to COVID-19 due to the presence of the elderly and those in poor health, due to insufficient aged care facilities. Also, major vulnerabilities in rural areas included: fewer doctors, lack of mental health services, high numbers of people with disabilities and uninsured persons. Poor telemedicine connections were also noted. The cited author believed that the lack of social capital and social services could prevent local control of the pandemic (Peters, 2020: 446). In New York, a metropolis strongly affected by COVID 19, a series of comparative studies were carried out on neighbourhoods and it was concluded that in communities characterized by poverty, low access to health services and little education, more cases of diabetes, obesity and high blood pressure were identified, the percentage of these chronic diseases being higher in communities severely affected by COVID-19 (Harlem, 2020: 468). Harlem found that a high percentage of black people and Latinos severely affected by COVID-19 was synonymous with a high percentage of pre-existing chronic diseases, low education, and overcrowding (Harlem, 2020: 469). In the US, many problems have also been raised by immigrant communities. Thus, a study carried out by Center and collaborators highlighted the fact that in the provinces of Benton and Washington, the state of Arkansas, while people of Marshallese and Hispanic origin represented 19% of the

population, they totalled 64% of the illnesses and 57% of deaths caused by COVID-19 (Center, Da Silva, Hernandez et al., 2020: 1807).

As regards the community welfare inequalities, the warning was issued that it is very likely that COVID-19 could amplify existing inequalities both through the immediate consequences resulting from measures taken to prevent the spread and through long-term consequences (Fisher, Languilaire, Lawthom et al., 2020: 247). As Ferreira et al. observed, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought massive declines in well-being worldwide (Ferreira, Sterck, Mahler et al., 2021). For the case of Germany, specialists have documented the link between well-being and the impact of the pandemic in its various phases. For a first phase, a positive association was identified between the wealth of a district and infection rates and a negative association with indicators of social deprivation. It was the phase of the virus entering Germany through those who had been skiing in the Alps and on international trips and who were more affluent people. During the second phase, wealthier areas and areas with a higher share of university-educated employees saw fewer new infections, while the initial advantage of more socially disadvantaged areas disappeared. In the second phase, Plümper and Neumayer (2020, p. 1) pointed out, the further spread of the virus depended on the ability of individuals to distance themselves socially, an ability that was, to some extent, socially stratified.

2.2. Trust during the COVID-19 pandemic

In relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, studies conducted at the level of large populations in urbanized areas of the world considered a number of variables such as social capital or ethnic and racial diversity to explain disparities in the spread of SARS-CoV-2 in community level. Thus, considering wider communities such as provinces/counties in the USA, it was concluded that areas with a high level of social capital were at risk in the first phase of the COVID-19 pandemic due to the high level of interactions, over time the norms of trust and reciprocity contributing to reducing the impact of the pandemic (Borgonovi, Andrieu and Subramanian, 2020: 1). Researchers have also found in the case of cognitive social capital, in the form of trust and norms, a stronger impact than structural or network capital, in the form of activism or political participation. This result suggested that, in principle, social capital affects the response to COVID-19 by facilitating cooperation and self-sacrifice for the common good and by promoting public acceptance and compliance with control measures (Wu, 2021: 45-46). Social capital, as it results from other research, is associated with a great trust and relationship in a community, it can endow people with a greater care towards others, a fact that leads to the observance of hygiene rules and social distancing (Makridis and Wu, 2021: 1). Although it should rather lead to the spread of the virus through greater social interaction, social capital has a significant negative effect on infections and the spread of the virus (Makridis and Wu, 2021: p. 14). Hence the conclusion that health interventions cannot be disconnected from social forces that are at the local level. By investing in social capital and interpersonal relationships, experts believed, we help manage negative shocks and maintain levels of interconnectedness and well-being (Makridis and Wu, 2021: 15).

Anticipating that many studies will be developed on the topic of trust in the control of the COVID-19 pandemic, Devine analysed in 2021 a series of works that appeared during the first waves. The work on this topic, Devine found, confirmed that *trust was associated with greater compliance with political measures.* Some potentially conflicting results were also identified: while trust was associated with lower mortality rates, it was also linked to later adoption of restrictive isolation measures. Studies also showed how trust increased considerably at the start of lockdown measures, with *institutional trust* feeding *social trust*, but direct exposure to COVID-19 reduced trust (Devine, 2021: 282).

Thoresen and collaborators were interested in the impact of the pandemic on generalized trust. The identified levels of generalized trust in an early phase of the pandemic

(May 2020, on a representative sample of the Norwegian population) did not differ significantly from the expected levels based on pre-pandemic research. Increased trust was identified for people who reported personal experience with COVID-19 (tested positive, hospitalized, or lost someone to the disease). Pandemic worry and a high health threat were both associated with lower levels of generalized trust. The authors hypothesize that people who had personal experience with the disease may have had direct experiences with kindness and helpfulness from medical staff or others, which may have transferred into increased trust in others. The results, Thoresen et al. believed, suggested that generalized trust in other people can be affected by disasters and problems, both positively and negatively, depending on the personal experiences of individual disasters (Thoresen, Blix, Wentzel-Larsen et al., 2021).

The researchers also analysed the impact of the pandemic on *social trust*. For example, Kye and Hwang (2020 concluded that trust in Korean society, people, central and local authorities increased substantially while trust in the judicature, media and religious organizations decreased. Elgar, Stefaniak, and Wohl (2020) considered data on income inequality, data on four dimensions of social capital (trust, group affiliation, civic responsibility, and trust in public institutions), and data on COVID-19 deaths from 84 countries on a period of 30 days. They found that mortality was positively associated with income inequality, trust and group affiliation, and negatively associated with civic engagement and trust in state institutions.

3. Research on well-being and generalized trust
3.1. Method and studied group

The method used in our research was questionnaire survey. The research was carried out between November 6, 2020 and January 26, 2021. It was the period in which the highest number of infections was reached in Romania for the year 2020, i.e. over 10,000 cases per day. The survey took place online, with participants being contacted directly, through the Facebook network, or indirectly, through our students and other collaborators. The main themes of the survey referred to: concerns and fear, attitudes towards prevention measures and willingness to be vaccinated, quality of life, trust and tolerance. As already suggested, in the present paper we will consider only some aspects of well-being and trust. Other important aspects were the subject of several studies published by us in the last two years (Pascaru, 2021a, 2021b, 2022).

At the end of the survey, a group of 1,640 people answered the questionnaire. We have chosen to present here only the characteristics that will be used as independent variables in this research. By gender, 639 respondents (representing 39% of all respondents) were male and 994 (60.6%) were female, with seven people (0.4%) not declaring their gender. Depending on age, the group included 625 people between 18-29 years old (38.1% of the total), 336 people (20.5%) between 30 and 39 years old, 319 people (19.5%) between 40 and 49 years, 194 people (11.8%) between 50 and 59, 115 people (7%) between 60 and 69 and 45 people (2.7%) 70 and over. Six people (0.4%) did not want to declare their age. According to what was declared, 9 respondents (0.5%) had graduated from primary school, 95 (5.8%) from secondary school, 438 (26.7%) from high school and 1069 (65.2%) were university graduates. 29 respondents (1.8%) did not specify their last graduated school. Regarding marital status, the respondents declared that they were: married (754, representing 46% of the total), single (624; 38%), divorced (105; 6.4%), widowed (52; 3.2%) and in consensual union (55; 3.4%). 50 respondents (3.0%) did not declare their marital status. Regarding the occupational status, 982 respondents (59.9%) declared themselves employees, 91 respondents (5.5%) said they were employers, 10 respondents (0.6%) declared themselves farmers, 37 respondents (2.3%) were unemployed, 142 respondents (8.7%) were retired and 324 (19.8%) declared themselves students. A number of 54 respondents (3.3%) did not declare their occupation. The type of locality in which the respondents declared that they lived the most during the pandemic was a rural locality for 418 respondents (25.5%) and an urban locality for 1211 respondents (73.8%). 11 respondents

(0.7%) did not declare the type of locality. The non-declaration of gender, age or type of locality can be attributed to the very sensitive subject of the investigation, being probably a reflex to protect the identity.

Another characteristic of the group of respondents, also important for this work, was the experience with COVID-19: 137 respondents (8.4%) declared that they had been infected with the new coronavirus, 1167 (71.2%) that they had not been infected and 326 (19.9%) that they do not know whether they were infected or not. In relation to this aspect, 10 respondents (0.6%) refused to give an answer. The lack of an answer to the questions related to the experience with COVID-19, must also be related to their sensitive subject.

3.2. Results

According to our research data, almost 45% of respondents tended to place themselves in the first half of the rich-poor scale, while more than 55% placed themselves in the second half of the proposed scale. The average for the whole group was 5.86, so higher.

The predictors proposed by us were not associated with significant placement differences (greater than 1 point/step). However, we note some small differences that seemed to be based on schooling (average 6.39 for those with secondary school versus 5.00 average for those with primary school and 5.86 average for the whole group), occupation (6.34 for employers and freelancers compared to 5.43 for the unemployed and 5.60 for farmers), ethnicity (7.25 for those of German ethnicity compared to 5.32 for those of Hungarian ethnicity, as also results from Table 1). Infection with SARS-CoV-2 was also not associated with differences in the perception of well-being.

Table 1: On a scale from 1 to 10 (1- very poor, 10- very rich) where do you stand? * Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Romanian	5.87	1573	1.557
Hungarian	5.32	28	1.307
Romani	6.14	7	1.952
German	7.25	4	1.893
Other	5.81	21	1.632
Total	5.86	1633	1.558

More than two-thirds of respondents with valid answers (79.8%) considered that they are as rich or poor as they were before the pandemic, 15.3% that they are poorer and 4.9% that they are richer. Men more than women reported changes in well-being, both in terms of impoverishment and enrichment. By age category, more of those between 18 and 29 (16.6%) and fewer of those over 60 (9.8%) declared poverty. Those between the ages of 18 and 29 (6.3%) declared that they had become richer. All those with primary school and almost a fifth of those with high school studies (19.9%) declared themselves poorer. Most of those who declared impoverishment were among the unemployed (48.6%), followed by employers and freelancers (27.8%). Among the last category, there were also more people who declared enrichment (6.8%). By ethnicity, more Hungarians declared impoverishment (29.6%) and more Romanians declared wealth (5.1%). More than a fifth of those divorced or cohabiting (22.8% and 22.2% respectively) said they had become poorer and a higher percentage of those who were single (6.7%) said they had become richer. Neither the place of residence during the pandemic nor the infection with Sars-CoV-2 was particularly associated with the respondents' impoverishment or enrichment.

Regarding trust, as can be seen in Table 2, only 37.8% of the respondents stated that they have a lot of trust in people in general. Less than 3% declared a lot of trust.

The respondents' gender did not induce major differences in the declaration of generalized trust. A higher percentage of people over 50 say they don't trust people in general at all, with the peak being reached in people 70 and over (7.3% compared to 4.2% for the whole group). None of those with a primary school degree reported trusting people very much in general, with 22.2% of them saying they did not trust people at all.

Overall, the share of those who declared a lot of trust increased with education level, and correspondingly, the share of those who declared that they did not trust people at all decreased. None of the farmers and the unemployed expressed much trust in people.

The highest percentage of those who declared a lot of trust in people was registered among employers and freelancers (5.5%). Farmers and retired people stated more than other categories that they do not trust people at all (11.1% and 7.4%, respectively).

Table 2: How much trust do you have in people in general?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very high level of trust	48	2.9	3.0	3.0
	High level of trust	573	34.9	36.0	39.0
	Little trust	684	41.7	43.0	82.0
	Very little trust	218	13.3	13.7	95.7
	No trust at all	68	4.1	4.3	100.0
	Total	1591	97.0	100.0	
Missing	I don't know/ I don't answer	49	3.0		
Total		1640	100,0	100.0	100.0

In an important proportion (14.3%), Hungarians declared a very high trust in people. The same percentage was recorded among the Romani who declared that they did not trust at all. A higher percentage of widowed people declared that they did not trust people at all (9.8%), followed by those who lived in consensual union (5.7%) and those who were not married (5.1%).

The share of rural respondents who declared that they did not trust people at all was more than twice that of urban respondents (6.9% versus 3.3%).

Percentage-wise, twice as many people who had been infected with SARS-CoV-2 reported a lot of trust in people compared to those who had not been infected (1.5% vs. 3.2%). But three times fewer infected people also said they did not trust people at all.

The association between well-being and trust reveals some interesting aspects. As can be seen in Table 3, the average of self-situation on the poor-rich scale decreased as trust decreased. Below the general average (5.85) were all those who did not declare very high and high trust in people in general.

Table 3: On a scale from 1 to 10 (1- very poor, 10- very rich) where do you stand? * How much trust do you have in people in general?

How much do you trust people in general?	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Very high level of trust	6.08	48	1.933
High level of trust	6.07	573	1.522
Little trust	5.76	684	1.469
Very little trust	5.68	218	1.544
No trust at all	5.31	68	1.949
Total	5.85	1591	1.548

Above the average were those whose trust in people had increased during the pandemic or remained the same (6.79 respectively 5.89) and below the average were those who declared that their trust had decreased (5.74).

Before addressing the associations between well-being, trust, and compliance, we want to dwell on the connections between well-being and fear, on the one hand, and generalized trust and fear, on the other. As can also be seen from Table 4, fear appears to be lower as reported well-being increases.

Table 4: On a scale from 1 to 10 (1- very poor, 10- very rich) where do you stand? * Is there any fear in the state you are experiencing now?

Is there any fear in the state you are experiencing now?	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Yes, very big fear	5.70	144	1.374
Yes, but moderate fear	5.83	1144	1.502
No, I don't live in any kind of fear	6.07	345	1.741
Total	5.87	1633	1.548

Of those who said they trusted people very much in general, only 6.2% said they felt very afraid, while of those who said they did not trust people at all, 27.7% said they felt very afraid. It is interesting, however, that also in the category of those who declared that they did not trust people at all, there was also the highest share of those who claimed that they did not live in any kind of fear (38.5% compared to 20.7% overall).

Self-perceived well-being was associated with greater differences in attitudinal compliance with disinfectant use and social distancing. Thus, those who agreed with the use of disinfectants and keeping distance were on a lower rung on the poor-rich scale compared to those who did not agree with these measures.

Those who strongly wanted to vaccinate ranked themselves slightly higher on the poor-rich scale, but not by very large differences from those who then did not very much want to vaccinate (5.96 versus an average of 5.85).

Generalized trust appeared to be positively associated with attitudinal compliance. Thus, all those who said they trusted people very much and only 91% of those who said they did not trust people at all agreed with washing their hands regularly as a protective measure.

Accepting the use of disinfectants as a prevention measure were all those who declared a lot of trust in people, and only 79.7% of those who declared that they did not trust people at all. 89.4% of those who said they trusted people a lot and only 75% of those who said they didn't trust people at all agreed with keeping their distance. 84.4% of those who declared a lot of trust in people and only 55.6% of those who declared that they did not trust people at all approved the mask wearing as a prevention measure (Table 5).

A percentage of 88.9 of those who declared a very high level of trust in people (and only 59.7% of those who declared that they did not trust people at all) agreed with the quarantine of people.

Regarding the desire to be vaccinated, 40% of those who declared a very high level and a high level of trust in people and 26.2% of those who admitted very little or no trust in people wanted to be vaccinated.

Table 5: Generalized trust and agreement with wearing a mask (valid N = 1530)

		Wearing the mask		Total
		Yes	No	
How much trust do you have in people in general?	Very high level of trust	84.4%	15.6%	100.0%
	High level of trust	81.9%	18.1%	100.0%
	Little trust	72.1%	27.9%	100.0%
	Very little trust	65.4%	34.6%	100.0%

		55.6%	44.4%	100.0%
Total		74,4%	74.4%	74.4%
	No trust at all	55.6%	44.4%	100.0%

4. Conclusions and implications

The results of our research showed a self-situation of the respondents between 5 and 6 on the poor-rich scale, slightly towards the upper limit of 6, so not poor therefore. Schooling was positively associated with self-perceived well-being. Occupation, of course, also introduced differences in self-perception of well-being, from employers (richer) to unemployed and farmers (poorer). Ethnicity also highlighted a superior self-positioning of the Germans, average of the Romanians and inferior of the Hungarians. The vast majority of respondents believed they were as rich or poor as they were before the pandemic. They declared themselves poorer than before the pandemic, especially those with less schooling, the unemployed and employers, and Hungarians (by ethnicity). Poverty characterized especially those in consensual union and those divorced. From the perspective of the pandemic effects, the fact of being infected with SARS-CoV-2 was not associated with significant differences in the perception of well-being.

Among our respondents, just over a third declared a very high and high level of trust in people, with trust decreasing with age and increasing with education level. Trust was also lower among Romani or those living in rural areas. Trust was growing in the transition from the unemployed and farmers to employers and freelancers. In the perspective of the pandemic effects, the number of infected respondents who declared a lot of trust in people was much lower, but in the same category the share of those who declared that they did not trust people at all was smaller.

Regarding the association between trust and self-perceived well-being it was observed that the mean of the poor-rich scale decreased as generalized trust also decreased. Above average were those who declared an increase in trust during the pandemic.

Self-perceived well-being was not associated with relevant differences in attitudinal compliance. Generalized trust seemed to be associated with attitudinal compliance both in relation to adherence to some prevention measures and in relation to willingness to be vaccinated, also confirming the results of previous studies for the H1N1 pandemic (Rönnerstrand, 2013).

From the literature devoted to well-being and its impact on the spread and severity of COVID-19, we noted the disastrous effects of lack of well-being, through association with chronic diseases, housing congestion and poor working conditions. It would be expected that subjective well-being also manifests itself in the sense of a positive impact on compliance with prevention measures. And this all the more as its level is lower and the vulnerabilities of precariousness are assumed. The fact that the results of our research do not confirm this implies the need for further analysis in future studies. But the hypothesis of a gap between real and subjective well-being should not be rejected from the start either.

The practical implications of our research seem to be more clearly defined in relation to generalized trust because an increase in generalized trust could be associated with an increase in compliance with prevention measures. But is a program to increase generalized trust in Romanian society really possible? We leave this question open now, at the end of our study, only emphasizing the need for more in-depth research on this topic even outside of a pandemic context like the one generated by COVID-19.

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THE CONFLICT BETWEEN LABOUR GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS THROUGH THE APPROACH OF STRATEGIC ANALYSIS (MICHEL CROZIER)

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Abstract*: Michel Crozier is the founder of strategic analysis, where he developed the approach of organizational processes based on power. Where you ask about the fact that the freedom of actors is a reality, and the existence of organized and coherent formats as another reality, how can these two realities be connected. For any conditions and pressures, the collective action is an organized action and the organized environment in which it takes place. Therefore, strategic analysis is concerned with understanding how to build collective actions based on individual behaviours and coordination in action. The analysis of workers ' groups and modern organizations cannot be applied to classical approaches that study the group without analyzing what an individual can benefit from within the group, so it was necessary to highlight the most important contemporary approaches in the field of the organization to better understand the phenomenon, organizations and the conflict between them. Among these approaches, we find the theory of strategic analysis by Michel Crozet, where in this article we tried to extract some of the main concepts in this theory such as areas of doubt, the logic of play, and the consideration of intra-organizational conflict as a war expressed by Crozet as an unhappy choice for groups and individuals within organizations.*

Keywords*: Michel Crozier, strategic analysis, coordination analysis, areas of doubt, labour groups, organization.*

1. Introduction

"Strategic analysis" is based on emphasizing the maxim of the organized action, this is the direction of the analysis of both M. Crozier Friedberg E... Who reviewed their approach in their author: The actor and the system (Crozier and Friedberg, 1977) Which is evident in Crozier's thought in clarifying what is meant by "strategic analysis" and by which his sociology is known, the strategic analysis includes two statements.

First: "Analysis" Which it is appropriate to meet with "Theory", Either "Strategy" A saying that corresponds to planning, and a saying that allows transcending "Inevitability", As allowed by substitution, this second interview implies for us that the behaviors are directed, And intended ‹And the important thing here is precisely to know what it turns into. (Crozier, 1996.)

And suppose Crozier admits that a strategic statement is not a choice "Happy" Recalling the war. In that case, however, he considers that he has not found a better one, and if we accept the following definition of strategies as "The art of power relations" – Using power in its broadest sense, that is, which includes playing Effects, Where Actors practice playing important effects to obtain other sources of power" (Quivy, Campenhoudt, 1995: 93) In this sense, he accepts "Crozier", but this strategy has an enemy, which is the Doubt Related to the behavior of the opponent or partner, the will "Strategic analysis" It is due to the desire to understand the behaviors in which it is assumed that they have intentionality. Also, in being variable according to the compulsions and resources of the actors that they represent in a certain period of time,

intentionality is always present. Still, the direction is variable depending on the context /Discount.

The Crozian approach also sees that the analysis of physical situations is within a couple of statements:

The first duality: "Strategy-play" "authority - Uncertainty" The Social actor is the main element of this analysis, and the Social actor has a strategic behavior that will be understood within the relationships in which it takes, and this particular framework of the system of relations will make it possible to understand the actor in particular, and to what extent his strategy is rational or rational, and in order to understand this it is necessary to.

The second binary: "Power – uncertainty" Allows an understanding of how people behave within a world of compulsions. Their actions must also be considered through Authority since it seems that without authority something cannot act or influence, and for this, he knows "Crozier" Authority within a statement "Relational", If "We have no authority outside of our relationships with others" (Crozier, 1988: 61-63.). As far as "Crozier" And that's just his perception of power, it's the relationship in which "Exchange quotes" correspond to the interests of social actors or, more precisely, to how the actors represent their interests. In power, there is always reciprocity in influence (Two-way Payback). A saying "Zone of doubt" She assumes that in an organized group, actors have authority because they own areas of uncertainty "Arising from the use of regulatory norms, the spread of Regulations increase the areas of certainty" (Amblard, Bernoux, Herreros, 1996: 329). The actor exerts power over individuals because he controls the area of uncertainty to which they are subject, and since monopoly situations are rare, everyone tries to influence depending on the areas of uncertainty that he controls, hence the complexity of views of actions and contradictions when it comes to rationalization or rationalization, everyone wants others to be guides, provided that they remain their Free.

Rationalization in this regard becomes a bet for all parties to the conflict, and this is what he points out " Bourdieu. P" Speaking about the relationship of conflict and bet and the overlap between them, by saying: "The conflict bet is the conflict bet" (Bourdieu, 1984: 258.) If rationalization for a fighter in a war situation is the vision of demolition, as long as winning means eliminating the enemy, then the human beings in organizations and systems live with "The enemy" the problem is not his liquidation but how they are trying to develop their interests at his expense for their own.

The strategic approach is included within the sociology of organizations, which is a branch or specialization of the sociology of work, which denies the idea of replacing one another, the sociology of organizations specifically constitutes a level of sociological analysis of work by representing the intermediate level between the societal and the individual level of social action (Crozier and Friedberg, 1977: 24).

Everyone knows who "Crozier and Friedberg" In its founding author of the strategic approach:

the actor and the system as a guide not only to the sociology of organizations, but also to the sociology of organized action, they define this strategic approach as located at the level of power relations between actors and the implicit rules governing their interaction, which each of them calls "Games", And uses situations as a malleable and inadequate research tool in order to discover these games, the organization in this direction, is seen as an example "The kingdom of power relations, influence, bargaining, and calculations" Example "A human construct that has no significance outside of its individual relationships" (Crozier and Friedberg, 1977: 50).

"Power is defined as a structured relationship, which is described as a relationship of exchange and therefore a negotiating relationship, it is also an unequal and instrumental relationship, and the possibility of some individuals or groups to influence other individuals or groups" (Crozier and Friedberg, 1977: 60). "In light of this relationship based on power and

coercion coexists with an aspect of freedom that needs to be defended or expanded by negotiation, so negotiation in this perception is a strategy for the social construction of collective action with its frustrations and satisfactions (Crozier and Friedberg, 1977: 113).

expressing themselves and their existence. In other words, the stability of these games and the relations of influence between them, by means of the mechanics of the settlement of tendencies that make up other games, the "A structured action system is a structured group of people whose participants actions is coordinated by stable game mechanisms that maintain their structure, that is, the stability of their play and the relationships of those between them, with settlement mechanisms that establish other games".(Crozier and Friedberg, 1977: 286).

This perception points to the importance of choices and decisions and to the tools for understanding these mechanisms, especially addressing the relationship between the rationalization of the system for traffic to the rationalization of the actor, limited rationalization-in contrast with reductive rationalization, takes into account conflict relations and recognizes them, it is more about guiding decisions and identifying the problem than the conflict Their basis are based choices, and I have alerted "Crozier, Friedberg". On the relativity of the tools and perceptions usually used in order to develop a detection result, which is most often due to the micro-culture to the decision-maker. (Crozier and Friedberg, 1977: 361).

Therefore, our choice of the Cruise approach came from a firm scientific conviction that strategic analysis is the most appropriate to study a phenomenon of this magnitude since the functional constructivist approach does not adopt the strategy of the actors within the format.

2. Michel Crozier – The phenomenon of bureaucracy

The French sociologist is considered "Michel Crozier" Among modern scientists who have tried to study the phenomenon of bureaucracy, where he used the entrance to the Modern School of rationality by finding out the extent of the Craftsman's commitment to the bureaucratic personality, and to achieve this goal, Crozier chose two different organizations among them in terms of the degree of bureaucracy, where he chose a French government agency for administrative work characterized by a very high degree of bureaucracy and another tobacco factory in France characterized by a lesser degree The relative degree of bureaucracy compared to the structure of the state agency shows the high degree of bureaucracy within the agency in the presence of a hierarchy (Gradation of power) In addition, business and internal activities are characterized by formal impersonal relations, clarity of communication channels and authority, and promotion in this organization is based on seniority at work rather than relying on performance evaluation and observation of members of the organization.

It is worth mentioning that Crozier has defined his concept of bureaucracy as the phenomenon of red tape, complexity and inertia of organizations, as it is an expression of the image of a government employee committed to the textual application of rules and regulations without any action required by the variability of situations.

Through his findings "Crozier" From this study he began to be influenced by the views of "Merton" About the administrative personality, which is formed mainly through special training programs carried out by the organization to prepare this personality, which theoretically fully adheres to the implementation, of official instructions and rules, and from this given Crozier tried to find out the extent of that personality's commitment to official rules and regulations and is that personality trying to give itself a space of freedom that Organization the study concluded the following important results:

A- It is known that the organizational member has special goals that he seeks to achieve through his participation in work, the existing situation in work and relationships takes personal explanations by the participant, on which he builds strategies to ensure his interests and achieve his goals without apparent prejudice to official rules and regulations.

B- That at the level of workers in the tobacco factory, the group of maintenance workers and production workers agreed on a single strategy that guarantees them to stay in the organization without being punished by the higher supervisory levels and this strategy is based on protecting and achieving the special interests of each group through occasional contacts between them without resorting to the higher The subjectivity of two groups and therefore the information desired only by the two groups ascends to the higher level.

C- This is what the study revealed in the maintenance department, where there was an engineer with a high degree of technical expertise specialized in the maintenance and repair of tobacco production machines, so there was an urgent need for his expertise in repairing any emergency and unexpected malfunction in the Machines where he sees "Crozier" That with the change of culture and through its analysis of the results within the historical and cultural context of French society, the category of Engineers seeks to maintain its changing positions in order to face technical development by increasing specialized knowledge and creativity, which preserves for them a high functional position through which they exercise indirect control and optimal power within the industrial organization.

As for the government agency, the study gave indications of the occurrence of tensions revolving around the conflict between the head of the department, the head of his unit and supervisors at the lower organizational level, these tensions and conflicts are due to the inaccuracy of information transmitted vertically from supervisors to the head of the department through the heads of units subordinate to him and to her.

Through this study, despite the clarity in the official communication channels guaranteed by the organization regarding the relationship between the three supervisory levels, there is a conflict between them due to the strategy pursued by the supervisor with his workers in order to achieve their common interests, which guarantees each party continuity in his work, without exposure to obstacles, as this strategy is based on the failure Official instructions have the direction of subordinates literally on the one hand and entering into informal relations with them on the other hand in order to ensure the achievement of the workflow, and not to raise any problems that reach the ears of the head of the unit or through what is included in the reports related to the worker's competence, skill level and Colleagues Crozier's study of the highly bureaucratic government agency has revealed the role of the bureaucracy itself on the creation of situations of the use of force in indirect control over the information available through communication channels. He emphasized the important fact that bureaucracy has two sides:

That written preferential rules are not returned to during work except in certain cases, for example:

An attempt by a member to exercise the authority vested in him, wave it around or use it to cover his position in critical situations where individuals keep written instructions to protect themselves first when an informal attempt appears to interpret them in ways that deviate from what they were issued for.

It is worth noting that Crozier came to an important conclusion that the effective determination from a position constitutes the action he takes and his interpretation of the action of others, and the importance of this conclusion lies in his critique of the ideal model of bureaucracy by "Max Weber" Which gives the characteristic of complete rationality to the relationship between the means and the end, as he criticizes "Crozier" The Pure model of conflict through its basic concept that implies the inevitability of the destruction of the weaker party.

On the other hand, the results of the study revealed that the general symbols of legitimacy created by values are reinforced and strengthened by the common sense of groups ' keenness to destroy one another.

It is worth noting that the origin of Crozier's approach lies not precisely in his detection and naming of the vicious circle, but in the power relations that arise within the organization, as he found in his experiments: (Claudette la Faye. 1996: 43)

Production workers show respect to the workshop leaders and those who are subordinate to them according to the hierarchy.

Workshop leaders hate maintenance workers because they procrastinate in repairing machines, and maintenance workers judge production workers as reckless.

Maintenance workers appear sternly in front of workshop leaders and criticize their efficiency.

Through these studies, he came up with a model "Strategic analysis" Which focused on three basic postulates, namely:

Those individuals never accept to be treated as means, exploited to achieve the goals of the ORGANIZATION controlled by officials, but each individual has his own goals and ambitions, which may be opposed or not to the goals of the organization, the latter goes in light of the multiplicity of goals of its constituent individuals.

The relative freedom of the actor in any kind of organization, the actors possess a sphere of freedom, in which they exercise some kind of choice.

The strategy of the actor always emanates from rationality, provided that this rationality is limited (Crozier, 1965: 56) the strategy of individuals stands at temporary solutions and the least harm does not reach the optimal solution, contrary to Taylor's thought. (Bernoux, 1990: 129).

3. Basic concepts of strategic analysis

The strategic analysis revolves around three main axes as follows:

A- Influence: Groups are based on conflicts and influence, and individuals within groups differ in their functions, each has its own goals within the group format that has common goal, and Crozier's influence is the ability to influence others in order to get something within the relationship, influence is not a feature of individuals but an unequal relationship that requires exchange and negotiation. (Crozier and Friedberg, 1977: 56).

B- Efficiency: It is related to a specific specialty so that it is irreplaceable, it is the expert who can solve the problems that meet the organization.

C- The zone of uncertainty: The organization and groups are subject to changes, surprises, or so-called uncertainties that cannot be controlled or known in advance (Bernoux, 1990: 149) and actors exploit uncertainties for the benefit of their own calculations.

In light of all the above, organizing as we understand it is a social format oriented towards achieving specific goals, this format includes elements that support its balance, integration, and stability in order to be able to perform its functions and other elements that provoke conflict between its different groups, those groups that have divergent if not conflicting interests and interests.

Obviously, this issue is based on another issue, which is that the organization includes different groups and different classes, each of which has its own interests that seek to rationalize them, and each of them has its own goals, which are to obtain more power, authority, and influence in order to strengthen its position and status. The organization does not exist in a vacuum, because it is a sub-format of a larger and more comprehensive format is society, society is the source of its human and material resources, and therefore the organization depends on drawing the dimensions of its policy and ideology, but at the same time, the organization exerts a different kind of influence on society, the source of the function The Society of which he is a part.

In other words, our perception of organization allows us to study the extent of consistency or contrast between the ideology of society and the ideology of organization, a

concept that allows addressing the organization in the light of the mutual influences between it and the external environment and the obstacles it produces that prevent it from performing its goals. if Organization is social Its structural dimensions are expressed by recognized organizational characteristics such as planning, hierarchy, human resources, and communication channels ...etc.

However, the role of these characteristics is not limited to their connection with the achievement of goals, they are then associated with social variables or processes with a special relationship that ultimately expresses the ability of the organization and its effectiveness, and from this point of view, we cannot imagine studying the structural dimensions and social variables in the organization without studying the obstacles that prevent.

Strategic analysis is concerned with understanding how collective actions are built from individual behaviors and coordination in An action that assumes a set of individual actions and the analysis is strategic when it examines the behavior of the actors Related to the clear and conscious goals that they set, the pressures of the environment and the resources available to them, the analysis moves away The strategic report on the basic balancing of the existing shortcomings in management and administration to focus on clarifying Choices.

For general management and avoiding mistakes that may threaten the life of the enterprise making strategic analysis, it has the status of an internal examination and the essence of the external examination of the organization.

A natural extension of the environment as much as possible; considering that the strategic decision of the enterprise on the nature of this environment, their change and development with emphasis on their fragmentation and ability to provide strategic keys. From this point of view it is possible Presenting five types of environment that the strategic actor interacts with:

1- stable environment: it has freedom and needs to be met and others are available, and the factors of change seem unproductive for the saturation act.

2- An overgrown environment: gradually approaching the saturation state.

3- semi-continuous environment: when the achievement limits have been reached and the saturation state that requires

Investing more with the emergence of some obstacles leading to instability.

4- A separate environment: considering that the environment is constantly changing and therefore it always requires renewal and creativity and then the beginning of separation.

5- unexpected environment: permanent separation, unexpected environment, unpredictable factors of change, analysis is not enough

The Strategist is aware of the internal functioning of the management of the organization, but rather studies the form and maneuvers of power, each organization.

The institution is subject to environmental restrictions.

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RESILIENCE RESOURCES OF THE RURAL POPULATION IN ROMANIA

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Abstract. The current sociological analysis concerns the resilience of the rural population in Romania, this being the seventh country in Europe according to the number of inhabitants and it hat a predominantly rural population until 1985. In 1859 (birth year of the modern Romanian state), the rural population was of 3.2 million pers. (82.8%) and the urban population was of 665.000 pers. (17.2%). The rural population registered a *boom* of more than 12 million persons in 1948. Currently, it counts over 9 mil. inhabitants and it represents 46.2% of the Romanian population. Along history, it was confronted with numerous traumatizing situations and events, such as: poverty, famine, epidemic diseases, strong repression during strikes, world wars, the transition from capitalism to communism and backwards, from monarchy to republic, the expropriation of agricultural land etc. Despite the menacing events of several global and national changes, the rural population managed to find resilience resources every time (biological, economical, cultural and moral), in order to adapt itself to the encountered difficulties and to return to normality, ensuring the reproduction of rural communities. It's main current vulnerability is natural decline, stated in 79% of the country's rural localities and we consider that the most important way to overcome it is sustainable development.

Keywords: *collective resilience, population dynamic, social modernization, sustainable development, rural investments, population migration, natality/mortality rate, life quality*

1. Introduction

In a previous article, we presented comprehensively our theoretical contributions to the debate of the resilience concept and we revealed the subjective sources of the moral and psychological revival of the inhabitants in the urban environment, when they find themselves under the influence of traumatizing factors. We also highlighted the expression types and forms of resilience and we analysed three of its' major approach perspectives: the psychological, sociological and biological perspective, starting from the hypothesis, that man has a bio-psycho-social structure and his reset concerns all of these three dimensions, in a unitary way.

If psychologists are concerned with the individual's resilience and his subjective resources, sociologists, in return, study the collective or community resilience or at group or society level (Otovescu et al, 2015: 32-37).

In the present article, we intended to make an analysis of the rural population in Romania, because, although having registered the hardest strokes during its existence, this succeeded, still, not only to adapt to modern changes and preserve itself, but also to remain at high levels for 126 years (1859-1985) and to regain part of its historical deficit of sustainable development.

Modernization has been, in Europe, a historical process of social renewal on multiple levels, generated by the political and economic ascension of the bourgeois-class. The capitalist society brought constitutional order and the separation of powers in the state (parliament, government, justice), market economy and series production (by applying the machinery technique), the electrification of villages and cities, the asphalting of roads and the railway network, the settlement of schools and hospitals, of banks, the grounding of national culture on individual creations or values etc. Capitalists and workers were the main social agents of the renewing changes. In Romania, they emerged and developed more difficultly, as Romania was tributary to the old feudal relations (landowners and peasants).

Romania's capitalist evolution and, implicitly, modernization process was carried out mainly in the cities, where ca. 20% of the country's population lived, while, in the rural environment, it was weak and sporadic, although 80% of the inhabitants lived here. Although, at the beginning of the 20th century, certain capitalist renewals were signalled in rural economy, such as the acquisition of some agricultural machinery and the establishment of popular banks that granted loans to the land owners, the dominant social relations were still those between the land owners and the villagers. This fact explains the historical delay of the villages from the modernization perspective and, at present, it reclaims the necessity of their sustainable development.

To be underlined that Romania entered the competition of capitalist modernization from the position of a predominantly rural and traditionalist society, the inhabitants of which performed occupations specific for economic agriculture, this being seasonal and depending on nature's moods, attributes that were characteristic until the 1965-1970's.

It had a mainly rural population and an eminently agricultural economy, based on the production of cereals and the peasants' physical labour. Certain statistics inform us that, in 1920, Romania had 15.541.000 inhabitants, 12.088.000 of whom lived in the rural environment (78%) and 3.453.000 in the cities (22%). Out of the total of active population, of 9.076.000 persons, the great majority activated in the rural space – 7.102.000 pers. (78%) (Axenciuc, 1996: 21).

During the interwar period, Romania made a title of glory out of the fact that it was considered Europe's „grain peer", although the economy continued to be unilateral - that is nearly exclusively agricultural and deficient under the aspect of mechanization. The priority interests were those of the big rural property, animal traction and the physical force of the majority social class- the peasants- being used for their satisfaction. Only after the 1970s, it was appreciated, at political level, that Romania gained enough progress on the industrialization and urbanization line, as to be able to be considered an industrial-agricultural country, a society similar to those under development.

Thus, a historical and organic problem of the Romanian society, at all times, was „the rural problem", this being linked to the destiny of the village people and of the evolution of the property regime over the land. In its essence, the rural problem was both an economic and agricultural one (the lack of agricultural property for the majority of peasants) and a social one, in a broad sense, linked to the first one (poverty, illiteracy, alcoholism, epidemic diseases and so on).

Until 1962, the rural economy was dominated, as we underlined, by the feudal production relations that had been maintained for a very long time, becoming a brake in the way of capitalist modernization. As opposed to the land-owners, the peasants were the main productive class of the society, they lived badly and difficultly, being deprived of agricultural property, for its biggest part, fact that determined it to rebel several times, culminating with the 1907 rebellion. After the agricultural reforms in 1864, 1921 and 1945 that had a reparatory role, but did not bring a radical change with regard to the life conditions of the whole villagers, the socialist cooperativisation process followed (1949-1962). This came as a big stroke for the villagers, as a unitary social class that decreased numerically, through the migration to the city of numerous inhabitants of the villages, become workers overnight (after their property right over the land and agricultural machinery was taken away from them, also depriving this class of the economic support of its reproduction).

The massive migration of the village population towards the cities, as a life-saving strategy, was definitive until 1989 and led to the de-population of villages and the abandoning of agricultural occupations, usually leaving behind only the elder generations, unable to work. The migration abroad, after 1990, for a better-paid job and a higher living standard, accentuated the work force deficit in the national agriculture and economy, generating, in the present, a labour force crisis on the labour market in Romania, obliged to import from Asian markets.

Sociological analyses underline that around 5 mil. Romanians had to leave abroad, after 1990, the majority of them due to the economic constraints. They reached over 30 countries on the European continent, especially in Italy, Spain, Germany and Great Britain, where their number exceeds 2.5 mil. pers. The Romanian Diaspora also exists in North America (USA, Canada), in Latin America (large communities of Romanians in Argentina and Brazil), in Africa and the Middle East (Israel), in Australia and New Zealand etc. (Otovescu, 2017: 25-42). Despite of the external migration, the amount of the rural population in Romania exceeds 9 mil. pers. and has a rather consistent proportion within the total population of the country (over 46%), fact that proves its high resilience potential. This means more than the entire population of several countries, such as Bulgaria (7.1 mil.), Serbia (7.02), Denmark (5.75) and Norway (5.26) and almost the population of other countries, such as Hungary (9.8), Greece (10.77), the Czech Republic (10.58) and Sweden (10.0).

The former Romanian peasants re-adapted to the market economy, becoming the farmers of today, whose number is the largest in all 28 member states of the EU. Eurostat registers prove that, out of the 10.3 mil. farms registered in EU, a number of 3.4. mil. are in Romania (33%), followed by Poland (1.4 mil. - 13.6%) and Italy (1.01 mil. -9.8%).

2. The theoretical and methodological framework

2.1. The concepts of collective resilience and sustainable development

From the sociological perspective, resilience can be understood as „the capacity of resisting and recovery, revitalization, rebirth of some groups/communities/societies, after the destabilizing or traumatizing action of certain natural and social factors, radical and explosive changes that concern the life of a human collectivity on the whole. In consequence, when sociology deals with the problems of the collective resilience, the solutions are appropriate at collective level" (Otovescu et al, 2015: 34).

Currently, „durable" or „sustainable" development makes the object of some national public policies, but under conceptual aspect it has been outlined within the context of some international theoretical debates, related to the exploitation of the natural environment to the benefit of the current generations, but without hampering the needs and expectations of the future generations.

The sustainable development concept has been acquired from the field of political debates, in the theoretical register of social sciences and undergoing multiple approaches, of historical, sociological, economic nature etc., being appreciated as a complex concept, due to its multidimensional character. Thus, it can be defined through an ecological, social, economic, technological, cultural, moral dimension, a dimension of scientific research and innovation, of international cooperation and so on.

The idea of sustainable dimension appeared, initially, as a rational and responsible response, of controlled protection of human life (current and future) from the practice of anarchic economic development, at any costs, so-called free. The latter used even the high-risk, polluting technologies in order to gain profit, without anticipating the possibility of some natural disasters, with a big impact on the life quality of the future generations.

Essentially, sustainable development is a documented answer, scientifically based, to the need of protection and conserving the natural environment against the threats of industrial civilisation (as a pollution source), to the need for change of a society or of some fields of it, relating to certain value parameters, of searching a viable solution for a major problem (poverty, unemployment etc.), of correlating several large-scale actions and organizing several actions in order to achieve a major goal, of community interest (at local, county/department, regional, national level, in the case of a country).

The great merit of the sustainable development theory is the unitary approach of the relations between man, society and nature, on a short, medium and long term, as well as advancing some adequate therapies, according to the stated dysfunctions.

Sustainable development is a concrete solution to different types of collective trauma and crises (ecological, of natural resources and so on), but also a viable alternative for balancing society and nature, younger and older generations, developed and under-developed states, the right to a clean environment and the right to use plastic products etc. The base pre-requisite is that humanity has a commune future that all people must respect and protect, because they live on the same planet. As the phrase also points out, the „durable/sustainable development" is a social process, initiated in order to satisfy human needs of long duration, being generated by certain pressing

community needs. For these reasons, it must be managed by public authority institutions, able to ensure the carrying-out and control of the process up to the final stage. Usually, the respective authorities possess the necessary means, advantages in order to mobilise financial, and human resources, to carry out substantial activities on a long term and to ensure their management, with considerable efforts.

Sustainable development involves a commitment and an inter-institutional responsibility, being assimilated as a cardinal value within UN's and EU's strategic directives and the programmes of some national bodies (at the level of the communes, cities, main cities, counties, regions). If we think only about the European funds for the construction of major objectives, such as highway networks and water supply networks etc., we get the image of what institutional support and managing a large community interest project mean.

Handling the sustainable development concept through the perspective of four dimensions that we consider essential – ecological, social, economic and technological – allows us a unitary, but also differentiated approach of the analysed problematic.

The sustainable development topic appeared in the register of social-political sciences in Romania within the context of analysing the problem of the petrol crisis in 1973 and of the appearing of some reports of the members of The Club of Rome such as: Aurelio Peccei, *The Limits to Growth*, 1972; Mikhail Mesarovic, Eduard Pestel, *Mankind at the Turning Point*, 1975 and others, works that were also translated into Romanian.

2.2. Sustainable development as a revitalization factor of the rural communities

The new theoretical-philosophical perspective, opened by the promotion of sustainable development as a global humanity value, was actively supported through an institutionalized network that organized and extended itself consequently, at world level and from which corresponding ramifications emerged, at national level. As examples of important institutional events supporting this philosophy of sustainable development, we underline the following:
-   UN Conference on the Environment in Stockholm, 1972;
-   World Commission on Environment and Development led by G. Bruntland and established by the General Assembly of the UN in 1983;
-   Vienna Convention, 1985, on the depletion of the protecting ozone layer of our planet;
-   the Bruntland Report, entitled „Our Common Future", 1986, issued after the nuclear catastrophe in Chernobyl (1985), which pledged for a development strategy that would not imperil the ecological balance;
-   Earth Summit, Rio de Janeiro, 1992, in which 170 state leaders took part, where the Agenda 21 was adopted as an action programme allowing each local administration in the world to establish the directions of its sustainable development, on a medium and long term;
-   World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, 2002 and others. (Otovescu, 2017).

The fact that UN has a Department for Sustainable Development, as well as the EU, proves the primordial attention granted to the new strategic sustainable development

orientation of all world countries. The priority action directions inscribed on Agenda 21, concern: fighting poverty and social exclusion, protection the natural environment and production of sustainable goods and services. At a world political level, sustainable development was seen as a factor for building a new society, with a superior life quality and as a mean for reducing cleavages between poor and rich countries.

At national level, like in Romania, for example, the National Centre for Sustainable Development was established, which began the implementation in our country of the UN Programme for Sustainable Development (PNUD). The Local Agenda 21 was carried out during 2000-2003, in nine pilot-cities in our country and Government Decision, in more than 40 main cities, later extended the programme during 2003-2007.

After Romania's accession to the European Union, in 2007, local development strategies for communes and cities in Romania were elaborated, as a preliminary condition for accessing European funds for local development. In addition, since January 31st 2012, the Ministry for regional Development and Public Administration was established, as a management authority under the command of the Romanian Government. Since the 4th of January 2017, it has been reorganized, under the name: Ministry of Regional Development, Public Administration and European Funds, having, as a main objective, the coordination of European structural and investment funds, during the period 2014-2020, of the regional development, territorial cooperation and cohesion, transnational and interregional cooperation and landscape planning programmes. For the implementation of the regional development programmes, Romania was split in eight regions, each of them having a Regional Development Agency– as a sustainable development vector, of an economy that would respond to global competitiveness, by creating regional systems of advanced knowledge and innovation.

Another important national rural development institution, placed under the command of the Government, born in Romania ever since 1883, is the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MADR). It ensures the elaboration, implementation and monitoring of policies and strategies in the fields of agriculture, forestry and rural development, modernization of activities and the efficient use of the allocated funds.

It has a number of 15 agencies and other institutional structures under its command, among which the National Rural Development Network. At territorial level, MARD is represented by the Directorates for Agriculture and Rural Development that exist in each county. The General Directorate for Rural Development is a management authority for the National Rural Development Programme - NRDP, developed under the motto: „Romanian villages have a future!"

The National Rural Development Programme was developed in several stages, through the SAPARD (2000-2006), NRDP1 (2007-2013) and NRDP2 (2014-2020) projects. Within this programme, „national strategic orientations for the sustainable development of the disadvantaged mountain area (2014-2020)" were set out. There also exists a programme for „integrated investments in the territory of the Danube Delta" and others.

The main objective of this work is the investigation of the major changes that occurred in the Romanian rural environment from a demographic and economic point

of view, during the period 1859-2018 (159 years), based on some indicators considered as relevant. In addition, some significant benchmarks of sustainable development and of the resilience of rural communities in our country were set out. The examination of the demographic decline and of sustainable development was especially supported by historical analysis, by the statistic method and by the case study (in Dolj County).

In the elaboration of the study, we started from two general hypotheses:

Hyp. 1: The Romanian society knew a permanent demographic growth until 1989, after which it entered a state of decline, the risk of a massive de-population existing especially in the rural environment;

Hyp. 2: The biggest need for sustainable development in Romania is in the rural environment, where we meet also currently localities with dirt roads, no water supply and sewerage networks or where certain villages live the stress and drama of their physical disappearance from history.

3. Discussions

3.1. The rural space development – a historical challenge for the modernization of Romania

In its entire history, the rural space was and remained for Romania one of the most important and difficult social-economic challenges. This, for several reasons:

a) Here lived and worked, depending on nature, more than 80% of the country's population that built-up, at the half of the 19th century, the most numerous social class-the villagers;

b) The modernization of the agricultural economy, firstly through the mechanization of works and the improvement of the living standards (electrical network, water supply and sewerage network, asphalting of roads etc.) still remained a major aspiration during the 20th century, because they involved massive and long term investments;

c) Illiteracy was a mass phenomenon and diseases caused large damage, especially amongst children – the number of those deceased under the age of 1 per 1.000 living births being amongst the highest in Europe: 175,6, in 1930 and 198,8 in 1947 (for a population of ca 15 mil. inhabitants). In 2017, the infantile mortality rate was, in Romania, of 6,6 deceased under 1 year per 1.000 living births being higher in the rural environment (8,4 per thousand) than in the urban environment (5,2 per thousand).

3.2. The dynamics of the rural and urban population. Comparative evolutions.

In the country's demographic history, Romania's population increased permanently until 1989 and since 1990, it started to decrease year after year, until the present time. As for the rural population, this has always been more numerous than the urban population, situation that existed until 1985, when it became equal to the urban one, after which it entered a continuously descending trend. This fact is proved

by the following statistical data, processed and correlated by us (Axenciuc, 1996: 20-21).

Table no. 1: Historical evolution of the relation between the rural and urban population in Romania (1859-2018)

No.	Reference years	Total population	Rural population		Urban population	
			Number	%	Number	%
1.	1859	3.865.000	3.200.000	82,8	665.000	17,2
2.	1906	6.584.000	5.351.000	81,3	1.233.000	18,7
3.	1920	15.541.000	12.088.000	77,8	3.453.000	22,2
4.	25th of January 1948	15.872.624	12.159.485	76,6	3.713.139	23,4
5.	1st of July 1985	22.724.836	11.354.744	50,0	11.370.092	50,0
6.	1st of July 1989	23.151.564	10.839.761	46,8	12.311.803	53,2
7.	1st of July 2016	19.706.529	9.120.865	46,3	10.585.664	53,7
8.	1st of January 2018	19.530.631	9.027.161	46,2	10.503.470	53,8

If in the Union year of Moldavia with Wallachia (24th of January 1859), the population of the newly established modern state lived in the villages in a percentage of ca. 83%, after nearly 5 decades, in 1906, the relation between rural and urban was still the same (81,3% - 18,7%). Even later, after almost half of century, at the beginnings of communism in Romania (1948), the Romanian society was defined by the predominance of the village population, this representing 76.6% of the entire population of the country. Barely through the 1985 census, it was signalled that the village population had decreased to half of the total population, becoming equal to that of the cities.

Since 1989 until the present, the relation between the percentage of rural and urban population reversed, meaning that the rural population decreased and the cities became demographically oversized, having ca. 54% of the resident population in Romania, at the 1st of January 2018. The last Population and Housing Census reveals that, on December 30, 2022, Romania had 19,053,815 inhabitants, about 1.1 million less than in 2011. At the same time, there was also a slight recovery in the share of the rural population (of to 46.2% in 2018 to 47.8% in 2022). Out of 42 counties, 39 experienced losses in the number of inhabitants and only 3 had an obvious increase in population: Ilfov, Bistrița-Năsăud and Suceava.

Statistic calculation show us that, during the last 3 decades, the resident population of our country knew a general decrease. For instance, at the 1st of January 2018, we were 3.620.933 less than in 1989, the most of people belonging to localities in the rural environment. If we take into account that the demographic prognoses of the Romanian National Institute of Statistics anticipate a perpetuation trend, over the next 3-4 decades, of the population decline, estimating that, in 2060, our country will reach 15.3 mil.

inhabitants, nearly equal to the population in 1919 (15.495.000 pers.) or that in 1948, at the beginning of the communist age (15.872.624 pers.), then the need for adopting measures inspired through firm and urgent public policies for the solving of the two previously underlined problems: Romania's rapid demographic decline and the disappearance of some rural localities.

Amongst the causes of the population decrease, there are: a higher mortality rate than the natality rate at the level of the whole country (negative natural growth), but also in the rural environment, where it is sensibly higher than in the urban environment, as it can be noticed from the table below; the massive migration for work and a better life in other countries of ca. 5 mil. Romanians. Only in the 2007-2017 decade, after Romania's accession to the EU (1st of January 2007), 2 mil. young people, aged below 40, left out country. The National Institute of Statistics reveals that only in 2008 there were 302.796 temporary immigrants from Romania, but also after 8 years, in 2016, their number remained high – 207.578 pers. Suggestive for explaining the population decline in Romania are also the statistical data in the next table (Axenciuc, 1996 p. 51).

Table no. 2: Dynamics of the natality and mortality rate in Romania

Years	Residence environment	Natality		Deceased		Immigrants		Total population	
		No. of living births	Per thousand inhabitants	No.	Per thousand inhabitants	Defini-tive	Tempo-rary	No.	%
1990	Urban	156.950	12,9	99.331	8,2	96.929	-Year 2008: 302.796	12.311.803	53,2
	Rural	157.796	14,3	147.755	13,4			10.839.761	46,8
Total / average		**314.746**	**13,6**	**247.086**	**10,6**			**23.151.564 (1st of July 1989)**	**100,0**
2017	Urban	113.042	9,0	124.299	9,9	23.156	242.193	12.523.597	56,3
	Rural	92.793	9,6	137.446	14,2			9.707246	43,7
Total / average		**205.835**	**9,3**	**261.745**	**11,8**			**22.230.843**	**100,0**

In the year 2017, a low natality rate, of 9.3 per thousand was registered - the EU average being of 10.1 per thousand, while the mortality rate was of 11.8 per thousand, our country being ranked on the 8th place in EU-28, according to the data offered by IndexMundi.

Sociological research state that 4 out of 10 Romanians that left were aged under 35 years; that the average age of the Romanian immigrants was of 28.8 years in 2002 and of 33.3 years in 2012; that Romanians formed the largest foreign community in Italy and that their number exceeded 1 mil. not only in Italy, but also in Spain and the

USA (Otovescu, 2016: 128). The majority of Romanian immigrants were high school and professional schools graduates and, in the last years, the share of young Romanians studying abroad also increased. Thus, our youth is contributing not only economically, but also to the increase of natality in other countries that adopted them, to the detriment of the biological reproduction of the population in Romania.

3.3. Left villages and agonizing villages

The amplitude of the flows of Romanian immigrants after 1990, that some specialists compare, referring to their volume and intensity, to the flows of refugees from Syria, torn by civil war, obliges us to acknowledge the gravity of the difficulties faced by the citizen, who had to search for living solutions in other countries, as well as the incapacity of the government to manage the challenges of the transition period from communism to capitalism in an appropriate way, when poverty risk has spread over 40% of the population of our country. If the citizen solved their own problems, through internal migration and migration abroad, the government and the local authorities must instead solve the problems of the country and of the local communities.

The cities always offered more living opportunities than the cities, the populations' internal migration from the rural to the urban environment being encouraged. The youth in remote villages, particularly, left their houses and families, leaving only older generations behind. As the inhabitants physically disappeared, numerous villages became empty, as the surroundings, with unprocessed gardens and agricultural lands, which offer a desolating image. According to some estimations, there are ca. „128 completely abandoned villages" and others in agony, „perhaps even 200 small villages that have under 10 inhabitants" (Otovescu, 2016). Other times inhabited by hundreds or perhaps thousands of people, who gave life to the places and energy to the traditions or collective events, now „[only] houses, churches and graves are left behind" (Bogdan, 2018).

In the current administrative organization, on the territory of the 41 counties of the country, there are 12.951 villages, 2.854 communes 320 cities and 103 main cities (Tudor, 2019). The natural decline of the population in Romania and, particularly, the accentuated depopulation process in the rural environment, caused by aging (high age average - over 60 years) and the decrease of natality, by (internal/external) migration, is an irreversible phenomenon, fully expanding at national scale, being signalled in 33 counties, namely in 2.532 villages and cities, according to the calculations of prof. Vasile Ghețău, based on the data supplied by the National Institute of Statistics in Romania (Vasile, 2019). We underline that the 2.532 localities undergoing demographic decline represent ca. 80% of the total of rural and urban localities in Romania. In our county, Dolj, for instance, at the 2011 census it was stated that 7 of the 376 villages of this county no longer had any inhabitants and 46 villages (12% of the total number) had less than 100 inhabitants each. In 30 of these lived less than 25 persons. (Regional Directorate of Statistics Dolj, 2019, 12). If the actual rhythm of population loss of the Romanian villages should be continued, the estimations lead us to the idea that, in 2 or 3 decades „perhaps at least 300-400 rural settlements shall be erased from the map" (Bogdan, 2018).

A recent analysis on the meaning and dimensions of the movement of resident population in Romania was carried out by a renowned specialist, prof. Vasile Ghețău, who warns on the fact that the population decreased in 80% of the total of 3.181 localities of the country- in 79% of the rural and 82% of the urban localities, at it can be stated from the table below (Ghețău, 2019).

Table no. 3: Distribution of the localities according to the dynamics of the number of resident population in 2017

Localities	Number of localities	Number of localities in which:			Proportion of the localities in which the population decreased – %
		The population increased	The population was stationary	The population decreased*	
Communes	2861	566	26	2269	79
Cities and main cities	320	57	0	263	82
All localities	**3181**	**623**	**26**	**2532**	**80**

It results that the resident population in Romania increased only in 623 localities (representing 19.58% of the total of 3.181 localities in the country), of which 57 are urban and 566 are rural; it was stationary in 26 localities (0.82% from the total of localities in the country), all being rural and it decreased in 2.532 localities (79.60% of the total, 263 of which are urban and 2.269 rural). Thus, the rural population benefits from more resilience resources than the urban one, as it knew increases in 20% of the country's communes (the urban population increased in 17.81 of the cities).

The amplitude, complexity and rapidity of the depopulation phenomenon do not allow the local authorities in our country to control its manifestations, but they also do not have appropriate responses and programmes of intelligent or pragmatic measures, as we encounter in other countries.

The village Palaios Panteleimonas in Greece, for instance, was revitalised after the physical disappearance of some villagers and after being abandoned by its last inhabitants, by being transformed into a touristic village, currently being visited daily by thousands of tourists.

An attractive measure also was taken by the town hall of Sambuca in Sicily that, in order to repopulate the locality, offered houses for sale at the price of 1 Euro, under the condition that the future owners would spend 15.000 Euros to restore them.

We consider that sustainable development was for Romania of the last 7 decades (44 years of communism and 28 years of capitalism) the main national salvation solution. It remained also for the future, especially because now we have the chance to access non-reimbursable funds from the European Union. Even if the current development rhythm, in certain fields, is discouraging. For example, during the last 100

years, only 805 km of highway were built in our country, while Hungary had reached 1.500 km of highway in 2015, Austria over 1.700 km and Spain had over 16.200 km at the beginning of 2015. In order to ironize the indifference of the public authorities and stimulate their interest, a citizen from Suceava built on his own, in March 2019, one meter of highway and other citizen planted flowers in the holes in the streets where they lived.

3.4. Life quality of the rural population

The most problems of the current Romanian society appear as being related to the life of some rural communities that the previous governments could not solve. Numerous villages, other times vivid and prosperous, became, over time, suppliers of under-development, poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, demographic decline, through the progressive depopulation of some rural cores - because of the sudden decrease of natality, of the inhabitants' accentuated aging and the youth's exodus towards the cities or migration in other countries. Thus, in the last 70 years, the rural population decreased by 25.76%: from 12.159.485 inhabitants in January 1948, to 10.839.761 pers. In July 1989 and currently, at the 1st of January 2018, it reached 9.027.161 pers., situation that confirms, once again, the first hypothesis of our article.

In addition, at national level, the resident population diminished with 0.6%, being, at the 1st of January 2018, 113.719 pers. lower than at the 1st of January 2017. At the beginning of 2019, it has been estimated that Romania would lose ca. 247 daily, fact that would place the country on the line of a demographic disaster.

Relative to the remote past, many things have changed now in our country, as we notice obvious signs of progress and technical civilization in the rural environment, but numerous villages continue to face the same problems that the inhabitants had during the previous centuries and other risk, furthermore, to disappear from the geographical map of Romania. In a traditional sense, sustainable development refers to the penetration of the elements of modern civilization into the rural world and the elevation the inhabitants' living standard, through the establishment of schools and medical units, through the asphalting of streets and roads, through the mechanization of agricultural works, electrification of dwellings etc. In the current meaning of this term, frequently used in the language of the public administration, sustainable development concerns, particularly, the quality of the natural environment, water, air and soil conservation and the non-polluting waste management.

A revealing image of the resilience potential of the rural population results from the analysis of its life quality, through the perspective of some indicators presented below (at national and European level):

- The amount of the total average household income, registered in the 3rd trimester of 2018, points out the fact that, in the rural environment, the incomes are lower (3.598.84 RON) compared to those in the urban environment (5.120.25 RON), also being inferior to the national average (4.454.10 RON). We mention that the gross minimum wage in Romania placed our country on the second last place in EU-28, maintaining this position even after its substantial growth since the 1st of January 2019, when it reached 2.080 RON or 271 Euros (2.350 RON for those with higher education). The highest minimum wages in the EU are in Luxemburg (2.000 Euros), Ireland (1.614)

and the Netherlands (1.578) and the lowest are in Bulgaria (202 Euros), Romania (271) and Hungary (283) (Ilie, 2018). The minimum wage average in the EU is of 872 Euros (15 countries are below this threshold, the other 13 being above this average value) and the medium wage average in the 28 countries is of 1.644 Euros (14 countries being below the average and 14 above).

- The relative poverty rate was in Romania of the year 2016 of 25.3%, being fuelled particularly by the precarious situation of the rural population. This rate brought our country on the 1st place in EU -28, where the average of poverty risk was of 17.3%. Romania was followed by Bulgaria, with a rate of 22.9%. In the year 2017, the poverty risk decreased to 23.6%, according to the data of the NIS. The information collected through a recent opinion poll, in January 2019 reveals that, at the beginning of this year, 25% of the Romanians considered themselves „poor", that 30% are „worried" about the lack of money, about the uncertainty of the next day, about the low level of salaries and pensions and 12% are worried about their own health status. Only 1% assessed themselves as being „rich" and one third of the Romanians considered that a personal monthly income of ca. 2.000 RON would bring them financial peace.

- The inactive population in the rural environment increased continuously: from 4.32 million in the year 2000 to 4.76 mil. in the 3rd trimester of 2018 (4, 2019). Technically, unemployment was higher in the country than in the city. If we take into account our county, we notice that the unemployment rate was, at the 31st of August 2017, higher in the rural environment, „affecting 20.574 pers, namely 84.5% of the 24.353 unemployed persons in Dolj county, while, in the urban environment, 3.779 persons were registered, namely 15.5% of the total of unemployed persons. Women represented 46.4% of the total of unemployed persons in the urban environment and 39.1% of the total of unemployed persons in the rural environment" (325).

The agricultural economy offers limited work places for the villagers, but many of them sold even their lands, because of poverty or the incapacity to exploit them. Most often, these were acquired by foreign buyers that gained property over more than 40% of the total of Romania's agricultural land. The former owners find themselves in the impossibility of having a sure and permanent living source, the social phenomenon of rural poverty and dependence of the villagers on the support provided by the Romanian state being thus amplified;

- School education and sanitary protection in the rural environment suffer because of the same problem of under-financing that is encountered also at national level. Moreover, the rural education is affected by the decrease of natality, by the dissolving of several schools and consolidation of others, measures taken during the period of the economic crisis during 2008-2012. Romania has 7.047 school units, most of them being unacknowledged. From the total of schools, 3.140 function in the rural environment and about 1.460 (46.5%) of these do not have a toilet with water and sanitary containers within the premises of the education spaces. The current government committed itself to modernize the toilets in schools, to ensure water sewerage and the installation of septic tanks;

- The utilities system, necessary for a civilized living of the rural population, presents numerous deficits in the entire country. At the level of the year 2018, it was estimated that half of the Romanians neither have a toilet in the house or access to permanent potable water supply; that, in the villages, the sewerage network is almost

missing and in the city only 87.7% of the inhabitants benefit from sewerage, although a EU Directive „obliges our country to connect all localities to the sewerage system until the end of this year" (ObservatorTV, 2018). Also waste collection and landfilling management in the villages present multiple flaws that affect the ecological or natural environment;

- The state of the public roads is an old and difficult problem not only for the rural environment, but also for the population of the entire country, ca. 35% of roads being without asphalt, fact that ranks us on the last place in EU-28. According to the NIS data, acquired by Libertatea and processed by us, Romania is crossed, at the 31st of December 2017, by 86.099 km. of public roads, of which:

● only 763 km. were highways (4.3% of the total of public roads);

● 10.088 km. were dirt roads (11.71%) – of which 13 km. were from the national roads category, 1.858 km. from the county roads category and 8.217 km. from the communal roads category;

● 20.037 km. were stone roads (23.27%);

● 55.211 km. were modernized and asphalted roads (64.12%), but they did not lack holes and bumps. Certainly, the majority of dirt roads are in the rural environment, but they are also not missing in the urban environment, particularly in the new neighbourhoods or at the outskirts of some cities. Only in the capital of Romania, Bucharest, more than 200 dirt streets have recently been inventoried;

- The health protection of the rural population is deficient and often supposes only emergency medical services. In the rural environment, there are a small number of medical units and medical doctors, of pharmacies, but also a chronical under-financing and chaotic reforms in the system that accentuated the cleavages between medical conditions in the country and in the cities. For example, during the financial crisis in 2011, a number of 111 sanitary units were joined in Romania and other 67 hospital units were dismantled, out of a total number of 128 hospitals. From the NIS data it results that, in 2016, we had a network of 60.000 medical units spread across the entire country (under public and private regime), but the most of them, 49.000 (81.7%), were concentrated in the urban environment and only 11.000 (18,3%) operated in the rural environment, the number of doctors being, implicitly, lower. The gap between the two social environments is enormous on the medical field, taking into account that, in 2016, over 9 mil. pers. lived in villages (46.3% of Romania's population), while more than 10.5 mil. pers. (53.7%) lived in the cities. Statistics show that: in the cities there are 6.700 family medicine units and in the villages there are 4.600 family medicine units; in the urban environment operate 10.400 specialized medical units and their number is 27.2 smaller in the villages, with only 381 units; per 10.000 inhabitants in the rural environment there were only 9,8 units. In the cities, there are hospitals with 122.000 beds, while in the rural environment there are hospitals with only 10.000 bed. In the year 2016, Romania had 570 hospitals that granted medical assistance for a number of 4.2 mil. hospitalized patients. (Otovescu, 2011). They represent ca. 28% of the 15 mil. persons that permanently live in the country, according to our appreciation;

- The social protection of the citizen in the rural communities is normally achieved through specialized services of the local mayor's offices. Moreover, the church and different non-governmental organisations are involved in solving some individual

and family needs, but in the villages in a smaller rate than in the cities. Certain researches unveil that the governmental organisations assumed, especially, the role of „formers of social services" in the rural environment (Andrioni, 2009: 19), that there is a need regarding their specialization at local, regional and national level (Andrioni, 2018). In series of the rural life problems, some deficits regarding the inhabitants' food consumption (Goian et al, 2010), the child's education and protection within the family are signalled and so on (Andrioni, 2009);

- Life expectancy at birth, in the Romania of the year 2018, which is s synthetic indicator of people's life quality, was amongst the lowest in the European countries, with an average of 75.2 years, while in Europe the average was of 81 years. To be remembered that, under this indicator, Romania is ranked on the 72nd place in the world ranking. Regularly, life expectancy in the Eastern European countries is lower than in Western and Northern states. According to genders, the life expectancy of Romanian women is higher (79 years) than that of Romanian men (71.6 years), but lower than the European women's one – where the average is of 82 years, for women and 75 years, for men. Furthermore, the life expectancy of the rural population in Romania is lower than the one in the cities, the mortality rate being even higher in the village world – 14.2 deaths per thousand inhabitants, in 2017, in comparison with the urban environment, where the mortality rate was of 9.9 per thousand inhabitants. Technically, the number of deceases in the villages was, in 2017, for example, with 13.386 pers. higher than in the cities (26.   Institutul Național de Statistică, 2018: 13).

- The perception and assessment of their own health status. In the year 2016, half of Romanians assessed their own health status as being „good" and „very good" (51%), the EU average being of 69%; the other 35% considered it „acceptable" (the EU average - 24%) and 14% appreciated it as „bad and very bad" (the EU average being of 7%).

The statistical data above reflect the size of the cleavages between life standards in the country and in the cities, but also the multiple needs of sustainable development of the rural environment in Romania, validating the second hypothesis of our study.

4. Who saves the Romanian village and the sustainable development?

4.1. The rural investments as main community resilience resources

The salvation of the rural environment is expected, first, to come from European funds and governmental policies, from the budgets of the public county administrations and of the communal mayor's offices. Besides these, different community institutions, cultural and educational institutions, non-governmental organisations and associations could play a role.

The emancipation of the Romanian village was an imperative requirement for all governments that administered the country in the 20th century, but remarkable results were obtained only after the 1960s (electrification of rural localities, construction of schools, kindergartens and medical units, road infrastructure, mechanized agricultural economy etc.). The philosophy of the current Romanian government has cohesion as a

central value and promotes it bot at national level (in order to balance the discrepancies between villages and cities) and in the context of the European relations.

Recently, during the last General Assembly of the Association of Communes in Romania (Bucharest, the 18th of February 2019), the current Prime Minister proved to be aware of the specific needs of rural communities and mentioned the fact that the draft of the state budget Law for 2019 helps us to have a sustainable economic growth. Thus, more money was allocated for the county councils, in order to „pull the Romanian village out of the mud". Moreover, it was pointed out that the chances to „pull the country out of the muds" were offered by the two programmes – NLDP I and NLDP II, as ca. 70% of their financing was directed towards the communes, so that the Romanian village would be modernized through specific projects, not demagogical declarations. Other investment sources were the Regional Operational programme 2014-2020 (ROP) and the National Rural Development Plan 2014-2020. We underline that the number of financing applications submitted at the administrative-territorial units totally reached 778 (in amount of more than 780 mil. Euros), of which 357 or 45.9% (ca. 399 mil. Euros) are at the level of the communes.

From the National Budget for 2018, 1.893 objectives for the development of the public infrastructure in the communes in Romania were contracted, in worth of 1.6 billion Euros. These funds were mostly allocated for the water and sewerage infrastructure (315 contracts in amount of 439 mil. Euros), the road infrastructure (506 contracts - 528 mil. Euros), the school and preschool infrastructure (320 contracts – 118 mil. Euros), the cultural infrastructure and the cultural patrimony (667 contracts– 212 billion Euros). Assuming its general objective, to have the main amenities in every village, the current government of Romania set up the Development and Investment Fund. NLDP I and NLDP II and ROP shall be continued and the financial resources allocated through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development , with the purpose of „raising the Romanian village at the European level, where we shall have all amenities". In the Prime Minister's vision, we must put an accent on cohesion not only at European level, but also at national level – „cohesion between village and city, cohesion between the more developed and less developed areas". Firstly, the South - Eastern area of Romania is considered. Amongst the governmental priority objectives, in the current phase, there are the following: no unacknowledged schools until 2020, in Romania, due to the lack of sanitary amenities; „no mud on the streets of our villages and communes"; jobs in the rural environment, in order to prevent the youth from migrating towards the urban areas etc.

At present, the investment objectives and directions shall be continued, but with considerably larger financial resources than in the last years. Thus, there are now a total number of 12.681 investment objectives, of which 10.387 or ca. 82% are financed in the rural environment (in total amount of 34.25 billion RON). From those allocated for villages, we mention:
-   2.689 water supply and sewerage systems;
-   1.776 education units, of which 880 are day care units and kindergartens;
-   3.948 roads, bridges and small bridges

After Romania's accession to the European Union, important steps were made on the line of modernization of the rural environment. Thus, for instance, during the period 2008 - 2018, in Dolj county were made out investments for water supply in 68

rural and urban settlements (from the total of 84 administrative - territorial units that, in 2008, did not have a water supply network) and for the construction of some sewerage systems in 59 localities (from a total of 105 territorial - administrative units that in 2008 had no sewerage network). Other investments concern ecological protection, performing road infrastructure works and wastewater treatment and recovery, waste landfilling in a single, county landfill, production of electrical power from renewable sources (solar, wind, water).

To be noted that the investments in the agriculture and rural development of our country benefitted from European funds, in 2017 and 2018, in amount of ca. 7.553 billion Euros. Almost 900.000 agricultural landowners received subventions, the total worth of which reached 2.75 billion Euros. The reconstruction and extension of the irrigation system allowed the setting into operation of 86 centres that ensure water for 1.980.000 ha. The development of a system against hail and for precipitation control in Muntenia, Transylvania and Moldova is planned, as well as the mapping of all agricultural lands by the state etc.

4.2. The political agenda and the specific needs of the citizen

The compatibility between the political agenda of the leaders and the needs or expectations of the citizen is essential for the progress of a society. The first often present their global achievements and the image of a land under progress, while the citizen take into account their specific life problems. If we refer to the current leaders in Romania, they frequently point out: raises of salaries and pensions that were real in the last years and improved the life of more than 10 mil. Romanians; the national economic growth in a larger percentage compared to other EU economies, as this was of 7% in 2017, 4,1% in 2018, estimated to be of 5.5%, in 2019 etc. According to the views of the population, whose specific needs refer to asphalted roads and highways , gas, water and sewerage networks and others, the image of those at the power is associated with unfulfilled promises, with inertia and lack of interest.

For a longer time, the political Romania has been blocked in plans and expectations of the population. Thus, for instance, the Casino in Constanta is almost totally ruined and no salvation solution for this former pearl of the Romanian seaside has been outlined. Moreover, the Radio House in Bucharest, a grandiose, but unfinished construction of the Ceausescu era, degraded continuously, under the carelessness of all governments up to the present time, who, in nearly 30 years, did not succeed to recover it. In the Capital, the works for the subway line of only 7 km between the University and Drumul Taberei started in 2011 and it was considered that it would be ready in 3 years, but still has not been finished after 8 years (March 2019). The works for the subway line between „Henri Coandă" International Airport and the Northern train station had not begun in March 2019, although in 2020 football games from the European Football Championship were scheduled to take place here. Romania could become a national construction field if it only concentrated on building highways. Nevertheless, the political-administrative management is deficient and weak, if we think about the fact that, in 28 years (1990-2018) only ca. 676 km could be built!

The society needs dwellings for young people, but these could be only partially covered until the present!

It needs hospitals, but only one was built in the entire country, in 28 years - the Municipal Hospital in Craiova!

It needs a modern and rapid road network, especially between the three historical provinces (Moldova, Transylvania and Wallachia), because this ensures communication, national unity and cohesion, but the measures taken have been for many years under planning!

It needs water and sewerage networks in villages, ecological landfills and waste recycling units, bathrooms inside the homes of the citizen in the rural environment, but the planned investments are weak, insufficient or blocked on the bureaucratic channels!

5. Conclusions and proposals

Romania's population decreased in 80% of the rural and urban localities and, if this trend is continued, our country will reach ca. 10 mil. inhabitants and this will lead to the disappearance of several villages, with difficultly foreseeable consequences in the social, economic and cultural field. Certainly, there are also other countries with a population higher or lower than the one forecasted for Romania; still, not the number is important, but how well the human and natural resources are organized and administered, how much is achieved on the economic field, so that the population would reach a high living standard.

Romanians are dynamic and enthusiast people, capable of rapid mobilisation, qualities that help them overcome certain historical difficulties and historical cleavages compared to other countries. In order for Romania to become a prosperous capitalist society, it needs a biological, moral and spiritual regeneration of our country. First of all, the severe demographic decline must be stopped, by increasing natality on a long term, based on substantial financial incentives (for example: 250 Euros monthly for the first child, 300 for the second and 450 for the third, until the age of 16 years, when it has the right of work). The life quality improvement leads to a decrease of the mortality rate, but also to the stability of population that is no longer tempted to migrate abroad. The moral reconstruction of the society can be achieved through education, work and the internalisation of humanist values.

A special attention must be given to the repopulation of some villages and the improvement of life in the rural environment, through: granting free land to those who want to build dwellings; stoning and asphalting of communal roads; construction of the water supply and sewerage network for citizen, but also for the irrigation of agricultural lands; setting-up agricultural machinery parks in each commune that the citizen shall be able to rent for use, as it happens in Israel; setting-up medical units with permanent service in each commune; endowment of the locality with specialists for agriculture (agronomists) and stockbreeding (veterinary doctors); setting-up banking units that would facilitate business in the rural environment; construction of day care units, kindergartens and modern school spaces, for the education of young people and of day centres for elder people etc.

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THE TRAPS OF ONLINE COMMUNICATION VS HUMAN TRAFFICKING

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Abstract: *One of the most serious social issues of our time is represented by human trafficking, and the consequences of this phenomenon are devastating. Along with the development of society, significant changes have occurred at the level of interaction between peers, communication in the online environment being preferred over face-to-face communication. The time spent in the online environment and communication with unknown people can create a favourable context for human traffickers, who mainly target people in vulnerable situations such as children and young people from disorganized families, single mothers, people with a precarious financial situation looking for a job etc. The investigative approach consisted in conducting quantitative research with the questionnaire as a research tool, applied online to a number of 141 people. The purpose of the research was to determine the population's perception of the risks of online communication with unknown persons.*

Keywords: human trafficking, communication, vulnerability, online environment*.*

1. Introduction

Currently, one of the main methods of retrieving victims of human trafficking is represented by the Internet. Over 75% of children connect daily to social networks and communicate with unknown people. https://www.salvaticopiii.ro/combaterea-traficului-de-copii

The use of online platforms allows the trafficker to contact his victims from anywhere, without having a fixed location, a fact that complicates criminal prosecution and stopping the phenomenon. Traffickers can even operate more easily across borders, having access to a larger number of potential victims from around the world (Schrock 2022).

The criminal contacts his potential victims on social networks such as Facebook, and one of the techniques used to gain trust is to express admiration for the victim. Whether with the promise of fame or a job, the criminal lures the victim away from his home. Afterwards, methods are used to restrict communication with the people close to them, a context in which they resort to violence and threats targeting both the victim and her family (Dixon 2013).

The use of mobile phones with prepaid cards makes it difficult to access the user as he cannot be identified through a possible service contract. However, most advertisements used to promote victims include a phone number, including customer reviews involving the use of a phone number (Ibanez and Suthers 2014). Thus, before the advent of the Internet, traffickers were more visible, as victims were advertised on the street. Currently, there are many websites that help traffickers to remain anonymous (Alvari, Shakarian and Snyder 2016).

In the opinion of the author Alexandru (2010:554), human trafficking represents a form of modern slavery. According to the literature, human trafficking involves all acts or actions, from recruitment to transfer to another country, which are carried out through the use of threats, abuse, physical force, deception or any other form of coercion aimed at exploiting the victims (Fehér, 2009: 211).

From a legislative perspective, human trafficking is defined as follows: Human trafficking means "recruiting, transporting, transferring, harbouring or receiving people, through threats of or recourse to force or other forms of coercion, through kidnapping, fraud, deception, abuse of authority or a situation of vulnerability, or by offering or accepting payments or advantages to obtain the consent of a person in authority over another, for the purpose of exploitation. Recruiting, transporting, transferring, harboring or receiving a child for the purpose of exploitation will be considered human "trafficking", even if it does not involve any of the means exemplified above (https://anitp.mai.gov.ro/legislatie/).

Trafficker – the person who commits the crime of human trafficking; this person may be sentenced depending on the circumstances and consequences of the act with imprisonment from 5 to 25 years and the prohibition of certain rights (according to the Criminal Code of Romania).

2. Types of traffic

Over time, several forms through which people can be trafficked have been identified. The common denominator in most cases is the traffickers' speculation of the vulnerable state of the victims.

- **Trafficking for sexual exploitation –** when a child, adolescent or woman is forced to have sexual relations for money, or to appear in certain materials with adult content ; when a woman marries a man and is subjected to bad treatment, such as slavery, physical verbal, sexual violence. Usually these marriages are concluded with the help of agencies that deal with this type of actions, but there are also situations where women agree to marry a man just to obtain citizenship.
- **Organ trafficking –** it involves depriving a person of their freedom and removing their organs (liver, kidneys, ovaries) against their will.
- **Work in slavery conditions:** it is characterized by abominable working conditions, those who work are not remunerated or receive modest amounts. http://prorefugiu.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Manual.pdf

3. Causes of human trafficking

The phenomenon of human trafficking has many causes such as poverty, gender discrimination or ethnic discrimination, greed, government policies regarding migration in the countries of origin and/or destination. The research carried out in the field of human trafficking demonstrates the existence of two categories of factors:

Macro-social factors: decreasing incomes, unemployment, lack of jobs; the existence of a socio-cultural environment tolerant when it comes to acts of violence; the existence of a small number of relevant educational programs (sexual education, couple education), but also the lack of educational opportunities for certain categories of the population; the development of international migration for work; low involvement of the political and legal system; natural disasters that lead to poverty of large segments of the population; family abandonment.

Micro-social factors: poverty and reduced possibilities to find a job; low level of education of both the trafficked person and his or her family; the existence of toxic family relationships; deviant behaviours (aggression, consumption of alcohol and other substances); the desire to be surprised and experience new things, the influence of the environment; missed emotional relationships, disappointments; low self-esteem; mental lability; low trust in institutions and specialized persons who could provide support to overcome crisis situations https://lege5.ro/App/cauze-si-factori-de-risc-ai-traficului-de-persoone-hotarare-1654-2006 .

4. Stages of human trafficking

Taking into account the documents of the United Nations Organization, human trafficking involves the following stages: recruiting, transferring and harboring a person by using illegal methods (abuse of power, deception, threat, etc.), all of which have the purpose of exploiting the person for sex, forced labour or services such as begging or organ harvesting.

1. **Recruitment –** most of the time the recruiters are people whom the victims met online, with whom they socialize frequently and who promise them a better life abroad.
2. **Transport -** human trafficking takes place on certain routes, from the country of origin to the country of destination. Most of the time the destination is completely different from the one known to the victim, the border crossing is done with the help of recruiters or guides and can be: legal under the pretext of a trip (in the case of girls who have a passport); illegal, in the case of minors or people without a passport, in which case the guides promise to take them across the border safely in exchange for a sum of money or even without payment.
3. **The sale of the person** – it takes place when they arrive at destination, the victims become someone's "property" against their will, and the price is set in most cases taking into account the victim's age and physical appearance.
4. **Seizure and exploitation** - as a rule, the victims only realize that they have been sold when they are seized and exploited, they are not allowed to communicate with anyone, their documents are withheld, and their phones are isolated in closed spaces; they are physically, mentally and verbally assaulted, in some cases this situation even leads to murder.
5. **Resale -** at this stage the victims of human trafficking enter a circuit of false debts to the trafficker, who tells the victims that they must recover their money from their work and thus they are sold to another "owner"
6. **Escape –** this is premeditated and prepared long in advance by the victim, the escape takes place with the support of the police when they conduct a raid or with the help of customers who want to help them.
7. **Repatriation** – it takes place with the help of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Romanian embassies and/or consulates that deal with repatriation formalities.
   https://childhub.org/sites/default/files/library/aas_ghidde_informare_tfu_1.pdf .

5. The methodological dimension of the applied research

The approach is of a quantitative type, the method used being the sociological survey based on a questionnaire. The questionnaire was applied online, the research group consisting of 138 respondents, of which 113 people from the urban environment and 28 people from the rural environment. The purpose of the quantitative research was to determine the population's perception of the risks of online communication with unknown persons.

The methodological dimension on the causes and effects of online communication with unknown persons involves a combination of normative and interpretive analysis of the collected data. The normative part starts from the description of the phenomenon of online communication through the questionnaire, and in the second part, the interpretive part, the phenomenon of human trafficking, as it is perceived in social reality, is approached from a systemic perspective. By using these two types of analysis, different data are highlighted, the normative analysis that emphasizes what is explainable, verifiable in reality, quantifiable, objective, external, and the other part that focuses on what is interpretive, subjective, unique, internal (Cohen, Manion, 1981, apud Damaziere, 1996). These analyses contribute to the understanding and explanation of social reality from two different perspectives.

By analysing the studies from the literature in the field of this research, it was found that many causes of human trafficking are due to toxic behavioural patterns, vices, fear, lack of confidence in one's own strength, and the failure to report them is due to a lack of trust in the competent state bodies. The applied research set out to sketch a clear picture of the population's perception regarding online communication with unknown persons, for highlighting the information gaps which lead to the propagation of the negative effects of this phenomenon.

