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SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE IN THE ALGERIAN SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT: BETWEEN SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL MECHANISMS.

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Abstract: *The school is an excellent social institution, but it is not immune to the influence of various phenomena and problems that plague and weaken society. Violence is one of those problems that has spread in various forms and manifestations. Despite the school's efforts to combat direct forms of violence, it remains helpless against covert and implicit methods. This poisoning of the educational environment and the complexity of the school community have turned it into a platform for practicing many destructive and dangerous behaviors. The Algerian school also suffers from the proliferation of violence and its infiltration into all educational institutions, with its implications and meanings permeating various aspects of the pedagogical environment. In this paper, we will analyze the phenomenon and extract its indicators by providing a socio-psychological interpretation of symbolic violence in the Algerian school environment. Sociology and psychology have offered us diverse intellectual insights and integrated approaches that explain symbolic violence in its social implications, mechanisms, and psychological strategies.*

Keywords: Symbolic violence, Algerian school, harassment, psychological mechanisms, social implications

1. Introduction

Violence is an ancient phenomenon that has accompanied humanity throughout its history. It has been a deeply rooted practice in the depths of human civilization, leading to the downfall of civilizations and the collapse of governments. Its scope extends to all areas of human existence, presenting itself as an issue that affects individuals and society, inflicting material and human damage on individuals, groups, and institutions alike.

Violence is not a phenomenon caused by a singular factor, and its boundaries are not limited to specific individuals. It has become a complex scourge with various motives and dimensions, resulting from psychological and social factors intertwined with political, economic, and cultural factors. It emerges from society and impacts it, giving rise to negative manifestations that strike at the social and cultural fabric of communities.

Throughout time, violence has taken on various forms and manifestations. Physical violence represents the simplest and most instinctive form, attracting the attention of scholars and researchers across diverse fields. However, there exists another intricate and profound pattern that operates through secrecy and implication, permeating different structures and organizations, enabling oppression and the exertion of power. This phenomenon is known as non-physical or "symbolic violence," which assumes numerous covert forms. Symbolic violence serves as a potent backdrop for practices that often go unnoticed and unacknowledged, necessitating a scientific and methodological study and analysis for a comprehensive understanding of this type of violence.

In this context, we aim to focus on one aspect of violence that permeates all areas of life and manifests in diverse applications and practices: symbolic violence. It represents a type and pattern of practices that express and achieve suffering. While the subject is relatively new in terms of study and conceptualization, the practice itself is ancient, surrounded by silence, marginalization, and a lack of social and legal recognition. This has led to the exacerbation of

the phenomenon and the evolution of its mechanisms, as these deviant behaviors and symbols infiltrate Algerian society, spreading within families, educational environments, and workplaces. The educational environment reflects and perpetuates relationships of power and oppression that have historically targeted vulnerable classes and groups within society.

An ideal educational environment should embody balance and security, fostering comfort, happiness, and nurturing diverse cognitive and psychological aspects such as self-assurance, optimism, and openness towards others. However, this is not the case for a substantial portion of the population. For many, schools become a source of suffering and distress, where individuals face various forms of pressure and constraints. This accumulation of stressors leads to tension, suffering, and violence. Sociologically and psychologically, violence within educational institutions has undergone development. Initially, physical or material violence garnered significant attention from educational institutions. Nevertheless, it has witnessed a significant decline due to a multitude of cultural, legal, and human rights factors. As a result, violence has taken on more insidious and subtle forms, concealing itself within implicit practices revolving around symbolic and psychological violence. In this regard, Hirigoyen (1998) suggests that direct violence is socially unacceptable, thereby providing room for psychological violence to prevail.

2. Symbolic violence in the context of psychological and sociological approaches

Symbolic violence is a concept studied and analyzed by psychology and sociology. It refers to a type of violence that is executed through symbols and non-material means, rather than direct physical force (Galtung, 1990: 292). Symbolic violence utilizes social and cultural symbols and meanings to exert control, inflict harm, and restrict others.

Psychology examines symbolic violence from a psychological and cognitive perspective. It focuses on understanding the psychological and cognitive factors that contribute to the use of symbolic violence and its impact on victims and society. Psychology explores emotions, beliefs, personal values, and mental processes that influence the formation of this form of violent behavior and its effects on individuals and society.

On the other hand, sociology studies symbolic violence from a social and structural perspective. It emphasizes the social, cultural, and political factors that influence the use of symbolic violence and its impact on individuals and society. Sociology examines social patterns and structural forces that encourage the use of symbolic violence, define its patterns, and determine its effects on society and social relationships.

Psychology and sociology share similarities in their analysis of symbolic violence as they both investigate the motives and effects of symbolic violence and seek to understand the factors that contribute to its occurrence and prevalence. They aim to develop theories and concepts that help in the explanation and understanding of symbolic violence in its various manifestations and practices.

A. Symbolic Violence in Sociological Approach

Symbolic violence is considered one of the most significant sociological concepts in terms of its profoundness and authenticity due to its relative novelty. It falls within the realm of enigmatic problematic concepts (Wafi, 2018: 431). Symbolic violence is held captive by critical intellectual assumptions that attempt to refine and engineer its dimensions and functions.

The concept of symbolic violence emerged in the works of Pierre Bourdieu and Jean Baudrillard in their book "Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture" in 1980. Bourdieu later extensively discussed this concept in his book "Outline of a Theory of Practice" in 1982 and "Masculine Domination" in 1990. Bourdieu defines symbolic violence as the practices of social, educational, and political authorities exerting violence within the framework of their legitimate power over individuals, aiming to control and manipulate their lives according to

specific ideologies, goals, and beliefs. Symbolic violence merely represents the problems experienced by a social class or group that leads to marginalization, belittlement, and other forms of violence (Ayyad, 2016: 343).

Bourdieu concluded that symbolic violence manifests indirectly through interpersonal relationships, relying on the symbolic meanings conveyed through individuals' discourses to subjugate and control their behaviors to a great extent. It represents any influence or authority that imposes a set of meanings, carrying in them the legitimacy to suppress and erase reports of power, which is fundamentally the basis and source of this power (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990). Symbolic violence is an arbitrary and authoritarian form of violence that imposes power and control over others, depriving them of their freedoms and subjecting them to a set of symbolic meanings. Perpetrators of symbolic violence claim the legitimacy of their rights and the legitimacy of exercising this violence, just as they are publicly practiced. However, they employ this form of symbolic violence as a means of retaliation (Bourdieu, 1991 :78). Therefore, this violence does not directly cause physical harm to individuals but inflicts psychological damage that may develop into physical symptoms. It can be measured through individuals' perception of the violent practices they face, such as deprivation and abuse in their social lives. Symbolic violence is practiced by others through various methods, including devaluing individuals, asserting superiority over them, denying their capabilities, depriving them of their rights, and suppressing their self-expression. Symbolic violence shares the characteristics of arbitrariness and despotism with other forms of violence, all of which share the common goal of causing harm and damage to others, regardless of whether this harm is explicit or hidden (Mohammed, 2018: 5).

Pierre Bourdieu establishes his sociological analysis of symbolic violence by relying on his understanding of symbolic power and the division of the social world into fields. He investigates how these social fields function to understand their nature and the internal logic that governs them, as well as their dialectical relationship with the concept of power. Bourdieu states, "Power is not something that is located in one place, but rather a system of interconnected relations, and we find that every structure of the social world must be taken into consideration in order to understand the mechanisms of domination and control" (Bourdieu, 1987: 48). According to this rule, it becomes evident that power, according to Bourdieu, is a complex system that infiltrates all the relationships and connections that operate within it through precise and effective mechanisms that control the general structure of that system (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990). Therefore, Bourdieu emphasizes connecting it with the concepts of order, field, which are of great importance in his intellectual project. In his conceptualization of symbolic power, Pierre Bourdieu relies on various theoretical studies and field research, which.

From all that has been mentioned, we can infer several distinguishing points of the sociological analysis of symbolic violence:

- Symbolic violence reflects class differentiation and social and cultural inequality among social strata.
- Symbolic violence is a natural outcome of disparities in interests, benefits, and circumstances between the new belief and the old belief.
- Symbolic violence elucidates symbolic power practices and mirrors its hidden nature through laws and systems.
- Symbolic violence shares the objective of causing harm and damage to others with various other forms of violence, but it differs in terms of its manifestation and tools.
- Similar to other forms of violence, symbolic violence exhibits the qualities of arbitrariness and oppression.
- Symbolic violence is a cultural and social phenomenon in its outward appearance, while concurrently reflecting the existence of intellectual and political conflicts between dominant and dominated categories.

- Symbolic violence holds substantial indirect influence and impact based on the collection of symbols and their meanings.
- Symbolic violence assumes multiple forms and attributes, with encoding being the most significant among them."

The sociological approach in the analysis of symbolic violence focuses on the diverse meanings of society and the manifestations of class disparities within its different strata. It also examines the interactive mechanisms that seek to solidify ideas, beliefs, customs, and ideologies through the exercise of invisible and subtle symbolic power. In contrast, the psychological approach emphasizes the interactive dimensions that govern the relationship between the parties involved in symbolic violence. This perspective introduces additional terms that align with the field's scholarly view. Specialists and sociologists endeavor to apply these terms to the phenomenon of symbolic violence through rigorous scientific and academic observation of the various mechanisms at play and the resulting effects. Thus, terms such as moral oppression, psychological oppression, or harassment are employed to convey the complex nature of symbolic violence.

B. Symbolic violence according to the psychological approach

According to Le Petit Larousse 2001 dictionary, "le harcèlement" (harassment) is defined as subjecting an individual or a group to repeated small annoyances and attacks. Michel Drida, the president of the "Mot pour Maux" association, defined harassment as "inflicting suffering... in a permanent, repetitive, or systematic manner by individuals towards others, using all the means permitted by the relationship" (Drida, 1999: 16).

Ariane Belharam (2007) defined the phenomenon as "aiming to gradually destroy an individual or a group by another individual or group through systematic attacks seeking to forcibly obtain something against the will of the target individual."

Initially, the focus on moral harassment was primarily in Western countries, especially in Anglo-Saxon ones, where it was recognized as a destructive phenomenon in the workplace. Heinz Leymann (1996) is credited as the first to address this phenomenon and named it "mobbing." Moral harassment is defined as "a form of psychological terrorism that appears as a sequence of long-lasting reactions (words or actions) expressed or practiced by several individuals towards a targeted person, causing distress. Examples of such behaviors include isolation. These words and actions may initially seem harmless, but their persistent repetition has a profound impact" (Leymann, 1996: 26-27).

In France, the recognition of criminalizing psychological harassment came after the significant uproar caused by the book "Moral Harassment: The Perverse Violence of Everyday Life" by Marie-France Hirigoyen in 1998. The book defined psychological harassment as "any hostile behavior (gestures, words, actions, attitudes) that violates the dignity, psychological well-being, and physical safety of an individual through repetition and organization." (Ben Khalid, 2018)

Psychological harassment is considered a form of psychological abuse. It is characterized by repetition, insidiousness, and manifests in deviant behaviors that reveal hidden and symbolic violence. We may experience psychological harassment without immediately realizing it, as this type of violence focuses on symbolism and employs small, seemingly insignificant attacks that do not have an immediate impact when isolated. However (Galtung, 1990: 294), their repetition causes significant pain and suffering. Therefore, this type of violence is considered one of the most dangerous because it operates silently over a long period and seeks to erase all evidence that implicates the harasser. It is essential to confront this malignant phenomenon through study and analysis in order to understand its mechanisms and strategies.

In 2007, Ariane Bilharam categorized the serious literature on the phenomenon of psychological harassment into four main categories: social, clinical, legal, and victim-oriented

currents. In this presentation, we will focus on the first two categories as they provide the most relevant contributions to the subject matter:

- **The social Current:** This category encompasses books that specifically address workplace issues, with a strong emphasis on social psychology or work psychology. One notable example is Heinz Leymann's book, which played a significant role in fueling resistance among workers against these aberrant practices. In more recent times, we can observe a growing interest in this form of violence through the works of Christoph Dejours (1998-2001). He has published rigorous and noteworthy studies that delve into the dynamics of work and the suffering experienced within the professional milieu. Moreover, Dejours has focused on the detrimental effects caused by this deviant behavior and highlighted how society and organizations contribute to its prevalence by remaining silent and marginalizing the phenomenon.
- **The clinical Current** encompasses books with a clinical or psychoanalytic orientation that aim to identify the mechanisms involved in sexual harassment. Marie-France Hirigoyen's works, for instance, explore the phenomenon through the marital relationship between the harasser and the victim, revealing the deviant practices. She pays attention to various contexts of harassment, from workplaces to schools and families, extracting the behaviors and mechanisms of psychological harassment through clinical analysis of her clients' experiences.

3. Mechanisms and Steps of Symbolic Violence

Marie France Hirigoyen (1998) identified the mechanisms of psychological harassment or symbolic violence in 6 steps. They can all be employed together to target and humiliate the victim, or a combination of them may be used. They can also be arranged according to a predetermined strategy as follows (Agaguenia, 2009: 5):

A-Devaluation: It is one of the mechanisms that can be observed in psychological harassment, as it aims to criticize the other person in front of others and use methods to diminish their value, whether in the eyes of others or in their own eyes. This can be seen through the use of certain terms and innuendos, such as stating that women have less value than men.

B-Reputation damage: This occurs through the dissemination of lies and false allegations about the victim, tarnishing their honor and reputation. It affects their image in front of others and influences how people interact with them.

C-Insult: It refers to any actions, words, or gestures that harm the victim's religion, personality, race, or any aspect related to them.

D-Isolation: Isolation is one of the strongest hidden mechanisms used in psychological harassment, as the perpetrator seeks to sever all social and familial ties of the victim in order to isolate them and exert various other forms of harassment. Isolating the victim also affects their psyche, causing them to feel loneliness, weakness, and a lack of options in the face of the harasser, thereby enhancing the harasser's control over them.

E-Blaming the victim: This may involve insinuating to the victim and directing them to engage in wrongful behaviors, and then criticizing them and highlighting their mistakes in front of others. Alternatively, the victim may react inappropriately under the pressure exerted by the harasser.

F-Sexual harassment: Sexual harassment is closely related to psychological harassment, as both seek to humiliate the victim. (Ben Khalid, 2018) Each type can utilize the other as a mechanism to achieve its objectives. Thus, the boundaries between them are not always clear.

From a sociological perspective, symbolic violence has manifestations and methods classified by Bourdieu, as stated by Hussein Ayyad (2016: 343). These manifestations include:

A-Denigration: It is a behavior characterized by superiority, discrimination, and the devaluation of individuals, particularly those of lower social status. This behavior is manifested through disdain, belittlement, social and professional exclusion.

B-Value Denial: This involves denying the capabilities and skills of individuals with the intention of controlling them, limiting their abilities, and suppressing their potentials and talents.

C-Psychological Appropriation: It refers to the appropriation of individuals' rights and legitimate social and professional privileges, as well as depriving them of the opportunity to express their thoughts, opinions, and personal orientations.

D-Declared Hostile Interpretation: This entails the use of symbols, verbal signs, and bodily expressions that indicate the aggressor's power, rejection, and the imposition of their functional and social dominance over others. Bourdieu emphasizes that symbolic violence is not based on any moral or intellectual criteria because its purpose is to humiliate the individual, make them feel inferior, deprive them of their human rights, and disregard their psychological and social needs.

These techniques, practiced and combined, constitute a form of invisible and intangible violence that casts its shadow on the victim, causing psychological pain, social narcissistic wounds, self-devaluation, cultural retreat, and diverse and profound effects that vary in their severity on the mental health of the victim on one hand, and on the social structure on the other.

4. Symbolic violence in the Algerian school environment

The school is considered one of the most important institutions of socialization, created by humans to achieve the educational process within a formal framework. It is one of the most significant environments for education through comprehensive pedagogical and educational goals. As a social product, it is not immune to the influence of various phenomena and problems that afflict and weaken society. (Ziyada, 2007: 12) Violence is one of those problems that has spread in various forms and manifestations. Despite the school's efforts to combat direct forms of violence, it remains powerless against covert and implicit methods. This poisons the educational climate, complicates the school environment, and turns it into a space for destructive and dangerous behaviors.

Symbolic violence is considered one of the most dangerous forms of violence due to its profound emotional and psychological impact. Education in its various forms and domains is a source of what is known as symbolic violence, whether it occurs at home, in schools, or even through the media. In its essence, education carries knowledge, experiences, and guidance that perpetuate the dominance of one group over another. Symbolic violence arises due to the power and oppression exerted on individuals by the state or its institutions, such as schools and other professional and educational structures, especially the family, based on a set of traditions and customs that are taught to individuals, in addition to the existing laws. (Wafi, 2018: 431)

Bourdieu considers educational activity as a form of symbolic violence, as it is imposed by an arbitrary entity that promotes a cultural and social pattern that reinforces the interests of a particular social class and sustains its dominance through hidden power relations. The school is not seen as a place of dominance but rather as a fair institution that promotes upward mobility for the disadvantaged class. There is no need to impose it through force or physical violence; it would be more practical if it is imposed through the ideology of talent, which signifies symbolic violence. Thanks to symbolic and ideological representations practiced in a society that conceals inequality and power relations, legitimacy is given to symbolic violence. (Jabelah, 2016: 171)

Symbolic violence has undergone sociological and psychological evolution within educational institutions. Initially, physical or material violence was the most prominent form of concern for educational institutions. However, it has witnessed significant decline and

retreat under the influence of various cultural and rights-based factors, leading to the emergence of more cunning and subtle forms of violence. It has concealed itself behind implicit practices, revolving around verbal and psychological violence, taking on multiple forms such as cultural violence, moral violence, psychological violence, and linguistic violence. (Watafah, 2013: 21-22)

The Algerian society has experienced a history filled with conflicts, confrontations, and wars. The Algerian individual has witnessed various forms of violence due to historical accumulations and successive civilizational deposits. In recent decades, violence has taken on dimensions that pose a threat to the social and moral system, given its widespread and escalating nature, as well as its diverse methods and manifestations. It has emerged through multiple approaches and expanded beyond the confines of violence, becoming a component of the social fabric of Algerian society to the extent that Algerians have been characterized as inherently violent beings.

The practice or exposure to violence is not limited to a specific social class but has become a method of coexistence, expression, and self-assertion. The manifestations of violence and its causes in Algerian society are diverse. They range from numerous socio-psychological factors such as unemployment, poverty, frustration, marginalization, and alienation to multiple objective factors that contribute to the spread and entrenchment of a culture of violence. Socialization institutions, such as the family and school, play an active and prominent role in perpetuating violence by embodying violent models, whether physically or morally.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the phenomenon of violence due to its evident impact on the social structure of Algerian society. This has led sociological and psychological studies to make serious efforts to understand the causes of the phenomenon in various fields and environments.

The Algerian school system also suffers from the spread of the phenomenon of violence and the infiltration of its patterns throughout the educational environment, with the proliferation of its implications and meanings in various dimensions of pedagogical practice. (Wafi, 2008: 440) In this regard, Rachid Amellal holds society, as well as the state, responsible for the deterioration of conditions in educational settings. The responsibility lies with society in all its components and strata, as well as with the state, its policies, institutions, and programs.

The school is a social product that reflects a dialectical relationship based on influence and being influenced. The learner is the product of society, its values, and its prevailing culture, as they are affected by deviance, weakened by weakness, and their abilities fade away due to the fragility of their structures and systems. Amellal adds that what the school environment has witnessed in recent times is a reprehensible moral decline, a troubling educational divide, and a deliberate cultural erosion. (Bourdieu, 1991 :23) This questions the educational function of the school and tests its ability to reflect its true cultural and moral identity.

When a learner violates the sanctity of their teacher, or when they enter the school grounds with the intention of unleashing their violent impulses and anger, or when the educational space transforms into a breeding ground for corruption and moral decay, and various forms of deviant social discourse emerge, or when students exchange insults and profanities among themselves or with their teachers... responsibility in this context goes beyond the school and its fortifications.

If we focus on the hidden patterns of violence and practices in the Algerian school environment, we find that they intertwine with direct forms of violence and may even prevail in terms of prevalence and application. Symbolic violence is a reality and a practice whose dimensions and impacts on the functional and organizational structure of the Algerian school cannot be denied. According to Bourdieu, symbolic violence has meanings and implications

that manifest in pedagogical performance and practice (Laqous, 2013: 36). We will try to apply these implications to the reality of the Algerian educational system and draw the most important indicators from them:

A- Inequality in the education system: This is reflected in the unequal opportunities, which manifest in the disparity of infrastructure and educational facilities between different regions of Algeria, from north to south, and from urban to rural areas, or what is known as marginalized areas where the chances of success are lower due to interconnected factors. This leads to a loss of trust in the ideology of merit and undermines its meaning.

B- Non-inclusive climate: Environmental indicators that are unhealthy and unsupportive are present in the Algerian context. The Algerian educational system does not involve students in decision-making, nor does it support their aspirations or recognize their efforts and achievements.

C- Marginalization in student relationships: In this aspect, symbolic violence is manifested in the marginalization of students who suffer from financial vulnerability or belong to ethnic minorities or different lifestyles. This marginalization is practiced in remote and interior regions of Algeria, where decent living conditions and the foundations for effective and successful learning are lacking.

D- Power in knowledge construction: This is evident in granting authority to the textbook within the classroom. If we examine the Algerian educational reality, we find that the Algerian textbooks are subject to numerous criticisms. They have turned into an agenda for promoting specific intellectual and ideological views of those in charge of the sector during their tenure. Many textbooks have been found to have flaws and errors, yet they are still used as a curriculum to impose certain ideas, practices, and beliefs. (Bourdieu, 1991 :187)

On the other hand, students resort to confronting these symbolic practices through violent reactions in an attempt to overcome the inequality and oppression practiced by the school. In this regard, Dr. Ben Khald Abdelkarim confirms in an article published in the Algerian daily newspaper "Ech-chaab" on June 1, 2019, that the phenomenon of tearing books and notebooks in front of school gates to celebrate the end of the academic year is nothing but a strange ritual practiced by students as a way to vent their frustration towards the symbolic violence imposed by the Algerian educational system. He states: "The student becomes frustrated when successful students are praised and the academic failures are belittled, which generates a revolt against the school environment that neglects the psychological aspects of the student. In addition, the social climate characterized by the absence of justice and the weak presence of counseling and social guidance, not to mention the socio-economic level of some poor families, makes the student feel inadequate and deprived compared to their peers (Hussein 2008: 56). This leads to feelings of hatred and resentment towards others who are doing better than them and results in strange behaviors that drive them to engage in violent practices. This inferiority complex leads to psychological accumulations that manifest at the end of the student's academic journey, expressed through acts of vandalism as a celebration of ending this conflicting situation in which they have been living. It becomes a mechanism of psychological release towards the frustration caused by a school that does not contribute to their cognitive, psychological, and social growth and development" (Source: Ech-chaab daily newspaper, Algeria, <http://www.ech-chaab.com/>).

5. Conclusion

Violence is a complex phenomenon that affects individuals and societies, and it can manifest in various forms, including symbolic violence. The understanding of symbolic violence draws from the fields of psychology and sociology, offering different perspectives on its nature and implications.

From a psychological standpoint, symbolic violence is seen as a subtle form of aggression that operates through symbols, language, and social norms. It involves the use of power and manipulation to control and oppress individuals or groups, often leaving lasting psychological impacts. Psychological research examines the cognitive and emotional processes underlying symbolic violence, shedding light on how it influences attitudes, beliefs, and behavior.

On the other hand, sociology explores symbolic violence within the broader social context. It emphasizes the role of social structures, institutions, and power dynamics in perpetuating symbolic violence. Sociological perspectives highlight how symbolic violence reinforces and reproduces social inequalities, maintaining hierarchical systems and reinforcing dominant ideologies. It analyzes the social norms, cultural practices, and discourses that legitimize and sustain symbolic violence.

Both psychology and sociology recognize that symbolic violence operates through subtle mechanisms and can be difficult to identify and challenge. They acknowledge its pervasive nature and the potential for long-term harm to individuals and social cohesion. By integrating psychological and sociological insights, researchers aim to understand the underlying mechanisms of symbolic violence and develop strategies to address and prevent it. Ultimately, the interdisciplinary approach that combines psychological and sociological perspectives allows for a more comprehensive understanding of symbolic violence and its impact on individuals and society. It provides a foundation for developing interventions, promoting social justice, and fostering inclusive environments that reject and counteract symbolic violence in all its forms.

The Algerian school system also suffers from the spread of violence and the penetration of its patterns in all educational environments, with the proliferation of its implications and meanings in various aspects of pedagogical practices. When discussing symbolic violence, we find that the Algerian school environment has turned into a nurturing and encouraging environment for the spread and proliferation of this behavior, as evidenced by the observed indications and indicators practiced by the Algerian educational system, such as marginalization, inequality, and an unsupportive climate. In response to this oppression, students resort to violent and symbolic reactions.

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INTEREST, TRUST AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

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Abstract: *The present study delves into the key concepts of political interest, trust in politics and civic engagement since these elements represent the fabric of democratic societies at international level. In our view, when citizens are interested in the changes happening on the political scene and trust public authorities, they are more likely to display civic engagement and take part in shaping the future of their nation. The study also provides insights from an empirical study using data driven from the ninth round of the European Social Survey on 33 European countries.*

Keywords: trust, civic engagement, voting, boycott, political interest

1. Trust in politics

The more citizens know about authorities' actions, the more they can reliably assess authorities' intentions and their competence (Önnudóttir et al., 2021: 62).

Norris (1999) developed a five-level support system conceptual framework that ranges from diffuse support to specific support, as follows: support for political community (the most diffuse); regime principles; regime performance; regime institutions; political actors (the most specific). These levels overlap and, by placing the indicators considered in this conceptual framework, we could place satisfaction with how democracy works at the level of support for regime performance, but it could also capture support at other levels such as at the level of regime institutions (Önnudóttir et al., 2021: 62).

Trust in parliament and politicians could be both at the level of regime institutions and political actors. Thus, trust in politicians as the most specific indicator for political support and satisfaction with the way democracy works as the least specific, having trust in parliament in between. With this, we argue that satisfaction with democracy is at a more diffuse level, but that it also includes specific elements of political support (Önnudóttir et al., 2021: 63).

When the performance of institutions is perceived to be good and corruption low, people express higher levels of political support. Voters for government parties and right-wing voters generally express higher levels of support than voters for opposition parties and left-wing voters. Macro-level explanations for the level of political support were similar in terms of the institutional effectiveness of the political system, level of corruption, and income inequality. Better performance, lower levels of corruption and income inequality in general all go together with higher levels of political support (Önnudóttir et al., 2021: 63).

According to Easton (1975), people develop an affection for authorities in their early adult years, for example through socialization, and this affection may be reflected in their level of supporting the policy system, both specific and diffuse (Önnudóttir et al., 2021: 63).

System justification theory states how people vary in their dispositions to defend and protect the system they are in, whether the system is as small as the family unit or as large as a society. Research has shown that system justifiers are more likely to be right-wing, support incumbent parties and express satisfaction with their lives and the system they live in (Önnudóttir et al., 2021: 64).

Political trust, defined as an individual's perception that those in power are competent, benevolent and have the integrity to respond to public interests and needs, may be a robust predictor of policy evaluation. Trust in national parliament and national government predicts higher levels of perceived social cohesion and mitigates the adverse effects of economic strain on the perception of social structure (Martins et al., 2022: 2).

Social and political trust positively predicted support for environmental policies, regardless of attitudes, beliefs, or political orientations (Andrews, Jilke and Walle, 2014: 560-562).

The analysis at the individual level showed a positive relationship between institutional trust and attitudes towards social spending. Thus, people's preferences about protection and policy are not determined by their beliefs and concerns, and trust correlates with preferences much more than with beliefs and concerns, an important distinction not previously identified in the literature (Fairbrother, 2016: 360-362).

In addition, political trust is a positive predictor of support for a wide range of economic policies, for example economic recovery plans, tax cuts, privatization of social security (especially among people with conflicting ideological beliefs and orientations), policy evaluation tax and tax compliance, and government policies in a wide range of economic, social and security areas that are relevant for public discourse (Martins et al., 2022: 2).

The extant literature highlights the crucial role of political trust in the evaluation of general and specific policy initiatives at all levels of government. This phenomenon extends from trust in an institution or public administration to other institutions and policies. The effect is substantially more prominent regarding political distrust than trust, having a negative impact on institutions, politicians and policies (Martins et al., 2022: 2). From a psychological point of view, some researchers see this effect as a search for coherence in the formation of attitudes, a phenomenon that affects (among other things) the evaluation of policies.

Easton's (1965) concept comprises two main elements: *process* and *outcome*, in which the latter seems to be the most concentrated. The process part refers to how decision-making processes are organized, that is, how they are structured in terms of participants, the approach to problems and solutions, what rules are followed, how competent are government employees, the participation of affected actors and parties, etc. The production-related elements relate to the classic "who gets what" in politics. This means that people's support or trust in government depends on what they gain, regardless of the process leading to the outcome. This way of reasoning is very typical for the new public management movement, which claims that governments should be much more result-oriented, that is, more efficient (Christensen and Læg Reid, 2005: 9).

Distrust can be based on both myths and symbols promoted by the mass media, for instance "distrust mode" or any negative first-hand experiences with government representatives. People can trust certain political and administrative leaders because of their achievements or personal charisma, but not the institutional features of the political-administrative system. Another important aspect is related to the fact that there is distrust both in the system and in the specific governmental representatives. If we relate these elements to the distinction between diffuse and specific support, it is likely that individual elements of trust are more related to specific support, while institutional elements are related to diffuse support (Christensen and Læg Reid, 2005: 9-10).

Another variable is related to *time*. Trust in government can be based on experiences over a long period of time, on the current situation or expectations of the government in the future. The higher the level of trust inspired by the current government, the more likely a person is to express specific support and trust, while long-term experience points more in the direction of diffuse support and trust (Christensen and Læg Reid, 2005: 10).

People's satisfaction with public services in terms of trust can be seen in a broader or narrower performance perspective. The broad performance perspective assumes that certain

modern public reforms imply better quality of public services and, therefore, high levels of public satisfaction and trust in government. Quality improvements for some people may imply disadvantages for others, and quality improvements may in any case be primarily connected to political symbols and hype. People may react to quality as purely symbolic improvements, while real quality improvements may be seen by some as of little significance compared to other aspects of a service, either because access to a service is limited or simply because of a lack of reaction. Another possibility is that people have other reasons for trusting government than satisfaction with public services (Christensen and Lægheid, 2005: 10).

Previous studies have shown that party preferences have a major influence on individual evaluation of various aspects of the public sector. A person's position on the left-right ideological dimension has proven to be a consistent and important factor in understanding public attitudes towards sectoral institutions. The general tendency is that those who vote for the winning parties show a higher level of political support and trust than those who vote for the defeated parties (Christensen and Lægheid, 2005: 13).

The relationship between individual demographic factors and trust in government indicates that results can be used to predict long-term trends in trust. Demographics are variables that can also be related to diffuse support and general trust, be they knowledge-based or value-based. One such variable often mentioned is education, and the expectation is that the more educated people are, the more they trust the government. The cognitive factor is related to how people know to a greater or lesser extent the political-administrative system, as well as how they can distinguish various components or understand how public services are organized and function (Christensen and Lægheid, 2005: 13).

People with high levels of trust in one institution also tend to trust other institutions, while distrust in one is related to distrust in others. In other words, trust in government shows a cumulative pattern, and trust relationships are more complementary than alternative (Christensen and Lægheid, 2005: 24).

The idea that people with experience in employment or social services have less trust in the government than people without such experience is, however, not significant when controlling for other factors. This means that positive or negative experiences with different public services are more important for variations in trust than whether one has any experience at all. Simply being a consumer of specific public services is less important to people's level of trust in government institutions than their degree of satisfaction with them. We also find some support for the assumption that satisfaction with universal benefits generally increases trust levels more than experience and satisfaction with selective benefits. The function of institutions and their performance impact people's level of trust in them (Christensen and Lægheid, 2005: 24).

Trust in government institutions also varies significantly depending on political and cultural factors. Thus, citizens who are integrated and involved in the political system generally have a significantly higher level of trust in most government institutions than people who are less integrated and involved. The same is true for political and cultural factors, when institutions and citizens are poorly integrated (Christensen and Lægheid, 2005: 24).

Political and cultural variables have the strongest overall effect on the variation of people's trust in government. This indicates that integration and involvement in the political system and political-administrative culture is more important for trust in government institutions than the function and performance of these institutions, and also more important than social or demographic factors. The strong effect of overall satisfaction with democracy indicates that passive political integration and satisfaction may be as important to trust as more active political participation (i.e., party membership) (Christensen and Lægheid, 2005: 25).

Expressions of trust in a political institution can assume that, on average, the agents operating within those institutions will prove trustworthy or that democratic institutions

serve to select relatively trustworthy agents. Alternatively, “an expression of trust in government (or, synonymously, political trust and support) is a summary judgment that the system is responsive and will do what is right even in the absence of constant scrutiny”. Comparative analyses indicate that although individual-level perceptions of incumbents and attitudes toward other aspects of the political system (e.g., institutions) are related, perceptions of institutions appear to be empirically distinct from perceptions of incumbent government officials. In this context, political trust, defined as citizens’ confidence that the political system, its institutions, or actors will “do the right thing even in the absence of constant scrutiny” is a core concept in political culture research and it is considered essential to its proper functioning and the stability of democracy (Mauk, 2022: 1711).

High political trust is associated with greater willingness to pay taxes and fewer requests for institutional reform. Political trust makes political institutions work effectively and reduces the need for control and oversight. Investigating how election losses, electoral integrity and political trust relate to each other can thus help us assess under which conditions election results have the most profound consequences for the functioning of democracy (Mauk, 2022: 1711).

The dependent variable political trust is latently modeled as citizens’ trust in four key regime institutions: parliament, legal system, police and political parties. *Institutional trust* is a commonly used measure of political trust in both democratic and autocratic contexts (Mauk, 2022: 1715). *Political trust*, generally defined as citizens’ trust in political institutions, is an important indicator of political legitimacy – the belief in the justice of these political institutions and the regime they belong to. Measuring the level and development of political trust can elicit important information on the stability of political systems. Trust in a country’s political regime is a reservoir of goodwill when the day-to-day performance of the regime falls short of expectations. Given these crucial implications, political trust is often considered an essential component of civic culture, which is necessary for the stability of democratic systems. That is why the apparently declining levels of political trust in Western democracies over the past two decades have stimulated a growing body of research on the causes and consequences of political trust (Turper and Aarts 2017: 417).

The more people are educated, the more trust they will have in the political system. The underlying logic is that the more educated are more likely to benefit from political processes, for example, having better jobs and better life chances. Educated citizens understand better and participate in politics, therefore developing more political trust. From this perspective, the educated largely influence politics using the sophistication acquired through education, while the less educated are alienated from politics lacking similar means to those acquired by the educated. This approach emphasizes the instrumental role that education plays, as education is believed to provide access to more privileged positions (Ugur-Cinar, Cinar and Kose, 2020: 780).

The more educated question political elites and the traditional processes of representative democracy. In general, education as an explanatory variable has received little attention and aggregated results are rare in individual-level studies of political trust (Mayne and Hakhverdian 2016: 176). The relationship between education and political trust should thus be approached based on the context and not in a uniform manner (Ugur-Cinar, Cinar, and Kose, 2020: 780).

The effect of education on political trust may be moderately different for some micro- and macro-level variables. Education will shed light on the effects of formal instruction on political trust and therefore help solve contradictions regarding the relationship between education and political trust (Ugur-Cinar, Cinar and Kose, 2020: 781).

At a higher level, “trust” is a summary judgment “that the system is responsive and will do so correctly even in the absence of constant control” (Miller and Listhaug 1990: 358). More precisely, political trust can be defined as the expectation that political institutions will

operate according to the rule of law without continuous inspection (Marien 2011: 17). Political trust reflects “assessments of whether or not political authorities and institutions operate in accordance with the public’s normative expectations, which assumes that this is fair, equitable, honest, efficient and responsive to society’s needs.”. For this end, political trust integrates the concepts of impartiality, certainty, transparency, satisfaction with service delivery, political effectiveness and participation (Ugur-Cinar, Cinar and Kose, 2020: 782).

Education has conditional interactive effects, both regarding micro- and macro-level variables, which cumulatively affect people’s attitudes and trust orientations towards political institutions (Ugur-Cinar, Cinar and Kose, 2020: 789).

2. Voting participation

Voting is an essential mechanism of the democratic institution that allows citizens to participate in the decision to select a limited number of people in positions of authority. By voting, citizens exercise their indisputable right to participate in democratic decision-making. Therefore, voting is the defining element of democracy (Ahmad, Abdullah and Arshad 2015: 362).

Participatory politics is popularly conceptualized as involving citizens in making decisions that affect them. Participation is the essence of democracy. In organizational management, participation is a characteristic of good decision-making: the higher the number of people involved, the better the policy process. The quality, effectiveness and legitimacy of public policies are therefore measured by the extent to which a wide range of political actors participate in the process (Ahmad, Abdullah and Arshad 2015: 364). Consequently, participation involves related activities of seeking and accessing information as well as providing feedback from political actors. A perspective of good governance suggests that public participation facilitates better policy formulation and the implementation of decisions that generate an effective and efficient delivery of public services (Ahmad, Abdullah and Arshad 2015: 365).

As an integral part of the democratic decision-making process, voting is a mechanism that allows citizens to participate in the act of public decision with the purpose of choosing their leaders. Voting cannot be treated in isolation from other democratic decision-making chains by selecting the inclusive voting method (Ahmad, Abdullah and Arshad 2015: 372).

The quality of democracy is reciprocal to the extent that stakeholders participate in all aspects of public life, including political, social and economic areas. The rationale behind public participation is to ensure that those affected by the policy outcome have a deep and meaningful influence on the policy process (Ahmad, Abdullah and Arshad 2015: 372). In this sense, democracy is a system of electors by which representatives are chosen through voting. The effectiveness of such a procedure is mainly determined by the level of faith that people have in the electoral process (Jafar, Aziz and Shukur, 2021: 2).

Political participation can be vaguely defined as citizens’ activities that affect politics. Political participation is relevant to any political system, but it is an indispensable feature of democracy: “Where few take part in the decisions, there is little democracy; the more participation there is in decisions, the more democracy there is” (Verba and Nie, 1972: 1).

The main features of political participation are clear and indisputable. First, it is understood as an *activity* (or action). Second, it is *voluntary* and not ordered by a ruling class or mandated by law. Thirdly, participation refers to the *activities* of people in their role as non-professionals or amateurs. Fourth, political participation *concerns* the government, politics or the state in the broad sense of these terms and it is not limited to specific phases (such as parliamentary decision-making processes or the execution of laws) or to specific levels or areas (e.g., national elections or contacts with a party). Thus, any voluntary, non-professional activity related to government, politics or the state is a type of political participation (Verba and Nie, 1972: 3).

Different types of political behavior that meet these criteria can be easily identified: voting, signing a petition or filing an objection are simple examples of specific forms of political participation. By increasing the level of abstraction, participation can be understood as a latent concept (usually measured as a continuum) that covers more than one form of participation as specific manifestations. Several forms of participation that share certain basic characteristics are called mode or type of participation. For example, voting and party activities can be described together as a mode of electoral participation. A participatory policy repertoire unites all available forms – and indeed all modes – of participation (Tilly, 1995: 41-48).

3. Interest in politics

By political participation, we mean those legal acts of private citizens that aim (more or less directly) to influence the selection of government personnel and/or the actions they undertake (Verba, Nie and Kim, 1978: 1). Political participation has been seen as “actions of private citizens by which they seek to influence or support government and politics” or as “all voluntary activities of individual citizens, intended to influence either directly or indirectly political choices at various levels of the political system” (Milbrath and Goel 1977: 2; Kaase and Marsch 1979: 42).

Brady (1999: 737) defines political participation as the “directed action by ordinary citizens to influence political outcomes”. The author points out that we should think of political participation primarily as overt and observable actions or activities in which volunteers participate. Second, “people” are ordinary citizens, not political elites or civil servants. Third, the concept refers to deliberate attempts to influence people in power, to make a difference. Being interested in politics and social issues, or even discussing politics frequently, is not considered enough. Political participation refers to attempts to influence others – any powerful actors, groups or business enterprises in society – and their decisions regarding societal issues. Brady (1999) provides a broader definition of political participation. At the same time, it could be argued that Brady also tends to give more weight to actions directed at political elites than actions directed at other elites. This was actually a typical feature of the research field: even if scholars have suggested increasingly broad definitions of political participation, the focus has remained on a narrower set of civic activities.

It has also been stated that political participation is “citizen action aimed at influencing decisions that are, in most cases, ultimately made by public representatives and officials” (Parry, Moyser and Day, 1992: 16; in Brady 1999: 738).

The literature suggests a more extensive typology regarding political participation, comprising five dimensions. The first dimension is related to electoral participation. The second dimension is consumer participation, which covers donating money to charity, boycotting and political consumption, as well as signing petitions. Namely, it touches on the role of citizens as *critical consumers*. The third dimension is party activity: being a member and activate within a party, volunteering for or donating money to a political party. The fourth dimension is the protest activity, which covers acts such as participation in demonstrations, strikes and other protest activities. And last but not least, the fifth dimension is contacting organizations, politicians or public officials, namely contact activity (Teorell, Torcal and Montero, 2007).

Political participation is understood as the *active dimension* of citizenship. It refers to the various ways in which individuals participate in the management of collective affairs for a particular political community. Political participation cannot be limited, as political science research is, to conventional forms such as voting or standing for election. It also covers other less conventional types of political activity such as protests, demonstrations, sit-ins, hunger strikes, boycotts, etc. Even though the distinction between conventional and less conventional

forms of political participation is a matter of debate among political scientists, we argue that it is useful because the two categories involve different patterns of activities.

Political mobilization refers precisely to the process of building collective actors and a collective identity. Conventional forms of political participation, although they do not exclude comparable models of mobilization, take place within the previously structured set of political institutions. Voting can be interpreted as a very personal contribution to the functioning of a community policy. However, voting can also be seen as collective action when groups of voters organize a bloc voting initiative that requires mobilization. On the other hand, some unconventional forms of political participation, such as hunger strikes, can occasionally also be expressed as individual protest. By voting, citizens mandate those people to govern on their behalf. This process of legitimizing government action is called political representation. Nevertheless, political representation also refers to the result of the legitimation process, namely the group of persons mandated to govern on behalf of the citizens.

Interest groups directly influence public policy through political payments to incumbent politicians. Interest groups design their contribution programs to maximize profits. The government chooses the level of a policy instrument (tariff, tax, subsidy) to maximize its political support, considering the contribution graphs offered by various organized groups. In doing so, the government faces a trade-off. If it adopts the best policies, it will maximize national income but forgo interest group contributions and associated political support (Mayer and Mourmouras, 2008: 109).

Politically interested people are more knowledgeable about politics, more likely to vote and more likely to participate in politics (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Powell, 1986: 18-30; Verba, Schlozman and Brady, 1995). They are also more likely to be mobilized and attempts to encourage political participation often have significantly greater effects on individuals who are politically interested (Finkel, 2002: 995-1010).