The survey is one of the most complex methods of sociological investigation, based on the collection of data from a sample drawn from a population. The data collection is done by applying questionnaires to the subjects (Curelaru, 2003: 45).

Chelcea emphasizes that "the research questionnaire represents a technique and correspondingly an investigative tool consisting of a set of written questions and possibly graphic images, ordered logically and psychologically, which by administration by the investigation operators or by self-administration, triggers from the part of the investigated persons answers to be recorded in writing" (Chelcea, 1998: 180).

6.   Research design. Quantitative research objectives

Objective 1: Identifying the degree of population's awareness regarding the risks that may arise when communicating with unknown persons on the Internet;

Objective 2: Highlighting the proportion in which respondents were approached by unknown persons on social networks;

Objective 3: The population's perception of the sincerity of online conversations with strangers.

7.   Data analysis and interpretation

Following the objectives of the research approach, the research questions were established. The sample size was 141 people, of which 113 came from the urban environment and 28 from the rural environment. The group of subjects is uniform, there is no predominance of a certain gender that could affect the research results. Analysing the data obtained, the established hypotheses were verified and thus validated.

We can see that a large number of men and women surveyed (78%) believe that social networks are dangerous, 6.4% are of the opinion that they do not present any kind of danger; the rest of 15.6% are not aware of the danger.

Of the respondents, 89.4% stated that they are familiar with the term human trafficking, and 10.6% declared that they do not know the term.

It was found that 85.1% of the surveyed subjects have been approached by unknown people on social networks, while 14.9% claim that they have not experienced such moments.

From the analysis, we see that 4.3% of the people surveyed have total trust in the people they communicate with online, 67.4% have partial trust, and 28.4% have no trust at all in the people they interact with online.

Following the frequency analysis carried out, we can conclude that although most respondents (79.4%) agree that human trafficking involves the recruitment, transfer and harboring of a person through the use of abuse of power, deception or threat, aiming to exploit the person for purposes of sex, forced labour or services such as begging or organ harvesting; a relevant percentage (20.6%) do not adhere to this statement. We can also state that this aspect is not influenced by the level of education of the respondents.

The sociological investigation led to the drawing of the following conclusions: a significant percentage of the people surveyed, namely 89.4%, declare they know the term "human trafficking", while 10.6% of the respondents do not recognize the existence of this phenomenon. Another highlighted aspect is that the respondents are aware of the fact that social networks, namely online communication can be dangerous, 78% of them affirming this;

15.6% believe that social networks do not present any risk; 6.4 agree that one could become a victim of human trafficking at any time by communicating with strangers on the Internet.

Analysing the responses obtained from the subjects, we remarked that a significant number of them, 85.1%, were at some point approached by unknown persons on social networks, an aspect that reinforces the idea that the online environment is not at all safe, being at risk to be contacted at any time by human traffickers, who under various pretexts come into contact with people in vulnerable situations. One of the questionnaire items concerned the degree to which they trust unknown people, and the obtained percentages demonstrate that: 4.3% of the people surveyed have total trust in the people they communicate with online; 67.4% partially trust those people; the remaining 28.4% are totally reluctant to communicate with strangers online.

We conclude that online communication is extremely widespread, with most respondents preferring online communication over face-to-face communication.

8. General conclusions of the paper

The globalization of society and the rapid and continuous development of online means of communication have rather reduced face-to-face interaction, social networks registering millions of users daily. The possibility of connecting and communicating with people from all the corners of the world can represent a real advantage, but it also involves a lot of risks, communication in front of a screen often leads to the creation of false identities and the delivery of promises that have nothing to do with reality.

Human trafficking currently represents one of the most serious problems of contemporary society, the seriousness of this phenomenon being also influenced by the trust that some people grant to unknown persons, sharing aspects of their personal life, such as the composition of the family, the difficulties faced, personal problems and expectations, a context in which human traffickers speculate on their vulnerability and create a false story through which they manage to convince certain persons, such as single mothers, unemployed people, children and adolescents in vulnerable situations, to follow them by promising them a new life and a much better living.

The applied research demonstrated the fact that the population is aware of the human trafficking phenomenon, that they realize the danger posed by online communication with unknown people on various social networks, a significant percentage affirming that they were approached by unknown people in the online environment.

One of the measures that should be undertaken by the authorities, together with other social stakeholders, social workers, psychologists, teachers, is represented by the constant running of information campaigns regarding the extent of human trafficking among the vulnerable population: children, adolescents, people facing crisis situations.

Another aspect that can contribute to the prevention of human trafficking is the permanent monitoring by parents of the online activity of children, so that they can be informed about the people with whom children communicate and the activities they carry out online.

We believe that the teaching staff should present to the pupils and students during the educational classes with the form teachers' statistics regarding the extent of the phenomenon of human trafficking in the world and talk to them about things that are important to know, so that they do not risk becoming victims of this phenomenon.

All in all, human trafficking is a current phenomenon, a major problem of contemporary society, which can affect many segments of the population.

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THE INFLUENCE OF MEDIA ON HOW TATTOOED PEOPLE ARE PERCEIVED IN TODAY SOCIETY

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Abstract: *The media plays a key role in conveying information and shaping public opinion, dramatically influencing people's understanding of social phenomena. In other words, the information conveyed through the media leads individuals to form a more or less positive image of the reality around them. The practice of tattooing is also a subject, even a controversial one, in the formation of an opinion, perception or image among the population through information appearing in the media. Through this contradictory information, tattooed people are both rejected and approved by society, depending on the level of education, social status, age and background of those who access the information. This paper aims to trace the conceptual divide that is formed within society by media reports on tattooed people. The media is critical of ordinary people who have tattoos through negative portrayals of them but, at the same time, it plays a key role in the spread of tattoos when it highlights the lives and tattooed bodies of famous people such as artists, actors or athletes whom young people admire. This objective will be pursued by means of a micro-survey in Dolj County, using as research methods: content analysis (to obtain data related to the information transmitted by the media about tattooed people and the reactions of people online), a questionnaire-based sociological survey (to capture what is the current perception of the population about tattooing and implicitly tattooed people but also to obtain data on the environment from which people get their information, trust in the different media channels, the type of news they have seen on the subject) as well as an interview-based sociological survey (to find out what the social experiences of tattooed people are after they have had a tattoo, how society's perception of various aspects of their social life is reflected: interpersonal relationships, social image, workplace, etc.). As far as the expected results are concerned, given that in Romania negative opinions about the practice of tattooing and tattooed people predominate, it is expected that the results of the research will also point in the same direction.*

Keywords: *media, media influence, tattooed people, social stigma*

1. Introduction

There is no doubt that people are connected to their environment through the act of perception, which is the central element of knowledge and communication. Perceptual configurations process at a primary level the information provided by objects, events or messages to which we direct our attention. It is easy to infer from this that mass media not only inform but also determine certain attitudes among the population, helping to shape opinions on a particular issue. In this context, the concept of image can be understood as "clearly, a reflection, a representation" (Coman, 2018: 5) that arises from the assimilation of information transmitted via communication channels.

Thanks to the evolution of technology, people can now retrieve their information not only from offline (TV, radio, print media) but also from online (websites, social media platforms, blogs, podcasts, etc.). It is an undeniable advantage that digital technology has revolutionized access to information, but it should not be overlooked that it has also created the framework for misinformation and manipulation of information. Moreover, given the way messages are

delivered, the variety of communication channels and the professionalism of journalists, trust becomes a fundamental element underlying the power of the media to influence people's perceptions.

Inevitably, tattooed people have at least one unpleasant social experience caused by the simple fact that they have a tattoo. How many of these experiences are influenced by the way the media presents and conveys information about tattoo practice and tattooed people in terms of morality, deviance and nonconformity?

Thus, we are dealing with two categories of individuals: those who disapprove of tattooing and associate it with socially undesirable and deviant people, and those who accept it as an artistic practice expressing individuality, as a creative act requiring courage and assumption.

Visual identity plays an important part in any aspects of life. Thus, in the process of differentiation, brands gain competitive advantage through their logo, slogan and symbols (Coman, Bularca and Otovescu 2021) and so individuals can also use symbols such as tattoos to express their identity and uniqueness.

Unfortunately, more and more people who have banked on the media's positive redefinition of tattoos have decided to get tattoos, only to realize later that there is still an ingrained social stigma attached to tattoos: "While the tattooed person enjoys the positive attention from their peers generated by the tattoo, most of these people feel embarrassed by the negative reactions they receive from others (...) People with tattoos often feel they should cover their body markings in public or risk being socially rejected". (Fisher 2002: 101).

These mixed messages from the media have contributed to the contradictory situation of middle-class individuals who use tattoos to express and form their identity while keeping their existence secret from the general public.

In this sense, this paper aims to trace how information conveyed in the media affects people's perceptions of tattooing, leading to the formation of positive or negative opinions and the adoption of attitudes of acceptance or rejection of tattooed individuals.

2. Literature review

2.1 The influence of media on people's perception of reality

In post-communism Romania, with the liberalization of the press and the recovery of the freedom of expression, the media institutions have shown an extraordinary ability to report and present events with effects on population, thus producing opinions and attitudes in all social spheres. One of these effects is that society forms its perception and opinion based on the information presented by the media (Sadaf, 2011) Hence its importance in influencing the dynamics of social and political events, and being also called the fourth power in the state.

The function of the media is to inform, educate and entertain, but quite frequently it misinforms, manipulates and has a tabloid appearance according to different socio-political interests. All the more so as the media becomes an important institution in so far as it not only forms beliefs but also has the capacity to distort them. Moreover, sometimes the media can produce conflicts between different social groups and the result of this action is social instability (Sadaf, 2011).

Mass media, or "the classical forms of mass communication, refers to social institutions engaged in the production and distribution of knowledge and distinguished by: the use of advanced techniques for the mass production and distribution of messages [...] to very large audiences that are unknown to the communicator and free to take up or reject his messages." (Coman, 2007: 26). In other words, the media, through the information it provides, plays a considerable role in building the image of a social category (tattooed people in this case) and can influence, positively or negatively, the public's perception of that category.

By following the information, events, messages and comments transmitted through television, newspapers, radio or online social media platforms, when people are in the position

of interacting with individuals who have tattoos, they already have an image, a perception, formed in their mind, which is not always in line with reality, and which will positively or negatively influence their interaction.

Thus, perception, according to Longman's dictionary, is "the way you think about something and your idea of what that thing is like" (Longman, 2006: 1131) and exposure to selective content conveyed by the media can affect and influence how people view and relate to a social category, tattooed people in this case.

According to West & and Lynn, 2010 "selective exposure is a method of reducing dissonance by seeking information that is consistent with current beliefs and practices." In the context of the present work, it is to be investigated whether people who have previously been exposed to negative information about people who get tattoos will tend to select from the new information those that fit their beliefs and ignore those that conflict with their opinion.

The media influences society deliberately - as a result of a pre-arranged strategy or by accident - and the effects of this influence are felt both at the individual or group level and at the level of society as a whole. It can affect the human personality from several perspectives: the cognitive dimension (changing the image of the world), the affective dimension (creating or modifying attitudes and feelings) or the behavioral dimension (changes in the way individuals act and social mobilization phenomena).

Bearing in mind that not all situations presented in the media can be fully verified by the public at large, we can infer that the element on which the media relies is the trust of the public in the sources supplying the information. Trust thus becomes the fundamental element that gives the media the power to influence people's perceptions. The more people trust a particular media channel, the more likely they are to perceive the reported information as true.

Translated into other terms, people's trust in print or audio-visual media, including digital platforms, may represent "individuals' willingness to be vulnerable to content provided through mass media channels based on the expectation that the media will perform in a satisfactory way" (Hanitzsch, Van Dalen and Steindl, 2018: 5).

2.2. Society's perception of tattooing under the influence of the media

Discovered by 18th century explorers, tattooing was a procedure used since before the Christian era to designate the social status of members of a tribe. The etymology of the word comes from Polynesian, the original word being *tatau* which translates as mark. Although in modern times it is no longer necessary to show social status by a body mark, more and more people are deciding to get a tattoo. Studies show that modern individuals get tattoos to express their identity or aspects of their personality or to tell a story about themselves in an artistic way. Tattooing has thus become a way of physically expressing an emotion.

Although the practice of tattooing has become increasingly common in recent years among individuals of different social statuses, education, age, ethnicity or gender, it remains a stigmatized practice in mainstream society. Long considered a hallmark of social deviance, tattooing has undergone a drastic redefinition in recent decades. No longer the preserve of bikers, punks and thugs, tattooing is increasingly practiced and appropriated by middle-class, mainstream individuals (DeMello 1995; Irwin 2001).

Citizens' perceptions of tattooed people can be influenced, changed or shaped by a news story whose purpose should have been purely informative.

For example, on February 17, 2020 in the daily newspaper Evenimentul Zilei, a news item entitled "Tattoos and permanent make-up banned in the EU" appeared with a description clearly intended to give a negative connotation to people who resort to such practices: the European Commission has put a negative spin on ladies with permanent make-up, as well as on gentlemen with "bad boy" tattoos. Eyebrows contoured by mycroblading or micropigmentation, eye or lip contouring, and the usual tattoos could become history.

By labeling tattoos as being for "bad boys", and presenting them as possibly being banned in the future, the newspaper suggests that tattoos are still deviant, influencing public opinion in a negative way. On the same subject, the portals Realitatea.net and Timpul.md headlined "Tattoos and permanent make-up ILLEGAL. European Commission decision", also suggesting that these practices are deviant and to be outlawed. In fact, if the content of the news had not been distorted, it should have been purely informative about the European Commission's proposal to review a recommendation by the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) to restrict two harmful chemicals present in ink for certain tattoos and permanent make-up.

The media also tries, through a series of articles, to create a link between tattoos and cancer, inducing a state of panic among the tattooed population or those who intend to get tattooed. A scientific study carried out by the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) concluded that tattoos are not dangerous, only that some inks contain chemicals that represent a health hazard and are thus not recommended for use. But this kind of danger is present in all aspects of our lives, including processed food itself.

All these types of articles cause scaremongering and misinformation, negatively influencing public opinion and individuals attitudes towards tattooing.

Reinforcing the above, "when the media claims to address an audience, the expectations of this audience are already imagined, which most often seem not to be the real ones, but which become real precisely as a result of this communication" (Ghiţă, 2007) In other words, the media transmits information by anticipation, depending on what expectations people have which, even if they are not the real ones, following the transmission of the message and the assimilation of the information, people perceive these beliefs as real and their own.

Thus, if the media conveys information or suggests correlations between tattooed people and certain deviant behavior, the population will perceive what is presented as their own thoughts and will act accordingly, socially sanctioning tattooed people. The same applies to young people who build their image of their social ideal and standard of living on information taken from the press about the lives of celebrities. They will want to have tattoos just because their idols have them, seeing tattoos here as a confirmation of a certain social status and financial power.

But things are different online. On platforms such as Facebook, Instagram or Twitter the practice of tattooing and tattooed people easily find followers or people who admire and treat tattoos as a work of art. The penetration of the tattoo industry online has allowed some great tattoo artists to become celebrities in their own right, giving them the national and even global attention they deserve.

As well, social networks allow users to send personalized messages to a target audience promoting their image, products or services. (Bularca et al., 2022).

Social networks allow people who don't have enough facts about tattoos to feel less intimidated, introducing them to a culture about which information is pretty controversial anyway, long before they ever step foot in a studio. They can access ideas, share opinions with artists or clients, and form an opinion from people who have some experience in the field.

Another incredibly powerful benefit of social media in the tattoo industry is the access it gives to underrepresented groups in the industry. Regardless of race, gender, economic status, cultural background or experience, tattoo art will always find an audience online.

2. Research methods and tools

The aim of this paper is to identify how media information influences people's perception of tattooed individuals and how this perception changes people's attitudes towards tattooed people, be it in terms of interpersonal relationships, labor market insertion or social exclusion.

The research methods will be represented by content analysis as well as the questionnaire and interview-based sociological survey method. The research instruments used will be the analysis grid, the questionnaire and the interview guide.

Through content analysis, information about tattooed people and the tattooing procedure will be followed up in the online environment as well as on TV, newspapers and radio. In the online environment, social media, podcasts and blogs will be followed, in addition to information about tattooing and tattooed people, the reaction of people after receiving the message: comments, shares and likes.

The interviews will be applied to a sample of 10 people in Craiova who have had at least one tattoo. It will focus on how they feel perceived by their peers and how they are affected both socially and professionally by the way they are perceived by society.

Through a questionnaire-based survey applied to a sample of 300 people in Dolj county, the current perception of the public about tattooing and tattooed people will be followed and also the assimilation of the information already transmitted by the media. The questionnaire also aims to obtain data on the environment from which people get their information, their trust in the various media channels, and the type of news they have seen about the practice of tattooing and personal experiences with tattooed individuals.

3. Expected results

Given the fact that in Romania negative opinions about tattooed people are prevalent, I expect that the results of the research regarding the perception of the public in Dolj county will also prove it to be negative.

In terms of the influence of the media on this perception of the public, I expect the results to show a negative level of influence of the presentation of information through TV news bulletins, and a positive level when it comes to social media.

As far as the results obtained by conducting the content analysis are concerned, I expect them to reveal that negative information about tattoos and tattooed people is conveyed on TV and in newspapers rather than online.

The results obtained by applying the questionnaire on the other hand, are likely to show that rural citizens and those in the over 50 age group place more trust in the information conveyed through the news (TV, radio and print media) and that information assimilated from these media negatively influences how they relate to the practice of tattooing and the experiences they might have with tattooed people, more than information reported online. In terms of urban young people, I expect that they will be more influenced and in a positive way by posts on virtual social media platforms than by information received through traditional information channels: television and print media.

Conclusions

The media, through the digitization of information transmission methods, is today more than ever, not only a means of information but also of shaping public opinion and attitudes. Through the way it organizes and presents information, it influences people's perceptions of certain aspects of the world to varying degrees. This is also true for the perception of tattooed people and the practice of tattooing, and this paper will try, by means of the above-mentioned research methods, to highlight how the type of communication channels and the messages conveyed influence the opinion of the inhabitants of Dolj county.

With regard to the media and their influence on citizens, as we have seen above, an important factor is trust in the veracity of the information transmitted, in the professionalism and fairness of journalists. Thus, given the fact that in Romania, the perception of tattooed people and tattoos themselves is rather negative, the research part of the paper will look at

whether the inhabitants of Dolj county trust the information in the media, which channels they trust the most, and how, their perception can be influenced based on their level of trust.

Also, new media such as social media, blogs, podcasts, are growing and people are using them more and more as a source of information. In this sense, the paper will also look at how messages on these platforms influence people's perception of tattooed people in Dolj County. Therefore, the results that will be obtained through the proposed research may point to a new research direction, namely how the social stigmatization of tattooed people influences their quality of life, and how the media, through the information provided, can improve or worsen, in the case of tattooed people, elements such as: self-image and emotional health, social relationships and access to the labor market.

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CROSS-BORDER TRANSPORTATION AND REGIONAL INSTABILITY IN NORTHERN CAMEROON: THE ARCHEOLOGY OF ILLICIT SMALL ARMS DISTRIBUTION (1990-2000)

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Abstract: *The objective of this article is to analyze how the mobility of men and goods in North Cameroon is accompanied by crime and the illicit circulation of arms and ammunition. This violence is related first to the defective road system, then to the jeepers responsible for accidents and kidnappings, which are orchestrated by the armed hordes that accentuate insecurity, grand banditry, crime, and the deterioration of the economic fabric and expose the region's herders and farmers. To this end, the diachronic method is favored in this analysis. It is based on an exploitation of both primary (archives) and secondary sources (theses, dissertations, articles, newspapers, electronic documents) to better highlight the criminalization of the population in this part of Cameroon between 1990 and 2000.it is clear that the decade of 1990 is marked by a resurgence of the economic crisis, which is responsible for the birth of hordes, which take hostage transporters, passengers and their goods. The smuggling and illegal circulation of arms and ammunition (automatic pistols, MAS-36, Kalashnikov AK-47, machine guns, homemade rifles) in the localities of Zigue-Zagué, Kousséri, Laindé, Meiganga, Ndjaména, to name but a few. To this end, it is urgent that the political authorities, the forces of law and order of Cameroon, Chad and the Central African Republic take measures for de-escalation, disarmament, reform of the security sector and especially good governance would be possible ways out of violence and crime.*

Keywords: *Cameroon, Lake Chad, small arms, ammunition, cross-border transport.*

1. Introduction

The mobility of people and goods is always accompanied by risks. These risks may relate to the state of the road infrastructure, as is the case in the northern part of Cameroon. Hostage-taking with ransom demands by armed gangs (Zarguinas, Coupeurs de route) (Fogué Tédom, 2007). This is a cross-border crime (Fogué Tédom, 2010) that goes from Lake Chad to the borders of the East Cameroon region, with an illicit circulation of arms and diamonds, sometimes with the complicity of political leaders (Ntuda Ebodé, 2011). This paper aims to analyze the causal factors of instability, even insecurity in northern Cameroon through transportation. Better yet, what are the different actors responsible for the illicit dissemination of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in the Logone et Chari, Zigue-Zagué, Kousséri and Meiganga roads? There is a relationship between the mobility of people and goods and insecurity in North Cameroon (Far North-Adamaoua-North) to the borders of the Chadian basin. The smuggling and counterfeiting of SALW is a reality experienced by passengers and users on a daily basis. This is what justifies the convocation of the theory of collective security or "security complex" by Barry Buzan and Mvié Méka(Messe Mbega, 2015). According to Messe Mbega: collective security "Security complex" apprehended at the regional level is the security of groups of states whose primary security concerns bind them to each other in such a way that the security of none of them can really be separated from that of the others. This policy takes the form of an effective fight against threats common to the regions where the state cannot eradicate them alone. This analysis situates the problem of the management of crisis zones, of the high mobility of armed hordes that undermine insecurity and accentuate cross-border crime. It is a question of examining how regional services in North Cameroon accentuate transnational crime. Second, to analyze and evaluate the entrepreneurs of violence in the region, in the non-licit dissemination of SALW. Finally, the consequences of these cycles of

violence and some strategies for escaping the "long night" of insecurity. It is important to note that many previous scientific works have addressed this issue (Adamou Machou Paré, 2001; Saïbou Issa, 2000; Mouctar Bah, 1985). This historical analysis is intended to be complementary, or even to provide another reading grid, because in science one is the pioneer.

2. Cross-border trafficking as a vehicle of violence: the case of clandestine transport

Several factors are responsible for illicit transport as a violation of the sovereignty of the State of Cameroon in general and of North Cameroon in particular. Among others, we should mention: the disloyalty of the State (A. Fogué Tédom, 2016), and the erection of grey zones, the result of the lack of control by the Forces de Maintien de l'Ordre (FMO).

2.1 The breakdown of the state: a breeding ground for transnational crime in northern Cameroon

Transnational crime is accompanied by a number of causal factors such as the disintegration of the central state vis-à-vis regions with eccentric positions (Saïbou Issa, 2010). This is the case of North Cameroon, which has long been subject to a plethora of crises. This is why the Cameroonian academic is partly responsible because for a long time left the Far North through the weakness of public investment, the industrial fabric of health infrastructure and the road network (Saïbou Issa, 2006). The State, in its regalian missions, is the guarantor of citizens' security. However, because of the economic crisis of the 1990s, the State of Cameroon had to abandon some territorial entities to their sad fate (A. Zozime Tamekamta, 2022), which was a mistake for its own security and even the isolation of some neighboring states such as Chad.

Saïbou Issa notes that several factors are responsible for insecurity and organised crime in the northern part of the country. The author places the facts at the end of the 1980s, an abundant labor force caused by the idle, a proliferation of ex-combatants or active and important logistics (Saïbou Issa, 2006A. Fogué Tédom, 2007). The economic crisis is not the only cause of this transnational instability. It is also necessary to mention the ethnic alliances on both sides of the Logone et Chari border (Saïbou Issa, 2010).

It is therefore clear that the phenomenon of road cutters is fueled and caused by the multiplication of political and military crises, the porous borders that have plagued CAR and Chad for decades, and the idleness of youth, all of which are factors that revive criminality and accentuate the impoverishment of the population (Alain Fogué Tédom, 2007).The economic crisis, followed by the political turmoil of the 1990s, have had harmful effects on the violation of the sovereignty of Cameroon. Insofar as there has been a proliferation of armed hordes (R. Guivanda 2010) in search of survival with weapons in hand (David Wenaï, 2021). It is important, however, that the central state take a set of measures to address these failures.

The disintegration of Cameroon's authority and the de-statization of the country are the seeds of social and economic destructuring in the localities of Zigue-Zagué, Mora du Logone et Chari and have opened the way to transnational crime (J.V. Ntuda Ebodé, 2007). This situation dates back to the historical period from 1980 to 1990: following the adoption of the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP) and the economic crisis which had considerable consequences on African states and Cameroon in particular. Crime will impose itself to the detriment of the security of citizens. Cross-border transportation will take a severe body. From then on, border porosity was exploited by the hordes to impose a crime economy.

2.2. Cross-border porosity: or the non-control of borders

Border porosity becomes a means of enabling the existence of any traffic. Ntuda Ebode points out that the transnational expansion of organized crime was initially based on the

phenomenon of diasporas, border porosity, and the circulation of capital (Joseph Vincent Ntuda Ebodé, 2010). The border became a free pass, a symbol of the illicit circulation of armed gangs in the Chadian basin. This is due to the weakness of the military and police authorities during entry and exit operations.

This is why the Cameroonian academic Saïbou Issa specifies that, on the whole, armed gangs use the border at three levels: in the sanctuary of their activities, then insularization and transhumance (Saïbou Issa, 2010). The porosity of the border becomes a strategy that increases insecurity and exposes transporters and passengers to the risk of being dispossessed of their goods. This poses the problem of control and surveillance of grey zones by States and their territorial divisions. Gaïd Minassian defines a grey zone as a lawless area, abandoned to the hordes, a pocket, a neighborhood, which is impenetrable by state institutions where the inhabitants are held to ransom (Gaïd Minassian, 2011).However, this situation is not limited to African states. Grey zones are a global reality: France during the attacks on the Stade de France in 2011, proves it sufficiently. The attacks on the New York Stock Exchange on September 11, 2009 by armed men situates the difficult and uncontrollable character of gray areas (Gaïd Minassian, 2011). Nevertheless, these spaces show the complexity of states to have an effective control of the movement of people and their goods. North Cameroon, on the border with Chad and the CAR, fits this sad picture.

Border porosity remains a fundamental problem for African states in general and those of the Sudano-Sahelian strip, which is plagued by terrorism (Ngarlejy Yerongar, 2010).This has been an effective observation since 2006 in CAR, a fragile state (bordering Cameroon) in post-conflict is open with a view to pacifying the country and initiating its development. In addition, there is the porous border, the proliferation and illicit circulation of light weapons and ammunition (UNDP, 1991). This situation shows that the political and security instability in the northern part of Cameroon is partly due to the political instability of neighboring countries (Chad-RCA) (Ngarlejy Yerongar, 2010), which are experiencing a succession of security crises. According to Guibaï Gaïtama, the weakening of the State from the periphery exposes populations who are afraid, riven by division and religious quarrels, because of the prevailing insecurity, or terrorists can find refuge (Guibaï Gaïtama, 2022). This border porosity is therefore the pebble in the shoe of the state of Cameroon and its neighboring countries. It has immeasurable consequences for peace and security. It (porosity) creates new chrysogenic zones in this region. This is the case of the illicit circulation of SALW through various routes.

3. Resurgence of grey zones in North Cameroon: factors in the illicit circulation of small arms

Transnational insecurity is a reflection of several factors. These include smuggling, the routes used to smuggle goods, the different actors and their knowledge of geopolitics, but not forgetting the illicit circulation of SALW (Saïbou Issa, 2010, 2007).

3.1 Routes, actors and strategies for circumventing the state order

Several routes are criminogenic in Cameroon in general and in North Cameroon in particular. This is also the case for the actors who accentuate this transnational crime. Saïbou Issa, a Cameroonian academic, states that multi-ethnic armed gangs in their modes of action of trans-border banditry use techniques and weapons of war that suggest the military expertise of its perpetrators (Saïbou Issa, 2010). It is sometimes hours that break out in 1992 between Arab Shuwa and Kotoko (Saïbou Issa, 2010), by example and which poses the problem of ethnic clashes of community alliances, to attack and have murders with weapons. It is clear that several actors are responsible for cross-border crime in the northern part (Cameroon-Chad or Cameroon-Nigeria).

In the chapter on different criminogenic routes, it is important to note that there have been record attacks by coupeurs de route, Chadian-Central African rebel groups in the Ngaouhi district, near Djohong, followed by a flight of herders after a gendarme was killed (D. Ousman, 2005). These are scenes that must be denounced with the utmost energy to prevent them from happening again.

But then this insecurity is still experienced on the routes of the Far North and Adamaoua regions, with hostage taking, raids (David Wenaï, 2011). In the department of Mayo-Sava (Far North), countries without are attacked, bush travelers, vehicles stopped, motorcycles snatched in the localities of Vamé (Mora) - Amchidé-Banki-Bonderi-Doublé-Wildir-Tolkomari (Ernest Djonga, 2011). These populations have been abandoned to their sad fate, which raises the question of the protection of property and persons by the FMO. There has also been a weakening or even a loss of state authority in this part of the country. Those involved in cross-border crime operate with impunity, if they do not always benefit from the complicity of the gendarmes and police.

Also in the region, in the localities of Wilala, Blamédéri, Mangavé and Gouzou, road cutters raid the livestock of herders, seriously injure drivers and snatch two motorcyclists (Christian Tabouli, 2011).This insecurity is also experienced at the border between Gambaru in Nigeria and Fotokol in Cameroon, where police officers intercepted two Kalashnikovs coming from Chad and from Maiduguri in Nigeria. These traffickers, use Cameroonian territory as a rear base for the transit or routing of weapons (A. Alifa, 2012).The border becomes a place of contact and exchange of criminal activities. The border becomes a place of contact and exchange of criminal activities. The securing of grey zones is therefore a categorical imperative. This is why Elong Abanda specifies that one cannot place each individual under police surveillance. He calls for everyone's responsibility in the face of the poaching that is rampant in these areas of lawlessness and security (Elong Abanda, 2022). The population and users of the public highway are abandoned to razzias, the FMO are absent, and when they are present, they shine by acts of corruption (Bernard Ananfack, 2022).

In the Adamaoua region, Professor Saïbou Issa informs us that the Djohong and Ngaouhi areas have lost their livestock due to banditry. Thus, along the road leading from Meiganga to Garoua-Boulaï between Adamaoua and the East, spontaneous villages have been established by Fulani herders, particularly Mbororo (Saïbou Issa, 2010). From pure cross-border criminality, there is reason to wonder about the frequency of regular attacks by road cutters (Zarguinas) against herders. This cycle of violence against these peaceful, defenseless Fulani must be denounced. The economy of these territorial entities suffers.

These criminogenic areas (Zigue-Zagué, Mora, Kousséri-Meiganga-Figuil) are experiencing chronic instability, which must be contained. However, the unlawful circulation of SALW and ammunition has become a gaping wound that accentuates this political poaching. There is then a close relationship with the actors, the routes, the state bypass strategies and the anarchic mobility of SALW in the northern regions of Cameroon on the one hand and the Lake Chad basin on the other.

3.2. Northern Cameroon: a breeding ground for the illegal spread of small arms stocks and ammunition

Machou Paré defines grey zones as a gateway where international relations abound, a factor in the rapid proliferation and dissemination of SALW since the end of the Cold War (Machou Paré, 2001). Cross-border crime benefits from the high mobility of armed gangs, which make use of sophisticated war machines. This is the case of the coupeurs de route who rely on rural banditry, making theft a profession, a state raid in the Lake Chad Basin thanks to a good command of the handling of weapons of war (Saïbou Issa, 2010).

In her book, the French historian Débos shows that in Chad, weapons have become a profession, a tool of contestation and political intervention. She deduces that militiamen live off their weapons for years without firing a shot, based on a survey conducted in Chad between 2004 and 2010 (Saïbou Issa, 2010). The point for her is to understand the mechanisms linked to the possession and handling of weapons, even in the midst of demobilization. A regime of military predation, which totally pressures the poor civilian population. These men in arms parade between Sudan and Libya and between France, alternating between governments and the maquis (Marielle Débos, 2010). The fundamental criticism is that linked to the apology of war crimes by bandits in Chad, to the roles played by women in this historicization of conflicts and the profession of arms in Chad. She does not point out the impunity of these gangs, the recruitment of child soldiers, the trafficking of arms, drugs and precious stones (Marielle Débos, 2010).

Community confrontations between Arabs and Kotoko with SALW, bought at reduced prices, or even picked up on the banks of the Logone River in 1990 when Hissène Habré and his men left Ndjamena when the MPS took power. These community clashes through sophisticated weapons, cross-border solidarity, and the use of militias in illegal possession of weapons raise some astonishment (Saïbou Issa, 2012). Weapons caches are the result of lax control operations or sweeps of administrative border units in Chad. The second reading lays bare the lack of respect for the regulations on the carrying of arms in this part of the country and in Lake Chad in general.

Ngarlejy Yorongar believes that state terrorism in Chad is sponsored by the pundits of the Chadian state, through the assassination of politicians and the abduction of deputies. These road cutters are supplied with arms and ammunition by senior officers who run military armories, not to mention sub-prefects arrested for theft (Ngarlejy Yorongar, 2010). While Domo notes that lawless road blockers in Chad operate in a context of generalized insecurity, the possession of a symbol of violence has become child's play, so it is not surprising to see this equipment in the hands of everyone. They act in the middle of the road, force passengers to stop their vehicles on the side, and relieve passengers of their belongings (Joseph Domo, 2013). The result of a state with weak security structures subscribed to ethnic, religious cleavages and preoccupied with issues of survival and not defense and security of the people (J. Domo, 2013). To this end, rampant corruption becomes the rule, military violence the norm, moral integrity and the ethics of the profession of arms trampled underfoot.

Table 1: Seizure of weapons following clashes between Kotoko and Arabe Shuwa (1994)

Order number	Nature of the weapons
1	Quantities of shotguns
2	7 armes (AK-47, PM, FAL, M14....)

Data compiled by Saïbou, Ethnicity, p.113.

An inter-ethnic confrontation that requires the use of SALW calls into question the sources of fraudulent endowments of these light weapons held by these white-collar criminals. The ease of access to weapons by herders on the shores of Lake Chad has something in common with the candid acceptance of the evidence of the illegal circulation of weapons that results in their recovery after conflicts (Saïbou Issa, 2012). But then, Ngarlejy Yorongar believes that state terrorism in Chad is sponsored by the pundits of the Chadian state power, through the assassination of politicians and the abduction of deputies. These road cutters are supplied with arms and ammunition by senior officers who run military armories, not to mention sub-prefects arrested for theft (Ngarlejy Yorongar, 2010). While Domo, makes the following observation: the lawless road cutters in Chad, act in a context of generalized precariousness, the possession of a symbol of violence has become a child's play, so it is not surprising to see these equipment in the hands of everyone(Joseph Domo, 2013).The following map traces on the one hand the

geography of SALW since the Arab Spring in 2012 and on the other hand the areas of dissemination of these SALW in sub-Saharan Africa.

Map 1: Mapping of small arms and light weapons trafficking in sub-Saharan Africa since the Arab Spring of 2012
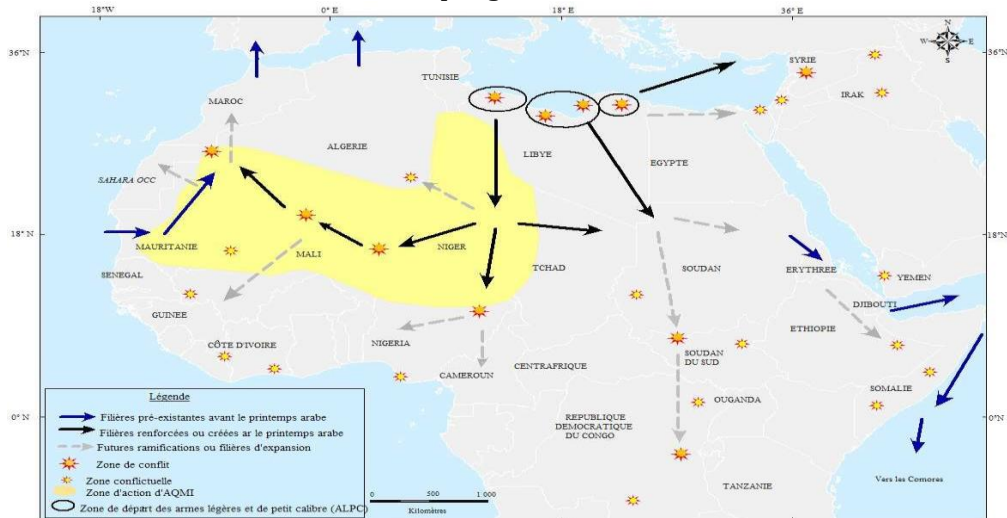
Source: Messe Mbega, "La Communauté Economique des Etats",... p. 271.

It should be noted that there is a strong anarchic circulation of SALW between states that are prey to either civil wars or the violent extremism of Boko-Haram. Indeed, it presents the places of departure of SALW as Libya and Tunisia; the transit areas of Niger, Mauritania, Mali and Sudan of the gray areas located across the Sahara desert, where different drug channels, vehicles by armed gangs and terrorist groups prevail (Saïbou Issa, 2021). The main recipient countries (dumping grounds) of these SALW traffics are Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon and CAR. These countries are subject to chronic and regular belligerence. As a result of the fall of the Libyan regime, Muammar Gaddafi, in 2011, the Sahel has become a dumping ground for small arms, due to the porous borders its neighbor Chad suffers from, as well as Cameroon, a country bordering Chad, the CAR and Nigeria. This cross-border crime has significant effects on the daily life of the population and the economic fabric, for example.

4. Cross-border crime: what are the challenges and prospects in North Cameroon?

Organized insecurity on the border corridors between Cameroon and neighboring countries by rebel groups has consequences for both the economic fabric and the peace and quiet of citizens. In the same vein, observers are witnessing the criminalization of political poaching on a large scale by politicians and law enforcement officials.

4.1. Criminalization and political poaching: two hydras with elusive contours?

Several facts contained in various literatures show these criminal acts, which affect the physical and moral integrity of citizens. This is the case of an armed robbery of a policeman in N'Gaoundéré (Adamaoua region) in a shop on February 5, 2004, followed by the assault of the shop owner (A. Dahirou, 2004). These facts are also similar to the release of a Chadian army captain who supplied arms and ammunition to highway robbers by the gendarmerie in Kousséri (D. Ousmane, 2003). When the police become the executioner and the people the victims. It is

pure brigandage, robbery of the FMO, and corruption that must be denounced. How can we understand that the public force puts pressure on the population through raids? The Cameroonian academic Saïbou Issa traces the picture of this crime in the following terms:

It is by militarizing that cross-border banditry leaves its traditional framework to become a polemological phenomenon...such conjecture has always favored the emergence of criminal networks in the form of insecurity entrepreneurship in regions such as the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region... On the borders of Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Sudan, bandit families are deployed who take advantage of the chronic instability in this region(Saïbou Issa, 2012).

It is necessary to understand the impunity that is said to exist in several border areas in Africa. The multiplication of armed bands is an important barometer for understanding the sociology of armed groups in Africa. These hordes live and survive by raiding, extorting the goods of farmers, herders and passengers. Marielle Débos, a French researcher, notes that: the profession of arms in wartime (on the side of the government army and its militias, as well as on the side of the rebels) is mainly concerned with its exercise in the inter-war period. Weapons are used to injure and kill, but also to intimidate, to impress, to bring about administration and, in general, to impose oneself in interactions. To practice extortion (Marielle Débos, 2012).The close relationship between political-military poaching and the non-legal possession of SALW and ammunition (Marie Julien Danga, 2021). This brings back to the table the question of the issuance and authorization of the purchase of death devices. Saïbou Issa, notes that the foundations of rural banditry that imbues the culture of theft, which has become a profession, a raid of a state in the Lake Chad basin. Theft has become a life insurance policy for marabouts and sometimes certain potentates (Saïbou Issa, 2012).The post-colonial nation-state is a shell set up to ensure living together. However, several entrepreneurs of crime and violence poach and pillage in the midst of peace. For the criminalization of the State is observed in all strata of power. The state and war criminals go hand in hand.

4.2. The breakdown of the forces of law and order and rampant corruption

Gendarmes are accustomed to beating up motorcyclists and herders for refusing to pay bribes in the Mayo-Dankali locality in the Far North region, in the Galim-Tignère district, purely as a result of FMO fraud (Yvonne Salamatou, 2010). One must question the need for the various roadblocks erected on the road, either checkpoints or sanctuaries of corruption. What is certain is that many military and administrative authorities are responsible for these acts of corruption and bribery. According to Saïbou Issa, this cross-border corridor is subject to several crises and challenges: regional instability, the deterioration of road assets, banditry and terrorism, incivism and corruption undermine transport in the north (Saïbou Issa, 2022). Added to this is the difficult and sometimes accident-prone state of the road network:

Table 2: Defective road assets in North Cameroon

Fotokol	Maltam	
Banki		Mora
Mokolo	Bourha	
Gashiga	Belel	
Banyo		Bonhari
Tignère	Kontcha	

Source: G. Gaïtama, *L'œil du Sahel*, Yaoundé, 18 avril 2022, 18h30.

There is reason to wonder about the dilapidated state of these various sections, which in principle should serve Chad, Nigeria and the entire region. However, it is not the object of any particular attention. This is unfortunate, to the detriment of the economy of this part of the country and the neighboring states, mainly the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Mora, Maiduguri;

Garoua-Yola; N'Gaoundéré-Jalingo). Road sections that are real cash cows of the various checkpoints of customs officers, gendarmes, and police. They erect mixed barriers, not always for traveler control operations, but for financial rents. This sometimes poses the problem of defending and protecting the territory of border areas, which are exposed to terrorist activities (Saïbou Issa, 2021). It is important that the reform of the sector is truly imposed within the law enforcement forces.

Conclusion

In the final analysis, cross-border transport is dependent on regional instability in northern Cameroon and the unlawful circulation of SALW in Africa and in the Lake Chad Basin in particular remains an issue of concern for the member states of the African Union (AU) and CEMAC. It is important that these states and institutions (CEMAC, UN) engage in genuine public policies of disarmament, demobilization and recovery of the increased stockpiles that accentuate rape, sow death and undermine economic development. These weapons and ammunition have become the seeds of chronic instability in the Sahelo-Sahelian band with the mobility of terrorist hordes: Boko-Haram, AQIM, Mujao, Islamic State (EI). Securing people and property is essential, as is Security Sector Reform (SSR). The Mixed Multinational Force (MMF) present or in operation in Lake Chad should disarm rebel groups and put an end to cross-border crime. It is important that the member states of the Sudano-Sahelian zone put in place adequate strategies to considerably reduce the increased stocks of arms and ammunition in circulation in the Chadian basin and the Sahel. Civil society actors and academics are called upon to reduce transnational crime to its simplest form. Good governance, equitable sharing of the fruits of growth, and the rule of law should be the pillars of a fight against violent extremism and the war economy, which accentuate impoverishment, frustration, and the increased mobility of large flows of SALW. The uncontrolled spread of the tools of war remains a central issue for states, international organizations in charge of peacekeeping and disarmament, and the reduction of weapons and ammunition responsible for crime and organized crime. The African Union (AU) and the UN Peace and Security Council are called upon to review the mechanisms for seizure, collection, recycling and destruction of SALW.

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CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE DEGREE OF SATISFACTION OF THE BENEFICIARIES ROMA TOWARDS SOCIAL SERVICES IN TIMIŞ COUNTY

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Abstract: *The research focuses on the problems of the Roma ethnic group in Timiş County, with a particular focus on the Roma who access social services, trying to rank and establish the problems they face in relation to social services. The research is of a mixed type, containing both quantitative items and open-ended, qualitative questions, aimed at clarifying the major problems faced by ethnic Roma who interact with the social services system in Romania, at the level of Timiş County, both from the perspective of the services public but also from the perspective of non-governmental organizations as well as local public authorities. The conclusions of the research offer the perspective of a strong social system, which, however, presents some gaps, although the problem-solving process proceeds relatively smoothly, in the view of the majority of respondents. However, there are still areas of interest and action that require improvement. From a procedural perspective, the beneficiaries do not always have access to information regarding the operation of the respective social service.*

Keywords: *Roma, problems, social services, satisfaction, system.*

1.Introduction. Social context

The ethnic Roma have lived for centuries alongside other populations on the territory of Romania. Exercising a fascination over the majority population through curiosity, and often awakening rejection, this ethnic group, perhaps too little known and understood, is still the victim of stereotypes and prejudices deeply rooted in the collective psyche.

Prey of some dismissive attitudes or contrary to curiosity, the ethnic Roma certainly represent a surrounding reality. Traditions, customs and certainly a rich history make this ethnic group the target of curiosity and sometimes rejection by other ethnic groups. One thing is certain, the Roma ethnic group is part of the surrounding reality with its own problems, joys, troubles.

The historical Banat is known and perceived as a land of acceptance, ethnic and religious tolerance. The place where many ethnicities coexist, the place where inter-ethnic and religious conflicts were not possible. This is why the way the Roma feel integrated or not in the historical Banat is all the more important. From a territorial perspective, Timiş County represents a significant part of the historical Banat, and these patterns of behavior specific to the historical Banat are certainly characteristic of Timiş County as well.

The presence of ethnic Roma in Banat is constant, according to some sources, these communities appeared around the 16th - 17th centuries, Roma communities being found both in the lowlands, but also in the mountainous area of the historical Banat province (Ţigău, 2015:42). According to the cited source, there is the possibility that the presence of ethnic Roma in Banat is much older, but the absence of documentary evidence from the period of the 14th - 17th centuries regarding the existence of Roma communities remains an unresearched topic and a challenge for the future.

The Roma from Banat were mentioned for the first time five centuries ago, and the first documentary mention of them refers to the Roma from Timişoara (Țigău, 2015:43). The testimony comes from the royal chaplain György Szerémi, He lived the event of the Crusader Uprising of Dózsa, mentioning the existence of Roma. After this first mention, documentary information about the Roma of Banat becomes more and more numerous. These reflect, according to the quoted source, the attitude of the authorities and the population in general towards the ethnic Roma, which is not tolerant but rather rejective and exclusionary.

In the first centuries of documentary attestation, the nomadism of the Roma was clear and obvious and their settlement near the big cities represented a visible phenomenon. This continuous displacement of the Roma ethnic group created the impression of a social disaggregation of an ethnic group that did not find its place in the middle of a community and in the collective mentality of the past eras, the Roma were affected by a certain feeling of antipathy.

In the medieval Banat, the situation of the Roma was a marginal one, the Roma were not owners of land to cultivate, but were oriented towards various types of business and were also involved in the processing of metals, especially iron. Historical sources recognize the inclination, craft and true talent of the Roma in metalworking, especially for blacksmithing, and documents mention their use in gold sands washing activities. The Roma were sometimes also involved in illegal activities starting from their talent in metalworking, it is possible that they ended up forging currency (Țigău, 2015:43).

However, the Roma from Banat became sedentary, this process being a lasting one, and their peaceful coexistence with other ethnic groups is attested and mentioned by bibliographic sources, in this sense following the classic pattern of the ethnically and religiously tolerant Banat.

In relation to these data, although many theorists (Grebeldinger, D – customized to Lugoj) are of the opinion that there are no conflicts between other ethnic groups and the Roma in Banat, this does not mean that we do not face the social exclusion of the Roma population. During the documentation, no relevant studies were identified regarding the social exclusion of the Roma population from the historical Banat or Timiş County. We identified, however, studies on the Roma population in general in Romania. The fact that 3.1% of Roma do not have any identity document creates the conditions for the exclusion of approximately 47,000 people, half of whom are children, from all the rights of citizens of the Romanian State (Cace, Stelian, Ilie, et al, 2002:29) this includes education services, free health services, child allowance, emergency aid type aid, other types of services or social benefits offered, all of this in relation to the cited source. At the same time, in accordance with the cited source, an opinion to which we fully subscribe, these ethnic Roma will not be able to benefit from the right to vote to participate in the democratic political life of the country, they will not be able to be elected and they will not be able to participate in any way at any kind of electoral poll due to the fact that they do not have identity documents.

This fact adds to the social handicap, these citizens will not be able to be included in a form of education, then depriving them of the rights to carry out legally profitable activities or to benefit from health insurance, for example. Despite the fact that they do not benefit from health insurance, the Roma are exposed to a higher risk of developing mental health problems due to discrimination and social exclusion, showing a predisposition to chronic conditions as well. However, the poor health of the Roma is not determined exclusively by socioeconomic factors, but is rather related to ethnicity, due to genetic predispositions and poor hygiene (Robison et. al. 2022).

Thus, the lack of identity documents contributes to a chain of exclusion, without identity documents you cannot attend school, without attending school you cannot find a legal job, without a legal job, the person is socially excluded, marginalized , thus living on the

periphery of society and living from today to tomorrow, not being able to have access to a quality home, a bank loan or a quality life.

The quality of life of the Roma is also reflected in their diet, which is considered inferior compared to the rest of the population. About 40% of Roma in the European Union suffered from hunger at least once a month. The quality of the food they consume can be explained by socio-economic factors such as poverty and education. However, Roma consumption patterns can also be determined by their informal traditions. Thus, income levels and their volatility, compared to the majority population, are reflected in their access to sufficient and good quality food, hence the few options of diversified diets (Ciaian et. al. 2018).

Another very important fact is that a significant percentage of 21% of the Roma, in relation to the cited bibliographic sources, live in buildings for which they do not have ownership documents, often built houses and sometimes even illegally occupied houses, a fact that on the one hand it generates legal problems and on the other hand it contributes to the amplification of a risk of social exclusion. The risk of social exclusion is certain, even taking into account the loss of housing. At the same time, the living conditions are closely related to the state of health of the Roma. Thus, housing is considered a determining factor, being able to negatively affect vulnerable and marginalized populations, such as the Roma. Air pollution caused by energy sources inside Roma settlements (excess carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide) has a strong impact on their health (Majdan et. al. 2012).

In this context, a research highlighting the degree of satisfaction of Roma beneficiaries with the social services in Timişoara and Timiş County, which are intended for citizens in difficulty, is all the more important because social services can directly contribute to increasing the degree of integration social, reducing vulnerability, decreasing the risk of social marginalization, implicitly in reducing the social exclusion of ethnic Roma. In the particular context created, the degree of satisfaction and perception of ethnic Roma on social services, we can, in the future, research how these services really respond to the problems of ethnic Roma and how these services are prepared to really provide the premises for a good social reintegration, the reduction of vulnerability, the risk of social marginalization, implicitly contributing to the good social functioning of communities.

2. Methodological considerations
The purpose of the research: Identifying the perception of the beneficiaries of social services from Timişoara and Timiş County, of Roma ethnicity, towards these services.

Research objectives:
1. Identifying vulnerabilities related to these services
2. Identifying how these services respond to real problems of Roma ethics
3. Determining how social services provide a good response to Roma problems

3. Demographic considerations
In Timiş county, the large urban communities where there are Roma communities are Timişoara and Lugoj. In addition to the two municipalities, there are a number of smaller rural communities, in which there are numerically significant Roma communities. Pesac, Periam, Saravale, Sânpetru Mare, Satchinez, Checea, Uliuc and Berini from Sacoşu Turcesc commune and Măguri locality belonging to Lugoj municipality are just some examples of localities where there are numerous Roma communities.

Due to the limitation of material resources for the implementation of the research, the urban communities of Timişoara and Lugoj were included in this research, respectively ethnic communities from two rural communities, Berini and Uliuc.

As a first remark, from a demographic perspective, the Roma respondents were under 35 years of age, this is a general characteristic of the Roma ethnic group, the Roma population having a young demographic structure compared to the majority population in Romania (Zamfir and Preda, 2002:15).

The pilot research focused on a number of 30 people of Roma ethnicity, 15 males and 15 females, who answered the questions, affirmatively residing in Timiş County and under the age of 35. As for the level of education, two people of Roma ethnicity had completed secondary school education, respectively, the rest stated that they had not completed secondary school education.

4. The target group

The target group was deliberately chosen from among the ethnic Roma who benefited from social benefits or accessed social services in the last 5 years or are in the assistance of social services at the moment. By social services we refer both to residential services with accommodation and to social services belonging to local public authorities, for the benefit part, but also social services that are of the non-governmental organization type or are patronized by religious cults or are under their organization. Practically, an important condition for participating in this study was that the respondent had benefited from social services.

Institutional communication

The participants in the study are mostly satisfied with the way in which they are communicated with within the social services, 65% state that they had no difficulties communicating with the representatives of the social services, while 23% of the participants in the study believe that this communication could be improved but does not report major complaints related to communication with representatives of social services. A percentage of 13% believe that this communication is carried out in a difficult and cumbersome manner and they feel disadvantaged in the relationship with the representatives of social services.

Professional attitude: 67% of the respondents are of the opinion that the professionals had an impeccable and impeccable attitude, while 20% of the respondents are of the opinion that the professionals had a good attitude. A percentage of 13% believe that the attitude of professionals could be significantly improved towards people who benefit from benefits or social services.

The solution to the problem: a percentage of just over half, i.e. 54% of the respondents, state that the problem for which they accessed the social service was solved from the first meetings, while 33% of the respondents claim that the problem for which they accessed the social service and found resolution after several meetings, i.e. after more than four or five meetings or sessions with the social service professional. A percentage of 13% of the participants in the study claim that the problem for which they accessed the social service did not find any solution and accessing the service was done without any obvious benefit.

The labour market in each country may refer to a locality, a smaller or lager area, or the entire economy, with different phases: in the case of unqualified labour force or with inferior qualification, the scope is small, the labour force needs can be satisfied in a locality; as the qualification level of the labour force increases, the highly-qualified labour force is more rare, and the necessity occurs to expand the scope of the labour force to larger areas or even to the entire territory of the country.

The labour market is a heterogeneous ensemble, made of the individualised labour markets down to each trade of profession, operating distinctly and with the possibility of mutual influence by professional requalification.

After Popp(2013), the disappearance of jobs triggered among certain social-professional categories affected by unemployment the reduction of material gains and the change of social

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statuses and roles. Starting from the fact that "labour is the most powerful connection between individual and society" (S. Freud), unemployment means not only a loss of income, but also the loss of self-confidence, erosion of the connections with the community and the occurrence of the sentiment of exclusion from normal life, which may constitute a true menace for democracy (Codin, 1990). Under these circumstances, the essential goal of social policies in Romania consists in guaranteeing a job and guaranteeing a decent living, either resulted from the direct labour of the respective person, or by means of the services of social protection and assistance. It is necessary to reinstate an environment favourable to learning and labour, meant to make it possible that labour become the main source of living, and the person who works in order to dispose directly of part of its results "feels it is worth working, that he can live from the earnings of his labour" (Stegăroiu, 1993).

Stereotypical attitude / discrimination: a percentage of 70% of the respondents state that they have not been the victim in any way of a stereotypical attitude or during the ancillary period of the social service, while 20% of the respondents believe that they did not pay attention to these aspects but that they did not see any signs of discrimination or did not feel discriminated in any way while accessing the service. All of them, a percentage of 10%, are of the opinion that the professionals of the service discriminated them through gestures, attitudes, even through inappropriate jokes related to the social situation, not being able to specify whether they did it in bad faith or whether these jokes had an innocent character. However, when detailing the question, 10% continue to claim that they felt discriminated against in the situation in which they accessed the social vice and the attitude of the professionals left much to be desired towards them.

Availability of the professional / orientation to problems: a percentage of 73% of the respondents consider that the social service professionals acted impeccably and that they proved a good response to the reported problem, while 20% consider that the professionals had a good performance. Only 7% of the respondents declare that they are totally dissatisfied with the attitude of the professionals towards the reported problem and implicitly with the response of the social service to the problem they themselves are facing.

Work procedures and their explanation: regarding the working procedures of the social service, 53% of the respondents believe that they were explained or understood well enough the working procedures underlying the provision of the service or social benefit so that they left fully enlightened of the problem or situation they are facing, while 47% of the respondents believe that the work procedures were not sufficiently explained to them or were not sufficiently well understood. They state that they do not understand the organization and operation of the system or the social service.

Hierarchical social problems: 47% of the respondents believe that the main social problem they face is the lack of money or its insufficiency, related to the fact that they fail to meet their needs. This is attributed to a non-existent job/job or a poorly paid job. Among the occupations practiced by the respondents are casual daily workers so that the amounts of money received do not provide them with the necessary subsistence. 33% of the respondents are of the opinion that a big problem is the housing problem under the aspect of housing possession of the housing facilities or the insufficiently equipped and organized / built housing, so the housing problem represents a stress being ranked among the main problems. 20% of respondents believe that the main problem is the lack of jobs in the communities of which they are a part, respectively the difficulty of commuting to a job in big cities correlated with the high cost of transportation.

Family problems encountered: 47% of respondents declare themselves worried due to the absence of financial resources to ensure the goods necessary for family life, 40% of respondents declare they are worried about the future of children and the lack of opportunities

for them in the communities they belong to, 13% of respondents declare that he does not encounter any kind of problem at the family level.

3 of the responding beneficiaries are people who were or are part of the Child Protection system, being adults with full legal capacity and who declare that the current child protection system is clearly superior to the one in the past, respectively the home-type system family is a gain and an addition compared to the old placement centers because in the family home the beneficiaries are more united, communicate better and it's a different atmosphere and attitude. The actual situation of care and assistance is beneficial in relation to the fact that there are far fewer children in these family-type homes and the respondents declare that this is a good thing and the Child Protection system responds much better at the present moment to their needs. Regarding schooling, offering opportunities on the labor market and other types of problems that young people in the protection system face, the degree of satisfaction and satisfaction expressed by the beneficiaries of the protection system with the services offered within it is good.

Violation of law by respondents: at the percentage level, 97% of the respondents state that they have not broken the law, respectively 3% claim that they have committed a crime.

From a numerical level point of view, this represents 29 out of a total of 30 respondents who have not committed any criminal act during their life, respectively only one person states that he has committed a crime.

One of the beneficiaries participating in the study states that he served a custodial sentence, as a result of driving an unregistered car and without a driver's license on public roads, repeatedly. A non-violent crime that sent him behind bars. He also states that he also consumed alcoholic beverages with a very high blood alcohol level. However, he believes that the punishment was disproportionate to the act committed and believes that it was not appropriate for him to receive a custodial sentence for such an act because he did not cause any kind of accident. However, he does not believe that it is the court's fault and that he was not discriminated against because of his ethnicity, but rather the fault belongs to the lawyer who did not work hard enough on the case.

The other respondents state that they had no contact with the prison system and that they did not break the law at the level of crime.

Conclusions

The social protection system largely responds to the overall overall needs and requirements of the ethnic Roma respondents. The representatives of the social services show good communication with the beneficiaries and a professional attitude, in most of the cases. On the other hand, the problem solving process offers a fairly easy solution from the first meetings. However, despite this, there is a constant percentage, between 10% and 13% of respondents who declare themselves dissatisfied with the institutional communication framework, with the attitude of the professionals, as well as with the fact that the problem for which they accessed the social service did not find a solution solution. This percentage is also significant for those who believe that there are stereotypical or discriminatory attitudes in the social services towards ethnic Roma. There are also dissatisfactions and people who declare themselves totally dissatisfied. A small percentage of respondents are dissatisfied with the social service, because the problem they are facing has not been solved. However, a much larger percentage of respondents believe that they do not always understand the working procedures of a social service and that no one explains these procedures to them in a way that they understand.

The persistent problems faced by ethnic Roma participating in the study are the lack of money, respectively obvious concerns for the future of the children. Also the existing jobs in their communities or their absence is a cause for concern.

Regarding criminality and violation of the law, only one person among the respondents states that he violated the law and served a custodial sentence. What is significant, the crime for which he states that the custodial sentence was executed is a non-violent one and not directed against the patrimony although it represents a violation of the law with criminal consequences and repeatedly.

The answers given to this pilot research create the premises for a better adaptation of some social services to the ethnic Roma and their needs. Although the problems find a solution which is a positive fact and a certain quality of the services provided, not always the working procedures of the social services are known and understood by the service seekers. Social services respond to real problems to a great extent and provide a good response to them.

However, better procedural adaptation would be needed, so that service seekers understand how they work and how these services can be involved in the problem-solving process.

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THE IMPLICATIONS OF ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY

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Abstract*: Pregnancy among teenagers is a phenomenon with implications for both the young mother and the newborn, under aspects related to health, education, social position, and/or employment prospects. Romania is ranked second in the European Union regarding the maternity rate among teenage girls, a fact that highlights the need to address preventive and supportive measures for the target group. The purpose of this study was to investigate the degree of information on teenage girls regarding the problems that teenage mothers may face, aiming to evaluate their knowledge on the notions of sexual education and contraception. The investigation tool used was the sociological questionnaire, applied by self-administration on a sample of 50 persons, the subjects being girls aged between 14-19 years, in school students in Reşiţa Municipality.*

Keywords : pregnancy; adolescence; teenage mothers; family; newborns.

1. Introduction

Teenage pregnancy is a phenomenon with implications for both the young mother and the newborn. Among the aspects influenced by the occurrence of this situation, we may cite health, education, social position, and/or employment prospects in the field of employment (Habito et.al., 2019). This fragile stage in a woman's development represents the period in which the need for sustained and unconditional efforts is felt on the part of parents, as well as the school as an institution as well as governments. It is an issue present in all states, both in the most developed and in those that rank lower on the scale of economic progress; this problem require two necessary directions of action: on the one hand, measures to prevent pregnancies among young underage girls, and on the other hand supporting and streamlining support resources for young mothers and their babies. The increased incidence of this phenomenon at the level of a country or a region signals the need to improve the functioning of the educational system and the health system (Ursache et al., 2023).

A study carried out by Salvaţi copiii / Save the Children Organization points to the fact that Romania is home to approximately a quarter of young women who became mothers before the age of majority, among the countries of the European Union, i.e. a percentage of 23%, according to EUROSTAT data forwarded and updated in 2018. The National Institute of Statistics (INS) presents, in the most recent data, the fact that out of the 199,720 births in 2019, 749 came from mothers under the age of 15 and 17,933 from mothers between the ages of 15 and 9 (https://www.salvaticopiii.ro/s-ro/, 2021).

Romania is ranked second in the European Union (the first place being occupied by the neighboring country Bulgaria) in terms of the maternity rate among teenagers, teenage pregnancy having a multitude of adverse effects on young pregnant women, as well as socio-economic costs, according to a study conducted by UNICEF in collaboration with the SAMAS Association of Romania (https://www.unicef.org/, 2021). The authors note a cyclicity of the phenomenon, a tendency to propagate within the same families from one generation to another, followed by negative economic, social and health effects. We can, however, remark a positive

perspective related to the dispersion of the percentage of teenage pregnancies: in 2019, 16,639 teenage pregnancies were registered, down by 9% compared to 2018.

2.The context of the teenage years

Adolescence is the stage preceding adulthood. It is considered the most important stage, because there are changes from all points of view: physical, psychological and social. Within it, the child's personality and identity develops, leaving its mark on his entire behavior.

In adolescence, the desire for the opposite sex appears, it is the period when the first love occurs, and teenagers can be inspired by movies, novels or other people's lives to manage events. (Adams, 2009: 35) During adolescence, there is also a development of sexual identity that involves the child's understanding and acceptance of his own body, but also the discovery of specific male and female attributions.

Sex has always been a taboo subject in society and within the family, and for this reason teenagers had relatively limited access to information. They are ashamed and feel guilty when they have certain questions or concerns related to sex, and often wait for the first experience to have the desired answers, and this leaves an emotional imprint on the teenager (Borten, 2001: 52).

All these changes appear suddenly in the child's life and for this reason the role of the family, especially the parents, is very important. They should be aware that teenagers need to express their opinions and thoughts without being ashamed, to feel loved, to feel that others give them attention and trust, to be involved in various activities (Adams, 2009: 37).

There are two defining factors: education and religion rule in some cultures. There are peoples who do not allow the beginning of sexual life before a certain age or before the most important step in a person's life, marriage, and those who do not respect these rules are punished (Borten, 2001: 57).

However, without promoting sexual activity among adolescents, there are information programs on existing contraceptive methods that encourage, in particular, the use of condoms. Contraceptive methods are not always at hand even in the case of adults, which proves that it is even more difficult among teenagers. Maybe they don't resort to contraception for reasons such as money, as teenagers do not having a stable income that would allow them to purchase such contraceptive means; in other situations the shame involved in purchasing a condom causes them to give up this gesture, being an uncomfortable moment even for adults, even more so for teenagers (Enăchescu, 2008: 40).

3. Conceptual clarifications regarding teenage motherhood

From a biological point of view, a pregnancy can occur between the ages of 8 and 63, but the period of adolescence as well as the period over 35 are considered exceptions because medical complications may occur.

Due to the age and the body, which is not sufficiently developed but still developing, the teenagers may face various problems and medical complications. These aspects lead to abnormal development of the baby, premature birth, abortion or the child it may die before being born. There are situations in which the teenagers did not have their first period but had sexual relations, in which case a specialist physician should be contacted. However, there are also teenage girls who, despite the unfavorable aspects mentioned above, complete a pregnancy without any problems and the child is born healthy (Şerban, 2001:79).

However, pregnancy during adolescence can predispose the mother to health problems such as anemia and sexually transmitted diseases, but also to psychological problems: depression or even suicide. Moreover, an additional risk may be represented by the large age difference between the mother and her sexual partner in the sense that it may increase the risk of domestic violence (Reyes et. al. 2022).

A pregnancy may occur at any time without taking into account the life of the mother who is going to carry the baby. For a teenage girl, the mother plays a very important role as a landmark in life and a role model. Some mothers openly approach any topic, but others consider certain things too shameful, too "adult-appropriate", therefore a child should not know them. This reluctance to prepare and educate the young adolescent for the natural course of life arises either from a faulty intention of prevention, with the thought that the lack of information or postponing the answers will have the effect of allaying the temptation, or even from the lack of education perpetuated by previous generations, so that the mother does not have the necessary knowledge to give answers. This may be the mistake that later leads to a pregnancy among teenage girls (Şerban, 2001: 86).

Poor education, poverty, violence, environmental conditions are other factors that can favor teenage pregnancies. At the same time, the children resulting from such pregnancies are also at risk of living in poverty, growing up without a father figure, failing at school and even accepting sexual initiation prematurely. Therefore, these children are more likely to become teenage parents themselves, due to the lack of authority from their mothers (Reyes et. al. 2022). On the other hand, functional families, harmonious relationships between parents, but also those between parents and children find their effectiveness in preventing unwanted pregnancies in adolescence (Diabelková et. al. 2023).

However, the reasons for pregnancy are more numerous and usually the main one is the lack of a contraceptive method because teenagers are sure that they cannot fail and nothing can happen. There are cases when teenage girls are aware of what they are doing and are sure that they want to get pregnant either to harm the family or out of jealousy to keep a partner close to them (Şerban, 2001: 87).

If a teenage girl becomes pregnant without planning it, there are several solutions that she and her partner can turn to, namely: to ask a doctor's opinion for terminating the pregnancy, something that is not recommended for women, and even less so for young women, because it may have serious consequences in the future; to keep the child and be responsible parents or entrust the child for adoption (Ştefan, 2006: 103). Thus, the immaturity of the mother causes the grandparents and other relatives to get involved in raising the children, these changes in the person of attachment increasing the risk of abuse or neglect of the child. All this is later projected into criminal behavior and school failure of the child(Diabelková et. al. 2023).

At such an age, none of these is an easy decision to make, because the young woman is anyway scared about the unscheduled pregnancy and such a decision implies seriousness, maturity, correctness. Even before having sexual contact and at the moment of learning that she is pregnant, the teenager girl asks herself many questions about what she should do, but which lose their effect when the people around her, especially her family, tell their opinion. The opinion of the parents matters so much that the opinion of the young mother, considered too immature to make decisions, is no longer taken into account. The reality shows, however, that adolescents choose to make their own decisions of a diverse nature, but without open coordination and the confidence to be able to turn to a responsible adult when they need guidance, there is a risk that they will make harmful choices (Ştefan, 2006: 104).

At the same time, a teenage pregnancy affects the mother's educational and employment opportunities, hence the financial difficulties. For teenage girls, early pregnancies can also have social consequences in the form of lower status in the community and in the family, stigmatization, abuse from family members, but also from the partner, and even forced early marriage (Diabelková et. al. 2023).

4. Socio-demographic aspects of fertility and motherhood

As for Romania's situation, according to the data provided by the National Institute of Statistics (INS), in 2021, mothers aged between under 15 and 19 gave birth to approximately 9.1% of the country's live births (http://insse.ro , 2022).

Female fertility was comprised in 2021 between 44.5 live births per 1000 women of childbearing age in Suceava county and 27.5 live births per 1000 women of childbearing age in Caraş-Severin county. Low fertility rates (below 30 live births per 1000 women of childbearing age) were also recorded in Brăila, Gorj, Hunedoara, Neamţ and Vâlcea counties. In rural areas, the fertility rate is higher than in urban areas (38.7 versus 32.0 live births per 1000 women of childbearing age). The birth rate was, in 2021, 8.2 live births per 1,000 inhabitants, higher in rural areas (8.9 live births per 1,000 inhabitants) than in urban areas (7.6 live births per 1,000 inhabitants)). Among the counties with a high birth rate (over 9 live births per 1,000 inhabitants) we may mention Bihor, Bistriţa-Năsăud, Cluj, Iaşi, Ilfov and Sălaj. Low birth rates (below 7 live births per 1000 inhabitants) were also recorded in Brăila, Hunedoara, Mehedinţi, Neamţ, Olt, Teleorman, and Vâlcea counties.

During the last 15 years, there has been a decrease in the percentage of teenage pregnancies registered at the level of several countries, a fact resulting from intervention measures at the level of education, support for young people, contraceptive tools, as well as other strategies. (Hamilton et. al., 2015) This observation constitutes an argument for the deepening of studies on this subject, already located in the center of attention in the specialized literature, considering the progress made.

5. Methodological considerations

Considering the extent of this phenomenon and the implications of a social, economic, physical nature, etc. that teenage mothers and their families have to face in the short and long term, the study proposed brings to attention some clarifications regarding the thinking patterns of teenage girls, related to the risk of pregnancy during adolescence.

The aim of this study was to investigate the degree of information of teenage girls regarding the problems that teenage adolescent mothers may face, aiming to evaluate their knowledge regarding notions of sexual education and contraception. The investigation tool used was the sociological questionnaire, applied by self-administration to a sample of 50 persons, the subjects being girls aged between 14 and 19, high schools students in Reşita Municipality, Caraş-Severin county.

6. Data analysis and interpretation

As regards **the preferred activities**, the respondents cited a proportion of 30% going to school and related activities, 32% prefer going out with friends, 32% opted for "fun", and 6% chose other activities. Adolescence being a period of transit and change, in which young people try to integrate into society and choose their reference figures, the tendency to prefer going out in youth groups and fun activities is predictable.

Adolescents' relationships with their parents are considered to be predominantly healthy and supportive, which reveals the construction of secure attachments. 54% of teenage girls have a very good relationship, 34% have a good relationship with their parents, 11% define the relationship as neither good nor bad, and 1% did not want to answer. Some teenage girls may consider a "very good" relationship to be a permissive one, where the parents give them everything they want, while other teenage girls may consider it a simply normal relationship, where all members live in harmony and understanding.

The question related to the confidence relationship with mothers clearly divided the sample: 40% of the girls always consult their mothers, 33% ask for advice only sometimes, 17% would rather talk to a colleague/friend, and the remaining 10% say they never talk to their

mothers about intimate topics because they feel ashamed. The mother is the main support of a girl, regardless of the situation. The relationship between a mother and her daughter should be sincere, based on trust and safety.

When we attempted to identify the existence of knowledge related to contraception, we found that 47% of teenage girls are well informed, 40% know about it "by hearsay", and 13% know nothing about this subject. Knowing about contraceptive methods "from hearsay" can have various consequences: the teenager girl could take contraceptives at random just because her friends take the type of pills that are not suitable for her, and this could have serious consequences. There are also teenage girls who at this age do not know anything about contraception, perhaps because they have other concerns and are not interested in starting their sexual life yet.

The next question was related to the initiation of sexual life : 30% of the teenage girls stated that they had begun their sexual life, 56% had not begun their sexual life, and 14% did not want to answer clearly.

When asked to name potential dangers that may arise in the context of starting a sexual life in adolescence, 56% answered that one of the dangers would be an unwanted pregnancy, 43% cited sexually transmitted diseases, and 1% considered that a danger would be "tarnishing the reputation" and the fear of abandonment by the partner.

Considering the fact that a considerable percentage of the respondents cited the occurrence of an unwanted pregnancy as a potential danger, we wanted to find out what knowledge they have about pregnancy termination. 49% of the teenage girls answered that abortion has serious consequences, 42% said that abortion is not a good thing, 9% do not know anything about it. Before resorting to this method, the woman must know very well all the aspects related to abortion, because multiple problems and complications can arise that can mark her whole life.

The respondents expressed their opinions regarding girls who get pregnant at a young age , and they are very varied. 21% considered that girls are losing their youth, 21% preferred to show reserve, 18% claimed not to think about the consequences, 13% do not have good opinions about teenage girls becoming mothers in general, 13 % believe that teenage girls should have protected themselves, 9% of the surveyed girls were of the opinion that the lack of information would lead to such an incident, and 5% confessed that they probably do not receive help.

In an attempt to see if teenagers formed their aforementioned opinions based on reality, we asked if they knew any teenage mothers . 77% said "yes", so they know teenage mothers, 20% don't know any teenage mothers, and 3% answered that they don't know.

Finally, we asked the young women to name or describe the main problems they observed teenage mothers face. 29% cited lack of life experience, 19% of young women answered that lack of income is a problem, 17% believe that "everything is difficult for teenage mothers", 16% identified dropping out of school as the most serious consequence, 11 % believe that mothers are helpless, and 8% think about the misunderstandings that will arise in the relationship with the parents.

7. Conclusions

Teenage pregnancy is a phenomenon present in all countries, regardless of the level of development. The incidence of this phenomenon outlines the need to develop strategies for prevention and help, for young mothers and children.

In the context of the quantitative research conducted by self-administering the sociological questionnaire to a group of 50 young girls, students in several high schools in Reşita Municipality, it can be noted that the girls are predominately concerned with activities specific

to their age: curricular activities and time spent with friends, school occupying a place of major importance in their lives, as an educational and socializing environment.

The relationship with the mother, the most important attachment figure for a child, highlights the fact that the possible communication problems between mothers and young girls create a vulnerability context and thus girls do not feel safe to turn to their mothers about matters related to of their privacy, exhhibiting the tendency to get information from other sources about aspects related to contraception and a healthy intimate life. This choice gave in the results the impression that the degree of information on these subjects is relatively low, either by the fact that the young women are completely unaware of the cause, or have vague or erroneous information.

As for the risks generated by the occurrence of a pregnancy at the age of adolescence, there is a fear of the impression generated at the community level, a fact that can be explained considering the psycho-emotional complexity of a teenager's concerns. It is an age when young people form an image of who they are, feel the need to impress through appearance and behavior in order to stand out in the community, and choosing healthy role models is essential to their development. Besides this perspective related rather to perception, the results also highlighted the awareness of the real consequences of those actions, which involve risks associated with material, physical, educational difficulties, etc.

Consequently, the subject covered has a large scope in the field of the literature, and the decreasing trend of this phenomenon, highlighted by current statistics, encourages research, prevention work and the development of relief measures for the factors involved in this context.

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DRUG ADDICTION AND SOCIAL DEVIANCE. STUDY ON TEENAGERS AND STUDENTS IN THE CLUJ COUNTY EDUCATION SYSTEM

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Abstract*: The phenomenon of drug use in contemporary society is one of the biggest and most serious social problems among young people. The onset of drug use among the young population of Cluj is 13 years old, in the case of drug use. Drug use can trigger inappropriate, risky behaviors in young people that include violence, unprotected sex that can lead to sexually transmitted diseases or unwanted pregnancies, or breaking the law, or it can lead to learning difficulties and behavior problems at school. The present work aims to study the possible effects of drug consumption among young people in Cluj County, generating effects of social deviance. This research aims to develop specific benchmarks for users of psychoactive substances in Cluj from the urban and rural environment. To carry out this study, questionnaire-based investigation was used, and the applied research tool was the questionnaire. The main conclusion is the consequences of substance use are serious. The number of accidents in which young people are involved under the influence of drugs is constantly increasing, self-aggressions and other aggressions are more and more frequent.*

Keywords: drug use; social deviances; effects of drug use., teenagers, young people.

1. Introduction

The radical transformations of society throughout its history, the evolution of the means of production and the emergence of new technologies, the creation and continuous development of intercontinental communication route networks, requiring shorter and shorter periods of time to travel distances, determined the expansion of usage of drugs worldwide, and no nation can consider itself protected from the destructive effects of narcotics.

Romania being isolated in time for many years, due to political and economic constraints, remained in its communist area, one of the rare areas on the world map that does not present in its traditional culture of behavior models that might include drug use, economic crisis or wide opening of the state borders that facilitate the transit in continuous growth of people, goods and services. However, after the fall of communism and especially after Romania's entry into the EU and the increase in living standards, this country has become an important potential market for drug dealers and users. In the current situation of year-on-year increase in the number of users and the quantities of confiscated drugs, it tends to turn into a social phenomenon. The actions of specialized governmental and non-governmental organizations must have a prevention component, not just a sanctioning component, as well detailed analysis of the results of cooperation with the institutions and the bodies of the European Union and the United Nations. The preventive component must first of all take into account drug addiction in the case of young people and adolescents, but also especially their predisposition towards social deviance.

2. Theoretical framework and literature review
2.1. Substance dependence among adolescents and young people

The issue of drug addiction is becoming more prevalent in modern society, and its negative effects are felt by both the individual and society as a whole.

Addiction is a condition where a person feels an overwhelming urge to use drugs or engage in a certain behavior, despite the negative consequences. It's a chronic and potentially life-threatening disease that's characterized by a persistent preoccupation with drugs, loss of control, increased tolerance, harmful effects in one or more areas of life, denial, and distorted thinking. Koob and LeMoal defined drug addiction as a chronic relapsing disorder characterized by (a) acompulsion to seek out and take the drug, (b) loss of control in limiting consumption, and (c) emergence of a negative emotional state (eg, dysphoria, anxiety, irritability) when access to the drug is prevent (defined here as dependency) (Koob and LeMoal, 2006). The knowledge of the personality and behaviour of the young drug addicts from a multidisciplinary perspective displays a high interest for theoretical and applicative researches belonging to various scientific and practical fields (Andrioni, Popp, Petrică, 2016).

Substance abuse can quickly lead to addiction in young people, resulting in a loss of autonomy and the ability to express oneself freely. With time, drug use becomes compulsive, and the individual may feel powerless to control their impulses, resulting in significant changes to their personality and behavior.

Addiction is a condition where an individual becomes excessively preoccupied with drug use and feels a compulsive urge to use despite negative consequences. This chronic and progressive disease can significantly impact an individual's physical and mental health, as well as their social and professional life. According to Stroescu's (Stroescu, 1999: 14) framework, addiction is defined by four key features:

- **Psychological addiction** is characterized by an overpowering desire to use a drug in order to relieve psychological discomfort. The pleasurable effects of the drug lead to repeated administration and the strengthening of conditioned behavior, resulting in addiction. The reactivity of the individual also plays a role in intensifying the satisfaction derived from the drug. Psychological addiction is a common element in all cases of addiction, but each drug has its own unique characteristics;
- **Tolerance** is a phenomenon characterized by a decrease in the effectiveness of a drug upon repeated use, requiring an increase in dosage to achieve the desired effect. This can lead to a vicious cycle of drug use and tolerance, where the individual becomes increasingly dependent on higher doses of the drug to achieve the same effect;
- **Physical dependence** is a condition where the body has adapted to the drug's presence and requires it to function normally. The discontinuation of the drug leads to the onset of withdrawal symptoms that vary depending on the substance. The severity of withdrawal symptoms can range from mild to severe, and in some cases, life-threatening;
- Long-term use of addictive substances at high doses can lead to **phytotoxicity**, which is characterized by behavioral disturbances, including psychotic symptoms.

2.2. Drugs and the social consequences of drug use: deviance and stigma

One of the central themes of sociology is the concept of deviant behavior. According to Emile Durkheim, deviance is a natural occurrence in all societies. Durkheim examines this phenomenon in terms of its origins and consequences, as there is no authority that can compel members of society to conform entirely to its norms and values. Thus, deviance is an inherent aspect of society, since complete adherence to its norms is unattainable.

Anthony Giddens, a prominent sociologist, defined deviance as *"the failure to conform to the norms of a social group or society, which are accepted by a significant number of people"* (Giddens, 2001: 189). In other words, deviance is the violation of social norms that are

considered legitimate and accepted by the majority of people in a particular community or society (Vlăsceanu, 1998: 165-166).

According to the Romanian Dictionary a "drug" is a "medicinal or toxic substance that is used to treat medical conditions or diseases." While the dictionary definition of "drug" refers to substances used in pharmaceutical preparations, in common language it can refer to a wider range of substances, including natural, synthetic, or semisynthetic substances used for recreational purposes or to self-medicate, which can result in addiction and other negative outcomes.

2.3. The impact of drug consumption on social deviance and the forms of social deviance

The issue of drug consumption has been an ongoing challenge for humanity, and its negative repercussions have led to the global cooperation to combat and diminish its prevalence. The problem continues to worsen, reaching alarming levels, with drug addiction transcending age, social class, and occupation.

Legal drugs refer to substances that are allowed by law, and their use and distribution are regulated by the state. This category includes alcohol, tobacco, caffeine, and some prescription drugs. While legal, these substances can still be harmful to the body and lead to self-destruction. However, their consumption is permissible as long as it is in compliance with the laws and regulations of the country.

Drug consumption has a significant impact on social deviance. It is a problem that affects individuals, families, communities, and society as a whole. One of the most significant consequences of drug consumption is the emergence of deviant behavior, which is non-conformity to a given set of norms, which are accepted by a significant number of people within a community or society. Drug consumption can lead to behavioral disorders, sometimes with a psychotic aspect, which can appear in the case of long-term use of high doses of addictive substances. These behavioral disorders can lead to criminal behavior, such as theft, drug trafficking, and violent behavior, which are considered deviant behaviors in society. Drug consumption also has a significant impact on the health of individuals. Long-term drug use can lead to physical dependence, tolerance, and phytotoxicity. Physical dependence is the need to continue using the drug to avoid the disorders that occur when the administration is interrupted.

Tolerance is the progressive reduction of the effect upon repeated administration, respectively the need to increase the dose to obtain the expected effect. Phychotoxicity is manifested by behavioral disorders, sometimes with a psychotic aspect, which appears in the case of long-term use of high doses of addictive substances. Drug consumption also has a significant economic impact. The costs of drug consumption include the costs of healthcare, law enforcement, and lost productivity. Healthcare costs include the costs of treating drug-related illnesses and injuries. Law enforcement costs include the costs of enforcing drug laws, such as the costs of investigating and prosecuting drug-related crimes. Lost productivity costs include the costs of absenteeism, reduced productivity and reduced work quality. Drug consumption also has a significant social impact. Based on the analysis of the Andrioni and Popp research results, drug consumption can have long-term impact, even in relatively short-term drug consumption (Andrioni, Popp, 2018: 10). The use of drugs can lead to the breakdown of families, the loss of social ties, and the disintegration of communities. Drug use can also lead to a decline in social values, such as honesty, integrity, and respect for others. The use of drugs can also lead to social inequality, as drug users are often stigmatized and excluded from mainstream society.

It is important to understand the forms of social deviance. An example of categorization in the field of deviant behavior is presented by M. Cusson (1997: 439), who proposes a taxonomy (in Boudon, 1997) divided into seven categories:

1. Violent behavior and criminal activity such as murder, theft, and juvenile delinquency;
2. Suicide;
3. Substance abuse with its psycho-social implications;
4. Deviant sexual behavior including prostitution, homosexuality, lesbianism, and pornography;
5. Religious deviance that leads to fanatical attitudes in certain religious sects, heresies, and witchcraft;
6. Mental illnesses have also been analyzed from the perspective of deviating from social norms;
7. Physical disabilities.