Understanding the roots of political interest is becoming increasingly important as the effects of this type of intrinsic motivation are growing. As mass media provides much more content, the politically uninterested can more easily avoid news exposure than in the past, while the interested seek out more news, learn more about politics and participate at higher rates.

Political interest can resemble a well-rehearsed attitude, a personality trait, or a part of people's political identity. Most empirical studies of the persistence of political attitudes focus on the stability of party identification, concluding that many people identify with the same party for years and even decades (Green, Palmquist and Schickler 2002; Jennings and Markus 1984; Sears and Funk, 1999). Research on the persistence of political attitudes attempts to determine not only how stable certain attitudes are, but also when they are most likely to change. There is a persistence model according to which only early experiences influence attitudes and there is a "lifelong exposure" model that emphasizes change throughout people's lives as they continue to update their attitudes (Alwin, 1994; Merelman and King, 1986).

Another important idea is related to the fact that "early learning [can produce] a lasting tendency toward activism, coupled with strong motives to search the environment flexibly and imaginatively for a satisfactory political position" (Merelman and King, 1986: 479-476).

Participation in politics must include both the means of participating in the opinion-forming mechanisms of debate and deliberation, as well as the participation in the decision-making process. Action without speech and speech without action are both problematic. Thus, deliberative democracy and direct democracy are both inadequate in themselves, as properly participatory politics needs mechanisms to facilitate all political means, including speaking, acting, listening and protesting. When talking about political participation, theatrical

metaphors are often invoked, from Arendt's claim that politics is the "virtuosity of performance" to Rancière's references to the staging of politics (Smith, 2017: 76).

The most basic aspect of political participation is the ability to speak one's mind in a meaningful way that is taken seriously and listened to by others. Anti-political biases treat humans as troublesome animals, capable of expressing pain and pleasure but not engaging in meaningful discourse that can express opinions. Political science becomes the art of taming the beast of public sentiment, an art that remains relevant even when the people are able to elect representatives and are guaranteed the right to freedom of expression. Thus, before one can express an opinion on a political issue, the discourse becomes a contested ground between politics and anti-politics at the level of whom is considered capable of speech and whom is simply making noises of pleasure or pain. Before an actor can speak to the audience, a stage must be built to provide the opportunity to speak. Antipolitics denies that such stages are necessary because masses do not speak, they only signal vague preferences that representatives and economic experts can appease through top-down political decisions.

Politics consists of speaking, acting, listening and creating relationships and associations, activities that leave no direct material traces behind, unlike an artist who creates a painting. In this sense, politics is like other performing arts that require a public space populated by others so that the art can emerge and performers' virtuosity be revealed. Public political space serves as a theater in which people can act in the form of political participation (Smith, 2017: 77).

4. Trust levels in politics

For decades, political trust has been a central theme for political science and political psychology (Braithwaite, 2003). Many studies have focused on the underlying drivers of trust (Burke and Hsia, 2007; Frazier, Deaville, Green, Stringano, Willoughby, Plant and Mueller-Harvey, 2010; Schoorman and Bogotch 2010; 2007) and how trust influences the assessment of a variety of policy initiatives (Fairbrother, 2016; Habibov, 2014; Hammar, 2009; Hetherington and Husser, 2012; Konisky, Milyo and Richardson, 2008; Popp and Rudolph, 2011). It can be assumed that political trust has never played a more critical role in democracies than at this moment in history, especially when public action is required to ensure public safety (Woelfert and Kunst, 2020).

Low levels of trust in the political class are closely related to low voter turnout and populist voting (Hooghe, 2017). More recently, higher levels of political trust have positively affected compliance with various restrictions serving to protect societies in a time of crisis, such as social distancing and travel restrictions (Bargain and Aminjonov, 2020). Therefore, knowledge about the dynamics of political trust and its underlying drivers has never been more significant.

Political trust, defined as an individual's perception that those in power are competent, benevolent, and have the integrity to respond to public interests and needs, can be a robust predictor of policy evaluation. Trust in the national parliament and government predicts higher levels of perceived social cohesion and moderates the adverse effects of economic strain on the perceptions of social structure.

Social and political trust have predictive support for environmental policies regardless of attitudes, beliefs or political orientations (Fairbrother, 2016; Konisky et al., 2008). Analyses at individual level showed a positive relationship between institutional trust and attitudes about social spending (Habibov, 2014). In addition, political trust is a positive predictor of support for a wide range of economic policies, for example economic recovery plans, tax cuts and social security privatization, especially among people with conflicting beliefs and ideological orientations (Popp and Rudolph, 2009, 2011).

The literature highlights the crucial role of political trust in the evaluation of general and specific policy initiatives at all levels of the government. This phenomenon extends from

trust in an institution or public administration to trust in other institutions and policies (Christensen and Lægheid, 2005). The effect is substantially more prominent in terms of political distrust than trust, having a negative impact on institutions, politicians and policies (Levi and Stoker, 2000).

From a psychological point of view, some researchers see this effect as a search for consistency in attitude formation (Gawronski, 2012), a phenomenon that affects policy evaluation, among others (Calmfors, 2013). In the context of policy evaluation, trust serves as a heuristic for making an evaluative judgment under conditions of insufficient information (Rudolph et al., 2017), with initiatives from trusted sources rated more positively than initiatives from untrusted sources.

Previous research in organizational psychology has suggested that three main aspects affect the foundation and maintenance of trust: perceived competence, perceived benevolence and perceived integrity (Burke et al., 2007; Frazier et al., 2010; Schoorman et al., 2007). The first aspect refers to the actors' perceived competence in skills, competencies and characteristics that help the actor influence a certain domain. Perceived benevolence is the degree to which an actor is trusted to serve the holder's interest rather than one's own. The perceived integrity of the actor is the commitment to a set of moral values that the trustor considers to be appropriate (Schoorman et al., 2007).

5. Boycott actions

A political boycott uses economic coercion to force its victims to speak or act politically in a way that furthers the goals, not necessarily of the speaker, but of the boycott. Although the US Supreme Court has not explicitly ruled on the legality of political boycotts, in many cases it has indicated that the First Amendment does not protect activity designed to compel individuals to express a particular opinion. Political boycotters intend to force others, through economic coercion, to speak a certain way about a certain issue (Orloff, 1983: 1077).

Furthermore, political boycotts are aimed not at forcing the victim to take economic action, but at constraining the victim's discourse and association. Certainly, one who seeks to coerce political activity should have no greater constitutional protection than one who seeks to coerce economic activity. Thus, in cases similar to political boycotts, the Supreme Court has consistently held that the First Amendment does not protect the activity designed to constrain speech or association. These cases should serve as precedent when a court considers whether the First Amendment protects political boycotts. The cases suggest that, because political boycott is a manner of communication that constrains speech and association, courts should not consider it a privileged means of expression (Orloff, 1983: 1083).

Because a political boycott deprives its victims of their own freedom of speech and association, it should not be considered protected speech. The immediate purpose of a political boycott is to force its victims (private parties) to express themselves politically. The coercive power of a political boycott should not be underestimated. Merchants depend on sales for their livelihood; an effective boycott of their stores deprives them of their source of income. Although attempts to persuade individuals to act are usually protected by the First Amendment, attempts to coerce individuals to act are not so immunized (Orloff, 1983: 1092).

Boycotts are classical examples of the marketplace of ideas because they (more than other forms of political conduct) necessarily depend on the persuasion of others for their very continuation. Second, political boycotts generate an instance of the marketplace of ideas. Ideas and the real market interact with each other to press for political change (Lee, 2012: 537).

Mixing economic and political aspects may create some space, but the boycott is a necessary counterweight for other examples when political and economic spheres mix within the American society. There is one highly regulated area of law where these two spheres already intermingle: campaign financing (Lee, 2012: 537).

Political boycotts can be considered another incarnation of campaign spending, an independent holdback rather than an independent expenditure. Just as corporations spend, consumers must be allowed not to spend because this is where their market power lies (Lee, 2012: 551). Political boycott is conducted for a political reason, undertaken for the same reason as an election campaign or an impact litigation. A political boycott does not impose any result; in fact, when consumers boycott to affect the decision-making process, “other individuals with equally strong feelings may respond roughly in proportion to their numbers”. A boycott from one side does not shut down debate or prevent further discourse. For every boycott that pushes to influence social or political decisions from one side, there can easily be one from the other side. If others in the democracy disagree with boycotters, they may boycott in kind or expressly patronize the boycott targets, thereby frustrating the external effectiveness of boycotters. A political boycott consists of individuals, through collective action, seeking to affect the social world around them (the very stuff of self-governance) (Lee, 2012: 555).

Boycotters also make decisions that affect their own lives and future elections. While one part of the political boycott aims to change the minds of others, another part represents the personal belief of each participant that their money will not be available to be used in ways that clash with their personal beliefs. There are many places one can support, so part of boycotting is choosing not to take someone’s money that could be used to support the cause the boycott is organized against. While a boycott depends on the collectivity to achieve its political goals, even in failure, it remains an expression of “a series of voluntary decisions by free citizens”. Boycotts require their participants to make a decision not to support certain businesses. While in political boycotting this action is undertaken with the aim of influencing political and social structures or decisions, the participation itself defines each boycotter as an individual. Boycotters make individual decisions that say something about who they are (Lee, 2012: 556).

There are several types of boycotts. These are: *economic boycott*, *labor boycott*, the difference between individual economic retaliation and boycotts, the concern about “less legitimate” boycotts. Economic boycott refers to the fact that, if it is undertaken because of competition between the targeted business and the boycotters or because of any similar parochial interest, this can be kept outside the strong First Amendment protection recognized by the Supreme Court for boycott political (Lee, 2012: 566). In an economic boycott, the ultimate goal is to affect the market position of the boycott target. And while a political boycott may well have the ancillary effect of changing such a market position, the ultimate goal is to change social or political reality (Lee, 2012: 568).

Labor boycott refers to the fact that a boycott involves dialogue, with participants hoping to persuade the target to take political or social action. Participants say something to advocate their political goals. A political dismissal, on the other hand, contains no element of dialogue. It has a one-way impact. Moreover, a political boycott can, and does, end, while a dismissal ends the relationship entirely. It is possible, although not likely, that individuals will be rehired, but this does not change the finality of the layoff (Lee, 2012: 570).

Another definition given to the boycott is related to how the conception of the political boycott is constituted: a “right to try to affect the social decision-making process easily distinguishes legitimate boycotts from those that refuse to enthrone a business because of the identity of its owners or managers”. When one refuses to support something because of an immutable characteristic of the target’s identity, it should not be classified as a political boycott because it has no political goals, even if the boycott cannot be classified as economic in the sense that distorted competition benefits boycotters economically. A political boycott wants to achieve something; it is an impetus to convince the target to act in the political or social sphere (Lee, 2012: 573).

6. Types of civic engagement

Definitions of civic engagement as a collective action assume that such engagement most often comes in the form of collaboration or joint action to improve conditions in the civic sphere. Other definitions emphasize the political aspect of “civic” and equate civic engagement with “activities that are not merely collective but are specifically political (i.e., involving governmental action)” (Adler and Goggin, 2005: 238). Another definition of civic engagement is the following: “how actively the citizen participates in the life of a community to improve conditions for others or to help shape the future of the community” (Adler and Goggin, 2005: 241). Moreover, “civic engagement is any activity in which people come together in their role as citizens” (Diller, 2001: 21-22). In addition, “civic engagement can be defined as the means by which an individual, through collective action, influences civil society” (Van Benschoten, 2001).

Civic engagement is about rediscovering politics, the life of the city where men and women talk and act together, as citizens. The word *civic*, when connected to commitment, implies work that is done publicly, it benefits the public and it is performed together with others (Van Benschoten, 2001: 239).

Civic engagement comprises individual and collective actions aiming to identify and address issues of public interest. It can take many forms, from individual volunteerism and organizational involvement to electoral participation. It may include efforts to address a problem directly, work with others in a community to solve a problem, interact with representative institutions. Civic engagement encompasses a number of specific activities, such as working in a soup kitchen, serving in a neighborhood association, writing a letter to an elected official or voting (Van Benschoten, 2001: 240).

Some authors define the term *civic activism* from several perspectives. For example, it is seen as “any activity related to personal and societal improvement that results in the improvement of human connectedness and the human condition” (Diller, 2001: 22). Perhaps the most expansive (and subjective) definition of all is that “civic engagement is experiencing a sense of connectedness, interrelationship, and, naturally, commitment to the larger community of all life forms” (Diller, 2001: 22).

Civic engagement indicators number the following: civic indicators, electoral indicators and political voice indicators. Each indicator encompasses a series of dimensions. Thus, civic indicators include the following dimensions: community problem solving, regular volunteering for a non-electoral organization, active membership in a group or association, participation in fundraising run/walk, other fundraising for charity. Electoral indicators include the following dimensions: regular voting, convincing others, displaying various signs, stickers, campaign contributions, volunteering for candidate or political organizations. Indicators of political voice include the following dimensions: contacting officials, contacting print media, contacting broadcast media, protests, e-mail petitions, written petitions, boycotts, canvassing (Adler and Goggin, 2005: 242).

7. Empirical study on 30 European countries

Regarding the purpose of our research, we conducted an empirical study using data from the European Social Survey 2018, Round 9 (EES9 edition 3.1.), coordinated by the Centre for Comparative Social Surveys (City University in London), Catholic University of Leuven, GESIS Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, NSD Norwegian Centre for Research Data, SCP Netherlands Institute for Social Research and the University of Amsterdam.

The ESS survey is run every two years and it focuses on various social indicators. The ninth round of the survey was entitled “Timing of life, justice and fairness” and it covered (among others) topics related to the following: social behavior and attitudes; political behavior and attitudes, political ideology, inequality and social exclusion.

The sample included 33 European countries, as follows: Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom. Overall, we had data from 49,519 participants. According to the demographics, people involved in this EES survey were at least 15 years old, residing in private households across Europe.

In order to run the analyses, we used the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.

In terms of the methodological approach, we employed the Pearson pairwise correlation analysis. According to the literature, a coefficient is considered low when $r = \pm 0.1$, medium when $r = \pm 0.3$ and high when $r = \pm 0.5$.

Among the multiple indicators that were examined in the ESS survey, we selected the following, which serve the purpose of our study:

- **Interest in politics:** scale from 1 (“very interested”) to 4 (“not at all interested”);
- **Trust in political parties:** scale from 0 (“no trust”) to 10 (“full trust”);
- **Voted in last national election:** values 1 (“yes”), 2 (“no”), 3 (“not eligible”);
- **Contacted politicians or government officials last 12 months:** values 1 (“yes”), 2 (“no”);
- **Satisfaction with the way democracy works in the country:** values from 0 (“not at all satisfied”) to 10 (“very satisfied”);
- **Boycott of certain products:** values 1 (“yes”), 2 (“no”).

The first correlation we tested was between the variables “interest in politics” and “trust in political parties”.

Table 1. Correlation between political interest and trust in political parties

		Trust in political parties	How interested in politics
Trust in political parties	Pearson Correlation	1	-.266**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	49516	49516
How interested in politics	Pearson Correlation	-.266**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	49516	49519

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Authors' computation.

According to Table 1, there is a low negative correlation between our variables. Hence, considering the coding of the variables, more trust in political parties is associated with more political interest ($r = -0.27; p < 0.01$).

The second correlation investigated by us was between the variables “voted in last national election” and “interest in politics”.

Table 2. Correlation between political interest and vote in the last national election

		How interested in politics	Voted last national election
How interested in politics	Pearson Correlation	1	.215**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	49519	49519
Voted last national election	Pearson Correlation	.215**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	49519	49519

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Authors' computation.

As indicated by Table 2, there is a low positive correlation between the selected variables. Hence, with the variable coding in mind, it can be stated that a high interest concerning politics would be associated with a vote during the last national election process ($r = 0.22; p < 0.01$).

The third correlation we tested was between the variables "interest in politics" and "contact of politicians and governments officials last 12 months".

Table 3. Correlation between political interest and contact of politicians/government officials last 12 months

		Contacted politician or government official last 12 months	How interested in politics
Contacted government official last 12 months	Pearson Correlation	1	.213**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	49519	49519
How interested in politics	Pearson Correlation	.213**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	49519	49519

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Authors' computation.

According to Table 3, there is a low positive correlation between the selected variables. Hence, with the variable coding in mind, it can be stated that an increase in public disinterest for politics is associated with the lack of initiatives in contacting either politicians or government representatives for one year ($r = 0.21; p < 0.01$).

The fourth correlation we tested was between the variables "trust in political parties" and "satisfaction with the way democracy works in the country".

Table 4. Correlation between trust in political parties and satisfaction with democracy

		How satisfied with the way democracy works in country	Trust in political parties
How satisfied with the way democracy works in country	Pearson Correlation	1	.534**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	49519	49516
Trust in political parties	Pearson Correlation	.534**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	49516	49516

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Authors' computation.

Table 4 indicated that there was a high positive correlation between our variables. Hence, a high degree of satisfaction with the way democracy works is associated with a high level of trust in political parties ($r = 0.53; p < 0.01$).

Last but not least, we examined the relationship between interest in politics and the action of boycotting certain products.

Table 5. Correlation between interest in politics and boycott of certain products

		Boycotted certain products last 12 months	How interested in politics
Boycotted certain products last 12 months	Pearson Correlation	1	.240**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	49191	49191
How interested in politics	Pearson Correlation	.240**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	49191	49519

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Authors' computation.

According to the results in Table 5, there is a low positive correlation between the selected variables. In this sense, a complete lack of interest in the political scene is associated with a lack of willingness to boycott certain products during the last 12 months ($r = 0.24; p < 0.01$).

8. Conclusions

Based on relevant sources provided by the literature, our research details concepts such as political interest, different levels of trust in politics and various types of civic engagement, which define and shape democracies across the globe. Fueled by trust and their level of interest in the political life, citizens may decide to get involved in the process of communicating with public authorities by constantly engaging with them, taking part in voting processes and holding them accountable through the leverages of civic engagement.

Empirical results stemming from the 2018 European Social Survey (wave 9) based on correlation analysis run on data from 33 European countries indicate that trust in political parties is associated with interest in politics and satisfaction with the way democracy works. At the same time, interest in politics is associated with the following: voting during the last national election; the act of contacting politicians or governmental officials during the last 12 months; the act of boycotting certain products out of civic engagement.

All in all, studies focused on interest, trust and civic engagement across European countries are relevant and important because the way residents get involved in politics will determine the course of European democracies in the years to come.

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HUMAN RESOURCES IN THE ECONOMIC FIELD DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract: *In the first section of this paper, we will make a short foray into the literature dedicated to human resources in the Covid-19 pandemic, especially human resources in the field of industry, commerce and services. The second section, also very condensed, is dedicated to the review of some concepts involved in the foundation of our qualitative research: esteem and self-image, interpersonal relationships, job satisfaction, social capital and human resource development. The methodology section lists the main topics covered by the research instrument – the interview guide: 1) personnel and work schedule restructuring in organizations in the economic field during the pandemic; 2) the impact of the pandemic at the level of relationships in health work groups/work teams; 3) cooperation, competition and conflict between employees; 4) the self-esteem and self-confidence of employees; 5) some aspects of employees' social capital (trust, tolerance, personal relationships outside work place); 6) human resource development activities (learning, development and training opportunities) and their form of organization. The presented results reveal the many common problems that the human resource in the economy faced during the pandemic, but also some aspects that differentiated the industrial, services and commercial sectors.*

Keywords: self-esteem, interpersonal relations, job satisfaction, social capital, human resources development.

1. Introduction

The pandemic was also seen from the beginning as a special opportunity for research in the field of human resource development and management (Li, Ghosh and Nachmias, 2020: 332). Starting from considerations such as the one above, our paper will present part of the results of a didactic-scientific project carried out together with students from the master's programs in social sciences of "1 Decembrie 1918" University from Alba Iulia, during November 2020 - January 2021, project based on a series of socio-psychological foundations of human resources development, on the one hand, and on the semi-structured interview method, on the other. During the research, more than eighty employees from different fields of activity were interviewed, a significant number of them working in industry, commerce and services, fields strongly affected by the pandemic. The qualitative research from the mentioned didactic-scientific project took place in parallel with an extensive survey whose results were published by us in the last two years (see also Pascaru, 2021; Pascaru, 2022; Pascaru, 2023).

In the first section of this paper, we will first recall some aspects of the literature dedicated to human resources in the Covid-19 pandemic, specifically targeting human resources in the field of industry, commerce and services. Then we will present as succinctly as possible the concepts involved in the theoretical foundation of our qualitative research: self-esteem and image, interpersonal relationships, job satisfaction, social capital and human resource development.

The methodology section lists the main themes of our qualitative research and, accordingly, the main research questions.

We will present here only the research results for the economic field, grouping these results in relation to the themes fixed by the methodology: aspects of organizational change; new standards and job satisfaction; the impact of the pandemic on the work climate; self-image and confidence; cooperation, competition and conflict; labour groups and relations with management; employee trust and tolerance; decision making; development of human resources; the organizational and personal future in the representations related to the evolution of the pandemic at the time of the interviews.

The most important conclusion we reached is that the human resource in the economy has found the resilience necessary to adapt to the pandemic.

2. The Covid-19 pandemic and the issue of human resources in the field of industry, commerce and services

The issue of human resources during the COVID-19 pandemic was approached from a comparative-zonal and organizational perspective, in which rural vulnerabilities compared to the urban ones were highlighted (Peters, 2020: 446).

The COVID-19 pandemic, Mwita (2020: 253) observed, was not only the worst global health crisis since the Great Influenza (Spanish flu) of 1918, but it was set to become one of the costliest pandemics in recent history. With cities and countries locked down through quarantine and people's mobility discouraged, many businesses and firms were suffering, with customers and employees alike facing new ways of living, including avoiding face-to-face meetings. The shift to remote work, a solution, also brought great challenges for employee performance management. However, studies carried out in some Asian countries proved that the use of information technology in services such as banking was compatible with human resource management in general and performance evaluation, in particular (Rahman et al., 2020: 54).

The general link between human resource management and performance was also noted by Zhong et al. (2021): "During the outbreak, HR practices (such as training, profit sharing, development, job security and employee voice) have made an increased contribution to organisations' performance, mainly because widespread unemployment causes employees to cherish job opportunities more" (p. 18). This link was stronger in the case of small and low-technology firms, such as those in the hotel and catering industry.

The COVID-19 pandemic, researchers noted, has disrupted all types of organizations and caused HR managers to rethink their roles. They had to support the implementation of protective measures and social distancing practices and also be facilitators of new working methods, such as remote working and home remote working, which will apparently be permanent. As face-to-face collaboration was replaced by e-mail and videoconferencing, employees, managers and trainers had to do difficult work in difficult circumstances (Dreghici, 2020: 469).

Considering the measures taken around the globe, the specialists noted that with the pandemic came a series of serious psychological problems such as restlessness, fatigue, exhaustion, loneliness, fear and anxiety, uncertainty and economic conditions seeming to be the main factor behind these problems (Özbay and Özcan, 2021: 29-30). At the same time, the acceleration of economy digitization, by moving jobs to home, but also the expansion of online commerce, are noted. Likewise, the connection between companies and consumers could be strengthened by involving companies with money and equipment in supporting efforts to combat the effects of the pandemic (Özbay and Özcan, 2021: 30). It was felt that the pandemic can also be seen as "a large-scale natural experiment in corporate social responsibility", with firms that typically produced industrial goods taking the initiative to support the production of medical equipment, while other firms fired all staff and asked for government support, but continued to pay bonuses and large dividends (Karabag, 2020: 4).

Some studies carried out in the field of services have highlighted the fact that the leadership of organizations has a positive and significant impact on trust, and trust has a positive and significant impact on organizational performance (Santi, 2021:172).

Regarding the industry, the last decade of the Industry 4.0 era - *intelligent industry* is being discussed (Grenčíková et al., 2021: 10-11). It is very likely that the pandemic has accelerated some processes related to the implementation of *intelligent industry* (Grenčíková et al., 2021: 11). As we noted above, the pandemic has accelerated digitization in industry, remote work, but numerous challenges have been highlighted at the same time. Kaushik and Guleria noticed that not every home had an office or quiet workspace. Back then, many people didn't possess sophisticated systems, along with headsets, video cameras, high-speed internet connectivity, and the skills to manage it all. Working from home, people were forced to take care of their families at the same time. Worry loomed over all, hence the need to implement the principles of positive psychology, including resilience, positivity and psychological safety (Kaushik and Guleria, 2020: 10).

The connection between the pandemic and the explosion of concerns about artificial intelligence in recent years is likely to be explored at some point. Khan et al. (2021) noted that as the world grappled with COVID-19, every ounce of technological innovation and ingenuity harnessed to fight this pandemic brings us one step closer to overcoming it. In this context, artificial intelligence (AI) was playing a key role in better understanding and addressing the COVID-19 crisis, providing tools to support remote communication, facilitate telemedicine and protect food security (p. 1751), and make predictions about the behaviour of users/consumers of the business and commercial environment (p. 1755).

In the field of constructions, the consequences of the pandemic have been reflected in the suspension of projects, job losses, time overruns and cost overruns. Developers have been forced to mitigate the impact of the pandemic by reducing the number of workers on construction sites. Other challenges such as labour shortages, rising material prices and material shortages, as well as disrupted supply chains (Gamil and Alhagar, 2020: 127) have emerged for the urgent constructions related to the expansion of medical facilities. In general, the decreased production of materials causes an extension of time because there was a higher demand but a low supply (Esa, Ibrahim, and Kamal, 2020: 982).

The pandemic has had a particularly negative impact on the tourism sector, with the human resource in this field experiencing a series of job and income uncertainties. As early as 2020, the need for measures to stimulate the retention of human resources in this field was invoked (Arachchi and Gnanapala, 2020, p. 22).

The pandemic has brought with it the redefinition of some human resources management policies in the conditions where working at home has made employees play various roles in the family context, mainly because the quarantine measures have led to the schools' closure. Hence the need to ensure a certain flexibility and encourage work teams to promote individual activities, so as to support employees who fulfil family roles while simultaneously working remotely (Calderón-Hernández, Osorio-Londoño and Serna-Gómez, 2021: 13)

After all, and above all, the pandemic highlighted the role of man in the architecture of organizations, and the post-Covid-19 period highlighted even more clearly the fact that without talented people, organizations collapse (Mefi and Asoba, 2021: 4). Therefore, in a pandemic context, the specialists suggested that the ethical aspects of human resources management had to be rethought, promoting the principles of human dignity and social justice (Butterick and Charlwood, 2021: 852).

3. Socio-psychological foundations of research

For the qualitative research that is the basis of this work, a series of socio-psychological foundations were highlighted. They refer to the core themes of the investigation: self-esteem and confidence, interpersonal relationships, job satisfaction, social capital and human resource development.

Regarding self-esteem, we noted that the *level of self-esteem* strongly affects performance in all activities (Iluț, 2009: 326). Some specialists even speak of an *organization-based self-esteem*, i.e. the level at which a person believes that he/she is capable, significant and valuable as a member of the organization (Pierce and Gardner, 2003: 593).

In relation to interpersonal relationships, Cristea's (2015: 265) statement seems important to us, according to which they "*designate those immediate and reciprocal interactions between people, in which there is a conscious and direct psychological involvement*".

As regards job satisfaction, in general, the importance of some *characteristics of the work and the work environment*, but also of some variables related to the *personal disposition* of the employee (Coutts and Gruman, 2005: 240) was found.

As Adler and Kwon (2002: 18) wrote, social capital is the resource available to actors depending on their location in the structure of their social relationships, among the new dimensions of social capital considering trust (generalized and in institutions), tolerance and relationships outside work place.

In our research, we started from the idea that the essential elements of human resource development are learning, education, development, training, coaching, mentoring, on-the-job training, employee-based training, workshop, courses within the organization or outside of it, job rotation, etc. (Bădescu, Mirci, Bögre, 2008: 75). Regarding the concrete ways to achieve the development of human resources, years before the pandemic there was talk of the *virtual development of human resources* (Bennett and McWhorter, 2014: 568). Virtual development is of course only possible for some of the activities listed above, but as we will see, it has been used quite a bit in the pandemic.

4. Methodology

The method used in our research was that of the individual interview, based on a semi-structured interview guide. Among the main topics in the content of the interview guide, we note for the needs of the present work: 1) *personnel and work schedule restructuring in organizations in the economic field during the pandemic*; 2) *the impact of the pandemic at the level of relationships in health work groups/work teams*; 3) *cooperation, competition and conflict between employees*; 4) *the image and self-confidence of employees*; 5) *some aspects of employees' social capital (trust, tolerance, personal relationships outside work place)*; 6) *human resource development activities (learning, development and training opportunities) and their form of organization*.

Thirty-one employees from industry, commerce and services were interviewed. The interviewed industry employees were born in Alba, Hunedoara and Sibiu counties, with jobs in these three counties. They had, as a minimum level of schooling, at least 10 grades and vocational school and, at most, master's studies. Their jobs were in construction, winemaking, the auto parts industry, baking industry, the oil extractive industry and mining. The service employees were born in Alba, Hunedoara, Timiș, Prahova, Cluj counties and Bucharest. Their jobs were in beauty services, architecture, home design, gaming, tourism, accounting, information technology (IT), financial consulting, administration and mechanics. The interviewed commerce employees were also from Alba, Hunedoara and Cluj counties. They were high school and college graduates, most of whom were commercial workers in the retail commerce.

4. Research results

In this section, the main findings are illustrated with extracts from the interviewees' responses. After these extracts, some data about the interlocutor (gender, age, last school completed, years of experience at work) and the first name of the interviewer are retained.

4.1. The impact of the pandemic at the organization level

The impact of the pandemic at the level of organizations in the industry was first reflected in staff restructuring, through the transition of some employees into technical unemployment, especially during the state of emergency (March 17-May 15, 2020): *During the pandemic, in the company where I work, some employees entered technical unemployment. I had, at my workplace, two people who were technically unemployed* (M[ale], 45 years old, University, Winemaking, 6 years of experience, Ana Maria P.).

The restructuring in the work schedule concerned shift work (from 12:24 to 12:12) or the reduction of the working week (Monday-Thursday), with the corresponding reduction in salary: *After this virus settled in our area, various norms appeared at the workplace according to which we worked; for example, the schedule was reduced by one day, i.e. I worked on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, Friday being at home. Of course, the salary also decreased* (Female), 30 years old, High School, operator, 5 years of experience, Ana-Maria P.).

Among the effects of restructuring on a personal level, the fatigue associated with moving to shorter but more frequent shifts is noted, but some of the interviewees stated that they were able to adapt to the changes: *Personally, it did not affect me. I managed to easily adapt to the new conditions* (M, 31 years old, High School, Automation Technician, 7 years of experience, Lavinia L.).

In relation to the service sector, we first note the cases in which staff reductions were reported: *Yes, at the beginning of the year when I came here there were more, but we remained three people in the workshop, one of whom is the manager* (M, 47 years old, Secondary School, mechanic, 3 years of experience, Bianca B.). In other organizations, it was possible to quickly switch to online work and optimal measures were adopted for a good performance of activities: *Fortunately, there were no personnel restructurings and no changes that would negatively affect the work schedule* (F, 28, University, brand coaching online gaming, 3 years of experience, Maria Adelina P.). In public administration services, different situations are reported from town hall to town hall: *This pandemic did not affect us as an institution, although there were other town halls that interrupted their activity or reduced their number of positions. We worked normally, observing the rules of protection and distance* (M, 61 years old, University, administration advisor, 23 years of experience, Ana Maria P.).

Wider changes combining work from home with staff reductions and the rationalization of classic workspaces were also reported: *Since March, when the pandemic began, everyone in the company has been working from home. There are some exceptions for colleagues who need a certain device that is only in the office or colleagues from finance and front desk. There were also some staff reductions, requirements from the client. In order to cope with the reductions, the company gave up one of its offices* (F, 28 years old, University, Programmer, 2 years and 6 months of experience, Aurelia C.).

Other aspects of the pandemic impact at the organizational level concerned, according to the interviewed services employees, the insecurity, the growing bureaucracy, the lack of direct socialization with colleagues: *The company I work for was less affected by this pandemic and did not lose any customers. We miss colleagues and socializing* (F, 36 years old, University, financial consultant, 12 years of experience, Cosmina Simona C.).

In the field of commerce, according to the reports of the interviewed employees, there were no personnel restructurings, in the sense of making some of them available, but,

possibly, other hires were made: *There were not, we are the same people, we even made a few hires in this pandemic period* (F, 28 years old, University, Saleswoman, 8 years of experience, Andreea P.); *Changes were made to the work schedule, depending on the restrictions from the pandemic* (F, 28 years old, University, Salesperson, 8 years of experience, Andreea P.). Commerce employees did not declare a particular impact of the pandemic in terms of organizational changes.

4.2. Changes in relationships at the level of work collectives

The existence of some changes at the level of relations in the work collectives in the industry is almost unanimously noted. One of the causes was the dismissal of some employees, which generated a certain pressure on the others: *Yes, the pandemic affected the relations between the team members. During this difficult period, I had to let go of two team members, so the other employees also felt their jobs were in danger* (M, 42 years old, University, construction team manager, 8 years of experience, Paul G.). Another reason was given by the imposed prevention rules and their impact on employees' sociability: *In relation to colleagues, people are much stricter with hygiene, distancing, they no longer communicate and relate as before. Everyone is panicking* (F, 30 years old, High School, operator, 5 years of experience, Ana-Maria P.). The different beliefs and attitudes towards the pandemic also generated changes in the relationships in the work collectives: *I believe that this pandemic has changed us all. Some are more fearful, others don't even believe that this virus exists* (M, 45 years old, University, Vinification, 6 years of experience, Ana Maria P.). The limited content of communication is also highlighted by the employees in the industry: *Communication is poorer, as if there are no more topics for discussion, everything revolves around the pandemic* (F, 50 years old, University, engineer, 21 years of experience, Cristina B.).

Regarding the impact of the prevention rules on the solidarity of the work teams, some employees in the industry stated that there is no such impact: *It neither weakens nor strengthens the solidarity of the team, it remains the same* (F, 52 years old, University, economist, 4 years of experience, Aurelia C.). Others highlighted a negative impact: *Before, you could work closer, now you have to distance yourself* (M, 53 years old, professional, extraction operator, 37 years of experience, Alina Teodora L.). Several employees in the industry also wanted to emphasize the positive impact of prevention measures on solidarity: *Compliance with the prevention rules strengthened team solidarity, given the fact that everyone wears a mask not out of obligation, but out of concern for protecting themselves as well as their colleagues* (F, 50 years old, University, engineer, 21 years of experience, Cristina B.).

However, high stress was almost unanimously highlighted: *Due to the fact that they are confined and do not know what tomorrow brings them (first of all they think about the illness), yes, the colleagues are more stressed than before* (F, 50 years old, University, engineer, 21 years of experience, Cristina B.). In the field of services, the interlocutors signalled a "more distant" relationship between employees (F, 26 years old, University, architect, 2 years of experience, Aurelia C., Aurelia C.), one of the causes being the multiplication of tasks: *Out tasks increasing - some of our colleagues became dissatisfied and sometimes irritable, leading to a tense atmosphere and reproaches between us. It's not a rule, but it still happens, there are days and day.* (M, 47 years old, Secondary School, mechanic, 3 years of experience, Bianca B.). With regard to workloads, employees in the service sector declared a "relaxation" of them in some places or maintaining the pre-pandemic level. The exception was for those involved in IT services, whose tasks increased: *During this period, the team's tasks multiplied, there were more requests from the managers and the departments for which we provide services* (F, 59 years old, University, computer scientist, 20 years of experience, Aurelia C.).

The increase in stress, recognized by some employees in the service sector, was attributed to the increase in the volume of work tasks and the concern of employees regarding the children's education, now online: *Yes, colleagues are more stressed, because they have to do*

work tasks and, at the same time, to help their student children, to deal with online school (F, 59 years old, University, computer scientist, 20 years of experience, Aurelia C.).

In the field of commerce, the impact of the pandemic on relations in work teams seemed to have a particular specificity given the small number of employees: *The relationship with colleagues did not affect us, because we are a team and the number of employees is very small: four people* (F, 28 years old, High School, commercial worker, 2 years of experience, Lavinia L.).

Regarding the solidarity of the work teams, for some commerce employees this seemed to be directly affected, while for other employees, the prevention norms strengthened the solidarity of the team: *From my point of view these norms strengthen the solidarity of the team. It makes us more attentive to each other, more united and better* (F, 28 years old, High School, commercial worker, 2 years of experience, Lavinia L.).

Overall, in the field of commerce, workloads had increased, with additional tasks related to the sanitization of premises and products, and stress-generating preventive control measures: *We are stressed with everything that happens, but especially with the controls that are held, for keeping masks in normal and correct conditions, with disinfectants and all the measures related to the prevention and spread of Covid* (F, 28 years old, High School, commercial worker, 2 years of experience, Lavinia L.). Another source of stress was technical unemployment and the decrease in income: *...The shopping centres were closed for two months and everyone in the offices was technically unemployed, the company's income decreased and the employees' income also decreased* (F, 29 years old, University, logistics department manager, 6 years of experience, Alina-Monica S.).

4.3. Social capital

In general, the interviewed industry employees characterized their colleagues as trustworthy and tolerant in their relations with others: *The team under my command is a collective formed by me, as I wanted the people, I work with to be... They are sociable, respectful, supportive people. Some have even become close friends, they visit each other, although during this period less often, due to the restrictions* (M, 45 years old, University, Winemaking, 6 years of experience, Ana Maria P.).

Some interviewed employees divided colleagues into two categories - those who trust others and those who are suspicious - while others emphasized the existence of suspicions between colleagues: *There are many types, but in general people are suspicious, they fear infection* (F, 35 years old, High School, operator, 7 years of experience, Lavinia L.).

According to the answers of those interviewed, the employees in the industry trusted the state institutions and especially the Church, but were dissatisfied with some measures taken by the authorities: *My colleagues trust the state institutions, but they are dissatisfied with the measures taken by the authorities and are particularly disturbed of the fact that they must wear a protective mask in the open air* (M, 42 years old, University, 8 years of experience, Paul G.).

The general changes produced by the pandemic at the level of trust, tolerance and interpersonal relations were not recognized by all interviewees; *The pandemic has not changed the relationships, tolerance and trust of colleagues in their daily lives* (F, 52 years old, University, economist, 4 years of experience, Aurelia C.). Some deeper changes seem to have taken place at the individual level: Most have given up making plans for the future because (they say) they are no longer sure of tomorrow, but they have become more cautious. (F, 50 years old, University, engineer, 21 years of experience, Cristina B.). People were more faithful, in the opinion of others, or, in general, more careful with their neighbours: *It made them stronger, more careful with those around them and with their families* (F, 35 years old, High School, operator, 7 years of experience, Lavinia L.).

The interviewed service employees indicated that regarding their colleagues, they trusted others and were tolerant with members of other ethnicities: *Considering that most of the colleagues are of other ethnicities, the relations between us are, I might say, normal, not being suspicious and trusting each other* (M, 32 years old, High School, cook, 2 years of experience, Maria-Adelina, P.). Close friendships are also testified, but affected by the pandemic: *Before the pandemic, they met very often with friends or family friends, but now with this virus, meetings have become less frequent* (F, years, Higher studies, Assistant manager, 5 years of experience, Cristina-Teodora P.). Regarding institutions, trust was declared only in the church or lack of trust in any institution was confessed: *Most of them trust Church or better said in God.* (F, years, Higher studies, Assistant manager, 5 years of experience, Cristina-Teodora P.); *The state institutions did not give us the chance to have too much trust in them. Both, the institutions of the state and the church pursue their own interests more than those of their servants* (F, 59 years old, University, computer scientist, 20 years of experience, Aurelia C.).

The commerce employees we interviewed fell into two categories: some who believed that they had colleagues who trusted others and others who believed that they had colleagues who were rather suspicious, the two categories being somewhat equal. It was generally appreciated that commerce employees show tolerance, sometimes this being considered imperative: *Yes, they don't really have a choice* (F, 41 years old, High School, Salesperson, 4 years of experience, Teodora Alina L.).

The pandemic also limited the social life of commerce employees: *Before the pandemic, they met friends and family more often, but now with this virus, meetings have become rarer due to fear of illness* (M, 59 years old, Post-secondary school, cargo handler, 8 years of experience, Cristina-Teodora P.).

Although in general the existence of trust in institutions was recognized among commerce employees, this trust was low, it being greater in the Church: *In state institutions too little because today the state no longer represents the people. The Church is one of the protections of the common man, you go to the Church and you come back better in every way. You are calmer, more relaxed because God gives you everything* (M, 59 years old, Post-secondary school, cargo handler, 8 years of experience, Cristina-Teodora P.).

The interviewed commerce employees recognized little change in people's trust, tolerance and relationships: *I don't think the pandemic has changed them; they've stayed the same* (F, 41 years old, High School, Saleswoman, 4 years of experience, Teodora Alina L.).

4.4. Image, self-confidence and self-esteem

The interviewed industry employees highlighted the fact that some deep aspects of the personality could change under the impact of the pandemic: *People will certainly change their attitude, self-confidence will probably decrease... And they will certainly not give the same return, all due to the stress to which they are subjected* (B., 28 years old, University, engineer, 3 and a half years of experience, Cristina P.).

Other employees stated that, as far as they were concerned, their image and self-confidence were not affected: *As for me, I remained the same as before the pandemic, I trust that everything will go back to normal* (F, 30 years old, High School, operator, 5 years of experience, Ana-Maria P.).

Some of the employees in the service sector believe that the pandemic could not change their self-image: *I don't believe this, nor would I want to believe as long as you have a personality, you can't change yourself as a person, in my opinion* (F, 28, University, Brand coaching online gaming, 3 years of experience, Maria Adelina P.). However, the majority signalled a series of other changes at personality level, changes that can be linked to the self-image: *In general, I know that many things have changed and many people have fallen into depression...* (M, 47 years old, Secondary School, mechanic, 3 years of experience, Bianca B.). A

possible impact is highlighted in the case of self-confidence: *In my field of activity, fortunately, people's image of themselves did not suffer. Of course, unfortunately, there are many areas in which people have suffered because of the pandemic and have lost confidence in them* (F, 59 years old, University, computer scientist, 20 years of experience, Aurelia C.).

Retail workers also divided when it came to the impact of the pandemic on their self-image. Some claimed that there was no change: *I don't think that the pandemic changes people's self-image* (F, 41 years old, High School, Salesperson, 4 years of experience, Teodora Alina L.); *Yes, the pandemic has changed the image we have of ourselves. We went through a period of almost three months of quarantine in which you feel that you no longer develop professionally, you no longer socialize, and the moment you go out to do the strictly necessary shopping, you have the impression that people are running away from each other* (F, 26 years old, University, commercial worker, 5 years of experience, Maria Mihaela P.)

Others claimed that the pandemic had a positive impact on self-confidence: *They became more confident, especially if they went through the Covid situation, isolation, etc. They became stronger and more confident* (F, 28 years old, High School, commercial worker, 2 years of experience, Lavinia L.).