2.4. Types of deviant behavior determined by drug use

In the following, some aspects related to types of deviant behavior determined by drug use:

- Social isolation. Many drug users become isolated from their families, friends, and communities. They may spend long periods of time alone, neglecting personal hygiene, nutrition, and other basic needs. This isolation can exacerbate their drug use and lead to a downward spiral in their lives.
- Health problems. Drug use can lead to a range of health issues, including organ damage, infections, and mental health issues such as depression and anxiety. These concerns not only affect the individual but can also have a significant impact on their family, friends, and society as a whole.
- Disruptive behaviors. The use of drugs can lead to disruptive behaviors that negatively impact personal relationships, school or work performance, and social interactions. This can result in isolation and feelings of loneliness, which further exacerbate drug use. Financially problematic behaviors.
- Financial problems. Drug use can lead to financial difficulties, such as job loss, bankruptcy, and debt. Users may prioritize buying drugs over paying bills and meeting other financial obligations.
- Medical complications. Drug use can lead to a range of medical complications, including heart issues, respiratory issues, and infectious diseases. Injecting drugs can also lead to the spread of diseases such as HIV and hepatitis C.
- Risky behaviors. Drug use can lead to engaging in risky behaviors such as unprotected sex, sharing needles, and driving under the influence. These behaviors can have serious consequences for the user and those around them.
- Emotional instability. Drug use can lead to extreme mood swings, making the person feel euphoric one moment and depressed or anxious the next. This can lead to difficulty in forming and maintaining relationships, as well as other negative impacts on social behavior.
- Criminal activity. In addition to the potential for violence and aggression, drug use can also lead to involvement in criminal activity such as drug trafficking or distribution. This can have severe legal consequences and further perpetuate deviant behavior.
- Physical deterioration. Prolonged drug use can result in severe physical deterioration, such as malnutrition, respiratory problems, and other health issues. This can lead to a cycle of further drug use and self-destructive behavior.
- Impulsive behavior. Drugs can reduce inhibitions and increase impulsivity, leading individuals to engage in risky behaviors such as driving under the influence, and making impulsive purchases or financial decisions.

One of the most serious implications of behavioral disorders is theft, which is often rooted in feelings of frustration and anxiety. Studies in the field of psychology have shown that

many juvenile delinquents engage in theft as a means of coping with these emotions. When committed by gangs, theft can take on even more severe and terrifying forms, particularly among young people.

Robbery is a severe form of deviant behavior that involves the use of violence or the threat of violence to obtain money or goods. When committed by a gang, it highlights the disharmonious personality characteristics and intensifies the tragic nature of the situation.

Deviant sexual behaviors can arise during sexual maturation and can take on aberrant forms due to harmful influences, aggression, or opposition. Rape is one such deviant behavior that can have serious consequences.

Suicidal behavior can have contagious functions, especially in certain areas or during specific periods. While suicide attempts are more common than actual suicides, both are serious issues that require attention and support.

The phenomenon of suicide contagion varies across different periods and locations, with suicide attempts generally being more common than completed suicides. Another concerning trend is the use of drugs among teenagers, who may be drawn to the thrill of breaking rules and engaging in risky behavior such as smoking, drinking, and experimenting with illegal substances like marijuana and heroin. While adults may use legal substances like alcohol and tobacco to varying degrees, teenagers may consume alcohol in large amounts in order to boost their confidence, elevate their mood, or feel more social.

Heresy, when viewed through a historical lens, can be seen as a form of social and political dissent, challenging established authority and advocating for alternative ways of living and believing. However, in modern times, religious deviations can take on more extreme and harmful forms, such as terrorism or cult behavior.

Cultural beliefs and values are often passed down from generation to generation and deeply ingrained in individuals from a young age. This can lead to a narrow-minded perspective and resistance to alternative viewpoints.

Drug consumption has a significant impact on social deviance. It leads to the emergence of deviant behavior, has a significant impact on the health and economic well-being of individuals and society, and has a significant social impact. To address this problem, it is essential to develop comprehensive strategies that address the root causes of drug consumption, including poverty, social inequality, and lack of access to education and healthcare. These strategies should also focus on providing effective drug treatment and prevention programs, as well as developing more effective drug policies that balance the needs of individuals and society.

2.5. The effects of drug use that can lead to deviance in adolescents and young people.

From the perspective of the effects, it has on the central nervous system, we can distinguish between the following types of drugs:
- *Psycholeptic substances:* causing euphoric symptomes, sedatives, which induce euphoria and inner calm
- *Psychoanaleptic substances*: stimulants, which cause an excitation of brain activity
- *Psychodysleptic substances*: which produce hallucinations.

Because of drug use, there have been a lot of car accidents lately. Teenagers get behind the wheel after consuming drugs, which reduces their ability to distinguish in traffic. It seems that a drug use for a young person leads to a decrease in inhibitions, and teenagers seem to feel more mature, when in fact, the effect obtained is the opposite.

There is also the risk of transmission of sexual diseases, because in the state of unconsciousness some forget to use condoms or other forms of protection and do not think

about the fact that they could get HIV-AIDS, herpes, chlamydia or unwanted pregnancies can occur.

Young people are not aware of the fact that the drug called cocaine causes addiction, being very dangerous. Thus, cardiac arrhythmia, myocardial infarction, pseudoepileptic seizures or cerebral vascular accidents can occur. Among the most common drugs used by adolescents are extasy, gamma hydroxybutyrate. Toxic substances are distributed especially in night clubs, but a very dangerous aspect is that they have started appearing in schools. The use of extasy can cause sleep disorders, severe anxiety, liver damage or temporary memory loss. The danger is all the greater as in some cases the drugs are taken in combination with alcohol can generated: car accidents – drug use is one of the main causes of car accidents involving teenagers and young people; violence and delinquency – teenagers who use drugs are prone to acts of violence;risky sexual behaviors – the risk for unwanted pregnancies, infection with sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS is very high; emotional costs – drug use lowers self-esteem, increases the risk of depression and aggression, creates problems with friends, school or parents; suicide - in many cases drug use leads to suicide.

3. Research methodology
The present article has two major components:
a) The theoretical part and the review of specialized literature - it aims to comprehensively explain the concepts of social deviance, drug use and user profile aspects. Last but not least, the effects of drug use in the case of teenagers and young people will be presented.
b) The practical, applied part, the one in which the studied concepts are operationalized – it aims to apply a questionnaire among young people from universities in Cluj County, as well as teenagers from high schools in the same county.
The objectives of the practical part are:

b1) General objectives
Objective no. 1: Studying the relationship between the presence of drug use among urban and rural youth and their deviant predispositions
Objective no. 2: Studying the existing relationship between the presence of alcohol consumption among urban and rural youth and the presence of deviant behaviors

b2) Specific objectives
Objective no. 1: Highlighting the differences between drug users from the urban environment and those from the rural environment
Objective no. 2: Revealing the differences that appear in terms of the presence of deviant behavior in consumers from urban and rural environments
b3) In order to achieve the above-mentioned objectives, the following working **hypotheses** were advanced:
The first hypothesis: There are differences between urban and rural drug users and their deviant predispositions.
The second hypothesis: There are differences between urban and rural consumers and the presence of deviant behaviors.
b4) The investigated population. This paper aims to highlight the differences between young drug users in urban and rural areas and non-consumers in the motivational structure of the person. For this, 120 subjects aged 15 to 19 years, female and male, were tested from January to March 2023. They are part of high schools in urban and rural areas, but also from their first academic year in Cluj-Napoca. In order to assess their environment, they were divided into two groups based on not their school affiliation, but on their home of residence.

b5) Method. To carry out this study, questionnaire-based investigation were used, and the applied research tool was: questionnaire.

4. Drug addiction and social deviance – The results of the study on teenagers and students in the Cluj-Napoca education system

After applying the questionnaire to assess the size of health risk behaviors in high school and university students, they were divided into two batches according to drug use: an "experimental" one (that includes a variety of subjects, from subjects who responded to having taken at least one dose of the drug in the past 30 days or subjects who declared they only tried once) and one "in control" (subjects who responded that they did not ever used or tried drugs).

The very interesting fact is that subjects *were equally distributed* in the two batches in terms of their consumption (60 of 120), and almost the same in terms of their environment (of which 34 from urban and 26 from rural areas). Thus 50% of the today teenagers have at least once tried drugs.

Figure 1. Drug consumption based on companionship – Rural Area
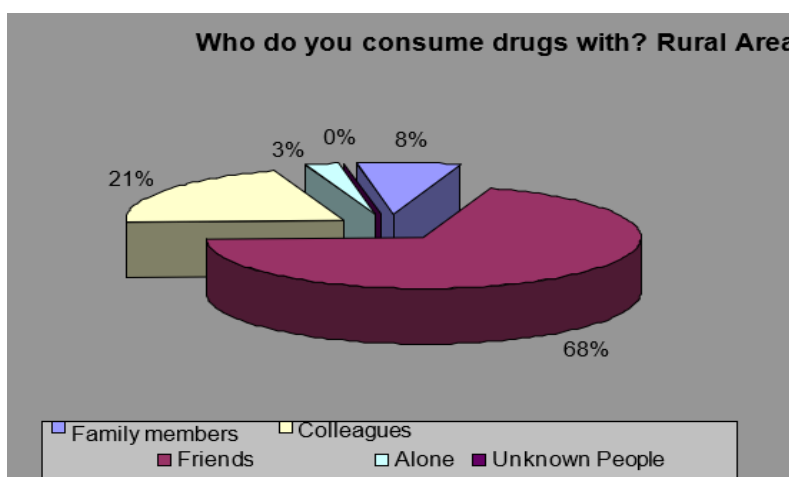
In this research, it was assumed that the psychological variables measured with the investigative tool used, will record significant differences between the two batches. However, all research is carried out under certain conditions, in a certain context. It must be admitted that, in one way or another, unexpected elements may occur in the conduct of the phenomenon under investigation, determined by the composition of the group, by the presentation of information and instructions by the examiner to different groups of subjects and by the context of the examination.

First hypothesis: There are differences between urban and rural drug users. Consumers in urban areas have many more favorable factors than those in rural areas, so the percentage of the two categories differs.

Figure 2. Drug consumption based on companionship – Urban Area

Who do you consume drugs with?

Urban Area

6% 4% 15%

25%

50%

Family members   Colleagues
Friends   Alone   Unknown People
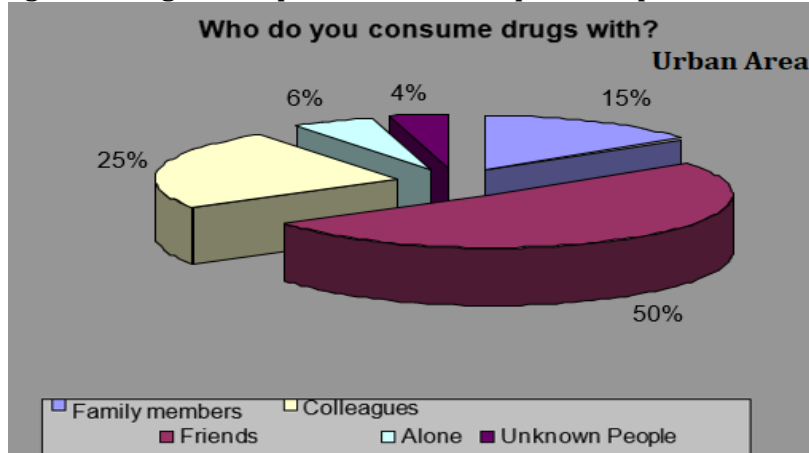
We observe that in rural areas drugs are used in a high percentage with friends, while in urban areas, a favorable factor for drug use is the school / university environment.

Figure 3. Starting age for consumers – Urban Area

At what age did you first tried consuming drugs?

Urban Area

15- 16 years
100%

17 - 19 years
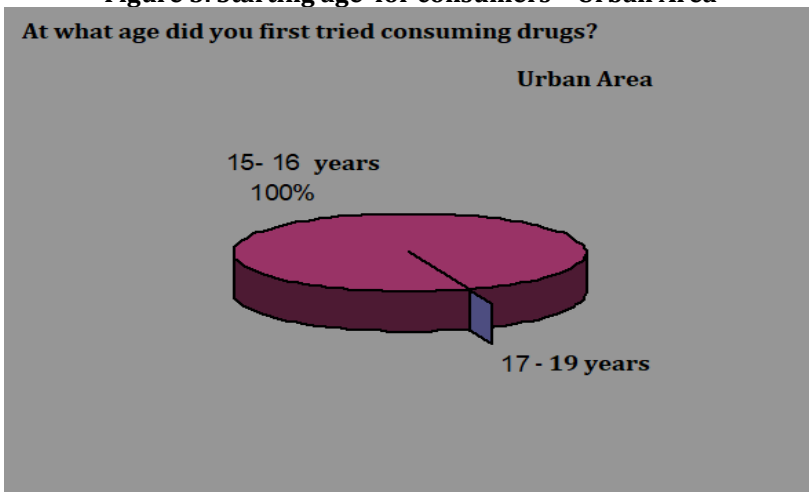
All of the 34 consumers from the urban area of Cluj-Napoca have started using drugs, or tried drugs at a very young age, between 15-16.

Figure 4. Starting age for consumers – Rural Area

At what age did you firs tried consuming drugs?

Rural Area

15-16 years
23%

73% 17-19 years
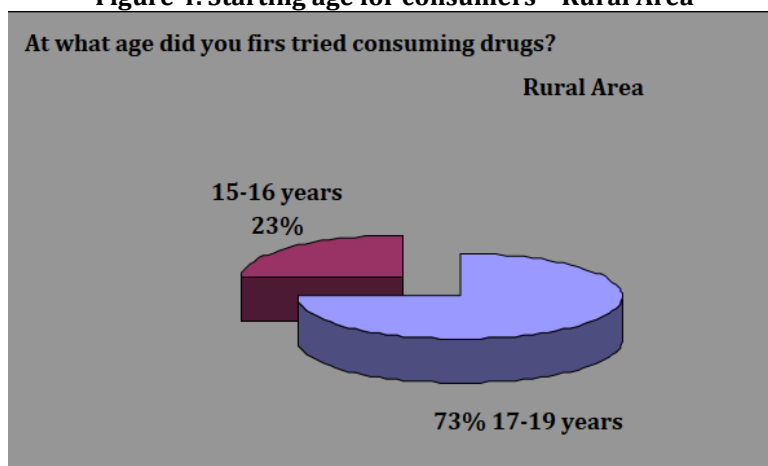
From the 26 consumers from the rural area of Cluj County, only 6 of them started using/ tried drugs in their first 2 years of high school. Most of the other 20 remaining, first consumed drugs at the age of 19, in their first academic year (16 out of 20).

Thus, the academic environment in Cluj-Napoca offers temptations many students who came from rural areas might not handle properly.

Second hypothesis: There are differences between urban and rural consumers and the presence of deviant behaviors.

Figure 5. Deviant behavior in Rural Areas as a consequence of drug use
Deviant behavior in Rural Areas

■ deviant behavior   ■ normal behavior

32%

68%
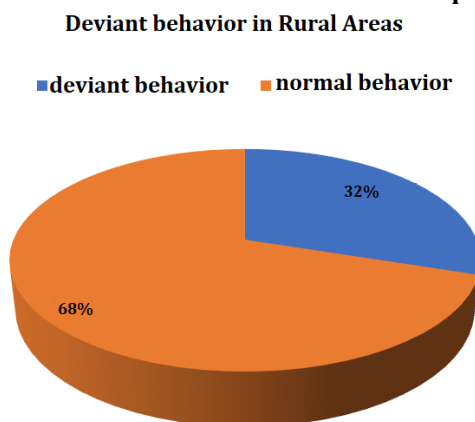
In rural areas, 9 subjects out of 26 have reported that they have had some sort of deviant behavior as a consequence of drug use.

In rural areas, considering that both favorable factors are reduced and situations of manifestation and development of deviant behaviors, their percentage is about 32%, while much bigger in the urban areas.

Figure no. 6. Deviant behavior in Urban Areas as a consequence of drug use

90

Deviant behavior in Urban Areas

■ **deviant behavior**　■ **normal behavior**
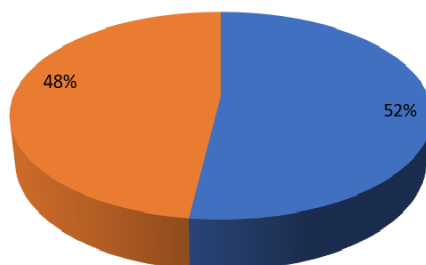
It can be seen that in the case of urban consumers, they have a high percentage of deviant behaviors, a percentage that is significantly superior to rural consumers. This difference is supported by the high number and diversity of schools, universities and leisure opportunities.

5. Conclusions

From what has been stated so far, an important conclusion emerges: young people turn to alcohol consumption out of the desire to assert their independence, to be part of a group. In adolescence, when the young person moves away from the family, the group of friends and its values become milestones in the formation of his personality. If the members of the group use drugs, the young man will do it too, because he will continue to remain among similar people. The schools will offer the opportunity to enrich his knowledge about the ways of communication and relating to others. Out of the desire to demonstrate that he is important, the teenager will resort to risky behaviors, including the consumption of substances. (Dixit, 2023, p.2). The diversity of the economic, educational, and family factors as well as the pressure of the entourage exert their influence on the behaviour of the minors and can determine their predisposition to drug use (Andrioni, Popp, Petrică, 2016,p.22).

The consequences of consumption behavior should also be analyzed: aggression in all its forms: from verbal to beatings, to suicides and homicides.

The first hypothesis (there are differences between urban and rural drug users) is supported by the higher percentage of urban drug users, both regarding the age at which drug use begins and the people with whom they use.

The second hypothesis (There are differences between urban and rural consumers and the presence of deviant behaviors) was strengthened by the presence of deviant behaviors as a result of addictive consumption among young people, behaviors which are also in a much higher percentage among those from the urban environment than rural.

The consequences of substance use are serious, sometimes even fatal. The number of accidents in which young people are involved under the influence of drugs is constantly increasing, self-aggressions and other aggressions are more and more frequent.

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THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER IN PREVENTING CRISIS SITUATIONS IN PRE-UNIVERSITY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract: *The article presents the counseling principles in crisis situations, with emphasis on how pre-university education institutions can prevent and intervene when such situations occur. Researchers such as: Hillman (2002), Dupper (2003), Lines (2006), Openshaw (2008), Sandoval (2013), emphasize the fact that that students may also be affected by anxiety, depression, neuroses, suicide or self-injury -suicidal. In our country, there has been an increase in the number of juvenile mothers, cases of emotional and sexual abuse, rape, ill-treatment, consumption of alcohol and psychoactive substances among minors, addictions to digital games, even gambling, alcohol and other psychoactive substances, addiction to certain foods harmful to health, anorexia nervosa or bulimia nervosa. Victims of bullying can develop low self-esteem, depression and suicide attempts. For some students, it is necessary to work on the management of anger, aggression and acts of violence. All the previously mentioned situations, as well as any others, can be perceived by the students as extremely stressful and difficult to manage. They require the intervention of specialists at school: psychologists, school counselors, priests, specialists in pediatric psychiatry (if the situation requires) and school safety officers. The activity of the multidisciplinary team, made up of the aforementioned specialists, is certainly coordinated by the case manager, the school social worker, who becomes responsible for the speed and efficiency of the intervention, for each case separately.*

Keywords: School Social Worker, crisis, prevention, suicide, intervention.

1. Introduction

The mass media reports that there are many parents who seek counseling because their children have become neurotic. Online courses have a major effect on the psyche of students, there is a risk of emotional disorders that can occur after they are overexposed to the screen, isolation, repressed emotions and not discussing with parents or friends, so teenagers feel lonely, sad or angry. Alcohol consumption can be a factor triggering hostility. Aggressivity can be defined as verbal or physical behaviour that is characterized by the intention to harm someone. Castro-Blanco (apud Holdevici, 2011) states that between the ages of six and ten, children spend most of their time at school, therefore most of the crises they go through are found at school by teachers and by school counselors.

2. Ways to prevent crisis situations at school, with the school social worker as a prevention agent

A reaction to crisis situations at school (Mennuti, Christner, Freeman, 2016) should seek for universal prevention, for all students, early intervention for those at risk for maladaptive reactions, as well as intensive intervention for beneficiaries who show clear symptoms of emotional and behavioral disorders.

Primary prevention programs in schools usually aim at preventing the occurrence of learning or behavioral disorders, such as running away from school, dropping out, the consumption of psychoactive substances, juvenile-adolescent pregnancy, etc. School Social Assistance focuses on the resilience, on the emotional and physical health of students, parents and school staff.

Resilience is represented by the ability of beneficiaries to develop themselves, despite risk factors or the prolonged exposure to stressful situations. Among the protection factors that contribute to resilience, we find: constructive relationships with children of the same age and the presence of loving adults in children's lives. Crisis intervention services are based on activities designed to meet the needs of all students (for example: to discuss the traumatic event in class, to provide them with the opportunity to express themselves emotionally and to activate positive coping strategies). The purpose is to restore the sense of security, and then to resume teaching activities according to the timetable as soon as possible after the crisis situation has occurred. The natural reaction is that students no longer require further services from professionals in the mental health field.

Secondary prevention aims at an early intervention in which, when the crisis response plan is developed, it is important to identify students at risk, in order to implement additional support measures. Pre-existing vulnerability to stress and difficult life situations are risk factors.

Intensive third prevention refers to students with psychological symptoms and requires most of the resources targeting the mental health of the students at school. Third prevention refers to a limited number of students, namely those who have significant emotional and behavioral issues.

The social prevention (Cusson, 2006) has the goal of placing the child in a situation where he/she can acquire the ability to be sociable, conceived as the ability to live in the society. *The prevention by development* intervenes early in order to promote the normal development of students and to discourage any possible temptation to wrong acts

The crisis (Larousse, 2006: 288) represents "a violent rupture of the evolutionary process whose direction is suddenly masked, modified or reversed", and it marks a deep discontinuity. The term also includes the impressions experienced by the person who fails to overcome a conflict, and it represents the acute aspect of ambivalence. The adolescent crisis represents "a typical example of the double meaning, objective and subjective". Some theorists appreciate the crisis as a normal process of development. No matter how "abrupt" a crisis seems, there are successive phases in its overcoming:

　　1. The installation phase, which is marked by a destabilizing anxiety;
　　2. The "maximum" phase, also called acme, in which "the global disorder" is present;
　　3. The liquidation phase, in which the gradual "resolution" of bipolarity is revealed.
A "normal" crisis has "a joint date for all" the individuals of a society. The persistence of ambivalent or regressive conducts constitutes the sign of a disorder, but the opposite situation, the absence of crisis in a given period, can have repercussions that are difficult to overcome.

Ewing (apud Holdevici, 2011a) considers that intervention in a crisis situation is represented by any informed and planned approach, which aims at applying techniques meant to help a person who is in such a stressful and difficult situation, hard to manage. According to the author, the intervention in a crisis situation can be considered a short-term psychotherapy. Caplan (apud Holdevici, 2011b) elaborated the theory of psychological crises, which reveals the fact that human beings continuously face situations that threaten their balance and normal lives, which are usually short-term threats, but they can be managed through problem-solving skills. When faced with the stressor, the person is generally in a tension state that is of reduced intensity, because after previous experiences he/she is confident that he/she can cope well with the situation.

We speak of a crisis when the stress and threat are so great that they cannot be managed by the usual *problem-solving methods*. The crisis refers to the emotional reactions of the person and not to the threatening situation, whereas the way in which the person perceives the crisis situation depends on factors of a psychological and conjunctural nature such as: the

loss or change of the job, the loss of a close relationship, the transition to a new existence stage, such as adolescence.

The precipitating factor of the crisis is presented by the lack of balance between the perceived difficulty, the significance of the threatening situation and the resources available to manage it. The counseling offered by the school social assistants is predominantly psycho-social and differs, according to the time of the request. Thus, we refer to:

1. Counseling in crisis situations, such as counseling children and families in cases such as: the risk of dropping out of school, the consumption of psychoactive substances, suicidal thoughts or ideas, self-injury, refusal to commit suicide, suicide attempts, pregnancy in juvenile mothers, juvenile parenthood, cases of rape, sexual aggression, conflicts in the family, disasters such as floods and earthquakes, the stress of moving out to another house/town, or the divorce of the parents, cases of illness, mourning, bullying, ill-treatment, disability, incarceration; and at the international level, the specialized literature specifies a high vulnerability of the beneficiaries from LGBTQI category;

2. Pre-crisis counseling is offered in case of low school performance, prior to school dropout; this type of counseling could have a preventive character and it is characterized by providing support to students in risk situations and their families, aiming at the school integration of the children;

3. Post-crisis counseling is represented by the counseling that is offered after the resumption of the educational process and that aims at the re-adaptation and the integration of children into school life (for example, the post-crisis counseling for people who followed a rehabilitation treatment, in which it is important to prevent the fall) (Dumitraşcu, 2011).

3. Types of reactions to the psychological crisis situation

There are several *types of reactions to the psychological crisis situation*, such as: suicide, depression, anxiety disorders, mania and aggression. We will detail them in the following pages, one by one.

Suicide (Blumenthal, apud Holdevici, 2011) is the third cause of mortality among 15-year-olds and the fourth among the younger pupils. Substance abuse and violent behaviour are well-founded reasons why students are taken to psychiatric and psychotherapy medical practices. Psychological crises in children and adolescents can be generated by the exposure to violence scenes, which can subsequently generate anti-social behaviors. Problems such as poor school results or behaviour disorders can be based on certain undiagnosed psycho-pathological disorders. The cognitive-behavioral approach has very good results in working with this category of beneficiaries.

The suicide of a student is a traumatic experience for colleagues, relatives, the teaching and auxiliary staff of the school. The role of the School Social Worker is to support the children and adults who stay alive, to deal with the situation, *to prevent the contagion of the suicidal* phenomenon, by avoiding the valorization of the lost person or the suicidal act. Suicide attempts among students are not very frequent, but are suicidal thoughts and ideas are more frequent (Shaffer & all, apud Holdevici, 2011b). During the work with this category of beneficiaries, the technique of direct questions is the most indicated; among the risk factors are other suicide attempts in the past, as well as the presence of relatives or friends who had such attempts.

As for the risk of suicide, the School Social Assistant must have a direct intervention, aiming to calm the student, to notify the adults who are at home and to contact an emergency service specialized in pediatric psychiatry. Ivanof & Riedel (apud Krogsrud, Miley, O'Melia, DuBois, 2006) show that suicide is the main cause of death among people between the ages of 15 and 20. Proctor & Groze (apud Krogsrud, Miley, O'Melia, DuBois, 2006) conducted studies which showed that there is a two to three and a half greater chance of attempting suicide in the

case of LGBTQI youth (data belonging to the US Department of Health and Social Services), a fact generated by the reaction of the society to this category of social assistance beneficiaries.

The School Social Worker must know how to respond effectively to suicide threats, and the first step is to recognize the signs. Sometimes suicidal beneficiaries send direct messages, other times their messages are subtle and require more attention to be found.

Suicide messages (Krogsrud, Miley, O'Melia, DuBois, 2006) can be of 4 types:

1. A direct verbal message:

Example: "I will shoot myself if you leave me alone";

2. An indirect verbal message:

Example: "A life without love is a life without meaning";

3. Direct behavioral message which can be shown by storing medicines, in the case of a person suffering from a chronic disease or serious disability.

4. Indirect behavioral message that can be noted by the sale of the beloved objects, insomnia, the loss of appetite.

Also, previous events such as a series of attempts, or even an attempt of a close person, can signal an increased suicide risk. The suicidal tendencies of the preadolescents may be related to community violence (for example, neighbourhood violence), past abuse, the presence of aggressive thoughts against others or oneself, parental ambivalence and family issues, the lack of social support, as well as the psychological and/or sexual abuse in the past.

Indicators of the presence of suicidal thoughts can also be represented by sudden changes in appetite and sleep-related habits, personal care, the increased consumption of alcohol or drugs, agitation or tardiness, school failure, behaviours that involve risk-taking. Also, concerns about ideas related to death are noted.

The School Social Worker must know the fact that a sudden change in the mood of a depressed person can actually reflect the firmness of the decisions to end one's own life. Also, in the assessment of the suicide risk, a distinction must be made between the facts and the opinions of the beneficiary, having in view that the people who often talk about suicide could go all the way, and, after an unsuccessful attempt, they can try again. The professional who intervenes must talk directly with beneficiaries about the suicide prevention, since direct discussions do not rush to suicidal behaviour, but on the contrary, they can prevent it.

It is a myth that people who attempt suicide either come from wealthy families or have family members who have made this choice. Any person, regardless of their socio-economic status, if "caught in a network of circumstances" could be defeated by suicidal thoughts.

In the intervention itself (Krogsrud, Miley, O'Melia, DuBois, 2006, p. 244), when a client is considering suicide, social workers can ask direct questions, such as:

1. "Are you are thinking of harming yourself? "

2. "Are you telling me you're thinking about killing yourself?"

3. "I heard you mention the possibility of killing yourself. Are you really thinking of that?"

4. "I have noticed some changes in the way you behave, as if you let everything go. What are you trying to do?"

By asking direct questions, the beneficiary in a suicidal risk situation is offered the possibility to discuss their thoughts openly, during which the seriousness of the beneficiary's threats is evaluated, and the most important factor is the existence of a plan. Important elements of the evaluation are related to the method (Is it a relatively slow method?), to the means (Does the person have the necessary means at their disposal, by which to bring their plan to the end?) and to the plan (Is there a specific plan?). If there is a detailed, specific plan, and the chosen methods are at hand and with them, the suicide risk is an increased one. The social worker will immediately involve the support systems, will ask family members and friends to accompany the beneficiary permanently, until the self-destructive thoughts have

disappeared. Practically, the beneficiary is "under surveillance", not left alone, with their own feelings of despair and suicidal thoughts.

The incidence of depression is high among adolescents with suicide attempts, although a small percentage suffer from depression during the attempt. The predictors for the possibility of depressive episodes are cognitive variables such as: self-appraisals with negative content, pessimism and the lack of strategies to adapt to the demands of life. In the prevention and treatment of depressive disorders in adolescents, it is efficient to use techniques specific to the cognitive-behavioral therapy.

Suicide (Blumenthal, apud Holdevici, 2011) is the third cause of mortality among 15-year-olds and the fourth among the younger pupils. The substance abuse and the violent behaviour are the reasons why students are taken to psychiatric and psychotherapy medical practices. Psychological crises in children and adolescents can be generated by the exposure to violent scenes, which can subsequently generate anti-social behaviours. Issues such as poor school results or behaviour disorders can be based on certain undiagnosed psycho-pathological disorders. The cognitive-behavioral approach has very good results in working with this category of beneficiaries, whereas the crisis intervention within pre-university education institutions can have the following stages, principles and therapeutic model:

I. The intervention stages in crisis situations (Cadden & Wolberg, apus Holdevici 2011a) are:

1. Centering (focusing) on the problem;
2. Evaluation;
3. The contract;
4. The actual intervention;
5. Ending the counselling process;
6. Final evaluation.

II. Ewing (1990) outlines the principles of the crisis intervention:

1. The crisis intervention is short-lived and needs to be applied quickly;
2. The crisis intervention targets not only the beneficiary, but also the family and its social support networks;
3. Crisis counselling addresses "a variety of human problems", not just one type of crisis;
4. Crisis counseling focuses on the current issues, especially those that lead the beneficiary to request specialized support, with an emphasis on the factor that triggered the crisis;
5. Working with the beneficiary in a crisis situation is aimed at solving the problematic situation and developing new adaptive coping mechanisms;
6. Counselling in crisis is based on the reality;
7. Counselling in crisis is characterized by the fact that the specialist (the psychological therapist or the social worker) undertakes an active role;
8. Counselling in crisis can prepare the beneficiary for further interventions.

III. The cognitive-behavioral therapeutic model (Mennuti, Christner, Freeman, 2016) as the foundation of short-term intervention in crisis situations, presents the following steps:

1. Establishing the therapeutic relationship;
2. Assessing the physical danger or risk of injury the students are in;
3. Evaluation and mobilization of personal strengths and resources found at the cognitive-behavioral level;
4. Designing a positive action plan;
5. Consolidation of personal commitment to the plan for the development of adaptive (coping) strategies;
6. Evaluation of plan effectiveness.

Students, children and adolescents suffering from conduct disorders show a deficit in problem-solving skills, which triggers aggressive behaviors in physical and verbal terms. Hostility and anger trigger aggressive behaviors. Crisis intervention must target the immediate risk of an aggressive action. Similarly to suicidal risk, direct interviewing about aggressive thoughts or intentions is still the best strategy.

4. Conclusions

The activity of the school social worker is relevant in prevention. Cristina Neamțu justifies the fact that "in all the civilized societies, *the school is a child protection institution"* (Neamțu, C. 2011: 1024), and that the objectives of the social assistance service in the school are: "to prepare the social history and/or the development of students, to carry out *counselling activities, individually or in groups,* with students and their parents, to support the school adjustment of students with issues, both at school and at home or in the community, and to identify school and/or community resources, necessary to achieve the objectives of school education" (Neamțu C. 2003: 836). In social assistance, counselling is "a method of psychosocial intervention *in order to induce change in a client's attitude and situation* (Neamțu, G., 2016: 238). The cognitive-behavioral approach is distinguished by techniques in which the school social worker identifies problematic behaviours, their background, which are based on wrong beliefs, and later, in collaboration with the student, his/her parents and friends, and with the teaching staff, ends up by reducing them, by adapted behaviours, the problems the student faces. "A behavioural counsellor can have multiple roles, depending on the theoretical orientation and the goals of the client. While the client learns, forgets or learns again specific behavioral ways, the counsellor acts as a consultant, a professor, an advisor, a support person, a facilitator" (Gîrleanu, D.T., 2002: 52).

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MOTIVATION AND BENEFITS OF EMPLOYEES AT THE WORKPLACE. MINI SOCIAL-COMMUNITY RESEARCH

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Abstract: *The following article addresses the issue of employee motivation in Romanian organizations, offering, based on the theoretical support of motivational theories, the results of a mini-research with a socio-community value (a sociological survey based on an online questionnaire applied to some employees in the fields of education, transport, IT&C, public administration). The sociological survey tracked the perception of employees in the surveyed fields regarding the benefits offered at work by the employer. Based on the answers, conclusions could be drawn regarding the main solution for motivating employees, represented by salary, but there are non-financial methods that contribute to motivating employees.*

Keywords: human resources; motivation; benefits; non-financial methods; salary

1. The Perception of Employee Motivation in Organization Management

From the point of view of the management of modern organizations, the human resource is regarded as one of the "essential investments, the human resource becoming a strategic resource for an economic agent", (Postolachi, 2015: 60-66). It is much more difficult and complex to manage than financial, informational, technical, etc. resources. It is essential and unique in the process of growth and development of an organization due to its potential and ability to know and overcome its own limits.

In this direction, motivation is treated as an important aspect within the article, an aspect related to the will of the human being to act in a certain way, it represents, in fact, "the intrinsic state of the employee, orienting and directing his behaviour by satisfying certain needs", (Gheorghiţa, Levinţa-Perciun and Shundi, 2012: 45).

The motivation of the human factor for work represents an essential concept in human resources management, it consists in influencing the staff through certain factors, determining positive or negative actions in the fulfilment of work responsibilities.

To motivate the human resource in work means to reward, in monetary or non-monetary form, its contribution to the company's prosperity, such as effort, initiative and success.

In such cases, the main motivational factor provides differentiation in rewarding the human resource. Differentiation through financial rewards according to qualification, effectiveness and success is the most effective way to motivate the human resource. When in a company, the distribution of income is equal, the demotivating effect is born.

Therefore, the success or failure of the organization depends on how its employees act. To avoid failure, the manager must motivate his employees, involve them in the actions carried out, stimulate their creativity, capitalize on their skills and competences, know and satisfy their needs. In this way the manager will make them work well and use all their physical and intellectual resources.

Motivation leads to results and performance, this being a basic component of management, a topic often analysed and with various approaches in specialized works.

In the Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language, (1998: 571), motivation is defined as "the totality of reasons or motives (conscious or not) that cause someone to perform a certain action or to aim for certain goals". Thus, we understand that motivation is an accumulation of internal and external forces that generate and coordinate behaviours to achieve certain goals. Since these are achieved, they lead to the satisfaction of some needs.

It can be seen that, nowadays, within every organization, human resources management has gained particular importance, because it includes all managerial decisions and practices that directly influence the behaviour and quality of employees' work.

At the same time, the management of human resources consists of a complex set of activities related to the efficient use of the human capital in the organization, in order to achieve the objectives targeted by the organization. At the same time, it considers ensuring all the conditions necessary to satisfy the needs of employees, motivating them to be loyal to the organization in which they work.

In other words, human resources management aims at a strategic design related to the attraction, training, development, management, use and motivation of human resources, which can ensure success in achieving the proposed goals.

In the management plan, the main influences are observed in the design of the employee motivation system, the type of management used, respectively a management of individuals or one of groups, the organizational climate.

Being a complex process, the approach to employee motivation must be carried out differently, depending on each individual, their potential, needs and interests, their behaviour and ambitions, their readiness to assume new tasks and responsibilities.

The concept of motivation refers to the desire and willingness of the employee to get involved in the achievement of the organization's objectives, simultaneously with the satisfaction of their needs. This approach considers three important coordinates: the needs of the employee, the effort made by said employee and the objectives of the organization. Specialists "have not reached a consensus regarding creativity and its problematic, but it has become a targeted theme of management research", (Demyen and Ciurea, 2016: 906).

Motivating factors refer to the elements that cause a person to carry out various actions or adopt certain attitudes and behaviours. Motivation is the support of engaging the person in the race to achieve a result, having the satisfaction of achieving it.

Motivational factors are considered "tangible (motivating and competitive salary, financial rewards, bonuses, prizes, other material and financial benefits); intangibles (influence on decision-making, career development, job security, performance recognition and appreciation, advancements, involvement in new projects, telework)", Sodex (2019).

A good manager senses, in time, the important needs of employees and knows how to act, so as to motivate them accordingly. In this approach, one must consider the following premises:

• the structure of employees' needs depends on the individual particularities of development and the general standard of living;

• the formation of complex motivational models is achieved through the interaction between needs and motivations;

• good experiences within the organization generate new employee motivations;

• the individual may have diverse needs, in different contexts: the same organization, different groups or organizations;

• every need generates motivation, the employee acts until that need is satisfied;

• employees can respond differently to managerial strategies, depending on the motivating factors and personal qualities.

Motivation is a complex issue, being "difficult to accurately assess the trigger because each employee's needs are different in terms of nature, structure and length", (Demyen and Lala-Popa, 2013: 233).

The content of motivation has the following motivational structures (Radu, 2009: 18-20):

• "needs/necessities - motivational structures of the personality, which do not always trigger action and which can be: primary (innate) needs, which ensure physical integrity and secondary needs (formed throughout life), which ensure the psychological and social integrity of the individual;

• the reasons – ensure the triggering of appropriate behaviours to satisfy some needs, which support and guide the action;

• interests - more complex than needs and reasons, consisting of selective orientations, established and relatively active towards certain fields of activity;

• convictions – ideas of value in the personality structure, strongly experienced on an affective level, which drive the individual to action;

• the ideals and conception of the world, based on own experiences and those of peers, influenced by culture and education".

According to the generating element, the forms of motivation are:

• positive motivation and negative motivation – the first consist of praise, encouragement, with beneficial effects on activities or interpersonal relationships, and the other uses threat, blame or punishment, associated with abstinence, avoidance, refusal;

• intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation - depending on the source that produces it, the first being linked to the needs of the individual and in solidarity with the work process, the other being imposed/suggested by another person, manifests itself through negative or positive emotional experiences (rejection, aversion due to demotion, dismissal, etc. or satisfaction due to promotion, acquiring a higher salary, etc.

• cognitive motivation and affective motivation - related to some immediate needs of the individual, the first acting from within cognitive processes and stimulating intellectual activity, and the other being determined by the individual's need to feel good next to and together with others.

The roles and effects of motivation can be synthesised as it follows:

• the managerial role consists in establishing the content and efficiency of the training function which has a decisive role in the realization of the other managerial functions, the quality of decisions, the operationalization of the strategies used and their effects, the information system and communication having a particular influence on the motivation of employees;

• the organizational role refers to the impact of motivation on the organization's functionality and performance;

• the individual role consists in motivating the organization to satisfy the needs of each employee;

• the economic role refers to the fact that employee motivation leads to economic results and performance;

• the social role means the effect of the previously presented social roles, of the social climate, of the social relations in the organization and not only that.

2. Basic theories in regard to employee motivation

There are a large number of theories related to the field of motivation, trying to classify them according to different criteria. Among the specialists who developed original theories related to motivation, we list: F. W. Taylor (scientific management), Elton Mayo (theory of human relations), H. A. Murray (instrumentalist theories), A. H. Maslow (theory of the hierarchy of needs), B.F. Skinner (operant conditioning theory), Frederick Herzberg (bifactor theory),

Clayton Alderfer (Existence–Relationship–Development theory), V. H. Vroom (expectancy theory), J. S. Adams (equity theory), etc. The criterion classifications were considered subjective and, in this case, a chronological analysis of them was considered much more objective, since all the authors explained what motivates employees, avoiding saying why it occurs and how it can be preserved in time the motivation.

From the chronological point of view of motivational theories, we talk about "classic (traditional) theories and contemporary (modern) theories", (Radu, 2009: 29).

Out of the classic theories of motivation we can list:

• The classical (scientific) management theory of F. W. Taylor (1911) demonstrated that the payment that employees receive is the motivating factor for them.

• The theory of Hawthorne studies, developed by Elton Mayo as a result of experiments at a factory (1927-1932), which concluded that group membership, as well as its specific status, for employees is more important than financial incentives or conditions very good work offered.

• Theory X and Theory Y elaborated by Douglas McGregor (1960), the first linking motivational factors with concern for personal security, and the other employee motivation with self-actualization.

• The theory of the hierarchy of needs developed by Abraham Maslow (1954) according to which man constantly tries to satisfy his various needs, based on a certain hierarchy of their importance, currently known as the pyramid of needs: physiological needs (food, water, shelter, clothing, rest, etc.); safety needs (personal physical and emotional security: secure job, health insurance, insurance of a pension and safe working conditions); social needs (group membership, social and family relationships); esteem needs (respect and social recognition); self-realization needs (utilizing one's own potential).

• The theory of the two factors (bifactorial) was defined by Frederick Herzberg (1966), showing that employees are influenced by: extrinsic factors (dissatisfaction or hygiene) and intrinsic factors (satisfaction);

• The Existence - Relationship - Development (ERD) theory was designed by Clayton Alderfer, starting from Maslow's classification of needs and highlighting three categories of individual needs that must be gradually satisfied: existence (E), relationship (R), and of development (D).

Modern theories of motivation are the following:

• Equity theory belongs to J.S. Adam (1964) where motivation is seen as the result of a process in which a person compares himself with others, based on the effect-effort ratio, abandoning the simple stringing of motivational factors.

• The theory of expectation (hope), developed by Victor Vroom (1964), without explicitly specifying the generating factors, shows that motivation is an extensive process in which each individual studies the chances of obtaining some results and to what extent they are attractive to him.

• The theory of reinforcement or consolidation, developed by B. F. Skinner (1953), which, beyond the review of motivating factors, shows that it is a complex process that takes into account different situations, requiring different solutions.

These motivational theories suggest that performance is the result of the following sets of factors:

• the knowledge, skills and capabilities of the individual, combined in such a way as to lead to the desired results;

• the attitudes, motives, needs and expectations that each individual appeals to when he chooses a certain behaviour.

Most organizations "try to build an intelligent framework and a motivating and intense quality system from which to develop their goals and strategies", (Bretcu and Demyen, 2018: 402).

Consequently, motivation springs from acting on these sets of factors. The organization must help individuals to continuously enrich their knowledge and capabilities, and leaders must be able to motivate them, meet the needs of the employees in the organization in order to obtain the desired behaviour from them.

3. The methodology of empirical research on the perception of employees' motivation and benefits at work

Starting from theoretical elements related to employee motivation, with the help of the methodological approach carried out, we offer an overall perspective on the perception that employees in Romania have in regard to the benefits received at the workplace, emphasizing the importance of motivating the human resource, revealing the reality on the ground of work and indicating elements proposed by employees that contribute to their motivation.

For a good development of the methodological approach, it is important to address, in support of the empirical research, two thematic research questions:

1. Are Romanian employers involved in the employee motivation process?
2. Are the benefits offered by the employer sufficient for the employee?

The research questions are focused on outlining a reality that can show us the effectiveness of human resource motivation strategies within Romanian organizations and how they are perceived by employees.

The methodological approach with the help of which we will find answers to the research questions addressed, aims to validate (or not) the following hypothesis: The perception of employees in Romania regarding the benefits offered by the employer is positive.

3.1. Research Design

The methodological approach is based on quantitative research. The use of the sociological survey based on the questionnaire will help us to provide data, in a quantitative manner, about the perception of employees in Romania regarding the benefits offered at the workplace by the employer.

Sociological survey based on online questionnaire was used because in this way more data could be obtained about the researched topic, the data obtained was collected more quickly due to the ease of spreading and interpreting the questionnaire. We also took into account the fact that, through self-administration, subjects can express themselves better when answering the questions raised.

On the subject of sample used to conduct the sociological survey, it was a random one of convenience. The questionnaire includes 21 items and was applied online on the Facebook platform, in groups with different topics, as well as among contacts, on the WhatsApp platform. Although the target group is not well defined, the intention of the questionnaire was to collect information from people with different degrees of professionalization and education, as well as different ages. The purpose of the sociological survey was communicated to each participant before completing the online questionnaire. Also, the participants were informed that the answers will be anonymous.

The total sample that participated in the questionnaire consisted of 55 subjects.

They were distributed socio-demographically as it follows: women – 61.8%, men – 32.7%, and 5.5% preferred not to declare.

Additionally, regarding the socio-demographic distribution, we observe a dominance among the age of the respondents: 45.5% of them are between 46 and 55 years old. Another relevant index is the fact that 18.2% of the subjects are between 26 and 35 years old, and 14.5% are under 25 years old.

The result of this item in the questionnaire is important and emphasizes the work experience of the subjects which, correlated and viewed holistically with the other questions in

the questionnaire, will provide us with information both about how the employer motivates its human resources, but also about the expectations that employees have from the employer.

More than 90% of the subjects of the sociological survey work for an employer whose residence is in the urban environment.

The employer's sector of activity represents another important aspect, and this is because it provides us with information about the main fields in which the employees work. We observe how most subjects work in key areas for society. 23.6% of them work in the field of education and to an equal extent, a similar percentage works in the field of transport, another fundamental field of the 21st century society. A field that experienced rapid development and became a pillar of the labour field is IT&C, with 9.1% of respondents working in this sector. A small part of them, but relevant for research, work in fields such as pharmaceuticals, public administration.

It is important to understand to what extent the subjects of the sociological survey are satisfied with the benefits at the workplace, if they knew at the time of employment the benefits offered by the employer and which are the benefits to which the respondents attach high importance.

We thus find that 54.5% of the subjects are satisfied to a moderate extent with the benefits granted at the workplace, while 27.3% to a great extent, and only two of them are not satisfied at all. At the same time, 7.3% are very satisfied with the benefits provided by the employer, and 7.3% to a small extent. The answers to this question, related to the level of satisfaction regarding the benefits granted at the workplace, indicate that there is a consistency, a moderate way in which the benefits granted by employers in Romania satisfy the employees.

Among the benefits granted by employers in Romania, we mention meal vouchers, amounts for telecommuting, gifts in money or in kind offered on special occasions such as public holidays or anniversaries, transportation to and from the workplace. We even find benefits such as medical service subscriptions, gym memberships, fruit giveaways and even financial advice. The latter benefits are implemented later than the other benefits that fall under a traditionalist note and are known by employees to a greater extent.

To a large extent and to a very large extent, employees in Romania give importance to meal vouchers, gifts in money or in kind offered on holidays or anniversaries and transportation to and from the workplace. Equally important for employees is the subscription for medical services. They give little or no importance to the fruit bar and the amounts offered for telecommuting, as well as other types of memberships such as the gym membership.

Regarding the work system implemented by the employers, in a majority proportion, the employees work from the office, only 12.7% of them being offered by the employer a telework system. We understand in this way why the importance given to this benefit is low or non-existent. Around 22.5% of the employees work in a mixed system.

In this regard, 67.3% of the subjects feel motivated at work by their bosses, while 32.7% do not. The results of these two questions give us an insight into the involvement of the employer not only in terms of the comfort of the human resource, but also of his involvement in the good progress of his company.

We graphically reproduce the results for questions 2 and 3 of the questionnaire: At the time of employment, were you informed about all the benefits offered by the employer? (Graph on the left) and Do you feel that you are motivated at work by your bosses? (Graphic on the right):

Figure 1: Informing and motivation of employees
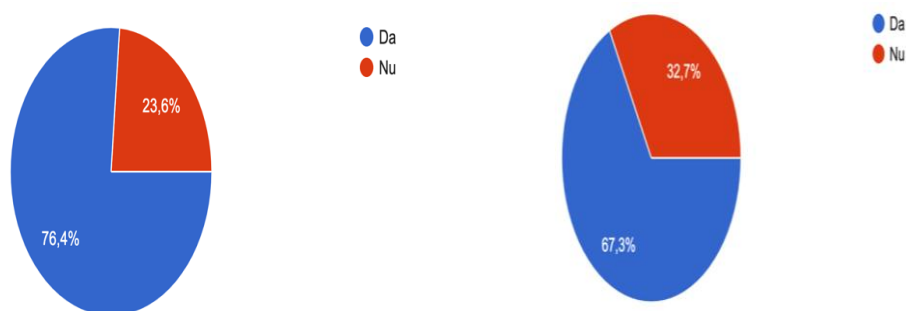
Figure 2: Attention provided by the employer to aspects regarding the employee
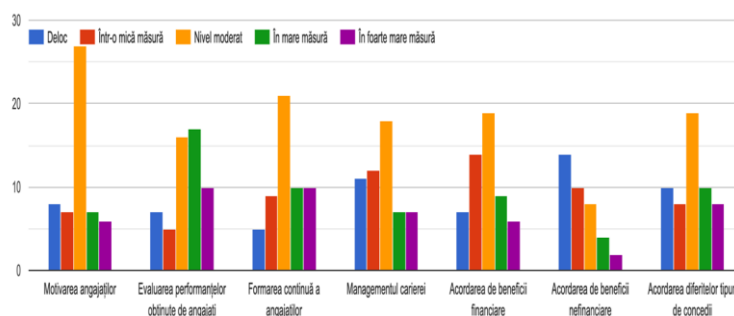
In order to perform well, it is necessary to give the employee what motivates him. In the lines above, we noticed that the employer pays attention to financial benefits more than non-financial benefits (which are translated into appreciation, relaxing work environment, inspiration, recognition, etc.). Correlating the answer to the question whose graph is presented in figure 3.2. with the answers to the question *What would motivate you to perform better?* we understand that the reality of the employer is not the same as that of the employee.

The question *What would motivate you to perform better?* is open-ended, and in a summary way, the majority of the subjects' answers refer to recognition of merits, relaxing work environment, constructive feedback, patience from a boss whom they wish to be, in fact, a leader.

Therefore, while there is an increased interest in financial benefits from employees, it is equally important for them to be offered non-financial benefits in the form of rewards. This way of rewarding has an effect on the employee's well-being and will motivate him.

4. Conclusions

The theoretical approach showed us that an important component of employee motivation represents the benefits that employees have at work. Although the main motivation solution is the salary, there are non-financial methods that contribute to the motivation of employees and which, as we have seen in the answers to the questions in the questionnaire, are,

if not more important, equally important for the employee (meal vouchers, gifts in money or in kind offered on holidays or anniversaries, transport to and from the workplace, subscription for medical services). With the help of these rewarding methods, the employee feels appreciated and thus his intrinsic motivation increases, identifying himself and wanting to contribute to the success of the organization he works for.

Therefore, the answer to this question is positive. Employers in Romania are involved in the process of motivating employees. Both in the motivation process and in the evaluation process, employers make an effort to drive the organization towards performance.

The second research question addressed is whether the *benefits offered by the employer are sufficient for the employee*. Between the employee and the employer, it is imperative that there be a balance and constancy.

Therefore, the answer to the second research question is negative. The results collected with the help of the questionnaire showed us that employers in Romania use financial methods to motivate employees, while employees need more than a good salary. Rewarding performance through specific events, promotions, awarding diplomas of excellence, symbolic gifts, awards, interim in key positions are rather appreciated by employees, and they must have a repetitive character.

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UNDERSTANDIG THE LINKS BETWEEN DRUG USE AND CRIMINALITY

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Abstract: *Psychotropic substances are regulated by international conventions and the national laws of states worldwide. Drugs are prohibited primarily throughout these regulations. However, narcotics' use also contributes to other forms of crime in addition to the fact that they are unlawful to possess in the first place: drug trafficking, the establishment of organized criminal networks for this purpose, drug-related crimes against individuals, crimes against property, and crimes against public road traffic safety. Since the middle of the 1960s, American sociologists and criminologists have been examining the issue of drug-related criminality. The study of the criminality brought on by drug use has garnered interest over time in other societies as well, and many specialists worldwide keep investigating the dynamics of this occurrence even today. This concern is also present at the level of national and international public authorities, whose statistics and publications, which are periodically released, provide an overview of the phenomenon. The goals of the current study are to provide a better understanding of the connection between drug use and crime and to provide a comprehensive picture of drug-related offenses worldwide, in Europe and in the last ten years in Romania, using both qualitative and quantitative methods: study of specialized literature, comparison of research findings, and methodical assessment of available statistics. The results of the study highlight that drug-related crimes are a worldwide problem. In Romania, although certain fluctuations in the trends were noted in the last ten years, this issue is still present in our country. Also, it was noted that some statistics comply with explanatory models used by theoreticians.*

Keywords: narcotics; criminality; illicit drugs; prison; new psychoactive substances

1. Short historical facts

Drug use has been part of human history since ancient times, and the narcotics we know today as illicit were originally legal and socially accepted. As specified by Antoine and Maurie Porot (1996/1999, pp. 70–140), the euphoric effects of cannabis resin were known by priests in India, who used it in religious processions. After being kept secret for a long time, it also spread to the profane world, first in India, then in the Near East (Egypt, Persia, Asia Minor). Most likely, with the Arab invasions, it was also introduced to North Africa, thereupon becoming known in Spain, and America was the last conquest of cannabis resin. There are records from the 1850s of Peruvians chewing coca leaves to increase their resistance to fatigue, hunger, and thirst. By the 1860s, the active alkaloid, cocaine, had been extracted. Sigmund Freud personally tried it in 1884 but stopped using it when he noticed its dangerous effects. In World War II, amphetamines were used by campaign armies to combat fatigue. At the same time, certain women used them irresponsibly to lose weight, as amphetamines suppressed the feeling of hunger. It should be noted that amphetamines were also prescribed to treat some forms of hyperactivity in children.

When we consider the use of opium, opiates, coca, and cocaine in the nineteenth century in America, we are looking at an era of wide availability and unrestricted advertising of these substances (Musto, 1991: 42). As history shows us, all the narcotics that we know today as illegal enjoyed, in the first phase, not only acceptance by society but also a lot of popularity, being consumed without any type of restriction. When time showed the harmful effects of these substances, they came under the law as we know it today.

Before the events of 1989, drug consumption in Romania represented an exceptional aspect, and in the few cases identified, the users were citizens of another nationality. Among other factors that led to the increase in national drug use were the tolerant laws regarding drug use in certain Western European states. Consumption was introduced to Romania by foreign citizens, who attracted Romanian citizens to this behavior. Also, Romanian citizens who initially became drug users abroad and remained with this behavior contributed substantially to the expansion of the phenomenon of narcotic use after their return to their home country (Andreescu, Iliescu, and Enuță, 2019: 73).

2. Theoretical framework
2.1 Conceptual clarifications on drugs

The French psychiatrists, Antoine and Maurie Porot (1996/1999, p. 14), well known in the medical world for their contributions in the field of drug addiction, define drug as "a natural or synthetic substance capable of leading to an addiction".

Drug addiction (or dependence) is defined by the Canadian physician specialized in drug addiction research, Harold Kalant (2001, pp. 21-27), as drug usage that a person could not consciously stop, and losing control over drinking is regarded as a crucial component of substance dependence. The focus is on how much the drug use controls the person's life, as evidenced by things like a persistent obsession with obtaining and using the substance and an unwillingness to stop using it even when its negative effects make it absolutely necessary. Drug addiction is of two kinds: psychological and physical, both referring to the imperative need to continue drug consumption, in order to obtain a state of well-being or to avoid a state of ill-health (Abraham, Cicu, Podaru, et al., 157: 2005).

Psychological dependence is characterized by beliefs: a person believes that he needs the respective substance to cope with problems. Physical dependence. on the other hand, is defined by the concrete physical changes associated with drug consumption, which may result in withdrawal symptoms and tolerance (Blume, 2005/2011: 45)

Drugs can be classified in several ways: according to their physical structure (liquid, solid, gaseous), according to their chemical structure (natural, semi-synthetic, synthetic), according to their legal status (legal or illegal) and according to their effects on the central nervous system. From the point of view of the effects that drugs have on the body, the last classification is the most revealing.

As structured by professor Howard Abadinsky (2011, pp. 7-12), according to their main effects on the central nervous system, drugs can be divided into three categories, as follows:

a) *Depressants*

Depressants can reduce pain by depressing the central nervous system. Alcohol is the legal substance in this category that is used the most often. The opiate derivative, heroin is the illegal substance most frequently used. Additional depressants include morphine, codeine, methadone, OxyContin, barbiturates and tranquilizers, all of which have some sort of medicinal utility. These substances can produce physical and psychological dependence, along with a craving and withdrawal.

b) *Stimulants*

By activating the brain functions, stimulants boost mood and foster emotions of wellbeing. The most commonly used substances in this category are coffee and nicotine, which are legal. Cocaine and amphetamines are considered prohibited stimulants.

c) *Disruptors of the central nervous system: hallucinogens, "club drugs," marijuana/cannabis*

Perceptual functions are altered by hallucinogens. The term "hallucinogen" has more connotations than terms like "psychoactive" or "psychedelic". The two chemically generated hallucinogens that are most frequently used are LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide) and PCP (phencyclidine). Moreover, there are organic hallucinogens like mescaline, which is derived from the peyote plant.

Club drugs, including MDMA, also known as ecstasy, are psychoactive chemicals connected to dance parties or raves.

Cannabis, which is widely smoked as marijuana, exhibits some of the characteristics of depressants, hallucinogens and even stimulants. Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the psychoactive component of it, is only used legally to treat glaucoma and lessen some of the negative effects of cancer chemotherapy.

In addition to traditional drugs, a new category of drugs has appeared in recent world history: the new psychoactive substances. The term "new psychoactive substances" is a general one, as it refers to substances that imitate the effects of classic illicit drugs but are not controlled by drug legislation. The main categories of new psychoactive substances are: synthetic cannabinoids, synthetic cathinones, ketamine, phenethylamines, piperazines, herbal substances: Khat, Kratom, Salvia and others: phencyclidine, tryptamines, etc. (Smith, Sutcliffe and Banks, 2015: 4932).

The use of new psychoactive substances appeared in Romania in 2008, experiencing an accelerated growth in recent years, but also with decreases and returns generated by the implementation of legislative measures. The new psychoactive substances are known as "ethnobotanicals" or "legal drugs". In addition to the health problems, it can cause loss of appetite, weight loss, personality disorders, physical exhaustion, etc., after a period of time, and depending on the frequency of consumption and the routes of administration, these substances can cause the user's death (Botescu, 2011: 10-12).

Starting with 2011, Law no. 194 of November 7, 2011 regarding the combating of operations with products likely to have psychoactive effects, other than those provided by the normative acts, entered into force. Therefore, dealing with these substances has become illegal in Romania since then.

2.2. Conceptual clarifications on criminality

Deviance represents everything that contradicts the public image of "normal". Therefore, no deviant behavior can be defined, except through the cultural norms of a certain society (Rădulescu, 2004: 83-84). The Romanian sociologist Dumitru Batâr (2014, p. 69) draws attention to the fact that deviance cannot be confused or identified with nonconformism, because deviance refers to a system of norms, values and traditions that belong to the entire society.

According to Talcott Parsons (*apud* Rădulescu, 2004: 83), deviance represents a failure of social solidarity, which disrupts the relationships between the social roles that unite individuals. The people in question consciously break the social rules, by their refusal to act according to the indications provided by the normative cultural model of the social group to which they belong. Deviance is, therefore, a refusal of conformity and a protest against the demands of order in the system of which the individual is a part.

The American sociologists Marshall B. Clinard and Robert F. Meier (2011, p. 112) highlight that deviant behavior also includes criminal behavior. A violation of the law, which is a specific form of norm, constitutes a crime. In reality, there are two ways to look at a crime: as a breach of the criminal law or as a violation of any law that results in state punishment. Sociologists define a crime as any action that is thought to have negatively impacted society and is punishable by the government, regardless of the severity of the punishment. On the other hand, Romanian criminologist Tudor Amza (2002, p. 32) considers that "criminality is

constituted of all crimes that occur in a certain period of time and in a well-determined place". Criminologists often group it into three main categories: street crime (property, conventional or street crimes), white-collar crime and juvenile crime (Clinard and Meier, 2011: 112).

3. Correlations between drug use and criminality

In Romania, the very possession and purchase of drugs for own consumption constitutes a crime, which can result in a prison sentence, according to article 4 of Law 143/2000 on the prevention and combating of drug trafficking and illicit consumption.

The problem of drugs goes far beyond committing the crime of possession of drugs for own consumption. Compulsive drug use is a disease, not a crime, which will eventually lead to serious medical problems and most of the time, poor chances of recovery. In the social area, drug use leads to problems that are very difficult to manage, starting with school dropout, family violence, deviant behavior, and going as far as committing crimes in order to support an addiction. Working with people who are in recuperative treatment after drug addiction, has shown that behind every case of addiction there is a history that could justify the person's refuge in the world of drugs.

The drug problem is still complicated by the great diversity of substances, their effects on the central nervous system and the body, and the types of addictions that develop. There is also a strong connection between drugs and criminality, a problem infinitely more complex than the stereotype of an addicted user who commits heinous acts under the influence of drugs or in order to get money to support an addiction.

Ruth Goatly (2002, p. 392) believes that there are three ways in which drug use is related to criminality: as part of the crime (e.g.: possession of illicit drugs for personal use), as a means of facilitating the production of crimes as a result of drug use (by reducing inhibitions), or as a result of the consumption of illicit substances (to obtain drugs directly or to obtain the money necessary to procure drugs).

The results of a study carried out in the mid-1970s in U.S.A. illustrates the strong connection between heroin use and crime. Out of a total of 4,069 male opiate addicts in Baltimore, a probability-based sample of 243 addicts was selected. A detailed examination of the sample's criminal history throughout an 11-year risk period, during which they were "on the street," was conducted through interviews. These 243 heroin addicts were determined to have committed more than 473,000 offenses. The average addict committed more than 178 crimes annually and nearly 2,000 crimes in his lifetime, as determined by crime-days. Like with other criminal communities, stealing was the most common crime done by these addicts, but they were also involved in drug sales, robberies, forgeries, pimping, assaults, and murder. The authors of the study estimated that the 450,000 heroin addicts in the US commit more than 50,000,000 crimes annually and more than 819,000,000 crimes over the course of their lifetimes (Ball, Rosen, Flueck, *et al.,* 1982: 225).

The nature of the drug-criminality relationship, however, is not clear. Is the addict usually an adolescent who did not commit a crime before he/she became addicted and who was later forced to commit crimes to obtain money to support the drug addiction? In other words, does drug abuse lead to crime? These questions can go on and many aspects are still unanswered. But on one point several researchers agree: regardless of the temporal or causal sequence of drug abuse and crime, the frequency and severity of crime increases with the user's dependence. Drug abuse cannot "produce" criminal behavior, but it can increase it (Adler, Mueller and Laufer, 1995: 320-325).

Three explanatory models are used by White and Gorman (2000, p. 170) to explain the connection between drugs and crime:

a) substance use causes crime;
b) crime causes substance use;

c) the association can be attributed to a number of common factors or is merely coincidental.

In relation to the first explanatory model (substance use causes crime), according to certain research, drug use, particularly the use of heroin, contributes to crime. Certain crimes, like drug theft or shoplifting or burglary that results in money used right away to buy drugs, appear to have a direct connection to drug usage. A substantial body of research, primarily from the USA, supports this claim (Measham and South, 2012: 706-707).

The second exploratory model (crime causes substance use) has evidence from studies supporting the opposing proposition of the first model. According to certain research, those who use heroin or other dangerous drugs were likely already engaged in criminal or delinquent behavior before they started using them. According to the British sociologists Fiona Measham and Nigel South (2012, p. 706), this side makes the following claims: (a) participation in deviant/criminal-oriented subcultures or groups would be likely to expose someone to the availability of drugs distributed within that culture; (b) they'd live an unconventional lifestyle that would make it relatively easy for them to engage in drug use; and (c) they'd make money from illegal activity.

The third explanatory model used by White and Gorman is a more extended one, that allows for various interpretations. According to this model, drug use and criminal activity are not directly correlated, and the relationship between drug use and criminality is influenced by factors such as a weak social support system, academic challenges, or exposure to dysfunctional groups. Studies have shown that involvement in acquisitive crime, which primarily involves minor shoplifting, tends to occur before the initial use of heroin and crack cocaine, but involvement in more serious crimes, such as street crime, may tend to happen after regular use has been established (Allen, 2005: 356). On the other hand, the American experts David Nurco, John Ball, John Shaffer and Thomas Hanlon (1985, p. 101) highlight that drug use and crime are causally linked, with crime rising during active dependency and falling during non-dependence. This is well supported by the research. Self-reports released information that permitted reliable estimations of criminal activity and the classification of various addict subgroups. Although drug users as a group commit a lot of crime, this does not make them a homogeneous class in terms of criminal activity.

American criminologists Richard Dembo, Linda Williams, Werner Wothke and James Schmeidler (1994, pp. 1435-1436) also studied this issue and compared the association between drug use and criminality when examining adolescent offenders. They came to the conclusion that a number of factors, including familial drug and alcohol use, emotional issues, and prior juvenile arrests, all contributed to persistent drug use and delinquent behavior.

Romanian sociologists were also concerned about the study of drug and crime connection. In a study carried out in 2013 on the situation of adolescents in Romania, coordinated by the Romanian sociologist Abraham Dorel, it was highlighted the increase of criminal behavior among investigated adolescent drug users, in order to obtain income to procure doses of new psychoactive substances, given that the effects of these substances are shorter compared to other types of drugs and users have to take them more frequently, resulting in more daily doses (Abraham, Abraham, Dalu, *et al.,* 2013: 40).

In another research carried out in 2018, a number of 17 individuals who committed property crimes (aged between 26 and 30 at the time of the interview) and were sentenced to non-custodial sentences were interview. Of these, 9 adopted new illegal behaviors during the probation period, for which the application of custodial penalties was ordered and 8 successfully completed the probation period. All 17 participants indicated that at least at some point in their lives they had consumed alcohol or drugs in excess, and 6 of these individuals admitted to having experienced drug addiction in the past. However, what emerges from the analysis of the life stories of the interviewed persons is that the involvement in illegal acts was not governed by the need to maintain the consumption or addiction to substances. The

addiction was installed later, mainly because of the disposal of money and due to the influence of the peer group. In other words, the individuals had already started their criminal careers before the abuse of alcohol or psychoactive substances was manifested. On the other hand, four of the participants in the interviews showed that due to the daily use of drugs, which involved the disposal of quite large sums of money, in certain periods of their lives they dealt with substance trafficking, their interest being to ensure their own consumption (Gheorghe, 2018: 165-178).

4.   Statistical analysis of crimes related to drug use

The research method used in this study is the analysis of statistical data available wordwide, in Europe and in Romania. Sociology can make use of statistics to organize, serialize, systematize, concentrate, or correlate empirical data. Although data analysis does not replace theoretical analysis, it does provide a foundation for systematizing the meanings that are inherent in social data. Without eradicating qualitative analysis or data interpretation, statistics assisted in establishing the so-called quantitative statistics (Vlăsceanu, 1998: 94). To capture the quantitative characteristics of the facts and processes under study, sociological knowledge requires a statistical approach (Otovescu, 2009: 133).

4.1. Global and European overview

Worldwide, according to The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2022, p.15), in 2019, 5.6% of the general global population (aged 15-64) used at least once an illicit drug.

The Penal Reform International (2022, pp. 6-11) estimates that the global prison population consists in aprox. 11 milion individuals., of which 2.2 milion convicted for drug related crimes, representing 19,1 % of the global prison population.

Figure 1. Number of worldwide individuals in prison

Source: Penal Reform International, 2022

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2020, p. 56) provides an overview of the number of worldwide individuals that are in conflict with the criminal law for drug regime crimes (both drug trafficking and drug posesion for personal use). Given that 61% of the 3.1 million individuals worldwide are detained for drug possession for personal use, it is clear from the amount of convictions that only 22% of those who commit this type offence receive prison sentences, with the remaining 72% being found guilty for drug trafficking.

Figure 2. Worldwide individuals in the criminal justice system for drug-related offences (estimated number)
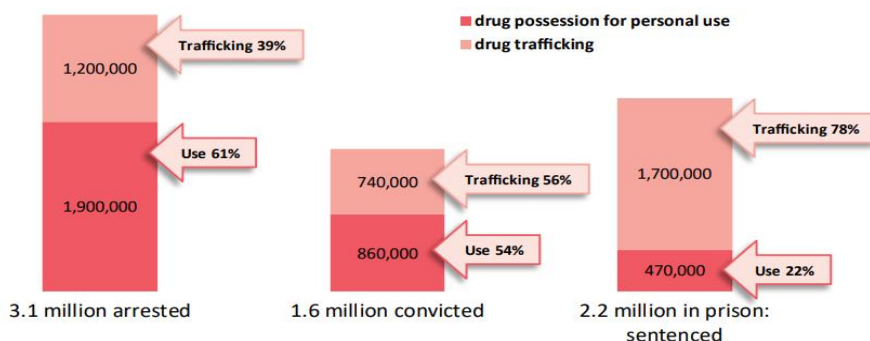
Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2020: 56

At the European level, in the latest report of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (2022, p.8), it is estimated that in 2020, 29% of the general European population (aged between 15 and 64 years) used at least once in their lifetime an illicit drug, this percentage corresponding to a number of approx. 83.4 million adults.

According to Aebi and Tiago (2020, pp. 50-51), on 31st January 2020, 18,3% of the prison population in Europe were convicted for drug-related crimes, as presented in Figure no. 3.

Figure 3. Percentage of the European prison population convicted for drug-related crimes
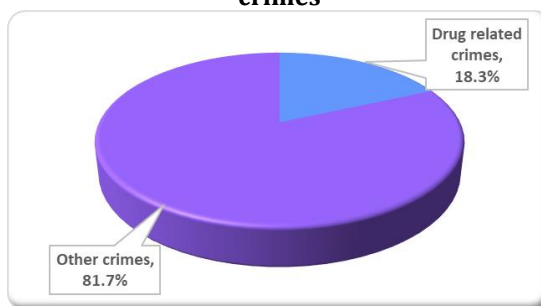
Source: Aebi and Tiago, 2020

In Table No. 1, it is shown how on 31st January 2020, drug-related convictions from all European countries are distributed in relation to the total prison population, Latvia having the highest percentage of these type of convictions.

Table 1: Distribution of individuals convicted for drug crimes in Europe on 31st January 2020

Country	Total number of sentenced prisoners	Drug offences	
		Number	%
Albania	2 777	774	27.9
Andorra	30	2	6.7
Azerbaijan	17 643	5 108	29.0
Bulgaria	5 625	666	11.8
Croatia	2 190	121	5.5
Cyprus	542	148	27.3

Denmark	2 558	636	24.9
Estonia	1 984	511	25.8
Finland	2 074	425	20.5
France	49 576	9 034	18.2
Georgia	7 986	2 093	26.2
Germany	50 589	6 796	13.4
Greece	8 105	2 381	29.38
Hungary	13 165	881	6.7
Iceland	136	47	34.6
Ireland	3 218	358	11.1
Italy	41 679	13 114	31.5
Latvia	2 465	1 089	44.2
Liechtenstein	3	1	33.3
Lithuania	5 412	800	14.8
Luxembourg	327	58	17.7
Malta	564	142	5.2
Moldova	5 598	460	8.2
Monaco	9	0	0
Montenegro	727	129	17.7
Netherlands	5 541	941	17.0
North Macedonia	1 811	299	16.5
Norway	2 211	531	24.0
Poland	65 079	2 344	3.6
Portugal	10 522	1 862	17.7
Romania	18 525	829	4.5
San Marino	0	0	0
Serbia	7 862	1 921	24.4
Slovak Rep.	8 924	1 133	12.7
Slovenia	1 048	146	13.9
Spain	49 011	8 337	17.0
Sweden	4 834	1 071	22.2
Switzerland	3 669	697	19.0
Turkey	250 594	64 528	25.8
UK: Engl. & Wales	72 798	11 121	15.3
UK: North. Ireland	1 010	87	8.6
Average			**18.3**
Median			**17.7**
Minimum			**0**
Maximum			**44.2**

Source: Aebi and Tiago, 2020

4.2. Drug use impact on criminal behavior in Romania

In Romania, according to the latest General Population Survey, the prevalence of any illicit drug in the general population was 10.7% over the course of a lifetime, 6% over the course of the previous year, and 3.9% over the course of the previous month (Agenţia Naţională Antidrog, 2020: 7).

There are two types of crimes related to substance use: drug regime crimes, provided by special laws and drug related crimes, provided by the Criminal Code. Among the main crimes provided by the special laws, we find: possession of drugs for personal consumption, national and international trafficking, making available a space for consumption or for tolerating consumption, encouraging the illicit consumption of high-risk drugs (all these crimes are related Law no. 143/2003) and carrying out without right operations with products that are likely to have psychoactive effects (Law no. 194/2011). Among the main categories of drug

related crimes against the person and crimes against property, provided by Title I and Title II of the Romanian Criminal Code and crimes against traffic safety on public roads, provided by Title VII, Chapter II of the Criminal Code.

An examination of the information pertaining to those who were held in preventive detention at the level of Detention and Preventive Arrest Centers 77 of the Detention and Preventive Arrest Service under the General Directorate of Police of the Municipality of Bucharest highlights that, over time, crimes against property, particularly simple theft and aggravated theft, are the most common crimes done by those who use drugs (Agenția Națională Antidrog, 2022: 225). These statistics comply with one of the explanatory models used by White and Gorman (2000, p. 170): *substance use causes crime*, in which certain crimes, like shoplifting or burglary that result in money are used right away to buy drugs.

Figure 4. Arrested persons in Bucharest who declared themselves drug users at the time of incarceration, depending on the type of crime committed, in the period 2011-2021

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
simple and qualified theft	319	160	341	151	264	405	341	320	198	236	210
drug trafficking	103	85	143	68	74	76	113	74	54	81	64
robbery	102	66	78	57	76	70	80	50	37	53	55
murder	0	2	4	2	3	1	3	4	2	4	7
bodly harm	0						15	6	3	9	12
other crimes	0	150	68	27	51	39	73	37	22	11	25
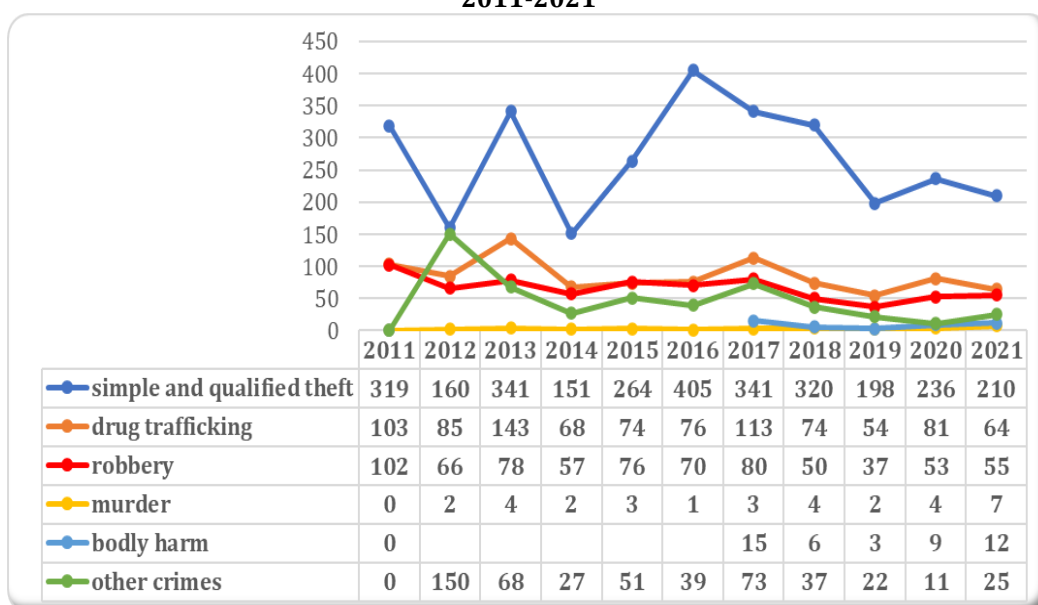
Source: Agenția Națională Antidrog, 2022

The number of offenses involving driving while under the influence of psychoactive substances, as defined by the provisions of article 336 paragraph (2) of the Criminal Code, shows a significant increase, from 26 in 2011, to 1535 in 2021 (Agenția Națională Antidrog, 2022: 225)

Figure 5. Crimes involving driving while influenced by psychoactive substances between 2011 and 2021 (numbers)
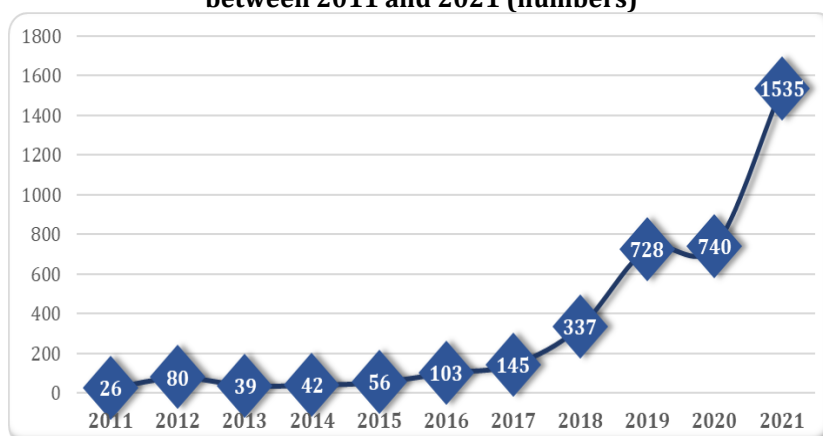
According to the National Antidrug Report, in 2021, 1031 individuals were convicted for offences under the drug regime (Law no. 143/2000) and new psihoactive substances (Law no. 194/2011), compared to 739 individuals convicted in 2020. Those 1031 individuals convicted in 2021, represent 27.54% of the total number of individuals definitely convicted at the tribunal level and 3.05% at the national level (all courts) (Agenţia Naţională Antidrog, 2022: 216). As a result, the number of people found guilty of offenses related to drug regime crimes increased by 39.51% in 2021, compared to 2020.

Figure 6: Number of individuals convicted for drug regime crimes (Law 143/2000 and 194/2011) between 2011-2021
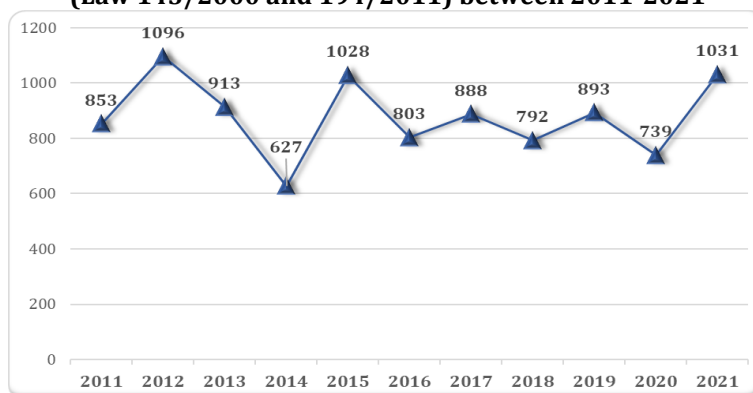
The statistical data available (Administraţia Naţională a Penitenciarelor, 2017, p.4; Aebi and Tiago, 2020, pp. 50-51) regarding the prison population convicted for drug-related crimes in Romania emphasize that their proportion has remained at a constant level (4.6% out of the total prison population in 2017 and 4.5% in 2020).

Figure 7: Percentage of the Romanian prison population convicted for drug-related crimes (data from 31st January 2017 and 31st January 2020)

Prison population in Romania - 31st January 2017

4.6

95.4

⊞ Drug related crimes ⊞ Other Crimes

Prison population in Romania - 31st January 2020

4.5

95.5

⊞ Drug related crimes ⊞ Other Crimes
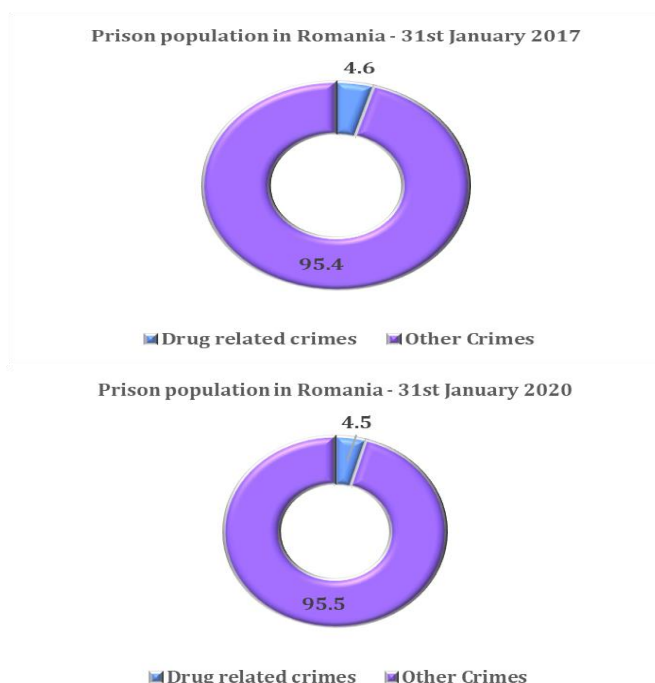
Source: Administrația Națională a Penitenciarilor, 2017; Aebi and Tiago, 2020

According to the data provided by the National Administration of Penitentiaries to the National Antidrug Agency, in 2021, 3083 persons who are convicted to custodial sentences self-declared drug users when entering the prison system (Agenția Națională Antidrog, 2022: 240). Compared to the previous year, there is a significant increase of 42.6%. Regarding their proportion in the total prison population, the percentage is 13.5%, registering an increase of 3.6 percentage points compared to the previous year. The average of the last 10 years of people who, upon entering the penitentiary, declared themselves drug users reveal that they represent, between 2011 and 2021, 8.5% of the total prison population.