4.5. Development of human resources

For the most part, the interviewed industry employees highlighted the concern of the companies where they worked for the development of human resources, for providing opportunities for learning and professional improvement: *Usually, at the factory where I work, qualification courses were held, some were even abroad for specialization, about three months. Employers are very interested in the quality of work, which is why these qualification courses are held* (F, 30 years old, High School, operator, 5 years of experience, Ana-Maria P.). In some companies, activities continued even during the pandemic: *Even if it was difficult due to the implemented measures, people had the opportunity to develop personally and professionally* (B., 28 years old, Higher studies, engineer, 3 and a half years of experience, Cristina P.). In companies such as those in construction, no qualification courses had been organized, while in others it was suggested that they were not necessary: *We are all qualified, and we do not need qualifications in other fields* (M, 53 years old, professional, extraction operator, 37 years of experience, Alina Teodora L.); *In my case no, because I do the same things all the time and I don't think there would be any activities to do to be more prepared* (M, 47 years old, Professional, Miner, 3 years of experience, Georgiana-Maria S.).

During the pandemic, most professional development activities were suspended, where in the previous period they were still organized: *During this period, of the pandemic, not only did they reduce our work schedule, but these courses were also postponed...* (F, 30 years old, High School, operator, 5 years of experience, Ana-Maria P.).

In the industry, training efforts were focused on prevention measures: *Yes, they were permanently informed about the measures, developments and ways to prevent the pandemic* (F, 52 years old, University, economist, 4 years of experience, Aurelia C.).

A large part of the employees in the service sector indicated that in their organizations there were concerns for the development of human resources, but these were suspended during the pandemic: *Before this pandemic, at the institution where I work, there were always qualification and improvement courses, of which some colleagues benefited. But during this period, no courses were held because it was not allowed* (M, 61 years old, University, administration advisor, 23 years of experience, Ana Maria P.). In other situations, where the training courses were conducted centrally, with physical presence, it has now gone online: *Until the Covid-19 virus appeared, we had training courses, but now we can no longer go, everything is done online* (F, years, University, Assistant manager, 5 years of experience, Cristina-Teodora P.).

The online organization of training activities, reported in the field of services, has some important limits: *...It is more difficult to keep your attention when you study in front of a computer. In the in-person trainings, our attention was exclusively on the trainer and we could exchange opinions and impressions with each other, whereas online this is not so easy now* (F, 36 years old, University, Financial consultant, 12 years of experience, Cosmina Simona C.).

In a few cases, commerce employees stated that their company was not involved in the continuous training of its workers: *It is not that involved in this regard* (F, 28 years old, University, Saleswoman, 8 years of experience, Andreea P.). However, most of the interviewees stated a series of concerns, some with consistent arguments: *Yes, the company where I work ensures that we are always prepared. This is done with the help of team leaders who teach us every time how to do certain things unknown to us. Although they seem like trivial things, it is very important to know how to receive your goods, knowledge and training in receipt programs that include both opening and closing cash registers, knowledge of stock management according to the products that are the best sellers plus many other activities* (F, 26 years old, University, commercial worker, 5 years of experience, Maria Mihaela P.).

In commerce also, training activities have been suspended or moved online. During the pandemic, no special training related to prevention measures was carried out everywhere in the commerce, the information being obtained from other sources: *We were told to respect the prevention rules: to wear a mask and gloves, to wash our hands often, to disinfect everything and that's about it* (F, 41 years old, high school, saleswoman, 4 years of experience, Teodora Alina L.). It seems that the training was supplemented, in some places, by very rigorous concrete measures: *During this period, the prevention measures were well defined, consisting of the fact that we worked in teams of 4 people, only 4 hours a day with masks and disinfecting gel available. After the 4 hours of work, the cleaning team came to disinfect everything and then another team started work to avoid contact between employees* (F, 26 years old, University, commercial worker, 5 years of experience, Maria Mihaela P.).

5. Conclusions and openings

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in the economic field manifested itself with some particularities in the industrial, service and commerce sectors. Personnel restructuring and technical unemployment were recorded mainly in the industrial sector and only in some places in the service sector. Labor retention was possible only where it was possible to switch to online work or to carry out activities in smaller work teams. The changes in the working schedule, however, affected all three economic sectors. These changes meant more frequent shifts (12 by 12 instead of 12 by 24!) or the shortening of the working week to four days. In the field of services, a decrease in wages was reported along with the change in the work schedule.

Important changes in the level of relations in labour collectives were signalled especially in industry and that of services, and less so in commerce where labour collectives were small. No particular negative impact of the prevention rules on the solidarity of work teams was highlighted; on the contrary, in all sectors, there were voices claiming that the measures in question led to an increase in solidarity.

In all sectors, workloads seemed to have increased and this, plus the fear of infection, was responsible for increasing employee stress. For those in the service sector, stress was also related to homework linked to assisting children with online school preparation. In services, high stress sometimes led to leaving the job. Let us remember here also the testimony of the employees' tasks multiplication, who had to take greater care in the sanitization of the premises. The spectre of technical unemployment also loomed over these employees due to the temporary closure of large shopping centres.

In industry, services and commerce, the interviewees testified to an increased trust and tolerance of colleagues, noting that in commerce tolerance was almost imposed by the

relationship with customers. Relationships outside the workplace appeared to be more deeply affected by the pandemic. The high trust in the Church and less high in the state institutions was also confirmed in the economic field. Overall, especially in industry and services, it was felt that the pandemic did not deeply affect trust and tolerance.

The impact of the pandemic on self-esteem was reported especially among employees in industry and commerce, the first ones speaking of a negative impact against the background of the specific pandemic climate and those in commerce of a positive impact in the context of the emergence of opportunities to be "more generous and better at heart". In this context, employees in services and commerce highlighted the profound impact of the pandemic on self-esteem through the appearance of depressive states that were associated with low self-esteem. The loss of self-esteem, recognized especially by the trade employees, could be associated with the decrease in work efficiency and the neglect of family problems.

Human resource development was a constant concern for some companies in industry and services, with specific activities (especially training courses) being restricted or moved online during the pandemic. It should also be noted here that in online format, training activities were associated with a series of difficulties in learning and concentration, as activities with physical presence seem to be preferred. We can link here with the transition to online school and the teachers' remarks on the quality of online education. Preventive measures have received special training attention in industry and services but less so in commerce.

To outline some practical openings, we use some considerations developed by researchers during the pandemic. For example, in relation to their findings, Özbay and Özcan formulated a series of recommendations, among which we note here: 1) companies can be prepared for new disasters and pandemics in terms of labour force and production capacity; 2) companies should prepare their strategic plans against new crises that may arise, that is, long-term plans in addition to short-term plans, which should generally be for moments of crisis; 3) consumers can be careful not to share their personal information with other institutions and investments can be made for new cyber security, in this way, cyber incidents can be prevented so that consumers do not lose their trust (2021: 30). The last recommendation was closely related to the unprecedented expansion of online commerce, with all its risks.

The pandemic, as we have all noticed, accelerated the companies' digital transformation process, but it was pointed out to us that part of the success of this process begins with the awareness of employees and the understanding of the organizational culture as a starting point (Regalado-Pezúa, Toro, and Horna-Saldaña, 2021: 78). Moreover, as Zhi, Ismail, and Nasuredin observed, although people are usually able to adapt, the workforce needs multidisciplinary education and more skills because competitiveness will intensify in the future (Zhi, Ismail, and Nasuredin, 2021: 5).

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HOW IS SOCIAL INNOVATION DIFFERENT FROM SOCIAL CHANGE? A BRIEF PRESENTATION OF THE CONCEPTUAL HISTORY

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Abstract: *The study of social innovations requires the understanding of complex phenomena such as the change of the social structure at the level of society. Therefore, beginning in the 19th century and continuing into the 20th century, sociologists such as Gabriel Tarde, William Ogburn, Wolfgang Zapf, economists such as Joseph Schumpeter, philosophers such as Karl Popper or management specialists such as Peter Drucker have approached the concept of innovation differently by laying the foundations of currents of thought regarding the role of innovations in social change processes. This article attempts to clarify the distinction between social innovation and social change both by presenting the theoretical framework and by reviewing the literature on social innovations. The author writes a comprehensive presentation on social innovation dedicated to students, researchers unfamiliar with this topic and others interested in analyzing social innovations in certain fields of activity. Readers going through the article will identify the most recent efforts to strengthen social innovation as a distinct field of study by researchers who have distinguished themselves in the early 21st century.*

Keywords: innovation, social innovation, technological innovation, social change, sociology of social change

1. Introduction

The literature review reveals over a century of efforts to clarify the role of innovations in the more complex processes of societal change. As technological innovations began to change people's lives for the better, theorists and researchers in fields such as sociology and economics, and more recently in fields such as social entrepreneurship, began to question the social impact of these innovations. The article contains the presentation of both the main paradigms and theories regarding innovation and social change, including those regarding social innovation and technological innovation, as well as the way to define and classify social innovations.

2. Innovations in the collective mind. Presentation in a nutshell

The concept of innovation, in general, and that of social innovation, in particular, has a whole history originating in the Middle Ages but did not always have the currently assigned meaning in the specialized literature. The process of changing the meaning attributed to innovation has been analyzed since the 15th century by the Canadian historian Benoît Godin (2015 *apud* Schubert, 2018: 373). At that time, innovation had a negative connotation as it was attributed to people who were involved in subversive religious or political actions and this societal perception remained in the collective mind even in the 19th century when innovations were assimilated with communist ideals of social change (Schubert, 2018: 373). The change in the negative connotation of the concept was only identified at the beginning of the 20th century when innovation was approached in relation to technological progress, respectively with the positive social effects of new technologies (Godin, 2015 *apud* Schubert, 2018: 373).

The transition from the industrial society to the knowledge and services society signals a change in the innovation paradigm (Howaldt and Kopp, 2012: 45) determined by the change of vision about development, respectively if in the industrial society the focus was on technological innovations of products and processes, in the knowledge society non-technical or social innovations aimed at solving various societal challenges are important (for example

the need to reform social security systems or the management of ecological risks) (Howaldt and Kopp, 2012: 46).

Currently, it is considered that the results of social innovation are visible at the level of social practices in a certain sphere of activity, which are accepted, disseminated and institutionalized at the social level in society as a whole or in certain parts of society, that is, they are transformed into routines, not necessarily because they are new (“ ‘new’ does not necessarily mean ‘good’ ”) but because they are “socially desirable” (Howaldt and Kopp, 2012: 47; Howaldt, Kopp and Schwarz, 2015: 30).

3. Social innovations and technological innovations in the process of social change

During the last century we observe a category of specialized works that had the role of clarifying the difference between social and technological innovations, approaching the two concepts in the context of the social change process. In the first part of the 20th century, the two paradigms of social innovation research were consolidated, respectively the one proposed by Ogburn, who argued that social adjustments can be achieved through public policies or regulations, for example by introducing legislation in the field work, and the one proposed by Schumpeter, which emphasizes the creative force of entrepreneurship (Schubert, 2018: 374).

In Ogburn's view (1922 *apud* Schubert, 2018: 373) social change is mainly determined by material cultural factors, respectively technical and economic factors, but it is also influenced by non-material cultural factors, respectively the institutions that materialize through social values, norms or routines. Through the immense contribution of Schumpeter (1942 *apud* Schubert, 2018: 373), who promoted the phrase “creative destruction”, innovations were transformed in the collective mind from subversive actions into factors of economic development (Schubert, 2018: 373).

Karl Popper (1945 *apud* Schubert, 2018: 375) reduces the level of abstraction of social changes and characterizes them, in a tangible way, as innovations that determine, for example, “the introduction of a new kind of life-insurance, a new kind of taxation, of a new penal reform”, all these being “social experiments which have their repercussions through the whole of society without remodeling society as a whole”.

Drucker (1957 *apud* Edwards-Schachter and Wallace, 2017: 7) later presented social innovation in relation to organizational effectiveness. This approach to new organizational forms, which can represent sources of social change in the knowledge society, was gradually taken up at the level of the private and non-governmental sectors (Drucker, 1957, 1976 *apud* Edwards-Schachter and Wallace, 2017: 7-8).

Zapf (1968: 23), one of the first social change theorists to be interested in the topic of innovation, explained how the institutionalization of innovations generates social change. One of Zapf's (1968: 23) main themes of interest was the institutionalization of innovations in the process of social change, namely the way in which institutionalization modifies or protects the original form of innovations. Zapf (1968: 23-24) draws readers' attention to the law of cultural acceleration which “assumes that, by the rules of combination, an accelerated diffusion of innovations must lead to an acceleration in change itself”. So the process of social change is composed of the initial conditions, the generative causes of change and the effect of change on the targeted entity (Zapf, 1968: 23). The outcome of innovation differs according to societal characteristics, more precisely according to the complexity of the targeted society (Zapf, 1968: 29). Adaptation, invention and planning are the main sources of social change in complex societies, strategic planning being a key stage for the development of innovations, whereas in traditional or non-complex societies, as Zapf calls them, innovation is mainly based on adaptation (Zapf, 1968: 29).

Another theme addressed by Zapf (1991: 83) is the theoretical relationship between technological and social innovations, respectively between change processes at the micro and macro level or between those focused on structural changes or specific actions. Zapf (1991: 85) promotes the vision of Talcott Parsons regarding the theory of modernization, namely development includes adaptive modernization that materializes through the invention or adaptation of institutions and behaviors, i.e. through social innovation. The transition of the former socialist states to the model of Western democracies, simultaneously with the reformation of modern Western systems, brought back to the attention of researchers the theory of modernization and the way in which the mechanism of development is explained, namely through innovation, imitation and exchange between advanced and less advanced societies (Zapf, 1991: 86).

The theory of innovation can be useful in explaining the phenomena in postmodernity because at the conceptual level the connection between technical and social innovations has been clarified, including the resistance to them of interests, cultural inertia and societal anxiety or resistance to change (Zapf, 1991: 86). Since innovations generate either new technology, which may be physical equipment or a method of working, or a new idea that materializes through a new practice, Zapf (1991: 87) concludes that "innovations are new material technologies and new social technologies that help us to better satisfy our needs and solve our social problems". So a new material technology qualifies as an innovation only to the extent that it influences productivity, health and satisfaction on an extensive scale (Zapf, 1991: 87). The link between technical and social innovations is explained by Zapf (1991: 89) in detail as follows: "social innovations, then, are new ways of doing things, especially new organizational devices, new regulations, new living arrangements, that change the direction of social change, attain goals better than older practices, become institutionalized and prove to be worth imitating. Social innovations may be preconditions, concomitants or consequences of technical innovations. Whereas the productivity of technical innovations rests on the manipulation of natural energies and material resources, the productivity of social innovations depends on human creativity and symbolic resources, in both cases activated by scientific knowledge and practical experience".

4. Conceptual clarifications of the distinction between social innovation and social change

More recently, respectively in the last 10 years, in the specialized literature we identify the works of researchers such as Jürgen Howaldt, Michael Schwarz and Ralf Kopp through which they try to clarify the relationship between social change and social innovation. Howaldt and Schwarz (2011, p. 210) are of the opinion that social innovations are part of sociology as a field of study as they can generate changes in the structure of social relations, demographic developments or the effects of climate change. The sociological understanding of innovation can refer, for example, to the social character of technical and organizational innovations or to the interactions between the different actors participating in the process (Howaldt and Kopp, 2012: 44).

Social innovations are a component of social change as they contribute to the modernization of society by fulfilling objectives aimed at solving societal challenges (Ogburn, 1937; Zapf, 1989 *apud* Howaldt and Schwarz, 2011: 211 -212). Social change is not identical to social innovation or technological innovation, but the two types of innovations complement each other to determine change at the social level, which is why the analysis of this process must be carried out from a dual socio-technological perspective (Howaldt and Schwarz, 2011: 212). Social innovation is part of a process that generates new social practices through planned actions as opposed to social change which is determined by an unintentional process by which the social structure within a society changes (Howaldt and Schwarz, 2011: 212-213).

Howaldt, Kopp and Schwarz (2015: 31) consider that Ogburn, by advancing the concept of social change and initiating the sociology of change, provided the foundations for understanding both technological and social innovation. Ogburn (1968, p. 64 *apud* Howaldt, Kopp and Schwarz, 2015: 33) characterizes social change as the process of diffusion of innovations through imitation or adoption of social or technological inventions. However, researchers give greater importance to Tarde's social theory, namely the analysis of social change from the perspective of the sociology of innovation, which aims at social microphenomena and does not treat innovation by strictly referring to economic aspects (Howaldt, Kopp and Schwarz, 2015: 31, 32). The sociology of innovation proposed by Tarde goes beyond Schumpeter's (1964 *apud* Howaldt, Kopp and Schwarz, 2015: 36) conception of economic and technological innovation or Ogburn's conception (1937 *apud* Howaldt, Kopp and Schwarz, 2015: 36) of the social consequences of technological innovations. Imitation or imitation practices that shape social phenomena and therefore generate social change is the essential element in the theory of social development put forward by Tarde, unlike Schumpeter for whom the main unit of analysis is the innovator or entrepreneur (Howaldt, Kopp and Schwarz, 2015: 36). Based on Tarde's theory, Howaldt, Kopp and Schwarz (2015: 38) point out that "social innovation is a central driver and element of social change". However, the results of social innovation can be diffused differently depending on the socio-economic context existing at the time. The new social practices generated by innovations at the micro level, within specific fields of activity, can be diffused under normal conditions through networks of actors, who through imitation can modify them, but in extraordinary conditions, such as the outbreak of a financial crisis or the acceleration of climate changes, innovations can be rapidly diffused through accelerated institutionalization that ultimately leads to social change (Howaldt, Kopp and Schwarz, 2015: 39).

The distinction between social change and social innovation is highlighted by Howaldt and Schwarz (2016, p. 6) as follows: "social innovations relate to change (of social practices) in 'society', and social change relates to the change of 'society'. Social innovation is the mechanism by which 'society' changes". Unlike social change, social innovation is not yet seen as a field of study in its own right for two main reasons. Firstly, there is generally no understanding of how social innovation generates social change as for a very long time the focus has been on technological innovations although the latter have an obvious social dimension that cannot be omitted in the analysis of the process of social change (Howaldt and Schwarz, 2016: 8). Second, the Anglo-Saxon school of thought on social innovation promoted social entrepreneurship as a source of social change, starting from Schumpeter's conceptual approach (Howaldt and Schwarz, 2016: 8). Although there is a tendency in the specialized literature to promote social entrepreneurs as agents of change, more recent research such as the SI-DRIVE project (mapping social innovations at the global level) has shown that social enterprises are marginal actors in the processes of social innovation developed by private companies, public and non-governmental organizations (Howaldt, 2019: 40).

Currently, social innovations are understudied within social change theory, although Zapf and Ogburn have addressed them in the past in relation to the process of modernization of societies or cultural development (Howaldt and Schwarz, 2016: 14-16). However, Howaldt and Schwarz (2016: 58) are of the opinion that there are chances that social innovation will be conceptualized in close connection with social change if specialized works highlight the way in which new social practices are transformed into institutions (Giddens, 1984 *apud* Howaldt and Schwarz, 2016: 58). While the process of social innovation involves the creation and structuring of institutions in order to promote new social practices, the degree of institutionalization reflects the stability or instability of these social practices which are in a continuous dynamic (Howaldt and Schwarz, 2016: 58). The way in which social innovation generates social change can be understood through three dimensions of analysis, according to Howaldt and Schwarz (2016: 58-59), respectively: "a) in how far social innovation is diffused

in society and societal subareas (geographically, policy field related and according to overarching cultural patterns); b) to which degree it has been institutionalized (made routine, triggered or influenced new regulations, organizations, infrastructures...); c) and to which degree established social practices are challenged by these new contestants for becoming a dominant, co-existing or niche practice". Thus, social innovations, through which new social practices are developed, represent an action initiated, planned and implemented by an actor or a group of actors and the institutionalization and deinstitutionalization of social practices are defining features of the social change process that involves complex and lasting changes at the level of social structures (Howaldt and Schwarz, 2016: 59).

5. Social innovation: definitions and classifications

Social innovation, as a process, and social innovations, as a result of the process, are frequently defined in relation to either market failures to provide basic products and services to the population (i.e. innovations are the results obtained from the improvement of existing products/services or in following the promotion of new products/services to unsatisfied market segments) (Nicholls, 2006: 16-17), or with systemic change at the level of an institution (innovations are generated by the need to solve social problems) (Bauer and Gonzales, 2014: 6099). In addition, social entrepreneurship has been conceptualized as a means of promoting social innovation to solve social problems and generate social transformation (Mair and Marti, 2006: 37; Haynes, 2012: 58). According to Murray, Caulier-Grice and Mulgan (2010: 3), the most creative part of social innovation occurs at the intersection of the private, public and non-profit sectors.

Young Foundation (2012: 18) elaborated a comprehensive definition of social innovation, namely it is composed of new solutions made with the aim of meeting social needs in a more efficient manner and increasing society's ability to act. The process (through which new services, products, models, forms of collaboration, etc. are designed and implemented), the product (the satisfaction of social needs) and the impact at the level of society are the pillars that form the basis of social innovation. Moreover, social innovations have common characteristics that allow their identification and measurement, namely cross-sectoral character, new relationships and capabilities, degree of openness and collaboration, co-production, bottom-up initiatives implemented and promoted through networks, efficient use of assets and resources, capacity building and assets (Young Foundation, 2012: 21).

At the same time, Young Foundation (2012: 25, 33) proposed a typology composed of seven types of social innovations (new products, new services, new processes, new markets, new platforms, new organizational forms and new business models) and divided the process into six stages (identifying the need, developing the idea, testing the idea in practice, sustainability of the idea, growth and spread of social innovation, and systemic change that involves redesigning some systems or introducing new systems that influence multiple sectors).

The three levels of social innovation, namely incremental innovation, institutional innovation and disruptive innovation were identified by Nicholls and Murdock (2012: 4-5). Incremental innovation addresses market failures to provide basic products and services to the population. At this level, innovation can be identified in the process of improving already existing products and services in order to respond to social needs effectively (the authors give the example of the large-scale commercialization of intraocular lenses following the accessibility of the prices of these products). Institutional innovation "aims to harness or retool existing social and economic structures to generate new social value and outcomes". This level of social innovation implies the use of intellectual capital or new technologies for social purposes rather than for the fulfillment of purely economic objectives, thus reconfiguring market structures (the authors give the example of the mobile banking service). Disruptive innovation alters social structures and systems. This is the approach of actors (political actors, interest groups, networks) who consider changing power relations and social

hierarchies by involving the masses and using technology in order to position the social problems of unrepresented groups on the public agenda. Disruptive innovation can be generated from within the state structures, through the involvement of political actors, and/or from outside the state structures through the adherence of citizens to political parties, social movements, free coalitions of individuals, etc. (the authors give two examples of systemic change: the Arab Spring of 2011, violent and rapid systemic change, and the reduction of gender discrimination in the labor market, gradual and non-violent systemic change).

De Bruin and Stangl (2013, p. 8) proposed the conceptual framework of the “social innovation continuum” to highlight the complexity and flexibility of this concept. Social innovation can take various forms and manifest itself at different levels on this continuum, the goal being to create solutions to social problems. Moving along the social innovation continuum takes into account the point where the scalability of solutions occurs, that is the transition from solutions for local social problems, which can be the result of incremental innovation, to disruptive social innovation with system-level and societal-level impact. At the same time, De Bruin and Stangl (2013: 7) showed their interest in the position that social entrepreneurs and social enterprises can occupy in the continuum of social innovation. They considered that innovative solutions generated at the level of social enterprises can be positioned on the social innovation continuum depending on the type and scalability of the resulting innovation.

Differences in the conceptual approach to the social innovation process, including the forms of collaboration within it, and its impact at the utilitarian or social level are visible in the specialized literature (Ayob, Teasdale and Fagan, 2016: 637). The term “social” within the concept of social innovation has various uses, such as “new forms of social collaboration; collective approaches to delivering these innovations; the role of the social sector (or civil society) at different stages of the social innovation process; and the (positive) societal impact of these social innovations” (Ayob, Teasdale and Fagan, 2016: 636). In the period 1989-2013 there were four categories of literature on the conceptualization of social innovation (social relations, societal impact, social relations and societal impact, social relations and technological innovation) and starting from 2004 the most numerous and influential publications focused on conceptualizing social innovation in relation to social relations and societal impact (Ayob, Teasdale and Fagan, 2016: 641). Analyzing the efforts to conceptualize social innovation in the specialized literature, Ayob, Teasdale and Fagan (2016: 648) conclude that social innovation must be seen as a process that can take different paths (these paths can both together and separately constitute social innovation) and that can develop as follows: “first, new forms of social relations lead to innovation; second, innovation leads to a restructuring of social and or power relations; third, innovation leads to utilitarian social value; fourth, new forms of social relations lead to innovation which results in the restructuring of power relations (and thus societal impact); and fifth, new forms of social relations lead to innovation, which creates utilitarian social value (and thus societal impact)”.

6. Conclusions

Currently, academic debates are in the transition stage from Schumpeter's theory of innovation, well known by the phrase “creative destruction”, perceived by Zapf (1991: 86) as a “conflictory innovation” which by its nature often fails or it is unproductive because it involves a process of economic and entrepreneurial development in which individual and collective actors try to determine changes in institutions and behaviors, to a theoretical framework focused on the process of development through social innovation, meaning the achievement of lasting technical and social transformations and, implicitly, the creation of new institutions that can be promoted as progress rather than loss within change resistant society (Zapf, 1991: 92).

Regarding the approach of social innovations from a sociological perspective, Howaldt and Kopp (2012, p. 49, 53) draw attention to the fact that the discipline must

reposition itself in the study of the modernization process, since the concepts currently used are insufficient in relation to the complexity of social innovations and the conceptual elements necessary for this repositioning are found in the sociology of technology, economic sociology and organizational sociology.

Although there are many definitions on the topic of the social innovation process and social innovations, Mulgan (Mulgan in Nicholls, Simon and Gabriel, 2015: x) simplified this approach to understanding the concept, concluding that social innovations are “innovations that are social in both their ends and their means”. However, there are two important currents of conceptualization through which social innovation is approached either as a process of social change or as a response to market failures to meet society's needs (Nicholls, Simon and Gabriel, 2015: 2-3).

Innovation was a socio-technological solution for development within industrial society, but in postmodernity it represents an opportunity to promote inventions generated at the community or civil society level (Schubert, 2018: 371-372). In this context, it is important to understand that social change is not synonymous with social innovation, but social and technological innovations, through the diffusion of new social practices and new technologies of processes or products, can determine over time, through the process of institutionalization, the change of the social structure within a society.

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WORK-LIFE BALANCE AMONG TEACHERS - FROM CHALLENGES TO SOLUTIONS

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Abstract: *The balance between professional and personal life is an increasingly important concern in contemporary society, especially in the context of teaching staff. These professionals often face multiple demands and responsibilities, both within the school and in their personal lives. Previous studies have highlighted the existence of a potential conflict between these two areas, which can affect the health and general well-being of teachers. The purpose of this paper is to investigate and better understand the issues related to work-life balance among teachers. Specifically, we want to examine the level of conflict between professional and family responsibilities, identify the factors that can influence this balance and evaluate the impact on the well-being and professional satisfaction of teachers.*

Keywords: teachers, professional life, work-life balance, burnout and stress.

1. Introduction. Work and family. Two domains in balance or in conflict?

The balance between work and family is a complex and individual challenge for each person, and the perception of this balance can vary depending on individual values, priorities, and circumstances. For some people, achieving a balance between work and family can be an ongoing and sometimes difficult process. Both work and family demand considerable time and energy. Efficient time management and prioritizing activities can contribute to the balance between these two domains. A flexible work schedule and greater autonomy in choosing how to manage work can promote a better work-life balance. The balance between work and family can be influenced by the level of stress experienced in each domain and overall satisfaction in both areas of life. It is important to find ways to reduce stress, find joy in activities and moments in both professional and personal life, and maintain a balanced perspective. Work-life balance refers to the ability to balance professional responsibilities and commitments with personal and family ones, so that both aspects of life receive adequate attention and time. A healthy balance between work and family can contribute to a person's well-being and overall satisfaction.

The balance between work and family is a complex and individual challenge for each person, and the perception of this balance can vary depending on individual values, priorities, and circumstances. For some people, achieving a balance between work and family can be an ongoing and sometimes difficult process. Both work and family demand considerable time and energy. Efficient time management and prioritizing activities can contribute to the balance between these two domains. A flexible work schedule and greater autonomy in choosing how to manage work can favour a better work-life balance (Rantanen et al, 2011).

The balance between work and family can be influenced by the level of stress experienced in each domain and overall satisfaction in both areas of life. It is important to find ways to reduce stress, find joy in activities and moments in both professional and personal life, and maintain a balanced perspective. This refers to the ability to balance professional responsibilities and commitments with personal and family ones, so that both aspects of life receive adequate attention and time. A healthy balance between work and family can contribute to a person's well-being and overall satisfaction.

The modern family differs from the traditional family when it comes to balancing work and family and also due to "the changing population age structure and functioning, and the family planning" (Olimid and Olimid, 2019: 54). In the past, the traditional family model relied on a clear division of roles, where the man was generally responsible for paid work outside the home, while the woman had primary responsibility for household chores and childcare. It is important to emphasize that changes in work-life-family balance are not limited exclusively to women but also affect men. Efforts to promote gender equality and improve the balance between professional and personal life are essential to address these challenges and create a more supportive environment for all employees.

It should also be noted that the impact of women's participation in the labour market on work-life-family balance can vary depending on the cultural, political, and social context of a country or community. Women have become increasingly present in the labour market and hold professional positions in various fields. Thus, there is increased pressure and a need to find a balance between career and family responsibilities.

However, women's participation in the labour market adds additional tasks within the family because they must manage their time efficiently to handle all responsibilities, including childcare, household obligations, and maintaining a couple's life. This multitasking situation can be exhausting and can affect personal quality of life and family relationships. Women's participation in the labour market can bring higher professional demands, such as career opportunities, performance pressures, and continuous professional development. These can interfere with the needs and priorities of the family, leading to tensions and conflicts. Overall, women's participation in the labour market has had a significant impact on the balance between professional and family life. In the past, women's traditional roles were often associated with household responsibilities and childcare, while men were considered the main financial providers. However, with the increasing participation of women in the workforce, balancing work and personal life has become a complex challenge in today society.

2. The work-family conflict.

The work-family balance is a term that refers to an individual's perception of the degree to which they experience positive relationships between work and family roles, where the relationships are compatible and in harmony with each other. Serving as a measurement anchor for the day-to-day challenges of shifting time and energy allocation between work and family life, the term "work-life balance" provides a metaphor opposing the historical notion that work and family relationships can often be competing, at odds, and contradictory (Abendroth, and Den Dulk, 2011).

In the last 10-15 years, a frequently encountered topic in organizational psychology research has been the well-being in organizations and the conflict between work and personal life. This is primarily due to the multiple changes regarding the distribution of roles between men and women, both within the family and in the workplace. For example, the number of women in the workforce has increased, and today, couples in which both partners contribute to the family income have become more of a rule than an exception.

On the other hand, the way work is conducted has undergone certain changes due to technological and economic advancements, making it possible, for example, to work from home (with the help of a laptop) or during vacation time. However, these situations are not always pleasant for those involved or their families. The mentioned changes have led to increasingly high demands, both in terms of family life and professional activity, demands that are not always compatible and often generate a conflict between work and personal life, or between personal life and work.

The work-family conflict is a form of role conflict, where the roles at work and in other non-work domains require time, energy, and involvement to be properly fulfilled, and the pressures of work and family roles are mutually incompatible. This definition implies a

bidirectional relationship between work and family life, meaning that the incompatibility can find its roots in either of the two domains. More specifically, the conflict can be based on the incompatible requirements of a role in one domain (work or family) with the requirements of a role in the other domain in terms of time, tension, or requested behaviours.

The career-family conflict refers to the discomfort and tension experienced by individuals when facing difficulties in successfully combining the demands and responsibilities related to work and those related to family. This conflict can have negative consequences on physical and mental health, satisfaction in both spheres, and interpersonal relationships (Manolica and Duță, 2019: 136-137).

The career-family conflict is a state of tension and incompatibility between professional and family responsibilities and demands. It can affect the balance, satisfaction, and well-being of the individual, as well as interpersonal relationships and workplace performance (Ciocănel, 2017: 45-48).

The career-family conflict refers to the tensions and difficulties that arise when the demands and responsibilities related to professional work conflict with those related to the family role and family responsibilities (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985). The career-family conflict represents a state of tension and incompatibility between the needs, time, and resources invested in career development and those invested in fulfilling the needs and responsibilities towards family and personal life (Netemeyer, Boles and McMurrian, 1996).

The career-family conflict refers to the difficulty of successfully balancing professional and family commitments, as well as the tensions and stress that result from this incompatibility. The career-family conflict is a state in which the pressures and demands from the professional and family spheres intersect and negatively influence each other, putting pressure on and creating tensions for the individual. The career-family conflict relates to the challenge of balancing the demands and responsibilities of a career with those of personal and family life, resulting in tensions and conflicts in both spheres (Kossek and Ozeki, 1988: 39).

3. Teaching profession: a risk in the emergence of career-family conflict?

In the past, teachers were accorded significant respect and authority in society. They were considered important pillars of the community and were viewed as role models of behaviour and knowledge. The teaching profession was associated with prestige and trust, and teachers had a strong role in educating the youth and shaping future generations. The role of teachers was often perceived as more stable and well-defined within educational institutions, and hierarchies and rules were more rigid. There were clear boundaries of authority between students and teachers, and teachers had full authority in organizing and managing the educational process.

In today's society, the status of teachers can be influenced by various factors. Although the teaching profession continues to be respected and considered important, social and technological changes have brought about a series of challenges and modifications in this field. The role of teachers has become more complex and diversified, as they are expected to adapt to the needs and requirements of an ever-changing society. Technology and the digital environment have entered the classroom, and teachers need to be familiar with their use and incorporate innovative elements into the teaching process. Additionally, teachers face increased pressure in terms of academic outcomes, standardized assessments, and curriculum requirements. There is a constant need for adaptation to educational reforms and the development of competencies in areas such as educational technology and modern pedagogical approaches.

However, the status of teachers remains important in today's society, as they play a crucial role in shaping future generations and developing students' skills and knowledge. It is important to note that the perception of the teaching profession's status can vary depending on

Teachers are often considered prone to the risk of career-family conflict for several reasons:

- *High work demands*: Teachers are involved in a wide range of professional responsibilities, which include planning and preparing lessons, assessing and marking papers, meeting with parents and participating in extracurricular activities. These high work demands may require additional working hours, including after-hours activities, which may affect the time available for personal and family life (Kyriacou, 2001: 27-29). This involves researching, selecting and organizing teaching materials, creating supplementary materials and adapting content to the specific needs of students. This planning stage requires considerable effort and attention to detail to ensure effective teaching. Then, teachers are responsible for evaluating and marking students' papers and tests. This process involves correcting and analyzing work, providing feedback and grading in an objective and consistent manner. Assessment and grading may require additional time, especially for large classes or complex activities (Stanculescu, 1995).

- *Limited flexible hours*: Teachers usually have a set schedule during school hours, which can limit flexibility in managing their own schedule and accommodating family needs and events (Ștefan and Lefter, 2017: 98-99).

- *Emotional and psychological implications*: Teachers often face demands and stress in relation to students, school performance, behaviour management (Niță, 2014: 175-176; Vlăduțescu, Budică, Dumitru and Stănescu, 2015: 191-192) and relationships with parents. These aspects can generate an additional emotional and psychological burden, which can affect the balance between career and personal life. Professional stress can affect the emotional and mental well-being of teachers. In addition, teachers are involved in intense emotional interactions with students, such as providing support, encouragement, and counselling. They can witness students' difficulties and needs, including personal problems, learning or behavioural difficulties. This emotional load can affect the emotional balance of teachers and create additional pressure on them. In fact, many studies highlight the fact that teachers are facing „the difficulty of coping with negative emotions and the lack of effective methods of coping with stress” (Goian, 2014: 380; Otovescu, Otovescu and Toderici, 2022).

Due to the high demands and stress associated with the profession, teachers are exposed to the risk of professional exhaustion, also known as burnout (Chang, 2009: 193-2018). This may be the result of exceeding physical and emotional resources in the performance of professional tasks. Professional burnout is manifested by persistent fatigue, disinterest in work and decreased job satisfaction (Stănculescu, 2020: 17).

4. The sociological perspective on career-family conflict

Although the term "work-family balance" may be more recent, the ideas and concepts developed by classical sociologists (19th century) continue to be relevant in analyzing the complex relationship between the professional and personal spheres. Emile Durkheim is considered one of the founders of modern sociology. Although he did not directly discuss work-family balance, he analyzed the importance and influence of work in the public sphere (work) and social integration in the community (family). His works, such as "Suicide" and "The Division of Social Labour", examine the interaction between individual activities and social roles in society. Also, Max Weber addressed issues related to work and its role in social life. In his work "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism", he analyzes the influence of religious values on the development of capitalism and how work and career success can influence personal life and interpersonal relationships.

Within the Chicago School, sociologists studied human interaction in the urban environment and its impact on individual and social life. They emphasized the importance of social, spatial and cultural context in determining how individuals configure their lives and relationships. This contextual approach can also be applied to the analysis of the work-family

relationship. For example, the sociologist Ernest Burgess, who was associated with the Chicago School, developed the concept of "concentric zones" to describe urban structure. This concept emphasizes how individuals adapt to the urban environment and how their interactions unfold in different geographic areas. This can also include the ways in which work and family intersect and how individuals manage their roles and responsibilities in these two areas. Also, Robert Park, another sociologist associated with the Chicago school, analyzed the processes of assimilation and the development of social identity in the urban environment. He argued that social interactions and relationships with other community members can influence how individuals organize their family life and engage in paid work (Motoi, 2023).

The conflict perspective suggests that work and personal life can conflict with each other. For example, people may be pressured to work too much and neglect family responsibilities or give too much time to their personal lives and not meet the employer's expectations. In this case, it is important to identify and manage the sources of conflict to maintain a healthy balance. Also, conflict theory in sociology suggests that work and personal life can conflict with each other, including career-family conflict. This theory emphasizes that career can be time and energy consuming and it can be difficult to find a balance between career and family. For example, people may be pressured to work harder to achieve their career goals, which may lead to neglect of family and social responsibilities. On the other hand, prioritizing personal life can lead to low career performance and a sense of frustration. Career-family conflict can also be caused by factors such as geographic location, transportation, and the need to deal with personal or family issues. For example, a person who lives a long distance from work and has to spend a lot of time in traffic may be pressured to sacrifice time spent with family.

The integrative theory of Rabinowitz and Hall analyzed and according to this model, participation in work is related to the following three types of variables: personality variables (related to individuals), context (related to the work and activities of employees) and the third type of factors of interaction. In this model, all three categories of variables have the same weight in influencing the work participation of employees. The interaction between these two types of variables describes the dispositional-situational method, which uses individual and environmental characteristics to explain individual attitudes and behaviours, that is, when they are consistent, they will lead to a high level of work engagement. In this model, no variable category shows a strong relationship with work engagement. Temperament and situational variables are equally important in explaining work participation (Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli and Lynch, 1997: 230).

Arlie Russell Hochschild developed the theory of "emotional work". In this theory, Hochschild points out that some jobs require a high emotional investment from employees, which can lead to a conflict between work and family responsibilities (Hochschild, 1990: 117-146). She is known for her work on work-life balance and for introducing the concept of "emotional work". Her work examines how women manage responsibilities at home and at work and their impact on their personal and professional lives.

Annette Lareau studied how different social classes adapt to the demands of the workplace and family responsibilities. His studies show that people from poorer social classes often have to prioritize their survival needs and do not have the financial resources to provide childcare or take time off from work. For example, in a 2002 article, Lareau explores the differences between white and black middle-class families and how they approach child rearing and the relationship between family and work. The author shows that white middle-class parents are more likely to involve their children in extracurricular activities and provide them with financial and social support, while black middle-class parents focus more on day-to-day survival and send their children at public schools. In addition, Lareau explores how middle-class parents adjust to the demands of the workplace and family responsibilities, and how this adjustment can lead to conflict between the two spheres (Lareau, 2002: 747-776).

Susan Walzer looked at how gender influences how people balance their careers and personal lives. Walzer showed that women are often more pressured to prioritize their family responsibilities and that men are often more pressured to prioritize their careers. In her work, Walzer examines the wage gap between women with children and women without children, using data from the United States. She argues that women with children are often penalized in the labour market, being seen as less available or less engaged in paid work than men or women without children (Walzer, 1996). Walzer also explores the different strategies women use to cope with work demands and family responsibilities, including part-time work, flexible scheduling, and delegating responsibilities to life partners. Her work provides important insight into how society and workplaces can affect the balance between paid work and family responsibilities, and how women manage these pressures.

Sharon H. Mastracci studied work-family conflict from the perspective of public sector workers. She showed that public sector employees face rigid workplace demands and social pressure to be present in family life, which can lead to conflict between the two spheres. Sharon Mastracci develops a theory of expansion that explains how women adapt to the conflicting pressures of work and family through strategies such as delegation, outsourcing, and re-evaluation of personal and professional values. She argues that organizational policies can play an important role in encouraging or hindering the balance between paid work and family responsibilities, through paid childcare leave, flexible work and telecommuting programs, and other measures that allow employees to manage their better time and responsibilities (Mastracci, 2008: 83-96).

Therefore, the sociological perspective on the work-life balance of teachers focuses on the analysis of the influence of social, organizational, and cultural factors on the balance between the professional and personal life of teachers. These factors may include the organizational culture of schools and educational institutions, human resource policy, working conditions and social expectations.

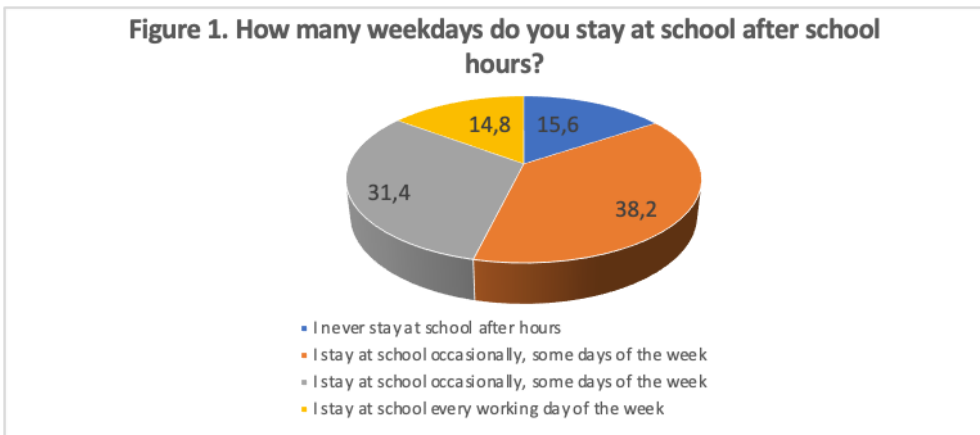
There are theories that highlight the fact that the interaction between work and family can be influenced by organizational and social factors. Thus, these theories identify four main mechanisms that link work and personal life: time, stress, behaviour, and identity. These factors can be influenced by organizational factors such as HR policy and working conditions and can affect teachers' work-life balance. Also, government and educational institution policies, as well as organizational culture and social expectations, can have a significant impact on teachers' balance between paid work and family responsibilities.