Figure 8: Self-declared drug users compared to the country's overall prison population between 2011-2021
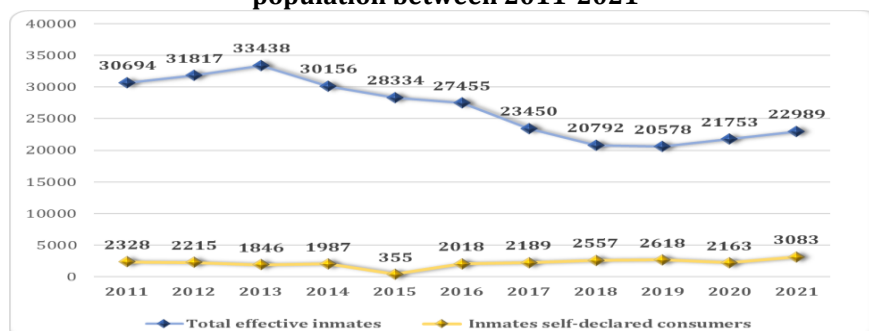
Source: Agenția Națională Antidrog, 2022

Between 2011 and 2021, heroin was the main used drug, as reported detainees upon entering the prison facilities, although a decrease can be observed over time. Compared to 2011, a decrease of 37.7 percentage points can be noticed in 2021. In terms of self-reported cannabis use when entering custody (18.4%), the trend remains constant from 2018 to 2021, although it should be noted that the numbers are three times higher than they were from 2011 to 2014. While cocaine is cited by 11.8% of those who self-declared drug users upon entering the jail, the NSP records the lowest value (9.6%) of the monitoring period in 2021. The use of "other substances" (23.2%), without identifying the substance, has increased over the past two years of monitoring, and in 2021 it will have doubled from what was reported in 2011 (Agenția Națională Androg, 2022: 241)

Figure 9. Self-declared drug users' percentage distribution by type of substance used (%) between 2011 and 2021

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
heroine	68.6	61.9	54.3	46	44	43.2	37.2	31.4	30.8	31
cocaine	5.8	5.4	6.1	10.2	6.1	8.8	11.7	9.5	12.8	11.8
ecstasy	1.2	2.1	1.6	2.4	0.7	1.6	2.4	3.8	1.3	3
amphetamines	0	0	0	0	0.7	0.9	2.2	1.6	1.4	1.8
LSD	0	0.6	0.4	0.8	0.5	0	0.7	1.2	0.2	1.2
cannabis	4.4	4.3	6	5.5	11.9	9.8	15.2	17.8	17.7	18.4
NSP	0	0	0	0	11.7	16.9	15.8	16.2	11.4	9.6
prescription drugs	1.2	1.1	2	3.7	0	0	0	0	0	0
other drugs	9.1	16.3	18.7	16.3	13.6	18.8	14.8	18.5	24.4	23.2
polydrug use	9.7	8.3	10.9	15.1	10.8	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Agenția Națională Antidrog, 2022

5. Conclusions

Although it is also well recognized among sociologists and criminologists that a significant percentage of real crime (defined as all criminal acts, whether or not they are reported to the authorities) eludes researchers (Amza, 2002: 36) and even though illicit drug use is a hidden phenomenon and "the validity of social statistics is conditioned by the visibility of facts, phenomena, and processes to be recorded" (Chelcea, Mărginean, Cau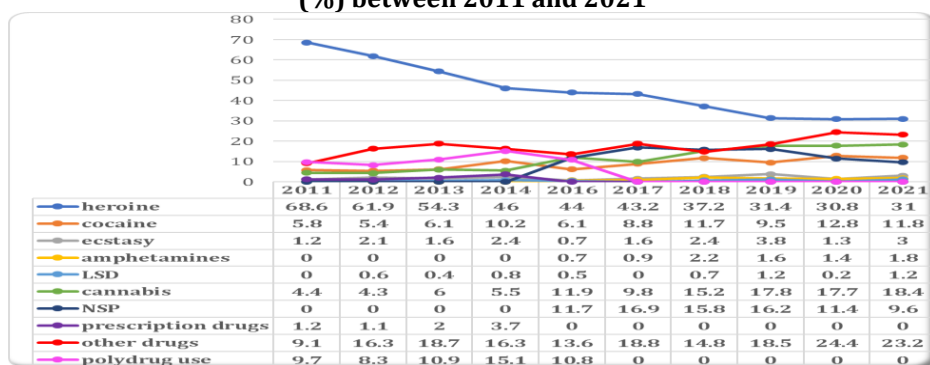c, 1998: 345), the available statistical data still gives us an overview of the proportion of criminality generated by drug use. Nonetheless, as these data only represent reality that has been reported to the authorities, they should be cautiously read.

Statistics show that 19.1% of the global prison population, respectively 18.3% of the European prison population, and 4.5% of the Romanian prison population are convicted for drug-related crimes, our country being significantly below the global and European average. This proportion of the prison population is in accordance with the 8.5% of self-declared drug users in the Romanian penitentiary system in the last 10 years, noting that they not only represent those with drug regime crimes convictions but also those with convictions for other types of offenses (e.g., theft, robbery, etc.). As can be seen, offenses against property (simple and qualified theft) are the main crimes committed by the drug users who were arrested in Bucharest.

Although being below the global and European average in the prison population convicted for drug-related crimes, certain fluctuations in trends can be noticed in the analyzed period (2011-2021). This issue is still present in Romania, and the need to implement rehabilitation programs for both drug users and individuals convicted of drug offenses is one that should not be neglected.

American sociologists and criminologists have been studying the issue of drug-related criminality since the middle of the 1960s, and many researchers from different societies have developed an interest in the study of this phenomenon over time. Certain exploratory models elaborated 20 years ago are still reflected in today's official statistics.

It should be highlighted that no theory or exploratory model is exhaustive. Some of them are complementary and, in some cases, even antagonistic to one another. When we examine criminality caused by drug use, empirical investigations and sociological research demonstrate that this social phenomenon cannot be explained by a single explanatory model. Most of the time, it is a sequence of events, where one link may play a more important role than other.

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DECENTRALIZATION AND UNION OF MUNICIPALITIES IN CAMEROON: STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

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Abstract: *In Cameroon, decentralization has enabled the establishment of local authorities which are administrative structures which, unlike the State, do not act in the name of the general interest, but in the name of the interests of the population of a specific territory. Intercommunality being an emanation of decentralization embraces many issues including local democracy, local development, and good governance at the local level. Thus, the management of public services, spatial planning and economic development are all issues at the center of intermunicipal collaboration, which is based on optimal satisfaction of the vital needs of populations despite the limited resources of a single municipality. The aim of this article is to provide, from a historical perspective, an analytical grid on the contribution of intercommunality, in this case the union of communes, to the development of populations. The central argument developed in this text is that the syndicates of communes which were born in Cameroon following decentralization (law of 2004), participated greatly in the development of the localities covered by the latter, but certain structural brakes, institutional and financial constraints have reduced the development impetus driven by this form of intermunicipal cooperation. Through a descriptive and analytical method, we show that the commitment of municipal unions, although bearing fruit for local populations in terms of water and sanitation, remains insufficient because it is littered with several obstacles.*

Keywords : Intercommunality, Syndicate of communes, Decentralization, Sanitation.

1. Introduction

The frantic search for alternative solutions to the development crisis in Africa in general and in Cameroon in particular has led to the promotion of new paradigms of administrative management and the economy. The multisecular effort of centralization that was necessary for a long time is no longer necessary. On the contrary, it is decentralized activities that appear to be the springs of tomorrow's economic power (B. Mougnole Mvondo, 2018:2). Decentralization can be defined as the transfer of a certain number of competences from the State to the local authorities having a certain autonomy, including financial. Municipal unions were born in Cameroon during the colonial period. However in 1987, many problems contributed to the dissolution of these unions. But in 2004 we note the revival of these council unions. It is in this perspective that several unions of municipalities are born such as the Union of Municipalities of Mbam and Inoubou (SYCOMI), the Union of Municipalities of Nyong and Kéllé (SYNCONIK), the Union of Municipalities of Lekié (SYNCOLEK), and the intermunicipal syndicate of the highlands, etc. In doing so, what is the contribution of SYNCOLEK and SYCOMI and SYNCONIK in local development? What are the difficulties encountered by these forms of intercommunality in the development process? and the intermunicipal syndicate of the highlands etc. In doing so, what is the contribution of SYNCOLEK and SYCOMI and SYNCONIK in local development? What are the difficulties encountered by these forms of intercommunality in the development process? and the intermunicipal syndicate of the highlands etc. In doing so, what is the contribution of SYNCOLEK and SYCOMI and SYNCONIK in local development? What are the difficulties encountered by these forms of intercommunality in the development process?

In an analysis favoring the exploitation of archival sources, oral, written, digital and a field survey, the description and analysis of the data made it possible to structure this study in

two main parts, namely:The contribution of the unions of the communes in the process of development of the local populations, and, the difficulties of the implementation of the process of development by these unions of communes.

2. The strength of municipal unions in Cameroon

With the advent of modern times, the nascent theory of a State with subdivided powers appeared as necessary. The Cameroonian State through the process of decentralization will make local authorities a real place of democratic life. The municipal union therefore appears as a form of intermunicipal organization whose goal is to carry out works that will contribute to the development of the population. How can we apprehend the notion of intercommunality and commune union? What are the challenges involved in setting up municipal unions? What concrete contribution have they made to the local population?

3. Emergence and evolution of municipal unions

Before presenting the historical development of municipal syndicates, it is wise to outline the contours of the notion of intermunicipal cooperation and municipal syndicate.

4. Definition of concepts: intercommunality and syndicate of communes

Intermunicipality designates the different forms of cooperation existing between municipalities. It enables municipalities to group together within a Public Establishment for Intermunicipal Cooperation (EPCI). This grouping makes it possible either to provide certain services or to draw up real development projects. In the implementation of intercommunality in Cameroon, there are five possible forms, namely the intercommunality of services, development projects, the intercommunality forged by the communes themselves, the intercommunality institutionalized by the State and informal intercommunality. In the Cameroonian context, this concept is understood as a process that allows municipalities to put and manage all of their human, material,

The commune syndicate is then a form of intercommunality. It is an inter-municipal public establishment endowed with legal personality and administrative and financial autonomy. The syndicate of municipalities is in fact an EPCI created for a fixed period or without limitation of duration or for a specific operation. It is a question for the communes of refocusing the interest of such a grouping around the realization of important investments on the basis of the principle according to which the union makes the force (Practical guide of the cooperation and the solidarity intercommunal in Cameroon of the Ministry of Territorial Administration, 2010:26). The initiative comes mostly from a local elected official, most often from a mayor, who is the first to feel the need to move towards this pooling of resources.

As for the bodies of the union of municipalities, we have the union council composed of the mayor and two councilors appointed by deliberation of the municipal council of each unionized municipality, and the president of the union who is not necessarily a mayor (Finken, 1996: 21). The particularities of the municipal syndicate arise from the fact that it is a structure through which the municipalities of the same department or the same region can come together in order to carry out operations of inter-municipal interes[1]. It is a formal management structure which is, moreover, different from decentralized cooperation. Even if both work for the achievement of common objectives which is development, we still retain that decentralized cooperation which is a mode of transnational cooperation, is not based on administrative structures.[2]

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[1] Municipalities belonging to different regions cannot form a syndicate.
[2] Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization, Practical guide to cooperation and inter-municipal solidarity in Cameroon.

Similarly, the municipal union is different from the professional union, which is a group of people exercising the same profession, with a view to defending their professional interests, whose state body of recognition is the union clerk appointed by the President of the Republic to of the Minister of Employment and Vocational Training (Paho, 2020: 84). This clerk validates the creation of workers' unions governed by the labour code. As regards civil servant unions in Cameroon, the Minister of Territorial Administration grants approval.

However, what is the historical evolution of municipal unions?

5. Historical overview of the birth, evolution of communes and syndicates of communes in Cameroon.

Intermunicipality was designed to overcome certain shortcomings noted at the level of Cameroonian municipalities (Report of the Ministry of Territorial Administration, 2010:26). Indeed, the administrative and political fragmentation of the territories into several municipalities of varying sizes, populations and resources limited their capacity for individual intervention. Similarly, several Cameroonian municipalities were heavily indebted. It is in this perspective that the initiative to create municipal unions will have its full meaning. However, this initiative is very old, it took shape long before the law of 2004 which again authorized the creation of municipal unions. In doing so, the history of municipal unions cannot be separated from that of municipalities.

Indeed, the desire of communities to take charge of their future and manage their own resources is old in Cameroon. As in all the countries of Africa south of the Sahara, the citizen had to be introduced to the management of public life. The concept of a territory managed by a municipal council was imported from colonization. Cameroon experienced its first experiences of decentralization during the colonial period.

The British colonizer, in order to integrate the traditional chiefs in the management of the territory's resources, set up the "native authorities" in 1930 along essentially ethnic lines. First, the fons of Bali, Nkom, Bum and Banso in the division of Bamenda and the fon of bangwa (Fontem) in the division of Mamfe were constituted as native authorities assisted by tribunals and councils. Then four chiefs were also recognized in the districts of Victoria-Buéa. The responsibilities growing, the institution of the "native authorities" recorded progress, they began to take a collegial form, the authorities were less and less people, that is to say the traditional chiefs, but more and more local assemblies local councils. So, the current North-East Bamenda division had 18 "native authorities" in 1938. In 1944, the number of "native authorities" in this Region was twenty-three. (Levine, 1984:249). In 1950, all the "local authorities" were councils bringing together traditional chiefs and gradually elected personalities. The "local councils" after reunification became the "local governments" (Péguy, 2012: 10). In other words, the members of these local assemblies were for some designated by the Minister of the Interior (the traditional chiefs) and in the majority elected, the president of the council called chairman was appointed by the Minister of the Interior for a period of one year, and its vice-president was appointed by the council. the number of "native authorities" in this Region were twenty-three. (Levine, 1984:249). In 1950, all the "local authorities" were councils bringing together traditional chiefs and gradually elected personalities. The "local councils" after reunification became the "local governments" (Péguy, 2012: 10). In other words, the members of these local assemblies were for some designated by the Minister of the Interior (the traditional chiefs) and in the majority elected, the president of the council called chairman was appointed by the Minister of the Interior for a period of one year, and its vice-president was appointed by the council. the number of "native authorities" in this Region were twenty-three. (Levine, 1984:249). In 1950, all the "local authorities" were councils bringing together traditional chiefs and gradually elected personalities. The "local councils" after reunification became the "local governments" (Péguy, 2012: 10). In other words, the members of these local

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In French Cameroon, it was not until 1941 that the mixed urban communes of Douala and Yaoundé were born. This municipalization will gradually extend with the creation of new municipal units, precisely six mixed rural municipalities in 1952. In 1952, all the administrative districts were endowed with a mixed rural municipality. In reality, the first mixed rural communes were created in the subdivisions of Djoungolo, Mfou, Okola, Sa'a, nanga-eboko, Akonolinga, Mbalmayo, Ebolowa, Ambam, Sangmélima, and Djoum. These rural communes are no longer administered by the head of the region (administrator-mayor) as in the case of mixed urban communes created by a mayor appointed by the high commissioner. The latter can be chosen from the staff of the administrative framework. The municipal administrator was chosen from three councilors appointed by an appointed municipal council. In 1955, the state of the communes was as follows:

Table 1: State of municipalities in 1955

Type of municipalities	Nature of the executive	Legislative body	number
Urban Communes of Douala and Yaoundé	Administrator-mayor appointed	Municipal commission with appointed members	2
Urban Communes of Garoua, Nkongsamba and Ngoundéré	Administrator – appointed mayor	Municipal commission with elected members	2
Urban municipalities of Bafang, Bafoussam, Ebolowa, Kribi, Mbalmayo, Edéa, Eséka and Sangmélima	Administrator-mayor appointed	Elected City Council, with two seats allocated by the High Commissioner	8
Mixed rural municipalities	Mayor appointed	Elected city council	59
Total			**71**

<u>Source</u>:M. Finken, communes and municipal management in Cameroon: institution *municipal, finances and budget, local management, municipal interventions*, India, Indiana University Press, 1996, p.12.

In 1955, there were already 71 municipalities throughout the national territory. All seventy-one communes, whether urban or mixed rural, were administered by an appointed administrator or mayor. However, the legislative body was different. The two urban communes of Yaoundé and Douala had a municipal commission with appointed members while the other urban communes had as their deliberative body, a municipal commission with elected members or an elected municipal council with two seats allocated by the high commissioner. As for the mixed rural communes, they had the elected municipal council as their deliberative body.

The existence of communes in both parts of Cameroon already opened the door to the creation of syndicates of communes considered as a form of intercommunality. It is in fact a

public establishment for inter-municipal cooperation (Verpeaux, Rimbault, Waseman, 2018: 116).

The appearance of syndicates of communes dates back to 1955. The decree of November 8, 1955 opened up to mixed rural communes of the same administrative region who so desired, the possibility of grouping together in a syndicate of mixed communes for works of utilities. intermunicipal. It is in this perspective that the commune union of Nyong and -Sanaga was effectively created on December 28, 1955, precisely by lawno.1489 of November 18, 1955 relating to municipal reorganization in French West Africa in French Equatorial Africa in Togo in Cameroon and in Madagascar.

After this first syndicate of communes, many others were created so that on the eve of the law of December 5, 1974 reorganizing the communes there were 14 syndicates of communes in Cameroon.

Law No. 74/23 of December 5, 1974 on municipal organization takes up the principle by stipulating that the municipalities of a department may either at the request of the supervisory authority, or by concordant deliberation duly approved, group together in a union to jointly carry out intermunicipal operations such as:

-The opening or maintenance of inter-municipal roads;
-The purchase and use of common road machinery;
-The operation of services by way of concession.

On April 3, 1980, there were already 38 municipal unions in Cameroon which had a real need to open and maintain municipal roads. These unions through the machines acquired by the Special Fund for Intermunicipal Equipment and Intervention which had proceeded with the creation and maintenance of rural roads. This regrouping made of authority by the Ministry of Territorial Administration, had at the head of the structures, the first prefectural deputies. These unions of communes functioned until their dissolution by decision of the governmental authority in 1987. Several reasons militated for their dissolution, one of the fundamental reasons was related to the organs of the unions themselves. The executive of rural communes, for example, was appointed by the supervisory authority, and the Sub-Prefect was automatically mayor,

Similarly, the union's activities were carried out on behalf of the municipalities without their deliberative body having had to discuss them. In addition, unions did not operate on the basis of consensus or unanimous voting for decision-making. It was enough for a certain number of municipalities, on the basis of the quorum required, to agree for the decision to be taken. This way of proceeding had harmful consequences, insofar as the negative vote of a municipality had no effect on a decision adopted by the majority, the municipalities left behind began to resign (MINATD, 2010: 26). The problem of rivalry between the Prefects and their deputies was recurrent because the syndicate of municipalities released significant funds to manage. This dissolution of the municipal unions was harmful to rural development, the municipality being unable to carry out major development work in the locality on its own. These problems will lead the public authorities to authorize and reframe the role of municipal unions through the law of 2004. Therefore, what will they bring to local populations. What is the contribution of municipal unions, in particular Syncolek, Sycomi and Synconek, in the development of local populations?

6. Contribution of municipal unions to the development of local populations

Municipal unions appear to be an important force in the process of local population development. The management of local affairs has become a communal responsibility with decentralization. (Ngane, 2019:73)

Local development is a well-documented and well-known concept throughout the world and its actions involve the improvement of the level, framework and living environment of a

given community through a harmonious integration of actions between different sectors of activity. It offers a comprehensive, integrated, community-based and horizontal approach to community development. Local development is a process through which the community participates in the functioning of its own environment in order to improve the quality of life of its residents (Sommet de Montréal, 2002:1).The establishment of an intermunicipal structure constitutes for the deliberative bodies a model of true expression and a framework for experimenting with democracy. This approach requires harmonious integration of economic, social, cultural, political and environmental components. The union of municipalities is one of the social actors of local development, what are its orientations?

7. Orientations and competences of municipal syndicates

The syndicate of municipalities is nothing other than an inter-municipal public establishment intended to ensure inter-municipal cooperation and solidarity. This is what makes it a major organ of decentralization (Mougnole Mvondo, 2018:2). The stakes of intermunicipal cooperation and solidarity are enormous. This solidarity offers unions many opportunities such as:

-Intervene and work more effectively;

-Coming together for a large mobilization of financial resources and technical support from partners;

- Allow the most disadvantaged communities to benefit from the solidarity of others. (Mougnole Mvondo, 2018:2)

The main interests are then the realization of savings and the acquisition of better expertise by strengthening their capacities. Inter-municipal solidarity is based on solid principles that govern healthy inter-municipality, so that local authorities can comply with their commitment. As principle we have the specialty, the principle of exclusion, the principle of indirect representativeness, the principle of pooling. Intermunicipality in Cameroon is an asset. It also allows municipalities to be credible through more effective interventions despite the weakness of their resources. The major challenge of intermunicipal cooperation is to significantly promote the effectiveness and efficiency of municipalities in carrying out basic social development works, while avoiding errors due to ignorance of the specific data of local life. These syndicates are constituted for an intermunicipal utility, in particular the carrying out of equipment works such as the electrification of the participating municipalities, the construction of water points, the collection of household waste, sanitation, urban transport, also to develop it. genuine economic development, development or urban planning projects. The municipalities transfer some of their powers to this institution. It finds itself vested in their place with the powers of decision and execution. It is precisely in this sense that we can note the work carried out by several municipal unions such as: Syncolek and Sycomi, etc. in the realization of several development projects for the local populations. We then note the regulatory capacity of these unions in the field of water and sanitation. How can we concretely evaluate this contribution of municipal unions in the development of populations?

8. The contribution of Syncolek and Sycomi and synconek to local development

In Cameroon, the coverage of drinking water needs reaches 44%, but only 28% in rural areas. But the national rate of breakdowns on the networks on the rural hydraulic structures is close to 50%, which is why in 2010 the State entrusts the management of the rural hydraulic structures to the municipalities in order to improve the situation. Thanks to the support of foreign partners Syncolek and Sycomi have contributed to the water supply of their populations and to sanitation.

- **The contribution of the union of municipalities of Lekié and Mbam and Inoubou in water.**

The Syndicate of municipalities of the Lekié department will participate in the establishment of water points in its municipalities, thus participating in the development of its community. The most visible achievements are those of the municipality of Lobo. Thanks to the project called Sustainable Project Management for Water and Sanitation in the municipality of Lobo (MODEAME), the municipalities covered by SYNCOLEK, in particular the municipality of Lobo, have improved the daily lives of more than 5,000 inhabitants.

This project had a significant socio-economic impact, including:

-Reduction of costs related to access to drinking water;

- Faster access to water, allowing the development of related activities;

-Reduction of the difficulty of finding water;

-Equality in terms of access to water in the village;

-Improvement of the quality of life (Experts-Solidarity Report, 2017: 9).

With regard to Sycomi, it was first conceived in the associative form called ASCOMI (Association of Municipalities of Mbam and Inoubou), it became a union of municipalities of Mbam and Inoubou (SYCOMI) after the law of 2004. This union brings together 9 departmental communes such as: the commune of Bafia, Bokito, Deuk, Kon Yambetta, Ndikimeki, Nitoukou, Makene and Ombessa. The main motivation for its creation was to pool the resources of municipalities and to seize the opportunity offered by potential partnership requirements in Europe. SYCOMI carried out activities and carried out projects. He negotiated a partnership with IRCOD-ALSACE (Regional Institute for development cooperation of the former Alsace region in France), this partnership has also enabled the union to make several exchange trips and study the problem of water in the department of Mbam and Inoubou (Ndoki, 2019:11). The implementation of the GEMI project (Governance of Water in Mbam and Inoubou), then of the SPIC-Eau (Intermunicipal public service and citizen involvement for water and basic sanitation) enabled the population to have access to drinking water. This GEMI project was largely financed by the water sector of the European Union with the help of various municipalities and populations benefiting from the project. The objective of this project was to rehabilitate boreholes and mini water supply, as well as the construction of new boreholes. Eight of the nine municipalities have joined this SPIC-EAU project. Thus, out of a hundred water points to be rehabilitated, sixty points have been rehabilitated. twenty-five water points have been constructed. Beneficiary populations have been made aware of good practices aimed at protecting water quality. SYCOMI has in its objectives provided for spare parts to ensure the maintenance of these water points.

SYNCOLEK and SYCOMI are not the only unions to have thought about the development of the local population in terms of drinking water supply, we can also note the projects in progress in this direction of the Syndicat de Communes du département du Nyong and Kelle (SYNCONYK).

Created in 2008, this union includes ten municipalities in this department such as: Biyouha, Dibang, Bandjock, Matomb, Eséka, Nguibassal, Ngog-Mapubi, Makak, Messondo, Bot-Makak. This union of municipalities, following exchanges with SYCOMI, which showed a fine example of local development, updated the road map of the department of Nyong and Kéllé with the assistance of the departmental trade delegate (MINATD, 2010:58). Similarly, in order to eradicate poverty in the municipalities covered by SYNCONYK, several other projects benefiting from the support of Germany and the Cameroonian State are in progress. These include the project to set up a road rehabilitation and construction brigade, a drilling workshop and the rural electrification project (MINATD, 2010:58).

In addition to the establishment of water points in the municipalities covered by SYNCOLEK and SYCOMI, the quality of water and the prevention of waterborne diseases have

been taken into account. Water quality in the departments of Mbam and Inoubou was poor (MINATD, 2010:58). In 2008 out of 258 water points analyzed, only 39 had acceptable quality, twenty-two water points were declared out of service. Of the two hundred and fifty-eight water points, more than a hundred required natural treatment and sanitation around the water point (Chague Njumeni, 2013: p 24). Sycomi reviewed the quality of the water in the municipalities for which it was responsible.

- **Contribution in Sanitation of water and around the water point**

The word sanitation refers to all the means of collecting, transporting and treating wastewater before it is discharged into rivers or into the ground. It is strongly linked to public health due to many diseases linked to an unhealthy environment. It aims to ensure the evacuation and treatment of waste water and excrement while minimizing the risks to health and the environment (Larousse, 1979). With the support of European partners, the two municipal syndicates ensured the sanitation of the living environment of the populations. The ecological sanitation provided by the MODEAME project in the department of Lekié has an environmental impact that deserves to be noted. Indeed, it revolves around ecological sanitation. The project has set up ecological latrines. This technique promotes the reduction of health risks related to human excrement and the production of fertilizer and organic matter which helps preserve soil fertility and increase agricultural productivity. This technique also allows people to become aware of the role they can play in climate change. (Experts-Solidarity Report, 2017: 9).

From a health point of view, the needs in terms of public health are emerging in a conscious way among the local population because households are now adopting good hygienic practices appropriate for the improvement of their long-term living environment. And, the progress made in public health has an economic impact in terms of lower health expenditure. Thus, nearly 324,000 people have benefited from drinking water in the municipalities of the two departments. It is clear that intermunicipal cooperation promotes local development, relaunches the regional planning policy. Thus, at the national level, it is a question, with the consent of the municipalities, of setting up a network of the territory which makes it possible to respond to the challenges that arise in the country in terms of land use planning,

This participatory management promotes the development of the local population of the municipalities covered by the syndicate, in the sense that those who carry out the activities have a certain right to decide on this practice (Tsamo, 2008:11). The partners are the first experts who can provide relevant information on a given situation. They hold the means to develop, correct or transform reality. It is in this perspective that Fontaine thinks that in order to be able to speak of participatory management, participation must relate to real acts of management (Fontaine, 1992:516) and in the specific case the actual acts of management here deals with water supply, water quality, sanitation of the territories of the municipalities mentioned above. We can therefore conclude in view of the above that the population's access to drinking water and basic sanitation have been provided by SYNCOLEK and SYCOMI, which is in fact a strength of this form of intercommunality called syndicate of communes. This reflects the development of the population of Mbam and Inoubou because trade union action in development cooperation is above all the democratic appropriation of development strategies. The union has always considered development cooperation and solidarity to be synonymous (Wandja, 2009:2). Today, many other unions must also demonstrate their development effectiveness in terms of development outcomes and contributions (Ryder, 2009: 8). which is in fact a strength of this form of intercommunality called syndicate of communes. This reflects the development of the population of Mbam and Inoubou because trade union action in development cooperation is above all the democratic appropriation of development strategies. The union has always considered development cooperation and solidarity to be synonymous (Wandja, 2009:2).

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SYNCOLEK, SYCOMI and SYCOLEK have a very vital role in society, they are integral parts of civil society as a whole and contributors to development as social partners. (Akouete Beleki, 2010:5) By setting up the decentralization process, the political hierarchy had understood that it was an essential way of development (Babagnack, 2014:9), however, the municipal unions resulting from it will not escape the structural, institutional and financial problems that will break this momentum of development.

9. The weaknesses of municipal unions in Cameroon

The objective pursued by decentralization is local development, there is no sustainable decentralization without a real improvement in the living conditions of the populations (Kuaté, 2014:15). However, the local development momentum launched by Syncolek, Sycomi and Synconek within the framework of intercommunality was blurred by multiple structural, institutional and financial difficulties.

10. Structural and institutional weaknesses

Structural and institutional brakes will break the momentum of development of localities by the unions of municipalities.

Structural weaknesses

The union of municipalities comprises two essential bodies, namely the union council and the president of the union. The president is entrusted with the administrative tasks of the union, in particular the execution of the deliberations of the union council, the management of the budget. He can also propose an organization chart, he represents the union in court and in acts of civil life, chairs committee meetings and executes its decisions. He prepares the budget, orders income and expenditure, prepares the presentation of the administrative account. He is in charge, after agreement of the committee, of concluding the markets, of subscribing in the forms established by the laws and regulations, namely leases, loans and all acts of acquisition, sale, transactions, exchanges; sharing, acceptance of donations and legacies[1]. The attributions of the president of the syndicate of communes are enormous. For lack of a technical and administrative body in some municipal unions, everything is concentrated around the president of the union. In several municipal unions, there is a lack of a technical and administrative body that can manage the affairs of the union. The intermunicipal administration must exist and expand.

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[1]TH.D. Obiegni, around 60 years old, mayor of the municipality of ndikinimeki, interview on March 10, 2020 in yaoundé.

This lack most often leads to the personalization of union organization. The case of the Public Organization for Intermunicipal Cooperation of Sanaga Maritime (OIPC) [1] is more illustrative. Indeed, created on March 22, 1995, this intermunicipal organization experienced this personalization problem. This strong personalization of this inter-municipality is due to the fact that the construction of an inter-municipal dynamic was carried essentially by an individual, the very one who had had the idea of setting up the inter-municipality. This accentuated monopoly led to the fall of this union as soon as its president resigned.[2]. The poor structuring of municipal unions is not the only problem facing them, we can also note the institutional limits.

Institutional weaknesses

At the institutional level, the law limits the framework for the grouping of municipalities. If the syndicate of communes cannot bring together communes from various Regions, it means circumscribing and limiting the development of decentralized territories, and consequently of their populations. The municipalities of the same department or the same region can, by concordant deliberations acquired by a majority of at least 2/3 of each municipal council, come together in a syndicate with a view to carrying out operations of inter-municipal interest. Intermunicipal dynamism should not be limited, it would reduce the impetus of municipal unions for the development of their populations. The challenges to be taken up by the communes in terms of development are almost the same everywhere, the geographical framework cannot limit the action of the syndicates of the communes.[3]On the ground there is a mismatch between the realities and the texts. There are municipalities that geographically rub shoulders, but cannot form a syndicate of municipalities because the law does not allow them. We note for example the communes of Ayos, in the Center Region, the commune of Nguélémédouka in the East Region and the commune of Minta in the Center Region. What are the financial problems linked to the local development ensured by the syndicates of municipalities?

Financial weaknesses

The income of the budget of the association of municipalities includes the annual contribution of the associated municipalities, the participation of the municipal budgets in expenditure of inter-municipal interest, any subsidies from the State, and from FEICOM or any other bodies, income from property , furniture and buildings of the syndicate, income from services, loans, donations and legacies, miscellaneous and accidental receipts.

The unions of the communes do not easily submit themselves to the constraints of the financial world, the real savings capacity of the unions of the communes is not as brilliant as some of their administrative accounts would suggest, taking into account the existence of a significant public debt and all the unpaid bills that municipalities generally accumulate. We also note the debts of the communes and consequently of their unions vis-à-vis the concessionaires of public networks such as SONEL, SNEC and PTT. (Kom Chuente, 1996:102).This debt is only increasing and has already reached more than ten billion. In the same way, the unions of municipalities, through their municipalities, accumulate a significant debt vis-à-vis FEICOM, suppliers and service providers. This can be illustrated by the table below:

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[1]It brought together nine municipalities namely. the urban commune of Edéa, the rural commune of Edéa, the commune of Ngambe, Dizangue, Pouma, Mouanko, Massock, Ndom and Nyanon.
[2]F. Bindzi Ebodé, around 60 years old, mayor of the municipality of Lobo, interview on March 1, 2021 in Sa'a.
[3]F. Bindzi Ebodé, around 60 years old, mayor of the municipality of Lobo, interview on March 1, 2021 in Sa'a

Table 2: Loans and subsidies granted by FEICOM to municipalities and syndicates of municipalities (amount in millions of CFA francs)

Breakdown by three-year period	1978-1980	1981-1983	1984-1986	1987-1989	1990-1992	Total
Subsidies	1376	110	2033	798	1281	5598
Loans	214	21	319	550	481	1585
Together	1590	131	2352	1348	1762	7183

Source:B, Kom Tchuente, municipal development and urban management in Cameroon: the challenges of municipal management in a decentralized system, Yaoundé, Clé, p. 116.

Although these data are old, the current situation of municipal unions created after the law of 2004 is not far from it. This table shows the exponential rise in loans and subsidies obtained by the unions of municipalities from FEICOM, which suggests a great financial weakness of these unions of municipalities. Thus, the operation of municipal syndicates is financed more by external resources than by its own resources.

The dependence of municipal unions on external resources

The syndicates of the communes through their communes can no longer cope with the most urgent operating expenses, and the financing of investments poses problems. The search for solutions to these problems places the unions of the communes under the dependence of international donors or other Northern States which have financed their projects. On January 26, 1986, a loan agreement was signed between the Cameroonian government and the World Bank which granted an amount of 146 million US dollars for the benefit of local public authorities for the realization of operations such as the realization of urban infrastructure works and land development, the execution of a program of loans to municipalities and urban communities for the purposes of income-generating projects such as markets, bus stations,

The low financial contribution of the member municipalities, the negative external influence of the elites, the struggles for influence and leadership between the mayors, the absence of technical support for this inter-municipal dynamic contribute to the financial dependence of these associations of municipalities. (MINATD, 2010:58).

Conclusion

The decentralization process through its various reforms has profoundly transformed the Cameroonian administrative landscape. Following these various reforms, the administrative landscape has been enriched with new bodies which are in fact players in decentralization. Among these, the union of municipalities as a complementary actor to the action of the municipalities.

These municipal unions, notably SYNCOLEX, SYCOMI and SYCONEK, all adhere to the concept of development for several reasons, namely to better respond to the problems of populations whose dimensions may be economic, ecological or cultural. They situate their actions on a sufficiently global scale to solve these problems (Guillon, 2021:2). Interaction between unions and communities strengthens both community mobilization and local governance. If these municipal unions are attracting attention, it is first of all because of their essential contribution to the development of local public services (Guéranger, Poupeau, 2019: 3) which brings to light the success of intercommunality in Cameroon, which is an indisputable vector and an effective means. They allow the municipal institution to carry out concrete and perceptible actions, guaranteeing a better implementation of decentralization, which is according to the orientation law the fundamental axis of democracy, governance and development in the local level. It is in the same perspective that SYNCOLEK and SYCOMI participated in the water supply of their communities, in the quality of this water and in sanitation. This dynamic of collaboration, even of partnership between several municipalities

is part, despite some pitfalls, in the capacities of municipal unions to meet the challenges of poverty in rural areas, especially in a context marked by both the economic recession and its corollaries. However, the impetus for the development of localities led by the associations of municipalities raised is sometimes hampered by the complexity of the laws, the poor structuring of the associations of municipalities and also a glaring lack of accounting capital which often makes them dependent on foreign capital. It would be wise to review the institutional and structural framework for a total contribution of municipal unions to local development.

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Regulatory texts and laws.
1. Law No. 1489 of November 18, 1955 relating to municipal reorganization in French West Africa in French Equatorial Africa in Togo in Cameroon and in Madagascar.
2. Law of December 5, 1974 on municipal organization.
3. Law No. 2004/017 of July 22, 2004 on the orientation of decentralization.
4. Law No. 2004/018 of July 22, 2004 setting the rules applicable to municipalities.

Oral sources

Nouns	Ages	Occupation	Date And Place Of Interview
Bindzi Ebodé, F.	60 years	mayor of the municipality of Lobo	March 1, 2021 in Sa'a
Obiegni, TH.D.	60 years	mayor of the municipality of Ndikiniméki	March 3, 2021 in Yaoundé
Baby.E	50 years	cooperation department	March 20, 2021 at FEICOM
Mne Ndongo	48 years old	Secretary at the cooperation department	March 15, 2021 at FEICOM
Essomba, M.	about 58 years old	Head of central municipalities	April 15, 2021 in Yaoundé

ALGERIAN SOCIETY: CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS SOCIOHISTORICAL APPROACH
Dalal DJABRI

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Abstract*: Algeria is a country in the north of the African continent, occupying a distinct geographical location that gave it unparalleled importance. Like the countries of the world, Algeria knew prehistoric eras, which reach the dawn of the Stone Age , and history also recorded the passage of a number of countries and civilizations, for example: the Phoenicians, the Romans, the Vandals and the Byzantines, Then came the Islamic conquest, as many countries succeeded in the land of Algeria The Islamic state, including the Rust amid state, the underside, the majority, the Fatimid state, the Almoravid state, the Almohad state, and other Islamic countries, followed by Ottoman rule, then French colonialism, up to the independent Algerian state. All of these factors made Algerian society a scene of mixing cultures, making it know a great momentum in terms of different customs, traditions and rituals. Based on the perceptions of DJamal Graid and in response to his call, the need to listen to society and get to know it, given that this approach imposes itself and calls for the establishment of a sociology stemming from the specificity of society, we try through our work to establish this For an approach to understanding the sociological reality of Algerian society through Researching its history in terms of the customs and traditions of society and its social and linguistic structure*

Keywords: customs and traditions, Algerian society, Algerian, Africa, Arabs.

1. **Introduction**

Research on the subject of customs and traditions in Algerian society is considered one of the important and controversial topics for several considerations, including:

- The geographical location occupied by the Algerian state, which made it occupy an important position throughout the ages and be a gateway to the African continent.
- The geographical location that characterizes Algeria made it an important area for transit and for trade exchange with the countries of the Levant or with European countries.
- Algeria, throughout history, has known the succession of many civilizations, which made it a country that knows a great momentum of customs and traditions, which have a historical and civilizational extension that expresses certain periods of time.
- Algeria has a very large area and a different topography of beaches, plains, plateaus, and deserts, all of which are factors that make customs and traditions differ from one region to another in the same country.
- Many factors have made talking about the subject of customs and traditions an important topic in sociological discourse and discussion and a provocation in historical and anthropological research.

Therefore, the subject of customs and traditions has a privileged position among the subjects of the study of the country of Algeria, as it is rich in its information and diverse in its vocabulary. Here comes the importance. The topic is to discuss it and delve into its minute details, and because the topic of customs and traditions is very broad, we decided to talk about language, customs of dress and cooking, especially those with an Arab influence.

2. **Algeria geographical location**.

The word Libya or Lubia in ancient history was applied to the four countries of North Africa: Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Al-Aqsa Morocco. ecosiom meaning Pigeon Islands, and the Romans kept this name and called it Ecozim (Yahya Ben Bouaziz, 2009: 13) One of the clearest

accounts in naming the city Algeria is that there were large rocks in front of its shores resembling islands, and from it the city was called Algeria.

Almost in the tenth century AD, the Bani Mazghna tribes settled on these islands and rocks, so the town was attribute to that, and its name became Algeria Bani Mazghna.

And it kept the name until the 16th century AD, when the Ottoman Turks abbreviated the name, and the name of the city became the name of the state, Algeria. (Yahya Ben Bouaziz, 2009: 14). As for the Arabs, they violated this designation and called the region the Maghreb country, and called Algeria the Middle Maghreb. (Yahya Ben Bouaziz, 2009: 14)

Algeria mediates the regions of northwestern Africa and is border on the north by the Mediterranean Sea, on the east by Tunisia and Libya, on the south by Niger, Mali and Mauritania, and on the west by Morocco. (Yahya Ben Bouaziz, 2009: 16)

Figure 1: A map showing the geographical location of Algeria

3. The structure of Algerian society.

Talking about the structure of Algerian society prompts us to search for the origins of this society and is older than its inhabitants, as many historical studies prove that the Berbers are older than the inhabitants of the Maghreb, meaning that the Berbers are the original inhabitants, although there are many accounts to explain this designation:

They traced the origin of the word VARVAROS, meaning incomprehensible speech, back to the Roman civilization and launched the term BARBAR on all peoples that do not speak Latin. And in another narration, you see that the origin of the word is Arabic and goes back to the great-grandfather...There are many narrations, but they agree that it is an imported designation and does not stem from the essence of the population.

As for the word Amazigh, it is one of the Arabic names in the Levantine folklore, and it is an Arabic name at its core. (Othman Saadi, 2007, p. 3) And Amazigh means the free man.

Algerian heritage is a complex field in which many cultural varieties and sub-cultures overlap, thanks to the multiplicity of ethnic units and human groups and the multiplicity of cultures that participated in building the edifice of the Algerian cultural field, and making it characterized by diversity.

These ethnic units and human groups are:
- The Kabyles: They are the inhabitants of Djerjara and Soumam.
- Chaouia: inhabitants of the Aures and eastern Algeria.
- Beni M'zab: They are Berber groups living in the "M'zab" steppe.
- Tuareg: spread in southern Algeria,
- Arabs: They are the category that arrived in North Africa during the Islamic conquests, then merged with the indigenous population and spread to the rest of Algeria.
- Al-Shinawi: They are located in the Shinawa Mountains in the state of Tipaza.
- Al-Shalah: They are present in Tlemcen, the city of Al-Bayd, and in the high plateaus in the southwest to the Algerian-Moroccan border. (Ahmed Al-Sulaymani: 43)

4. Customs and traditions of Algerian society

Algerian society is characterized by cultural diversity, and a multi-component cultural identity, due to the expansion of the geographical area and the ethnic and cultural mixing that the region experienced, the most important of which is the cross-fertilization of the Amazigh cultures and the Arab-Islamic culture, which resulted in a variety or the Algerian social structure, with its momentum and richness in customs and traditions as a result of cultural friction with many peoples' civilizations.Talking about the customs and traditions known to Algerian society prompts us to search for many elements that formed, so to speak, social laws and constants, that contributed to the support of social bonds, which were manifested in manifestations and customs that characterized society in every period, and among these customs and traditions we decided to talk About language, dress and cuisine, this habits that formed part of the social heritage that still exists in many aspects of life to this day.

In our discussion of the customs and traditions that were the result of the Arab and Amazigh cultural mixing, we find the issue of language presenting itself with urgency. How not when the Arabic language has become an official language used by the Algerian in his daily life.

4.1. Language

Language is part of the cultures of peoples, where they are used as a means to express their cultural identity in a way that distinguishes them from other groups, and even among speakers of one language we often find some differences in the use of that language and each of these differences is used to distinguish some subgroups from others within the framework the culture the broader, for example, the language of Algerian society and its various dialects, which indicate the affiliation of each group to a specific side or a sub-culture within the overall culture.

Algerian society has known throughout its history several transformations, due to the cross-pollination of different cultures, so that cultural friction left its imprints and effects, especially on its local language, in addition to the Arabic language, which has become an official language of the country the French occupier changed his socio-linguistic reality.The linguistic reality in Algerian society after independence until the present time is characterized by a linguistic dichotomy between the local language and the French language, and even its local language is characterized by plurality.

The linguistic space in Algeria is a mixture of the following languages and dialects:

1 - Standard Arabic language.

2- The modern Arabic language.

3- The Algerian Arabic dialects.

4- The Berber languages, which include Tamazight, Shilha, Mozabite, Zanatiya, and Chaoui. (Bariha Sharifah, 2015: 134)

However, the linguistic field in Algerian society includes the largest number of Arabic speakers in its various dialects, with an overlap between it and the French language.

This linguistic space of Algerian society differs among Algerian interlocutors according to the geographical regions and the cultural diversity that exists from one side to the other along the Algerian territory.

Numerous studies also prove that formed the Amazigh language as a result of the influence of the Arab language, as he presents in his book Othman Saadi, whose title is The Dictionary of Arabic Roots of Amazigh Words, many examples that illustrate this issue.

Among them, we mention: (examples illustrating the compatibility of Berber with Arab languages)

- Agrum: Bread and gharam is a type of bread in Yemen
- Adhan: disease, and in Arabic dengue.
- Arid: the road, and in Arabic, the post, the distance between two trips.

- Amrar: Mountain, Arabic from the names of the bitter mountain. (Othman Saadi: 4)
- And the examples are many...

Historian William Langer acknowledges that the Berber language and the Arabic language descend from one origin. (Othman Saadi: 5)

Also, the Amazigh language used Arabic letters for writing during the Islamic conquest period, because the Tifinagh script is almost primitive and did not develop, while the Berbers, students of the French Academy, believe that the Latin letter is the most appropriate.

And from it, we can say that the Arab influence on Algerian society extends in history, as we do not limit it to the entry of Arabic into Algeria during the period of Islamic conquests, but rather to prehistoric times. (Osman Saadi: 17).

4.2. Dress

Algeria knows a great diversity and richness in customs related to dress, whether they relate it to women's clothing or men's clothing, which differs from one region to another. Al-Taraqi... And others, and many examples.

It made the great diversity of the Algerian dress known over the times and civilizations that followed Algeria through the interaction of the individual with his environment and by being influenced by the civilizations that he passed through.

And if we choose in this place to talk about men's clothing.

The dress of the Algerian man: According to what William Spencer mentions, the traditional dress of the North African man was a wide, loose dress, the sides of which were connected with sleeves and a hood, sometimes called in Algeria Bernosa, in addition to an undergarment.

And in his book, The Mirror, Hamdan Khoja describes the men's clothing as being made of black wool, woven by women, and has the shape of a bag with holes pierced in the middle for the head to come out, and it has two other holes for the hands, and the rich add another garment to it, which is the burnos. (Hamdan bin Othman Khoja, 1980: 23)

Numerous historical research also mentions clothing models that were the result of the influence of Algerians on the customs and dress of Arab Muslims, including:

Djellaba: the djellaba or djellaba, and it is close to the Arabic term jilbab, and it is a lower garment with stripes that has short and wide sleeves, and they commonly used it among the Berbers in difficult seasons. As for the rich, it is made of thinner fabrics and can be made of white wool. (George Marcais p.14)
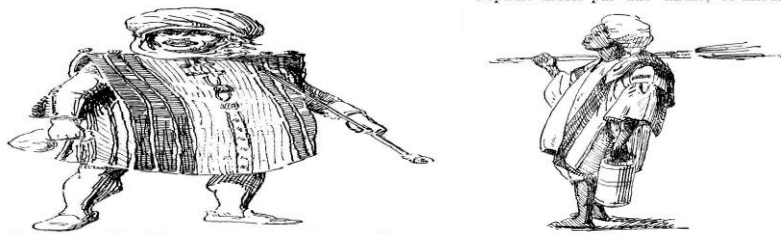
And the next picture shows the dress of the djellaba.

Figure2 : Shows the dress of the djellaba.

Source: G. Marcais, *The costume of musulman d'Alger*. Paris: Librairie Plon, p14

Abaya: A short dress that reaches the knee, worn with slippers made of coarse wool, and decorated with alternating lines between light and dark. The next picture shows that. (George Marcais: 14)

Figure 3: Shows the dress of the Abaya.

The burnous: It is a garment that is placed on the shoulders in a circular shape that reaches the knee. It has a square-shaped hood attached to it from the back and has the same material from which the burnous was made. It is also decorated with a ribbon on the chest area to bring the two parts of the burnous together. The following picture shows that. (George Marcais: 21)

Figure 4 : Shows the dress of the burnous.

Source: G. Marcais, *The costume of musulman d'Alger*. Paris: Librairie Plon, p14

4.3. The kitchen

People choose, acquire, preserve and prepare foods as a complete social and cultural event. Eating as a social, biological act is linked to the cultural heritage of societies and is an element like other cultural elements: music, dance, dress, architectural style...And other elements that reflect the cultural identity of every human society.

They closely linked Algerian cuisine to the production of land and sea, and has ancient Berber origins consisting of herbs, grains, and fresh or dried vegetables, which are still welcomed to this day in the countryside.

Then, with the advent of the Islamic civilization, Levantine and Andalusian recipes were transmitted to him, then the entry of the Turks enriched him with multiple dishes such as grills and sweets. And do not forget some derivations from Spanish cuisine, Italian cuisine, and French cuisine.

Historians agree that Ziryab is the one who has the credit for transferring many Eastern cooking and eating habits to the Islamic Maghreb. (Horiya Sherid, 2010: 48) Also, new customs entered Morocco in the Islamic era related to the arrangement of food on the table and how to

prepare it, as people from the general classes began to work on developing table etiquette and its types. (Horia Sherid, 2010: 40)

There was also a special arrangement for the dining room, where in the back section there is a place for placing food and serving it alternately. (Horia Sherid, 2010: 50), where new arrangements entered the Maghreb that its people did not know, and the following picture shows an Algerian family gathering around the dining table.

Figure 4 : Shows an Algerian table

Source: Houriya Sherid: *The development of the Arab kitchen and its equipment from the Almoravid era to the end of the Ottoman era* (historical and archaeological study).

Moroccan cuisine also acquired new habits in the Islamic era, such as the demand for spices coming from the East and sugar cane. Talking about the customs and traditions known to the Algerian society, which was the result of the Arab influence on the region, is an exciting and provocative topic for research and writing, and we cannot give it its due, but rather it needs more writing, research and analysis, and what we have presented in this work It is simple stations that may be harbingers of deeper and larger actions and size.

5.Conclusion

The succession of various civilizations in the North African region throughout history had an impact on the local cultures, due to the continuous changes and transformations that their societies experienced in terms of cross-pollination, ethnic homogeneity, and cultural mixing. Middle East, Algeria.

Customs and traditions are an important part of this cultural structure, which reflects in its various details, rituals, myths and narratives the story of the interaction of the Algerian individual with his environment and with the civilizations that he passed through, to find ourselves in front of a society that knows a great diversity and momentum of customs and traditions that differ in country from one region to another.

Among the conclusions reached by the research:

Due to the succession of the peoples that occupied and settled Algeria and their different races and places of origin, this led to the diversity and different customs and traditions.

As a result of :

- the cultural accumulations in Algeria, the customs and traditions of the people of Algeria are rich in their social and cultural nature.
- Algeria's formative nature (social structure) led to a state of societal mixing and fusion in language, culture, customs, and traditions.
- we have distinguished Algeria since the Islamic conquest by carrying the banner of the Islamic religion and defending it. This reflects the originality of Algerian society.

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FEAR AND UNFAIRNESS IMPACT ON THE LEARNING CAPACITY: OLD AND NEW CHALLENGES TO ASSESSMENT AND LEARNING

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Abstract: *Our society streams towards developing, adapting and coping with the increasingly intense waves of crises in a globalized world. For that, we need an education system that provides sustainable assessment methods and guarantees students' knowledge. Intending to understand the problems of the current education system, their origin and potential solutions, we initiated a mixed theoretical study on the assessment and learning processes in higher education. Then, to test the theoretical assumptions, the article takes the Romanian case study and analyses how feedback availability and the assessment environment impact the psychological state of Ph.D. students, their motivation to learn and the ease with which they complied with the Ph.D. requirements, and how socialization and group activities contributed to stimulating the students' capacity of development and integration into the labour market. The results show that assessment environments that put accent on feedback and eliminate competition allow learning to happen. And also, that the absence of feedback, be it from colleagues or teachers, represents a crucial factor in understanding tasks, getting over blockages and better preparing for summative assessments.*

Keywords: fear; unfairness; higher education; learning; assessment

1. Introduction

Since the 1990's we wonder what it would be like for education to embrace more the technological dimension as a tool and as a learning environment. Thirty years later, during the COVID-19 pandemic, we came to embrace technology as the only solution that made education possible during a health crisis. In this way we came to see practically what it means to change and transform education.

Technology introduced to us new learning and assessment tools while raising one of the greatest fears - the fear of not being able to provide future citizens and workers of a good quality when having great tools that allow cheating. Hence, a set of questions arise:

(1) To what extent the online education allowed more cheating and what values does it ground in our future citizens?

(2) How much does online education actually differ from in-person education and how much can it replace in-person education?

To answer these questions, we focus first on understanding the main tool of education – assessment, and its role in the learning process. For this we follow a mixed theoretical approach that leads us towards discovering the biological processes lying at the basis of thought so we can understand how learning happens and how assessment is perceived. Consequently, we focus on the role of socialization in assimilating information, building meaning and perceiving reality, and the impact of the learning environment on the learning capacity.

To verify the validity of our findings we used the Romanian case study, in which we analysed the way the Romanian former Ph.D. students in political science perceived the higher education system, its strengths and gaps.

2. A mixed theoretical approach to assessment

Assessment is quite an old process, which is part of our natural behaviour and serves as a mechanism to establish interpersonal relationships, group hierarchies, possession relations, etc. It involves the analysis, and most important, the comparison of someone's knowledge and skills with a frame of reference - be it a written text, a tradition, or a person. As Sadler said, assessment is "a multidimensional process of judging the individual in action" (Heywood, 2000: 32).

In education, the concept of assessment appeared relatively late and used to refer to the children's ability to cope with knowledge tests. But currently, education defines assessment as a process of judging episteme, techne and praxis; meaning that assessment is a process of evaluating one's knowledge on a subject, the methods one uses to apply that knowledge in a practical way, and the skill with which one manages to use both the knowledge and the tools to achieve good results and be as efficient as possible. Thus, assessment is about evaluating two aspects, the cognition and the behaviour.

The natural law theory argues that humans are rational by nature and that human action is also rational. With all this, we cannot overlook the impact of natural (instinctual) sent on the way we think and behave, and the impact of socialization on building meaning and internalizing knowledge. Thus, to penetrate the meanings of assessment and learning it may not be enough to embrace only one theoretical approach, we may need a mixed perspective on the subject where the used theories will complete each other and will help explaining different factors and actions in the learning environment.

2.1 Assessment and learning through the lenses of natural theory

The first theory we embrace is the natural theory. Its view derived from the natural sciences, and focused on the cognitive processes and mechanisms involved in projecting the human behavior and influencing the human knowledge.

The pioneers of natural theory recognize the implications of the natural laws and phenomena on the human behavior and learning. They argue that the human way of processing information and projecting a behavior are not separate processes but dependent. In agreement with this, we differentiate two types of information processing: the automatic and the controlled one. The first describes a fast process in which the humans project a response without passing it through the rational filter. The second is about projecting an answer that passed through the filter of thought where it matched a set of reasons that helped choosing the exact response (Schneider and Chein, 2003). The controlled information processing is responsible for learning and rewriting information. Yet, we must not undermine the power of automatic information processing.

The automatic information processing has a great influence on our behavior because it projects immediate responses. For example, in situations where people notice an unfair treatment towards someone or themselves, their response will be influenced by the automatic processing of information since we recognize fairness and its lack at the level of intuitive information processing (Cappelen et al., 2016). Thus, our response in these situations is fast given that it follows subconscious routes. And only after, the conscious and rationale response will come to complete and maybe correct our automatic actions.

In general, the automatic control of information is related to the automatic responses we project when receiving impulses that trigger in our brain a state of alarm. This state makes the information to be processed urgently to find in the known the easiest ways to respond. The way we act in these situations depends on the human way of organizing needs. Maslow said that human needs are: physiological, security, love and belonging, esteem and self-actualization needs (Maslow, 1954). He classified them in a pyramid where the physiological needs are at the bottom and the self-actualization needs are at the top. Now, the impulses we receive the closer

they are to the basic needs, the faster and the more automatic we act to the impulses we receive. The farther we move from the basics, the closer we get to conscious thinking that requires time and lucidity, which can only be achieved if we are calm. Thus, automatic information processing has a major impact on learning and especially on the perception of assessment and feedback.

Thus, we focus further on understanding two aspects with a major impact on the learning process, namely the perception of fear and fairness in the human psyche.

Perception of fear inducing factors and learning

Higher education institutions were founded to disseminate knowledge, train specialists, and guarantee through assessment the acquired skills. Hence the two roles of teachers: to teach and assess. But, for education to reach its purpose and for assessment to take place, learning must take place at first. Therefore, the main role of teachers is to sustain learning, to guide students throughout learning, to provide feedback for improvement and advice to help information processing and storing.

The things get complicated when we talk about the teacher as the assessor. The evaluation process, unlike the learning one, is a bit more complicated because it can generate impulses that can induce a state of alarm and make us anxious and afraid of the evaluation process itself.

From ancient times learning and the learning outcomes were always associated with the human ability to build a future. Similarly, assessment from the education institutions is meant to evaluate and guarantee competencies. This aspect made us see the education institutions as evaluative authorities rather than as producers of knowledge.

Teachers have a key role in the educational process, namely to assess students' skills and knowledge. However, this role is accompanied by an obligation, which proceeds the previous, namely, guaranteeing the assimilation of knowledge in the learning process and respectively the improvement of knowledge along the way. This obligation gives teachers a second role, namely that of the competent authority to give feedback and advice, to encourage learning. With these in mind we find one of the key issues of the assessment and learning system in higher education, namely the attachment of feedback to assessment.

Because assessment, as most definitions point out, is about comparison with other students and evaluation of the one's capacity to build a future, assessment does not remain at the level of a cognitive process, it comes to interact with aspects of our basic needs some with immediate priority such as: integration, status, friendship, sense of connection, sense of belonging, respect, gratitude, and others; and respectively future needs related to: the capacity to ensure the needs of safety, love and belonging, esteem and self-actualization. Because of this, at the subconscious level people perceive the assessment as a test of their learning skills and as a stressful situation, which keeps them in a state of alarm.

As Boud and Falchinkov (2007) sustain, besides motivating and encouraging, assessment has the power of embarrassing and humiliating the individuals or simply upsetting them. But these, do not allow the learning to happen. Our brain is built in such a way that it prioritizes to keep us alive in the first place, and only then in allows to any other processes of creative thought or any kind of word-based learning to happen. Thus, for us to learn we must not have any impulses that would awake our senses of survival, we must not be in an alarmed state. "A frightened person does not focus on words" but focuses on the impulses that trigger the state of alarm. The more we are in this alarmed state, the less we can learn. "In essence, fear destroys the capacity to learn" (Perry, 2006: 23). Hence one of the central problems of the education system. Because assessment has always been perceived as a process that raises anxiety (Struyven et al., 2005) and one that poses existential questions, any feedback provided by the teacher in the context of assessment will not be assimilated. The education system used to attach assessment feedback to show the student both the mistake and the development

opportunities. Despite this, feedback remains inferior to assessment because assessment affects us at the existential level while feedback is about development and improvement, about thinking, imagining, comparing and associating information to plan future actions which is processed in the prefrontal cortex.

With these in mind, from a natural perspective, as long as the feedback is delivered in the context of summative evaluation it will not be processed and will not provide results.

Fairness and learning

A factor that frequently influences our capacity and motivation to learn is fairness. When we learn, we put effort to understand, memorize and apply the information we receive, and in return we expect a positive response to our actions, like a good grade, respect, appreciation, etc. All these things are perceived at the intuitive level in our brains and are crucial in projecting a conscious behaviour and in motivating future learning. But, if during the learning process we notice an unfair treatment, we automatically associate learning and assessment with the bad things we saw and felt (unfairness, subjectivity, and inappropriateness). This has a major impact on learning and assessment, because our judgments shape our future behaviour and affect the way we learn, the efforts we put in developing ourselves, and the motivation we have for further learning and improvement.

Besides fairness there is the subjectivity factor. People, in general are subjective and their opinions about everything, including the assessment, depend on their life experience. So, no matter the teacher's intention, he's way of assessing people will be bias more or less. By consequence, assessment can be seen as a natural process of collecting and comparing information about the people around us.

Now, because learning is in direct relation with the controlled information processing (Fisk and Schneider, 1984; Schneider and Chein, 2003), an effective assessment that encourages learning, should exclude as much as possible the impulses that generate automatic information processing. When we are in a calm state of mind the learning process flourishes because the information can be processed and assimilated in a personal way. While the fight or flight states will prevent learning and objective assessment from happening.

Considering the above, we highlight two major problems of our assessment and learning systems: the first is about the incapacity of the brain to separate two types of information while being in a stressful environment. Here we refer to the two roles of the teacher, that of a trainer and that of an evaluator.

This problem raises in the moment the teacher provides feedback on the assessment results. The reason teachers do so is because the best way to learn is by pointing the problems right when the learner made them. Thus, teachers find it useful to combine the trainer and the assessor roles. But because these roles are perceived by different parts of the brain, once the assessor role triggers a state of alarm, all the work the teacher does as a trainer, is lost, because learning in a state of alarm cannot be done. Thus, we must look for a practical solution that will help students to differentiate between the two roles of the teacher so that they could learn better.

The other problem is about human subjectivity and fairness interpretation. Just as teachers can be biased in the assessment process, so students can be subjective in interpreting assessment results. So, in order to solve this problem, we must find practical solutions that can separate the evaluation from the person, but most important, to separate the assessment results from the comparison with the others, at least within the summative evaluations. In this way we can avoid students' fear of being judged, criticized, misunderstood, and we can present feedback resulting from evaluation much easily.

2.2 Assessment and learning through the constructivist lenses

The second theoretical approach we embrace in this study is the constructivist theory. Constructivism approaches learning through the prism of the individual, i.e. by analysing the impact of individual life experience on the process of perception and internalization of knowledge (Koohang et al., 2009). Yet, when discussing the learning, as it rarely occurs in individual circumstances, we cannot exclude social constructionist ideas on social groups and language impact on negotiating meanings and internalizing knowledge.

Basically, as Berger and Luckmann (1966) argued, social constructs such as knowledge are the result of socialization that gives the possibility of negotiating and giving meanings. In the same vein, "assessment and learning are social practices that involve the active construction of meaning" (Higgins et al., 2002: 54) in which language plays a key role in communicating, penetrating meanings and learning.

Thus, assessment is a social process in which learning standards are established through socialization, and applied in an evaluation process to measure the student's capacity of learning. But also, assessment is of an individual nature, in which the student shows his ability to learn by applying the knowledge and methods he thought and internalized along with other personal experience. Starting from this approach we can analyse the way in which assessment and feedback are perceived among the students considering that these are social practices with implications of group and individual work.

3. Assessment value, purpose and challenges

The role of assessment goes from guaranteeing personal development to training future specialists. It stimulates serious commitment to learning, an increased level of general culture and intelligence, and grounds the trend of social development.

In the past, assessment was a method to encourage learning. Today, it is "the principle guarantor of quality assurance in education" (Heywood, 2000: 32); it prepares the learners for employment, it measures the quality of learning, accustoms students to the task-evaluation process applied in work, and trains the students for solving life problems and managing personal behaviour. Thus, assessment is a crucial process in education, capable of stimulating and inhibiting learning, of generating ethical and moral principles or replacing them.

The main role of assessment is to build from a professional and psychological point of view conscious and responsible adults who will constitute a stable, safe and sustainable society. It tells "the students what they can and cannot do, to help them build confidence" or temper their behaviour (Boud and Falchinkov, 2007: 3), and for this reason assessment is a key factor in influencing people's future, highlighting behavioural frames and lightening thinking ways.

From a technical perspective assessment is all about learning and improving the learning skills (Gipps, 1994, in Higgins et al., 2002); it helps people to make connections and interpret information (Sadler, 1998), to associate it with something specific, and use it when necessary. Thus, in education assessment ensures the assimilation and synthesis of information, the formation of critical skills, analysis, interpretation and expression (Heywood, 2000). Yet, all of this is possible because of the formative assessment, which lays the foundations of high thinking skills, while the summative assessment is focused on encouraging competition and motivating learning through evaluation.

The transition of learning and assessment in online during the COVID-19 pandemics raised the issue of fairness, assessment anxiety, inappropriate standards, difficulty of communicating for peer assessment, the lack of traditional methods for teaching and assessment, etc. Some of these problems were present before embracing the online learning, but they enhanced once the technology became a part of our daily reality and the only means that made education possible during a health crisis.

3.1 Assessment challenges in the technology era

The purpose of assessment is to establish a problem-solving model in the students' mind. Regardless of problems' nature, we must learn to find effective methods of intervention (Greene, 1986, in Greene, 2017). Basically, when being assessed we do not learn only the art of being assessed but also the art of assessing. As Perlman (1957) argued, assessment is a process of gathering information based on which the nature of problems are established and paths of action are built (Greene, 2017).

When technology was introduced as an education tool, it transformed assessment and learning into individual processes. That is, in online everything is focused on the individual and on using personal experience for a better internalization of knowledge. With all this, we cannot rule out the importance of socialization for a better understanding, for debating realities, building ideas and perceiving the daily reality. This is where technology raised the issues of connecting individuals with reality, lack of confidence, evaluation anxiety, etc. Although at the individual level online education brought a set of benefits, it also highlighted a set of problems such as: the difficulty to verify the correctness of information, to establish interpersonal relationships, read behaviours and perceive reactions.

This comes from the fact that in online, education, learning, and assessment are often focused on the individual, lacking nonverbal language and other factors. Consequently, we stay focused only on achieving purposes and lack the emotional and human sides. This is one of the reasons why online learning and assessment raised the concern of plagiarism or cheating for completing the tasks by paying specialized business for such services (Walker and Townley, 2012; Ellis et al., 2018; Amigud and Lancaster, 2019). From here raise a set of worries about education and its challenges (see table 1).

Table 1: Challenges and benefits for learning brought by online education

	Factors' nature			
	Individual	Social	Natural	Ethical
Challenges	• Distrust of knowledge correctness; • Fear of expressing ideas that were not previously debated; • Reliability (completing a different task when not understanding and discussing the task); • Difficulty in applying an idea, method, or knowledge when lacking the real-life learning and assessment methods.	• Lack of social skills; • Social anxiety (the absence of social contact and the habit of living and working alone); • Lack of empathy (the incapacity to see real life persons and to interact with people may deprive students of valuable social experience); • Lack of immediate peer review; • Incapacity to rely on group work; • Absence of group responsibility and group working skills.	• Lack of natural competition; • The incapacity to learn or copy behaviors; • Difficulty to judge a situation in a complex way when lacking non-verbal language; • Reluctance to new environments; • Lack of communication and friends outside classes to debate knowledge, etc. • Difficulty to root loyalty and collegiality.	• Abstract behavior towards people; • Absence of privacy limits in an environment free of rules; • New cheating techniques; • The incapacity to guarantee a correct assessment of competencies; • The difficulty to recognize fairness and the risk of losing the learning motivation.

Benefits	• Developing personal methods of understanding and learning; • Encouraging continuous learning; • Focusing on personal results.	• Multidimensional development to cope with different tasks; • Embracing new methods of communication that involve development.	• Individual development without limits; • Encouraging personal learning approaches.	• Experiencing the lack of privacy limits and self-correcting; • Lack of factors that trigger unfairness in the real-life assessment.

Source: Author's table

Starting from the challenges we highlighted above two questions arise: how can our assessment guarantee the quality of education? And what principles and values of life does it root in the thinking of future citizens?

4. Traditional vs. authentic assessment

Assessment, as Sadler (1998) said "is specifically intended to provide feedback on performance to improve and accelerate learning" (77). But to what extent assessment in higher education conformed to this goal over time?

Traditional assessment seemed to be convenient for both teachers and mediocre students (Birenbaum and McRury, 1998), but as the students themselves argue, the traditional assessment methods "had a severely detrimental effect on the learning process, especially when they had little to do with the challenging task of making sense and understanding the subject" (Sambell, 1997, in Struyven et al., 2005). A simple demonstration of the fact that complex assessment, that focuses more on analysis, comparison, critique, penetration, and perception, encourages learning more than testing the final knowledge is Zeidner's (1987) and Traub and MacRury (1990) experiments. Zeidner showed that students who were told to prepare for an essay assessment easily passed a multiple-choice test. On the other side Traub and MacRury showed that those who prepared for a multiple-choice test had a hard time writing an essay assessment. This shows that assessment methods that encourage memorizing do not help to internalize knowledge in an effective and long-lasting way, while the methods that focus on developing learning competences help building effective ways of thinking, associating, and absorbing knowledge.

Also, the traditional way of assessing and teaching is often based on the teacher - learner kind of interaction where the relationship always places the teacher above the student. This attitude gives the student a lack of trust in his knowledge, may cause anxiety and make him deviate from the natural learning course. It is that, traditional type of learning and assessment encourage thinking inside the box and conforming to the group performance; it prevents individual development and exceeding the assessment standards (Sadler, 1998). In other words, the traditional education focuses on verifying the final knowledge and not the competencies of thinking and solving a problem in real life. Consequently, this learning type does not train adults for crises and change, but for work routines.

On the other side we have the authentic approach to learning and assessment, which focuses on the learner and comes with different assessment methods to encourage learning. This approach emphasizes the need for different types of teacher-student interaction to ensure that learning takes place at different levels (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Types of interaction in the authentic assessment and learning outcomes

Interaction based on

EQUALITY

Learner < - > Learner

This type of interaction encourages the negotiation of meanings, discussion of perspectives, sharing knowledge and projecting ideas from personal experience.

Learner < - > Teacher

Interactions based on equality between teacher and leaner encourage discussing opportunities, better understanding and developing autonomy and confidence by helping the learner to reach by himself a conclusion instead of imposing one.

HIERARCHY

Learner - > Learner

This interaction encourages the transfer of knowledge, building knowledge-based hierarchies, boosting confidence and establishing trust relationships.

Teacher - > Learner

This type of interaction helps grounding the normality of work hierarchy, responsibility, and discipline. It also highlights the necessity of having boundaries for efficiency and privacy.

Source: Author's figure

In traditional assessment and learning it was quite common to practice the teacher-learner type of interaction; it established a hierarchy and made teaching easy. But, if adopting only this type of interaction the students will lack communication, negotiation, debate and other activities necessary to learn and develop a wider range of skills. Of course, such a relationship is necessary for the learning and assessment processes to happen according to ethical and moral norms. However, the adoption of only this type of interaction deprives the students of the possibility to form other types of knowledge and competencies. Thus, for assessment to be sustainable and education to be effective, we need other types of interaction to allow formative assessment.

The teacher must assist the student in the learning process, and contribute to his learning by giving feedback, by identifying the students' weaknesses and strengths, and by proposing methods and ways to develop. Thus, the type of interaction and the teaching environment establish the teaching, learning and assessment methods that can encourage at the individual level the biological capacity to concentrate on learning, and at the social level the ability to negotiate, debate, construct meanings and internalize information about reality. To find ways for better learning and long-term assessment, we focus on the case of Romania, where we analyse the subject of fairness and evaluation standards among Ph.D. students, the presence of feedback, the environment in which feedback is offered, the degree of socialization, the evaluation methods and their efficiency in motivating learning and development.

5. The Romanian case study

Like every country, Romania adapted over the years to the challenges posed to assessment by technology, but also to the challenges posed by the simple development of society as a whole and the increasing need to raise the evaluation standards in the higher education once the general level of culture rose. This adaptation led to the implementation of new assessment tools such as anti-plagiarism software, the establishment of minimum requirements for doctoral dissertation, and requirements to ensure the accumulation of research skills, like the ordination no.5110/2018 on introducing the minimum standards for a PhD title in political science. With all this, new challenges to assessment and learning continued to arise.

To see the assessment impact over the doctoral students' capacity to learn and develop we chose to address an interview to 12 former Ph.D. students that we separate in two groups: the ones that went through an older evaluation system (7), and those that finished their studies after 2018 (5). The first aspect we focus on is the admission experience.

5.1 The admission experience

The admission experience has the purpose of sorting the students based on their competencies and capabilities. Thus. By nature this activity will trigger our alarm systems regarding our place in the group. So, we asked our interviewees to describe their experience from the admission colloquium. The answers show that at the admission colloquium the admission committee approached individually the students and not as a group. Consequently, the students gave more importance to the preparation for the admission colloquium instead of the event itself. Most of our respondents argued that a bigger challenge and quite an impulse for learning was the need to choose a research topic and the work for preparing the research proposal but not the colloquium.

Meanwhile, most of those who completed their doctoral studies by 2018 saw the admission colloquium as a strong impetus for individual learning and training and as an objective evaluation of their knowledge. Some of them saw the preparation for the admission colloquium as an opportunity to self-assess knowledge and skills, and as an opportunity to connect with other teachers.

Thus, some respondents saw the initial assessment as an impetus to mobilize for thinking, informing, and preparing the ground for initiating a learning process at another level, while others had a niche perspective and perceived the evaluation as a sorting process or as a formality. With all this, the majority of the students appreciated the individual work and excluded any implications of the admission assessment as a moment for receiving feedback.

Guidance commission

Most of those who finished their studies after 2018, identified the admission and the evaluation committee with a guidance commission. It was perceived this way because of its periodic evaluations throughout the Ph.D. studies. The interviewees sustained that the commission helped them a lot or

"Partially during the periodically presented reports where recommendations and discussions were made on the researched subject, weaknesses were identified, and the improvements were checked at the next report".

Also, the students found the commission's role to be about putting them on the right research path and encouraging them to improve their work. Yet, the students who defended their doctoral thesis prior to the implementation of the periodic evaluation method by reporting did not have the opportunity of being guided by a commission. An interviewee sustained that

"There was no such commission in general during my studies. But the fact that I worked with several teachers at the same time made me feel like I benefited in a way from such a commission".

Thus, during doctoral studies most of the work is individual, still our interviewees sustain and show that receiving feedback was important. Yet it also mattered the environment in which it was presented. Given that it was presented individually, the students avoided shameful and humiliating situations in the presence of other colleagues. This helped them focus on receiving feedback and projecting future actions for improvement of their research.

5.2 Peer feedback

An important aspect of the assessment was the availability, involvement and opportunity to receive peer feedback. It is not new that peer feedback is "effective for developing critical thinking, communication, lifelong learning, and creating or stimulating the

development of collaborative skills" (Nilson, 2003: 34). Peer review gives students the opportunity to negotiate and penetrate better the meanings by presenting their personal perspectives with no boundaries. Unlike teacher feedback, in peer feedback we do not have a hierarchy of authority, so the dialogue is conducted in a different way allowing students to ask questions in their own way and find answers in terms of their knowledge. So, we asked our interviewees about their perception of the peer feedback during their studies. Consequently, some interviewees sustained that peer feedback

"helped us improve our theses, especially in the early stages of research".
Others said that they

"Had study meetings with their colleagues, which helped me through the mutual critical analysis of the research and through the exchange of experience that took place at those meetings".
Both the colleagues and the referents helped the Ph.D. students by

"indicating possible vulnerabilities in the logical development of the thesis chapters, in the coherence and clarity of application of the models of correspondence and conceptual interpretation, respectively in the methodology used, so their contribution was likely to significantly improve the final form and content on the thesis".

Also some students benefited from peer feedback provided by the Ph.D. students in their senior years. The later, explained the tasks and shared their models of report structuring so the students could build and align to an academic writing and formatting standard for their periodic reports.

During the COVID-19 pandemic the students that finished their dosctoral studies after 2020 experienced online learning. They claimed feedback was more present in the first year of study and that later they were left alone. The social distancing measures constrained the students to adapt and study individually in the online environment, the reason why the interviewees underline the importance of interaction and feedback from their coordinators and coleagues.

Those who benefited from peer feedback appreciated its impact on their research path, while those who did not benefit from it or just partially, embraced individual research and feedback from their Ph.D. coordinators but psychologically felt alone. Implicitly, their habit of working alone impacted their ability to integrate into the labor market and embrace the team work.

5.3 Learning through projects, conferences and workshops

For personal and professional development it is necessary for students to be involved in varied activities that require thinking at different levels. Putting them in different situations encourages the learning of multiple methods and skills to apply in real life.
In doctoral studies, students are mostly concerned with conducting research in the interest of their study so they can build a thesis, meaning mostly they deal with individual work. Yet, the teachers try to involve them in other activities to familiarize them with other actions and help them integrate easier on the labor market by adapting to teamwork. In the case of the present students, they were involved in activities such as workshops, conferences, debates and projects. The experience gained by the students from these activities shows that they appreciated the conferences and the workshops for

"applying the research methodology and clarifying the concepts, but even in this case, due to the topic, the feedback was not extremely specific on the topic of my research".

We note that the Ph.D. activity, in addition to student research, largely depended on the degree of collaboration of universities with various institutions for the involvement of students in training programs. What we observe is that the students who completed their doctoral studies before 2018 highlighted a larger and more detailed list of activities and projects in

which they were involved, compared to those who completed their Ph.D. after 2018 who mostly mentioned the conferences that were actually part of the requirements for obtaining a Ph.D. Their capacity to invlove in extracurricular activities was diminished by the pandemics that restricted everybody's mobility.

The importance of extracurricular events influences student's learning. One of the students' stated:

"the doctoral program I graduated included the obligation to participate in workshops and conferences, as well as the construction of a research project and its submission for funding. Applying to these academic events was closely related to my study and doctoral research activity".

Similarly, another student stated that he participated in national and international conferences and projects along with the coordinating Professor.

"Collaboration in these activities helped me to explore the theoretical and practical perspectives, to understand the degree of methodological adaptability, to underlie the development of work dynamics in conducting research. The topic of these activities was marginally associated with the subject of my research, yet they were useful in terms of operationalization and continuation".

Also depending on institutional resources, some students had more opportunities than others. For example, one of the interviewees sustained that during his Ph.D. studies he, together with other colleagues, had study visits in Universities from Craiova, Constanta, Barcelona and Naples. Also he beneficed of a period of mobility outside the country, in Budapest, with the help of Rome Education Fund.

Along with this, some interviewees highlighted that their involvement in extracurricular, personal and professional training activities was strongly influenced by the coordinating teacher. One of the interviwees had the opportunity to work with researchers from Lithuania on a study about teachers' training regarding classroom diversity, and contribute to the development of a democratic education textbook.

Considering all responses we conclude that traditional way of assessment at the Ph.D. level are kept only when summative assessment was needed: for the admission and for final competencies assessment. Thus, doctoral studies are mostly about formative evaluation. The students' progress on complying with the academic standards is assessed through formative assessment and feedback from coordinators, peers and commissions.

Throughout the study we observe that from the feedback perspective, the students value any type of feedback and the extracurricular activities that helped them to develop a wide range of competencies, while the final summative assessment is perceived as something normal, a natural procedure for confirming a few of the acquired competencies.

Since the doctoral thesis and the Ph.D. requirements are the only summative assessments, we want to verify how much the assessment standards give students the feeling of fairness in evaluation. Do they consider the new standards sufficient? excessive or normal?

5.4 Technology and assessment standards

The evaluation criteria are constantly changing with the intention of adapting and complying with the new challenges in education and work. One of the factors that enhanced the rate of change in the education standards is technology, which given the COVID-19 pandemics became a normality and the only means through which education was possible for almost two years. In order to understand the impact of technology on learning and assessment in the technology era and after the pandemics we asked our interviewees if they consider the new standards for a Ph.D. imposed in 2018 as being enough for assessing the competencies of a Ph.D. student (see figure 2).

Figure 2: PhD students' perception of current standards for assessing doctoral skills
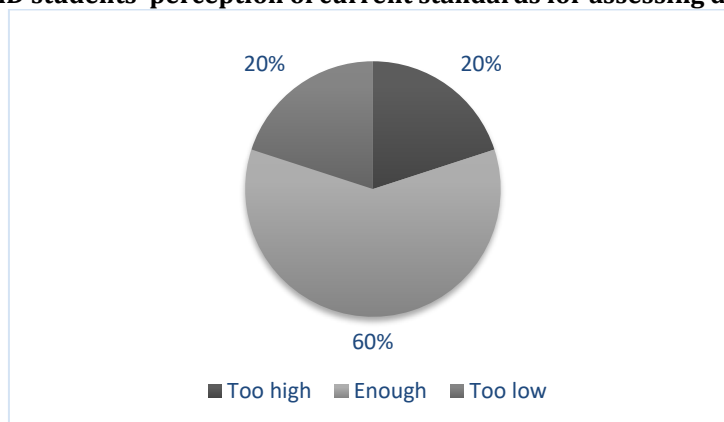
Source: Author's figure

The students who defended their doctoral dissertation after 2018, completed part of their studies according to the rules and constraints of the pandemic. All of them claimed that technology helped them a lot both in research and in compliance with academic standards, meaning attending conferences.

In addition to changing the assessment standards, technology came with many benefits such as the availability and accessibility of information, the emergence of various new research tools and new methods of storing and processing information. These aspects raised the ethical issue of using technology to cheat and comply easily with the assessment standards. For this reason, 20% of the participants in the interview that sustained their Ph.D. after 2018 consider that the assessment standards are not enough for fairly assessing the students' work and competencies. While 60% of the participants believe the standards are sufficient, and 20% believe they are too much. Those claiming that the assessment standards are too high come from a non-EU education system with a different culture, which had difficulties in complying with the basic requirements during their doctoral studies especially because they had a modest knowledge of English and Romanian, which were the only languages allowed for writing the thesis and for carrying out the entire doctoral activity.

Another aspect that influenced students' perceptions over the assessment standards is related to previous education. Students who were trained in an education system in the EU and in a field related to political science were better prepared for the activities of doctoral studies than those who came from a field with no connection with political sciences and from an education system with different evaluation standards. The continuity and connection of evaluation methods proved to be crucial for understanding the evaluation tasks, for identifying their relevance and connection with the real world.

6. Conclusions

Society is constantly changing, so it is normal for the challenges to the education system to keep raising. However, what we consider to be unnatural is the persistence of permanent challenges caused by permanent factors, namely the factors with implications in the thought process, like fear and injustice. The human biological response to these factors is not a conscious one to expect a change in the way we see the events that induce fear and anger because of injustice, but it is a subconscious one that once triggered does not allow the learning process to take place.

Developing the study, we found that for freeing learning from fear and injustice we must create learning and assessment environments that do not allow comparison of feedback

to establish interpersonal relationships between students, construct assessment methods and techniques to encourage the development of a personal imprint on answers, encourage teamwork, develop self-assessment skills and give access to socialization.

We verified these hypotheses in the case study, which showed us that injustice is a major factor in highlighting our level of focus and motivation for learning. The environment in which the assessment and feedback take place can free students from the fear of being judged, and help them focus on improving their learning and their competencies instead of comparing themselves with other students.

Also, feedback was a crucial aspect in the learning process. The students that received any feedback from teachers, committees and colleagues felt more confident in their skills and learning results, and knew what they should improve, compared to those that did not receive any feedback.

Equally important was socialization, which although considered trivial, the students highlighted its lack during the pandemic and the difficulties they had in learning given the absence of coleagues with which they could exchange information, discuss homework and negotiate meanings. The absence of socialization made our students feel alone in the learning process, which froze their ability to connect, establish friendships and discuss meanings, deadlines, problems and exchange solutions to learn better and comply more easily with the learning and assessment requirements.

Following this study, we conclude that to improve the learning capacity in higher education, we must encourage the teachers to create a learning and assessment environment similar to the one in the Ph.D. studies - one that does not trigger a state of alarm in students, that encourages learning, socialization, aquiring skills, and self improvement. This will help us teach students to differentiate between the two roles of teachers: the assessor, which usually triggers a state of alarm, and the feedback giver that must inspire trust for the information to be taken over and be processed.

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THE RELATION BETWEEN MOTIVATION TO LEARN AND THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE PUPILS IN THE HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE TRIANGLE AREA OF ISRAEL

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Abstract: *This research aimed to examine the relationship between Motivation to Learn and the achievement. A quantitative research method was used. A simple random selection method was used where 242 male and female students aged between 15 – 18 years old selected and 110 parents. The study used questionnaires that were distributed to a large number of High school students of the Arab sector in the Triangle area in Israel. Many variables such as income, family status, house (property or rent), economic situation, parental education level, parental involvement alongside many other factors were analysed to asses the SES. The research was based on the Social Capital Theory and the Success Model that showed the relationship between variables. The statistical analysis conducted was R programming language via R Studio. Further analysis using statistics such as t, F, Cramer v, Pearson correlation were used to measure the relationships between the different variables. Finally, a mediation analysis using the Sobel test was presented through several linear regression models with an aim to check the overall effect of each variable on achievement. In this research, the results indicated that there is a positive relationship between Motivation to Learn of Arab families and the student's academic achievement. The research also indicated that academic achievement is affected by and shows a reciprocal relationship with other variables: well-being, and socio-economic status.*

Keywords: The Socio-Economic Status (SES); Motivation; Academic Achievement; Social Well-Being.

1.Introduction

Examination of the demographic factors that affect educational achievements began mainly in the 7th decade, after 1960. For example, Mann (1985) studied a group of variables including age, gender, demographic association, race, marital status, socioeconomic status (SES), the education level of the parents, parents' professions, language, level of income and the religious affiliation. Since this time there have been many theories and advancements in the understanding of this topic.

It is widely accepted that a person's motivation level plays a crucial role in their desire to accomplish goals and perform well. The subject of motivation has been extensively studied, and there are many different theoretical movements that address it. To understand how an individual's level of motivation may be influenced by their socioeconomic condition, it is necessary to better understand the reasons and methods that raise it among learners (Zaghloul, 2012).

Socio-economic status (SES) is a criterion of a situation in terms of the material income of the family and the social status compared to others. When analyzing the socio-economic status of the family, the education of the mother, father, their profession and the family income (Gobena, 2018) is taken into account.

This study investigates if the different factors that affect the students' academic achievement depend on students' motivation to learn. There are many economic and social indicators which may impact the students' academic achievement, many of these indicators have been researched and defined widely in the past. These different indicators will be

considered and mentioned in order to appreciate how they could impact the students' achievements.

The following research focuses on Arab schools in Israel. Within the Arab community many students live in economically challenged environments which could impact their motivation and their future profession. In order to improve educational achievements and bring about a balanced society it is very important for those responsible for the Israeli education system to understand the contributing factors that may be causing the discrepancies in the academic achievements of the students in Israel.

The importance of motivation for learning is demonstrated by its ability to direct behavior towards specific goals. Additionally, it contributes to increase the effort, performance, perseverance of the student and his/her ability to process information, which in turn is reflected in the classroom performance by raising the level of academic achievement. Sarhan (2016) indicated that the importance of motivation for learning is in increasing academic achievement and success. He showed a direct relationship where, the motivation for learning is an internal condition of the student that moves thier behavior and performance to achieve a specific goal such as obtaining high marks.

2. Theories Related to Motivation

It is widely accepted that a person's motivation level plays a crucial role in their desire to accomplish goals and perform well. The subject of motivation has been extensively studied, and there are many different theoretical movements that address it. To understand how an individual's level of motivation may be influenced by their socioeconomic condition, it is necessary to better understand the reasons and methods that raise it among learners.

According to the behavioral hypothesis, people get motivated as a result of the action of internal or external stimuli, and they then respond to these impulses by producing a behavior or activity. The motive behind people's actions in a scenario is behavior, particularly the reinforcing kind. The incentive to retain and repeat these activities is stimulated by the fact that an individual receives reinforcements or rewards for their activity. When a person acts in a way that satisfies his wants and so gets motivated without outside help, according to Skinner, the reinforcement may become ingrained in that person's personality. For example, a student could read books for both pleasure and to prepare for an exam (Zaghloul, 2012).

Employing the knowledge from above, behavioral theory focuses on using various types of reward in its educational applications to increase the amount of learning motivation. These theories contend that an adequate examination of the motives and incentives offered in the classroom is the first step in understanding student motivation, and they view the reward as an alluring element that influences the outcome of a certain conduct (Allam, 2010).

3.Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation to Learn

Motivation is the reason that encourages and stimulates action. It is the process of goal-oriented activity, and stimulates an internal motivation for thinking and achievement (Goleman, 1995). Ibrahim (2016) defined it as a power or engine, the goal of it is to enable an individual to choose and act upon specific goals, it is an internal process that activates, leads, and maintains the behavior of an individual over time.

In recent decades, recognition of the key role of motivational processes is in students' success and other adaptation processes such as feelings toward learning and schooling, classroom troublesome behavior, dealing with difficulty and failure, and well-being in general (Pintrich and Schunk, 2002) have been increasing.

This recognition coincided with the development of theories and research programs aimed to understand the motivations and processes underlying the behavior of students in school. An important goal of these theories and studies was to apply them in situations where

student motivation is not optimal. Indeed, in recent years there have been many attempts and significant successes in running - programs to encourage and enhance student motivation in the school (Eccles and Wigfield, 2002). According to Zayed (2003) motivation for learning is composed of eight dimensions: the ambition and ability to achieve goals, the ability to take responsibility, perseverance and continuity, upgrading and competition, desire to excel and improve, the capacity for independence, the ability to achieve proficiency, self-confidence and self-respect, and guidance for the future.Many people consider motivation as an actual, procedural, and existent idea that can be assessed, quantified, and indirectly witnessed. It is regarded as playing the most significant part in human tenacity in getting a job done. One of the finest metrics for determining a person's degree of motivation is their perseverance. Humans are motivated to perform a variety of tasks, including inciting actions. According to Nofal (2019), motivation causes a person to engage in particular behaviors after experiencing a period of relative stability because it influences the standards of expectations individuals have of others based on their behaviors and activities and upholds sustainability in behavior. Motivation is an inner force that activates and provides direction to our thought, feelings and actions. There are two characteristics of motivation, which are behavior and performance to achieve the goal and persevere. People who are enthusiastic continue working until achieving their goals, and so the level of motivation of students affects their desire to attend school and their relationships with teachers. Moreover, it affects the amount of time to complete educational tasks, their performance in tests and many other educational aspects. If students are not motivated, it is difficult, and may be impossible, to improve their academic achievement, no matter how good the teacher, curriculum or school is.

Achievement motivation is often correlated with the actual achievement behavior. The motivation to achieve something, however may present itself only in the behavior that children value. For example, a child may be highly motivated to achieve something, and this may be exhibited in athletics but not in schoolwork. Thus, different situations have different levels of achievement according to how children may value something (Eccles, et. al. 2002) Motivation is difficult to define and measure, but scientists generally recognize two major types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic.

4.Motivation to Learn

This refers to the desire to succeed and achieve a certain level of education, and to learn and engage in educational activities in the school. Motivation provides students with a sense of belonging, integration, and acceptance within a class or a group, and enables students to benefit and have fun in class activities. The student sees him/herself as a part of a group (Abu Halima, 2018).

The motivation to learn is one of the important variables that have an effective role in the students' performances, as it has an effect in increasing the student's attention and focus in educational activities, which helps in his success. Also, it has a major role in raising the level of student achievement in the various fields and tasks he takes in school (Ahmed, 2015).

The interest in factors affecting the learning process led to study the motivation to learn, as it is one of the important factors that has an impact on the student's mind and performance. According to Sarhan (2016), motivation is represented in the student's inclination towards finding academic activities to achieve a reward that satisfies an internal need and desire in the field of expertise. The internal and external motivation of a student drives his/her behavior and orientates them to achieve a specific goal while maintaining their continuity until that goal is achieved. Motivation for learning is an important means that can be used to achieve educational goals effectively, and it helps to determine the student's achievement ability.

The importance of motivation for learning is demonstrated by its ability to direct behavior towards specific goals. Additionally, it contributes to increase the effort, performance,

perseverance of the student and his/her ability to process information, which in turn is reflected in the classroom performance by raising the level of academic achievement. Sarhan indicated that the importance of motivation for learning is in increasing academic achievement and success. He showed a direct relationship where, the motivation for learning is an internal condition of the student that moves his/her behavior and performance to achieve a specific goal such as obtaining high marks.

Low SES students can be reluctant to seek support from teachers, so the key advice to teaching staff with students from low SES backgrounds in schools are:

1. Know and respect students: understand LSES students; communicate with them, embrace and integrate their diversity and enable contributions of their knowledge to everyone's learning.
2. Give students the freedom to choose: provide students with a low socio-economic status with flexibility in assessments and diversity in teaching methods, with maintaining the academic standards. "
3. Make the instructions and goals clear and in an understandable language for students: clarifying and interpreting the material in a simple language that students understand, mentioning the expectations required from them and using the methods that help them to succeed.
4. Clarification of the educational subject: follow the sequence in teaching; clarify step by step during teaching to ensure the students' success and ability to access higher education.
5. Be ready to help students in their questions and inquiries. In addition, be kind in your interactions with students so that students benefit from your capabilities and experience and to improve their educational level.
6. Be a reflective expert: reflect and seek to act on your own reflections, peers' reflections and feedback from students, to continuously improve your teaching practice and your students' learning (Devlin et al. 2012).

5.The socio-economic status

Socio-economic status includes several components and variables which include: family income, number of individuals in the family, household expenditure of the family, the place of residence, relationships between the children, relationships between the children and parents, relationship between the parents themselves, geographic location, the neighbourhood where they live, customs, society, traditions and their environment. Those variables can affect pupils ethically, on a behaviour level as well as their achievements (Ali et al., 2009).

Socio-economic status is one of the most important factors affecting academic success. Poor income as well as lack of financial income and educational aids have implications on the child's upbringing. All studies confirm that the rate of school failure has a more meaningful connotation in the inappropriate socio-economic environment (Claes & Comeau, 2005).
Research conducted by Mcleod (2011) during the summer holidays shows that the level of achievement of pupils from middle class families was higher than the level of pupils coming from families with a lower socio- economic level.

The family's economic background and the family's good socio- economic level contribute in providing the material needs of the children, which give them more time to study. While the low economic situation of the family leads it to prioritising the provision of money, motivates the members to work even the children, and this makes children leave school early sometimes. In addition the lack of an appropriate environment to study, can also contribute to low the motivation, hence to low academic achievements (Mehmood, 2014).

6.Social Well-being

Keyes described social well-being as "the appraisal of one's circumstance and functioning in society" (Keyes, 1998) and identified five dimensions that are seen to cover this construct: social acceptance, social contribution, social actualization, social coherence and social integration (Radzyk, 2014).

The use of statistical data and indicators to study the well-being of children in particular is not new. Pioneering reports on the "State of the Child" were published as early as 1940s (Ben-Arieh 2008; Ben-Arieh et al. 2001). Many family and environmental factors affect the child's living conditions and development. The child's economic, health and safety conditions determine to a large extent the quality of his/her life in the present and future. Over the last decade, there was a continuous increase in the percentage of poor children in Israel, and today there is seen that every third child in Israel lives under conditions of economic distress. The poverty rate is one indication of many other changes that occurred over the years: decline in the average number of children in family, increase in the number of single parent families, increase in the number of pupils in the education system, all these and others are part of changing situation in everything related to the world and the living conditions of children in Israel, and their implications are both positive and negative.

7.Methodology

The methodology that was chosen for this research focused on a quantitative approach.

Quantitative data of the research was collected through questionnaires which were distributed to students in high schools in the Triangle Area of Israel; 242 high school students completed the survey of the Arab sector in the Triangle area in Israel (163 male and 79 female).

8.Findings

Figure 1, the relation between the family socio-economic status, Motivation and student achievements.
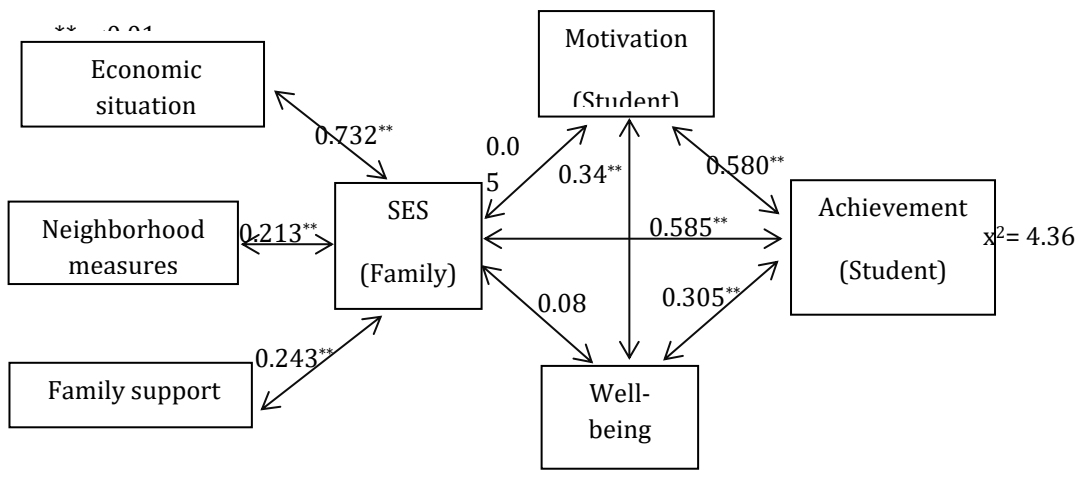
The model presents the connections and interactions between the components of success. The model comprises a basis (social capital) and four consecutive layers (SES, motivation, well-being and achievement). There is assumed that these elements are in a causal relationship: positive social capital conditions help the individual to achieve their goals (material, professional, personal). The acquired result leads to improve well-being, which

produces achievement. There is considered that interactions between the components of success may exist. For example, well-being can influence achievement. Additionally, all components can influence each other in an interchangeable way. As shown in Figure 1, neighborhood measures found to have an indirect effect on school engagement through its relationship with Socioeconomic status (= .213). Socioeconomic status was then directly related to school Achievement (= .585), youth who reported greater frequency of supportive parental behaviors (e.g., parent often giving encouragement) also tended to be more positively engaged in school. Youth who perceived greater safety in their neighborhoods were more likely to perceive more positive attitudes and also to report greater frequency of supportive parental behaviors. Well-being (= .305) and Motivation (= .580) were then directly related to school achievement.

Table 1. Pearson Correlation between Grade Level, Family Support, Economic Situation, Friends Support, Learning Motivation, Community Support, and social well-being (SWB) in Student Questionnaire.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Grade	--						
Family support	0.47***	--					
Perception of SES	0.41***	0.32***	--				
Friends support	0.4***	0.33***	0.61***	--			
Learning motivation	0.6***	0.62***	0.31***	0.42***	--		
Community Support	0.23***	0.21***	0.34***	0.38***	0.22***	--	
social well-being	0.22***	0.31***	0.4***	0.27***	0.38***	0.51***	--

Note: generated by the author based on SPSS outputs;$P<0.05$, **$P<0.01$, ***$P<0.001$.*

From table 1, a Pearson correlation between grade and family support was 0.47 a moderate positive relationship, an alpha of 0.001 was considered significant. The Pearson correlation between grade and Perception of SES is 0.41 a moderate positive relationship, an alpha of 0.001 is significant. Pearson correlation between grade and friends support was 0.4 a moderate positive relationship, an alpha of 0.001 was considered significant. Pearson correlation between grade and learning motivation was 0.6 a strong positive relationship, an alpha of 0.001 was considered significant. Pearson correlation between grade and Community Support is 0.23 a weak positive relationship, an alpha of 0.001 was considered significant. Pearson correlation between grade and social well-being was 0.22 a weak positive relationship, an alpha of 0.001 was considered significant.

Pearson correlation between family support and Perception of SES was 0.32 a moderate positive relationship, an alpha of 0.001 was considered significant. Pearson correlation between family support and friends support was 0.33 a moderate positive relationship, an alpha of 0.001 was considered significant. Pearson correlation between family support and learning motivation was 0.62 a strong positive relationship, an alpha of 0.001 was considered significant. Pearson correlation between family support and Community Support was 0.21 a weak positive relationship, an alpha of 0.001 was considered significant. Pearson

correlation between grade and social well-being was 0.31 a moderate positive relationship, an alpha of 0.001 was considered significant.

Pearson correlation between Perception of SES and friends support was 0.61 a strong positive relationship, an alpha of 0.001 was considered significant. Pearson correlation between Perception of SES and learning motivation was 0.31 a moderate positive relationship, an alpha of 0.001 was considered significant. Pearson correlation between economic situation and Community Support was 0.34 a moderate positive relationship, an alpha of 0.001 was considered significant. Pearson correlation between Perception of SES and social well-being was 0.4 a moderate positive relationship, an alpha of 0.001 was considered significant.

Pearson correlation between friends support and learning motivation was 0.42 a moderate positive relationship, an alpha of 0.001 was considered significant. Pearson correlation between friends support and Community Support was 0.38 a moderate positive relationship, an alpha of 0.001 was considered significant. Pearson correlation between friends support and social well-being was 0.27 a weak positive relationship, an alpha of 0.001 was considered significant.

Pearson correlation between learning motivation and Community Support was 0.22 a weak positive relationship, an alpha of 0.001 was considered significant. Pearson correlation between learning motivation and social well-being was 0.38 a moderate positive relationship, an alpha of 0.001 was considered significant.

Pearson correlation between Community Support and social well-being was 0.51 a moderate positive relationship, an alpha of 0.001 was considered significant.

9.Discussion

The current research examines students' motivation to learn and its connection to scholastic success, and its findings are based on an analysis of the papers that were given to the students.

According to (Yang, 2010), students' affiliation with a particular socioeconomic situation affects their performance in school achievement and behavior, in addition to their relationships with their peers.

The level of the local community and the family in which the individual lives have a direct impact on the student's motivation to learn and educational achievements. Children's motivation to study and academic achievement are significantly influenced by the social and economic climate of their environment (Radia, 2016).

The student's nurturing setting, whether at home or at school, is improved by parents' involvement in the school and their collaboration with the management and instructors. This has a positive effect on both the student's success and his desire to learn (Grenfell & James, 1998). The primary goal of the study was to investigate how the socioeconomic position of the learner affected his or her desire to learn.

The results of this research are consistent with the theory that states the family is the first factor that affects the individual and helps to develop the characteristics and values s/he has. These characteristics, which are transmitted from one generation to another, help one's success and distinction, including in the field of study (Lareau, 2002; Swartz, 2008).

The results of the current study indicated that there is a positive relationship between the student's socio-economic status and motivation to learn (P<0. 001), as the student's relationship with the parents positively affects his/her motivation to learn from the parents' point of view. Also, the students indicated the positive impact of good relationship between the student's parents and the surrounding environment of the student (P<0. 001), among neighbors and friends, on the student's academic performance and academic achievement (P<0. 001). Although this was a low value indicating a weak positive relationship it nevertheless shows there is a link present.

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Emotion, drive, and scholastic success have a definite positive connection, according to a research by Kapikiran (2012) conducted among Turkish high school pupils. It has been discovered that driven students show greater levels of innate motivation and have the capacity to keep an optimistic mindset when coping with academic difficulties. Because motivation is inversely correlated with test fear and the desire to avoid failure, and favorably with school love, class attendance, assignment preparation, self-ability, persistence, and drive toward expertise.

The findings of the current study indicate clearly a correlation between motivation and student achievement (p <0.001), as students experience school as a pleasant and safe environment, they achieve better academic achievements and their sense of success increases. Bernard & Walton (2011) presented in their research a plan for a supportive environment to the child's well-being since childhood, compared to other normal environment, and they concluded that the child's social environment has a great role in influencing his/her well-being and psychological health (having positive feelings more than negative feelings). Thus, these results support that the social environment in support of the student since childhood is the basis for well-being and good academic performance.

These studies support the results obtained in this study as there is a positive relationship between the socio-economic situation and the student's well-being (P<0. 001), as the student's standard of living and the student's social relationships at home and school affect his/her psyche and well-being (P<0. 001). When the socio-economic situation is good, the student's psyche and well-being are good, so the researcher has to take care of the student's environment from the base to get a stable student psychologically and socially.

Conclusion
- The socio-economic status of the country and the level of well-being and services affect the socio-economic status of the population.
- motivation to learn greatly affects the student not only in achievement, but it also affects his/her well-being, standard of living.
- There is a correlation between student well-being and motivation, and there is a two-way effect.
- Student performance and achievement affects their motivation to learn and their arrival to school.
- The student's social relationships with their colleagues and friends in school or in the neighbourhood affect their motivation to learn.

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FOOD AND NUTRITION POLICIES IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF DEVELOPMENT OF FAST FOOD INDUSTRY

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Abstract: *The starting point of this communication is one of the Conclusions of the European Congress on the Problem of Obesity (September 2020) and of Global Obesity Observatory according to which "24.22% of Romania s population is obese". We all know that in a society where people are in a hurry to get from one place to another, the possibility of serving food quickly (even, sometimes, without leaving the car) may seem like an irresistible offer. In addition to speed, accessibility, the standardization of products and the emphasis on low price are some of the so-called "advantages" of fast food, which have made this industry develop massively in the last 30 years: according to statistics, fast food generates revenue of over $570 billion. However, we also know that fast food products accumulate a lot of calories (approximately all the calories needed for a whole day are used at one meal), and regular consumption of such products leads to disruption of normal metabolism. This article presents, in a comparative manner, the response of EU in terms of public policies, national regulations in the field of food and nutrition.*

Keywords: fast-food; EU policies; healthy nutrition; food consumption

1. Introduction: Tracing the roots and growth of the fast food industry

The emergence of the fast food industry was determined by several factors. The first of these is related to the change in people's lifestyle, starting with the 1920s. the 20th century, which came amid the development of urbanization and industrialization processes (Baudrillard, 2016). These led to the emergence of a middle class in American society, with its own lifestyle, which enjoyed greater access to leisure, vacations, and contract activities. In the most recent period, the development of technology has generated, in its turn, the appearance of a new addiction, from smartphone addiction (Popescu et al, 2022), to the addiction of consuming services and products, including food products, procured through digital platforms.

Gradually, the 20th century and, later, the 21st century generated, against the backdrop of globalization and the development of modern commerce, best illustrated by the appearance of large shopping centers, hypermarkets and malls and, later it was called the "McDonaldization of society" (Schlosser, 2001; Bryman, 2017; Ritzer, 2013). All these changes have encouraged dining out and thus the emergence of chain restaurants offering fast food and minimal service. In the context of the perpetuation of the phrase "time is money" (Ritzer, 2013), the idea of fast food came as a saving solution - which allows the individual to serve the meal quickly to be able to return to his activities. Starting from this argument, many times, the main advantages offered by this type of food were mentioned in the marketing strategies of fast-food chains, and the first of these is speed. Fast food is often marketed as a quick and convenient option for busy

individuals who do not have time to cook. Also, they are presenting fast food like being cheaper than other dining options, making it accessible to a wider range of people.

However, there are many disadvantages of fast food, and the first of these is related to the nutritional capacity that these foods offer. First of all, fast food is often high in calories, which can contribute to weight gain and obesity; many fast food options are high in unhealthy fats, such as saturated and trans fats, which can increase the risk of heart disease. The production and distribution of fast food can have a negative impact on the environment, including increased greenhouse gas emissions and the generation of waste. Also, fast food can be addictive due to its high fat, sugar, and salt content, which can lead to a dependency on these foods and make it difficult to adopt healthier eating habits (Fuhrman, 2018; Janssen, H., Davies, I., Richardson, L., & Stevenson, L. (2018: 16-17)

According to a report by Zion Market Research, the global fast food market was valued at USD 647.7 billion in 2019 and is expected to reach USD 931.7 billion by 2027, growing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 4.6% from 2020 to 2027. The report also notes that North America held the largest share of the global fast food market in 2019, followed by Europe and the Asia Pacific region. However, the Asia Pacific region is expected to exhibit the highest CAGR during the forecast period (Zion Market Research, 2021).

In Europe, according to a report by Statista, the revenue of the fast food industry in Europe amounted to approximately 130 billion euros in 2020. The United Kingdom was the largest market in Europe, followed by Germany and France. The report also states that the market is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 4.6% between 2021 and 2025 (Statista, 2022).

A study published in the journal Nutrients in 2020 found that the highest consumption of fast food in Europe was among young adults aged 18-24, with males consuming more fast food than females. The study also found that fast food consumption was associated with higher BMI and lower diet quality (Papadaki et al., 2007: 169-170)

2. Literature review: theories on food consumption

There are several important theories of food consumption, each with their own unique perspective on why and how people choose to eat. Here are some of the most notable theories: social learning theory; cultural theory; evolutionary theory.

Social Learning Theory suggests that people learn about food preferences, tastes, and habits from those around them, particularly within their family and cultural context. The social learning theory, developed by psychologist Albert Bandura, proposes that people learn by observing others and their behaviour, and by receiving feedback on their own behaviour. In the context of food consumption, this theory suggests that people's eating habits are shaped by their social environment, including the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours of those around them (Bandura, 1977).

Cultural Theory emphasizes the importance of cultural and societal factors in shaping food choices and consumption patterns. It suggests that people are influenced by the food customs and traditions of their culture. M. Douglas argued that food is not just a physical necessity, but also a powerful symbol that carries important cultural meanings and values. She emphasized the role of culture in shaping people's attitudes and behaviours towards food and suggested that food preferences and taboos are closely tied to social norms and cultural beliefs (Douglas and Isherwood, 1996). One of Douglas's key contributions to the cultural theory of food was her concept of "cultural purity," (Douglas, 1966) which refers to the idea that certain foods or food combinations are seen as "pure" or "impure" based on cultural norms and beliefs. For example, in some cultures, certain meats or dairy products may be seen as impure or unclean, while in other cultures, they are considered essential components of the diet.

Evolutionary Theory suggests that food preferences and consumption patterns are influenced by evolutionary factors such as taste preferences that evolved to help our ancestors survive and thrive. According to Richard Wrangham (2009), our food choices and eating behaviours are the result of a complex interplay between our evolutionary history, our cultural practices, and our individual preferences and motivations. He argues that our evolutionary adaptations to different types of foods and nutrients can explain why some people may have a natural preference for certain types of foods, while others may find them unappealing or even aversive (Wrangham, 2009)

Symbolic interactionism suggests that our food choices and eating habits are shaped by the meanings we attach to different types of foods. For example, certain foods may be associated with specific cultural or religious traditions or may be seen as symbols of wealth or status. One sociologist from symbolic interactionism who has analyzed food consumption is Claude Fischler. In his book "L'homnivore", Fischler argues that our food choices are shaped by the social and cultural meanings we attach to different types of foods. He suggests that we are "omnivorous" not just in terms of the range of foods we eat, but also in terms of the cultural meanings we attach to them (Fischler, 1990). Fischler examines the ways in which food choices are shaped by social and cultural factors, such as gender, social class, and ethnicity. In other papers, Fischler also explores the role of food in the construction of personal (self) and group identities (Fischler, 1988).

All these theories provide insight into the complex and multifaceted nature of food consumption and can help inform strategies for promoting healthy and sustainable food choices.

EU policies and regulations on food and nutrition

Food consumption is important on the EU agenda for several reasons. Firstly, it is closely linked to public health, as diet-related diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease are major public health challenges in Europe. Improving diets and reducing the consumption of unhealthy foods can help to prevent these diseases and improve overall health outcomes (Rosenheck, 2008) .

Secondly, food consumption has significant environmental impacts, including greenhouse gas emissions, water use, and land use. The EU has set ambitious targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting sustainable food production, which require changes in food consumption patterns.

Thirdly, food consumption has important social and economic implications, as it is closely tied to issues such as food security, food waste, and the livelihoods of farmers and food producers. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach to food policy, which takes into account the complex interrelationships between food consumption, public health, environmental sustainability, and social and economic factors.

Finally, food consumption is an important cultural and social practice that shape identity, values, and norms (Poulain, 2002; Niță and Ilie Goga, 2017: 6-7). As such, it is an important area for research and policy development, which can help to support more sustainable, healthy, and equitable food systems in Europe.

The European Union has several social policies related to food and safe alimentation, which we are describing below:

General Food Law Regulation

The General Food Law Regulation (Regulation (EC) No 178/2002) is a key piece of legislation that establishes the general principles and requirements of food law in the European Union. This regulation sets out general principles and requirements for food safety, including the responsibility of food business operators to ensure that food placed on the market is safe.

The regulation sets out the responsibilities of food businesses, competent authorities, and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) in ensuring the safety and quality of food for human consumption.

The regulation applies to all stages of the food chain, from primary production to processing, distribution, and sale. It requires that all food placed on the EU market must be safe and comply with specific requirements on labeling, traceability, and hygiene.

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) is an independent agency of the European Union (EU) responsible for providing scientific advice and communication on food safety issues. It was established in 2002 under the General Food Law Regulation (Regulation (EC) No 178/2002). Its role is to ensure that food is safe for consumption and to provide scientific advice to inform policy decisions. The EFSA communicates its scientific findings to the public in a transparent and accessible manner, to help consumers make informed decisions about the food they eat. Overall, the EFSA plays a key role in ensuring that the food consumed in the EU is safe and of high quality, and that consumers are provided with accurate and transparent information about the food they eat.

Regulation on the Provision of Food Information to Consumers requires that all food products sold in the EU provide clear and comprehensive information on ingredients, nutrition, and allergens to help consumers make informed choices. The Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers, also known as the Food Information Regulation (FIR), is a key piece of legislation that sets out the requirements for food labeling and the provision of information to consumers in the European Union. The regulation applies to all food and drink products sold to consumers in the EU, and it establishes rules on the mandatory and voluntary labeling of food, including information on allergens, nutrition, and origin.

Common Agricultural Policy (CAP): The CAP is a policy that aims to support farmers and ensure a sustainable and secure supply of food for EU citizens. It includes measures to promote sustainable agriculture, support rural development, and provide financial support to farmers. The CAP was established in 1962, and it has undergone several reforms over the years to adapt to changing economic, social, and environmental conditions (Baldock, Hart, Witzke, 2014).

School Fruit Scheme provides free fruit and vegetables to school children to encourage healthy eating habits and improve their nutrition and it is implemented in all EU member states. Under the program, schools receive funding to purchase and distribute free fruit and vegetables to students during the school day (European Commission, 2009). The types of fruits and vegetables provided vary depending on the season and the availability of produce. In addition to providing free fruits and vegetables, the School Fruit Scheme also includes educational materials and activities aimed at promoting healthy eating habits and increasing children's awareness of the importance of a balanced diet. The School Fruit Scheme is part of the broader EU strategy to promote healthy eating habits and improve nutrition across Europe.

Food Donation Guidelines. The EU has developed guidelines to facilitate food donation by food businesses, to help reduce food waste and support food aid organizations. The Food Donation Guidelines were developed by the European Union (EU) in 2017, in response to the growing concern about food waste and food insecurity in Europe. The guidelines provide practical advice on food donation, including recommendations on food safety, quality, labelling, and transportation (European Commission, 2017).

The guidelines encourage food businesses to donate safe and edible food that would otherwise be wasted, while ensuring that the donated food meets the nutritional needs of the recipients. They also encourage charities and other organizations to accept and distribute donated food safely and efficiently, while maintaining the dignity and privacy of the recipients. In addition to providing practical guidance on food donation, the Food Donation Guidelines also aim to raise awareness of the importance of food donation and to promote a culture of

responsible food consumption and waste reduction. The guidelines have been widely adopted by food businesses and charities across the EU and have helped to increase the amount of surplus food that is donated to those in need.

All these policies are designed to ensure that food is safe and of high quality, while promoting healthy and sustainable food choices. Also, these policies and all the other EU policies on food and nutrition aim to support the agricultural sector and promote social welfare through initiatives such as the school fruit scheme and food donation guidelines.

**4. Healthy nutrition across EU countries. A Comparative analysis based on statistical data.**

Healthy nutrition is essential for maintaining good health and preventing chronic diseases. However, there is significant variation in healthy eating patterns across EU countries. According to Eurostat data, in 2020, the average consumption of fruit and vegetables ranged from 274 grams per day in Malta to 546 grams per day in Denmark. Similarly, the consumption of sugar and saturated fats also varied significantly across EU countries. To provide a more in-depth comparative analysis of healthy nutrition across EU countries, we can look at several indicators, such as: fruit and vegetable consumption, and sugar consumptions, because these types of consumption are associated either with a healthy lifestyle, with a lifestyle in which individuals can be exposed to risks of chronical diseases.

Fruit and Vegetable Consumption

Socialization theories suggest that fruit consumption is learned through socialization processes. Parents, peers, and media may all influence fruit consumption habits through modelling, reinforcement, and social norms. Socialization theories would examine how fruit consumption habits are transmitted and reinforced through social networks and institutions. As mentioned above, the consumption of fruit and vegetables varies widely across EU countries. In general, the countries with higher consumption rates tend to have lower rates of obesity and related diseases.

Among the EU Member States, the highest daily intake of 5 portions or more was reported in Ireland (33% of the population), the Netherlands (30%), Denmark (23%) and France (20%). The lowest daily intake was found in Romania, where only 2% of the population ate at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables, followed by Bulgaria and Slovenia (both 5%) and Austria (6%) (Eurostat, 2022)

**Figure 1: EU countries with the highest daily intake of 5 portions or more
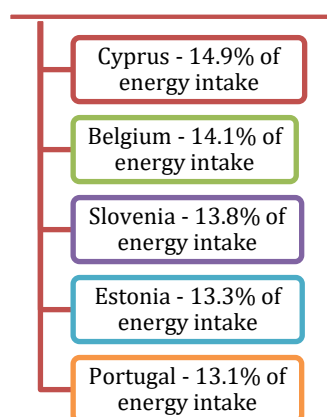– fruits and vegetables**

(% of the population)

Ireland (33%)

Netherlands (30%)

Denmark (23%)

France (20%)
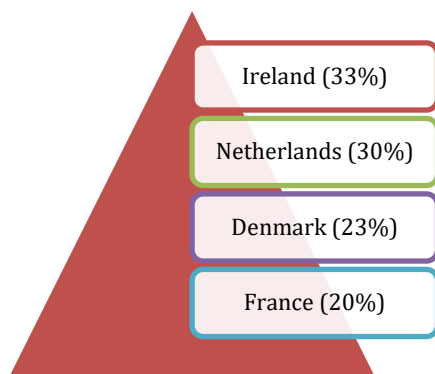
Source: Eurostat (2022). *Food Consumption Database.* retrieved from https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/data-report/food-consumption-data

It is important to note that these consumption rates are averages and can vary significantly within each country. Also, the data that Eurostat is giving are based on the *European Health Interview Survey[1]* (EHIS), which collects information on a range of health-related topics, including dietary habits. Additionally, the recommended daily intake of fruits and vegetables varies by age, gender, and other factors. According to the latest data available from Eurostat, in 2020 the average daily consumption of fruits and vegetables in Romania was below the EU average. The breakdown by gender shows that women in Romania consume slightly more fruits and vegetables than men. The age group with the highest consumption of fruits and vegetables in Romania is 65 years and over. The 15-24 age group has the lowest consumption.

Sugar Consumption

According to the European Food Safety Authority, the average intake of sugar across EU countries ranges from 7% to 25% of total energy intake. Excess sugar intake is linked to several health problems, including obesity and dental caries. Regarding sugar consumption, Eurostat provides data on the proportion of energy consumed from free sugars, which include added sugars and those naturally present in honey, syrups, and fruit juices. According to Eurostat data for 2020, the EU countries with the highest proportion of energy from free sugars are:

Figure 2: EU countries with the highest proportion of energy from free sugars

Cyprus - 14.9% of energy intake

Belgium - 14.1% of energy intake

Slovenia - 13.8% of energy intake

Estonia - 13.3% of energy intake

Portugal - 13.1% of energy intake

Source: European Food Safety Authority. (2020). *Dietary habits and nutrient intake in the European Union: A review of the data. EFSA Supporting Publication*, 17(12), e06420

The World Health Organization recommends limiting free sugar intake to less than 10% of total energy intake and preferably below 5% for additional health benefits.

Also, there is a connection between sugar consumption and quality of life. Excessive consumption of sugar is associated with several negative health outcomes, which can impact an individual's overall quality of life. Consuming too much sugar can lead to obesity, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and dental caries.

These conditions can cause physical discomfort, pain, and in some cases, can be life-threatening. They can also limit an individual's ability to engage in physical activity, enjoy

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[1] The European Health Interview Survey (EHIS) aims at measuring on a harmonised basis and with a high degree of comparability among Member States (MS) the health status (including disability), health determinants (lifestyle) of the EU citizens and use of health care services and limitations in accessing it.

certain foods, and participate in social activities. Additionally, the negative health consequences of excessive sugar consumption can lead to increased healthcare costs, which can have financial implications and cause stress for individuals and their families.

On the other hand, consuming a healthy diet that limits added sugars can have numerous positive effects on an individual's quality of life. A diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein, and healthy fats can help maintain a healthy weight, prevent chronic diseases, and support overall well-being. Overall, we may say that reducing sugar consumption can have a positive impact on an individual's physical and mental health, as well as their overall quality of life.

Saturated Fat Consumption.

It is well known that high intake of saturated fat is associated with an increased risk of heart disease. The average consumption of saturated fat across EU countries ranges from 7% to 18% of total energy intake. Based on the Eurostat Statistics from 2019, the EU average intake of saturated fats was 12.2% of total energy intake. The country with the highest intake of saturated fats was Latvia with an average intake of 15.6% of total energy intake. The country with the lowest intake of saturated fats was Greece with an average intake of 9.2% of total energy intake. Other countries with high intakes of saturated fats include Hungary (15.1%), Bulgaria (14.7%), and Lithuania (14.5%). Other countries with low intakes of saturated fats include Italy (9.8%), Portugal (10.1%), and Spain- 10.6% (Eurostat, 2022).

By analyzing these indicators across EU countries, we can identify areas where healthy nutrition is particularly challenging and where targeted interventions may be needed. For example, countries with high sugar consumption rates may benefit from initiatives to reduce added sugar in food products and promote healthier alternatives. Similarly, countries with low fruit and vegetable consumption rates may benefit from programs to increase access to affordable and healthy food options.

Conclusions and recommendations

The fast food industry has grown rapidly in recent decades, with many large multinational chains operating in countries around the world. Fast food restaurants have become ubiquitous in many cities and towns, offering convenient and affordable food options to consumers. However, the fast-food industry has also been criticized for promoting unhealthy diets and contributing to the global rise in obesity and diet-related diseases. Some of the common criticisms of the fast food industry include its reliance on highly processed and unhealthy ingredients, its marketing practices targeted at children and young people, and its contribution to the industrialization and globalization of the food system. As a result, there have been calls for greater regulation and oversight of the fast food industry, as well as efforts to promote healthier and more sustainable food systems. To better put into practice the EU regulations on food consumption it is necessary to raise awareness among consumers, food businesses, and policymakers about the benefits of healthy and sustainable food choices is crucial. Thus, education and public campaigns can help promote healthy eating habits and inform consumers about the nutritional content of foods.

Also, EU regulations require food businesses to provide clear and accurate information about the nutritional content of foods, and this can be reinforced by ensuring that labelling is easily understandable and visible to consumers. EU regulations on food consumption must be enforced to ensure compliance with food safety and nutrition standards. This can involve inspections and monitoring of food businesses to ensure they are following the regulations, as well as penalties for non-compliance. Finally, other important recommendation is the collaboration among stakeholders, including governments, food businesses, civil society, and consumers. This collaboration can help promote healthy and sustainable food consumption,

because engaging with stakeholders can help identify and address barriers to healthy eating and find solutions that work for everyone.

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THE VICIOUS CIRCLE OF VIOLENCE BETWEEN AGGRESSOR AND VICTIM

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Abstract: *The problem of violence against women is very complex and still little studied in Romania, although the number of studies carried out in the last 30 years in other countries of the world is very large. What is missing is the essential for completing the statistical data: the truth about the victims. In most cases, the victim is isolated, she cannot communicate, so the data about her does not report. This research is qualitative, including the document analysis method and the interview, as well as the comparative analysis of the results of several types of studies from different periods and from different countries, multidisciplinary, in relation to the victims of abuse who become minor mothers, dropping out of school early, as well as victims of family violence. The objective of the research is to analyze the vicious circle of violence through the perspective of the victims' perception of the phenomenon and the aggressor. The premise of the research is that people exposed to domestic violence since childhood become victims of domestic violence, developing risk behaviours of school dropout, early motherhood, dependence on the aggressor and social exclusion. The hypothesis of the research was confirmed, the results of the study demonstrated that the victims of domestic violence since childhood, develop risky behaviours, there is a vicious circle between these victims and aggressors from which the victims of domestic violence can be extracted with great difficulty.*

Keywords: violence against women, bullying, underage mothers, school dropout, abuse.

1. Introduction

The studies made on the topic of abuse and violence against women show that, in most cases, women who become victims can no longer be independent, most of the time becoming dependent even on the abuser. This can be the boyfriend/husband, but also the father, brother or other man from the victim's entourage. Romania allocates the lowest amounts in the EU for social assistance, and victims of domestic violence and underage mothers are almost invisible, being ignored from society, even by social workers. Some NGOs support these victims, but so far they have not been able to replace the work that state workers should be doing. Special programs and centers for recovery and social inclusion of these categories of victims are not enough either (Dima and Beldianu, 2015) and can be starting points in the reconstruction of the social work system (Corman, 2020:73). Romanian legislation was amended, at the insistence of NGOs for the protection of women's rights, in 2020. Thus, based on Law no. 217/2003, republished, pursuant to art. II from Law no. 183/2020, the protection order can be granted immediately, at the request of the victim. However, the legislative and institutional system is far from being able to provide real help to victims of domestic violence or young girls abused in the family, who become underage mothers and drop out of school early. The problems of these victims are not understood even by society, and because of this, they also become victims of bullying. In most cases, school dropout occurs because of bullying. The same thing happens in the case of adult women who go as far as social exclusion. Most of the victims in these two categories are dependent both materially and emotionally on the abuser. In the case of minors who become mothers and drop out of school, social workers and NGO experts who have conducted research in several underprivileged communities have found that in

many cases, girls are first victims of abuse by adults, including abuse committed by adult partners, and dropping out of school occurs before becoming pregnant. These are, however, assumptions of social workers and sociologists, since there are no definite data to show what exactly causes the victim to become dependent on the aggressor, breaking away from society, including dropping out of school.

2. Analysis of specialized literature

Research in this field began at the end of the 80s, in most Western countries, after it was concluded that it is a serious phenomenon that affects the whole society (Hindberg, 1988). Based on the specialized studies analyzed and on the basis of the comparative analysis of the research results, it is found that there is an increasing trend of aggressive behaviors at the global and national level in society, but also in the school environment (Bancă, Andrioni, 2022:382). Definitions were given more clearly after the first 15 years of studies, at the European level, when the risk markers for victimization and the consequences for victims, as well as coping processes and their relevance for research in this field, were also established (Löbmann, et al., 2003).

In the case of Romania, in 2022 there is still too little research in this field, and most of it is carried out by NGOs, not by state institutions, because social assistance is heavily underfunded. In addition to the activity of NGOs, the mass media contributed greatly to the popularization of this topic and thus the attention of the authorities was drawn to the situation that requires a solution from the state institutions, but the annual budget allocation from the GDP for social assistance remains the lowest at the European level.

A research carried out in 2022 in Romania, by the Save the Children Organization, shows how serious is the situation of underage mothers and how difficult is any attempt to stop this phenomenon, due to the lack of social assistance in disadvantaged communities, due to the lack of funding in this field from the state. A study carried out by the Save the Children Romania Organization in 2022 shows that a third of underage mothers in Romania were also born by underage mothers, 8 out of 10 mothers and pregnant women under the age of 18 do not go to school, 45% of births registered among of girls under the age of 15 in the European Union come from Romania, and 85% of mothers and pregnant women under the age of 18 no longer go to school, most of them dropping out before pregnancy (Save the Children, 2022).

The results of the research show that school dropout is not only a consequence of early pregnancy, it is the very first sign that should immediately trigger a social protection mechanism, but this does not happen. One of the specialists who contributed to the study gave an interview to the national newspaper „Jurnalul": „The social workers could go to check each individual case, after the schools find that minors are no longer attending classes. In most of the cases analyzed by us, we found that these girls drop out of school even before they become pregnant, many of them being victims of abuse by adults. There are a few counties where social work intervenes, but generally this happens when cases end up in court, while almost 3,000 localities do not have social workers who could go to the communities where these cases come from and offer them support. There may be an employee of the city hall who deals with the social assistance part, but often it is a person who only has a highschool education and cannot even do the social investigation, because the law does not allow it. In many of the cases, it is an employee of the town hall who also deals with the social assistance part, receiving money in addition to the salary, but there are no specialist employees", explained George Roman, Director of Advocacy, Save the Children Romania" (Scarlat, 2022).

In the article written for the newspaper, on the occasion of the launch of the research results, by the Save the Children Organization, the author further states that the NGOs specialist also explained why the approach according to which Romania would be the country of social assistance was wrong, because the statistics show the opposite. „Romania invests the

least money in social protection, in general, and in order to have positive results, especially with the social reintegration of underage mothers, but also to reduce their number, a much better social assistance system would be needed strong and better funded. Eurostat statistics (the statistical office of the European Union) show that in the last 12 years, Romania has invested between 11 and 17% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in social assistance, while the European average is over 23%, and some countries allocates more than 30% of GDP. A country like France, from the last category, also has a much higher GDP than Romania's, which means much higher costs with social programs, but also results commensurate with the investments" (Scarlat, 2022). Such analyzes are made by NGOs and journalists, but are not found in the official studies of state institutions.

The studies carried out by the Romanian Police complement those in the area of social assistance, within the prevention programs and are published or commented on in the mass media. In order to prevent this phenomenon, the intervention of the authorities is also needed by adopting effective laws to protect victims of domestic violence (Filip, Popp and Andrioni, 2020:311). In general, the mass media is the main partner of the institutions that do prevention in this field. Also, there is research in the legal field and the research of some NGOs for the defense of women's or children's rights. Another approach comes from the area of psychological and psychiatric research.

3. Behavioural patterns of victims and aggressors

There exists a behavioural pattern of the victim and one of the aggressor, but also a pattern of couple relationships in which violence occurs. This complex pattern, in which typologies are complementary, has been described in the same way by all researchers of this phenomenon: „There is a vicious circle of violence. Although everything begins with the acceptance of a first act of aggression („the first slap"), unfortunately, over time, violent episodes can become more frequent and more intense, more serious. Often, after such situations, the aggressor asks for forgiveness or tries to justify his behaviour. Not infrequently he accuses the victim and convinces her that she had her share of the blame. The victim can be more or less overwhelmed with various attentions/gifts to forgive their behaviour. This phase, that of the partner's repentance, is characterized by the affectionate behaviour of the abuser. It is the period when the aggressor can show availability towards the partner and her needs, giving her the impression that their relationship is functional, which can deepen the dependence between the victim and the aggressor. It is the so-called „honeymoon" phase, in which the episode is ignored and forgiven.

Tensions have been released through violent behaviour, and the period of regret and begging for forgiveness can cause the victim to see the partner as fragile and insecure, as needing her. A double dependency is thus structured, it being difficult for the victim to leave the abusive relationship. Psychologists draw attention to the fact that in the situation where this period of „love" is quickly followed by another one of intense conflict tension" (Stoica, 2020).

The problem of the inefficiency of protection orders in combating the phenomenon of domestic violence and for the effective rescue of victims is also raised in other countries, not only in Romania, being the subject of study of some recent scientific articles that show that victims need much more support, for to be saved and included in society (Burgess-Proctor, 2003). Studies also show that many of the victims of couple violence come from the category of bullying victims, including suffering from anxiety or depression, due to repeated psychological aggressions (Swearer, et al, 2001). In general, psychological and social research shows that victims of school bullying suffer from anxiety or depression, and thus lose the ability to fight the bullies, while the bullies consolidate their position of power by bullying the victims (Espelage, and Holt, 2001).

From the initial bullying, from the victims' childhood and adolescence, to social exclusion is a single step that relates to the entire social structure, not just the psychology of the victim or the aggressor, nor even the relationship between the victim and the aggressor, the mechanism being much more complex, as other research shows: „Results from a survey of New Jersey middle school students indicate that eighth graders were significantly more indifferent to bullying and less sympathetic to victims than fifth graders. Older students were also more likely to identify themselves as outsiders and bully's assistants in bullying situations. In the absence of bullying prevention programs, witnesses to peer aggression become less willing to intervene on behalf of victims and more indifferent to the distress of the victim. The implications of these findings for the prevention of bullying and the achievement of civic responsibility are discussed" (Jeffrey, et al., 2001).

Another study, within the „Expect Respect" Project in the US, shows that when bullying and sexual harassment are not controlled in primary school, these behaviors condition students to accept mistreatment in their relationships with peers, laying the foundations for abuse in future marital relationships (Sanchez, et al., 2001). The conclusion reached by the researchers was that only through constant awareness of the phenomenon and through sustained education can be reduced the violence, and thus the number of subsequent victims of domestic violence also decreases.

In addition, other studies show that bullying in the school environment creates a kind of habit, so that it forms the behavior of the victim in the relationship with the aggressor, based on depression that paralyzes the victim's ability to react, in the long term, including in subsequent relationships as a couple, where she will become a victim of domestic violence (Carnelius and Dennhag, 2022). There is also the phenomenon of submission of the victim in the relationship with the aggressor, on sexual grounds (Rerick, et al., 2022). The fact that victims of bullying suffer in the long term, especially from anxiety or depression, with the victim's mental state and health deteriorating afterwards, is also demonstrated by other research. A study conducted at eight colleges and universities in the US Midwest between 2011 and 2015 shows how strongly the relationship between exposure to bullying and alcohol abuse is over time for male victims. The authors define bullying as a risk factor that contributes to high levels of alcohol use among college students that continues to be affected into adulthood (Lin, et al., 2022). The phenomenon is much more serious in the case of victims of sexual harassment and assaults, the victimization being much more pronounced and long-term (Knapp, Hogue and Polites, 2022).

In India, a program dedicated to reducing violence against women was recently implemented, the phenomenon being considered a serious public health problem and an unacceptable violation of human rights, the program being built on the principles of feminist ideology. „The Kabaddi group work project in West Bengal, India, integrates sports and socio-emotional learning as a strategy for preventing violence against women through the empowerment of adolescent girls. Delivered by Praajak, a non-governmental organization, the Kabaddi project involves participants in athletic training and weekly study circles that raise awareness; build knowledge, skills, and confidence; and generate mutual trust and motivation to promote individual and social change. Guided by social learning theory and feminist theory, the carefully designed group work intervention follows a developmental approach that is consistent with Linda Schiller's relational model of group development. Testimonies from group participants demonstrate the intergenerational impact of the Kabaddi project on participants, families, and communities" (Majumdar, Purkayastha and Goswami, 2022).

4. Materials and methods
The research uses qualitative methods. The method of analyzing documents from the specialized literature in the fields related to domestic violence and its potential implications

was used: school dropout, early motherhood, social exclusion, and the interview was also used, applied to a number of 20 victims of domestic violence. The objective of the research is to analyze the vicious circle of violence through the perspective of the victims' perception of the phenomenon and the aggressor. The hypothesis from which he started in the present research is that people exposed to domestic violence since childhood become victims of domestic violence, developing risk behaviors of school dropout, early motherhood, dependence on the aggressor and social exclusion.

5. Results

We have selected 20 victims of abuse and domestic violence, aged between 18 and 45, 10 of them coming from the category of underage mothers, the others being adult victims of domestic violence, to apply the Sociological Interview, between August and November 2022. The victims benefit from the protection of anonymity, being in the care of the state and some NGOs, in protected housing in several counties of Romania. The interviews were carried out with the help of representatives of NGOs or social workers, being transmitted and completed with the help of members of non-governmental organizations or social workers, in order to guarantee the safety of the anonymity of the victims under protection, in protected housing.

The first question of the interview, regarding bullying, highlighted the fact that all current victims of abuse and domestic violence were bullied at least once during their early school years. Also, all the victims come from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds and from broken families or with serious financial problems, being also victims of abuse by adults in the family, in the first years of their life. Furthermore, all 20 victims are unable to support themselves, having dropped out of school early. All victims acknowledged their ongoing dependence, both materially and emotionally, on abusive partners, and stated that they endured at least three years of abuse until they had made the decision to seek for help and enter the protection program.

Also, victims of domestic violence admitted that they would not have sought help from state institutions or NGOs if those ones had not reached their community. Eight of the victims admitted that they would have risked being killed by their extremely violent partners, rather than leaving their shared home, if they had not received sufficient guarantees from the NGO that provided them with support. The other 12 victims stated that their partner's aggression had already exceeded the limit they could accept, their lives and that of their children being threatened, and if they had not been offered support, they would have left assuming any risk, even if he should have lived on the street.

All victims continue to fear for their lives and that of their children, but also for the inability to adapt in society, all of them being isolated during cohabitation or marriage relationships with the abusive partners. In turn, all ten victims of domestic violence who were underage mothers stated that they were isolated first from the abusive family, then from the abusive partner. In relation to dropping out of school, all ten underage mothers stated that they were ashamed to go to school after starting the relationship with the abusive partner at a young age. Three of the victims who were also underage mothers ran away from home because the family would not have approved of their very early couple relationship and „for fear of being killed by their parents", who were also very abusive and aggressive. Running away from home, they couldn't even go to school, because their parents could have found them there.

The other seven victims who were also underage mothers stated that their parents would not have had anything against their relationship, even though they were very young, but they stopped going to school when they suspected that they had become pregnant (5 of the victims), respectively because the adult and aggressive partners did not allow them to continue going to school (2 of the victims). All 20 victims stated that they could not defend

themselves and were generally afraid of any strong, male person if he became aggressive. Also, all 20 victims stated that they are afraid for their future and that of their children, even though they also receive professional training within the Integrated National Program for the Protection of Victims of Domestic Violence (PNIPVVD).

6. Conclusions

The conclusions of the research is that many of the women who become victims of abuse end up in a vicious circle that includes family violence, which can lead to early motherhood, school dropout, social exclusion and dependence on the abuser. As long as the victims do not ask for help and the problems of these victims do not become known to the state institutions, then the problems these victims face are amplified. The hypothesis of the research was confirmed, the results of the study demonstrated that the victims of domestic violence since childhood, develop risky behaviors, there is a vicious circle between these victims and aggressors from which the victims of domestic violence can be extracted with great difficulty. In this context, an important role is played by national prevention programs that can be based on the study and elimination of bullying to which young girls are exposed, since the first years of school.

As other states have done, by reducing bullying and raising awareness of its long-term effects, the number of future victims of domestic violence can be greatly reduced, as well as the number of underage mothers who are abused, after demonstrated, in research over the past 30 years, the causal link between long-term victimization and initial bullying. By eliminating or at least reducing the phenomenon of bullying, the number of victims resulting from exposure to this aggression can be significantly reduced. Thus, various complex problems generated by violence could be prevented on the basis of national programs to prevent or reduce the phenomenon of violence targeting minor mothers at risk of domestic violence and school dropout or other victims of domestic violence, on the one hand or the other part on the basis of studies and analyzes that provide more data to demonstrate the clear connection between these phenomena, both from a psychological and social point of view, and the causality of the phenomenon, there being the possibility of doing analyses, following some national programs to reduce abuse, in order to be able to see if the number of victims of domestic violence will be reduced, respectively the number of underage mothers, as well as school dropouts. Such a pilot program could track results over a ten-year time horizon.

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EFFECTS OF COMMERCIAL MIGRATIONS ON THE SETTLEMENT OF SOUTH CAMEROON BETWEEN 1840 AND 1887

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Abstract: *According to the testimonies of Europeans, only two peoples inhabited the Southern Cameroon between 1840 and 1886: the Batanga of the Atlantic coast and the Benë of the forest. However, the hinterland of the same region, where these two people did not live, has artefacts, marking the continuous presence of the Bantu people since the 16th century. Who are they? From a cross reading of sources, published from 1819 to 2021, the exploitation of the new African historiography and the hypothetical deductive method, it appears that the ethnic groups discovered in Southern Cameroon in 1887, already lived there before 1840, except for one: the Bulu. Invited by the Ntumu people to supplant the beneficiaries of the exchanges on the Kribi coast, they abandoned the savannahs of Upper Sanaga for the Southern region.*

Keywords: Migration, settlement, trade, incidence, Atlantic coast.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, the notion of settlement means: "the action of the public authorities aimed at intervening in the spatial distribution of populations according to some of their social, ethnic, religious or other characteristics, real or presumed". (Desage Journel, Sala Pala, 2014: 17). In other words, settlement would designate a spatial arrangement of the population by the State. In this article, this concept takes on another meaning, that of the action of increasing the number of groups of inhabitants of a place (Larousse online). Indeed, from 1840 to 1886, the testimonies of Europeans present on the Atlantic border of Southern Cameroon only revealed the presence of two peoples: the Batanga of the coast and the Benë of the hinterland (Laburthe-Tolra, 1981: 534; Bouchaud, 1952: 138). From 1887 to 1890, the German discovered new peoples inside the region during their expeditions. These are the Bagyèli, the Kwasio, the Fang, the Bulu and the ''Ewondo'' who have been established there for years (Morgen Von, 1893: 95-100). What could explain this increase of the number of population groups in Southern Cameroon from two at least to seven? In order to show the impact of Atlantic trade on the settlement of Southern Cameroon between 1840 and 1887, we have used documents published by Westerners who were in contact with the peoples of Southern Cameroon, their neighbors and relatives between 1818 (Bowdich) and 1890 (Morgen Von). Monographs and other various studies have also been useful to us, as well as the oral tradition. All these sources have been collected, confronted and analyzed through the new African historiography that could be resumed to multidisciplinary and critical comparative approach (Diop: 1984, 97-121; Obenga: 1980, 98, 103 and 105). The exploitation of the above-mentioned sources and methods reveals two hypothesis:
- The settlement of Southern Cameroon from 1840 to 1887 was made up of only two peoples: the Batanga and the Benë ;
- The majority of the current population groups of the Southern Cameroon already settled in before 1840.

2. Settlement of Southern Cameroons from 1840 to 1887

This part analyzes the testimonies of Westerners on the settlement of Southern Cameroon between 1840 and 1887.

2. The Atlantic coast

The French did not remain deaf to the call of the coastal inhabitants: in 1842, the king of the Banôh in Kribi, near Batanga, signed a treaty by which he ceded land to King Louis-Philippe asking him to build a fort there. This treaty will be ratified and renewed periodically under the Second Empire and the Third Republic. For example in 1869 and 1883 (we find these ''Banoho treaties'' in the archives of the FOM) but never followed by effect (Laburthe-Tolra, 1981: 208).

This source shows that the Batanga people were living in Kribi since 1842 and even before because they already owned lands there. With the same idea, a British Consul named Hutchingston, who scoured the coast of Central Africa from 1850 to 1860, said the seaside of Southern Cameroon was inhabited by the Batanga who had begun to trade with Westerners in 1840 (Laburthe-Tolra, 1981: 534). Bouchaud added that the Batanga hinterland forest was empty (Bouchaud, 1952: 138). According to some Eyewitness, the Batanga people lived alone in Kribi until 1895, when a new population arrived in the city, the Mabi:

In 1895, Father Koenig made an attempt at evangelization among the Mabea, but they were in full migration, an attempt was made to send the young boys to Kribi, but these, less strong and less numerous, were frowned upon by the young people. Batanga. A school will be opened for them in Mpango. On Sunday at mass in Kribi, the children have a special place in the church. Later. Mabea and Batanga will make their first communion together. Eventually everyone will end up fraternizing. (…). It was not until 1900, when the Kribi-Yaoundé road was opened, and the administration forced Mabea and Ngumba to settle on the road, that the Kribi mission opened schools at km 4, km 25, km 41 and even at km 62 (Criaud, 1989: 41-42).

If the idea showing that the Batanga people were living alone in the coast of Southern Cameroon between 1840 and 1895 has some proofs, few anachronisms undermine it. For example, it is very surprising that the missionaries were not aware of the presence of the Mabi in Kribi before 1895 when the German colonial administration put down one of their revolts from the 15 to the 22 of March 1893. In the campaign, Germans deployed great resources: 80 police officers, mostly from Douala, 600 Bakoko fighters supported by field guns. During this crackdown, the German officer, Kanzler Wehlan, used scorched earth tactics, murdering the Mabi and burning down their villages. He even hanged the three rebel leaders: King Majesse, King Benga and King Massili (respectively Biang Buo Mbumbo, Biwée Nagya and Nagyan Kwamba) on March 22, 1893[1].

Moreover, nowadays researches disregard that the coastal Bantu of the South region perceive Pygmies, in their traditions, as the first inhabitants of the seaside and their first partners are the Kwasio people. In addition, the Mabi people hold firmly that they are the first inhabitants of the Southern Cameroon coast that they reached between the 16th and 17th centuries (Ndtoungou-Nzambi, 1999: 23). Similarly, the same ignorance concerns the historical reality that there was in Douala between the Duala and the Basaa people then in Gabon between the Mpongwè and the Ndiwa. The former would have evicted the latter from their lands (Bucher, 1975: 59-89). Indeed, people living by the sea of Kribi refer to a hero who would have led them there. Among the Batanga (the Bapuku and the Bano'o in particular), the genealogies going back to these heroes were collected by a French ethnologist named Madeleine Richard. By applying the method of calculating genealogies most accepted in ethnology, that of Marcel Mauss which stipulates that three generations of people live for a century (Mauss, 1926: 16-17), the ancestors of the Batanga called Ngonga Ya Eko (Bano' o) and Ebadane Ya Ndamese (Bapuku) were born around 1725 and 1744 respectively (Richard, 1970: 141-142). These dates are recent compared

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[1]Colonial Archives, 3294-3295, DZP, Uechtritz-Expedition in das Hinterland von Kamerun, Band 1: Feb. 1893 - Aug. 1894.

to 1568 marking the birth of Bigio Nguiamba who have led the Mabi to Kribi[1]. The difference between the date of birth of Bigio and that of Ngonga Ya Eko, the oldest among the Batanga heroes, is 157 years. This time gap would mark the approximate period that would separate the discovery of the sea by the Mabi and the arrival of the Batanga in the Southern Cameroon coast.

Apart from comparative mythology, the onomastics in the districts of Kribi and Campo suggests that the Mabi are the first Bantu inhabitants of these places. First the toponymy of these towns (Mboum, 2021: 31-35), including the space located between the Lokoundjé and Nyong rivers where Germans expropriated the Mabi in 1910:

This project will nevertheless be implemented in 1910. Taking as a pretext a disagreement which arose between some Mabi and Bakoko at Bivuba, the German administration accused the two peoples of getting ready to confront each other and decided to uproot all the inhabitants of the Mabi villages of Pama, Bivouba, Bikoui, Bipaga, fifinda as well as those of the Bakoko-Bassa village of Mbébé. Only the old women remained. Those who resisted were shot. This is how entire families were wiped out and the survivors deported and sent to the German plantation areas of Tiko, Mundemba, Kumba, Victoria, Njombé etc. (Mboum, 2021: 83).

The Mabi populations of the city of Kribi (Mboom, 2021: 71) received some descendants of these deportees of 1910, who were fleeing the war in the English-speaking zone, in 2018 with large astonishment.

Then, a teacher from the University of Nairobi in Kenya, J. C. Sharman and Pierre Alexandre raised in 1964 and 1965 a problem. This involves identifying the people who created the word *mang* (máŋ), determining its etymology and reconstructing the history that led to its genesis. Starting from the observation that the etymology of this term is unintelligible among the Bantu, Alexandre supposed that the existence of this word was due to the Arabic language. *Mang* in Arabic would designate the sea. Like *banga* (báŋgà) indicating Indian hemp, this term would have passed from Arabic to Swahili in the form of *manga* and from Swahili to bulu (Bantu A72a) in *mang* (Alexandre, 1965: 532-533). Yet, according to the Kwasio[2], the word *mang* would have been born because of the geographical shape of the mouth of the *Kiènguè* River (current *Kienké*). Indeed, during their migration from Bipindi for the lands in the western direction, the Mabi heard, from the *Dèmbè* quarter (current *Dombè*) in Kribi, a deafening noise and regular. Frightened, they sent a Bagyeli scout to find the source of the noise. On his return, the Pygmy reported that he saw two vast spaces of sand on either side of the mouth of the Kienké River. The latter would be the source of the noise because, not far from there, it continued in the form of an immense and seemingly endless expanse of water. The Pygmy then baptized the place where the Kienké became immense: *mang madzio* (máŋ màdzíó),

Literally, *mang* (máŋ) indicates two vast spaces of sand or two beaches and *madzio* (màdzíó) means: water, waters and expanse of water. In the Kwasio language, the plural of nouns is mainly done with the nominal prefixes *bo, bi, ma* and *mi*. Examples: *fu* (fú); fish, *bofu* (bòfû); fish, *gio* (gìjò); the shea tree, *bigio* (bìgìjò); shea trees, *siang* (síàŋ); the mangrove, *massiang* (màsíàŋ); mangroves and *nshuong* (ŋʃúóŋ); the intestinal worm or earthworm, *minshuong* (mìŋʃúóŋ); intestinal worms or earthworms. However, there is a nominal class that includes the singular gender and the plural gender with the phonemes (d) and (m) respectively as nominal prefixes. Examples: *daa* (dáá); the crab, *maa* (máá); crabs and *dong* (dòŋ); the well, *mong* (mòŋ); the wells. The term *mang* belongs to this nominal class because it is the plural form of the word *dang*, which designates a large area of sand (a beach) or mud. The original and etymological meaning of the term used to designate the sea among the Kwasio (*mang madzio*) would therefore be the two wide sandy shores of the stretch of water. Later, the Kwasio contracted *mang madzio* in *mang* just as they made *Kiènguè Nguè* become *Kiènguè*. After this

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[1]Colonial Archives, 104, CSN, A. Minkua Ntunga, "Genealogical list of my family", 1-2.
[2]Interview with R. Guga, retired fisherman and Patriarch of the Mabi, Kribi, 05/01/2003, 118 years old.

term *mang*, they invented another that also derives from the word *dang*. It is *danga* (dáŋgà), meaning the salty seawater different from *madzio* (màdzíó) or fresh water from rivers (Bouh Ma Sitna, 2017: 229-230).

From the data analyzed above, it appears that the coastal settlement of Southern Cameroon was made up, from 1840 to 1887, of at least three peoples: the Batanga, Bagyèli (Pygmies) and Mabi. What about hinterland?

3. The hinterland

''Between 1850 and 1860, the British Consul Hutchingston was informed of the existence of a single people, the Benë, in the forest hinterland of the Batanga, but on both sides of the Nyong River'' (Laburthe-Tolra, 1981 : 534). This means, the only group that inhabited the Southern Cameroons hinterland during this chronological range is Benë, according to Western accounts. However, this type of conclusion does not correspond to the testimonies of Westerners outside Southern Cameroon, to a series of technical data as well as to the hypotheses of researchers.

To start, the Benë recognize that they followed the Enoa people into the forest (Laburthe-Tolra, 1981: 536). According to testimonies from Westerners outside Southern Cameroon, the Basaa were the first to be spotted. Indeed, the writings of European travelers on the Cameroonian coast mention, for the first time, the existence of a Bantu language at the exact location of present-day Douala in 1670. This language, denoted *bascha*, still appeared in nautical charts of 1750. Europeans compared this word to *biafar* shown on the maps of the navigators Ortelius in 1570 and Dis Costaldi in 1644 (Laburthe-Tolra, 1981: 534). Yet the *Biafra* or *Biafar* have lived in Nigeria for ages. On the other hand, the Basaa pronounce their ethnonym thus: *bascha* (bàʃǎ), consequently,

The Basaa would not have been alone; they would have occupied the Cameroonian forest, accompanied by related peoples, particularly the Bakoko who also live in Southern Cameroon (Dika Akwa Nya Bonambela, 1980: XXVII-XLIII). Their pre-colonial territory stretched from the left bank of the Sanaga River to the right bank of the Lokoundjé: '' (…) to the country of the Ngoumba'' (Cournarie, 1948: 16) where they would have waged permanent wars at the almost all of the peoples of Southern Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea (Dugast, 1949: 16-18/ Bureau, 1964: 3136-315/ Pouesset, 1904: 3).

After the Basaa in 1670, come, among the peoples of Southern Cameroon, the Kwasio (Bantu A81). They are part of a larger group called *Mfang* (Cournarie, 1948: 19 / Burnham, Copet-Rougier and Noss, 1986: 111). The *Mfang* ethnic group is made up of : the Kwasio (Bantu A81), the So (Bantu A82), the Maka (Bantu A83), the Koozimé (Bantu A84), the Konabem (Bantu A85), the Mbimu (Bantu A86), the Bumali (Bantu A87) and the Bethen (Bantu A88) (Guthrie, 1948).

These Kwasio were located in the forest of Central Gabon in 1818 by the British Consul Thomas Edward Bowdich. The Mpongwè of the Libreville coast informed him that an intimidating people who controls trade there inhabited the banks of the Ogooué River (Bowdich, 1819: 427-429). After this testimony came that of the Reverend Leighton Wilson. While exploring the Como River in 1842, he located the Kwasio this time in northern Gabon (Leighton Wilson, 1843: 428). Still in the register of testimonies, the Frenchman Fleuriot De Langle was informed in 1867 that the Kwasio, allied to the Fang, and the Batanga (Langle De, 1876: 259), inhabited the regions beyond the right bank of the Muni River.

As far as facts are concerned, the first meeting between Kwasio and Europeans took place on September 10, 1857 when Paul Belloni Du Chaillu met them in the Monts de Cristal in Gabon (Chaillu Du, 1861: 94). Another meeting, much later but very significant, took place on June 14, 1890 between German Lieutenant Curt von Morgen and Chief Ntunga Nziu. Morgen estimated the age of this leader at 22 (Morgen Von, 1893: 100). However, Ntunga Nziu's grandfather,

Nguiamba Mabiama, was already living in Bipindi (Pouesset, 1904: 3) where he was born around 1802 (Bouh Ma Sitna, 2017: 14-17).

These data agree with the work of researchers who make Kwasio and relatives, the first inhabitants of Southern Cameroon (Struck, 1912: 218, quoted by Dugast, 1948: 96/ Bah, 1985: 122 / Alexander, 1965: 546-547). The Maka in particular would have settled on the banks of the Nyong between the localities of Minlaaba and Abong Mbang (Laburthe-Tolra, 1981: 536). They were later driven back east by the Yebekolo (Geschiere, 1981: 522) and the Bulu (Dugast, 1848: 102). As for the Koozimé, they would have occupied a space between Dja and Lobo, Boumba and Ngoko (Burnham, Copet-Rougier and Noss, 1986: p. 111) and northern Gabon, precisely to the east of the Fang. Koozimé enclaves are still there (Dieu and Renaud, 1983: 449), just as the *Esaman* of present-day Bulu country are none other than the Koozimé people (Dugast, 1848: 106).

After the Basaa (1670), the Kwasio (1818), the Batanga (1840), the Fang constitute the fourth people appearing in the documents of Westerners. They lived along the banks of the Como River when Reverend Wilson (Leighton Wilson, 1843: 238) discovered them. They would have reached Gabon by following the same migratory paths as some Kwasio and the Sékéani: the source of the Ntem River – Ivindo River - Monts de Cristal or from the source of the Ntem for the Ogooué passing through the Ivindo River (Chamberlin, 1978: 441 / Deschamps, 1962: 82).

The period of the Fang migrations into central African forest is not clear, especially when their migrations are linked to that of the Bulu and Beti. Indeed, according to the glottochronology, that determines the time of separation between the languages, the Fang would have separated from the Bulu and the Beti around 1660 (Alexandre, 1965: 527-529). This Bantu A70 branch is the only people of this linguistic continuum who have been cited as intervening in the famous *Pupu war*. This war is known as incessant clashes, between the 17th and 19th centuries in Upper Ivindo that would have existed between the Bakota, Bakwélé, Kwasio, Fang, Bakélé and Ndjem people (Puech, 1990: 127-128 / Cheucle, 2008: 15-18 / Olson, 1996: 59-60).

According to the data mentioned above, many people made up the population of the hinterland of the South region of Cameroon, before and after 1840 – 1887. The Bakoko peoples living on the banks of the Nyong River after the Batanga and the Mabi, the Basaa, particularly Baso'o Ba Ngok, established between the left bank of the Nyong and the right bank of the Lokoundjé River. They were followed to the east of this location by the Enoa and Benë, shadowed by Makaa (which here includes the So and the Bikele). Below all these peoples lived the Kwasio (the Mbvumbo) and Bagyèli on an approximate line joining the localities of Bipindi-Lolodorf-Ebolowa-Sangélima-Djoum-Akom2. The Fang (the Ntumu, Okak and Ngoé) occupied the localities around the banks of the South Ntem from the locality of Ebolowa to Djoum and the Koozimé of the western side of the current Dja and Lobo. It is highly probable that the other Bantu of the region whose traces do not exist in European archives such as the Emburi, the Iyassa and perhaps even the Yanda figured in the said settlement, but the evidence is lacking. How did trade on the Kribi coast contribute to upsetting this configuration?

4. **Settlement of Southern Cameroon configured by trade on the coast of Kribi**
Trade could be defined as the purchase and sale of goods (products, services, processes). Its impact on migration would depend on six main factors: '' (…) the type of country of origin, the type of market in the countries in the countries of origin and destination, the type of immigrants, the extent of the immigrant community in the host country, migration policies, bilateral trade agreements and customs tariffs'' (Fenc, 2014: 82). The inventory of these six factors, adapted to the pre-colonial realities of Cameroon, suggests two paths: voluntary migration and forced migration.

5. Trade and Voluntary Migrations

According to the testimonies of Westerners, the first people of Southern Cameroon who have been seen in full migration for commercial reasons are Fang. In 1855, the American missionaries Ira Preston and Henri Adams met them in Gabon in an old two-hectare mine, upstream from the Abanga River, in the process of extracting salt. According to them, these Fang often traveled very long distances in search of this precious substance (Preston and Adams, 1856: 44-45). The Fang would not have been the only ones. According to certain oral traditions, the Kwasio would have abandoned the East of Cameroon for the South in order to obtain salt (Ngima Mawoung, 2001: 213).

This essential commodity was rare for lands far from the sea. According to Théophile Obenga, it was obtained by extracting salty mud, by filtering the ashes of grasses and reeds from the marshes or by boiling the saline sources of the rivers. The first grade of salt was for livestock while humans consumed the other two forms. Only, the best of all these types of salt was that obtained by boiling saline springs. People came from distant regions to settle near these salt-water springs in order to make this famous salt and become masters of the trade. This salt was exchanged for food, livestock or luxury items: shells, valuable jewelry, iron or copper wires. In East Africa for example:

Soon, the more adventurous reached the salt springs of Uvinza from which a much more famous salt was extracted by boiling. These saline sources, at the confluence of the Rushugi and the Malagarazi, gave rise, since at least the middle of the century, to a great commercial activity. There, the people of Buha, Unyamwezi (Tanzania) and Arab-Swahili caravans who joined the Indian Ocean from Lake Tanganyika met to make salt and exchange (Obenga, 1989: 269-270).

This information from Obenga reveals the economic importance of salt obtained from salt water. Peoples did not hesitate to travel very long distances to obtain it. In 1866, a Frenchman named Roullet in turn noted the existence of salt deposits in northern Gabon among the same people. They were all old. For him, the Fang moved towards the coast in search of these salt reservoirs which were rare on the continent and they had known this technique of salt extraction for a very long time (Roullet, 1866: 276).

After salt, the slave trade was also a reason for trade and the displacement of peoples. Once again among the peoples of Southern Cameroons, the Fang appearing first in the testimonies of Europeans. Although presented as refractory to the capture and sale of slaves because they did not even keep domestic slaves (Leighton Wilson, 1856: 301), the Fang sometimes turned into slavers because they did not hesitate to sell the captives whom they had procured themselves when another people (Chaillu Du, 1861: 94) attacked them. From 1846, a Frenchman named Charles Pigeard noted that the black trade was still flourishing in the villages of the Bakélé and Sékéani peoples inside Gabon and that their wealth attracted the Fang (Pigeard, 1847: 290). Two years later, the American missionary William Raponda Walker made the same observation; the slave trade had so enriched these peoples that it awakened in the Fang the desire to get closer to the whites (Chamberlin, 1978: 436). Objective they reached in 1860 on the coast of Gabon (Winwood Reade, 1864: 151).

As for South Cameroon, the trade consisted of the exchange of the following products: rubber, ivory and copal supplied by Africans against guns, loincloths and salt from European firms (Pouesset, 1904: 6). Among these products, the demand for ivory was higher. The coast of Kribi exported 40 tons annually (Bouchaud, 1952: 132). Traditionally sold in India, ivory interested Europe and the United States from 1820. From then on, its value increased considerably. Its price went from 20 dollars between 1800 and 1810 to 30 dollars in 1841, then 38 dollars in 1848, 70 dollars in 1856 and 80 dollars in 1880[1].

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[1]Http:// dictionary.sensagent. com. / annees 1820/fr, consulted on 08:06:2010 at 7:14 p.m.

This European demand was a means of rapid enrichment for the people who knew how to hunt the elephant, in this case, the Kwasio. The German Curt Von Morgen witnessed an unusual scene of hunting of this pachyderm by this people (Kasjua [Kwasio]) on June 08, 1890 in Bipindi:

In Bipindi, I also witnessed a new elephant hunting technique. The evening of my arrival, I was doing a reconnaissance tour along the river, when suddenly we heard the beating of tom-toms in several directions. As for the village, I inquired about what was happening, I was told that three elephants were near a nearby stream and that they were preparing to capture them. I asked with astonishment how one could go about it; my companion replied: ''the elephant is such a stupid animal that it gets caught in a cage that a fly could tear to pieces''. In addition, because of this, I myself realized later: the temporary fence built around them with extraordinary rapidity and where the elephants allowed themselves to be caught was made of very light brushwood a meter high that could be knocked down with a kick. And the elephant, this enormous animal, capable of felling trees one meter in diameter, does not free itself from this enclosure, which a blast from its trunk could put on the ground! The animals remain thus prisoners for fifteen days and sometimes even longer, until they finally succumb under the innumerable bullets that the natives fire at them (Morgen Von, 1893: 96-97).

This means that the Kwasio were a people of elephant hunters, meaning of their ethnonym (Kwasio = ivory hunter) (Kampoer Kampoer, 2011: 72). Morgen relates that they controlled the ivory route (Morgen Von, 1893: 97), precisely between the localities of Lolodorf and Kribi. The trade in elephant tusks is said to have been the source of many voluntary migrations from the interior of the forest of Southern Cameroon to the Atlantic coast. Therefore:

(...) all the Mabéa who remained on the banks of the Ntem joined their racial brothers settled along the coast between Grand-Batanga and Lokoundjé; some by a forest track linking the villages staggered from South to North between Akak and Angalé in the subdivision of Campo up to Bidou III; the others, the Nyabessan-Ebemvok road and substantially the current Boulou road: Ebemvok-Kribi. Even the Mabéa who arrived at the sea as far as Campo followed these interior tracks on which a certain number of them remained (Pouesset, 1904: 5-6).

Apart from the routes described above, two Europeans: Amat and Cortadelas have reproduced two other migratory paths of the Fang, accompanied by a few Mbvoumbo. The migration of the Fang of the Yemvam clan begins at the source of the Ntem in Gabon. It goes towards Djoum, precisely to Nkan then south of the district of Sangmélima to Melan, and from Melan to Mboelon, Mvangan, Eves by Meyo-Centre then Ngonebok, Kaba and finally Ngovayang II in South Cameroon. That of the Ngwé or Yengwi, always accompanied by some Mbvumbo, leaves from Mekomo near the town of Oyem and the Woleu River in northern Gabon for Ngovayang II in Southern Cameroon. It passes through Biyi to the northwest of Bitam, Ngonebok, Bilen and Bipindi. These migrations would have taken place, according to Amat and Cortadelas, around 1840 (Laburthe-Tolra, 1981: 99).

6. Trade and forced mobility

Forced mobility can be understood as displacement of peoples under constraint (Larousse, 1874: 355). These migrations are said to be caused by violence, nature, poverty or discomfort (Cambrezit and Lassaily-jacob, 2012: 37). Of these four causes, only two concern us: embarrassment and violence. Embarrassment is a behavior of the victim towards the coercion, while violence refers to the use of force or power to coerce.

With regard to the embarrassment, a migration of magnitude would have taken place in 1890. It is the displacement of the capital of the Mbvumbo of Boung Li (current Bongolo), located between the present localities of Ebolowa and Lolodorf, for Bidjouka. According to the records of the second-degree chiefdom of Bidjouka, the Mbvumbo and Benë peoples were allies. The two blocks would have symbolized this alliance by a particular rite. The remains of a Benë albino

and a Mbvumbo, who had died in the days when this alliance was to be sealed, were split into two parts. They were buried in such a way that the left part of the remains of the Benë was glued to the right part of that of the Mbvumbo and vice versa. From that moment, Mbvumbo and Benë considered themselves as one people (Bouh Ma Sitna, 2017: 88). Traces of the merger between Mbvumbo and Benë exist in ethnology. Philippe Laburthe-Tolra, quoting the German Wirz, denounced the fake genealogies of a certain François Manga who made Mbvumbo, the first cousins of his Benë tribe (Laburthe-Tolra, 1981b: 543)

Said alliance was also maintained by multiple marriages. Thus, Nziu Nguiamba, the chief of the Mbvumbo who managed to stop the advance of the Bulu towards Lolodorf and to protect the main trade route of the pre-colonial period, had given his sister Bouom Nziu to a Benë chief named Fouda Nga Mbida who was under the authority of the superior chief (of the Benë) Etoundi Ayié. Fouda advised the son of Nziu Nguiamba, named Ntunga Nziu, to leave his capital to approach the Atlantic coast that risked being invaded by the Bulu of Nsim Biyo'o and the Ngoués (Fang) of Chief Sakoudou Bibanga, established in Bikoka and coming from Gabon. This is how, following the advice of his aunt's husband, Ntunga changed his capital in spite of himself.[1].

As for the violence, it seems to result from the exacerbated monopoly of trade with European firms held by three peoples to the detriment of two others from the hinterland. The Mbvumbo, Fang and Benë were allies and controlled the ivory route (Morgen Von, 1893: 97). Having become too rich, their goods and locations aroused the greed of the camp of those excluded from the said trade: the Ntumu. These two camps in the hinterland were not long in confronting each other.

According to the oral sources of the Mbvumbo, the Ntumu established in Ambam and Oyem, in northern Gabon, attacked them with the double aim of plundering them and taking their place as intermediaries with the Mabi and the Batanga. As the Mbvumbo and Fang-Okak were armed with guns, they defeated the Ntumu. However, soon, the latter called the Bulu, a related people who still lived in the savannah in 1840 (Alexandre, 1965: 532-533), to their aid. They returned to the charge through a series of conflicts called Oban or war of the allies, they had the victory. These conflicts ended with the rout of the Mbvumbo and Fang-Okak during the battle of Ebemvok, a locality in the district of Ebolowa in Southern Cameroon (Pouesset, 1904: 5/ Kpwang Kpwang, 1989: Chapter II). Mbvumbo and Fang-Okak then ceded all their lands stretching from Dja and Lobo and from Ntem to Mvila. As they fled, they went to two main places. Some took refuge in the north of continental Equatorial Guinea while others escaped by the track linking Ebemvok to Bipindi via the locality of Aloum-Bekom. Still others took the Ebolowa-Efoulan-Abok Ntomba-Assok track. The refugees from the last two tracks settled between Bipindi and Lolodorf along the left bank of the Lokoundjé River. These are the clans: Biwandi, Bimbpalang, Bimbuah, Biwambo, Bingambo, Limanzuang, Bituer, Bindtuana, Bipongli, Biwüan, Biwüèlè, Sambong, Sambuong, Sanwüala, Sassandè, Sassiang, Samapfua and Sandeng. All these clans were nicknamed Mbvumbo *Pfiéburi* or Mbvumbo last comers in the Bipindi-Lolodorf space (Pouesset, 1904: 5). The Mbvumbo and Fang are not the only victims of the Bulu invasion. By penetrating into the forest of Southern Cameroons to bring help to the Ntumu, the Bulu created a veritable phenomenon of disruption in the settlement before 1840 by pushing back certain Maka and Koozimé towards the East (Dugast, 1848: 102).The conflicts would have shaken the trade because the ivory arrived less and less on the coast of Kribi. Situation which caused the loss of interest of the European firms for this coast with the profit of that of Bata where were other experimented hunters of elephant: Bisio (Cadet-Xavier: 2006, notes 765-772).

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[1]AC, 105, CSN, Letter from Minkua Ntunga, A., Superior Chief of the Ngoumba & Fangs in Bidjouka-Lolodorf, to Mr. Administrator-Mayor, Head of the Lolodorf subdivision, 05/09/1956, pp.1 -2.

7. Conclusion

The purpose of the reflection we have just carried out was to illustrate the impact of trade between Europeans and local populations on the initial settlement of Southern Cameroon between 1840 and 1887. To achieve this, we exploited multidisciplinary sources from 1819 to 2021 and the new African historiography. From these sources and methods, it appears that the most accepted hypothesis on the settlement of the region from 1840 to 1887, which makes the Batanga and Benë peoples the only populations of Southern Cameroon in this period, is hardly consistent with the data science and oral traditions. Already, the Frenchman Bouchaud pointed out that the coast of Kribi exported 40 tons of ivory per year and that the sellers, the Batanga, did not hunt elephants. He wondered about the provenance of these elephant tusks when the Batanga hinterland was empty (Bouchaud, 1952: 57). Through scientific data, it appears that the group of actors in this trade were much more numerous: the Ndowè, Kwasio and Fang-Beti complexes. The exponential enrichment of these peoples, who exchanged ivory, palm oil and rubber for salt, guns, cloths and mirrors, attracted the covetousness of the Ntumu, excluded from said trade. In order to enrich themselves in turn, they allied themselves with a related savannah people, the Bulu who invaded almost all of Southern Cameroon and brought down the ivory trade in Kribi.

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Oral Sources

Names	Profession during the interview	Age	Date	Place
Guga Rene	retired fisherman	118 years old	02/05/2003	Kribi
Mintanguele Laurent	Retired fisherman and village chief Nziou	90 years old	06/17/2009	Kribi
Nanzie Bidimbi Marlyse	Household	52 years	10/31/2006	Yaounde

CITY DIPLOMACY AND MULTILATERALISM IN AFRICA: TOOL AND CHALLENGES OF AFRICAN MULTILATERAL COOPERATION THROUGH THE PRISM OF THE INTERNATIONAL ACTION OF CAMEROONIAN MUNICIPALITIES

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Abstract: *This reflection aims to show that city diplomacy constitutes a framework for the expression of a new multilateralism in Africa today. It is part of the last thematic axis of this call for contributions relating to the projects of multilateralism seen from Africa and for Africa. This reflection starts from the premise that city diplomacy has over time contributed to the expansion of the field of competences of state diplomacy. The international action of local governments and cities therefore constitutes a diplomatic tool that complements state diplomacy with regard to the crisis in the effectiveness of this diplomacy. Today's Africa still faces the challenge of its insertion into the global multilateral system. A challenge that has as a prerequisite the strengthening of an inter-African cooperation framework capable of propelling Africa as a player that makes sense within the international architecture. The existence of a pan-African platform of local governments, namely the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLGA), is a tangible illustration of a framework for the deployment of a new multilateralism in Africa. The experience of African municipalities and cities in city diplomacy within the UCLGA is worthy of interest given that it makes it possible to question the relevance and effectiveness of city diplomacy in the construction of a new framework. multilateralism in Africa. The study is based on two theories, namely transnationalism and functionalism, which not only make it possible to understand the dynamics of internationalization of cities and local governments in the face of globalization, but also to assess the contribution of African municipalities and cities. in building a new multilateralism in Africa. From a methodological point of view, this research draws on a mixed-type approach that combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative approach makes it possible to establish the correlation between city diplomacy and multilateralism in achieving the challenges that still face Africa today. The qualitative approach makes it possible to understand and assess the relevance of city diplomacy initiatives in solving Africa's problems through the prism of the AFRICITIES summits. Documentary data made up of scientific works, reports from international organizations and archival documents constitute the main material of this research.*

Keywords: city diplomacy, multilateralism, local governments, Africa

1. Introduction

International relations are characterized today by a relative rise in power of the cooperative phenomenon of local governments. The latter has contributed to making the continental international landscape more complex. As in other continents, international action municipalities has greatly contributed to the expansion of the field of diplomatic skills state in Africa. Conscious that the promotion of international solidarity South-South goes through the implementation of cooperation initiatives at the local level, African towns and cities have over time undertaken to promote inter-African cooperation. Thus, was born in Africa a new framework of multilateralism carried by the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLGA), framework of expression of a diplomacy of the cities centered on the resolution of many problems which undermine present-day Africa. The international platforms of

municipalities and local governments are privileged places for consultation and dialogue with a view to implementing development at local level.