5. Objectives and Hypothesis

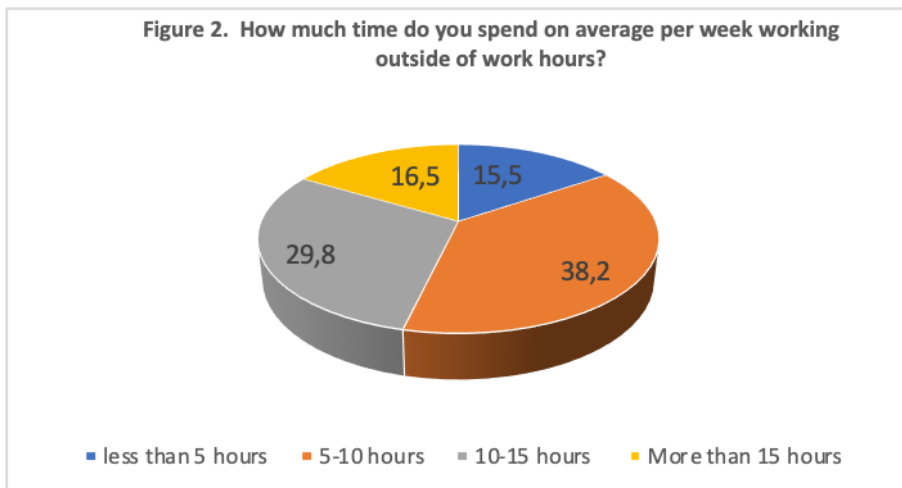
O1: To analyse the level of conflict between career and family among teachers.	H1: Teachers will report a significant level of conflict between professional and family responsibilities.
O2: To identify the factors that contribute to career-family conflict among teachers.	H2: The existence of high professional demands and an excessive workload will be associated with an increased level of career-family conflict among teachers.
O3: To investigate the coping strategies used by teachers to manage career-family conflict.	H3: Teachers will use strategies such as flexible schedules, delegation of responsibilities, and social support to reduce the level of career-family conflict.

6. Results and discussion

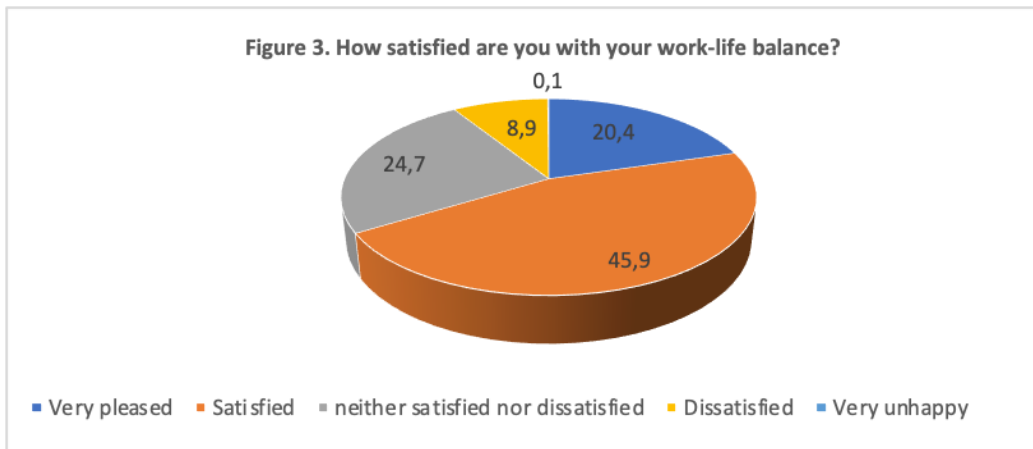
A significant share of teachers (15.6%) state that they never stay at school after school hours, which may indicate the existence of a culture that promotes strict separation between work and personal life. At the same time, the high percentage of teaching staff (38.2%) who stay occasionally indicates a flexibility of organizational culture and expectations related to their availability after the program.



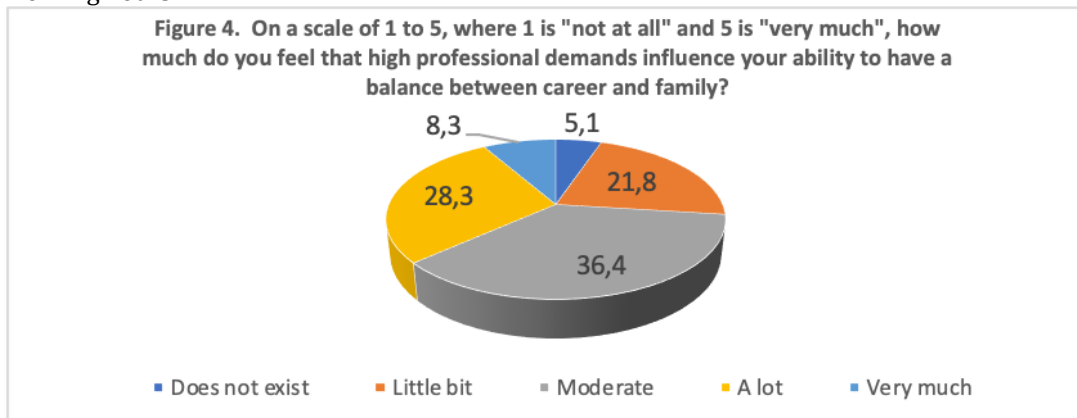
The presence of a significant percentage (31.4%) that stays at school on most working days shows an increased pressure on teachers in terms of the volume and complexity of work. This may be the result of high expectations from the institution, the need for additional training, or an excessive workload that cannot be completed during the normal schedule. The presence of a significant percentage (14.8%) of teachers who stay at school every working day may indicate the existence of institutional support and adequate resources that allow them to better manage their work tasks and personal lives. This support may include additional support from peers or the ability to access additional resources for lesson preparation and other responsibilities.



The results written above indicate that a significant proportion of respondents spend considerable extra time working outside of work hours. About 15.5% of respondents stated that they spend less than 5 hours per week working outside of work hours, which can be considered a relatively low level of additional involvement. However, most respondents (38.2%) indicated that they spend between 5 and 10 hours per week working outside of work hours.

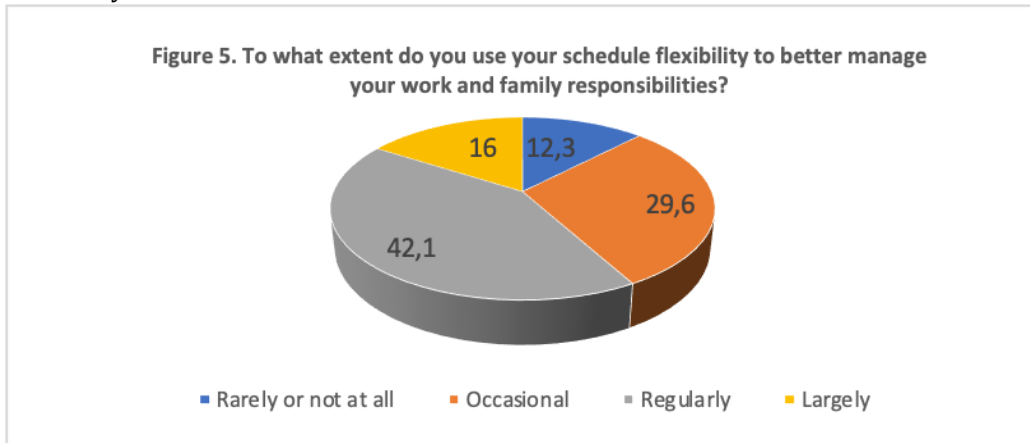


The high level of satisfaction (20.4% very satisfied and 45.9% satisfied) may indicate that a significant part of teachers feel generally satisfied with their work-life balance. This can be the result of an effective balance between professional demands and personal needs, good time management skills and support from the organization or family. The presence of a significant percentage of respondents who are at the level of "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied" (24.7%) may indicate an ambivalence or uncertainty in the evaluation of work-work balance, and 29.8% mentioned that they spend between 10 and 15 hours. Also, 16.5% of respondents reported spending more than 15 hours per week working outside of work hours, which can be considered a significant level of additional involvement. This finding suggests that a considerable proportion of teachers invest substantial time in work outside of normal working hours.

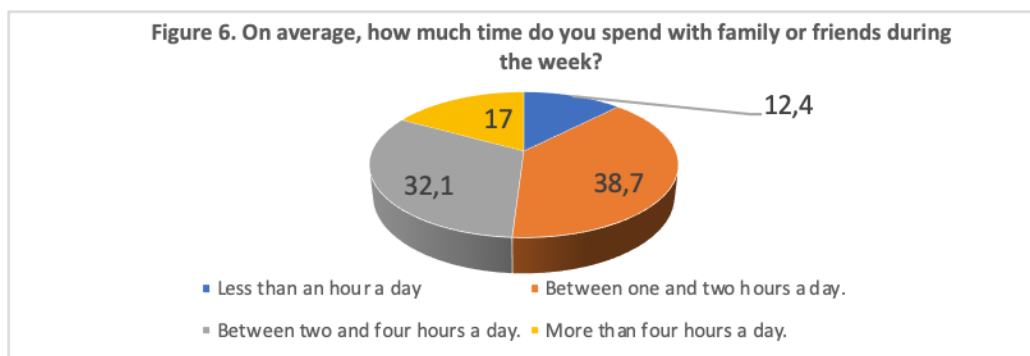


These percentages reflect the distribution of responses from the participants in our research and indicate to what extent teachers feel the influence of high professional demands on their balance between career and family. The majority of respondents (36.4%) considered the influence to be at a moderate level, while 28.3% indicated a much greater influence. A smaller percentage of respondents (8.3%) considered the influence to be very high, while 5.2% indicated that there was no significant influence. The results show that the majority of teachers indicated a moderate influence of high professional demands on the balance between career and family. This can be interpreted in the context of the specific characteristics of education professions, which often involve demanding responsibilities and work tasks, such

as preparing and delivering lessons, assessing students, preparing teaching materials, etc. Factors such as the pressure to achieve good results in teaching, professional norms and expectations, intense work schedules and the need to adapt to frequent changes in the educational system can contribute to the perceived influence of professional demands on work-family balance.



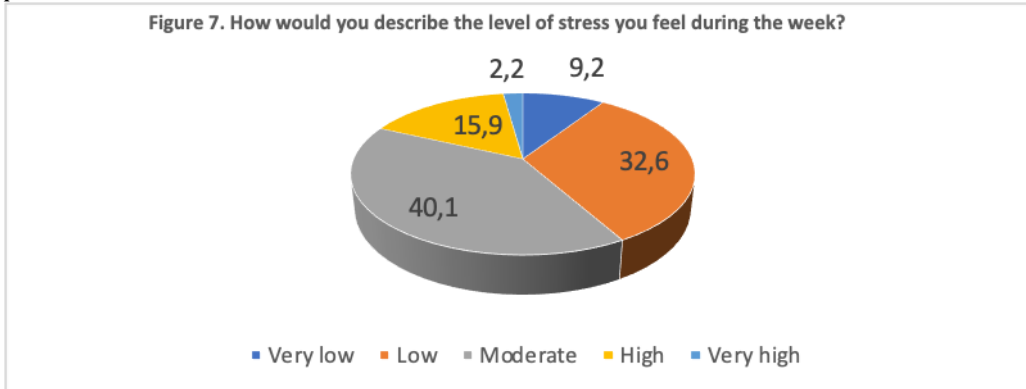
These results show that most teachers use schedule flexibility regularly to manage their professional and family responsibilities. This can be interpreted in the context of the specific demands and pressures of the teaching profession, which often requires a balance between planning and supporting teaching activities and giving the necessary attention and time to the family. The use of schedule flexibility can be seen as a strategy for adapting teachers to the challenges of meeting professional and family responsibilities. Schedule flexibility can allow teachers to accommodate school schedules and organize their time around their and their families' needs. This result may also be influenced by organizational policies and practices in educational institutions, which may offer options and flexibility in terms of working hours, such as telecommuting or flexible hours. In conclusion, these results highlight the importance of schedule flexibility in managing work-family balance among teachers and reflect their adaptation to the specific demands of the profession.



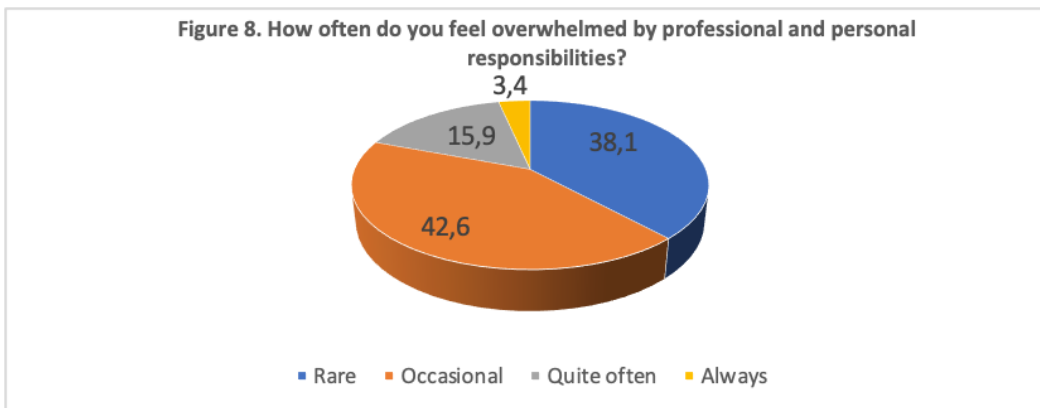
These results express the distribution of time spent by teachers with family or friends during the week. Most teachers (38.7%) spend between one and two hours a day with family or friends, followed by 32.1% who spend between two and four hours a day. There is also a significant percentage (17.0%) who declare that they spend more than four hours a day with family or friends. At the same time, there is also a smaller proportion (12.3%) who spend less

than an hour a day in their company. The significant percentage (12.3%) of those who spend less than an hour a day with family or friends may indicate a restriction of the time available for personal life in favour of professional tasks. Teaching staff can be involved in a high volume of work, with tight deadlines.

The significant percentage (32.1%) of those who spend between two and four hours a day with family or friends indicates a concern and priority for personal relationships and free time. These individuals may actively make time to meet their needs for social interaction and relaxation during the week. This may involve more effective time management or an awareness of the importance of work-life balance. The percentage (17.0%) of those who spend more than four hours a day with family or friends may indicate a significant attention to personal life and leisure time.



The relatively small percentage (9.2%) of those reporting a "Very Low" level of stress may suggest that some of the teachers manage to effectively manage their stress during the week. The significant percentage (40.1%) of those reporting a "Moderate" level of stress indicates that most teachers experience some level of stress during the week. This may be a result of the high demands of the profession and the pressures associated with their responsibilities. The percentage (15.9%) of those who report a "High" level of stress indicates the presence of a part of teaching staff who face considerable levels of stress during the week. This may be influenced by factors such as high workload, pressure of deadlines, difficult relationships with students or other factors specific to the professional context.



The answers obtained to this question could confirm hypothesis No. 1 of our research, by identifying significant percentages of those who feel quite often or constantly overwhelmed by professional and personal responsibilities.

The majority, i.e. 38.1%, state that they rarely feel overwhelmed by professional and personal responsibilities. This result may suggest that these teachers manage to manage their responsibilities for the most part and maintain a relative balance between their professional and personal lives. Approximately 42.6% of teachers declare that they occasionally feel overwhelmed by their professional and personal responsibilities. This category indicates a higher frequency of feeling overwhelmed than "rarely", which may reflect times or periods when the burdens and pressure become more intense, causing them to feel overwhelmed. Only 3.4% of teachers answer that they constantly feel overwhelmed by their professional and personal responsibilities. This low percentage may indicate a minority experiencing extremely high levels of constant stress and pressure.

7. Conclusions

Career-family balance can be an important factor in teachers' decision to stay in the profession or leave the education system. A sociological study can provide valuable information about teachers' motivations and needs in terms of reconciling professional and personal life. In conclusion, sociological research on career-family balance among teachers is important to understand and address the problems teachers face in reconciling their professional and personal lives. The research I did brought to light the following conclusions:

There is a significant level of conflict between professional and family responsibilities among teachers. The existence of a significant level of conflict can be observed through the frequency and intensity of experiences reported by teachers. These may indicate difficulties in simultaneously managing professional and family demands. For example, teachers may feel pressure to work overtime, respond to urgent work demands, or be available to parents and students outside of office hours, which can affect the time and energy they can give to their family. While focusing on professional tasks, they may feel that they are neglecting family needs and activities, and when they are involved in family life, they may feel pressure to be less professionally available.

Conflict between career and family can have a negative impact on the general well-being of teachers. They may be exposed to chronic stress, fatigue, time management difficulties and feelings of dissatisfaction in both areas. Establishing clear boundaries between work and personal life can be a challenge for many teachers, and this can have a negative impact on their well-being.

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COLLECTIVE IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION OF BROKEN HOME SURVIVORS' MOVEMENT

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Abstract: *Hamur Inspiration Community (HIC) is a forum for broken home adolescents in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, which runs the survivor broken home movement focusing on self-development and mental strengthening. Collective identity is essential for social movements to run since it can build bonds among the members. This study aims to determine how the HIC fostered a collective identity framed as a broken home survivors' movement. Then focuses on the communication strategies used in social media to construct HIC's collective identity for the public. This study used a qualitative method with a virtual ethnographic approach and purposive sampling. The findings show that the collective identity formation process follows some steps to form an identity as a superior and inspiring adolescent. Those steps are (1). Involving in both online and offline activities, (2). Determining the organization form and leadership model, and (3). Investing emotionally by making its members a part of the community. A communication strategy is needed to construct the collective identity of the social movement. It can be done using both side issue messages that combine the communicator's (HIC) perspective and the audience's opinion. Delivery of messages uses the redundancy method with message repetition, while the message content is informative and educative. Instagram has become the primary media to convey messages, and the role of the communicator is spreading messages, replying to comments, and involving readers in the communication. This study suggests how social media and communication strategies construct a social movement's collective identity.*

Keywords: Social movement, adolescents, broken home, collective identity, communication strategy

1. Introduction

Broken-home children in Indonesia face societal stereotypes as naughty and uncontrollable children. They are often considered to have a bleak future and tend to experience failure because they cannot adjust properly due to a lack of attention from family and parents. Therefore, they prefer to seek affection outside their homes by doing bad things such as using drugs and promiscuity. Although the condition of a broken home is not the only factor that can trigger behavioral, emotional, and academic problems in children, several examples of criminal cases and behavioral deviations committed by children from broken-home families further strengthen the stereotype. On the other hand, society's stereotypes of children from broken homes will trigger them to develop an identity or behavior that follows the stereotype.

Stereotypes against broken-home adolescents cause society to view them as elements of a discredited group, leading to negative perceptions. Therefore, broken home children tend to hide their identity from the public. This article will focus on broken homes caused by divorce in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, and takes as a case study the Hamur Inspiration Community (HIC), through which young people from divorced family backgrounds recreate a collective identity as survivors. The presence of HIC announced the identity of a broken home child openly to the public. It is contrary to the habits of the Indonesian people.

Hamur Inspiration Community (HIC) is a new social movement in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, focusing on self-development for broken-home adolescents. At first, HIC was an association of teenagers with a divorced family background who had Gadjah Mada University students' status. As time goes by, the number of members continues to grow until they reach other campuses in Yogyakarta and its surroundings and even outside the Special Region of Yogyakarta. Seeing these developments, finally, the target area expanded throughout Indonesia. According to their respective capabilities, HIC aims to form those with broken home backgrounds into mature, superior, and inspiring individuals. HIC promotes the survivor broken home movement through social media platforms, namely Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Path, with a target age of 17-26 years. Internal communication between members and administrators is carried out through the Line Group, which functions as a conversation group to strengthen, inspire, and disseminate information on various activities, coordination, and mobilization. Communication with the public is done via Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and blogs. Apart from online activities on social media, offline activities are also carried out through monthly face-to-face meetings, training, seminars, talk shows, inspiration classes, out bonds, and vacations. The practices show the application of the O2O concept (online to offline), namely activities that begin in cyberspace and continue in the real world. Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) in the online community continued with Face To Face (FTF) communication in the offline community.

As a social movement, HIC must build a collective identity to increase its commitment to achieving its vision and mission. Collective identity will create an effective bond that encourages participants to become an attraction for recruiting new members and mobilizing collective action (Eder, 2009). Collective identity appears at the same time as the formation of a particular group or community. The gathering of broken-home adolescents in one social movement creates a new meaning (message production) among them and society, and this meaning eventually develops into an identity. (Owens, T. J. and Aronson, 2000) state that collective identity as a result of group-level processes refers to how groups identify themselves. While (Taylor, 1989: 771) argues that collective identity is a shared definition of a group that comes from members' common interests and solidarity.

Collective identity is built through interaction and communication within the group and results from negotiations among the group members. Because identity is not natural and constant, it can change and be constructed. The construction of the collective identity of social movements is the result of framing. The frame's focus is to master new ideas and identities in shaping social movements (Klinken, 2007: 14). Framing constructs unique arguments to place, feel, identify, and label something according to the organization's views. Framing HIC formed a collective identity as the survivor broken home movement. The identity of a broken home adolescent is constructed to be a survivor of a broken home. This identity represents a struggle to live a troubled life and a serious effort to remove society's stereotypes. Their identity as a broken home survivors motivates them to face the condition of a broken home positively. The identity formed from views and ideas guides their behavior (Liliweri, 2011: 79). The collective identity is needed as a unifying force and a driving force that fosters a new spirit as superior and accomplished youth survivors of broken homes.