Promoting cooperation as well as African unity constitutes a cardinal principle of the policy of most states on the African continent, in particular Cameroon. It therefore influences the deployment of municipalities and African cities in international relations. This is undoubtedly the reason why the promotion of municipal cooperation at the African level is based on this foundation. The conduct of interstate relations based on peace is for African States a necessity for the promotion of African unity. City diplomacy has been able to find a place in the international architecture based on a simple reflection by researchers on the international transactions observed between cities and other local authorities. African unity, which requires the total and effective liberation of the continent, is a creed set out not only in the Agenda 2063 of the African Union (AU) but also in the founding texts of UCLGA. African local governments subscribe to this credo insofar as they have never ceased to attach an interest to cooperation Inter-african. Diplomacy of local governments is an important tool in the promotion of peace and conflict resolution. Conventions cooperation decentralized and the twinning initiatives between African towns and cities sufficiently illustrate the interest accorded to intra-African cooperation. These conventions, which are somewhat different from the Western approach to cooperation, reflect a vision embodied by the AU and relayed by UCLGA.

More than a decade after independence, the record of African States in the field of multilateralism is not at all satisfactory with regard to the many twists and turns that have often characterized diplomatic practices in Africa. Thus, with regard to Agenda 2063 of the AU, the cooperation of local authorities constitutes a tool which should promote the integration of the African continent. This makes local authorities important players in the implementation of a new framework for multilateralism in Africa. In light of this finding of a crisis of multilateralism in Africa due to the ineffectiveness of state diplomacy, there is reason to question the relevance and effectiveness of city diplomacy in implementing establishment of a new multilateral cooperation framework in Africa. How can city diplomacy help meet the challenges of multilateral cooperation in Africa? This is the main question around which this reflection revolves, which first sets out to show the global context that has led to the rise of city diplomacy in the field of international cooperation in order to show how this is a tool for building a new multilateralism in Africa. The experience of Cameroonian municipalities joining international African local government platforms and their participation in the AFRICITES summit are illustrative examples of our argument.

2. **Global context and rise of city diplomacy in the field of international cooperation**

One of the illustrative facts of the transformation of the international action of local authorities is the shift from decentralized cooperation to city diplomacy (Mamoudou, Iguigui, 2021: 7-8).Two major elements have contributed to the emergence of new fields in diplomacy local governments. These are wars and climate change. These new fields have therefore emerged in a context marked by the resurgence of conflicts and the proliferation of threats to the ecosystem, which has caused the acceleration of climate change. As planet earth is now faced with a double vulnerability, namely wars and climate change, the need to challenge people through local communities has emerged as an appropriate solution (Iguigui, 2020: 262). It is in this perspective that the establishment of intergovernmental platforms for negotiations on the climate has favored the rise and evolution of a diplomacy of development sustainable. The organization of Earth Summits has made it possible to challenge local authorities on the possibility of adjusting their international action based on these new fields of diplomacy. The birth of city diplomacy who followed this movement enabled the municipalities Cameroonian to experience these transformations in their own way. Thus, the emergence of sustainable

development issues and their appropriation by local authorities have been catalyzed by the dynamics of internationalization of cities and local governments in the face of globalization.

Statement of city diplomacy and emergence of sustainable development issues on the international agenda of local governments

The expansion of the field of competence of diplomacy state has caused the entry into the scene of sub-state entities what are in particular the local authorities, regional entities or federated states. The latter are at the origin of an intense diplomatic activity which aims to be both competitive and complementary to that of the States. City diplomacy, since it is about it, could find a place in the international architecture starting from a simple reflection of the researchers on the international transactions observed between the cities and other territorial collectivities.

City diplomacy: between the search for a definition and the consecration of the diplomatic action of cities and local governments

The first attempts to define diplomacy cities have been sketched by scholars who have tried to theorize the external action of sub-state entities. This is Professor Panayot is SOLDATOS who, in 1990, proposed the concept of para-diplomacy to allude to international action federated entities (Soldatos, 1990: 34). His work was thus taken up by many academics specializing in international relations seeking to understand the international deployment sub-state entities. This work has been reappropriated by other researchers, in particular Yves VILTARD, Brian HOCKING and Roger Van Der PLUIJM. It was in 2005 that the concept of city diplomacy emerged with the creation within the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) organization of a commission called "City diplomacy". A year later, that is to say in 2006, meetings of this commission held in Washington and Perugia will propose an initial definition of the concept. This first definition sees city diplomacy as:

A tool for local governments and their associations to help local governments caught up in conflicts and wars, through cooperation immediate and concrete city to the city with a view to creating a stable environment in which citizens can live together in peace, in democracy and prosperity (Viltard, 2008: 512).

After these initial academic stammerings, international local government organizations have set about finding a definition for diplomacy cities. In 2007, Professor Roger VAN DER PLUIJM proposed a definition of city diplomacy as "the institutions and processes through which cities engage with actors on the international stage, with the intention of representing themselves and their interests therein, and reciprocally" (Van Der Pluijm, Melissen, 2007). With regard to these definitions, it shows that city diplomacy has experienced a consecration in its practice starting from a simple search for definition at the start. Today, the spokespersons of local governments gathered within platforms such as UCLG are working to give recognition to their international activities, and to endow them with a singularity. It is in this sense that they attempt to appropriate the issues of sustainable development.

The emergence of sustainable development issues on the international agenda of local governments

The issues of sustainable development emerged in the field of international cooperation after the Second World War in a perspective of multilateral state cooperation under the aegis of the United Nations (UN). Originally, sustainable development was discussed during the Earth Summits organized with a view to finding solutions to the multiple threats facing the entire planet. The emanation of an intergovernmental will driven by the aegis of the UN, the earth summits are meetings initiated with the aim of developing a policy international public in development sustainable. They are held according to a cyclical period of ten years since 1972, date of the first summit organized in Stockholm in Sweden. The second was held in

Nairobi, Kenya in 1982, the third in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992, the fourth in Johannesburg in 2002, and the fifth to qualify for Rio+20 was also held in Rio in 2012 (Laville, 2013: 23-45). These Earth Summits have given a new impetus to international action local authorities, inviting them to include the promotion of sustainable development in their agendas. Since then, sustainable development has been on the international agenda local communities. Well before the 1992 summit held in Rio de Janeiro, the milestones of international commitment of local governments in promoting sustainable development had already been raised. In 1990, during the World Congress of Local Authorities, the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives was created (Boutaud, Brodhag, 2006: 155). It was this institution that led the way for local authorities at the Rio summit in 1992. The objective was to arouse a massive mobilization of local governments in order to support the States and the UN in the implementation of 'a politic global approach to promoting sustainable development. During this Rio summit, ICLEI clearly showed the fundamental role of local public actors in the implementation of sustainable development through the formula "Think global, act local".

To this end, Chapter 28 of Agenda 21 of the United Nations invited local authorities to put in place, as early as 1996, development strategies sustainable at the scale of their territories. This is how the first local approaches to sustainable development were developed and numerous actions carried out within the framework of cooperation international local authorities. Since then, many communities have drawn up local Agendas 21 in order to stimulate, from the local level, a global dynamic of environmental protection and the promotion of sustainable development. Decentralization started in some African countries since 1996, has facilitated the linking of local authorities to the recommendations resulting from the Rio de Janeiro summit of 1992. The Rio summit provoked profound transformations because it allowed the concept of biodiversity to leave the sphere of biologists to integrate into that of the human and social sciences (Blondel, 2005: 333). Results achieved in local development promotion policies sustainability have remained relatively mixed as many countries have struggled to meet this requirement. However, the local communities that are committed have been able to give satisfaction through the development of their local Agenda 21s. It was not until the Copenhagen summit that new impetus was given in terms of the commitment of local authorities to the promotion of sustainable development. If sustainable development is a catalyst for the rise of city diplomacy, it must be emphasized that it has provoked many dynamics of internationalization of cities and local governments in the context of globalization

The dynamics of internationalization of cities and local governments in the face of globalization

Metropolisation is today considered to be a major factor in the recomposition of territories (Viltard, 2010:598). This is how cities and other local governments try to project themselves within the framework of globalization. Even if this projection is controversial in view of the difficulties of ownership of African local authorities, particularly Cameroon, of city diplomacy.

The internationalization of cities in the context of globalization

Diplomacy cities has caused a reconfiguration of urban spaces in the world's major cities. We have witnessed the emergence of the concept of "city global". These are large metropolises with an international dimension such as Paris, London, New York, Tokyo, Hong Kong and even Geneva (Viltard, 2010:597). They are then carriers of many dynamics of territorial reconfiguration at the time of globalization and the redeployment of capitalism. Like the regional and federated entities, the local authorities have been able to develop strategies of resistance and integration into globalization. Thus, these cities implement capital attraction strategies as major stock exchanges, as the headquarters of multinationals or international

institutions (Viltard, 2005: 131). The internationalization of cities has been at the origin of the phenomenon of metropolization. This metropolitanization is encouraged by local authorities. Some countries like France have initiated reforms along these lines. Many networks of sub-state entities have been set up as a result of the internationalization of cities, thus intensifying the vast movement of globalization. Many of them have launched a fairly significant diplomatic offensive, a question of marking their presence on the international scene. Examples include Quebec, which had 28 international representations in 2005, and Catalonia, which had around fifty (Paquin, 2005: 131). Some cities have been awarded UNESCO World Heritage status due to their ever-increasing internationalization. Thus, we understand that today's globalization is strongly marked by the diplomatic action of local governments and other cities which have, over time, established themselves as major players in international relations.. If the phenomenon seems banal for European communities and cities, African cities seem to find it difficult to adapt to this situation. This is why diplomacy cities in the Cameroonian context remains in search of its bearings. It therefore oscillates between appropriation and adaptation.

Diplomacy cities in the Cameroonian context: between appropriation and adaptation

Diplomacy cities is a relatively recent tradition in the Cameroonian landscape, even if it must be recognized that the international commitment municipalities cameroonian, meanwhile, is old. It contributes to the influence of the Cameroonian model of decentralization (Mbeng Dang, Iguigui, 2017: 279-282). It has brought out a new category of diplomats in the Cameroonian diplomatic landscape, namely the mayors who, through their actions, strive to implement municipal foreign policies. This diplomacy is characterized by its difficult freedom from state supervision and the quest for benchmarks and international affirmation remains a real challenge. The difficult emancipation of diplomacy cities of state influence can be explained both by the lack of political will, and a narrow vision that government authorities have of non-governmental diplomacy. The fact that the state, as part of the implementation of decentralization policies, rises as a policeman for decentralized communities somewhat slows down the enthusiasm of local elected officials. Given the often very long administrative procedures, mayors often find it difficult to develop and implement projects in line with international deployment of their cities. For example, we note the attitude of the prefects who ensure the supervision of the State over the municipalities in Cameroon (Iguigui, 2015: 84). The latter have a hold on both the organs and the acts of the municipality..

The internationalization strategy cannot be based solely on the needs of local government without taking into account the possibilities offered by the context (Zapata, 2008: 40). In which case, local governments that opt for this approach run the risk of never having benchmarks, and by extension, an international affirmation. To know its international potential, the community must identify the threats to which it is subject and the opportunities available to it. For this analysis, the community must know, as exhaustively as possible, the history and current situation of international relations of its territory, without being limited to public institutions. Far from being a simple view of the mind, this is a major challenge to be taken up by Cameroonian cities which are in search of benchmarks and international affirmation. To achieve this, they must carefully scrutinize the current international situation. The evolution of the system international in all its components, and through taking into account certain economic, political, social and cultural indicators obliges the Cameroonian authorities to think about the external action of their local governments. This then assumes that the issues both manifest and latent of diplomacy cities Cameroonians deserve to be re-examined with regard to the shift observed around the general philosophy of the para-diplomatic phenomenon. Fundraising international and visibility which, until now, constitute the main challenges of the internationalization of municipalities Cameroonian are then faced with an imperative to adapt

to the upheavals experienced by the international system. Despite its lack of appropriation by Cameroonian municipalities of city diplomacy, it is now positioned as a framework for the expression of a new multilateralism in Africa.

City diplomacy as a framework for the expression of a new multilateralism in Africa

As one of the chessboards in the game of global influence, partnership is accompanied by a considerable transformation of African international relations (Chouala, 2003: 69). These relations are now undergoing a reconfiguration that reveals a new multilateralism supported by local governments and expressed through city diplomacy. The expression of a new multilateralism in Africa is manifested in the case of Cameroon by the adhesion of its municipalities and cities to the African international platforms of local governments and the participation in the AFRICITIES summits which constitute for Africa the anchor point of this new multilateralism carried by local authorities and African cities.

The membership of Cameroonian municipalities and cities in African international platforms of local governments

The international platforms of municipalities and local governments are privileged places for consultation and dialogue with a view to implementing development at local level. To this end, there are African platforms of cities and local governments to which Cameroonian municipalities have joined in order to enhance the cooperation inter-african. This membership obeys a logic that ties in with one of the guiding principles of the policy foreigner from Cameroon namely the promotion of African cooperation. For Cameroonian municipalities, the promotion and enhancement of inter-African cooperation requires membership in African platforms of local governments.

The promotion of inter-African cooperation as a basis for the adhesion of Cameroonian municipalities to African platforms of local governments

Promoting cooperation as well as African unity constitutes a cardinal principle of the policy exterior of Cameroon. It therefore influences the deployment of municipalities Cameroonian in international relations. This is undoubtedly the reason why the promotion of municipal cooperation at the African level is based on this foundation. The conduct of interstate relations based on peace is for Cameroon a necessity for the promotion of African unity (Nganmondi, 2011: 25). African unity, which requires the total and effective liberation of the continent, is a creed set out in the guiding principles of Cameroon's foreign policy (Mouelle Kombi, 1996: 46-95). Politics foreigner from Cameroon oscillates between two logics. The first concerns an African and sub-regional deployment whose objective is to strengthen African solidarity. The second logic is that of a global deployment characterized by a diversification of the poles of action beyond the African continent with the backdrop of openness to the world and the achievement of its development objectives economic. The cities Cameroonian subscribe to this principle insofar as they have always shown an interest in cooperation inter-african. Diplomacy of local governments is an important tool in the promotion of peace and conflict resolution. Conventions cooperation decentralized and twinning initiatives between municipalities Cameroonian and other African municipalities sufficiently illustrate the interest accorded to intra-African cooperation. These conventions, which are somewhat different from the Western approach to cooperation, reflect a vision embodied by the AU and relayed by the African platforms of local governments, the main one being UCLGA.

The adhesion of Cameroonian municipalities to African international platforms of local governments as a tool for the promotion of a new multilateralism in Africa

The cities Cameroonian are members of African local government platforms. Their membership follows a common vision driven by the States within the AU who, aware of the importance of decentralization have adopted the African charter of values and principles of decentralization, local governance and development local. This is a legal instrument which has contributed to the establishment of many African local government platforms, the largest of which is UCLGA. Ratification by Cameroon of this charter has encouraged a massive membership of its municipalities within African platforms such as CGLUA, the Covenant of Mayors of Africa(CMASS), the Association of Mayors of Central Africa (AMAC), the African Conference on Decentralization and Local Development(CADDEL), the Network of Locally Elected Women of Africa (REFELA) and many others (Le Communal Hors-Série, 2018: 28).

Beyond simple membership, municipalities Cameroonian stand out through the responsibilities that their leaders exercise within these platforms. For example, Cameroon chaired CADDEL and REFELA (Le Communal Hors-Série, 2018: 28). This shows a certain efficiency international deployment Cameroonian municipalities. Diplomacy cities which is gradually expressed through this membership of African platforms and the exercise of responsibilities within them finds its extension in participation in international meetings of African local governments. This is particularly the case with the AFRICITY Summits in which Cameroonian municipalities take part to demonstrate their attachment to the ideals of promoting cooperation inter-African communal pledge of a new multilateralism in Africa.

The establishment of the AFRICITIES summits and the advent of a new framework for multilateral cooperation in Africa

One of the modalities through which cooperation Association of Local Governments promotes a new multilateralism in Africa is the participation in the AFRICITIES summits. This is a process of internationalization of cities (Viltard, 2005: 600) which share experience in local governance. African cities, which are generally municipalities or even local governments, align themselves with this situation, hence the existence of platforms within which they meet within the framework of inter-African summits. Thus, gathered within CGLUA, African municipalities are trying in their own way to build international relations from a sharing of the experience of decentralization and local governance. As for the Cameroonian municipalities, their participation in the inter-African local government summits can only be better understood in the light of the context in which these meetings were set up and the issues that underlie them in order to better understand their participation in these meetings.

The context and challenges of setting up AFRICITIES summits

The establishment of inter-African local government summits took place in a context marked by a global legitimization of international action cities and other local authorities decentralized. The rise of diplomacy cities in the West and its extension in Africa has aroused enthusiasm on the part of local governments, more than ever engaged in a battle for recognition of their existence by the other players in the system international. Globalization and ever-increasing economic interdependence have contributed to broadening the scope of action of local authorities and other sub-state entities (Pasquier, 2012: 168). In 1996, during the United Nations Habitat (UN-HABITAT) Habitat II Summit held in Istanbul, Turkey, local and regional authorities were recognized an important role in the development. At the same time, their emergence as international players was reiterated. It is on the basis of the recommendations of the Habitat II Summit that the AFRICITIES summits were born. The first edition was held in 1998 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. Many issues under pin the establishment of these inter-African meetings of local governments. These issues are both geopolitical and geoeconomic.

On the geopolitical level, it is for the municipalities and African cities to build not only an African international entity, but also to project themselves on the international scene as meaningful actors. In light of the competition between the various players in the system inter***nationa***l, African municipalities are trying to seize the opportunities offered to them to obtain international recognition from the major entities such as the UN, the AU, the European Union (EU) and the Bretton Woods Institutions. It is also for African cities to position themselves as international territories whose governance mechanisms obey the channels in force. By analyzing urban action from the transnational (Russel, 2006: 21), we understand that the establishment of inter-African summits of local governments in Africa tends to make African municipalities real spaces for the production and distribution of transnational dynamics.

From a geoeconomic point of view, the inter-African summits of local governments like AFRICITES aim to establish a new partnership for the development economy at the local level. It is a question of multiplying the ways and means of including African cities in the field of economic competitiveness. This requires the enunciation as well as the implementation of a diplomacy cities focused on economic influence and territorial development. Given that metropolisation has become a structuring element in the recomposition of territories (Viltard, 2005: 598), economic competition is therefore at the heart of the battle for the international positioning of cities. For Cameroon, the AFRICITIES summits constitute a reservoir of economic opportunities (Le Communal Hors-Série, 2018: 27). They are often given the opportunity to meet technical and financial partners who can support them in achieving decentralization. This is the main motivation for the participation of municipalities Cameroonian at the AFRICITIES summits between 1998 and 2018.

The participation of Cameroonian municipalities in AFRICITIES summits

Between 1998 and 2018, local governments as well as African cities met eight times under the banner of the UCLGA. Some municipalities Cameroonian have always participated in these various summits which each time have addressed a problem related to development of Africa from local initiatives. These include the communes of Douala I, Douala IVth, Yaounde I, Yaounde II, Yaoundé III, Dschang and Bangangte. The first edition held in Abidjan in 1998 was marked by the recognition of the essential role of local communities in the development of Africa. The second edition took place in Windhoek, Namibia in 2000 (http//www.faapa.info/blog/histoire-des-sommets-africites-encadre consulted on July 21, 2019). The central theme was "The financing of local authorities for sustainable development in Africa". Cameroon hosted the third edition in 2003 on the theme "Access to basic services within African local communities". The participants pleaded for the acceleration of access to basic services such as drinking water, health, hygiene and sanitation.

The fourth edition held in Nairobi, Kenya in 2006 focused on the involvement of African local communities in achieving the MDGs. The city Marrakech hosted the fifth edition, the discussions of which focused on the response of African local authorities to the global crisis and the promotion of development local sustainability and employment. In Dakar in 2012, African local governments addressed the issues of building Africa from its territories. The seventh edition held in Johannesburg, South Africa looked at the future of Africa through its people. In 2018, African local leaders met in Marrakech for a reflection on the theme "The transition towards sustainable cities and territories: the role of local authorities of Africa" (http//www.faapa.info/blog/histoire-des-sommets-africites-encadre consulted on July 21, 2019). The Cameroonian cities that took part in the work are Yaoundé, Douala, Bafoussam and Dschang.

Cameroon always took part in these various meetings and succinctly reaped many benefits. These fallouts are the institutionalization two prizes, namely the "Gibert BIWOLE" prize and the "AMOUGOU NOMA" prize institutionalized during the first edition because of the

importance of Cameroonian cities within this platform. During the eighth edition, the Cameroonian delegation was led by the Minister of Decentralization and Local Development Georges ELANGA OBAM. He was accompanied for the occasion by certain mayors like Emile ANDZE ANDZE, Mayor of the Yaoundé District MunicipalityI , Jean Jacques LENGUE MALAPA, Mayor of the Arrondissement Commune from Douala I, Beaudelaire DONFACK, Mayor of the Municipality of Dschang and Célestine SHORT KETCHA, Mayor of the Municipality of Bangangté and other administrative officials in charge of decentralization. These ambassadors of the municipalities Cameroonians have contributed to enhancing their image and their visibility within the international architecture. Actions which undoubtedly contribute significantly to drawing a new framework for multilateralism in Africa.

Conclusion

In the final analysis, this reflection sought to account for the new mechanisms for reconfiguring multilateralism in the African context. This reconfiguration takes place through city diplomacy, which is positioned as a tool that is both complementary and competitive with state diplomacy. The internationalization of African cities and local communities in a context of globalization is a catalyst that has contributed to setting up a new framework for bottom-up multilateral cooperation. The example of Cameroonian municipalities through their membership in the inter-African platforms of local governments and their participation in the AFRICITIES summits as a framework for expressing local aspirations in a global perspective, sufficiently illustrates the importance of city diplomacy today. The incursion of new tools into the diplomacy of local governments is indicative of the transformation undergone by the international deployment of Cameroonian municipalities. This incursion took place in a context marked by the emergence of environmental concerns which have risen to the rank of priorities on the international agenda of local authorities. The Earth Summits then fostered the growth and development of city diplomacy in terms of environmental protection and the promotion of sustainable development. As a result, city diplomacy in the Cameroonian context appears as a reality that oscillates between appropriation and adaptation. Partnership as a tool and modality of cooperation should enable Africa to think up a new practice of diplomacy by giving pride of place to African towns and communities. Their ability to address and solve equally crucial issues such as sustainable development, climate change, natural disasters or conflicts testifies to the need to build a new multilateral cooperation framework in Africa based on the external action of cities. and local communities.

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THE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE PROMOTION OF BILINGUALISM AND MULTICULTURALISM AND THE CHALLENGES OF MANAGING THE ANGLOPHONE LINGUISTIC MINORITY IN CAMEROON[1]

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Abstract*: The socio-political and economic events that the post-independent has experienced in Cameroon are the consequence of a distinct colonial past. First as a protectorate under the German colonialist and successively as mandated and Trust territories under the British and French colonial authorities. The triad of colonial legacies and most importantly that of Britain and France fashioned the bilingual nature of contemporary Cameroon. It is worth noting that at independence, Cameroon was partitioned between Britain and France in 1916 and ruled as two different administrative entities by the colonial powers. It was only in October 1961 that both territories decided to reunite to form a bilingual country with each preserving its historical legacies. Upon the unification, the territory and Cameroonians from the British-governed part of partitioned Cameroon represented only 20% of the country's territory and population, thus making them what has been conceptualized as the anglophone minority. However, the socio-political, and linguistic marginalization of the anglophone minority since 1961 laid the basis for latent politico-linguistic grievances that materialized into the current anglophone conflict in 2016. In a bit to resolve the anglophone conflict, the government of Cameroon created the National Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism (CNPBM) in February 2018. The main argument sustained in this study is that the anglophone conflict is eminently a political problem and requires a political solution. This paper questions the nature and extent to which the CNPBM can contribute to the resolution of the anglophone conflict. Indeed, through a historical approach, this work questions the assessment of the management of linguistic minorities (Anglophones) in Cameroon and the issues and challenges facing this commission for the promotion of bilingualism. This paper suggests that an enabling political environment needs to be created in other to permit the CNPBM to effectively play its role.*

Keywords*: Cameroon, crisis, identity, minority, Commission for CNPBM*

1. Introduction

Cameroon's official bilingualism, which is one of its riches today, is in fact the result of colonial blunders and political compromises between Western powers in Africa. Following the German-Douala treaty of 12 July 1884, Cameroon became a German protectorate. This protectorate was modelled on the German colonial model until 1915, when the Germans were forced out by the French and British during the First World War. The victors then shared the spoils from 1916 onwards, giving rise to two incongruous portions, subject to international weather, whose strings were held by the League of Nations, then the United Nations (Tamekamta, 2016: 232). The Franco-British condominium statute that came into being on 14 March 1916 already enshrined this division (Eyelom, 2003: 267). These arrangements were ratified by the League of Nations on 20 July 1922 (Guifo, 2007: 24-25). This colonial act had consecrated and levelled the formation of two distinct entities which had in common only the

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[1] This article is a follow-up to the paper we presented at the 56th Congress of the Quebec Political Science Association in Ottawa in 2018.

anteriority of the past. This colonial blunder created two different psycho-affective frameworks within the same pre-colonial entity. Until 1961, the parts of Cameroon remained under the administration of two opposing colonial systems, thus creating important identity cleavages between these peoples. But in 1961, President Ahidjo and John Ngu Foncha (leader of Anglophone area) decided to correct the colonial contempt by reunifying the two parts of Cameroon. It should be noted that the part of Cameroon under British administration that was attached to its colonial empire of Nigeria was divided into two parts: Northern Cameroon and Southern Cameroon. But at the end of the referendum of 10 and 11 February 1961, Northern Cameroon voted for its attachment to Nigeria while Southern Cameroon opted to join the French Cameroon, which had been independent since 1 January 1960. Taking into account the different colonial heritage and especially the protection of the English-speaking minority, English and French were established as official languages, although the English-speaking population was barely 1/5 of the population of French Cameroon (Keunang, 2019: 295). In practice, however, the management of this minority was not always appropriate. Combined with economic and political frustration, language discrimination had paved the way for deep crises, including the one that has been ongoing since October 2016. It is to resolve this crisis that the Cameroonian government created the National Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism (NCPBM). This work aims to highlight the approximate management of the Anglophone minority and the challenges facing the NCPBM. Thus, what assessment can be made of the management of linguistic minorities (Anglophones) in Cameroon? What are the challenges of the commission for the promotion of bilingualism? Through a historical approach, this study presents in a first part the weight of the colonial heritage and the construction of an Anglophone feeling (International Crisis Group, 2017: 5); and in a second part, the context, issues and challenges of the creation of the NCPBM after four years of existence and operation.

2. The weight of the colonial heritage and the construction of an Anglophone sentiment

In this first section, we highlight the weight of the dual colonial heritage that gave rise to Cameroon's bilingualism and the linguistic cleavages that led to the outbreak of the crisis in 2016.

A- Exhumation of a historical vexation and the claim of an Anglophone identity

The mandate and trusteeship periods consecrated the division of Cameroon into two distinct entities in terms of culture, political aspirations and even economic development. However, political blunders, inadequate nation-building and linguistic cleavages gave rise to a feeling of frustration and separatism among the Anglophones.

B. Rejection as a test of national wealth redistribution

On 1 January 1960, Cameroon under French administration became independent with Ahmadou Ahidjo as president. Following negotiations (Foumban agreements) between Ahidjo and Foncha (leader of the English-speaking part), Cameroon was reunified on 1 October 1961 as a federal state with two federated states. While the federation was criticized by the Anglophones in its formation (France having put all its weight behind preserving its political model), it was the lesser evil for the Anglophone populations, some of whom wanted to join Nigeria and some of whom wanted their independence separately from Cameroon and Nigeria.

Just after less than 11 years in the federation, President Ahidjo wanted the unification of the two parts of the country. It took place on 20 May 1972 and left a feeling of economic regression in the English-speaking part, because it led to the centralization and/or dismantling of the economic structures of Western Cameroon such as the *West Cameroon Marketing Board*,

the *Cameroon Bank and Powercam*, as well as the abandonment of projects in gestation such as the port of Limbé, the airports of Bamenda and Tiko, in favor of investments in the French-speaking area. Faced with this situation, Bernard Fonlon declared: "In three years of reunification, thanks to Articles 5 and 6 of the federal constitution, several practices and institutions have come from the East to the West. In West Cameroon, one now drives one's car on the right, the franc has replaced the pound sterling as the common currency, the school year has been aligned with that of the East and the scientific metric system has replaced unwieldy British measurements. But I have searched in vain for a single institution brought from the West to the East. Outside its federated borders, the influence of West Cameroon is practically nil... The result, therefore, is that in East Cameroon, the already predominant French influence is terribly consolidated by the Cameroonians themselves..., we will all be French in two or three generations" (Fonlon, 1984: 283-284).

These words of Bernard Fonlon essentially translate the 'failure' of national construction based on a dual identity. In reality, they illustrate the absorption of Anglophones, an idea that has been reinforced by institutional reforms. In this context, the unilateral abolition in 1970 of the post of vice-president, which was devolved to Western (Anglophone) Cameroon, and the appointment of a Francophone to the post of prime minister was a political calculation that could not claim to structure the living together and to protect the Anglophone minority. Moreover, when in 1979, a revision of the fundamental law made the Prime Minister the constitutional successor of the Head of State, the Anglophones cried out for their exclusion from the political rent. Indeed, before 1979, the president of the national assembly was the second personality of the country and the constitutional successor of the head of state in the event of a permanent vacancy in the presidency of the republic. And since 1973, this position was occupied by Salomon Tandeng Mouna, a native of Western Cameroon, which guaranteed this part of the country even a minimal possibility of running for the supreme magistracy. The 1979 act therefore sounds like a rejection, an exclusion, a political fall from grace (Gaillard, 1989)

Furthermore, the discovery and exploitation of oil deposits in the Rio del Dey, Lokele and Moundi, or the management of the CDC (Cameroon Development Corporation) in West Cameroon, gave rise to deepening demands among the Anglophones. SONARA, which exploits this oil, is located in Limbe, a city which, because of its strategic position on the sea, is a flagship of Cameroonian tourism and the production of fisheries resources. However, the populations of the North-West and South-West regions that make up English-speaking Cameroon say they do not always benefit from this important natural potential. Moreover, many claim that the development of infrastructures does not concern the English-speaking part of the country and that the construction of the deep water port in Kribi rather than in Limbe is proof of this. In all social strata, the idea of marginalization seems to find fertile ground. Akere Muna sums up this frustration in a letter to his French-speaking friend in the following terms: "Imagine that your village has a large oil deposit and that the refinery plant has its own neighborhoods, its hospital, its residences, its school, in short everything for the people working there, that most of them are only English speakers living far from the reality of your village... Imagine that in this atmosphere your village has not made a step in thirty years. Imagine that in this atmosphere your village has not made a step forward in thirty years. Imagine then that you complain and that you are called a secessionist and an enemy of the house...this is the daily lot of your English-speaking brother who, after 30 years, wonders if he made the right choice" (Mouna, 1995: 52).

Furthermore, in terms of political distribution, Anglophones claimed and still claim to be under-represented in the government apparatus. Philippe Gaillard noted that in the government of 3 July 1972, 'there were only two Anglophones out of twenty ministers, not including the deputy ministers, as stated by Gailard (1989, P.52). Dze Ngwa (professor at university of Yaoundé 1, during a citizen debate on Tele vision4 channel on 19 May 2017) adds to this idea when he states that in 2017, out of seven ministerial departments in charge of

education (training), not one has an English-speaking minister or secretary of state at the head. This means that beyond the marginalization in the sharing of political rent, the Anglophone party feels that it has no power at the level of decision-making regarding the education system, which is the pillar of the construction and transmission of cultural identity. It feels that the Anglophone side has been assimilated, even phagocytosed by East Cameroon. However, these recriminations are trivialized by some Cameroonian intellectuals who believe that issues of wealth distribution, land use planning or political rent distribution can be transposed to several other regions of Cameroon, thus denying the relevance of the Anglophone problem. Despite efforts, the rise of Anglophone sentiment in Cameroon and the diaspora has not abated. The political events of the 1980s and 1990s galvanized the secessionists.

C. Denial of Anglophone identity and construction of separatist sentiment

The beginning of the 1990s marked a turning point in the Anglophone question in Cameroon. Indeed, Cameroon entered the last decade of the twentieth century under a severe economic crisis like many other African nations, where social unrest and political protest erupted in the streets and ran from one capital to another like a shock wave relayed by radio and television. In the majority of French-speaking African countries, the advent of democracy is taking on the taste of a bitter potion, as it carries with it many turbulences linked to the manner of its implementation or to the economic crisis induced by the strong deterioration of the terms of trade. Benin, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon and Niger have all been caught up in this spiral with varying degrees of violence (Soudan, 1990: 28-32). At the time, there was talk of putting an end to the one-party system and opening up the country to a multiparty system. It was then that the SDF (Social Democratic Front), a popular party with an Anglophone tendency, was born. It designated John Fru Ndi (Anglophone) as its leader for the 1992 elections. From then on, the spread of a "*Fru Ndist*" (This expression refers to SDF President John Fru Ndi, whose populism is entangled with the trajectory of a providential man or demagogue), movement took shape in a society hit hard by the economic crisis and in which Anglophones claimed to be victims of discrimination (Yared, 1992: 9). The party organized an unauthorized meeting in Bamenda on 26 May 1990. The meeting was violently repressed by the police, leaving six dead, all of them Anglophones, as pointed out by Gaillard (1990, 1990: 21). At the end of the violence, the Anglophones were held responsible. The government's reaction in the North West was one of exclusion and denial of their political identity. On the same day, Anglophone students, who felt they were being repressed, demonstrated in Yaoundé and three hundred of them were arrested. In this political imbroglio, the essential fact that emerged was that the SDF was for the Anglophones an instrument to claim their identity that had been swallowed up by the Francophone system. Moreover, Marc Yared (1992, p.17.) noted that the chairman of the SDF crystallized his campaign on the demands of the frustrated strata, especially in the English-speaking part

Within the national television station, this identity divide was highlighted. The Anglophone journalists who reported on these incidents were detained and eventually suspended from airing, while the Cameroon Post newspaper was suspended. Zacharie Ngniman (Editor-in-Chief of Information at CRTV) and Antoine-Marie Ngono (Head of Political Affairs at CRTV) had sent a letter to the Minister of Communication and Culture on 14 June, stating that Cameroon Radio Television had only "a decapitated Anglophone newsroom and a Francophone newsroom whose editors have been burnt out by public opinion" as confessed by Gaillard (1990, P.17.). The party (SDF), which in its early days claimed to be the defender of the marginalized Anglophone minority, was thus born out of the blood of the victims of the repression, noted Gaillard (1991, p.20). The SDF took part in the elections of 11 October 1992, and the Anglophones found another element of negation of their identity. In fact, on October 12, 1992, the Supreme Court accredited Paul Biya as the winner of the election with 39.90% against

35.60% for John Fru Ndi, but not without incident, especially in the North-West, Fru Ndi's stronghold, where a state of emergency had been declared (Yared, 1992: 12). This election, tainted by irregularities according to international observers, had only a hint of exclusion for the Anglophones.

All these factors added up to a separatist feeling among the Anglophones. This was reflected in the birth of the SCNC (*Southern Cameroon National Council*) in Buea in 1993. It is a movement with many factions, notably in Great Britain, the USA, Nigeria and South Africa. This movement militates in favor of the secession of the English-speaking regions of Cameroon. It generally organized protests. Every year, while Cameroon celebrates reunification on 1 October, the SCNC organizes unauthorized demonstrations to protest that the English-speaking part has simply been annexed and should therefore regain its independence. In its demands, the SCNC received support from the *Southern Cameroons Youth League* (SCYL)(Konings and Nyamnjoh, 2003: 48-57). This other movement has the particularity of being led by young people, mostly products of the University of Buea. But since the recent movement that started in October 2016, teachers and lawyers have grouped together in a corporatist movement called the Cameroon Anglophone Civil Society Consortium, the 'Consortium'. These associations are now illegal.

3. **Linguistic cleavages and the onset of the Anglophone crisis**
The notion of bilingualism in Cameroon transcends the linguistic framework and brings into play ethno-tribal and geographical identities. Moreover, although bilingualism is the norm, it is possible to observe a Francophone hegemony whose contestation constitutes one of the causes of the crisis that is shaking the country.

3.1. **Bilingualism in Cameroon is challenged by the Francophone hegemony**
The feeling of exclusion expressed by English-speaking Cameroonians has increased with the standardization of state symbols. Although the constitution of 1 September 1961 enshrined bilingualism, many grievances enumerated by English-speaking Cameroonians point to several misunderstandings, including

   - The numerical absorption of English by French in a context of consecrated bilingualism. However, the Foumban conference ended with a joint communiqué read to the press by John Ngu Foncha, Prime Minister of British Cameroon. It stated that the two official languages of the two Cameroonians, French and English, were imported and should one day be replaced by an indigenous language and culture (Benjamin, 1972: 125). This option, apparently subscribed to by English-speaking Cameroonians through the charismatic leader of West Cameroon, was reminded by President Paul Biya on an official visit to Bamenda on 13 September 1991 in the following terms: "Let us not set Cameroonians against each other. Let us not oppose Anglophones and Francophones... The language barrier is not and should not be a political problem in our country. Cameroon is and remains a bilingual and multicultural country. Besides, remember, at the beginning of the century, Cameroonians were neither Anglophones nor Francophones. Why is it that at the dawn of the third millennium, other people's wars and other people's cultures divide Cameroonians who are already facing so many other problems? "(Biya, 2003: 297).

   - The validation of the state symbols of East Cameroon as elements of sovereignty of the new federal state. This is in fact the national flag, so the colours and their arrangement on the cloth were accepted with a double star on the green band (representing the two entities). Similarly, the motto, anthem and coat of arms were maintained or partially modified to suit the federal configuration.

Within the society, a real cultural imperialism is visible. In fact, after the GCE (General Certificate of Education) exams in 1993, teachers who had not been paid and who were

demanding the formation of a GCE board boycotted the marking of the exams. Faced with this situation, the Ministry of Education entrusted the correction of the papers to French-speaking teachers, leading to violent demonstrations in the capital and in Bamenda by English-speaking teachers (Yared, 1993, pp.28-28). Thus, by exploring the redistribution of the two official languages in the public signs of the cities of Bamenda (capital of the North-West region) and Yaoundé (seat of Cameroon's political institutions) until 2012, Georges Echu notes that the majority of signs announcing services and public buildings are only in French and that most of the signs with bilingual mentions are located in the North-West region (Echu and Kiwoh, 2012: 21-42). Alain Takam goes on to use the concept of linguistic governmentality to show the context in Cameroon where English is relegated to second place, or even excluded, as is the case in the army (Takam, 2012: 43-64).

2- Government action in the face of the outbreak of the Anglophone crisis

On 11 October 2016, a strike by lawyers demanding the translation of the revised OHADA uniform acts and the rejection of the application of the French-speaking civil code in the English-speaking part of the country broke out. The government imposed a contemptuous silence when it did not violently repress, thus radicalizing a strike that was planned to last a week (Mbiam, 2016: 7). But a few weeks later, on 21 November, Anglophone teachers also launched a strike demanding the removal of Francophone teachers from schools and the removal of Francophone administrators from the universities of Bamenda and Buea. This other episode of the strike turned into a confrontation with the army and the forces of law and order, especially as some people took advantage of the strike to resurrect the marginalization and the old Anglophone separatist sentiment, even in the diaspora. But beyond the police violence, the government tried to negotiate with the Anglophone corporatist movements, but failed. It also created a common law section at the National School of Administration and Magistracy (ENAM) after translating the OHADA texts as requested by the lawyers. Believing that the Anglophone problem had identity-based roots, the government decided to create the National Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism. It is clear that the management of the Anglophone linguistic minority has been a failure in Cameroon so far. It remains to be seen what the CNPBM would bring to this climate of social crisis.

4. The CNPBM: assessment and challenges after four years of existence

It is appropriate here to present the objectives of the National Commission for Bilingualism and Multiculturalism (CNPBM) at the time of its creation; and to assess its functioning, especially in terms of the promotion and protection of the English-speaking minority, and to present the challenges facing this structure.

A- Objectives and challenges of the creation of the CNPBM and assessment of its functioning

The missions assigned to this body are clearly defined in the presidential decree that created it. Based on these missions, we can consider the issues at stake.

1- The missions assigned to the CNPBM

By decree number 2017/013 of 23 January 2017, the president of the republic of Cameroon created the national commission for the promotion of bilingualism and multiculturalism. Placed under the authority of the President of the Republic, this structure is a legal person with financial autonomy. According to article 3 of this decree, the missions of this commission are as follows: to work for the promotion of bilingualism and multiculturalism in Cameroon, with a view to maintaining peace, consolidating the national unity of the country and strengthening the will and daily practice of living together of its populations (Presidential

Decree No. 2017/013 of 23 January 2017 on the creation, organization and functioning of the national commission for the promotion of bilingualism and multiculturalism). The commission has an essentially consultative role and in this regard, it shall

- submit reports and opinions to the President of the Republic and the Government on issues relating to the protection and promotion of bilingualism and multiculturalism;

- ensure the monitoring of the implementation of the constitutional provisions regarding the practice of French and English, particularly in public services and any other services receiving State subsidies

- propose measures to strengthen bilingualism and multiculturalism in Cameroon;

- To prepare and submit to the President of the Republic draft texts on bilingualism;

- Conducting any study or investigation and proposing all measures likely to strengthen the bilingual and multicultural character of Cameroon.

This structure must also receive requests denouncing any linguistic discrimination and popularize the regulations on bilingualism. This structure is composed of 15 members, all of whom are appointed by the President of the Republic, headed by an Anglophone president from the South West of Cameroon, peter Mafany Musonge, who is a former Prime Minister of Cameroon. The main challenge of the creation of this structure is to consolidate living together, which has been undermined by a violent conflict marked by secessionist impulses since 2016 in the North West and South West regions of Cameroon. In addition, other identity-based aspirations exist and are manifested by an ever-growing tribalism in the public space. The CNPBM receives requests from all sections of the population on a daily basis, aimed at denouncing the non-respect of constitutional provisions relating to bilingualism and multiculturalism, or at making suggestions. The CNPBM is therefore ideally placed to stem the tide of this social cancer. In the following, we attempt to present the Commission's assessment after three years of existence.

2- Actions and projects of the CNPBM

The CNPBM is a particularly young institution that is waiting to prove itself with regard to its missions. After three years of operation, it has nevertheless tried to make its mark. It has made courtesy and working visits to the major government bodies in order to seek their support. The most important activity just after its creation was the visit to the 37 ministerial departments of the Republic to ensure the sound application of the constitutional provisions on the promotion of bilingualism (Messi, 2017: 9). As part of its projection logic, the members of the Commission met with the Canadian High Commissioner in Cameroon to discuss collaboration modalities and thus benefit from Canada's experience in the management of bilingualism. In addition, the chairman of the commission met with the Secretary General of the Commonwealth in order to benefit from the contribution of this organization and thus participate in the "promotion of a healthy cohabitation between Anglophones and Francophones". The reports and proposals resulting from these meetings were transmitted to the President of the Republic.

From 24 to 26 April 2018, the Commission conducted a listening mission in the South West. Academics, civil society, parliamentarians, traditional and religious authorities and many other actors from the social stratum echoed the poor practice of bilingualism in Cameroon. The recriminations revolved around corruption, the centralization of economic and political power. In this string of actions, the CNPBM organized from 24 to 25 April 2019 at the Mont Febe Hotel in Yaoundé, a colloquium on the theme "Cameroonian multiculturalism at the crossroads: between tradition and modernity". The summaries of the papers were submitted to the President of the Republic. Just before this scientific meeting, the commission organized a "day of reflection on living together" on 11 April 2019 to reflect on ways of improving living together. It emerged from these two meetings that it is absolutely necessary to provide a better legal and

institutional framework for living together. These initiatives led to the proposal and vote by the National Assembly of Law n°2019/019 of 24 December 2019 on the promotion of official languages in Cameroon. This law outlines the scope of application, defines bilingualism and the incentives for its practice and other national languages. These provisions enrich article 1 al.3 of the Cameroonian constitution which stipulates that English and French are official languages of equal value. Following this provision, Law 2019/020 of 24 December 2019 amending and supplementing certain provisions of Law 2016/007 of 12 July on the Penal Code was adopted. It deals with the criminalization of acts of tribalism and racism. Even if it is not the result of the Commission's initiative, it is one of its stated objectives for the year 2020. The Commission had begun information and awareness caravans on these laws before the Covid-19 pandemic intervened to put an end to this program, which should be extended to the ten regions of the country.

From 30 September to 4 October 2019, the great national dialogue was held in Cameroon. The members of the Commission took an active part in order to implement their roadmap on the issues of bilingualism, decentralization and living together. Despite the commendable efforts, many challenges remain, especially with regard to the Anglophone minority.

B- The challenges of managing English-speaking minorities

The management of the Anglophone minority presents many challenges related to the establishment of the CNPBM as a consultative structure, and the social environment in Cameroon characterized by over 200 ethnic groups.

1- Challenges related to the construction of the CNPBM

The National Commission is an organization with financial autonomy and is directly attached to the Presidency of the Republic. It is only an advisory body and therefore cannot take any decisions. Only the instructions of the president of the republic are binding. This commission therefore does not have enough independence, as it remains totally subordinate to the will of the president of the republic. It remains rather weak in relation to the missions entrusted to it. Its members are appointed by the president of the republic. While some of them are recognized by the population as a whole as being of good character, many of them only represent the senior members of the ruling party, which the Anglophone population considers to be the source of their misfortune. Thus, the mere fact of having been a member of the central committee of the CPDM (ruling party) discredits certain members in the eyes of the Anglophone population. Furthermore, in popular imagery, commissions have never been created to truly solve social problems, but are 'money pits' or 'means to reward' friends. These stereotypes are challenges for the CNPBM.

It should also be noted that the issue of the Anglophone minority has existed since Cameroon's independence and politicians have never taken concrete decisions to resolve it. Thus, creating this commission in the midst of a war when many Anglophones are clearly in favor of secession is already a handicap. Whatever the sincerity of the government, this organization is weakened from its creation.

2- Challenges related to the administrative and ethnic organization

In a country with more than 200 ethnic groups, the challenge is to encourage people to live together while recognizing the particularities of each one's identity. Except that the Anglophone case is more profound. If, despite the social and economic malaise, history links the different ethnic groups of the country, this is not exactly the case for Anglophones who, grouped together in several ethnic groups, nevertheless recognize a singular identity. This identity is reflected in the administrative system, education, and the less centralized model of political

governance inherited from Great Britain, of which language is only one vector. The CNPBM must absolutely take this into account.

It should be noted that the notion of *Anglophony* in Cameroon transcends linguistic issues. Indeed, the Anglophone in Cameroon cannot be the one whose first language of communication is English (Tchinda, 2018). In reality, this notion is based more on an ethnic, regional and geographical substratum (Guimatsia, 2010). It excludes at the same time all those Francophones living in the Anglophone regions of the country, regardless of their cultural anchorage in these regions, or their educational system. This means that the promotion of language alone is not enough to solve the problem of Anglophone minorities. The Anglophone dilemma goes further. The Anglophone populations believe that the basis for reunification has been distorted. According to them, the negotiation of the basis for reunification was not based on equality, but rather on a logic of absorption of the English-speaking part. The CNPBM must therefore work to reduce the effects of this strong trend. This will require greater autonomy for the regions. As a consultative body, the CNPBM should not ignore possible proposals on the form of the state, which, if it is not very decentralized, could move towards a federation. This is all the truer since the crisis that is shaking Cameroon is not an opposition between Anglophones and Francophones, but rather the absorption and assimilation of an Anglophone minority by a centralized Francophone power. Moreover, the criminal acts of the Anglophone separatists are not particularly aimed at Francophones, but at all those who pledge allegiance to the Yaoundé regime, including civil servants, administrators, and soldiers sent to the area, without any distinction of origin. It should therefore be noted that the notion of the Anglophone minority incorporates a set of historical particularities that cannot be ignored in the resolution of the Anglophone problem and the management of this minority.

Conclusion

The issue of protection of minorities, particularly the Anglophone minority in Cameroon, is a regalian mission of the state. But it can come up against political positions, the system of governance and historical constructs. The management of Anglophone minorities in Cameroon is entangled in all these realities. The creation of the CNPBM by the Cameroonian government was therefore intended, among other things, to address the issue of the linguistic marginalization of Anglophones in the light of the Anglophone crisis that erupted in 2016. However, given its structure and the anchoring of Anglophone demands, it is difficult to envisage effective action by this structure, especially in the management of Anglophone minorities. After four years of operation, its results remain rather mixed if one is to measure the impact on the Anglophone crisis and the practice of bilingualism in public spaces. In reality, the conflict has not been resolved and bilingualism in public spaces in French-speaking areas is still a pipe dream. In the light of digital technology and the rapid expansion of social networks, it is clear that the Commission does not communicate enough, or does not make sufficient use of digital means to popularize what it does among young people. Its role, which remains consultative, is in itself a problem if it is to have legitimacy of action, since it is the politicians whom anglophone people do not trust who determine the opportunity to act, including the modalities of action. The commission has no means of enforcement. Furthermore, decision-making is highly centralized at the level of the presidency and greatly hampers the implementation of proposals made. In other words, the commission can submit projects that are not taken into account by the government, or are only taken into account belatedly when the situation has degenerated as was the case in 2016. It can therefore be clearly observed that the political conditions are not in place for the optimal functioning of this structure, which nevertheless has good projects.

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REPRESENTATIONS OF INCLUSION STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONALNEEDS IN THE WRITTEN PRESS

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Abstract: *This article proposes a sociological approach to the integration of students with SEN as a social problem, with an emphasis on how it is reflected and re-signified in the online print media in Romania. In the first part of the article, we will deal with the operational definition of the conceptof integration, special educational requirements and other emerging notions, and we will review a number of relevant theoretical models from the field of sociology, special psychopedagogy and social psychology. Later, in order to know how the issue of integration is represented in the writtenpress, we analyzed a multitude of articles that focus on the issue. The results of the research bringto the fore the variables with which integration is correlated at the level of the media discourse, the most relevant of which are students from pre- university education.*

Keywords: sociality, integration, special educational requirements, print media.

1. Introduction

Reflections on the social nature of man date back to Antiquity. The Greek philosopher Aristotle is recognized for being the first thinker - at least the first whose writings have been preserved - who affirmed the "social animal" character of the human being, expressed by the famous phrase " zoon politikon ". Starting with Aristotle, most philosophical conceptions of man – from the scholastic philosophy of the Middle Ages, to the Renaissance, Enlightenment and postmodernist currents – placed the human individual, explicitly or implicitly, in the space of interpersonal interaction. Obviously, the meanings and mechanisms of this interaction are deciphered differently by each individual philosophical system. One thing seems to be the consensus of the great systems of thought, from Antiquity to today: man can only exist in and through interaction with the other.

Theories about sociality develop and reach their peak in the perimeter of sociological thought. The "father" of sociology, Auguste Comte, theorized the two mechanisms of sociality - statics and social dynamics; Ferdinand Tonnies operates the qualitative distinction between community and society, while Emile Durkheim analyzes the social division of labor and the socialphenomenon of suicide through the lens of social integration and solidarity. Max Weber and the exponents of the Chicago School lament the isolation of modern man, along with the expansion of industrialization and big cities, and in the second half of the last century it crystallizes and becomes

particularly popular with the current of symbolic interactionism. I have reviewed only a few of thealready classic sociological perspectives that claim to study sociality and, implicitly, loneliness. In the field of psychology, Abraham Maslow, in his famous pyramid, places the need forbelonging on the third level, after physiological and security needs. Despite the fact that, from apsychological perspective, loneliness is not treated as a clinical entity, Russell, Peplau and Cutrona (1980) advanced, 40 years ago, the idea that loneliness can be analyzed, in some cases, as apathological phenomenon itself, not just as a symptom of

other mental disorders (depression,anxiety, avoidant personality disorder, etc.).

Estimates show that, on average, having a classmate with SEN in the classroom has a negative effect on the academic performance of students without SEN. However, these effects aresmall and decrease, or even disappear, once better inclusion policies are in place. These results suggest that the peer effect is almost completely nullified when more resources are provided and when appropriate treatment and support protocols are implemented.

2. Integration and special educational needs: conceptual boundaries and theoretical approaches

In the thirteen years since the adoption of the Law on the Education of Persons with Disabilities (Law No. 448/2006), special education has grown in the number of students and the amount spent on services. Despite this growth, the academic performance of students with disabilities (SDS) remains alarmingly low compared to mainstream students. To some extent, these differences reflect persistent underlying impairments, but they may also reflect ineffective specialeducation services.

Students are eligible for special education if they have delays in thinking and learning, understanding and using language, self-help skills, physical abilities, or behavior that affects theirability to perform academically. Parents, teachers, or other school personnel may refer students for special education upon entering school or any subsequent grade. Referred students undergo psychoeducational and physical examinations by psychologists, psychiatrists, or other relevant professionals to determine which services are appropriate. If the initial assessment determines thata student is eligible for special education, parents, teachers, and school staff develop an Individualized Intervention Program (IIP) and an Individualized Service Plan (ISP) that documents the student's impairment/disorder, identifies the supports that will be provided , setting the servicesin which the supports and academic objectives for the following year will be administered.

In recent years, inclusive education and the effects of diverse classrooms on students haveattracted increasing interest in the economics literature (e.g. Angrist and Lang, 2004; Raitano andVona, 2013). However, quantitative studies analyzing the integration of students with special educational needs (SEN) in regular classrooms1 are rare and mostly incipient (e.g. Jordan et al., 2009; Keslair et al., 2012; Ruijs , 2017 ; Gottfried and Kirksey , 2019). The lack of available evidence is probably due to the limited amount of adequate information and the natural difficultiesassociated with identifying comparable groups. (Dante Contreras, 2020)

It is open to debate whether including students with SEN in the mainstream education system is desirable (see, for example, Ruijs and Peetsma , 2009; Gottfried et al., 2016; Stiefel et al., 2018; Schwartz et al., 2019 ;). The arguments in favor of their inclusion are that students withSEN would develop to their full potential in an integrated classroom and students without SEN would develop skills such as tolerance and patience. The argument against is that inclusion may have a negative impact on students without SEN because they would be distracted or receive lessattention from teachers due to the presence of SEN students. (Dante Contreras, 2020)

Integration of children with special educational needs in school has been a key theme in special education for the past 25 years. More recently, however, the term "inclusion," which embodies a whole range of assumptions about the purpose and meaning of schools (Kliewer , 1998), has come to replace "integration" in the vocabulary of special educators. Integration depends on the external agency; children are offered places in the "least restrictive environment" and integration becomes a matter of "placement decisions" (Fish, 1985). Such placement decisions are seen as a failure for some children, as mainstreaming may not meet the specific needsof children with significant disabilities. This is because integration as a process does not involve restructuring the educational environment to accommodate the needs of a

small number of children with significant disabilities (Thomas, 1997) (Elias Avramidis, 2000)

In contrast, inclusion involves such a restructuring of the mainstream school that every school can accommodate every child regardless of disability (accommodation rather than assimilation) and ensures that all students belong to a community. Such an argument places the discussion within a social-ethical discourse that is strongly value-focused. The concept of inclusion
thus becomes part of a broader human rights agenda that argues that all forms of segregation are morally wrong. (Elias Avramidis, 2000)

Inclusion of students with special needs special education (CES) in education classrooms common is a controversial issue in many countries and the subject of one of the most heated debates in educational policy . While inclusive education1 was supported by 92 countries in the UNESCO Salamanca Declaration (UNESCO, 1994) 20 years ago, the empirical evidence in favor of inclusion is still weak Ruijs and Peetsma. (Nienke Ruijs, 2009)

Proponents of inclusive education often argue from a human rights perspective, arguing that it is the right of all students to be educated in mainstream schools (Ainscow and César, 2006,Farrell, 2000). One of the main concerns of opponents, on the other hand, is that inclusion may have a negative impact on students without special educational needs (hereafter referred to as "regular" students). The argument is that regular students are distracted by the behavior of SEN students and that SEN students need more teacher attention than regular students. The additional support that is available in inclusive classrooms, however, could also benefit mainstream students. Therefore, this paper investigates the impact of inclusive education on the academic performance of mainstream students (Ruijs, 2017)

Recent studies support the concerns of critics of inclusive education, finding that disruptive peers have a negative impact on student achievement. These studies, however, do not focus on students with diagnosed special educational needs. Figlio (2007) uses an IV strategy that exploits the inappropriate behavior of boys with girls' names, Carrell and Hoekstra (2010) study peers of students who are exposed to domestic violence, and Neidell and Waldfogel (2010) use teacher ratings of problems with outsourcing. Students with diagnosed CES generally have more severe problems. At the same time, their special education eligibility also brings additional resources and support (Ruijs, 2017)

Although the movement for "inclusive education" is part of a broad human rights agenda, many teachers have serious reservations about supporting the widespread placement of SEN students in mainstream schools (Florian, 1998)

Other attitudinal studies have suggested that general educators/teachers have not developed an empathetic understanding of disabling conditions (Berryman, 1989; Horne and Ricciardo, 1988), nor do they seem prepared to accept students with special needs (Barton, 1992; Hayes and Gunn, 1988). This can be explained by the fact that integration was often carried out in an ad hoc manner, without systematic changes to the organization of a school, taking into account the educational expertise of teachers or any guarantee of a continuous supply of resources (see the example Italy where integration was radical in the 1980s) (Berryman, 2016)

Center and Ward 's (1987) study of regular teachers indicated that their attitudes toward integration reflected a lack of confidence in both their own teaching abilities and the quality of available support staff. They were positive about integrating only those children whose disabling characteristics were not likely to require additional instructional or management skills on the part of the teacher (Elias Avramidis, 2000)

3. Research methodology

We start, in the investigative approach, from the premise that there is no social problem that has escaped the media's scrutiny. Consequently, if we accept the idea that the

integration and inclusion of students with CES is a social problem, it follows the need for a perspective to approach this problem specific to the media space. Obviously, the logic of the media is not the same as the logic of the scientific approach, as the logic of common sense often detaches itself from the explanatory models promoted by the media. *How is the inclusion of students with special educational needs represented in the online print media in Romania?* This is the research question from which we started our approach.

The general goal or objective is to know how the inclusion of students with SEN is represented, as a social and psychological problem, in the online print media in Romania.

The general objective is subsumed by two **specific objectives** :

- knowledge of the attitude (positive or negative) towards the inclusion of students with SEN promoted in the online print media;

- identifying the variables that are correlated with the inclusion of students with CES at the level of the media discourse

Regarding the research hypotheses, we will assume that:

1. Most people support the inclusion process of children with CES.
2. Most people empathize with the integration process of children with CES.
3. The main barrier to the inclusion of students with SEN are the poorly trained teachers in mainstream schools .

Considering the relatively small number of online sources that will be consulted, I preferred formulating the hypotheses in descriptive terms, of plausible expectations with a provisional character, in favor of conjectural statements about the relationships between the variables. From these considerations, the main **limitation** of the research results - the quasi-quantitative character

, which does not allow extrapolations and does not exhaust everything that means the approach to the inclusion of students with CES in the mass media.

The method used is content analysis. **The unit of analysis** is the article published online, in a publication that appears or not and in print format, and the **research corpus** includes 25 such articles. They were identified using the Google search engine, following the keywords "CES", "integration", "inclusion". In the selection of sources, two criteria were taken into account: actuality (the most recent results) and popularity (the most accessed results).

4. Research results

1) The attitude towards the inclusion of students with SEN, conveyed through online print media, is almost always positive. The discourse analysis carried out on several articles demonstrates the co-occurrence of terms such as: "support", "service assurance", "need for support".

2) The main variables with which the inclusion of students with SEN in the online print media is correlated are the following:

- *the reluctance of colleagues who have a class with a student with SEN*
- *the reluctance of teachers who have a student with SEN in their class*
- *the reluctance of parents whose children have a student with SEN in their class*

3) The first research hypothesis - *The majority of people support the process of inclusion of children with CES* - is refuted .

After analyzing the data, we can define 3 large categories of people who oppose the interactive process of students with SEN: colleagues who have a student with SEN in their class, teachers who have a student with SEN in their class, parents whose children have a student with SEN in their class .

4) The second research hypothesis - *Most people empathize with the integration process of children with CES* . – is partially confirmed .

After analyzing the data, we can say that at a macro level, Romanians empathize with the current integration phenomenon. Although most articles promote productive integration techniques and ways and new laws that support this process, we can find articles in the written press that bring to the surface situations of verbal and emotional abuse byclassmates or teachers in mainstream schools.

5) The third research hypothesis - *The main barrier to the inclusion of students with SEN is poorly trained teachers in the mainstream school.* – is partially confirmed . The confirmation is only partial, considering the Aesopian character of the media language, which does not clearly distinguish what are the barriers of this process of inclusion in mass education and other emerging concepts. This fact makes it impossible to clearly delimit these conceptual categories in order to test the hypothesis. However, in most cases, the emphasis is also on the lack of materials adapted for students with CES, the lack of programs adapted according to the diagnosis and the potential for development and learning, the reluctance of teachers to facilitate students with CES all the measures by them.

5. Conclusions

The inclusion of students with SEN is a complex, multidimensional concept, distinct fromthe concept of integration. Unlike integration, which refers to the inclusion of an individual in an environment that does not need structural changes; inclusion aims to change the waythe environment acts to include an individual. The inclusion of students with SEN is becoming a topic of interest, increasingly addressedin the media discourse of the Romanian press. Most of the studied articles have a positiveattitude towards this phenomenon, promoting innovations and new changes in this field.

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INDUSTRIAL LOGICS, STRUCTURING PROJECTS AND LAND CONFLICTS IN CAMEROON: THE CASE OF THE CITY OF KRIBI (2010-2021)

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Abstract: *The advent of major structuring projects in Cameroon is the daughter of major structural and geo-economics changes induced by public policies of sectorial development such as thinking by great ambitions and carrying by great achievements whose strategic city of Kribi embodies the implementation, and the materialization of national growth. Indeed, starting from this prism amounts to being part of cultural spatial imaginaries and the logic of land power of which land is the base and the issue that fuels conflicts between actors. The natural resource potential available to Cameroon, in general and the city of Kribi in particular, to induce the State to set up structural projects there (the industrial-port complex of which the deep-water port of Kribi is a component, the construction of the Kribi II natural gas power plant and the construction of roads and especially the Lolabé-Kribi highway). Since 2010, the city of Kribi has been at the centre of all attention (international and national); this because of the said structuring projects. In such a context of development, the earth is in the foreground, as a material support that shelters these projects. The State, the economic stakes and the populations coming from the four corners of the national triangle have enormous needs in land to make their capital grow. This research has led to intensive land speculation in the city of Kribi, with local populations and buyers of plots of land as the main actors. This reflection aims to highlight the land disputes arising from the establishment of such projects in the city of Kribi. Data analysis was based on a methodological approach that was both diachronic and synchronic, based on a variety of documentation consisting of articles, dissertations, theses and books; passive observations and interviews carried out in the districts of Kribi I and II. The establishment of structuring projects in the city of Kribi has given rise to a vast network of interaction around land between customary owners, canvassers, buyers, speculators and the administration. It emerges from this analysis that structuring projects are vectors of land disputes in the city of Kribi. However, to address these disputes that cause land insecurity, there is an urgent need to reform the land management system in Cameroon. This is in order to prevent potential clashes between different groups and especially that development projects are no longer interrupted because of said disputes.*

Keywords: Industrial logics, structuring projects, land disputes, Kribi.

1. Introduction

Kribi, city of light bears the seeds of its own charm: industrial-port complex, Lolabé gas plant, the Memve'ele hydroelectric dam, the construction of the Kribi-Lolabé highway and above all the asphalting of urban roads. Located in the heart of the Cameroonian coast, the city of Kribi, urban mirror and strategic industrialization centre of Cameroon is one of the main coastal cities of Cameroon next to Douala, Limbe and Buea. Custodian of a relief favourable to developments due to the diversity of its landscapes and its very little contrasting morphology, Kribi has been since the 2000s the heavenly destination of the demographic boom which is not without consequences (Abega, 2015: 26). However, this allows it to exert a double attraction at the national level, first on the local populations and its hinterland, and also on the other regions of Cameroon. At the international level, tourists from the sub-region, Africa and internationally

are flooding into Kribi. Due to its advantageous maritime-type climate, the town of Kribi is characterized by abundant rainfall, i.e. 219 days of rain per year on average, with average temperatures of 26°C (Bokalli, 1997: 3). The dry season is well marked, although there are no hot months. Added to this are other advantages such as: vegetation suitable for agricultural activities, a subsoil with mining resources, such as oil and natural gas in Eboundja, zircon in Lobé, etc. All this makes it conducive to the exploitation of resources for the development of the city through the creation of industries (Dong Mougnol, 2006: 74). In addition, its economic situation and its geostrategic position have motivated the State in the establishment of structuring projects in Kribi. This establishment has drained with it a large number of various actors (investors, non-native populations) and other factors (rural exodus, various migrations).

Indeed, the current situation in the city of Kribi marked by the accelerated urban population growth of recent decades is the result of the high birth rate and the immigration of people from diverse backgrounds. It constitutes an important factor in reinforcing the land pressure observed in this area; the increase in the demand for land for the construction of social housing or individual dwellings, the demand for land or space for the State, the increased investments in the mining sector, in gas and oil exploitation and the infrastructure development (roads, railways, dams, ports, pipeline), are all elements that justify the unprecedented interest that the land knows and undergoes in the department of the ocean in general and specifically in the city of Kribi since the 2000s (Elong et al, 2010: 18). However, the challenges of this vision are five in number: the first challenge is that of consolidating the democratic process and strengthening national unity; the second challenge is that of economic growth and employment; the third challenge is socio-demographic; the fourth challenge is that of urban development and land use planning and the last challenge is that of governance. This study is the result of a documentary review and oral data. Following an approach that is both diachronic and synchronic, the analysis of the data collected made it possible to build the corpus of work in three parts. The first part sets out to present the various structuring projects implemented in the city of Kribi. The second focuses on the socio-economic changes induced by these projects and which have led to the emergence of land disputes. Finally, the third traces the typologies of subsequent land disputes between 2010 and 2021.

1. From capturing public policies to setting up structuring projects in the city of Kribi (2010 -2021)

The initiative of public policies, the leitmotif of structural configurations, is undoubtedly fuel for the industrialization of strategic sectors intended to promote all-out development in the city of Kribi. Structuring projects can be understood as "designs that are part of the region's development priority and in an area with demonstrated significant growth potential that has a multiplier effect in the region's economy". They promote the attractiveness of the area concerned through the creation of jobs, the impetus (Mbaha, 2021: 13) of economic activities and finally the specific facilities and infrastructures (construction of communication routes, installations of energy lines, etc. In the town of Kribi, capital of the Ocean department, these structuring projects concern the industrial-port complex, the gas power station and the asphalting of the Kribi-Grand-Zambi and Kribi-Lolabé roads.

1.1. Major structuring projects: between urban change and industrial innovation in the city of Kribi

Four major infrastructural projects, carriers of development and drivers of transformation of the national industrial fabric, drive the vision of Cameroon's influence by 2035. Indeed, among these projects stands the industrial-port complex of Kribi. Born from the overriding interest in restructuring the port sector. Thus, by law n° 98/021 of December 24, 1998 (Etoga, 2010: 14) on the organization of this sector and the various provisions arising

therefrom", it was decided to build an industrial-port complex in the seaside town of Kribi for industrial purposes. This ambition began to materialize from 2011 with the launch of the construction of the deep water port of Kribi. This obviously marks the beginning of a new era in the process of economic development in Cameroon. This is that of major structuring projects, integrating and generating growth, jobs and wealth.

Located in the locality of Mboro, its construction began in 2011 and was completed in 2018. For this phase, the works were carried out in the form of an Engineering Procurement and Construction (EPC) contract by the Chinese company CHEC for a cost total of 497,000,000. 000 FCFA. Its funding was 85% provided by a loan granted by Exim-bank-China and 15% by the State of Cameroon (Etoga, 2010: 19). The operation of the deep water port of Kribi began with the reception of "large commercial vessels with a capacity of up to 100,000 tons and a draft of 15 to 16 meters". Indeed, its materialization on the ground is envisaged as follows: the construction of a mineralized terminal in the locality of Lolabé, the construction of a general port in Mboro (Mbodé) and the construction of a marina in Grand - Batanga I, which aims to promote seaside tourism and industrial fishing (Mbaha, 2021:23). The same is true of the redevelopment of the existing port to make coastal fishing, artisanal fishing and recreational activities prosper, as well as the construction of a new town in the Nlendi-dibé site. It should also be noted that the said port project is structured into four kinetic interest zones: the Magzi zone which is reserved for industries; the industrial-port area, which should house almost the entire complex; the MAETUR area housing titled land for sale and social housing and the area of the new city which is to be the seat of administrative institutions, shopping centres and the residential district. Following the port, another structuring project was implemented in the town of Kribi. This is the natural gas plant.

1.2. The Kribi gas plant

The gas plant project developed by AES SONEL is part of the medium-term strategic development program for the supply of electricity in Cameroon. It is with this in mind that AES SONEL hired Scott Wilson (SW), an international firm of environmental and civil engineering consultants, to carry out the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) of the Kribi Energy Project. (Ngnoungou, 2020: 33). An ESIA was therefore carried out in accordance with Cameroonian laws on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), as set out in Decree No. 2005/0577 of February 23, 2005, at World Bank OP 4.01 and IFC performance standards. The Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection officially approved the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment Report (Scott Wilson, October 2006) of the Kribi Power Project on April 5, 2007 (Mbaha, 2021:43). The Kribi power station project includes: the power station itself the construction on the Mpolongwé site of a power station with a capacity of 216 MW fuelled by natural gas, the construction of electricity transmission facilities including a lift station (11 to 225 kV) on the site of the power plant in Mpolongwé; a 225 kV double circuit transmission line approximately 100 km long between the power plant and the 225/90 kV substation at Mangombe, Edéa, the connection of the transmission line at the substation Mangombe, accompanied by the installation of new 225 kV line segments (Onomo Etaba, 2009: 47).

In 2009, the government of Cameroon entrusted the Kribi Power Development Corporation (KPDC) with the design, construction, financing and operation of the gas power plant in Kribi with a capacity of 216 MW (Mbaha, 2021:13). "This project was carried out in the form of a public-private partnership contract for a period of 20 years". The Kribi natural gas power plant project is located in the locality of Mpolongwé, Kribi I district. It was built between 2010 and 2013. It is important to note that, "this power plant is the first of the -Central Africa region and is the leading independent electricity producer in the country ahead of the Dibamba power station". Besides this project, we have the asphalting of the roads.

1.3. Communication infrastructure

From 2010 to 2021, two roads were paved in the Kribi area. These are the roads (Kribi-Lolabé and Kribi-Grand-Zambi). Work on the development of the Kribi-Lolabé road began in 2015. This section is 38.5 km long and goes from the Mboro village to end at Bilolo in the Kribi II district (Etoga, 2010: 23). It is connected to the national road n°7 Edéa-Kribi at the level of the village Lolabé. Its realization was ensured by the Chinese company China Harbor Engineering Company and financed by the Exim bank to the tune of 250 billion FCFA. It was commissioned in 2020.

The second road is that of Kribi-Grand-Zambi. It extends over "53 km, the work for its construction began in 2017 and was completed in March 2021". It was completely paved by the Ministry of Public Works through the Chinese company CGCOC and jointly financed by the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the State of Cameroon to the tune of 36233276410 billion FCFA. Its commissioning was effective in March 2021 by the Ministry of Public Procurement. The structuring projects implemented in the city of Kribi (Mbopda, 2021: 8) have made it possible to energize all the sectors whose interactions are additional and simultaneous. At the same time, they have had consequences both at the socio-cultural level and on the land.

2.The impact of structuring projects in the city of Kribi

The effects of major structuring projects in the city of Kribi are visible. They can be perceived through socio-economic life with its corollaries on land.

2.1. Socio-economic repercussions of structuring projects

Kribi is a cosmopolitan city which has become urbanized and populated rapidly due to the presence of agro-industries (Hévécam, Socapalm and logging). However, it is the implementation of structuring projects that has caused the demographic explosion of the city. Recent estimates give the opportunity to characterize the rate of population growth of the city of Kribi during each of the following periods: 1976-1987 and 1987-2005, from 1976 to 1987. "The population (MINHDU, 2016:11) of the town of Kribi grew at an average annual rate of 6.1%, bringing it from 11,261 inhabitants in 1976 to 21,507 inhabitants in 1987. From 1987 to 2005 the increase in population continued with an average annual rate of 5.7%, for a population of 59,928 inhabitants in 2005". With this new rate of population growth, if the current trends were maintained, the city of Kribi entered in 2015 among the cities of 100,000 inhabitants. This population has continued to grow. Thus, the city has seen its population increase from 11,512 inhabitants in 2016 to 14,246 inhabitants in 2020. Said population is increasing, yet the land area continues to decrease. Structuring projects have led to various migrations, rural exodus and all-out tourism. To this end, (Onomo, 2009: 7) Professor Onomo Etaba, understands tourism as "a complex set of activities and services whose interactions with other economic, environmental and social sectors are multiple".

The little illustrated Larousse defines the rural exodus as being "a definitive migration of the inhabitants of the countryside towards the cities. It is, in other words, the displacement of populations from villages to cities in search of better living conditions. The rural exodus results in the increase of the population of the cities, the increase in the demands of the places of residence, etc. The dynamic of structuring projects in the city of Kribi has attracted more people from different regions of Cameroon. Having become a gigantic pool of jobs in addition to its tourist potential, it is seen as the new place of investment for economic operators. As a result, its population has changed with the implementation of structuring projects. It is with this in mind that (Tassou, 2018: 17) Esther Boupda believes that: "This demographic dynamic has been accompanied by an expansion of the city following a spontaneous movement of urbanization and an uncontrolled colonization of spaces private or public, in particular by an

increasingly heterogeneous and cosmopolitan population which, on a daily basis, produces or co-produces its space, in a context where the action of the public authorities is increasingly insufficient. The population has certainly changed, diversified and above all increased, however, "the area of the city of Kribi (i.e. 203km^2)" has remained the same, which means that the city has remained exposed to land problems linked to the access and occupation of space through housing. In addition to the aforementioned factors, there has been added the emergence of both the informal and formal economy. Fishing, trade and other informal sector activities are developed because of the coastal position of the said locality. From the above, what impacts do the structuring projects have on the land in the city of Kribi?

2.2. Impact of structuring projects on land

The structuring projects occupy a large land area: "the Kribi industrial-port complex alone covers an area of 26,000 hectares". As for the gas plant, it covers a total area of 16 hectares for a period of 25 years (MINHDU, 2016: 61). In addition, the State, which does not have a land bank, has used the customary heritage of local communities for the implementation of major projects and the agro-industries already present in the town of Kribi have been the origin of the migratory movements of several people and the establishment of various economic activities that are changing it and its surroundings. This population increase has led to increased land needs, which are often the source of social tensions between foreign and native populations, members of the same family, the State and individuals.

The advent of the port alone had the impact of increasing the price of plots of land (for example, the plot (Mbaha, 2021:23) of land which cost 2000 frs in the districts of Mpangou and Afan-Mabé in the 2000s, is today at 10,000frs), all-out land speculation by all formal and informal socio-land actors. Permanent acquisitions of land by individuals, third parties, foreigners and even by the State are increasingly solicited at all costs and by all means. While the need for land is enormous, land speculation is growing and the protection of indigenous lands is intensifying through direct registration. As a result, land disputes arise between different actors. The enormous needs for land create scarcity, scarcity and, by extension, land disputes. That said, what are the land disputes resulting from the introduction of structuring projects in the city of Kribi?

2.3. The different types of land disputes resulting from structuring projects

Three main clusters of land disputes have been identified in the town of Kribi. These are customary land disputes, land disputes resulting from non-compliance with the land law and finally land disputes arising from land speculation. These disputes demonstrate in a way the complex management of land in Cameroon. When land management becomes difficult or complex within a society, most of the time we see crises. It is in this perspective that Le Bris, Le Roy and Mathieu assert:

"*Land conflicts or disputes (Onomo, 2009: 47) appear when the diversity of issues can no longer be regulated by a single authority*".

In this case, the differentiation of uses explains the manifestation of divergent interests which can be managed in a negotiated or judicial manner. To the extent that, in any society, several authorities contribute to controlling access to land or the distribution of its fruits, conflicts normally arise from this situation. Order is not manifested by the absence of conflicts or disputes, but results from the ability to control them. These land disputes arise, in large part, because of development, but also because of the lack of fluidity in land regulations. Besides these aforementioned factors, there are the socio-cultural considerations of the land by the populations. Under these conditions, when a certain number of precepts are no longer respected, we witness land disputes of several kinds.

2.4. Customary land disputes

Customary land disputes can be understood as those arising from non-compliance with customary norms in terms of management and traditional land rights by members of a family, clan or community. Since the advent and establishment of structuring projects in the city of Kribi, land needs have multiplied, because individuals want to invest. As a result, the natives who own huge land areas have started to sell. The sales, for the most part, are made without the knowledge of certain members of the family, clan or community. However, in Africa, in general, and in Cameroon, in particular, the earth, according to the habits and customs, (Dong, 2006:94) is a collective good whose sale is prohibited, as affirmed by Dong Mougnol: "the land was the property of the entire clan community". Going in the direction of the primacy of custom, Bokalli notes that: "in traditional Africa the law found its source only in custom, that is to say a a usage that slowly emanates from popular consciousness and which, little by little considered obligatory, will become a rule of law (Bokalli, 1997: 23). The custom thus presented has the advantage of being flexible, malleable and of corresponding at all times to the popular will, to the ideas, to the mores of the social or ethnic group which generates it. It is for this reason that it is as respected here as it is firmly established.

Since the implementation of major structuring projects, the land has become the source of all confrontations between the different members of society. Land that once had a sacred connotation has become a tool of division. The collective character has been trivialized. The effects of development have somehow led to the alienation of customary values. The land which was the legacy of the whole community, the collective good is becoming an individual good; this because of the selfishness of each other with regard to the co-owners. Indeed, the profitability of the land and the revitalization of the economy are at the origin of the upheaval of customary values, especially in the field of land in the city of Kribi. In customary land disputes, we note "disputes arising from the sharing of inheritance between the various co-owners, land disputes relating to succession (Dong, 2006: 74) and land disputes arising from donations". These land disputes, for the most part, are located in the city of Kribi. "For the period from 2010 to 2021, they were around 1563". In addition to this category of land disputes, there is the second category which is related to land regulations.

2.5. Land disputes related to land administration

Land disputes related to land regulations can be described as those arising from administrative or non-administrative shortcomings in the various procedures related to the said area. Cameroon's land law is subject to many discrepancies. This law is sealed with a double seal of management of two rights which coexist without really being complementary. On the one hand we have legitimate customary land rights, held by the indigenous populations, and on the other hand we have the modern so-called legal rights held by the Cameroonian legislator (Bokalli, 1997: 53). The 1974 reform which regulates land in Cameroon does not really respond to the realities of societies. It is in this duality at the level of the land law is a source of multiple misunderstandings and land disputes. In fact, it certainly recognizes the right of enjoyment of local populations, but not the legal right of said populations. By imposing registration as the only method of securing land, opposition between various actors arises. During registration, mistakes can be made on both sides (administration and other land actors). It is in this perspective that Nkankeu and Bryant affirm that: "since European colonization, the public authorities in sub-Saharan Africa have wanted to establish (Bokalli, 1997: 63) economic development on the exploitation of the land in order to control the value of the territory or to dispose of it for public utility purposes". But this political will almost everywhere came up against the reluctance of the populations, because as a general rule, in African mentalities, land has always been considered, not as the property of a single man or of an institution, but always like that of a community or a family.

It becomes obvious to understand why modern land law is a source of much rejection by the Cameroonian populations and that of the city of Kribi. It is this incomprehension and this refusal, coupled with the introduction and implementation of structuring projects, from which benefit.

2.6. Disputes arising from land speculation

Land disputes arising from land speculation result from the sale or purchase of land by various actors with or without compliance with the regulations in force. It becomes less and less difficult in a society governed by capital and the market economy to believe in ethnic or tribal difference when it comes to the sale or purchase of land. To be a landowner, it is enough to be wealthy or to have the capacity to acquire a plot of land. It is in this logic that Bokalli declares:

"Money today is the graveyard of ethnic groups. Whoever has the money can settle wherever he wants". In such a context, to be a landowner in a specific region of Cameroon, it suffices to have the necessary financial means" (Bokalli, 1997: 36)

Table 1: Summary of land disputes arising from major structuring projects in the town of Kribi and its surroundings: 2010-2021

Years / Denomination	2010	2011	2015	2021	Totals	Percentage (%)
customary land disputes	205	356	589	413	1563	21,26%
Land disputes related to land administration	347	503	669	700	2219	30,19%
Disputes arising from land speculation	382	789	1194	1202	3567	48,53%
Totals	934	1648	2452	2315	7349	100

Source: Compilation of data from the archives of the departmental delegation of domains, cadastre and land affairs (division of the land registry service), the Kribi Court of Appeal, customary authorities and private archives.

The observation that emerges from this table is as follows: land disputes arising from land speculation in the city of Kribi are significant, i.e. 3,567 complaints recorded in the various formal or informal places. This sufficiently shows the involvement of structuring projects in land disputes. Administrative disputes take second place with 2,219 recorded cases (Tchapmegni, 2005: 13). They are explained by the concern to secure the land of the populations in the face of their invasion of the land by the structuring projects. Finally, customary land disputes closed with 1,563 cases listed. Most of all these disputes peaked between 2011 and 2015. This is mainly due to the implementation of major structuring projects, such as the industrial-port complex which is the main link in mass investment in the town of Kribi. The following chart shows the proportion of these land disputes

#Graph 1: Representation of land disputes arising from structuring projects in the city of Kribi and its surroundings (2010-2021)
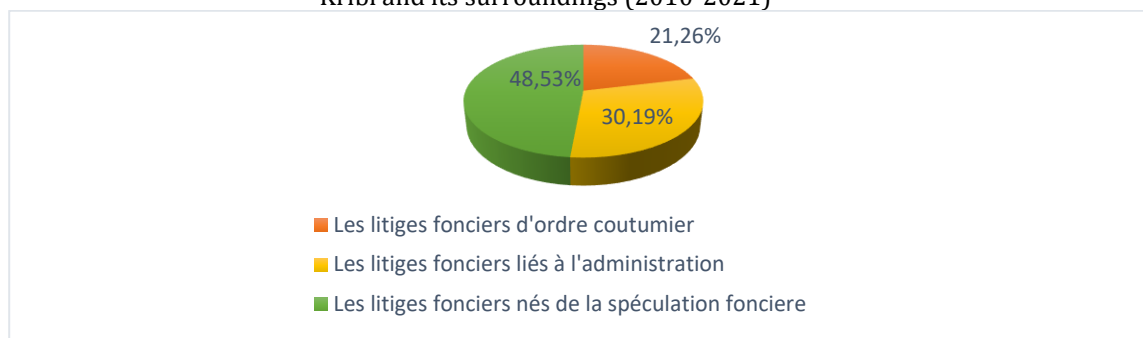
Source: Graph produced on the basis of data from Table 1.

The proportion of land disputes in our study area is significant. Thus, land disputes resulting from land speculation are 48.53% (MINHDU, 2016:81). Those related to the administration also represent an impressive share of 30.19% and finally, those of customary order represent 21.26%. This amounts to saying that structuring projects are double-edged swords. On the one hand, they allow the improvement of the living conditions of the different social strata and on the other hand, they are instruments of land disputes. From the above, what are the consequences of land disputes arising from structuring projects and their methods of resolution?

3. The typology of land disputes, logics of actors and resolution mechanisms

Land disputes have considerable consequences for society and especially for the various actors involved. This is why mechanisms have been put in place for their resolution.

3.1. The typology of land disputes

Land disputes are at the root of evils such as fratricidal quarrels, physical and verbal violence, and the deterioration of social relations between the various protagonists, inter-ethnic clashes and above all social instability. In June 2021, a complaint for assault and battery was filed at the Kribi II police station. It opposed two members of the same community (MINHDU, 2016:51). Legion are complaints recorded in police stations, gendarmeries and chiefdoms in relation to abuses relating to land disputes in the city of Kribi; they are around 312 complaints. In the city of Kribi, certain ethnic groups, in this case nationals of the West Cameroon region, are exposed to verbal abuse from the indigenous populations, because they are the major land buyers. It is in this logic that Dong Mougnol declares:

"*From the land opposition a certain hatred against immigrants was born; which gave rise to multi-dimensional inter-ethnic crises*".

In addition to this, there is the birth of a galloping and anarchic urbanization, dependent on the establishment of structuring projects. Indeed, the construction of places housing certain commercial premises or habitats are in risk or prohibited areas. There really is no environmental impact study by investors on the land requested. This is what made Tassou say that:

This seems to justify the irrational use of land on the one hand and the proliferation of spontaneous habitats in most of the study cities on the other (…). It is mainly poor families (in this case those of immigrants) who are at the origin of the multiplication of precarious housing, which only increases over the years" (Dong, 2006: 174).

From the above, we understand that development projects are at the origin of various changes that are political, economic and socio-cultural. These mutations are at the origin of the

exploitation and mass occupation of the earth. The occupation of the land in this case is unequal in the city of Kribi because it is the highest bidder who quickly obtains the best spaces. This inequality is responsible for the anarchic occupation of spaces. It is this reality that prompted Bokalli to assert:

"the less well-off, at their level, manage as best they can in areas at risk, this inevitably leads to disputes over land and the proliferation of spontaneous housing" (Bokalli, 1997: 46).

Along the same lines, Oscar Tagni declares that

"The lack of financial means for some and the need for land for the better off create a lack of land and above all better spaces". This often results in the anarchic occupation and forbidden spaces by third parties. The overbidding of plots of land in the districts of Afane Mabé, Mpangou where the square meter varies between 10000 and 12000 frs) and the high cost of housing are born of the establishment and the realization of structuring projects in the city of Kribi and its surroundings. To this, we can add the scourge of corruption which plagues the land sector. How are these land disputes managed in the city of Kribi?

3.2. Logic of actors and endogenous regulation of land tensions in the city of Kribi

Due to its nature and scope, the implementation of structuring projects raises environmental and social concerns. To this end, the legislation in force in Cameroon in the matter, and specifically Law 96/012 of August 05, 1996 on the framework law relating to the management of the environment in its title III chapter II, prescribes that the promoter of the works and activities that risk harming the environment is required to carry out an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) (MINHDU, 2016:41).

In the town of Kribi, it has become extremely difficult to acquire a piece of land. Indeed, since the start of construction work on the city's deep-water port, almost all the land has been acquired (including areas not yet serviced), and the first buyers are no longer willing to sell their property to new owners. Potential other buyers without having maximized earnings. As a result, prices have skyrocketed, both for individuals, real estate agents and companies who are now flocking to this seaside town, which could soon become Cameroon's main industrial city. The trigger for this gradual transformation of the coastal town of Kribi (Tchapmegni, 2005: 11) is, without a doubt, its deep-water port, the commissioning of which is announced for the near future. Around this port infrastructure, in fact, are grafted many projects in fields as varied as mining (the exploitation of the Mont's Mamelles deposit by the Sino steel company), heavy industry (aluminum and oil refineries), energy (gas liquefaction plant), car manufacturing, telecommunications, railway industry, public works, etc. From now on, this city already known for its immense tourist wealth concentrates so many industrial projects, to the point where the government, in order to capitalize on the opportunities that this locality holds today, launched in January 2015 a call for tenders for the elaboration of a development strategy for Kribi. Through this approach, indicate sources introduced within the Ministry in charge of the economy, the government aims a double objective. The first step is to identify the expectations of investors involved in the projects announced or in progress in this city or its surroundings, with a view to providing adequate responses. Then, it is a question of evaluating the capacity of Cameroonian SMEs (Onomo, 2009: 47) to ensure subcontracting for multinationals within the framework of the above-mentioned projects, with the aim of boosting the creation of local jobs and ensuring technology transfer. In short, with the construction of the deep-water port, many economic analysts already see the heart of the Cameroonian economy beating a little more in Kribi than in Douala, the current economic capital of the country. And the ambitions of the Cameroonian government for this city, located about 150 km from Douala, lead us to believe that over the next few years, failing to become the main economic pole of Cameroon, Kribi will be one of the essential links in the national economy.

3.3. Mechanism for resolving land disputes

The process of settling land disputes in the city of Kribi combines customary, administrative and judicial procedures. The customary mode of management is based on tradition and makes it possible to manage disputes between the various protagonists. The objective study of sources and ethnographic data show that the Negro African civilization is defined in terms of dialogue, compromise, coexistence and peace. Traditional African society is therefore predisposed to peace, a peace that it perpetually seeks and that it permanently cultivates; African thought seeks life in peace (Temgoua, 2012: 5). This peace, this permanent search for peace shows its extreme importance among Africans. From the above, the African peoples, in general, and those of Cameroon, in particular, are followers of peace in society. The search for harmony between men is at the center of the various concerns and remains a philosophy of life that respects the latter and, in turn, makes it sacred. In the resolution of a dispute, it is the head of the village, family or clan who presides. He is often assisted by notables, patriarchs and protagonists. The mechanisms used in the traditional way of resolving land disputes in Kribi are as follows: Conciliation, mediation, the palaver tree and negotiation. Thus, for "the period from 2010 to 2021, 3102 disputes were resolved by the customary mode".

In addition to this mode, there is the administrative mode. It makes use of the regulations in force on land. These are two commissions, namely "the advisory commission which settles objections and applications for the registration of rights as a principal title and the commission for the settlement of border disputes which intervenes exclusively when the land to be registered overlaps the disputed limits of the administrative districts or traditional command units". We also have the minister in charge of land, cadaster and land affairs. This mode really contributes to the settlement of land disputes in the city of Kribi, although it is expensive. Thus, between "2010 and 2021, 1370 (Temgoua, 2012: 9) land disputes were managed by this mode". Finally, there is the mode of judicial resolution of land disputes. The mode of judicial resolution of land disputes is very unusual in the city of Kribi. It is provided by the courts. The populations do not really use this mode; this because of its repressive and constraining character. Thus from "20101 to 2021, 267 land disputes were managed". However, it contributes considerably to the resolution of land disputes in the city of Kribi and its surroundings. Indeed, the high number of land disputes has led people to resort to this method of management. Since the advent and implementation of structuring projects in the city of Kribi, land disputes have increased considerably. This is why Tchapmegni asserts:

"the barometer of the level of land tensions in the areas of southern Cameroon can easily be measured through the roles of the court hearings, especially repressive ones, and the registers of complaints in the sub-prefectures and other administrative units" (Tchapmegni, 2005: 17). Thus, with regard to any epistemological consideration, it is unequivocally accepted that the earth is the base of any socio-anthropological mutation.

4. Conclusion

The implementation of structuring projects has drained with it land insecurity in the city of Kribi. These development projects have reinforced land issues involving several categories of actors with diverse and multifaceted interests. On the one hand, we have the socio-cultural conceptions and the demographic pressure which accentuate the demand for land which give rise to land disputes. To this are added migrations of all kinds, rural exodus, tourist activities therefore benefiting the said city, social inequalities and the complexity of Cameroonian land law which are catalysts for land disputes. Since the advent of major structuring projects initiated by the State of Cameroon, the populations of the said area, driven by a casual attitude, have embarked on the all-out sale of land. This anarchic sale resulted in land disputes which, for quite some time, have punctuated the lives of the indigenous populations. These land disputes can be considered as indicators of the ineffectiveness of the

public policies put in place by a country, namely land, agricultural, social, land use policies, etc. The incoherence of these policies would accentuate the land pressures created by the imbalance between population growth and.

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CHARACTERISTICS OF PROTECTION INSTITUTIONS AND THE PROCESS OF INSTITUTIONALIZATION

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Abstract: *Through this article, I have proposed to approach the integration process from a theoretical perspective socio-professional of young people from the social protection system, as well as the stages they went through for an independent life. Currently, the state through public protection institutions and non- governmental, participate in supporting and supporting the socio-professional integration of this category a young people, thus generating new opportunities and life trajectories in the context of socio-economic both nationally and internationally. The abandoned youth or child follows a predictable path from a family environment to an environment of protective organizations/institutions. In this context we wanted to bring a series of clarifications regarding the sociological concept of institution (with the correlation its institutionalization) in direct connection with the socialization process. Starting from the defined date of Emile Durkheim that the institution represents "external ways of the individual to think, to act and to feel" and the analysis offered by Parsons about the three types of institutions - relational institutions; regulatory institutions and cultural institutions, I begin to describe in chapter two the common elements of protection institutions offered by several authors.*

Keywords: institutionalization, social politics, social inclusion, social exclusion, vulnerable groups;

1. Introduction

If we follow the Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language (2009) by institution we mean "an organ or organization that carries out activities of a social, cultural, administrative nature, etc.". Another definition offered by the same dictionary designates the institution as a "form of organization of social relations, according to the legal norms established by fields of activity". From a historical perspective, according to Yves Fricker (2009), a series of important moments can be identified of the evolution of this concept. Fricker first quotes Emile Durkheim who linked the concept of the institution as being close to the "social fact" (defined in turn as "external ways individual to think, act and feel").

Also, for Emile Durkheim (1974) the institution was associated with "a set of rules and strategies of good practices, accepted by the individuals of a societies", and sociology can rightly be called "the science of institutions, birth and functioning society" (p. 53). According to Yves Fricker (2009), the perspective on social facts defined of the institution led to the emergence of a break between the Durkheimian School and holistic sociology. At the same time, the author mentions the contributions of Max Weber, Fauconnet and Mauss or of F. de Saussure. In the second stage of his analysis, Fricker dwells on the sociological thought of Talcott Parsons, who studied the institutions starting from the importance given to them in the mechanism of the functioning of the social system. Moreover, Parsons identifies three types of institutions:

- Relational institutions – which refer to the behaviors and mutual expectations they manifest social actors;
- Regulatory institutions - through which the conduct of social agents is legitimized;

- Cultural institutions - through which the behaviors that are considered to be accepted from the point of view are drawn social point of view, being accessible to actors at their discretion.

Thus, the complementarity of the two sociological thoughts, of which they are exponents, is highlighted Emile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons, the following definitions being widely influenced by earlier approaches remembered. We remind you that in the Dictionary of Sociology (1998, p. 298) coordinated by C. Zamfir and L. Vlăsceanu, the institution designates "the rules of influencing and social control of individual behaviours, the specific and stable patterns of organization and development of interactions between individuals and groups social social oriented towards the satisfaction of basic needs, values and interests of essential importance, strategic for the maintenance of social collectivities". Through institutions, collectivities overcome the natural state to reach a state social/societal (fact that involves an awareness of belonging to an organism invested with attributions social). M.R. Gunnar mentioned the typology of the protection bodies and the evaluation of the quality of care intended for these young people: "institutions that do not provide the child with access to health services, at o proper nutrition that does not cover the needs of interrelation; institutions that provide support adequate in terms of food and health services, but in which there is some form of deprivation social; institutions that cover all the needs felt by the child, but in which relationships cannot be established long-term with carers or specialists".

Theorizing this subject of institutionalization I concluded the idea as the concept of institutionalization it is also related to concepts such as social development, or the socialization process. Sergiu Gherghina mentioned that institutionalization can be seen as a "gradual transformation of socialization up to the moment when the norms, ways, rules and paths followed by institutions pencil and elaborate actions".

I have further described in this chapter the needs felt by institutionalized young people - according to the pyramid Maslow's - and some elements related to the specific needs of children, analyzed by Mia Kellmer Pringle. To have a complete picture of the socio-professional integration process of these hold on, I found the words to mention the phases the children went through since the moment it was institutionalized: the shock phase, the suffering and disorganization phase, the organization phase, respectively, the phase of acceptance" (Mitrofan and Buzducea).

The results obtained are mentioned in the report entitled Attitude of specialists towards violence against children in institutional care (2017), in which the behaviours are described deviations of these young people that can be taken over in their lives as a consequence of institutionalization with effects negative effects on the socialization and integration process. To reduce these consequences I have described programs to prevent institutional violence, namely: training programs; implementationsquality standards; organizing workshops with violent youth, etc.

Certain studies (see Groark and McCall, 2011; McCall, 2013; McCall et al. al, 2016; van Ijzendoorn et. al., 2011) showed that special protection institutions children abandoned by their families or who have developed outside of them have common traits if not we refer to the mode of operation. Centralizing all these suggestions I concluded the existence of some common elements: Within these centers, the number of beneficiaries (children) is much higher than the number of those who offers specialized services (social workers) Specialized institutions tend to group homogeneous groups of children by age category and categories of disabilities from which they suffer. Children can thus easily be transferred from one age group to another (especially in the first years of life). During the first 10 months of life, a child can interact, on average. with more than 50 caretakers. So, the caregivers are in continuous mobility (generated by the work shifts) which they are not it offers the possibility to concentrate additionally in working with children or with distinct groups. Many new people

(adults) appear in the lives of these children from the centers: medical specialists, psychology and others; adoptive parents if applicable, entire series of volunteers, etc. Caregivers/ the specialists from these centers are involved in an insufficient number of trainings. Even so these trainings are focused on solving sanitary/health problems and less on development social/social interaction skills. The staff in these institutions is strongly feminized - therefore, contacts with male caregivers are very rare or episodic. Gender staff women are involved most of the time in housekeeping or personal care activities (clothing, hygiene, food preparation, etc.); The lack of affectivity of the staff in these centers was repeatedly observed, the attitude towards children being rather distant. A typology of protective organisms was made by M. R. Gunnar (2001) who had as a criterion for evaluating the quality of care services: "Institutions that do not provide the child with access to health services, to proper nutrition and which do not covers interrelationship needs; Institutions that provide adequate support in terms of food and health services, but in which there is a form of social deprivation; Institutions that cover all the needs felt by the child, but in which long-term relationships cannot be established duration with caregivers or specialists." As a consequence of what has been pointed out so far, we also note the studies that signaled the fact that the classical protection institution does not constitute a normal environment for the balanced development of children. It is also known that in many states there is the problem of closing such bodies protection and the search for viable alternatives. It starts from the idea that "the delay in cognitive development is often associated with institutional care" (Sherr et. al., 2017). Other authors (Boothby et. al., 2012, Fluke et. al. 2012) emphasized the importance of care within families - a fact that ensures "un provides a strong sense of protection". Thus, the significant differences that separate them can be seen them by children in protective institutions. As Anca Tompea (2007: 296) mentions, unlike the protection institutions family homes "could facilitate better preparation for social integration and growth the confidence they need for a proper social life". This idea is straightforward related to art. 3 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), states that "States Parties shall see to it that the institutions, services and settlements responsible for protection and care children to comply with the standards established by the competent authorities, especially those relating to security and health, to the number and qualification of staff in these institutions, as well as to ensure.

2. The institutionalization process and vulnerable groups – institutionalized children and young people

The term institutionalization is defined in the Little Academic Dictionary (2010) as "officialization, respectively the hospitalization (of a child in a placement center or) of an elderly person in an asylum". In turn his, the verb "to institutionalize" is defined as "to make it acquire an institutional, official character, a officialize" (DEX, 2009).
The term institutionalization also has a broader meaning when defined in terms of operational "the process by which institutions become stable in terms of integrated patterns of behaviour, attitude and culture" (Ghergina, 2007: 339). The cited author specifies that it must we distinguish between internal and external aspects of the institutionalization process. From an internal perspective we refer to the specifi evolutions/developments of the institution, and from an external perspective the institution's way of relating to society as a whole are taken into account.

The concept of institutionalization is also related to concepts such as social development, or the socialization process. According to the same Sergiu Gherghina (2007, p. 341), institutionalization can be viewed as a "gradual transformation of socialization until the moment when the norms, ways, rules and the paths followed by institutions create and elaborate actions".

According to Elisabeta Zelinka (2016: 477), the process of institutionalization can be defined as "the placement of an individual presenting certain deficiencies/pathologies/anomalies/behavioural deficiencies, psycho-affective, mental in a closed circuit institution (psychiatric hospital, placement center, school special for disabled children, assistance center for disabled people, hostel for elderly people, penitentiary)". Such a process can be carried out both in the medium term and on long term, depending on the typology and stage of evolution of the accumulation of deviant symptoms. Same authors indicate a number of characteristics relevant to understanding institutionalization: loss freedom, loss of autonomy/sovereignty, respectively loss of decision-making power.

The notion of vulnerable group is treated in close association with inclusion, exclusion, social marginalization, respectively with poverty. Within a definition proposed by Adriana Neguț (2015: 125), vulnerable groups consist of "categories of the population exposed to the risk of poverty marginalization or social exclusion, lacking own resources, to whom it is limited or restricted access to their fundamental rights". Thus, vulnerable groups may encounter major obstacles in to access various resources to ensure adequate social participation and achieve integration optimal from a socio-professional and educational point of view. At the same time, such vulnerable groups are exposed to discriminatory behaviours, which could affect not only the existence of the individual, but even society as a whole (Neguț, 2015). However, as the same author points out, an individual's membership of various groups is rather volatile, which makes it difficult identifying a sufficiently comprehensive definition for the notion of "vulnerable group".

In the UNICEF report entitled "Children at the limit of hope. A focused analysis of the situation vulnerable, excluded and discriminated children in Romania" (2006), the main groups of children considered to have a high degree of social vulnerability.

These groups include:
- children deprived of parental care;
- abandoned children;
- children in various types of residential institutions;
- children involved in serious forms of work;
- child victims of trafficking;
- children who work and/or live on the streets;
- children in conflict with the law;
- discriminated children (those belonging to other ethnicities, with various diseases or chronic conditions, children with disabilities.

For a better highlighting of the types of vulnerable groups, Raluca Popescu (2007) makes a review of the main indicators of social inclusion. Among them are: Relative poverty rate; Rate of material deprivation; Housing deprivation rate and housing status; Life expectancy at birth; Share of people living in households where no family member is employed; Dropout/early school leaving rate; Share of the population with a low level of education.

3. The needs felt by institutionalized children/young people

On a practical level, during the institutionalization of the child/young person, they should be satisfied social and security needs. From a sociological point of view, the concept of need se can be defined as a requirement imposed by the natural or social environment but dissociated into two major types of needs: innate/primary - where the natural or physiological ones are found, respectively the acquired ones or earned during its existence. Moreover, they are captured in the well-known hierarchy of needs illustrated by Abraham Maslow's pyramid. Moreover, the theory formulated by Maslow se continues to be found in continuous debate, being often criticized, but also invoked in the analysis individual needs (Simons, Irwin and Drinnien, 1987; Wahba and Bridwell, 1976).

The first level placed at the base of the pyramid includes the physiological needs, they add up instinctual needs – food, water, maintaining an adequate body temperature, etc. by the way are considered to be the strongest needs, essential for access to the next steps of development.

The second level sums up the security needs and activates only when the needs their physiological needs are met. Children, in particular, can signal a sense of insecurity and manifest it the need to grow up in a protective environment, such as the family, for example.

The third level refers to the needs for love, friendship and belonging. Once the needs physiological and security needs are met, Maslow believes that individuals seek to avoid feelings of loneliness and/or alienation. Thus, this involves a reciprocal action of giving – receiving affection, love and a sense of belonging.

The fourth level reveals the need for self-esteem, which becomes dominant with coverage the other types of needs previously described. Once self-esteem and self-respect are high, the individual becomes confident and self-values, realizes that he can represent a resource importance. When such a need for self-confidence is not met, the person se feels inferior, weak, helpless, hopeless and marked by a deep sense of worthlessness social.

The fifth level comprising the needs for self-actualization/self-determination can be reached only if the previous four types of needs are met. Maslow describes this level as a need the person to be and do what he wants to do socially and professionally.

In the continuation of this part, we captured some elements related to the specific needs of children, analyzed by Mia Kellmer Pringle (1974). The author starts from the premise that at the base of becoming and the development of a socially fit individual who fulfils various statuses and roles in society should be fulfilled four new of high importance for the institutionalized child would be the fulfilment of the need for love and security. Moreover, he would need affection, which consists in strengthening physical comfort and spiritually necessary to satisfy basic, vital needs.

Also, the institutionalized child shows a desire to maintain constant relationships with others significant people. Once such needs are satisfied at an optimal level, they could determine positive social attachments, self-acceptance, and a proactive, social orientation.

The institutionalized child may still feel the need to exploit the opportunities that arise, but and to be stimulated by his surroundings through his constant involvement in new experiences. Such a need is of overwhelming importance once its satisfaction could shape his intelligence and sense of control over the world. At the same time, social interactions can develop and stimulate the growth of confidence per se.

The need for praise and recognition of the merits received is also of significant importance from significant others. This need can be an incentive for transformation the institutionalized child/youth into a socially fulfilled adult, who possesses a well-defined identity and a deep sense of self-respect.

Last but not least, the development of feelings of responsibility, autonomy and independence can develop the institutionalized child's ability to take care of himself, but also to showed concern for those around him once he left the social protection system.

As mentioned by Constantin Enăchescu (2008), although from a legal point of view these needs should be met among children in the protection system "institutionalization restricts his freedom and imposes strict rules of conduct, establishing in his life a system of comparison with other children which has negative effects on the nuance of the self-image".

Regarding the needs felt by institutionalized youth, in a study published in March 2016 and carried out on a sample made up of 979 subjects, coming from 22 counties and five Sectors of Bucharest municipality the following conclusions were drawn:
 A fifth of the young people included in the study sample mentioned that they are not satisfied with the way in who are treated by the staff of the placement/residential center or the social

apartment where I live. The qualitative study also revealed that the subjects show a low confidence in psychologist, considering him as a person who does not respect the principle of data confidentiality, passing on the information reported by the beneficiaries;

One in three young people pointed out that they do not believe that the staff in the centers think about their future after leaving the system.

A third of the young people investigated confessed that they were not informed about life skills independence; 9 out of 10 young people were very concerned about the way you live your life leaving the special protection system; One in three subjects did not consider themselves ready to face all the responsibilities arising from a live independently, autonomously;

Two out of three young people were not aware of the fact that they can benefit from the possibility of extending their stay in the framework a specialized center, according to article 55, paragraph 3 of Law 272/2004 on the protection and promoting the right of the child. Moreover, 9 out of 10 young people confessed that they know nothing about the provisions of Law 272/2004;

Almost half of the subjects were not included by the staff specialized in consultation activities on the decisions that are made for them A third of the respondents would like to be able to insure themselves after leaving the Center stable living conditions;

A fifth of the young people surveyed did not have a nuanced projection regarding what will happen to them over 5 years after leaving the Center, and a quarter would like to access a job;

The most significant fear for a third of respondents is the fear of missing one future prospects. So, among the consequences/effects of institutionalization on the development of psycho- of the young person's child, I mention the following aspects:

The social experience of raising children in specialized centers/orphanages marks them psycho emotional. Specialized studies (see Wiik et al., 2011) exemplify the fact that there is a high proportion of teenagers leaving specialized institutions who present deficit-related dysfunctions attention or hyperactivity.

Children in care institutions can have intellectual deficiencies generated by the lack of stimulation emotional, social or sensory. Intellectual disability also results from reduced social contact with the adults to which the effective institutional conditions are added. On the other hand, the reduction of experiences training and life in general can even delay the development of language skills occurrence found in institutionalized children immediately after birth (Șoitu, 2004).

Another author, Virgil Dragomirescu (1976: 111) believed that "the delayed development of children institutionalized should be understood not as a reaction to separation from parents, but as an effect of the environment unstimulating, especially the lack of opportunities for spontaneous and affectionate interaction with adults". So the consequences of the development in a protection institution/placement center are fully reflected even in the child's personality. Against this background, these children had an uncertain self-image, insecurity regarding trust in others and in one's own strength, numerous dysfunctions that prevent them from facing difficult situations head on.

Petru Ştefăroi (2008) appreciates that the personality of the child or young person institutionalized can be affected from a socio-affective perspective. The author summarizes the respective factors with significant influence: "the imperfect institutional environment and the poor interpersonal relations both between specialists and children, as well as between children". The child's personality and its development from a psycho-social perspective are directly related to social learning, mediated by a series of significant agents (parents, educators, teaching staff). The withdrawal or absence of these agents can generate a disruption of the hierarchy of values, attitudes and the specific norms of these children's lives.

In addition, as Iolanda Mitrofan and Doru Buzducea (2003) appreciate, "the abandoned child and directly exposed to the process of institutionalization goes through four phases: the shock phase, the suffering phase and disorganization, the organization phase, respectively, the acceptance phase". These four phases have the following features:

"The shock phase, as a stage in which one's own reality is denied, being a buffer state. Incidentally, this state is considered to be a natural one, children choosing to withdraw into their own memories about family. Thus, they see the situation as a compromise, wanting to accept it as such. The phase of suffering and disorganization, in which children or young people begin to feel the effects of the separation from those close and family. This phase is marked by deep emotional distress, in which I can states of anxiety and depression, suicidal ideation, sleep disturbances, feelings of anger, abandonment and guilt. At the same time, self-esteem is found at very low levels.

The organization phase, through which the transition from a feeling of hopelessness to a state of acute upset. The acceptance phase, in which children are willing to accept their situation and search ways in which they can manage their own existence, interacting with various social instances According to Conțiu Tiberiu Șoitu (2004), the "psychopathy of lack of affection" syndrome is based on the impossibility of the child to strengthen "a strong attachment relationship towards parents, compared to others significant adult or a friend of the same age". Moreover, children institutionalized immediately after birth are considered to have lower chances to form an attachment relationship - compared to those raised in their families - hence also a situation of vulnerability.

Other research results have shown the high probability of triggering acute adaptation crises (regardless of the initial causes of institutionalization), crisis that can generate a series of behaviors problematic, included by G. Gueux under the name "maternal deficiency syndrome" (apud Cheianu, 2015). Anorexia and negative attitude are the main manifestations of this syndrome, possibly followed by attachment disorders (if the psycho-socio-educational mechanisms are not enough valued).

In turn, KenMagid and Carole A. McKelvey (1989) identified those features of the disorders of attachment that exists among children. These severe disorders include: "The impossibility of establishing direct visual contact with people in the immediate vicinity; Lack of ability to give or receive affection; Control issues; Cruelty to animals; Repeated appeals to various lies: Delays in the learning process; Concern for the adoption of violent behaviors.

Conclusions

A constant concern is the problem of deviant, antisocial and delinquent behaviors (with an important source in distortions of intra-family relations prior to institutionalization but also in the specific regime of protective institutions that can oscillate from absolute control to total lack of supervision). If we insist on distortions of intra-family relations prior to institutionalization, numerous studies have demonstrated a strong correlation between the level of problems in broken families and the level of children's delinquency (Șoitu, 2004).
In order to reduce these consequences, I have described the programs for the prevention of institutional violence, namely: training programs; the implementation of quality standards; organizing workshops with violent youth, etc.

Once they leave the social protection system, young people over the age of 18 are more exposed to social exclusion, marginalization, professional failure or even to dealing with deviant behaviors, they have a harder time understanding their new role in society, the responsibilities they have and which he must undertake. Some young people do not achieve good social integration because they rely a lot on state institutions, they always expect help from those around them, they have no initiative, they are not willing to accept criticism from those around them and they are easily influenced. In such situations, the representatives of the state

authorities should develop their ability to closely guide young people from the social protection system, depending on the knowledge and skills of each one, to offer them the opportunity to access accommodation with a low rent. According to the respondents, these young people need psychological, professional counseling, support and after leaving the protection system, at least 6 months. Also, the protection institutions should monitor the young person out of the system and in case of failure support him.

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STUDY OF THE ANIME PRODUCTS MARKET IN ROMANIA BY USING THE PROPERTIES OF TIME DEPENDENT SYSTEMS

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Abstract: *Having as starting point the study of the appearance and evolving of the anime culture in Romania, and, as consequence, of its products market, using the author's survey data, we have realised a possible future behaviour of the Romanian consumer, concerning these products. Methods: For this purpose, we have evaluated the entropy emerged from the general opinion related to this genre of art. The next step was using the obtained entropy to generate the state matrix of the consumer decision dynamical system. The final goal was to obtain a visual representation of the consumer decision system evolution in time. Results: Shannon formula for entropy was translated into associated dynamical systems which were analysed using a simple algorithm and the results were verified with aid of the information theory formulas Conclusion: The research led to the highlighting of two basic influences in determining the decision: preference and motivation, as well as the interdependence between them.*

Keywords: modeling, entropy, culture, anime, e-marketing

1. Introduction

Starting with the first part of '90s, Romania officially received the anime culture, broadcasting Japonese animation films and TV serials, called "anime". The Romanian public interest for this animation genre evolved in the 2000s, when a special TV channel was created for this purpose. Beginning with 2009, emerged the anime themed conventions. These events were the official space for developing a lot of anime cultural manifestations like: doujinshi, cosplay, i.e. but the most important is the fact that these kind of events led to the anime products selling, outside the virtual space of the Internet.

The Internet played a very important role, spreading the anime culture in Romania and worldwide, and developing the anime culture markets. This was realised by the e-marketing, inside the discussions groups also on the entertainment and anime forums.

English-speaking Romanians already had access to anime news and information sites, such as *animenewsnetwork.com* and *myanimelist.net*, where many had accounts and discussed and commented on anime. Information also spread through discussion forums and social networking sites such as *neogen.ro*. The presence of anime culture in Romania has been strengthened by the social networking site facebook*.com*. Within the social network offered by this site, there is the possibility of creating discussion groups, virtual communities, virtual shops and pages presenting various events. Thus, these groups have become real newsletters on the group's topic, i.e. anime culture, giving each member the opportunity to keep up to date with the latest news and ask their own questions.

In this online context, we have developed some researches and surveys(Cazacu, 2019; Cazacu, 2021). Data used in the article were obtained from one of these surveys. For describing the anime public perception, it was realised a specific questionary. The received answers revealed positive and negative opinions. The positive alternatives were much more significant and the determining factors were analyzed in previous studies. This study is focused on the negative alternatives.

2. Methodology

In the present article, we have as goal to obtain the time entropy evolution for the anime culture perception in Romania. For this purpose, we did the following steps: first, we have created a state matrix based on the Shannon formula, then we builded the associated dynamical system, to which can be applied a specific mathematical method of solving. In order to verify the results, we used, as well, the information theory formulas and analyzed the interaction between the involved variables.

3. Results

Therefore, our further goal is to research the significance of the entropy in particular phenomenon evolutions, described in the form of open, time depending systems.

We start with the Shannon method of simulation. The Shannon formula is thus:

$$S = k \cdot \int \frac{dx}{x} = k \cdot ln(x) + C;$$

with C=integration constant, and also: $k = \dfrac{dR}{dx}$ ➔ R=kx+a, where the constant a can be calculated if some initial data are known: R_0 and x_0. We note:

$$k^{'} = \frac{k}{log_2(e)} = k \cdot ln(2)$$

Let's consider the time unit: $dt = \dfrac{1}{n}$. Consequently, on the (0,1) interval, we will have the

partition: $\left[0, \dfrac{k_1}{n} \dots \dfrac{k_n}{n} = 1 \right]$.

Each number in this partition is less than the number 1, so it can be considered a probability. All of the partition elements are positive real numbers, so it can be applied the logarithm function. We built the next sum:

$$S_1 = \sum_{p=1}^{n} \frac{k_i}{n} \cdot log_2 \frac{k_i}{n} = \sum_{i=1}^{n} p_i \cdot log_2 p_i$$

with: $p_i = \dfrac{k_i}{n}, p_i \in [0,1], i = 1,2,3 \dots n$. When passing the last expression to the limit, we are led to the next result:

$$S_1 = \int x \cdot log_2(x) \cdot dx = \int x \cdot \frac{ln(x)}{ln(2)} \cdot dx =$$

$$\frac{1}{ln(2)} \cdot \int x \cdot ln(x) \cdot dx = \frac{1}{ln(2)} \cdot (ln(x) - x \cdot \frac{1}{x} + C)$$

$$\Rightarrow S_1 = \frac{ln(x)}{ln(2)} + C_1$$

As consequence:

$$S=k' \cdot S_1 \text{ and: } S=-k' \cdot H, \text{ with: } H=-\sum_{i=1}^{n} p_i \cdot log_2 p_i.$$

Let's note: $s_i = -log_2 p_i$ and consider the variable:

$$M(t)=\begin{pmatrix} log_2 p_1 & \cdots & log_2 p_n \\ p_1 & \cdots & p_n \end{pmatrix}=\begin{pmatrix} s_1 & \cdots & s_n \\ p_1 & \cdots & p_n \end{pmatrix}$$

The medium variable value is equal to the entropy absolute value H: $\overline{M}(t)=|H(t)|$.

In the following, we shall built the associated dynamical system of the Shannon formula, considering that $s=s(t)=(s_1(t),s_2(t)...,s_n(t))$, and applying to s(t) the differentiation relative to t=time.

If we consider the time unit $dt = \dfrac{1}{n}$ and the time evolving of s(t), it will result:

$$s(t) = -k' \cdot \sum p_i \cdot log_2 p_i = k' \cdot \begin{pmatrix} p_1 & \cdots & 0 \\ \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ 0 & \cdots & p_n \end{pmatrix} \cdot \begin{pmatrix} s_1 \\ \vdots \\ s_n \end{pmatrix} \Rightarrow ds(t) = k' \cdot \begin{pmatrix} k_1 & \cdots & 0 \\ \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ 0 & \cdots & k_n \end{pmatrix} \cdot \begin{pmatrix} s_1 \\ \vdots \\ s_n \end{pmatrix} \cdot dt$$

which can be written like a simple equation, thus:

$$\frac{ds}{dt} = k' \cdot A_1 \cdot s(t)$$

so the associated dynamical system has the following state(dynamic) equation:

$$(\Sigma) \quad \begin{pmatrix} \dot{s}_1 \\ \vdots \\ \dot{s}n \end{pmatrix} = k' \cdot \begin{pmatrix} k_1 & \cdots & 0 \\ \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ 0 & \cdots & k_n \end{pmatrix} \cdot \begin{pmatrix} s_1 \\ \vdots \\ s_n \end{pmatrix} + \begin{pmatrix} 1 & \cdots & 0 \\ \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ 0 & \cdots & 1 \end{pmatrix} \cdot \begin{pmatrix} u \\ 0 \\ \vdots \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}$$

Let's note:

$$A = k' \cdot A_1 = k' \cdot \begin{pmatrix} k_1 & \cdots & 0 \\ \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ 0 & \cdots & k_n \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} a_1 & \cdots & 0 \\ \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ 0 & \cdots & a_n \end{pmatrix} \quad B = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & \cdots & 0 \\ \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ 0 & \cdots & 1 \end{pmatrix}, \quad S_0 = S(0)$$

An open system which is not disturbed by the external factors does not really exist, it is supposed to be ideal, so there will be also a disturbing vector u(t) and its square matrix coefficient B, together with an output vector y(t) and the initial conditions for s(t). The dynamical system Σ which we will refer, has the following general form:

$$(\Sigma) \quad \begin{array}{l} \dot{s}(t) = A \cdot s(t) + B \cdot u(t) \\ y(t) = C \cdot s(t), s_0 = s(t_0) = s(0) \end{array}$$

with : s(t) is the present state vector, $\dot{s}(t)$ is the state transformation vector, u(t)=(u,0,...,0) is the command(vector of input), y(t) is the vector of output, t is the time variable, A,B,C are

square, constant, diagonal matrices, and f(s,u,t)=A·s(t)+B·u(t) is a self-adjoint operator (symmetrical), in the finite dimensional case, a symmetric, positive matrix.

Accordingly, the spaces that own these variables are: the state space X, the output space Y, the space of admissible commands U and the time interval $(t_0,t_1) \subset (0,1) \subset R$(Kalman, 1969; Pontryagin et al., 1962).

We use the method of calculating the analytical solution for a specific class of optimal problems, named the "semi-invert method"(Dragoescu,2009), based on Kalman's theory, with software attached, realised in Mathematica 7.0 program.

This method can be applied to any pair of square matrices, $A(t)$ and $B(t)$, depending on time or not, symmetric and positive, $\det(A) \neq 0$, and for any initial input. Since the theory's premises are verified, the method which we mentioned gets the analytical solution for the associated dynamical system (Σ) if A+A* matrix is invertible(Dragoescu, 2009;Cazacu, 2016).

Note: B* is the transposed matrix of B, in this case: B=B*=I_n(unitary matrix) and also: A=A*. In this mathematical context, the analytical solution of the system has the following formula:

$$S(t) = S(0) \cdot e^{\int_0^t \left[A - B \cdot B^* \cdot z(\nu) \right] d\nu} = S(0) \cdot e^{\int_0^t \left[A - z(\nu) \right] d\nu}$$ with:

$$z(t) = \left[C_1 - e^{(A+A^*) \cdot t} \cdot C_2 \right]^{-1};$$

$$C_1 = B \cdot B^* \cdot (A + A^*)^{-1}$$

$$C_2 = -e^{-2 \cdot A - A^*} + e^{-A - A^*} \cdot B \cdot B^* \cdot (A + A^*)^{-1};$$

$$A = A^*; B = B^* = I_n$$

$$\Rightarrow z(t) = \left[C_1 - e^{2 \cdot A \cdot t} \cdot C_2 \right]^{-1};$$

$$C_1 = (2 \cdot A)^{-1}; \quad C_2 = -e^{-3 \cdot A} + e^{-2 \cdot A} \cdot (2 \cdot A)^{-1}$$

For numerical application of the above considerations, it was considered the author's researches regarding the consumer behavior, in particular regarding the new anime market in Romania. The involved variables which were tested in author's surveys(Cazacu, 2021), regarding the anime products, are the endogenous influences and the consumer need of consumption, all of them being important in the consumer decision process.(Cazacu, 2016)

There were selected five representative questions for the anime market perception study, so there were five sets of responses, with positive and negative alternatives, from which, in this case, we were interested in the negative ones.

We refer to a study (Mihaita, 2018; Cazacu, 2018; Cazacu,2019) conducted on a sample of 422 participants, which followed the effects produced by the emergence of the anime phenomenon on the behaviour of Romanian mainstream media consumers.

Identifying the *preference* for anime culture by-products, in the survey conducted, resulted in 76% of affirmative answers: 316 respondents compared to only 98 negative ones, prefer the adjacent products of this culture. These results were obtained in response to the question:

"*Have you ever bought products having a connection with anime (manga, posters, figurines, playing cards, dolls, clothes and any other products bearing the brand, logo or other distinctive sign that puts them in connection with anime)*?"(414 responses)

The *motivation* for purchasing such products was highlighted in the survey, asking for the purpose of the actual purchase action, the main reason resulting being "personal use" in 75%. The question was:

"*For what purpose did you buy the goods mentioned in the previous question*?"(410 responses).

The distribution of the scores obtained is symmetrical in relation to the mean, with values ranging from a uniform minimum to a maximum 308 responses in favour of purchasing for personal use, compared to 89 against purchasing.

Intention, materialized in the purchase of subtitled anime, so determining the actual consumer *attitude*, resulted from the responses to the question:

 "*Would you buy Blu-ray discs/DVDs with anime, officially subtitled by professionals, from shops*?"

The *attitudinal* dimension is partly highlighted by the results showing the importance of subtitling, i.e. localisation, at around 93% in favour ("very important" and "quite important", cumulatively). Thus, when asked about the importance of correct subtitling, participants responded as follows: out of 412 respondents, 277 considered subtitling "very important", another 110 considered it "quite "important", 16 opted for "less important", and the remaining 9 respondents did not consider it important.

In addition to these four questions, there is also the question on the need for consumption, which leads to the decision to buy:

"*How often do you watch anime subtitled by fansubbing groups in Romania*?"(413 responses)

From the total number of respondents to this question, it emerged that about 70% watch anime subtitled by fansubbing groups in Romania to a greater or lesser extent, which is close to the percentage in which they are aware of the existence of fansubbing groups (73%).

As an observation, we note that the three subcategories of those who prefer fansubbing subtitling have close percentages, which may be due to external factors such as: employment, geographic location, age, etc.

This, together with the fact that there is considerable interest in fansubbing groups in Romania, as well as the fact that there is significant interest in correct subtitling, leads us to the conclusion that a market segment has already formed in our country, namely a well-defined demand for DVDs and Blue-ray discs with anime, subtitled in Romanian. As a consequence of the existence of the above-mentioned market segment, there is also a *demand* for anime derivatives, in particular translated into Romanian. These observations lead to an overall favourable picture of the concept studied, with a *preference* for subtitling of derivative products, and for purchasing for personal purposes (Cazacu, 2021).

It resulted that the most important of the endogenous influences in the consumer decision process are: the *motivation*, the *preference*, in the first place, then, the *intention* and the *attitude*, all of them being known as the black-box components(Kotler, 1969), which, finally, determined the *need* of consumption for these products.(see Table 1)

It has been accepted that the whole forms a complex, open, time-dependent system called the "dynamic system of consumer behaviour", the response of the consumer being the purchase decision itself.

Considering the marginal probabilities equal to the measurable frequencies of the influences exerted within the decision making system, related to the products of a specific market, such as the anime culture, the aim was to exploit the previous results, namely the research conducted by the author, in the form of the online surveys among Romanian entertainment consumers. Thus, using the frequencies resulting from the surveys as probabilities of the alternatives, it was calculated the information entropy for the system of the endogenous influences, important in the consumer's decision process. (Table 1)

Table 1. The entropies given by the negative alternatives of the influences

BLACK-BOX ENDOGENOUS INFLUENCES	var1 MOTIVATION	var2 PREFERENCE	var3 INTENTION	var4 ATTITUDE	var5 NEED
ABSOLUTE NEGATIVE FREQUENCES (not vari)	89 (total: 410)	98 (total: 414)	210 (total: 410)	4 (total:412)	125 (total= 413)
PERCENTAGES: pi=p(not vari)	0,22	0,24	0,51	0,01	0,30
-log2(pi)	2,20	2,08	0,97	6,69	1,72
-pi·log2(pi)	0,48	0,5	0,49	0,06	0,52

Source: autor's research( )

For the purpose, we shall consider a real vector v(t), differentiable, $C^{(5)}$. Its components evolution shall be analysed using a mathematical model proposed by author. The variable components weights are the negative alternatives percentages, the author has obtained from the survey. They were denoted like this: a_1= weight of *motivation*, a_2= weight of *preference*, a_3= weight of *intention*, a_4= weight of *attitude* (Kotler endogenous influences)

All the same, the variable coomponents weights can be the negative alternatives entropies which are calculated in the same table and marked with the red color (see Table 1). As we shall see in the following, the same mathematical model led to a different dynamical system, which behavior will be studied. Let's note:

$$v = s_1$$
$$\dot{s}_1 = -s_2 = \dot{v}$$
$$\dot{s}_2 = s_3 = \ddot{v}$$
$$\dot{s}_3 = -s_4 = v^{(3)}$$
$$\dot{s}(t) = v^{(4)} = -a_4 v^{(3)} + a_3 \ddot{v} - a_2 \dot{v} + a_1 v$$
$$\Rightarrow \dot{s}(t) = a_1 s_1(t) - a_2 s_2(t) + a_3 s_3(t) - a_4 s_4(t)$$

The last line in the above formula represents the mathematical model which leads to the state equation of the associated dynamical model we propose. Indeed, the above equation can be written in the state form(the coefficients are multiplied by 100, for easier trajectory representation):

$$\begin{pmatrix} \dot{s}_1 \\ \dot{s}_2 \\ \dot{s}_3 \\ \dot{s}_4 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} a_1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & a_2 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & a_3 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & a_4 \end{pmatrix} \cdot \begin{pmatrix} s_1 \\ s_2 \\ s_3 \\ s_4 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 22 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 24 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 51 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \cdot \begin{pmatrix} s_1 \\ s_2 \\ s_3 \\ s_4 \end{pmatrix}$$

Adding the exit equation, the initial conditions, and the disturbing factor, it has been completed the building of the dynamical system which solution trajectory expresses the time evolution of the consumer decision when taking account only of the negative alternatives responses percentages.

$$\frac{ds}{dt} = A \cdot s(t) + B \cdot u(t); A = \begin{pmatrix} 22 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 24 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 51 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}; B = B = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & \dots & 0 \\ \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ 0 & \dots & 1 \end{pmatrix},$$

$$(\Sigma)$$

$$y(t) = C \cdot s(t); C = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & \dots & 0 \\ \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ 0 & \dots & 1 \end{pmatrix}; s_0 = s(0) = (1,1,1,1)$$

Similarly, when the state matrix A coefficients are the calculated entropies of the negative alternatives, the associated system is thus:

$$\frac{ds'}{dt} = A's'(t) + B'u(t); A = \begin{pmatrix} 48 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 50 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 49 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 6 \end{pmatrix}; B = B = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & \dots & 0 \\ \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ 0 & \dots & 1 \end{pmatrix},$$

$$(\Sigma')$$

$$y(t) = C \cdot s(t); C = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & \dots & 0 \\ \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ 0 & \dots & 1 \end{pmatrix}; s_0 = s(0) = (1,1,1,1)$$

As presented and theorized in the literature (Pontryagin et al.,1962), this type of open, time depending system, is solved in a context that allows the application of an algorithm that provides the solution (its trajectory and response) if the condition: $\det(A+A^*)\neq0$ (verified). The applied matrix algorithm, adapted to the presented system, also allows the visualization of the solution trajectory **s(t)**.

So, Shannon formula for entropy has led to the associated dynamical systems with square diagonal matrices coefficients, which analytical solutions and graphical representations can be obtained, with respect to the initial values and the extra condition concerning the state matrices.

As it can be observed, the evolution of the first system trajectory, using the negative responses percentages as elements of the state matrix *A*, and an arbitrary external disturbing factor *u*, but equally positive acting upon all the four influences, is an ascending evolution. The negative alternative percentage of the attitude is too small, so it is not realy visible in the graphic representations(see figure 1).

The evolution of the second system trajectory, using the negative responses entropies as elements of the state matrix *A*, with the same influence *u*, and applying the same mathematical algorithm for finding and representing the system solution, is presented in figure 2. As they are connected, is obviously that the associated entropies have also similar evolutions .

Figure 1 Negative responses percentages evolution during one unit of time
System Σ solution trajectory
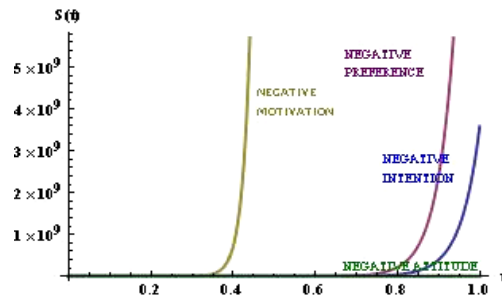
Source: Wolfram Mathematica 7.0 program, using data in Table 1

Figure 2 Negative responses entropies evolution during one unit of time

System Σ' solution trajectory
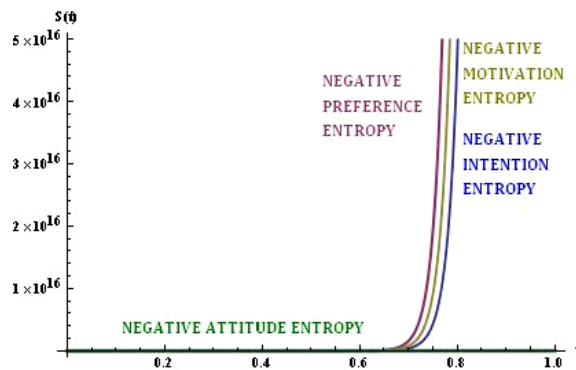
Source: Wolfram Mathematica 7.0 program, using data in Table 1

Using the information theory, we shall verify the relations between these variables, with aid of an Excel register application, which has two files, the main and the auxiliary file. In the first file, we insert data and the second file makes the calculations, based on the theory formulas (Cazacu,2022)

Table 2. 2³ experiment using the negative responses percentages

X(A) Negative preference		Z(C) Negative motivation		Y(B) Negative attitude	
				NO	YES*1000
NO	0,76	NO	0,76x0,78=0,59	0,59x0,99=**584**	0,59x0,01=**6**
		YES	0,76x0,22=0,17	0,17x0,99=**168**	0,19x0,01=**2**
YES	0,24	NO	0,24x0,78=0,19	0,19x0,99=**188**	0,19x0,01=**2**
		YES	0,24x0,22=0,05	0,05x0,99≅**49,5**	0,05x0,01≅**0,5**

Source: data in Table 1

Using the mentioned application in Excel, we underline some main interactions:

$$AI(\,Z\,/\,X\,) = \overline{E(\,Z\,/\,X\,)} - E(\,Z\,) = 17\%$$

Informational contribution from X=negative *preference* to Z=negative *motivation* is significant, which means that *motivation* appears to be strongly determined by *preference*. Even more, the informational gain from X to Z is much more significant:

$$\Delta(\,Z\,/\,X\,) = \overline{E_a(\,Z\,/\,X\,)} - E_a(\,Z\,) = 34\%$$

where: $\overline{E_a(\,Z\,/\,X\,)} = 2 \cdot \overline{E(\,Z\,/\,X\,)} - 1$ and $E_a(\,Z\,) = 2 \cdot E(\,Z\,) - 1$. In other words:

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$$\Delta(Z/X) = \overline{E_a(Z/X)} - E_a(Z) = 2 \cdot \overline{E(Z/X)} - 1 - (2 \cdot E(Z) - 1) = 2(\overline{E(Z/X)} - E(Z)) = 2 \cdot 17\% = 34\%$$

Figure 3. *Preference* and *motivation* relationships

ENTERING NUMERICAL DATA :

	X (C)	Z (A)	NOT Y (B1) Y°	YES Y (B2) Y¹	Total	NOTES/ CONVENTIONS:
X(C)=NEGATIVE PREFERENCE	X°	Z°	584	6	590	NOT Z=Z°; NOT X=X°; NOT Y=Y°;
		Z¹	168	2	170	
Y(B)=NEGATIVE ATTITUDE	Total X°		752	8	760	
	X¹	Z°	9	2	11	YES Z= Z¹ ; YES Y= Y¹ ; YES X= X¹
Z(A)=NEGATIVE INTENTION		Z¹	188	0,5	188,5	
	Total X¹		49,5	2,5	52	
	TOTAL		801,5	10,5	812	

AI= INFORMAȚIONAL CONTRIBUTION
Δ=INFORMAȚIONAL GAIN

$$AI(Z/X) = \overline{E(Z/X)} - E(Z)$$
$$AI(Z/Y) = \overline{E(Z/Y)} - E(Z)$$
$$AI(Y/Z) = \overline{E(Y/Z)} - E(Y)$$

	AI(Z/X) / A from C	AI(Z/Y) / A from B	Z from X,Y / A from BC	
Δ(Z/X)	34%	17%	0%	35%	Δ(Z/X,Y) 35%
	Z from X / A from C	Z from Y / A from B	Z from X,Y / A from BC	
Δ(Z/X)	0,34	0,17	0,00	0,35	Δ(Z/X,Y) 0,35

$$\Delta(Z/X,Y)=W_1 \cdot E_a(Z/X_1,Y_1)+W_2 \cdot E_a(Z/X_1,Y_2)+W_3 \cdot E_a(Z/X_2,Y_1)+W_4 \cdot E_a(Z/X_2,Y_2)-E_a(Z)$$

$$AI(Z/X,Y) = \overline{E(Z/X,Y)} - E(Z)$$

$$AI(Y/X) = \overline{E(Y/X)} - E(Y)$$

	AI(Y/X) / B from C	B from A	B from A,C	
Δ(Y/Z)	0%	0%	0%	0%	Δ(Y/X,Z) 0%
	Y from X / B from C	Y from Z / B from A	Y from X,Z / B from A,C	
Δ(Y/Z)	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	Δ(Y/X,Z) 0,00

$$\Delta(Y/X,Z)=W_1 \cdot E_a(Y/X_1,Z_1)+W_2 \cdot E_a(Y/X_1,Z_2)+W_3 \cdot E_a(Y/X_2,Z_1)+W_4 \cdot E_a(Y/X_2,Z_2)-E_a(Y)$$

$$\Delta(Y/X,Z) = \overline{E(Y/X,Z)}_a - E_a(Y)$$

$$\Delta(X/Y) = \overline{(E(X/Y))}_a - E_a(X)$$

	X from Y / C from B	AI(X/Z) / C from A	X from Y,Z / C from A,B	
Δ(X/Y)	0%	12%	24%	Δ(X/Y,Z) 24%
	X from Y / C from B	X from Z / C from A	X from Y,Z / C from A,B	
Δ(X/Y)	0,00	0,12	0,24	Δ(X/Y,Z) 0,24

$$AI(X/Y,Z) = \overline{E(X/Y,Z)} - E(X)$$

$$J(X/Y)=W_1 \cdot E_a(X/Y_1)+W_2 \cdot E_a(X/Y_2)-Ea(X)$$

$$\Delta(X/Y,Z)=W_1 \cdot E_a(X/Y_1,Z_1)+W_2 \cdot E_a(X/Y_1,Z_2)+W_3 \cdot E_a(X/Y_2,Z_1)+W_4 \cdot E_a(X/Y_2,Z_2)-E_a(X)$$

Source: Information theory results. Numerical data were multiplied by 1000 to optimize the calculation (the relationships between the variables do not change)

 Almost the same determination we found from Z = negative *motivation* to X=negative *preference*: $AI(X / Z) = \overline{E(X / Z)} - E(X)$ =12% and also, the informational gain:

$$\Delta(X / Z) = \overline{E_a(X / Z)} - E_a(X) = 2 \cdot 12\% = 24\%$$

We can only conclude that: less *preference* leads to less *motivation* and vice versa (see figure 3). Similar results can be achieved using the ***negative responses entropies***, since they have similar evolutions.

The interpretation of these results is as follows: it has been shown that the system (Σ) evolves as a result of the action of the variables *motives* and *preferences*, which we have considered endogenous determining variables, while *intentions*, *attitudes*, and *needs* can be considered resultants, hence determined variables.

Considering that *motives* and *preferences* are related to the consumer's specific *perception* of a given product, it is justified to study the latter with priority in numerous other works.

The selected endogenous categories correspond, in terms of naming and meaning, to the considerations in the recognized literature (Kotler, 1969), and the *need* component constituted the feedback of the cognitive model in the author's research, and led to the purchase decision on the market of anime and manga products in Romania. In this way, consumer behavior

demonstrates a spiral evolution, which always returns to the *need* component of genre products, which, on the other hand, is the very feedback of the decision-making behavior.

In summary: for the purchase decision, the consumer has a *motivation*, followed by a *preference*, or vice versa, relative to a particular product, as a result, the *intention* appears, concretised in *attitude*, which forms the purchase decision. The sum of these steps, completed by the actual purchase, leads to the *need* for consumption.

4. Conclusions

For this research we have used mathematical and statistical data, algorithms, formulas, making connections and establishing conclusions.

The results obtained by one method were verified by another and vice versa, in order to finally arrive to an obvious fact, but demonstrated again by the present study, namely: the consumer's behavior is primarily determined by his preference, his perception on the phenomenon. The decrease of the preference entropy leads to the increase of the positive perception over the anime phenomenon in Romania. Also resulted a strong relation between preference and motivation, each determining the other.

The proposed mathematical model can be adapted for several components. For the weights of these components, the results of the studies can be used, aiming at a percentage involvement, as real as possible, of each of these influences. In this way, the coefficients of the state matrix A of the dynamic system, the weights of the vector variable s(t) components, can take real percentage values, summing up the whole, for example, the affirmative or the negative responses relative to the influences analysed: a_i=weight($s_i(t)$)$_{,i=1,2,3,4}$...

The external action represented by the disturbance vector has the coefficient matrix B, diagonal, but in which the non-zero elements express the extent of the action of one or another of the external(exogenous) influences: *culture* and *subculture*, *social class*, *reference group* and *belonging group* (including *family*), called Veblenian influences (Veblen, 2009).

This system can be useful for any number of interdependent dimensions, provided that the number of exogenous factors selected, hence the size of the disturbance vector, is equal to that of the internal, endogenous factors, hence the size of the state vector variable, to fit the mathematical context and the possibility of applying the matrix algorithm developed in Mathematica 7.0, in order to visualize the response trajectory, its components, the resultant leading to the actual behavior, the consumer's decision.

The most conclusive example practically demonstrates **the possibility of applying this model to the results of an actual survey**, explaining also how the coefficients of the state matrix A can be assigned from the real data. For example, if the data in Table 1 are reported to their sum as a whole, thus obtaining unit sum percentages, these real numbers can also constitute the coefficients of the matrix A. If one wishes to visualize the trajectory of the state vector s(t) and the response vector y(t), in order to be able to apply the matrix algorithm taken from the literature, he must also check the condition:det(A+A*)≠0.

Table 3. The new state matrix A coefficients:
(0,22+0,24+0,51+0,01=0,98=TOTAL)

BLACK-BOX ENDOGENOUS INFLUENCES	var1	var2	var3	var4
	MOTIVATION	**PREFERENCE**	**INTENTION**	**ATTITUDE**
REAL PERCENTAGES: pi=p(not vari)	0,22	0,24	0,51	0,01
NEW PERCENTAGES ai=pi/0,98	0,225	0,245	0,52	0,01

The associated dynamical system (the coefficients have been multiplied with 1000, for better using) has the matrix A coefficients in the last line of Table 3. det(A+A*)=0,00028665≠0.

$$(\Sigma)\quad \frac{ds}{dt} = \frac{1}{1000^4}\begin{pmatrix} 225 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 245 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 520 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 10 \end{pmatrix}\cdot s(t) + \begin{pmatrix} 1 & \dots & 0 \\ \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ 0 & \dots & 1 \end{pmatrix}\cdot u(t);$$

$$y(t) = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & \dots & 0 \\ \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ 0 & \dots & 1 \end{pmatrix}\cdot s(t); s_0 = s(0) = (1,1,1,1)$$

The deterministic models proposed by the author are stand-alone tools, they are transcribed in terms of the state vector and dynamic systems of influences are obtained to which the matrix algorithm can be applied, for visualizing the transformation in time and in different hypostases.

Developing mainly in the online environment, at first positively received mainly by the young segment of consumers (Mihăiță,2018;Cazacu, 2018), the anime product market has subsequently proved attractive to any age or biological gender, offering a very diverse range of products, addressed to all categories of consumers (with the required specifications of the shed, etc.). In addition, using the non-gentropic Shannon-Onicescu analysis on case study data, precisely, the negative responses percentages, it was demonstrated strong interdetermining relationship between the main influences which determine the other endogenous factors in the consumer decision process: *preference*, the first in the black-box list, similar with the general term of the *perception*, and the *motivation*.

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THE EFFECT OF MASS MEDIA ON ATTITUDES TOWARDS AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

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Abstract: *The media has a significant impact on public attitudes and understanding of autism. Media representation can perpetuate negative stereotypes and misconceptions or promote positive and accurate portrayals that challenge stereotypes and promote acceptance. Autism is a spectrum, and media outlets must strive to accurately represent the diversity of experiences associated with it. Mass media awareness campaigns can educate the public about the realities of the condition and promote inclusivity. The media has a crucial responsibility in shaping public attitudes towards autism and must provide accurate and respectful representation of the condition and those affected by it to support the development of a more inclusive and understanding society. The study aims to investigate the impact of mass media on the attitudes of primary school teachers towards children with autism and their inclusion in mainstream public schools in Romania. It will use a mixed methods design with a large sample size from all schools in Brasov and the outskirts. The study will employ content analysis, questionnaires, focus group studies and semi-structured interviews to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. The results will provide insights into how mass media influences general attitudes towards individuals with autism and their inclusion in mainstream public schools. In this proposed research study, a mixed methods design combining quantitative and qualitative methods will be used to gain a comprehensive understanding of teachers' attitudes towards autism, including the impact of mass media on these attitudes. The results could be used to develop targeted interventions for promoting inclusive education practices and providing programs for teachers on creating an inclusive environment for students with autism.*

Keywords: mass-media, autism spectrum disorder, public schools, attitudes.

1. The effect of mass media on society in general

In contemporary times, mass media holds a major influence over our daily lives and has the capacity to shape our perceptions and understanding of the world and society. Additionally, the types of mass media we are exposed to impacts the way we form our attitudes, beliefs, and perspectives towards society and, therefore, the manner in which we interact with society (Duffy and Turow, 2009). The pervasiveness of various forms of media, including television, print, and the internet, means that we are consistently exposed to a constant flow of information and news (Turow, 2010). As a result, mass media plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion, raising awareness about critical issues, entertaining, and educating. Consequently, it is essential to acknowledge the influence of mass media on our daily lives and approach it with a critical mindset. Although mass media can be a useful tool for education and societal change, it can also spread misinformation and reinforce harmful stereotypes. Additionally, it is important to understand that the media is often driven by commercial interests and the desire for profits (McChesney, 2008). As consumers of media, it is important to critically assess the information and news we encounter to maintain a well-informed and nuanced viewpoint.

2. Mass media and autism

With regards to the topic of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), mass media serves a dual function in our society both as an educational tool and as a shaping influence on public attitudes towards autism and the inclusion of autistic individuals in educational institutions and other societal settings (Gemegah, Hartas and Totsika, 2021). The media is a major source of information and can greatly influence public understanding of autism through its portrayal of the subject. The diverse perspectives and information presented through various forms of mass media, such as television shows, movies, and print media, contribute to the formation of societal norms and beliefs regarding autism and inclusion (Belcher and Maich, 2014). In addition, another form of popular media is social media that not only facilitates information dissemination, interpersonal connectivity, and academic pursuits (Bularca, et al., 2022), but also serves as a platform for individuals on the autism spectrum to express themselves more effectively, circumventing inherent challenges associated with social communication (Gillespie-Smith, et al., 2021).

Given the significant impact that mass media has on public attitudes towards autism, it is critical to approach the representation of autism in mass media with a nuanced and informed perspective, to promote accurate and inclusive representations of autism. This involves analyzing and carefully considering the way in which autism is portrayed, considering the diversity of experiences associated with autism.

3. What is Autism Spectrum Disorder?

Before evaluating media representation of autism, it is important to comprehend the nature and characteristics of the condition. Autism is a condition characterized by persistent deficits in social communication and interaction. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (5th ed.; DSM–5; American Psychiatric Association, 2013) provides four criteria for diagnosis of autism, with the first criterion focused on social deficits. This criterion requires the demonstration of three symptoms, including deficits in social-emotional reciprocity, impairments in nonverbal behaviours used for social interaction, and difficulties in developing and maintaining relationships. These social deficits are the primary characteristic of autism, but an individual must also exhibit additional criteria to receive a diagnosis. The second criterion for diagnosing autism is the presence of restricted, repetitive patterns of behaviour, interests, or activities. This criterion requires at least two of four symptoms, which include stereotyped or repetitive speech or movements, excessive adherence to routines, highly restricted fixated interests, and hyper- or hypo-reactivity to sensory input. These symptoms, although important for a diagnosis of autism, are not exhibited by all individuals with autism and should not be assumed to be universal characteristics of the condition (as they are usually portrayed in representations of individuals with autism in popular media). It is important to dispel the stereotype that all people with autism display all of these behaviours. Additionally, the third criterion for the diagnosis of autism requires that symptoms be present in early childhood (prior to age 8), with the possibility of not fully manifesting until social demands increase. The fourth criterion stipulates that the symptoms must limit and impair everyday functioning, which is rated on a three-level severity scale: requiring support, requiring substantial support, and requiring very substantial support. The boundaries between levels of severity are not well-defined, but it is important to differentiate between levels as autism is a spectrum with a variety of diagnoses under one umbrella (this is why autism is represented on a spectrum).

4. Mass media representation of autism

The importance of understanding the symptomatology of autism lies in the fact that media representation of autism can perpetuate negative stereotypes and misconceptions, or it can raise awareness and promote understanding of the condition. Additionally, stereotypical and negative depictions of autism in media and popular culture can lead to the reinforcement of harmful biases and misconceptions about the condition. These representations often portray individuals with autism as socially isolated, lacking intellectual capacity, or as being a burden on society (Huws and Jones, 2011). Such portrayals contribute to the perpetuation of negative attitudes and stigmas towards individuals with autism and can discourage them from seeking support or resources.

Conversely, more nuanced and positive depictions of autism in media can help to raise awareness and understanding of the condition. These representations can showcase the strengths and abilities of individuals with autism, highlighting their unique perspectives and contributions to society (Urbanowicz, et al., 2019). Such portrayals can help to challenge common misconceptions and stereotypes, encouraging a more inclusive and accepting society. Additionally, positive depictions of autism can provide hope and inspiration to individuals with autism and their families and can help to promote greater understanding and acceptance of the condition.

Therefore, accurate representation is crucial in the portrayal of autism in mass media. Unfortunately, mass media representation often falls short in accurately depicting diverse social groups, including those with medical conditions such as autism. The autism community is a diverse group of individuals with unique lives and experiences, presenting a complex challenge for accurate representation in the media (Haller, Ralph and Zaks, 2010; Prochnow, 2014). Television and film, as media outlets, are limited in their ability to fully depict the complexities of autism in their programmes (Young, 2012). Despite the wide range of characteristics and types within the autism community, media representation of autism is often limited and fails to encompass the full spectrum of the condition and these limited portrayals fail to fully represent the diversity within the autism community (Hadley, Batch, & Whelan, 2021). Nonetheless, it is imperative for the media to take responsibility for striving towards accuracy in their representation of autism, taking into consideration that complete accuracy may not be attainable for every aspect or story.

5. Sensationalization of autism in mass media

Furthermore, mass media often depicts sensational or extreme stories about individuals with autism, which can perpetuate misunderstandings and reinforce negative attitudes towards autism (Yu and Farrell, 2020). These sensationalized stories can also contribute to the misconception that autism is a rare and unusual condition, which can lead to a lack of understanding and empathy among the general public. This can result in the further marginalization of individuals with autism, as well as their families, and can also discourage them from seeking support and resources (Loftis, 2015).

Moreover, the media's portrayal of autism can also impact public policy, funding, and research priorities, and can result in a lack of resources and support being directed towards individuals with autism (Pellicano, Dinsmore and Charman, 2014). It is of great importance for the media to accurately and fairly represent individuals with autism, as mass media plays a critical role in shaping public attitudes and perceptions towards the condition. The media should aim to tell stories that are representative of the diversity of experiences of individuals with autism and that challenge common stereotypes and misconceptions.

6. Awareness campaigns towards understanding autism

Additionally, the media should strive to promote a more nuanced and informed understanding of autism, which can help to break down barriers and promote greater inclusion and support for individuals with autism. It is important for mass media to depict individuals accurately and respectfully with autism and their experiences. This can be achieved through increased representation of autism in media, in a manner that is not sensationalized or stereotypical, namely through awareness campaigns (Bie and Tang, 2015). Mass media awareness campaigns for autism aim to increase understanding, acceptance, and inclusion of individuals with autism by educating the public about the realities of the condition and promoting inclusivity. These campaigns use various forms of media, such as television commercials, billboards, and social media platforms, to reach a large audience and promote positive attitudes towards autism. By utilizing a combination of these forms of media, these campaigns can reach a larger audience, as well as target specific demographics that are more likely to benefit from the information. In order to reach a wide audience and ensure participation, mass media awareness campaigns can be included, within a city wide cultural promotional event, such as the European Capital of Culture Program. In such an event city promote themselves as cultural and touristic destinations and organize various artistic performances (Coman, Bularca and Otovescu, 2021). The events organized on this occasion have been found to have a positive impact on the city, as they offer valuable opportunities for cultural, social, and economic development. Such events serve as a platform for showcasing the city's rich cultural heritage, while also facilitating social interaction and community engagement (Coman, et al., 2021) - therefore providing an excellent opportunity for raising awareness about autism.

Additionally, media can be used to showcase the experiences of individuals with autism and their families. This can be done through the use of personal anecdotes and stories, as well as documentaries and video features. By sharing these experiences, the public can gain a better understanding of what life with autism is like and the challenges faced by those with the condition. The goals of these campaigns are two-fold: first, to dispel misconceptions about autism and to provide accurate information about the condition; second, to raise awareness about the challenges faced by individuals with autism and to promote inclusion and understanding. For example, a mass media awareness campaign could feature individuals with autism sharing their personal stories and experiences, highlighting their strengths, and discussing the challenges they face. The inclusion of individuals with autism in the production and representation process can also ensure that accurate and authentic narratives are created and portrayed (Gillespie-Lynch, et al., 2017; Fletcher-Watson, et al., 2019). This can not only promote understanding and acceptance of autism but also help to challenge the harmful prejudices and misconceptions associated with the condition. This type of campaign could also feature experts in the field of autism, such as psychologists, educators, and researchers, providing information about autism and addressing common misconceptions. Expert input from individuals with specialized knowledge in the field of autism can aid in the dissemination of accurate information and understanding of the condition (Gillespie-Lynch, et al., 2017). The information provided should be based on both scientific research and practical experience, and must aim to dispel common misconceptions about autism. Through this medium, expert opinions can help challenge stereotypes and promote a more informed public understanding of autism. By reaching a large audience and promoting understanding and acceptance, mass media awareness campaigns can have a significant impact on public attitudes towards autism and on the lives of individuals with autism.

Moreover, by working to promote inclusive narratives and images of autism in the media, we can strive to create a more accepting and equitable society, where individuals with autism are valued and accepted for who they are. Also, these mass media awareness campaigns

can also collaborate with local organizations, schools, and support groups to spread their message. These organizations can offer educational workshops and events that are focused on increasing awareness and understanding of autism. These events can provide opportunities for the public to meet individuals with autism and ask questions in a supportive and non-judgmental environment. Furthermore, schools can use these campaigns to educate students about autism, helping to foster a more inclusive and understanding environment for individuals with the condition.

7. Media and the perception of autism - final remarks

Finally, mass media has a significant impact on the general public's perception and understanding of autism. As a result, media outlets have a crucial responsibility in educating the public and shaping attitudes towards the condition and inclusion. It is imperative that media outlets consider their role in shaping public attitudes and understanding of autism and strive to provide accurate and respectful representation of the condition and those affected by it. By doing so, they can play a significant role in dispelling misconceptions and promoting a better understanding of autism. Moreover, mass media can act as an effective tool for promoting awareness and acceptance of autism, by providing accurate information and showcasing the experiences of individuals with the condition. This can help to challenge stereotypes, foster inclusivity, and support individuals with autism in reaching their full potential. Therefore, media outlets have a responsibility to actively engage in promoting positive and accurate representation of autism, in order to support the development of a more inclusive and understanding society.

8. Future search: mass media influences on teachers attitudes towards autism

To fully understand the potential impact of mass media on the public's perception and understanding of autism, and to effectively utilize mass media as a means of educating the general public on autism, it is necessary to firstly assess the current understanding and attitudes towards autism and inclusion within schools and other public institutions. Future research could involve an investigation into the effect of mass media on the attitudes of primary school teachers in Romania. By evaluating the impact of mass media on this specific population, valuable insights into the role of media in shaping public opinions on autism can be obtained. This information can then be used to inform strategies for promoting greater understanding and inclusion of individuals with autism in society.

Therefore, in a future research study, we would like to investigate the effects of mass media on the attitudes of primary school teachers from public schools in Romania (specifically public schools from Brasov) towards children with autism and their inclusion. We would include a large sample size from all schools from the city of Brasov and the outskirts of the city in order to ensure generalizability of the findings study. The enrollment of the study participants would be based on a stratified random sampling method in order to ensure representativeness.

Regarding the methods used to evaluate teacher's attitudes, we would incorporate both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to provide a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the of the phenomenon (Onwuegbuzie and Collins, 2007), as qualitative methods provide rich and nuanced data, while quantitative methods offer the ability to generalize findings to a larger population. A mixed methods design could even uncover a discrepancy between what people report in surveys and questionnaires and how they actually express their attitudes, as they may perceive their views to be different from what their survey responses indicate (for example they may think their views are more or less positive towards autism than their survey responses suggest). On the other hand, the two datasets may confirm each other, with the qualitative data yielding insight into the meaning of the quantitative data

(Leavy, 2022). By using specific research techniques such as content analysis, questionnaires, focus group studies and semi-structured interviews, we would provide a more robust and nuanced understanding of how mass media influences general attitudes towards individuals with autism in and the attitudes towards their inclusion in mainstream public schools.

9. Designing a longitudinal study

Ideally, the study would be designed as a longitudinal study and would include schools that have already integrated students with autism and schools that have not yet done so, therefore we would be including in the sample of participants both teachers who already have experience in working with students with autism and teachers who do not have such experience, but who are likely to encounter these students in the future. In a longitudinal study the same individuals would be repeatedly examined in order to detect any changes that would occur over a long period of time (Ruspini, 2003; Baur, 2009). The period of time we have in mind is a five year framework including classes zero trough four, inclusively; so as to follow the teachers and their experience with students respectively, and to allow for teachers to finish teaching one whole generation of students (when students finish their primary education and transition to the next level of education). This would allow us to track changes and development in teachers' attitudes over time and identify any correlations with exposure to mass media. This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how media influences their attitudes. A five year period would allow us to measure the change in attitudes over time and determine if mass media has played a significant role in shaping teachers' attitudes. The longitudinal study would enable us to compare attitudes and behaviours at the start, middle and at the end of the five year period and determine if there has been a significant shift in teachers' general attitudes towards autism and in attitudes towards the integration of autistic students in their schools and classrooms.

Additionally, we would investigate whether previous experience in teaching and/or interacting with autistic students influences the type of mass media these teachers consume, and respectively how the choice of media coupled with previous experience influences their general attitudes towards autism and integration. The integration of teachers' previous experience is derived from the "contact hypothesis" introduced by Brown and Hewstone (2005), which posits that there is a strong body of evidence that demonstrates that previous interpersonal contact with individuals with disabilities can lead to a reduction in negative attitudes and biases. The theory suggests that through direct interaction and exposure to individuals with disabilities, individuals are able to challenge their preconceived notions and overcome stereotypes. This can ultimately result in a more positive and accepting attitude towards individuals with disabilities, contributing to the promotion of social inclusion and acceptance.

10. Designing a cross-sectional study

A more cost-effective and time-efficient alternative to a longitudinal study design could be using a cross sectional study design, particularly because the goal of the study is to obtain a snapshot of the current attitudes and perceptions of the participants. This method allows researchers to gather data from a large sample of participants in a relatively short period of time as it does not require repeated assessments of the same individuals over an extended period of time (Cummings, 2018). A cross-sectional research design is a research method that involves collecting data from a sample of different individuals' representative of a developmental trajectory at a single point in time (Al-Sharbati et al., 2015). The purpose of the current proposed study is to obtain information about the attitudes of teachers from schools from gardes including classes zero trough four, inclusively (grade one representing the start of students' primary education and grade four representing the end of primary education and

transition to the next level of education). Specifically, we will address primary school teachers from public schools in Romania and try to uncover their attitudes towards children with autism and their inclusion. Additionally, we would also assess the effect of mass media on these attitudes at the current point in time and the data would be analyzed to determine the relationship between exposure to mass media and attitudes towards children with autism and their inclusion in schools.

11. Preliminary content analysis

Before starting the field work investigation study, a content analysis would be used, specifically a media content analysis, which is a specialized sub-set of content analysis (Macnamara, 2005) to examine the representation of autism in Romanian and international prominent popular media content widely distributed through online media outlets and popular television programmes. This analysis includes identifying the frequency, tone, and context of the representation of individuals with autism. This would provide a more nuanced understanding of the types of information that people in the general population are exposed to. The media content analysis would include the following steps: defining the scope and the types of media included in the analysis; collecting the data from popular broadcasting networks and the internet, such as movies and documentaries depicting individuals with autism. The next step would be developing and coding of the data namely, creating a list of categories or themes that will be used to code the media content, such as frequency of representation, the type of tone used (either positive, negative, or neutral), and the context of representation (primarily medical, educational, or social) and, the final step would be analyzing the results (Macnamara, 2005).

The results of the content analysis would inform the design of the field work investigation study, helping to explain the valence of attitudes (either negative or positive) the general population has towards autism and the inclusion in general mainstream education of individuals with autism. For instance, if the content analysis would show that autism is frequently portrayed in a negative light in the media, this could help explain why some teachers may have negative attitudes towards individuals with autism and therefore they may be more prone to opt for the exclusion of students with autism from their own classrooms. Similarly, the results of the study conducted by Gómez-Marí, Sanz-Cervera and Tárraga-Mínguez (2022) revealed that teachers in Saudi Arabia displayed more unfavorable views towards the integration of children with autism into mainstream classrooms compared to teachers in the United States, who held more positive attitudes towards inclusion in general mainstream schools. The authors suggested that these negative attitudes and reservations regarding the inclusion of children with autism in schools may be due to the lack of awareness, lack of teacher training and stignatizing attitudes held within the general culture.

12. Using quantitative methods: the survey method

With regards to the attitudes of the teachers from public schools in Romania, towards autism we aim to conduct a comprehensive investigation to gain a deeper undestanding of their perspectives by firstly using a quantitative method such as the survey method. This quantitative approach will allow us to collect data from a large sample of teachers and use statistical methods to identify patterns and relationships in the data, providing us with a more comprehensive understanding of the teachers' attitudes towards autism and the inclusion of students with autism in their schools and classrooms. We will begin by examining the teachers' general knowledge of autism, including the sources of information from mass media that they typically rely on for entertainment and/or educational purposes. Our survey will also examine whether prior experiences with children with autism have any impact on their attitudes and the types of media they frequently use to stay informed about the topic. The survey data will be

collected and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics will be used to describe the sample and summarize the data, while inferential statistics will be used to test our hypotheses and make inferences about the general population based on the sample data. For example, we may use chi-square tests to determine if there is a relationship between prior experiences with children with autism and the teachers' attitudes towards autism. We may also use regression analysis to examine the relationship between the mass media sources of information the teachers rely on for knowledge about autism and their attitudes towards the inclusion of students with autism in their schools and classrooms.

13. Using qualitative methods: the focus group method

Afterwards, we would use a focus group study to investigate the valence (to find out whether their attitudes are mainly positive or mainly negative) of their respective attitudes towards autism in general and towards the inclusion of autistic children in their schools. A focus group study is a useful research method for investigating the attitudes of a group of people towards a particular topic (Acocella, 2012). In the case of the current proposed study, a focus group study can provide valuable insight into the collective views of the participants. The focus group method is useful for this type of research because it allows for a nuanced understanding of the attitudes and beliefs of the participants. It would involve a controlled and moderated setting where we would bring together a group of primary school teachers from public schools from Brasov and we would facilitate a discussion about their attitudes towards autism and the inclusion of autistic children in their schools. The discussion would be semi-structured, meaning that there would be a set of questions or topics to guide the conversation, but the participants would also have the freedom to raise any additional points they feel are relevant. Additionally, participants would be encouraged to discuss and debate the topic and, because they would be in a group setting, they could also provide feedback and challenge each other's views, resulting in a more complete understanding of the attitudes and beliefs of the group as a whole. Through the focus group discussion, we would be able to identify any common themes or patterns in the participants' attitudes towards autism and inclusion. Using this research method we would be able to identify the level of positivity or negativity in these attitudes by noting the words and expressions used by the participants, as well as observe nonverbal cues such as their body language and tone of voice. This type of research would provide a rich, qualitative understanding of teachers' attitudes towards autism and inclusion, and would give insight into the underlying reasons for these attitudes, as well as the possible ways to improve the integration of autistic children in schools. By gathering the views of a group of teachers, researchers would be able to gain a broader perspective on the issue and could make more informed recommendations for future policy and practice.

14. Using qualitative methods: the semi-structured interview method

Additionally semi-structured interviews could be conducted with a selection of teachers. Semi-structured interviews are a valuable tool for exploring the impact of mass media on teachers' attitudes towards children with autism and their integration into mainstream schools. We would ask open-ended questions to allow the teachers to express their views and experiences, while also using follow-up questions to gather more specific and detailed information. For example, we would ask teachers about their sources of information about autism, what types of media they consume (such as television, magazines, or websites), and how these sources have influenced their attitudes towards autism and the integration of autistic students into their classrooms. We could also ask teachers to reflect on specific media representations of autism they have seen and how those representations have shaped their perceptions of the condition itself and the children who live with it. The semi-structured interview format allows for a flexible and in-depth exploration of the teacher's experiences and

attitudes, while also providing a more systematic and controlled way to gather data compared to a completely unstructured format (Leavy, 2014). In addition, by using the semi-structured interview approach we could more easily compare responses between different teachers, which can be useful in exploring the broader impact of mass media on teacher attitudes.

15. Conclusion

In conclusion, in our proposed research study, by using a mixed methods design, and therefore combining both quantitative and qualitative methods, we aim to gain a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of teachers' attitudes towards autism. Specifically, we aim to examine the impact of mass media on the overall valence (positivity or negativity) of these attitudes. The integration of these two methods will allow us to gain a more complete picture of the topic, providing both numerical data and rich, nuanced information. The results of this study could be used in la later project to develop more targeted and effective interventions aimed at improving public attitudes towards autism and promoting inclusive education practices. Additionally, qualitative research would provide insights into teachers' concerns and needs with regards to integration of students with autism in their schools and their own classrooms. This further identification of teachers' needs could provide valuable information about intervention practices such as programmes for teachers. This type of programme would teach them about how to create an inclusive environment for the students with autism and how to handle specific symptoms and difficulties autistic students may have in school.

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POLITICAL CULTURE IN THE DOBROGEAN COUNTRYSIDE

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Abstract: *In the Romanian countryside, especially the communities that are at a significant distance from the nearest city, they struggle day by day to survive, the main concern of the families living in these areas being that of finding resources for the next day. This continuous struggle to find resources narrows their perspective on life, they are not interested in other areas such as education, culture, politics. In Romania, approximately 43% of the country's population lives in the countryside, a particularly important percentage. Also, in Romania there is also a marked inequality between the rural and the urban environment, the villages in Romania remain far behind in terms of modernization, and many of them face significant category. These shortages are related to poor infrastructure, poor education, lack of sewage, lack of jobs. The passage of time aggravates the things that have accentuated the problems due to the fact that there is no involvement of the authorities, social policies, educational policies. The optimal functioning of a democratic society, namely its stability and efficiency depend on the existence and active affirmation of the community and citizens.*

Keywords: countryside, social politics, political culture, rural population, social assistance

1. Introduction

At the administrative level, Dobrogea consists of two counties, Constanța and Tulcea respectively. The administrative-territorial organization of Tulcea county includes four cities, namely Babadag, Isaccea, Măcin as well as Sulina. In the same county there are 46 communes and 133 villages (cjtulcea.ro),. As for Constanța county, we have 12 cities, 59 municipalities and 189 villages (insse.ro). Using statistical data from 2021 of the Constanța County Statistics Directorate, the rural population represents 32.1% of the total population. (insse.ro) The population of Tulcea County according to the INS on July 1, 2018 was 238,542 inhabitants, of which approximately 50.8% represent the rural population (insse.ro). The entire rural area of Dobrogea is made up of 105 municipalities totaling 322 villages. We can say about the rural area of Dobrogea that it is one of contrasts, being able to classify the rural communities as follows:

Rural communities close to cities. These communities are the ones that "take advantage" of the proximity of the cities and based on this aspect they enjoy development in multiple fields such as economy, education, entrepreneurship, etc. The cities have a great influence on these communes or villages and the inhabitants of the rural environment in their immediate vicinity borrow from the behaviour of the urban inhabitants, being rural inhabitants only in theory. These residents will be educated like those in the urban environment, they will send their children to urban schools, they will find work more easily, they will be more connected with reality in the sense that access to information is easier, their quality of life being superior to the other inhabitants of rural environments but who are at greater distances from urban centers. Once the citizens' basic needs are met (job, financial resources, infrastructure) they will have the desire to get involved in other life activities such as volunteering, politics, recreational activities, etc. Among the main rural communities that enjoy proximity to urban centers we mention: Valu lui Traian, Cumpăna, Limanu, Lumina, Lazu.

Rural communities based tourism industry.

These communities are the ones that, despite not necessarily being close to the city, enjoy an efficient development based mainly on the natural resources of the area. This category includes those villages that are on the Black Sea coast, those that are in the Danube Delta or those that enjoy a spectacular landscape due to the relief. In addition to these aspects, when we talk about Dobrogea, it is very important to bring up the multitude of ethnicities present in the area, which makes the region an ethnic mosaic, as it has been called by several authors. These ethnic areas are famous for the preservation of traditions, for different shows but also for the specific cuisine that makes tourism in those areas develop. As for the local administration in the Dobrogean countryside, there are 59 town halls in Constanța County and of these, 11 are led by female mayors: Adamclisi, Bărăganu, Cumpăna, Gârliciu, Grădina, Ion Corvin, Mihail Kogălniceanu, Oltina, Peștera, Saraiu, Fair. (cjc.ro) As for Tulcea county, out of the 46 town halls, only 3 are run by women Valea Teilor, Valea Nucarilor and Maliuc (ziuaconstanta.ro) It is interesting to bring up this aspect also due to the fact that the rural environment is recognized for the conservative, traditional mentality in which men are the ones who lead in politics, while women are the ones who take care of the household chores and raising children. This aspect is worth analyzing to see if this choice of women at the head of the town halls is based on the awareness of the fact by the citizens, that women can also have a position in the administration like men or if their choice is based on a poor offer in what looks at the candidates. We notice that we currently have 14 women at the head of the town halls in the rural area compared to the urban area which only has men elected as mayor. Another aspect worth noting is that despite the fact that Dobrogea is recognized for the multitude of ethnic minorities living in the region, this does not apply at the level of local administration. Out of the total of 105 town halls in the Dobrogean countryside, only one commune has a mayor elected out of those among the ethnic minorities, namely Slava Cercheză from Tulcea County, whose mayor is Ivan Ignat, who is part of the Lipoveni Russian Community in Romania. This being the mayor of the commune for over 30 years, being one of the longest serving mayors in the local public administration. Otherwise, most of the rural town halls have mayors from the classic PSD-PNL parties or independents. Thus, we can observe a major difference between the rural communities in Dobrogea and those in the areas inhabited by Hungarians, in Transylvania.

Aging and demographic decline

Old age has always been the concern of many scientists, writers and philosophers. This stage is a normal, natural one that we all go through at some point. A successful and peaceful old age is closely related to a balanced life. In order to maintain adequate health, a vigorous body and implicitly a long life, one needs a proper diet, physical exercises, moderation in everything and regular intellectual activity. Sociologists and demographers operationalize the concept of "demographic aging" in the increasing share of the elderly population (65 years and over) in the total population (Rotariu, 2017:56). Demographic aging should not be confused with biological aging or psychological aging, which refers to the aging of the human body, accompanied or not by the degradation of mental processes and functions (thinking, memory, attention, concentration, resistance to stress, etc.), as a result of advancing in age of a person or group of people. Demographic aging refers to the change in the age structure of the population in favor of older ages (65 years and over – „third age") as a share in the total population, to the detriment of young ages, as a firm and long-lasting trend. Current statistics show that the rate of population aging is increasing alarmingly. People today are hungry for information to help them make their lives better and live longer. It would be desirable for old age to be a period without diseases, without risks, with good physical functioning and a high quality of life. In

states with a high standard of living, the average life expectancy for men is 70 years for women, 75 years. For many of the elderly, old age comes with physical and mental changes that influence the rhythm, complexity and dynamics of life. The professional and social experience of the elderly can play a very important role in this period, if it is taken into account as a resource both for themselves and for the family or community. The most „aged" populations in the world are those of countries such as Japan (over 20% elderly), USA, Russia, Italy, Germany. Europe is considered to be the oldest continent.

The social and economic consequences of demographic aging

The problem of aging has become very important and widely addressed in several fields of activity. The general conclusions are that in elderly people there is a decrease in the acuity of the sense organs, motor performances are reduced, and emotional mobility is altered. The result is that the elderly become less active, less interested (the sphere of interest in acquiring knowledge being very reduced), more fearful, more anxious, cold towards those around them, their character traits are accentuated most of the time in a negative sense (thrifty people become stingy, nervous people become suspicious). There is also a change towards themselves: mistrust, dissatisfaction, bad mood, frequent worries for minor reasons set in. As the scope of interest narrows. We must say, however, that these changes appear varied, differently, depending on the genetic background but also on the training and attention they have paid to themselves throughout their lives professional training, balanced life. (Răşcanu, 1997:156-157). Old age is accompanied by profound changes in the body, in the sense of its general wear and against the background of frequent and various diseases. This situation, often accompanied by the lack of adequate income or family support and help, is the main cause of the social problems encountered by the elderly. As we can see in the statistics, life expectancy has increased significantly (Rotariu, Dumănescu and Hărăguş, 2016:45). Theorists say that old age should be seen as a period of psychological development. In support of this statement we should talk about the fact that the elderly must adapt to the decline of physical strength and health, must prepare mentally to face retirement and, last but not least, adapt to the narrowing of the family field (children marry and move away, partner dies). Contemporary society looks at old age from a positive and a negative perspective: the positive one - in which old age is linked to wisdom accumulated over time, life experience as well as a different approach to life in general; the negative one - which refers to the fact that old age is often an age of suspicion, mistrust of others, inflexibility and exaggerated criticism. Aging is a complicated process that brings with it a series of changes that only the attentive and sensitive can notice and accept. The needs of the elderly do not differ much from those of adults or children, but in the case of the elderly these needs can be accentuated depending on his ability or inability to meet some of them can become more urgent with the passage of time. Old age often means helplessness and loneliness, and the elderly feel overwhelmed by these challenges of age.

Figure 1: The demographic dependency ratio in Romania, UN estimates (1950-2060)
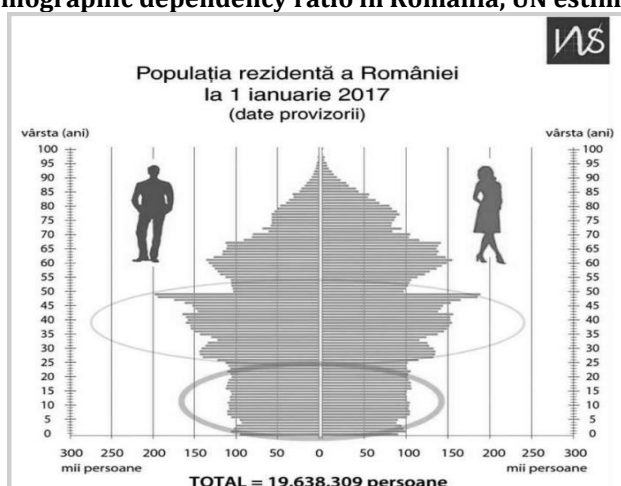
Source: National Institute of Statistics

Health status indicators

The average length of life expresses, in a certain way, the state of health of the population. In the last five years, at the level of Constanța county, the longest life expectancy was recorded in 2017, for men the average life expectancy was 72.28 years and for women 79.24 years. From the point of view of public systems, a high life expectancy means less public consumption for medical care and lower social assistance expenses. A low or declining life expectancy requires the adaptation of public health and social protection measures to be able to respond to needs, knowing that chronic conditions and physical/psychological disability are more common among the elderly. The increased number of elderly people and their low incomes show that these people are less able to access medical or sociomedical services appropriate to age-specific pathology. At the national level, an intensification of health problems and chronic diseases can be observed, along with advancing age (Eurostat, hlth_silc_04).

Regarding the poly-pathology faced by the elderly, in the first place among the ailments they suffer from are: tumors, diseases of the digestive system, cardiovascular diseases, followed by endocrine diseases and those of the osteoarticular system, and in the lower places are neurological diseases and dementias.

Compared to the rest of the population, the elderly are more exposed to the risk of poverty (in their case, poverty can mean either a lack of income/insufficient income, or reduced material resources, or difficult access to social, medical, housing, transport services). The risk of social exclusion is increasingly high among the elderly and, implicitly, has effects on the electoral behavior of the elderly. Also, the risk of social exclusion in old age is higher among women, especially among the very old and/or widowed. The prevention and reduction of poverty and social exclusion largely depend on the actions and reforms adopted. At the national level, the concept of social inclusion includes measures and actions from various fields (social protection, employment, housing, education, health, mobility, security, justice, culture, communication-information) aimed at combating social exclusion. Romania is faced, like most European countries, with an aging population, against the background of the reduction of birth rates and the accentuation of the migratory phenomenon. The largest part of the elderly population at the national level is represented by women, respectively by people living in rural areas. The higher share of the elderly female population is due to the higher mortality rate of

the male population, mortality that manifests itself even more as age increases. against the background of the reduction of birth rates and the accentuation of the migratory phenomenon.

The level of education determines the increase or decrease of the individual's vulnerability to poverty, the relative poverty rate being higher among the elderly, the lower the level of education. In this context, there are effects in terms of electoral behaviour by the fact that political participation in the public space is reduced due to the fact that there is no interest on the part of the elderly who do not feel the effects of the vote they gave to the elected officials at the local, regional or central level. The electoral behaviour of the elderly is influenced by the decisions of politicians and the perceptible results at the political and administrative level.

2. Methodology

The methodology used in the case of the present research is based on the quantitative method, on the questionnaire technique. The questionnaire proves to be an extremely frequently used technique, the population starting to be more and more familiar with this type of research method. Thus, the questionnaire represents a technique and, correspondingly, an investigative tool that consists of a set of logically and psychologically ordered written questions, which, through administration by the investigation operator, determines answers from the people questioned to be recorded in the written. Through the questionnaire, information can be obtained regarding the attitudes, knowledge, motivation and interests, dispositions and inclinations of the people who are part of the research population.

The objective of the present research is to identify the level of political culture in the target population, subsequently being able to make connections between the political culture of the citizens of rural Dobrogean and their electoral behaviour, starting from the hypothesis that a low level of political culture negatively influences the electoral behaviour of citizens.

The research tool

A research on the political culture of the population is one that must take into account a multitude of aspects, especially in the conditions where the contrasts are extremely accentuated at the national level: highly developed areas and very poor areas. In this sense, we proposed that the present research relate to a narrower space, namely the Dobrogean rural environment, its analysis relating to the political culture of the analyzed space. Such a study is more than useful considering that studies on Dobrogea from this perspective are extremely limited, being completely absent in the countryside. In the course of this research, we will try to see to what extent the political culture, representing the dependent variable in the present case, is determined by the independent variables such as: poor quality education, poverty,

Research population and sampling scheme

In the present case, the questionnaire was applied to a sample of 1000 individuals with the right to vote, who have their domicile in the rural areas of Constanţa and Tulcea counties. The localities where the questionnaires were applied are: Albeşti, 2 Mai, Vama Veche, Limanu, Hagieni, Cogealac, Deleni, Ion Corvin, Negureni, Gârliciu, Crucea, Ciocârlia de Sus, Mihail Kogălniceanu, Stupina, Mireasa, Siriu, Mihai Viteazu, Topraisar, Baia, Greci, Jurilovca, Enisala, Luncaviţa, Casimcea, Piatra, Izvoarele, Slava Casian, Slava Rusă, Murighiol, Frecăţei. We chose for the application of the questionnaires both well-developed rural communities located near the cities and isolated, poor villages/communes located at a considerable distance from the nearest urban center.

Questionnaire content

The questionnaire includes, in the first part, general data of the respondents such as age, sex, education, locality or belonging to a certain ethnic community. General data is followed

by 17 closed questions. Closed questions are those that can only be answered in the pre-set options, there being both questions with dichotomous answers and questions with a choice answer. Compared to open questions, closed questions have some advantages, namely: they considerably reduce the effort required to give answers, they allow respondents to consider some answer options that they would not otherwise have thought of, they are much more easily accepted by respondents, and so on. On the other hand, they also have disadvantages such as the fact that they can suggest to the respondents the normal answer option, they allow random answers to be formulated, they require a great effort of drafting and pretesting to establish all possible answer variants. The questions of the questionnaire that we applied had as an answer scheme 2, 3 or 4 predictable answers but followed by the answer "another or others" in case the desired answer is not in the scheme proposed by us, thus giving the opportunity to all respondents to be able to answer (Popescu and Motoi, 2022: 270).

The difficulties encountered

Considering the fact that the entire research was carried out in the rural environment, the main obstacle was traveling to the field to carry out the questionnaires and the reluctance of people to answer. At first glance, I can say that citizens are afraid to answer a stranger's questions, especially when those questions contain aspects related to politics, which made it difficult and delayed the realization of the predetermined sample. This reluctance that the majority of citizens have is caused by the negative perception among the general political population, institutions, authorities, etc.

Data presentation, analysis and interpretation (graphical component)
Interpretation of general data

In the first part of the questionnaire, there were questions regarding the general data of the person questioned, such as gender, age, level of education, locality or belonging to a certain ethnic community. Thus, from the total of 1000 questionnaires, for the interpretation of the general data we have the following graphs:

a. Age:
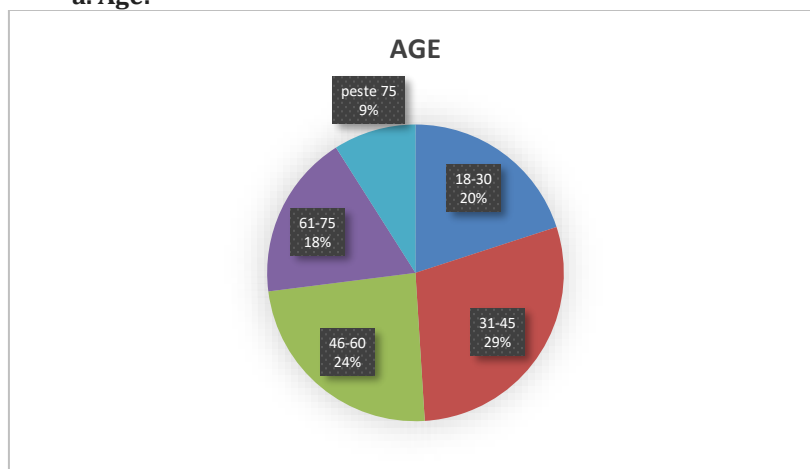
The most numerous respondents were those aged between 31 and 45, followed by those aged between 46-60, followed by the categories of those aged between 18-30, 61-75, and at the opposite pole being those aged over 75 years.

Interaction with the latter was the most difficult due to the health problems these citizens have. The fact that they could not write or that they have difficulty hearing made the questioning process difficult. Also, this category is also an extremely reluctant one, this being
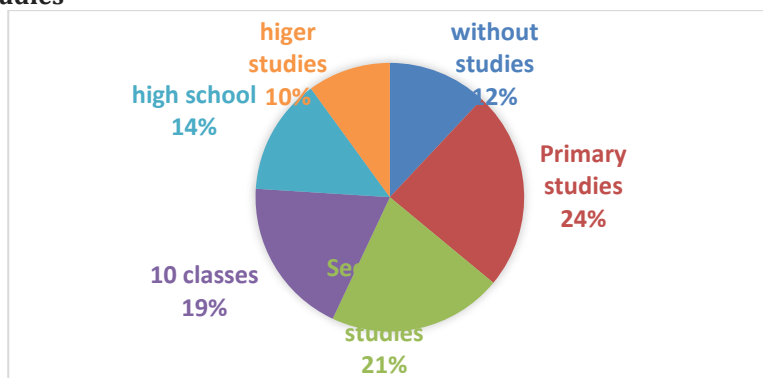
caused by their fear of not paying extra tax, not of not fining them, they hardly understand the objective of the present research. At the opposite pole, in terms of age, those with whom the interaction was easiest was the category of young people between the ages of 18 and 30. This one, it is the category of those who are connected to various sources of information, are present on various social networking sites, are willing in the vast majority to "help" through the answers provided, without considering this as negative. As for the rest of the categories, 31-45, 46-60, respectively 61-75, here things are a little different in the sense that other elements intervene that make them reticent or not, such as gender, studies, or locality but we will analyze these aspects later.

b. Gender

GENDER

femei
35%

bărbați
65%
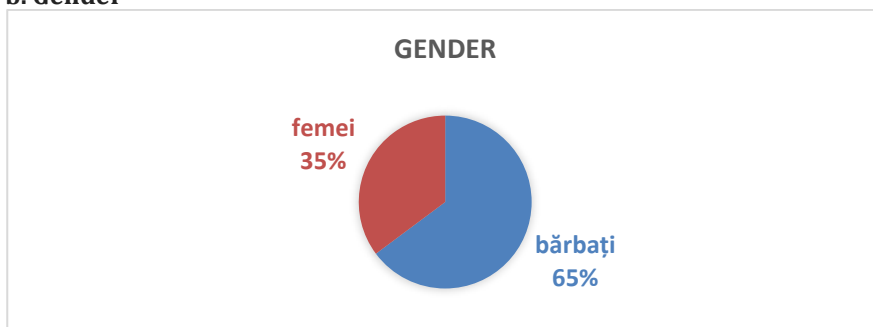
In terms of gender, despite the fact that we tried to maintain equality, men were the ones who were either more willing to answer or more. Thus, 648 respondents were men, and the rest, respectively 352, were women. Considering the fact that I applied the questionnaires physically, walking in the field and I applied most of them in the public domain and less in households, I noticed that the male gender is much more present in the public domain (streets) than the female gender. I met the women either in front of the gate or in households, except for those I found at their workplace. If we refer to the differences between the sexes at the level of rural communities, we can affirm the fact that the female sex represents a vulnerable category and this is due to many factors.(Spătaru, 2016:5)

c. Studies

higer studies 10%

high school 14%

without studies 12%

Primary studies 24%

10 classes 19%

Se...

studies 21%

Regarding the education level, according to their answers, almost half of the respondents (45%) have 4 or 8 classes (primary or secondary education). On the other hand, those who have higher education or are following a form of higher education represent a percentage of approximately 10% of the total (98 respondents). In this category we mainly identify young people between the ages of 18 and 30 and who live in those rural communities in close proximity to urban centers. Thus, we can affirm the fact that proximity to a city

positively influences citizens from an education perspective, access to higher education being easier, opportunities being more numerous, compared to those who live in isolated rural communities or located at a considerable distance from from the nearest city.

d. The town
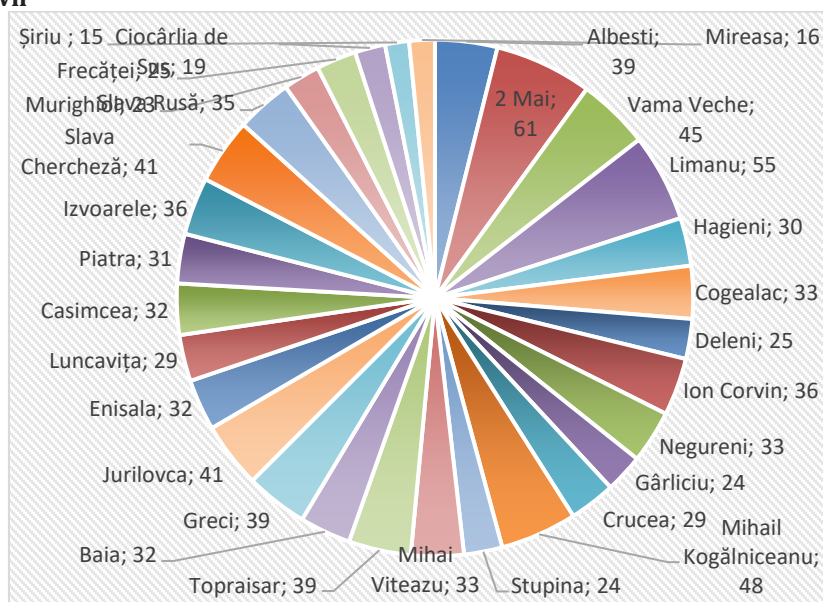
As I explained in the methodology, the questionnaire was applied to a sample of 1000 people, citizens with the right to vote from 30 rural communities in the Dobrogea region. The number performed for each locality was influenced by a number of factors such as population density, the day on which the survey was applied, the reluctance or receptivity of citizens, etc. However, I tried to keep some equality taking into account the demographic characteristics of the targeted community.

Thus, most questionnaires were applied in the localities of Limanu, Vama Veche and 2 Mai, Slava Cherchează, Jurilovca or Mihail Kogălniceanu. Also, there are small localities with a low population density and where it was extremely difficult to apply even a few questionnaires, these villages being Şiriu, Mireasa or Ciocârlia de Sus.

e. Main source of income
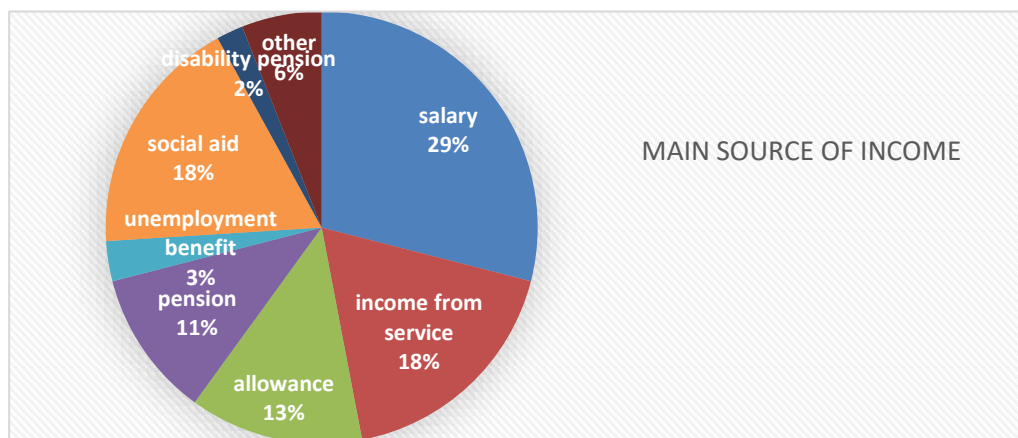
In terms of the main source of household income, almost half (47%) said that salary and income from the provision of services by the day is their financial base. Here, an extremely interesting thing seemed to me is that considering that the two sources represent their financial base, they are at opposite poles, in the sense that we have on one side those who stated that the income salaries represent the main source of income, the majority of them being in more economically developed rural communities such as Limanu, Vama Veche, Mihail Kogălniceanu, and on the other hand, those whose main source of income are those amounts from "day work" are those individuals living in poor rural communities with difficult access to jobs or quality education. Social assistance (18%) still remains extremely important in rural communities, especially marginalized ones characterized by chronic poverty, as it is extremely difficult for them to survive without it. A number of approximately 130 people stated that the children's allowance is the main source of income, and a number of 110 stated that the pension is the financial basis of the household in which they live. Other sources of basic income for citizens are unemployment allowance, disability pension, social aid, income from own activities (own grocery stores, car services, etc.), income from agriculture, the latter being in the category " others", without it being extremely difficult for them to survive without it.

Conclusion
This is the reality of the villages in Dobrogea, and this greatly accentuates the rural/urban divide that already exists at the national level, the contrast being an extremely significant one. Consumption poverty, i.e. poverty estimated according to households' consumption, is much more extensive in the rural environment, compared to the urban environment. If consumption in cities is extended to a multitude of areas, in the rural environment, the main consumption is reduced to those mandatory necessary products (food, medicines, vices). If they are at a significant distance from urban centers or if there is no tourism in the area, rural communities are prone to poverty. This category represents the most significant part of the Romanian rural environment, where most rural communities are dominated by poverty, school dropout, alcohol abuse, domestic violence, lack of jobs, poor infrastructure, etc. Consumption poverty is only one of many types of poverty. The consumption deficit is only the "entrance ticket to the door of poverty". Beyond the entrance, however, poverty expands and, with time, takes control of all spheres of life. Falling into poverty is a process in which consumption poverty is only the initial phase. (revistadesociologie.ro) Unfortunately, more and more households face this problem, becoming over time a chronic one that spreads continuously. According to the study „Atlas of Marginalized Rural Areas and Local Human Development in Romania", developed by the World Bank and published in 2016, in Dobrogea we have the following rural communities with a high degree of marginalization and poverty: Adamclisi, Castelu, Ciobanu, Crucea , Dobromir, Lipniţa, Mihai Viteazu, Mircea Vodă, Ostrov, Pantelimon, Rasova, Topraisar, Horia (CT), Cuza Vodă, Baia, Ciucurova, Daeni, Horia (TL), Izvoarele, Jurilovca, Murighiol, Slava Cercheză, Topolog. The degree of marginalization was defined as „the percentage of the population in a commune, exposed to disadvantaged conditions in terms of human capital development, employability or housing" (adrse.ro).

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THE IMPACT OF MASS MEDIA ON SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH AND LIFESTYLE IN CARDIOVASCULAR PATIENTS

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Abstract: *Socioeconomic dissimilarities have an overwhelming impact, with profound reverberations across societies, on health risk factors and consequences, especially regarding cardiovascular diseases. Cardiovascular diseases and their outcomes are preventable, if the risk factors are taken into account. The assembly of these factors can be grouped into unmodifiable risk factors, modifiable risk factors that are behavioural, metabolic factors and socioeconomical factors. The socioeconomical factors, known as socioeconomical determinants of health, are defined as the conditions where people are living, settings that are modelled by the dispersal of wealth, power and resources at all levels. The barriers to a better health can be alleviated by optimising publics' knowledge through media communication about the effect of the determinants on health.*

Keywords: mass-media, lifestyle, health risk factor, cardiovascular diseases

1. Introduction

Worldwide, cardiovascular diseases are the foremost cause of mortality and life - long disabilities. Annually, cardiovascular diseases are anticipated to rise, especially in the countries with low – and middle – income across the globe, suggesting that an array of socioeconomic factors is the decisive determinant of the disease, alongside the traditional factors such as smoking, obesity and others (Mathers and Loncar, 2006). Most of these factors that are related to lifestyle and behaviours can be preventable, reducing the incidence of cardiovascular diseases in populations. On the other hand, socioeconomic circumstances can be modified only when acknowledged by the public and policy makers as risk factors for these types of diseases and properly communicated to the public.

As early as 1850, Engels (1845) underlined that the living environment is more important for health than the lifestyle choices one makes. According to World Health Organization (2012), in the literature of speciality, living conditions have been defined until recently as "prerequisites of health", now being rebranded as "social determinants of health" (Marmot and Wilkinson, 2006). Social determinants of health are an array of social and environmental factors that are comprising the settings where the people are born, live, play, learn, work, age, together with ethnicity and race. Social and medical research established that these assemblies of factors have a powerful impact on the risk factors and the consequences of cardiovascular diseases. According to Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (2015), comprehending the nature and the relevance of social determinants of health will empower societies to promote a "Culture of Health", by "placing well-being at the centre of every aspect of our life" where "everyone has access to the care they need and a fair and just opportunity to make healthier choices". In order to do so, awareness need to be raised and focused on the significance and the implementation of these factors within our societies, leading towards better lifestyle choices and health outcomes. There are a multitude of channels that can be used to convey information to the public, correspondingly it has been shown that mass media is a

useful tool in transmitting messages that resulted in patterning people's attitudes, behaviours and approaches to health. On the other hand, when it comes to the promotion of social determinants of health to the public, there is dearth of coverage, that can be explain by certain dynamics involving mass media communication, political and economic aspects.

Thus, the present research proposes to examine the impact of mass media on the social determinants of health and lifestyle of patients suffering from cardiovascular diseases.

2. **What are cardiovascular diseases?**

Cardiovascular diseases are defined as an array of diseases, related to the heart and blood vessels comprising coronary heart diseases, cerebrovascular diseases, peripheral artery diseases and aortic atherosclerosis. These diseases are linked to arterial blockage, due to fatty deposits along the heart arteries (atherosclerosis) and a heighten incidence of blood clots. In atherosclerosis, the deposits of fat, cholesterol and calcium within the arteries will result in increased rigidity and narrowing of the walls. Coronary heart disease happens when the blood flow through arteries is reduced or blocked, and the heart is not receiving oxygenated blood. This strain on the heart can cause angina, cardiac arrest or heart attack when the blood supply is cut off completely and heart failure, when heart is unable to pump the blood. Blood clots augments the risk of strokes when the blood flow to the brain is stopped. When the blockage is temporary a transient ischemic attack takes place. This can be considered a mini stroke and the effect can last from few minutes up to 24 hours. Usually, mini strokes are viewed as warning signs for major strokes. Other diseases included in this spectrum are peripheral arterial diseases, when the arteries leading to limbs are blocked, inducing aortic disease. Aortic disease affects the main aorta that carries blood from the heart, sometimes generating an aortic aneurism which can be life threatening as it may cause dissection of the aorta.

Worldwide there are 550 million people suffering from cardiovascular diseases, with a ratio of 1 in 14 people being affected by these illnesses, a number that continues to rise yearly (British Heart Foundation, 2020). Research has shown that since 1990 there has been an increase of 93 percent in people suffering from cardiovascular diseases (British Heart Foundation, 2020). The WHO (2007) forecasted a 17 percent increase in the morbidity from heart diseases, reaching to a staggering amount of 20 million deaths per year, with a ratio of 1 in 3 deaths. Ischemic heart disease and strokes are engendering, every year a massive strain on the health and economy of countries worldwide, being accountable for 11 million deaths yearly and 156 million affected and left with life-long disabilities (Lopez, Mathers, Ezzati, Jamison and Murray, 2006).

Cardiovascular diseases and their outcomes are preventable, if the risk factors are taken into account. There are a multitude of causes associated with cardiovascular illnesses and these factors can be grouped into unmodifiable risk factors (genetic factors, age, sex, family history of cardiovascular diseases); modifiable risk factors that are behavioural (smoking, physical inactivity, unhealthy diet) and metabolic (hypertension, diabetes, overweight and obesity); and socioeconomic factors (Mejla-Lancheros, et al. 2014). Nevertheless, there are contrasting thoughts with regards to which risk factors have a higher impact on cardiovascular diseases. Most of the research tends to concentrate on the "modifiable factors" as they are largely individualistic, while socioeconomical factors known as social determinants of health are researched but not adequately promulgated to the public. Detrimental actions such as smoking, a poor diet of unhealthy foods, sedentary life are factors that are interconnected with the social determinants of health.

The particularities of how these categories of risk factors, lifestyle and social determinants, interact with each other has not been properly researched. Medical treatment together with surgical procedures makes up the 20 percent that ensures a positive result in individuals suffering from cardiovascular diseases; the rest of the 80 percent is about

acknowledging the potential impact of social factors on heart diseases, which will empower patients to alter their lifestyles accordingly, leaving aside other reasons such as genetics, gender and age (Kreatsoulas and Anand, 2010).

3. Social Determinants of Health in Cardiovascular Diseases

Social determinant of health is a quite novel term within medical sphere, and it defines the conditions where people live, settings that are modelled "by the distribution of money, power and resources at global, national and local levels" (WHO, 2012). This comprehensive definition shows that these determinants of health encompass not only the socioeconomic factors and the environmental factors, but also contain health - related behaviours as well (Hood, Gennuso, Swain and Catlin, 2016). A large body of evidence emphasize that worldwide the groups with an elevated risk of cardiovascular diseases, leading to poor outcome, are the socioeconomically underprivileged, with reduced access to healthcare, low income, and education (Havranek, et al. 2015).

According to the WHO (2012) all these factors and behaviours are complex, multifactorial, correlated with each other, and structured into five groups: economic stability (poverty, employment, food security, housing); education (childhood development, language, literacy, secondary education, higher education); social and community life (discrimination, condition within a working place); neighbourhood (housing, food, transport, water quality, crime and violence) and healthcare (access to healthcare, health insurance, health literacy).

Emerging evidence points out that socioeconomic features such as health disbursement, healthcare systems, and income are corelated with a higher occurrence of stroke morbidity and mortality (Sposato and Saposnik, 2012). Financial issues act as a catalyst on a bad prognosis, in people with cardiovascular diseases, together with poor access to healthcare and health insurance (Georgiades, et al. 2009). Low income is related to a higher risk of ischemic stroke and increase mortality of heart illnesses (Hedblad, et al. 2008). Education level is a strong indicator of disadvantaged lifestyle behaviours and "a poorer cardiovascular profile, heart failure and stroke" (Skodova, et al., 2008). Similarly, employment can affect the outcomes of heart diseases, lower work positions being associated with unhealthy lifestyles and higher morbidity levels (Kivimaki, et al.2012). Unhealthy lifestyle habits such as diet and sedentarism due to "globalization and westernization phenomena" are linked to a higher incidence of cardiovascular diseases (Franklin & Kushman, 2011). Within medical and social field, there is a multitude of research that points us in the right direction with regards to understanding the risk factors for cardiovascular diseases. Using the right channels of communication, this information can be expressed to the public, to augment their knowledge and responsiveness in relation to this topic.

4. Mass Media Communication of Health Information

Mass media is an important tool, within the health care sphere, in conveying information to the audience by propagation of messages, aiming to elevate awareness or to alter attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours among a pre-determined population. For the past three decades, there has been an immense change in the way mass media communicates with the public, leading to a revolution within its field "that has blurred the traditional distinction between mass and interpersonal communication", hence modifying the ways of reaching the public (Abroms and Maibach, 2008). Previously, mass media was perceived as a "broadcasting media", due to the existence of a small number of channels and a vast audience; nowadays media shifted towards the other extreme, being characterized as "narrowcast" (Lefebvre, 2006). The massive increase in the numbers of media channels resulted in a decrease in audience size. Consequently, media communication tailored their programmes and activities according to their audience requirements, in a continuous "battle" to increase the number of viewers. Not to leave aside the "boom" of the internet, social media, websites, and blogs that radically reformed

the transmission and the availability of any type of information, including health information. Nowadays, online media and social networks "have managed to eliminate communication barriers, such as geographic barriers", consequently innovation and emerging research, regarding a multitude of topics from medical sphere are available and can be conveyed instantly to public (Bularca, Nechita, Sargu, Motoi, Otovescu and Coman, 2022). Therefore, these alterations can positively impact the field of public health, enabling the diffusion of relevant knowledge to a variety of social groups. Regrettably, the true effectiveness of these methods of communication has not been thoroughly analysed by the literature of speciality.

Newspapers have been considered and still are, in some countries, a significant source of knowledge, with the public being better at "assimilating printed information… in comparison to information from television advertisements" (Corston and Colman,1997). Additionally, in the eyes of the readers newspapers are ranking highly with regards to trust, using as sources reputable academic and research journals. On the other hand, the press is a commercial institution and at certain times more attention has been accorded to sensational news or incipient health threats than diseases such as cardiovascular diseases. Research pointed out that in general, newspapers "failed to include threat or efficacy categories of disease prevention information required to help inform and potentially motivate change" (Peinado, 2008).

Health information has been made available to the public mostly through public campaigns, with the aim to influence behaviours, yet on most cases their overall impact has been minimal, or none at all. (Noar, 2006). However, "in the context of today's fast developing society in which peoples' preferences are constantly changing, mass media must…adopt effective strategies to promote" its messages (Coman, Bularca and Otovescu, 2021). The successful campaigns, that persuaded and amended behaviours, are the ones that promoted "well designed messages…delivered to their intended audience with sufficient reach and frequency to be seen or heard and remembered" (Abroms and Maibach, 2008). The efficacity of certain public health campaigns is owed to their directionality, being aimed to individual - levels factors, such as anti-tabaco and obesity awareness advertisings across United States (Farrelly, Healton, Davis, Messeri, Hersey and Haviland, 2002). Furthermore, health campaigns are supported by additional material, such as the creation of websites for providing supplementary information, with their effectiveness in engaging with the public emphasised by a growing body of research (Strecher, 2007). Abroms and Maibach, (2000) highlighted that campaigns can "achieve large scale changes" only if there are founded on "social support, community norms, the availability of products and services, and other factors from nonindividual fields of influence". The essential aspects of health advertising, at the present time, are based on the target policy, that are attempting to change the individuals rather than the social system as a whole.

More than two decades ago, Nettleton (1997) drew attention to the public unawareness of how social determinants are shaping the health, with everyone believing that "the holy trinity of risk" is the culprit: smoking, obesity and sedentary life, a concept that is still current. The framing of the messages hypothesised by the media regarding health topics perpetuates that everyone is responsible for their own health, and poor decisions lead to poor health, ignoring the important social determinants in preventing heart diseases alongside other illnesses. Peoples' perception can be changed by underscoring the effects of social determinants of health on the incidence, morbidity and mortality of cardiovascular diseases in media communications to the public. Empirical research stresses that people's underlying beliefs about poverty", and about the "role of personal responsibility" are strongly affected by a variety of factors such as the individualistic aspects of the society (Gollust, Lantz and Ubell, 2009). Wilkinson (1996) highlighted how the influence of neo-liberalism in the organization of the economy around the world is leading to an increase in income inequalities and poverty. Thus,

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the very concept of social determinants of health is in disagreement with the individualistic aspects found in neo–liberal theory. Here, the economic structure influence how wealth, income, influence and power in society is distributed, while mass media pursuits are a "reflection of societal structures that shape dominant ideological discourses" (Grabb, 2007). Subsequently, the media is being controlled by the same "market forces that increasingly dictate public policies", the corporate owners (Raphael, 2011). Recognising the importance of the social determinants of health and 'allowing' media to communicate them to the public will call for new policies. Enacting new policies, to address the inequalities in socioeconomic factors, entails financial resources, and a redistribution of wealth.

5. **Methodology Study**

To understand the effectiveness of media communication of social determinants of health, and to successfully employ media as a means of educating patients on the benefits of having a healthy lifestyle we will investigate a sample of patients at a private hospital. The aim of this paper is to identify the impact of media communication of social determinants of health on lifestyle of patients with cardiovascular diseases, in Pristina, Kosovo.

5.1. Study design and settings

The current study will be conducted on patients diagnosed with cardiovascular diseases that are admitted to the cardiac ward of United Hospital, Pristina, Kosovo during 2023. This clinical trial survey is used to investigate the effect of media communication on the awareness of social determinants of health in cardiovascular diseases, and if this knowledge will lead to lifestyle changes.

5.2. Study participants

The sample size was calculated to 50 individuals per group. Taking in consideration the possibility of dropout 104 patients was evaluated. The patients will be divided into two groups according to the score obtained on the HRSN Screening Tool: the group that scored lower and the group that scored higher. Allocation will be double blinded, so the allocator and the patient will not have knowledge of the type of intervention. The inclusion criteria for the study are related to the diagnosis of cardiovascular diseases by the cardiologist, age < 35 years old, to own or have access to a mobile phone, and to be able to read, write and speak Albanian. The exclusion criteria are changing the mobile phone number without informing the researcher and having an accident during the intervention leading to a disability.

5.3. Data collections

The tools employed in this research included, firstly, questions about the demographic characteristics collected with the help of the 10-item HRSN Screening Tool. The Tool can helps find out patients' needs in 5 core domains: housing instability, food insecurity, transportation problems, utility help needs, including age, gender, education, the place birth, access to health care, income and questions about cardiovascular diseases, such as onset of the disease, hospitalisation length, and compliance to therapy. The answers to these questions will be collected pre – intervention. Secondly, the patients will receive a Walker's Lifestyle Questionnaire, where they have to answer questions related to nutrition, physical activity, stress management, interpersonal relationships, health responsibility and self-realization. The answer to the second questionnaire is ranked on a four – point Likert scale (1 = Never, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Often, 4 = Always). The Walker's Questionnaire has a maximum score of 208 and a minimum of 52, while the score for each area can be calculate separately, while the high score is an indicator for good health. Patients that scored under 102 have a poor lifestyle,

between 103 - 156, an average lifestyle, 156 and above is an indicator of good lifestyle. The answers to this questionnaire will be collected before and after the intervention.

Data was collected from the patients before and after 4 months after the intervention. Firstly, the research objectives were explained, and the informed consents were collected. After the discharge of the patients a chat group was created, and the patient were added in the group. Through the chat group they received informative and educational material regarding, as text and videos, regarding the cardiovascular diseases, causes, risk factors and about the social determinants of health. The majority of information was constructed around the role of social determinants of health in cardiovascular diseases. The information was sent every three days to the patients. All the data will be analysed using SPSS Inc., Chicago, statistical software (IBM Corp., 2020).

6. Expected Results Study

Providing education through social networks and media will heighten peoples' awareness of social determinants and health – relating behaviours leading to a better lifestyle.

In the present study the groups are divided based on social determinants of health.

The group that scored higher on the HRSN Screening Tool is anticipated to score higher on the Walker's Life Style Questionnaire as well, while the group that scored lower on HRSN Screening Tool is expected to have a lower health related behaviours with regards to life style.

7. Conclusions

Mass Media can be considered a powerful tool in providing information, education and modelling the attitudes and behaviour of the public. In the health and social research field, there are a plenitude of incessant emerging new evidence, that necessitates to be communicated, as this type of information is a latent prospect for societal gain. The results of the present research will show how knowledge of social health determinants will impact the patients' lifestyle choices, in Pristina, Kosovo. Furthermore, the effectiveness of media communication is examined, with the finding illustrating any impediments to message transmission to patients.

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HIV-AIDS AND TODAY'S SOCIETY

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Abstract: *The studies carried out so far regarding the evolution of HIV/AIDS have had as a starting point clinical research enhanced by biomedical and behavioural scientific assessment designed to prevent and treat this disease. Over the years, sociologists have largely contributed to this field through research that focused on the analysis of the institutional and cultural factors that influence individual behaviour. Whenever we talk about the issue determined by HIV-AIDS we should not exclude risk behaviours that might become widely spread and include professional drivers or international workers who might disseminate HIV infection through commercial sex practices. The change of HIV-AIDS from a death sentence into a chronic disease has determined the coming out of new social and cultural realities that have influenced the dynamics and the way HIV infection and AIDS spread at present. The internalized stigma of HIV infection frequently determines a turmoil of guilt, fear of revealing the diagnosis, isolation and despair.*

Keywords: HIV, society, theories, evolution, interdisciplinarity.

1. Human immunodeficiency virus in today's society
1.1 HIV-AIDS pandemic – social implications

People increasingly talk about a new generation not affected by AIDS pursuant to the use of the resources of developed countries, such as those belonging to the United States of America. The experts in the field of HIV-AIDS, through a joint effort, would like to put an end to HIV-AIDS pandemic. Despite the contribution of sociologists to outlining policies and community responses able to deal with the pandemic, this very important domain still falls within the periphery of mass sociology. The sociological approach of HIV infection and AIDS originates in year 1980, when pioneers like Judith Auerbachet, Benjamin Bowser, Martin Levine, Beth Schneider and Rose Weitz began to publish AIDS-determined issues in social sciences magazines. Also, during this period, yearly sessions focusing on the problems this disease generated and meetings of various sociological associations were organized; in addition, the network of sociologists in the field of AIDS was founded in collaboration with the American Sociology Association (ASA). The network intended to use the perspectives offered by sociology in studying and preventing HIV-AIDS through increasing the degree of inclusion of HIV-AIDS preoccupations within all the branches of sociology and to become a community resource for the sociologists that were active in the domain.

Nonetheless, the scientific articles on HIV-AIDS were pretty rare in the emblematic sociology magazines; such articles have started being published only during the last decade (Watkins-Hayes, 2014).

At the level of the society, political intervention appears to play a key role in the manner in which HIV epidemic evolves and the manner it may affect individuals and communities (Auerbach, 2022).

Budhwani, author of various studies in the field of medical sociology, describes in a study published in 2022 the manner in which the implementation of the strategies for preventing and treating HIV through integrating the new digital health technologies might

contribute to the dissemination of the information and to providing assistance with a view to monitoring the present tendencies of HIV infection (Budhwani, 2022).

The efforts made towards acknowledging the structural factors of HIV infection through specific programs enable the integration of these factors in the category of individual or group risk behaviours and moral responsibility. The prevention of the infection appears to be obstructed by the willingness of the person affected to speak or not about his/her serological status due to embarrassment and guilt feelings (Barrow, 2013).

We increasingly witness a tendency of directing the attention on the pandemic caused by HIV-AIDS towards the social issues that represent the foundation of the decisions for implementing public health programs. Due to such circumstances, the sociological analysis of the disease should be studied in relation to the political answers and the health systems that are involved in the analysis and monitoring of epidemics (Weitz, 1992).

People also increasingly speak about the need to understand the manner in which the pandemic determined by HIV-AIDS changes in space and time. The epidemic in the USA began in the subpopulation of males having intercourse with other males (MSM); although it has largely decreased during the last two decades, poor young gay black males are still particularly exposed to the risk (Buot, 2014).

The negative social consequences of HIV infection require the supporting of the efforts towards normalizing life with AIDS, which becomes a real challenge in preventing HIV, especially in the case of sexual minorities (Zimmermann, 2021). In spite of the various programs carried out over the years with a view to prevent the infection with the human immunodeficiency virus among the sexual minorities, the increased infection exposure risk is still associated with the risk of social and medical exclusion (Cáceres, 2008).

As far as sexuality is concerned, let's mention that it had been a tabu for quite a long time, which, nonetheless, was subject to a series of radical changes during the centuries. In addition, the occurrence of HIV infection and AIDS has determined a turmoil worldwide, while the problems caused by HIV-AIDS appear not to have a short-term solution (Kontomanolis, 2017).

The existence of at least two factors contributes to the probability of HIV infection: individual risk and social vulnerability. Individual risk of exposure to HIV-AIDS is influenced by what people know and understand, by what they feel with respect to certain human relations or situations. Sexual behaviour is, probably, one of the most important factors that contribute to the vulnerability of the exposure to HIV infection and also to the evolutional pandemic impact of HIV-AIDS. In most societies, gender constructions and ideologies mainly determine what is considered to be a proper behaviour, while asserting strong differences between men and women. The gender-determined roles have an impact upon the manner in which sexuality is interpreted by women and men. They determine what and how men and women know about the issues that regard sexual behaviour (Mane, 2001).

In addition, the dominant gender ideologies and constructions frequently determine a series of practices that contribute to the HIV exposure risk and vulnerability. For instance, the highly praised virginity in certain cultures might encourage older men to look for younger women or might encourage single women to resort to anal sex with a view to protect their virginity, which, in the end, might double the risk of getting infected (Weiss, 2000).

Unfortunately, the women living with HIV-AIDS are frequently stigmatized and this stigma still persists and manifests through embarrassment and guilt feelings that determine low self-esteem. Women possess, owing to their anatomic and functional structure, the capacity of giving birth; nonetheless, the pregnant women affected by HIV-AIDS end up facing depression, which, in certain cases, might lead to suicide attempts (Kumar, 1997).

These circumstances that increase the vulnerability of the girls and women both to HIV infection and to other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), to violence and unwanted

pregnancies clearly show that women's reproductive health should represent a priority. This is especially valid in the case of the women living with HIV-AIDS, due to the fact that they have to face a wide range of problems. For instance, it appears that the women who disclose their HIV serologic status have an increased risk to be physically abused by partners, family or community (Ellsberg, 2005).

HIV-related suicides appear to be similar to the suicides among the consumers of injectable drugs or among the persons with psychological disorders (Cooperman, 2005).

All diseases acquire, at a certain moment, a certain social stigmatizing that might influence social and personal interaction, especially among those persons who suffer from permanent disabilities (Gannon, 2007).

Whenever we talk about HIV infection or AIDS, we should consider the social, economic and demographic impact of the disease. The economic impact of the AIDS epidemic is most of the time analysed along several coordinates, starting from the costs of the disease treatment and ending with research and prevention (Danziger, 1994).

From a demographic perspective, mortality and fertility are directly affected by the HIV-AIDS pandemic. The direct effects upon mortality are the result of the fact that AIDS determines death both among children and adults. The effects upon fertility are indirect and smaller, though they might influence the existence or absence of a pregnancy. The direct consequence is an increase of mortality, which, without an efficient and early treatment, will determine death during a time frame between 7 and 10 years. In non-industrialized world or in the countries on the verge of poverty, treatment is expensive and the means for diagnosis and treatment are not easily accessible for the vulnerable population, most of the time (Barnett, 2001).

Sexual behaviour and HIV-infection risk vary a lot among the subgroups of a population. The groups displaying the highest risk include men who have intercourse with other men (MSM) and the women who practice commercial sex (Bongaarts, 1989).

As far as chronic diseases (HIV-AIDS belong to this category, too) are concerned, sociology mainly focused on their consequences on daily life as part of the relation between the individual and the society. In addition, mass-media portrays HIV-AIDS as an epidemic that threatens the relations of an individual with the others due to its transmissibility (Pierret, 2000).

The disease acquires, as a result, cultural and labelling significations, the individual becoming defective, affected, stigmatized and associated with behaviours that are considered deviant and immoral; the individual becomes very dangerous for the community. Contrary to the mechanisms of the social stigma associated to HIV-AIDS, people believe that the stigmatizing associated with cancer is mainly determined by the fear of the illness or by the perception that "it could happen to me, too", cancer being considered less dangerous for the community (Fife, 2000). The prevailing attitude to the HIV-AIDS-affected people was and still is, generally, a hostile one due to the fact that the disease itself is contagious and not curable, and the presence of the diagnosis involves the stigma given to drug addicts, homosexuals or black people (O'Hare, 1996). Most of the time, fear is a negative emotion, associated to a high level of anxiety and is caused by a personal threatening of the individual (Terblanche-Smit, 2010).

Although largely spread, the status of being a HIV-infected person still determines both the fear of being rejected once the diagnosis is known by the community and a negative influence upon interpersonal relations (Evangeli, 2016). Not infrequently, the fear of revealing the serologic status of a person, even inside his/her family, might determine a denial of the diagnosis and delaying to get medical services and specific treatment (Wolf, 2014). For instance, in the case of the women in Africa, poverty, the lack of health education and the stigma determined by the HIV infection led to a late starting of the specific antiretroviral treatment and

a decreased adhesion to the treatment, which might easily determine maternal-foetal transmission in case of a pregnancy (Alhassan, 2022). The disease must be studied from a bio-psycho-social perspective (Alonzo, 1995). The importance of studying diseases from a social perspective is possible nowadays owing to a branch of sociology called medical sociology, which involves the converging of two completely different disciplines: medicine and sociology. During the 1930s and the beginning of the 1940s, sociologists such as M. Davis and Bernard J. Stern were interested in health, illnesses and medical systems as a whole. The consolidation of the National Institute for Health, at the end of the 1940s, in America, and the foundation of the National Institute for Mental Health gathered researchers in the biological and social domains, while academicians in these fields could work together (Hollingshead, 1973). They further asserted that when using the concepts of self and identity in order to describe the physical and social reality of the disease, people describe, in fact, the manner in which the chronic disease brings changes to the self and to the manner in which the other perceive and define us (Kelly, 1996).

Georg Simmel describes human society as a complicated network of multiple relations among people constantly interacting with each other and displaying standards, values, social and spatial circumstances, and joint assertions and opportunities. For instance, the persons who live near tropical forests are exposed to mosquito bites and, implicitly, to the increase of getting sick of malaria; in such a case, the finding out of a series of prevention and treatment strategies become absolutely essential (Amzat, 2014).

1.2 Social representations and HIV-AIDS

The spreading of the HIV infection may be decreased through the so-called primary prevention that involves educating the population, while considering the behaviours that regard sexuality and drug consumption, which both have a biological and a social substrate determined by resistance to change (Fineberg, 1988). The negative symbolism of HIV infection and AIDS has been determined by a series of cultural processes that draw boundaries between "the healthy, me, and the unhealthy"; the unhealthy is ill, contagious, full of addictions and sexually deviant (Green, 2008). A useful theoretical perspective that might help understanding the social and cultural factors that represent the basis of the increase of the HIV-AIDS epidemic in Europe is the theory of social representations. Representations are defined as a "structured mental content about phenomena that are socially relevant and that take the form of day-to-day images or metaphors among social groups" (Goodwin, 2003). The researches in the field of social representations have pin-pointed, in time, complex and provoking social phenomena belonging to the area of HIV-AIDS, mental illnesses and human rights (Moloney, 2014). An overview of social representations shows that HIV-AIDS mainly affected the social environment and racial/ethnic groups that also suffered from discrimination previously. In the 1980s social representations showed an angle of morality and moral panic. The marginalization of the AIDS-affected persons and the identifying of the disease as a "homosexual plague" were important influences during the period 1982-1985, which was mainly characterized by a rapid escalation of fear in mass-media as well as by a general public hysteria, the HIV-AIDS issue being displayed as a consequence of certain behaviours that determine God's punishment of the immoral world. Mass-media articles criticised the social policies developed by the social institutions, in the mid-1980s, when, after a period of being ignored, the HIV-AIDS topic suddenly became an eye-opener (Gillett, 2003). Fear and HIV stigma were more and more present although the transmission channels were not yet clearly settled in the '80s. The existence of opinion shakers that used to assert that the disease was transmitted through ordinary social contact, made things even worse for the disease that was considered terminal at the time (Gary, 2021).

During the period 1985-1989, the need for managing the crisis determined by the excessive media coverage of the disease and deaths was evident, especially when actor Rock

Hudson died from AIDS. The social representations of HIV-AIDS during the 1990s seemed to describe the disease as being specific for those sick with haemophilia, for homosexuals, drug consumers and Haitians, labelled as the club of 4H. Much later this theory was struck down as HIV infection also spread among heterosexual persons (Labra, 2013). Population feared a lot and, due to the political power of gay men, health authorities abandoned the traditional approaches of the control of transmissible diseases for civil liberties (Smith, 2010).

The limitation of sociological studies referring to HIV-AIDS prevention is due to the fact that the main theories used to fight AIDS are psycho-social theories that focus on the individual for changing behaviour (Bowser, 2002). Due to the number of persons with AIDS or HIV-infected and to the impact and reactions HIV-AIDS determines in society, AIDS may be called a social disease, even more than alcoholism, tuberculosis of classic sexual transmission illnesses (syphilis, gonorrhea, etc.) (Velimirovic, 1987). The individuals living with this disease often become activists as a response to the society stigma; they also plead for legislative changes and support each other with a view to fulfilling this goal (Earnshaw, 2016). The campaign-mobilizing of scientific knowledge during the periods previous to the HIV-AIDS epidemic was accelerated by the crisis of the so-called "plague years", when HIV meant a death sentence. During this period, the activists fought for determining awareness of the impact of the disease and for efficient prevention strategies, access to treatment, research and social solidarity as well as support for those affected by this disease (Colvin, 2014). For the seropositive persons, the existence of support groups and community services targeting the disease created a mutual supportive environment (Brashers, 2002).

One of the most intriguing aspects of the social, psychological and historical implication discourses on AIDS was the change of the narrative about social responsibility, morality, and sexuality, promoted by researchers, political-decision factors and governments as response to this disease. The sociology of the dynamics of the epidemic and AIDS conceptualization turned AIDS into a subject that was avoided in the discourses on sexuality, race and gender and included the disease in the political area (Govender, 2017).

The issues debated by the public health policies, such as smoking in open spaces or chronic diseases, are not perceived as being so problematic, but rather seen as general issues (Ornstein, 1992). One of the controversial problems of the informing and awareness-raising programs in the last 20 years appealed to fear in their messages and educational campaigns, which mainly relied on controlling sexual behaviour through decreasing the number of partners and using condoms (O'Grady, 2006).

HIV serologic status played, during the years, an essential role in choosing partners with a view to avoiding the transmission of the infection from one partner to the other. In accordance, a potential partner may be accepted or rejected based on a singular characteristic, as HIV status rules out all other characteristics (Koester, 2018). Another aspect that may influence the manner in which this disease is perceived involves issues that regard the ethics and the ideology of the fundamental values existing in democratic societies, which isolate seropositive individuals to the periphery of the society (Moatti, 1988).

2. Models and theories approached in relation to HIV-AIDS and society
2.1 The model of health beliefs
The model of health beliefs was the result of several independent researches within the public health departments during the period 1950-1960 (Rosenstock, 1974). It was initially formulated with a view to explaining health preventive behaviour and defined by Kasl and Cobb as follows: "*health behaviour involves all the activities a person who thinks he/she is healthy and who wants to spot all illnesses in an early, asymptomatic stage with a view to prevent getting sick*" (Rosenstock,1974). In order to get a perspective upon the theory of health beliefs, they pin-pointed the fact that most of the events during an individual's life gravitate around the ideas of

well-being and being ill. These events placed between the two extreme poles and labelled as health behaviour show an individual beginning to ask himself questions about his/her behaviour once the first signs of a disease appear (Kirscht, 1974). As early as the starting of the HIV-AIDS pandemic, the studies analysing the individuals mainly showed their sexual behaviour. Researchers assumed that once people knew their seropositive status, their behaviours would change with regard to the transmission of the virus. As usually known, most of the time, HIV transmission is determined by behavioural factors. At an individual level, the personal beliefs that concern the disease may be changed through acquiring correctly documented data; these data will determine the change through minimizing the risk of exposure to the illness (Elvis, 2015, pp.1-8)

2.2 The model of decreasing the exposure risk to AIDS

The change of the high-risk behaviours plays an important role in preventing HIV-AIDS. The development of proper prevention programs represents a significant challenge for the scientists both in the social field and in the public health field. The model starts from the assertion that to avoid HIV infection, the individuals with a risky sexual behaviour should become aware of the risk through labelling it and should assume a commitment that would determine behaviour changes. In order that the change process occurs, first it is necessary that the person concerned gathers data on the AIDS phenomenon and the social factors that contribute to the change process, mainly through a better documenting that regards the way the infection is transmitted (Catania, 1990). In the case of men practicing intercourse with other men (MSM) and of bisexual individuals, the study of informative stuff regarding the decrease of the risks is also required (Siegel, Grodsky, 1986).

Risky sexual behaviour cannot be easily monitored as we frequently encounter condom use rejection. In addition, even those who perceive that HIV infection is a serious one use to negotiate the use of condoms during intercourse with their partners (Dinoff, 1999).

Considering that we still notice practices that increase the risks of exposure and getting sick, the approach of a series of methods able to stimulate the change of such behaviours should remain a priority for the behavioural and social sciences in their fight against AIDS (Fisher, 1992).

Social sciences experts and educators may play an important part in slowing down the spread of HIV, especially in those areas where there are a lot of vulnerable groups. The model of decreasing the exposure to AIDS may determine the development of the abilities to correctly choose sexual partners, which, at its turn, supports the approaching of the model (Lanier, 1996).

2.3. HIV-AIDS and globalization

The social reality of a global society may be exhaustively analysed both through geographic delineations, economic life, cultural or language delimitations and through psychological features (Otovescu D., 2009: 289). The founders of the French school of sociology, starting with Durkheim and his successors to the German sociologists at the beginning of the 20th century carried out comparative analyses between contemporary societies and the societies from various epochs with a view to explaining social phenomena (Martin, 2006). Until the beginning of the 21st century, the concept of globalization earned its place within the social sciences and debates were more explicitly directed to the theoretical significance of globalization (Robinson, 2011).

Beginning with WWII, people witnessed a constant ascendant trend of globalization within societies. Nonetheless, the consciousness of a global society did not result in a world state, but rather determined interdependence manifested through the global movements for controlling national features, where the social actors come under social control within their own societies. (Meyer, 2007). Robertson raises awareness upon globalization as a topic of

interest in the area of social theories, especially that this one approaches the relation between the homogeneity and the heterogeneity in which we live (Mathias, 2007). With a view to characterizing globalization in terms of incertitude and risk as it is revealed by authors like Bauman, Beck and Giddens, they consider it does not bring novelty in the domain of the social as each epoch was influenced by such expressions. Today, sociology should be able to understand and explain the changes that determine the transformation of modern society into a transmodern society, under perpetual change (Pierpaolo, 2012).

Globalisation is nevertheless a key concept, which is defined by Held as "*a transformation of the spatial organizing of social relationships and transactions, evaluated from the perspective of their magnitude, intensity, speed and impact that determine transcontinental or inter-regional activity fluxes and networks interacting and exerting their power".* (Ampuja, 2012).

Diseases accompanied the expansion of globalization from the ancient times alongside the development of trade. In year 430 BC, plague affected Athens, which killed one third of its population. The black rats that transmitted bubonic plague throughout Europe during 1347 were probably carried by trading vessels. Three hundred years later, the State-towns in Northern Italy developed the first national systems of public health through lockdown in their attempt to stop the recurrent episodes of the illness (Deaton, 2004). As far as the relation between globalization and the HIV infection is concerned, we may notice a series of elements that help us understand, both scientifically and socially, the dynamic of this global epidemic (Michael, 2012). Social and economic changes have influenced people's life and human interaction. These changes ultimately influence negatively the manner in which HIV-AIDS spreads globally. The identification of the means by which this happens helps us understand the ways we can decrease the negative impact determined by HIV infection, AIDS or other diseases (Friedman, 2009).

The American historian William McNeill raises awareness on the role of epidemics throughout human history. The influence of globalization on public health is pin-pointed by, at least, two lines of action. A first vision of the influence of globalization upon health condition determines the increasing desire of the nations to work together with a view to attempting at improving the systems of public health as this serves their own interest. This represents an optimistic scenario of the analysis of the benefits of globalization, especially in the case of poor countries, both through increasing the accessing of the new technologies and through accepting and implementing joint human rights worldwide. In contrast, there is also the pessimistic scenario that regards globalization as a phenomenon that determined the loss of sovereignty and collaboration among the states, especially as far as resources are concerned.

The relationship between HIV-AIDS and globalization has led to the development of pharmaceutic industry that mainly focused on developing the treatment in rich countries. Generating increased profits in the area of rich countries has determined the decrease of the interest for poor countries due to a defective medicines market (Barnett, 2002: 9-11).

The problems determined by this disease are mainly experienced through the unequal distribution of the benefits of globalization as only a few countries are privileged. Inequities emphasize injustice and global political and economic injustice caused by the uneven distribution of the antiretroviral treatment (Johnson, 2005).

With the sponsoring of clinical research, multinational pharmaceutic companies carry out several clinical studies outside the worldwide primary market regions. Private clinical research determines a clinical globalization, which is a term employed with a view to show the manner in which politics, industry, groups and individuals interact at a global level in health research and the manufacturing of pharmaceutic products (Claire, 2008).

Lately, countries have begun to get support for dealing with the HIV-AIDS issue through global partnerships in the field of health, such as the Global Fund for Preventing AIDS,

Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM), the emergency plan of the President of the United States for Preventing AIDS (PEPFAR); the Multinational AIDS Program of the World bank, World Health Organization (WHO), co-sponsors of the United Nations Joint Program regarding HIV-AIDS (UNAIDS). Even under such circumstances, due to the pressure exerted by HIV-AIDS, there are health systems unable to give care to those affected by the disease, which determines opportunistic infections, lack of primary care and the increase of maternal and infant deaths. For instance, before the coming out of the ART therapy, half of the health hospitalizations in sub-Saharan Africa were AIDS-affected persons. In a series of countries in Eastern Africa, such cases reached 80%. Such circumstances exerted pressure on the health systems and hospitals were not able to give care for those who had other pathologies (Dongbao, 2008). The real cost of the pandemic is almost incalculable. Its impact is increased by the general economic environment, political and social context as well as certain cultural practices influenced by the growing unemployment, general poverty and the negative consequences of structural adjustment, which all strongly undermine Africa's capacity to compete on the global market (Livingston, 2009). The negative effects of globalization generally include an increase of absolute poverty and of relative poverty (Benatar, 2002).

AIDS epidemic actually becomes an effect of economic development, population moves, increased internationalization of trade, liberalization of commercial sex, and access to injectable drugs (Altman, 1998). During the last decades, public health policy and practice were increasingly disputed by globalization, even in spite of health global funding. (Labonté, 2011).

3. Conclusions

HIV-AIDS is, essentially, the longest pandemic in modern history, which yearly determines high costs for each country and requires proper responses. The efforts sustained by the stated affected by this pandemic require interdisciplinarity based on international collaboration and agreements. Joint international programs and social theories elaborated up to now have determined a better understanding of the phenomenon, which entails an improved cooperation between the social sciences specialists and the health sciences specialists.

HIV infection and AIDS still represent the scourge of 21st century, while the ill-fame of the disease is mostly experienced in the area of social relations, of the groups affected by the disease and of communities, in general. Although there is visible progress in managing this pandemic, the aim toward "*a world without AIDS*" is far from having been reached. The disparity of financial resources among the world states turns this disease into an "*unjust battlefield*" for the poor or under development countries, which strive to access health programs meant to provide antiretroviral treatment (ARVT) specific for HIV-AIDS required to slow down the progress of the disease.

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BREAKING THE WALL OF SILENCE BETWEEN EFL TEACHERS AND EFL STUDENTS (THE ROLE OF CLASSROOM INTERACTION)

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Abstract: *To expand the line of research investigating so as to break the ice of silence between English as Foreign Language 'EFL'' instructors and their students; the present research sought to test a structural model of classroom interaction through the use of communication skills and techniques in introducing English as a Second Language 'ESL' to FL learners who are emanated from different specialties such as the students of Economics, Commerce and Management Sciences. Among the various stakeholders in any educational system, teachers should be considered as key figures, having the potential to impact the success/failure of students, and the system as a whole. Thus, the purpose of the extended paper is to help both English for Specific Purposes 'ESP' lecturers and EFL Learners to create a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom, and to enable them to break the wall of silence between each other through the use of some useful methods in the reinforcement of the educational process.*

Keywords: *EFL, classroom interaction, communication skills, teaching methods.*

1. Introduction

People learn languages everyday; however the reasons for doing so are varied. To learn a language is no longer something can be done at school and forgotten in the work place. To learn a language is necessary for a number of reasons and purposes such as, work career, study or research, travel, culture or maybe studying abroad. A Foreign language 'FL' facilitates mastering the higher forms of native tongue. FL serves as lingua franca so their learners are not supposed to become bilinguals. English nowadays seems as one of the most significant foreign language that should be learned because learning an additional language and English in particular may opens a number of doors to a lot of opportunities.

Nevertheless, many of the ESP lecturers are facing some tribulations in the way of transmitting information to Non-English students from different specialties. In this context, a lot of EFL teachers agree on the fact that EFL learners are keeping silent in the classes most of the time because they do not dare to express themselves in another language rather than their mother tongue, the thing that makes the teacher has a hard task to create a comfortable zone in his classroom; full of motivated students. Moreover, a lot of researchers and linguists view that the study of Second Language Acquisition 'SLA' is an increasingly interdisciplinary field that draws on various branches of linguistics as well as cognitive psychology, educational research, sociology, and neurology to explain exactly how second languages are learned by different persons in different contexts, and to explain the biological, cognitive, and social mechanisms underlying these phenomena.

Thereon, this paper highlights some of the significant tools which facilitate the process of both teaching and learning English as a Second Language 'ESL'.

2. Oral Expression as an Affective Module in the Classroom

Speaking in a foreign language is almost a difficult task but it is not impossible, and here, the implement of Oral Expression 'OE' course considers as the principle module for the students to express their abilities in practicing English Language because language is a practice

and practice is mastery. Oral Expression, in this process, is the ability to express wants, thoughts, needs and ideas meaningfully using suitable syntactic, pragmatic, semantic and phonological language structures. In Oral Expression module, speaking should be given more magnitude and time. Besides the numerous of other English modules that are taught to FL learners, OE educators are invited to take into account a set of elements that can be likely to promote success in the learning/teaching procedure.

Generally speaking, learners in OE ask to share experiences, topics, what they feel and so on. So standing in front of a group and presenting a talk can be daunting for even the most confident student, in the light of that, professors and scholars from New York in Buffalo like, Woodward, Haskins. G, Schaefer. G and Smolen. L, created the **LET'S TALK** approach which is a different approach to oral language development where the learners are able to work together. For example, learners are given three to two minutes to think about any topic after that they will choose one topic and discuss it. This activity will create a good atmosphere in the classroom where all feel they are really could talk in another language and enjoy the opportunity to speak unremitting. As it is obvious, language is a set of skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) these four skills are overlap, they complete each other. Speaking is a productive skill used by people in order to communicate with each other. Many language researchers regarded the speaking ability as the measure of knowing a language. Harmer (2001) views that the speaking skill is the ability to speak fluently presupposed not only knowledge of language features, but also the ability to process information and language on the spot (269). This quotation shows that speaking skill is not related to the knowledge of language features but it needs the ability to apply this knowledge in speech; that is how well the individual can use it and not only how much he knows about it. Furthermore, the speaking skill has a neglected skill in FL classroom. What is more, the CLT (Communication Language Teaching) places more emphasis on being understood more than taken for a native speaker of English. The CLT gives a particular importance to the speaking skill and provides a meaningful practice for learners. It believes in the necessity of communication and negotiation of meaning. Therefore, it is advised to teach and develop the students' speaking skill.

3. Difficulties Facing the EL Students in the Classroom

As anyone who learns English as a foreign language 'EFL', he/she will face some complications among their learning process which may block the principle of participation in the classroom. Thereon, a lot of students share the same point that the obstruction which immobilizes them from being motivated during learning a second language is due to three main reasons which are:

- **The Teacher**

The teacher is considered as the first and main cause who either makes students active or inactive and this is owing to many reasons such as the severest of the teacher who imposes orders and takes the authority of a leadership rather than a facilitator of a language who is supposed to follow his students from time to time. As a result, the learner will find himself in a close box where he feels uncomfortable to show his ability of speaking freely and sharing thoughts in a foreign language. Also, the action of correcting the spelling, grammar and pronunciation mistakes of the students by the educator will obliterate the self-esteem of learners to participate during the lecture of Oral Expression because the latter, automatically, will not be energetic in the classroom since both the teacher and lectures of free talk are monotonous.

Like every other aspect of classroom management, it is possible for every teacher to have an idea about the necessary strategies and techniques to build a good relationship with their students. Besides, the connection between the lecturer and the student has a strong impact on the character of the human first and the society as well; if teachers of FL know how to deal correctly with their students, be honest in their work as facilitators of a language and educators, automatically, EFL students will admire to learn the module of that teacher and feel both active and motivated. As a result, they will study with big desire and find themselves ready to accomplish their learning process in order to become successful students in their studying career, as well as, good citizens.

- **Afraid of Making Mistakes**

Learners are psychologically anxious of making mistakes or even errors because they believe that this thing is something dreadful and brainless in the eyes of their teacher and classmates. This feeling may slow down and stop the learning process; however, learners of a FL should know that mistakes are part of the learning procedures; learners learn from their mistakes because when they make mistakes it means that learning is taking place.

- **Anxiety**

Anxiety is a physiological, behavioral and psychological response; it may include bodily reactions such as rapid heartbeat, muscle tension, queasiness, dry mouth or sweating. It also can interrupt the ability to act, express the self, or deal with a certain everyday situation. Anxiety is one of the difficulties that face both the English language students and lecturers in the classroom. In teaching speaking mainly in Oral Expression the teacher is asking his students to perform and speak up in front of their colleagues. As a result, many students will be anxious during these activities. Hence, there are many other reasons that threaten the FL students and sometimes even the ESP teachers. Consequently, both of them have to avoid these problems by working together; moreover, humanistic aspect of the teaching profession compels any teacher to be a friend among learners so as to establish confidence and the adequate environment for education. Teachers have both the power and responsibility to counter the development of anxiety by building self-assured through creating helpful situation for language acquisition.

4. Techniques in Teaching Oral Expression

Oral Expression module is a fundamental course for EFL learners and one of the basic linguistic skills where it gives the chance to students from different specialties to build their self-confidence, develop their communication competence through the four language skills such as, *Vocabulary, Fluency, Grammar and Pronunciation*. Therefore, the method of classroom interaction has no specific programme in the sense of that each teacher applies his techniques and methods in order to teach this module. Hence, there are several techniques using by teachers such as:

- **Games and Role Playing Activities**
In this activity, the teacher asks his students to read a dialogue for more than one time so as to make them understand and be able to get some ideas. Therefore, the teacher can observe their competence and examine their pronunciation throughout speaking. The use of games in the classroom provides many advantages and encourages the learners to contribute, sharing and exchanging ideas, and become more energetic. One source of games is puzzle, when a teacher brings a puzzle in the classroom he will create a challenge between students, and they will be capable to talk and not remain shy and silent.

- **Minimal Pairs**

In phonology, minimal pairs are pairs of words or phrases in a particular language; spoken or signed that differs in only one phonological element, for instance, a phoneme (smallest unit of speech distinguishing one word (or word element) from another), chroneme (a basic, theoretical unit of sound that can distinguish words by duration only of a vowel or consonant) or toneme (a phoneme consisting of a contrastive feature of tone in a tone language). It is a useful exercise to practice pronunciation techniques, minimal pairs are two words belonging to the same language and differentiated only by one speech sound. For example: Li**f**e → li**v**e, ri**c**e → ri**s**e, **p**en → **t**en.

- **The Oral Story Telling**

For this aspect, students may listen to a story recorded by a native speaker of a specific FL, for instance, 'English language' and then, the lecturer will give them the chance to speak and express their thoughts and ideas. Afterward, they will be asked to give a summary to the story by repeating it with their own style. Thereon, the role of the teacher as a storyteller here is to pick the story which is closer to them as you can, keep it concise and precise pare down to the heart of the story, stimulate their senses so they feel the story and live it literary, depict the characters and settings, and help them to be compassionate toward with the character's feelings.

- **The Use of Songs and Poems**

In oral expression module it is helpful to use songs because students need to sing and to have fun from time to time, when a teacher selects songs which are understood by his learners, they will enjoy find it easy to memorize the words of a given song. In another word they will improve the language skill, and they will break the ice in the class especially when the students do not know each other. Poems, like songs, since poetry is often spoken, repeated, deal with, they are acted as an effective tool for practicing a language. So the role of the teacher in this perspective is to provide a poem which is appropriate to the level, age and the interest of learners. Likewise, learners will be more aware about the grammatical structures. Poems, here, are considered an important aspect to be taught. Once a poem or even a song has been learned they will remain in the reminiscence of listeners and readers i.e., learners. Musical materials can offer an enormously rich, enjoyable and authentic context for FL learners.

- **The Role of Motivation in Breaking down the Ice of Silence**

In many educational systems throughout the world, the primary aim for learning a foreign language is to build communication potential. Motivation in this context plays an essential role in the classroom reaction, if both the teacher and learners are motivated the learning process will be active. Moreover, motivation is the way that led to the success. Harmer (2001) states that **"motivation is some kinds of internal derive that encourages somebody to pursue your course of action"** (3). Accordingly, motivation is to do the best thing, learners are influenced by a variety of motivations which will affect such things as anxiety or attitude. The lecturer has to facilitate the task of learning; he has to choose simple words and various ways to assist the learning process. He needs to encourage his students to be active by using the following steps that represent the major motivations for learning English as a foreign language:

a.   Motivation helps the learner to be able to interact with foreigners while travelling abroad.

b.   To be able to face the anxiety

c.   To read and participate in FL so easily and without being afraid of making pronunciation mistakes

d.   To be able to attend and participate in international conferences.

e.   Being capable of reading English literature and understand its meaning.

In the light of this, being fluent in English as Second Language (ESL) or as a Foreign Language means being able to keep the language coming in interactive speaking activities namely in OE course where most lecturers are trying to involve their students to be motivated by exchanging opinions regardless to mistakes, fails or even do repetitions as long as they are able to keep talking freely; because the success is to move from fail to fail without losing motivation.

- **The Role of Materials**

Successful educator has always taken a positively critical approach so as to develop his work by using his own and other experts' experience. Teaching materials have a great influence in both teaching and learning ESL. Its contain a immense position in building conversations in the classroom, in addition to this, the use of materials which include pictures, showing movies, poems, books, songs, data-show, Google meet, PowerPoint, etc, help the ESP teacher to prompt his class particularly in the section of Oral Expression. These materials may assist to involve learners in positive way and to create a means of communication and negotiation inside the classroom.

5.   Conclusion

Interaction in the classroom is considered as a fundamental pillar in the process of teaching the language to the student, as well as in mastering that language. Of course, this is due to the fact that speaking skill is one of the first and most significant means of communication that people has gained since ancient times in his daily, practical and personal life to secure his basic needs. In the light of that, education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights. It shall promote understanding and confidence between the ESP teacher and his students in order to broaden their knowledge and learn something they really understand and enjoy learning it. The purpose from this paper is to highlight the importance of Oral Expression module in the process of interaction during the classroom and as a key course in building confidence between students themselves. However, the difficulties that face both ESP teachers plus the learners of EFL in the classroom can be expunged through the implementation of the educational materials such as the value of motivation and speaking in breaking the wall of silence between EFL teachers and their students who may derive from different fields. From this paper, one may understand that a successful learner of ESL is confident in his ability to learn, he has a self-reliant, motivated and passionate, aware of what he wants to learn, unafraid of making mistakes, a good risk taker, willing to take responsibility for his own learning. In the same stream, an effective ESP teacher is the one who tells, explains, demonstrates and inspires.

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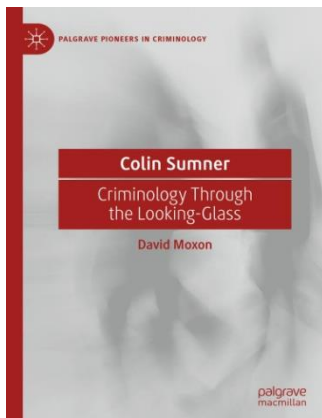
BOOK REVIEW

David Moxon (2020). *Colin Sumner: Criminology through the looking-glass*. Switzerland: Palgrave.159p

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The book "Colin Sumner: criminology through a looking glass" by David Moxon published in 2020 organized under a series of "Palgrave pioneers in criminology" reviews the work of the criminologist Colin Sumner, a leading figure in the theory's development of "censure" in the sociology of deviance and who did not have his right in sociology of crime despite the finesse of his views that are combined in the sociological law study and the orthodox criminology and revolves around a major concept of ideological censure through which he tried to replace the deviance.

Colin Sumner is a retired researcher professor of criminology, he took a law degree in 1970 at the University of Birmingham, and a Phd in 1976 entitled "Ideology and deviance "supervised by Ian Taylor at the Sheffield University.

He wrote and edited many books as "reading ideology 1979" and "The Blackwell Companion to Criminology 2004", also some article about law, social control and Marxism and the theory of deviance. He is the founder of crime Talk, a global educational resource and a publisher of crime Talk books.

Sumner was known by his main book entitled: "The sociology of Deviance: An obituary" published in 1994, the work exposes the crisis of sociology and the usage decline of deviance as a fundamental term in the field. Because the theory's failure to face social reality and to comprehend the word, Sumner try to demonstrate the problem of legal definition of crime and deviance in an ambivalence of power and censure referring to Marxist theory of ideology which has been ignored by criminologist.

The author divides the work of Sumner in three essential ideas:1/ The ideological censure as a substitute of deviance, concept linked to modern democratic society,2/neglected crime, justice and underdevelopment and 3/the death of deviance because the marginalization of the sociology of deviance whish he proposes to replace it by the sociology of censure.

The work contained an introduction and six chapters with 159 p resume the principal works of Sumner, his career as a scientist and the nature and significance of his efforts after him.

Sumner argued in his writings that human being objects have embedded ideologies. In this point of view, the social relation and construction of deviance was a common part of power produced within ideology, so he announced the death of deviance because of failed of sociology and its related theory. The author shows through the work of Sumner In his critique of Taylor, Yong and Walton's book "The new criminology", the weakness of the concept of deviance because a misunderstanding of the act by attributing the rationality to deviant behavior. "It was clear that the notion of the death of deviance was always implied as the counterpart of censure,"(p68). So the deviant behavior cannot be seen as deliberate, nor a result of simple label through a symbolic meaning, but a social practice of negative ideology which censuring practice by their unacceptance of it."So-called deviant behavior is composed of social practices censured

in the dominant ideology"(p29). However, the censure like as pointed out by Sumner is developed from clash practical interest; through legal system, communication, and media, some dominant groups allow this censure.

The author exposes a most important review of Sumner's work about law and its function related to Marxian analysis; On his writing about social control, Sumner critique censure as an act against riot or any other violence, "Because he took place against the backdrop of a fracturing and increasingly censorious late modernity" (p116). He argued that authority must win respect and provokes a motivation of auto-discipline. In this point of view, the concept of censure is doubly interpreted, and it is very important to practice it, insofar that we can control some cultural opportunity. Sumner borrows the phrase the "Measure for Measure" to explain how law and order must be adjusted with the freedom to get wrong, because it is easy to blame, hard to repair, easy to judge others, and hard to achieve justice. Sumner tries to locate the Measure for Measure in a historical context of legal thinking, as in the period of his writings, law was a means to achieve social control.

In his critique of criminology, Sumner renews the Marxist tradition, seeing that criminologists have positioned themselves as defenders of policy needs and obtain rewards for that, rather than focusing on causation. He thus shares the opinions of many scholars, such as Bonger, Reiman, and Chambliss about crime, which is defined by the state in its legislation and committed by the poor. Here we adopt Reiman's idea from his book "The rich get richer, and the poor get prison 2017. Many of the ways in which the well-off harm their fellows (deadly pollution, unsafe working conditions, and some of the harmful practices that have led to financial crises) are not even defined as crimes, though they do more damage to life and limb or take more money from people's pockets than the acts that are treated as crimes" (p15). Furthermore, Sumner believes that the meaning of crime loses its integrity, unless it is studied in the context of certain historical contexts that look at social control over crime and social harm.

The last chapter resumes the cumulative Sumner's work and his position on ideology through the word of censure, and his critic of late modernity. His commitment to the theory and criminology is based that crime and deviance are problematic and lead to ideological censure.

The influence of Sumner's work in the field of criminology was weak because of his radical position on crime and deviance and his concern on ideology and censure. The writhing of Sumner since his earlier book the Reading Ideologies (1979) was a consistent and homogeny work about a new vision on criminology through a systematic critic of law, ideology, and other forms of social control. In 1994 Sumner, announcing the "death" of any scientific confidence in the sociology of deviance, or liberal ideas on the rule of law, as pointed out by Morrison "If criminology was to be scientific it would have to study sociology of moral censure" (1995: 456).

The book of David Moxon is not just a Sumner's biography, but an original work which retraces a path of scientific activism, a career full of struggle by combative criminologist for a new discipline free from narrowly political interests.

Through the looking glass Sumner reverse the conventional image of criminology and invokes a new look over reality.

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Professor Daniela Șoitu PhD from the Department of Sociology and Social Assistance of "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University in Iași, is the authoress of numerous volumes and articles, studies and research in the field of social gerontology, social services and socio-medical services for vulnerable people, including the elderly, as well as a project coordinator and a member of research teams.

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The authors of the volume "Long-term care: practices, measures, policies", answer, in eight chapters, to questions such as: Do we live better, healthier? Are we happier, more fulfilled? Are there still differences in life expectancy between men and women? What exactly causes these differences? What exactly do we need to do in order to reduce them? How do we prevent social and health risks? How can we increase the well-being of the current generations and of the future ones? What happens when we need help?

It is necessary to have an integrated approach to social and medical services, a change of paradigm by looking for solutions, starting from needs, by emphasizing preventive actions, by co-creating an ecosystem that will consider opportunities, by preventing and by reducing risks. The first chapter of the volume belongs to Professor Daniela Șoitu PhD who, by documentation and professional experience, selected and included in the study two conceptual frames upon the long-term care: a medico-social one, and an integrating-participating-prospective one, with a conceptual frame made around the medical needs of healthcare and their costs, the degenerative aspects of the physical and mental well-being, due to vulnerabilities, but also the insured risks. Another conceptual outlined frame identifies arguments such as: the individual responsibility in social life contexts, the complexity of reports on the health conditions by social determinants, and the concern for the sustainability of the Long-Term Care system.

The authors of the second chapter are Professor Daniela Șoitu PhD, Professor Romeo Asiminei PhD, Alin Andrieș, Mircea Asandului and George Maha. This chapter identifies arguments and explanations whose purpose is to make methodological patterns of analysis and interpretation, the sustainability of Long-Term Care system and relationship between social services and social inclusion. The satisfaction degree of the beneficiaries concludes this first part.

Professor Aniela Matei PhD is the authoress of the third chapter which presents a conceptual and methodological scheme for substantiating an approach to set up public policy measures in the field of long-term care.

The fourth chapter was written by Professor Aniela Matei PhD, Mihaela Ghenţa PhD, Luise Mladen Macovei PhD and Elena-Silvana Bobârnat PhD. It presents a description of public policy measures in the field of human, financial and material resources, which are necessary for the development of the long-term care system in European countries. It also presents good practices in preparing the health system to provide services to the elderly.

The fifth chapter was made by Professor Aniela Matei PhD, Mihaela Ghenţa, Professor Luise Mladen Macovei and Elena-Silvana Bobârnat. It describes good practices for long-term care in countries such as Austria, Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Italy, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland but also Slovenia.

The authors of the sixth chapter are: Professor Daniela Şoitu PhD, Lecturer Nicoleta Moron PhD and Professor Romeo Asminei PhD. It mentions good practices in preparing the health system, regarding the services for the elderly.

The authors of the seventh chapter are: Professor Aniela Matei PhD, Mihaela Ghenţa PhD, Professor Luise Mladen Macovei PhD and Elena-Silvana Bobârnat PhD, whereas the final chapter was written by Professor Daniela Şoitu. It completes the analyzes and proposals for policy measures - the component of human, financial and material resources, which are necessary for the development of the long-term care system, respectively proposals for policy measures - the component of preparing the health system, regarding the services for the elderly.

The results of the analyzes contained in the volume primarily reflect initiated measures, practices and policies, with results recorded in other cultural and geographical spaces; they are all provided clearly, concisely and illustratively. It reveals defining elements in understanding and using the levers of a current field, of great interest, which quickly developed in European countries: the long-term care, which represents a complex form of providing social, medical, socio-medical and psycho-social services, for a period that exceeds a specified number of days. The volume analyzes the specialized literature, as well as the strategic and methodological framework related to the long-term care sector at the European level and in Romania.