As a survivor broken home movement, HIC creates its collective identity through various social media platforms, namely Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and blogs, with the highest continuity and frequency of use on Instagram. The process of introducing this collective identity requires an appropriate communication strategy. A communication strategy is comprehensive planning management to achieve the desired effect.

This article examines two key questions. Firstly, the process of forming a collective identity of youth from broken homes as survivors in HIC. Secondly, the article asks what communication strategy the HIC use in social media to create HIC's collective identity in the public sphere. After forming the collective identity of the broken home survivor movement, a

communication strategy is needed to create that identity through social media. It is known to the public to change public stereotypes against broken home adolescents.

According to research (Khazraee and Novak, 2018) on the My Stealthy Freedom (MSF) movement of Iranian women who protested the law on wearing the veil via Facebook pages, MSF provides space and infrastructure for identity construction. Iran's hijab policies are protested by posting photographs without the hijab with accompanying text. The literature study (Caren et al., 2020) describes how social movements use various media to enhance, alter, or diminish their capacity to mobilize support and influence broader identities and attitudes. Meanwhile, (Nurabdiansyah et al., 2019) characterize the process of creating a collective identity for the creative community in Makassar through social media campaigns employing the hashtag (#). In addition, it is accomplished by collaborating with other communities on publication management and communication and by exchanging information and creative presentation ideas. Thus, previous research has not focused extensively on social media communication strategies to form collective identities for social movements.

This article aims to examine how the HIC creates a collective identity while taking into account the elements of collective identity for a movement. Social media is considered to be the main media for creating the collective identity of HIC in this case. Finding a communication strategy that uses Instagram as a popular social media platform is hence another goal.

2. Collective Identity

According to (D. Snow, 2001), collective identity is a vital catalyst for group activity and a social construct to which the protagonists, opponents, and outsiders of a movement respond. Collective identity is a process that develops in a sense of "we" and distinct collective differences from other groups (D. A. Snow and McAdam, 2000: 42). The focus (Melucci, 1995) is on how movement members' regular encounters shape the group's collective identity. People are better able to comprehend who they are, what they stand for, and who opposes them as a result of daily contact that creates connections of mutual commitment and solidarity. Collective identity is therefore a product of movement members interacting with one another while organizing for a common cause. It is considered something that develops and is formed among individuals and pertains to how everyone interacts with the community on a cognitive, moral, and emotional level, as evidenced by observable instances of action and interaction. Social media has improved HIC member communication and interaction. Consequently, it is essential to investigate how social media interactions influence and shape collective identities.

Developing, maintaining, and redefining the individual identities of movement participants is one of the movement's goals, as new social movements placed a significant focus on identity. The collective identity of the movement influences not only the lives and individual narratives of its active members but also those of casual people in the crowd who, to some extent, share that identity. According to (Gaskell, 2004), collective identity is shaped through the interactions, decisions, and distinctions of movement participants. According to this theory, a social movement can be sustained and effective if its participants have a strong sense of collective identity (Ranney, 2014). The notion of collective identity as a process refers to shared meanings, shared experiences, and reciprocal interpersonal relationships, which have been fostered through the HIC members' interactions on social media, particularly Line. Instagram, in contrast to intra-movement phenomena, generates a collective identity with which individuals outside the movement may identify and interact.

Collective identity can be understood as a three-part, continuously conscious negotiation process. Cognitively defining objectives, means, and action domains happens first. Then, a network of active relationships between players who engage, communicate, influence one another, and negotiate is established. A relationship network contains communication

channels, forms of leadership, and communication technology. The third step is making emotional investments that make people feel like they belong to a whole (Melucci, 1995, p. 35). (1999, Taylor and Whittier); (Melucci, 1989).

In social movements, the development of collective identity refers to a process in which a group participates collectively and whose consequences reflect the cultural formation of collective consciousness (Ahn, 2017). Individual identities are linked to community identity frames through the use of a framing procedure that finds common elements that require collective action (Benford and Snow, 2000).

A social movement is a group of individuals collaborating to attain a common goal or fulfill a common purpose. The social movements express the society's collective struggle to seek equality and social justice and reflect its steps to protect its identities and cultural heritage (Singh, 2010). It is a distinct, three-dimensional phenomenon. Initially, a type of collaborative activity based on solidarity. Second, engaging in conflict with opponents who share similar demands and ideals. Thirdly, the activity must encourage the system to adapt to its environment rather than preserve its structure (Melucci, 1989: 29).

3. New Social Movement

The old concept of social movements, which tended to be political, featured mass action, and focused on class, differs from the new one. It is commonly viewed as a cultural movement that is more concerned with everyday concerns than with mass action (Larana, Enrique, Hank, Johnston, and Gusfield, 2009). Political action, solidarity movements, governmental change, racial and cultural inequities, and problem-solving strategies are emphasized (Hussey, 2014).

To achieve their goals, the ideology and objectives of social movements are often centered on modifying identity, norms, and lifestyles. The objective of social movement tactics and organizing is to organize and shape the people in order to gain political advantage. All genders, educational levels, occupations, and socioeconomic classes were represented among the participants and actors, who came from numerous social groupings. The performers hail from many social classes, including intellectuals, the middle class, academics, and students. As a transnational movement, the terrain and arena cross international boundaries. The emerging social movements highlight sociocultural concerns (Feixa, C., Pereira, I. and Juris, 2009: 10)

Those who have overcome trauma and neglect are known as survivors (Fernandez, A. MP., Pai, A L.H., Alderfer, M., Hwang, WT., Reilly, A., Kazak, 2010). This exhibits the survivor's mental strength and resilience in the face of hardship. The developers of HIC referred to adolescent victims of parental divorce who overcome difficult circumstances as "broken home survivors."

The term "survivor" represents the ideas of empowerment and social transformation. Giving less pervasive power or strength is what empowerment means (Ife, 1995). Empowerment provides young people from dysfunctional houses with the initiative to take action and work toward goals in accordance with their skills in order to counteract stereotypes in the community. The breadth of social change, which encompasses both material and immaterial cultural components, can be used to characterize the social change components of the term "broken home survivor" (Soekanto, 2017: 335). The term "broken home survivor" signifies a change in the meaning of an intangible part of the culture, specifically language. The term "broken home survivor" transformed the negative connotation of "broken home" into an empowering one.

Media is used by social movements to affect public opinion and bring about change (Clark, 2012). Internet and social media are necessary for social movements since they give a variety of benefits. First, new opportunities for the rapid and straightforward documentation of controversial subjects or current events, as well as for the formation and dissemination of

protests. Smartphones and social media make it feasible to directly exchange photographs, videos, emails, and documents; reach a big audience quickly; employ traditional mass media; and incite unintentional protest without the organization's effort. Second, the possible introduction of innovative protest strategies. Included in this category are hashtags, online petitions, and email campaigns. Using social media, like-minded individuals may readily distribute political manifestos and calls for concerted action. Third, online organizational patterns. Enhancing movement activity transparency and control, as well as expanding participant contact and prospective engagement. It impacts the authority or monopoly of the movement's organizers over the formation of meanings, assumptions, action plans, and guiding principles (Vasi and Suh, 2016).

Internet-based social movement acts are intended to enhance awareness and advocacy, but the use of the Internet as an alternative news source represents information control resistance to activist aims. The second purpose is organizing and mobilizing, which includes activities such as public campaigns, fundraising, and demonstrations. Then, activities of action or reaction, including attacks on websites deemed disruptive to a cause by activists, are sometimes referred to as hacktivism (Vegh, 2003).

4. Communication Strategy

Communication strategy combines communication planning and communication management to accomplish a goal that also demonstrates operational strategies with a situation- and set of conditions approach (Effendy, 2019: 5). Communication strategy is the appropriate combination of communicator, message, channel (media), and receiver factors for influencing (impact) and achieving optimal communication goals. Formulating a communication strategy involves a comprehensive understanding of the key elements of communication outlined in Lasswell's "Who Says What in Which Channel to Whom with What Effect" formula. The communication plan includes responses to Lasswell's reasoning (Cangara, 2017: 25).

There are five steps involved in developing a communication strategy (Arifin, 2006: 114). Start by establishing the aim of communication, information collecting, or influencing an individual's attitude or behavior. The targeted audience is then divided according to sociodemographic, psychological, and behavioral factors (Cangara, 2017: 25). Compilation and distribution methods consist of organizing messages based on their purpose and segmenting them according to one of two types of message theme formulation: one issue or both sides. A side problem is the construction of one-sided messages, e.g., simply from the communicator's standpoint, without taking into account the diverse public opinions that emerge. Alternatively, both sides release a message formulation that has both good and negative aspects, taking into account the communicator's perspective and the audience's evolving opinion. The manner of communicating messages is viewed from two different perspectives. The first component focuses on the implementation procedure, which differentiates the execution procedure and the communication approach employed by redundancy and the canalizing method. The redundancy technique demonstrates how to influence an audience by repeating a message. Repetitive messages will gain attention. Additionally, the audience will recollect the messages conveyed multiple times. The communicator may be permitted to address earlier presentation faults. Before expressing concepts based on the audience's personality, attitudes, and motivations, the canalizing process reveals how the communicator learns about the audience's personality, attitudes, and motivations. The second part of public relations and mass communication is the message content format. These techniques are informative, educational, persuasive, and coercive. The informative strategy involves a message that seeks to influence the audience by presenting something natural, above facts, accurate data, and accurate opinions. The communication instruction method consists of valid and defensible perspectives, facts, and experiences. The transmission of message information is organized to

influence the audience's behavior. The coercive technique, which entails using force to influence the audience, entails compelling them to adopt the notion since its communication message and opinions contain dangers. The persuasive approach is a method of influencing a communicator without excessive critical thought, and even the general audience can be affected unconsciously.

The next step is media selection, which entails selecting communication media based on the message's content and purpose and the type of media the audience employs (Cangara, 2017: 25). In the final step, consider the role of the communicator because the communicator is an important factor in influencing communication success. As a result, the communicator must be credible, appealing, and powerful. Given that communication strategies include informing, responding, and involving, communicators must be capable of doing so. Informing is the transmission and dissemination of messages to communicants. Responding to or presenting feedback to communicants is known as responding. Involving implies involving, including, and inviting communicants to participate in communication (Morsing, M and Schultz, 2006). Furthermore, evaluation is carried out in a communication plan to improve or raise the victory achieved that examines the success of communication efforts (Cangara, 2017: 25).

Communication is the basis for all movements. A social movement was sparked by communication, a common catalyst for mobilization. The communication strategy addresses how we effectively express meaning and communicate with others. Social movements rely heavily on communication strategies for distributing movement discourses and frames, driving direct action activities, and archiving movement self-representations. Every social movement organization grows through interaction, and, like any interaction, it depends on members recognizing frequent, significant, and shared references that build a sense of collective identity (Fine, 2004). Collective identity is conducive to establishing a movement's "loyalty," which is characterized by the movement's capacity to unify and mobilize a coherent force. So, according to (Rovisco, M., Veneti, A. and Poulakidakos, 2018), strategic efforts to fix meaning, define ideological borders, and construct a 'we versus them' rhetoric serve as a foundation for collective self-definition. Collective identity, which is something that people outside the movement know and respond to, must be a public status statement that is developed and communicated by certain communication tactics, in my opinion. The concept of collective identity as perceived by those outside the movement is distinct from the notion of 'processes relating to shared meanings, experiences, and mutual emotional ties as experienced by the actors of the movement themselves through their interactions with one another.'

5. Research Method

This is a qualitative study utilizing a virtual ethnographic approach. (Kozinets, 2015) Virtual ethnography is a qualitative field research method derived from ethnographic research methodologies that examine artifacts, such as culture and community. This method investigates the existence of the Internet, its devices, and computer-mediated communications. Determination of informants for the study was deliberate; i.e., individuals considered supplying the predicted information (Sugiyono, 2014). Informants are determined based on subjects deemed capable of providing a great deal of accurate information regarding the formation of the collective identity of the survivor's broken home movement and the communication strategy of using social media to disseminate that identity in the public sphere. Consequently, the informants selected as the unit of analysis in the study were: (1) HIC's founder, (2) HIC's core management team responsible for designing activities and managing social media (Facebook, Line groups, Instagram, and blogs), and (3) Twenty HIC members with a minimum membership period of one year who are actively involved in various HIC activities offline and online. Observations were conducted virtually on social

media content, mainly Instagram and Line groups, in order to identify messages concerning the formation of collective identities.

6. Results and Discussion

Their collective identity is formed through their online and offline interactions. Through Line group chats and participation in online activities such as inspirational classes and the sharing of experiences from those who have survived a broken home, online relationships are built. In contrast, offline interactions are developed through self-improvement activities, training programs, in vacations, and regular gatherings. Through psychoeducation, talk shows, and seminars, they are also mentally reinforced.

Participation in both online and offline activities is necessary for HIC members to develop a shared identity. These activities serve as a means of self-development and bring strength to adolescents from broken homes, who were previously perceived as vulnerable but have now converted into teenagers who can thrive in a challenging world. The following comment from one of the HIC members demonstrates how the changes that occurred to her after joining HIC created the collective identity of teenagers from broken homes as survivors of broken homes.

I became aware of the testimonies of other survivors who faced greater obstacles than myself. Their experiences motivate me to overcome obstacles and live my life. They are my driving force for growth and survival. Now I am more confident. Despite having a dysfunctional family, I can become a superior and competent person.

The next phase is to determine the HIC's organizational structure and leadership model. The organization has a community-based structure, and its leadership model is dynamic. The relationship between the chairman of the HIC and its members is based on several factors, including focus, communication, trust, respect, and risk. To communicate with a large audience, the organization implements communication channels such as group chats on Line and social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. Communication technology can be considered as a method for establishing a group's identity. The following clip from a Line group chat depicts how member dialogue can contribute to the formation of a collective identity.

A: I am angered and humiliated by the fact that I grew up in a broken home. I struggle to forget my traumatic past, and my present is no better. No one cares about me, let alone pays attention to me.

B: I'm also angry and depressed; it's an emotion I encounter the lot of times; yet, I express my anger through writing, songwriting, etc. In my experience, I have learned that not everyone will care about us; some will even forget about us, and we cannot force them to do so. We can only attract attention if we are at the top. In a positive manner, of course.

The preceding dialogue indicates that B intends to encourage A to incorporate a better attitude. Among them are doing good work and being on top, which can be interpreted as having advantages or accomplishments that can attract the attention of many people. This circumstance indicates that they are attempting to promote themselves as model adolescents from broken homes.

Emotional investment concludes the process of creating a group identity. It gives people a sense of belonging to a community. Emotional participation refers to the feeling of belonging to a group of adolescents from broken homes dealing with various home-related concerns. They aim to demonstrate that even as teens from broken homes, they can excel and inspire other adolescents from broken homes. They have the bravery and courage to live in order to achieve their objectives. The statement made by one of HIC's members displays the group's shared characteristics.

The fact that we both come from broken-home families causes us to share the same fate. We have empathy for one another and compassion for our peers from broken homes. I wish to make bad things good. I also desire to achieve success and obtain results for my efforts. As a child of a broken home, I must excel to avoid being predicated on something other than. Sharing the same fate increases HIC members' solidarity to strengthen and encourage one another. Demonstrating to the public that children from broken homes are just as capable of achieving as their friends from intact families is an effective way to motivate them to succeed.

The first step of the communication strategy is establishing the objective of communication. Messages on social media aim to disseminate information about HIC as a platform for broken-home adolescent leaders of the broken-home survivor movement. In addition, it seeks to impact society's opinion of adolescents from broken homes and their behaviors to engage in self-development and mental hardening activities. Instagram is the principal social media platform utilized by HIC. One of the materials on Instagram is about HIC's activities, such as Inspirational classes. The image below is an Instagram example of a motivating class poster.

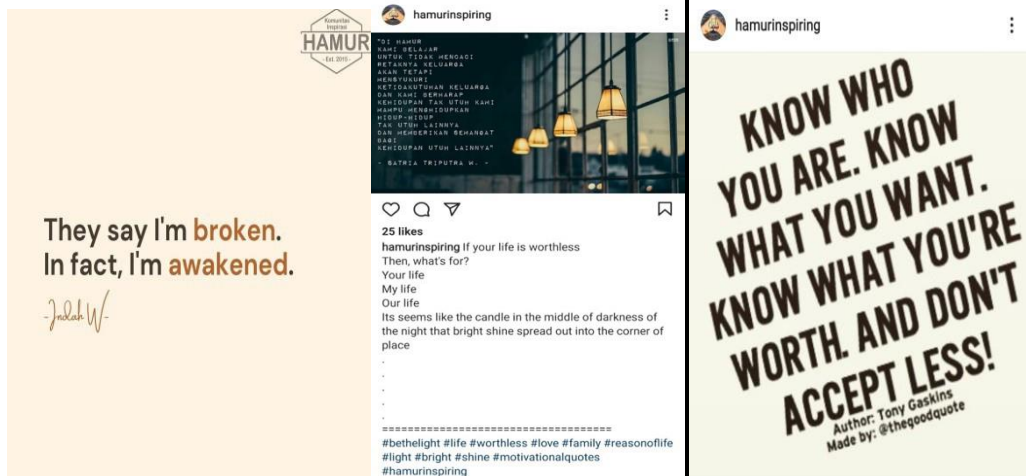
Figure 1. Poster of Inspirational Class held by HIC.



Source: Instagram @hamurinspiring

Adolescents from broken homes can be motivated to engage in positive activities and improve their mindset by read such quotes. Several instances are provided below.

Figure 2. Good quotes.



Source: Instagram @hamurinspiring

The second step in a communication strategy is audience segmentation. The social media messages were directed towards adolescents from broken homes who need a forum to share their stories and get help, as well as the broader public who stereotype broken home adolescents. Instagram can persuade adolescents from broken homes to join HIC's survivor broken home movement. The stereotypes of adolescents from broken homes can be altered. They see that adolescents from broken homes can support each other, resist from engaging in destructive behavior, and engage in constructive activities.

Next, compilation and transmission methods are considered. The formulation of the message topic integrates the communicator's (movement actor's) perspective with the audience's opinions. Depending on how it is done, the way of sending communication messages utilizes the redundancy method, as evidenced by the repeat of news about divorce and the success of children from broken homes. Multiple instances of testimonials that could serve as information disseminators and influence audiences were utilized. Depending on the mode of transmission, the message content focuses more on informational and educational strategies.

The media selection shows that social media, with the highest frequency of use on Line, Instagram, and Twitter, are the most popular form of media. In the meantime, Facebook and blogs are merely supplementary media.

Determine the role of the communicator as the final step of the communication strategy. Communicators are expected to have the essential components: 1) informing and spreading messages about HIC and its activities on social media; 2) responding, replying, or providing feedback to the communicant, namely social media followers who comment or give likes; and 3) involving or including readers in the communication that HIC has made by providing information on the activity plan and posting photos of the activity.

The researchers recommend promoting the survivor broken-home movement to high school-aged broken-home adolescents, as they are often unstable and need assistance to remain passionate about things and achieve their goals. Moreover, social media management can be enhanced by developing persuasive, engaging, and easily-remembered message content. As a result, social media management-focused personnel are necessary. Movement activities should be expanded to include routine training in the arts and sports so that members can express their self-actualization and promote interaction among themselves, so fostering solidarity.

7. Conclusion

The survivor broken-home movement is led by HIC, which establishes a superior and inspiring collective identity for broken-home adolescents. Through participation in online and offline activities such as Line group conversations, HIC self-development, and mental strengthening events such as inspirational classes, training classes, talk shows, seminars, and psychoeducation, members create this identity.

The method for communicating this identity to the public is carried out via social media, specifically Instagram, while Line Group is used to build a bond between members through rigorous engagement and communication. Interaction and communication within HIC also contribute to the formation of members' collective identity. With this collective identity, it is hoped that society's stereotypes about teenagers from broken homes will improve. Broken-home adolescents are neither vicious nor delinquent but rather have excellent accomplishments and a promising future. The objective of the communication strategy for transmitting collective identities is to acquire public acceptability and entice potential new members to join HIC.

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THE ROMANIAN CONTINUING TRAINING SYSTEM – A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS WITH THE SYSTEMS OF NORWAY AND LATVIA

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Abstract: *The evolution of society, of technology, the accelerated pace of changes obligatorily imposes the need for continuing training in each and every professional field. The education system, in an attempt to be compatible with the needs of the social system, requires those who serve it to permanently develop their professional competencies by assimilating new, innovative theoretical elements, by acquiring more and more complex skills, attitudes adapted to the demands of the contemporary world. Consequently, for all the teaching staff, training is not only a possibility, but above all, a necessity. The study addresses the issue of the continuing training of the teachers in the Romanian education system, in accordance with the current legislation, recently amended, in an attempt to make it compatible with the European training systems, which relate to relatively uniform quality standards, while carrying out a comparative analysis between this system and those of Norway and Latvia, at the same time. The used method of investigation is represented by the comparative critical analysis, which tries to capture the specifics of each continuing training system and which capitalizes on normative documents (laws, methodologies), but also OECD reports of the European Commission. The conclusions drawn from the analysis highlight the common and differentiating elements of those particular systems.*

Keywords: Romanian education system, European education system, Plan for Professional Growth (PPG), Continuing Professional Development (CPD), Continuing Professional Learning (CPL).

1. Introduction

The educational system is one of the most affected by the societal changes produced in recent years, considering the very close connection with the social system and, above all, the essential purpose that any educational system has, namely that of forming future specialists who will be able to perform in different fields and social subsystems, to serve the interests of the society. This is one of the primary reasons why changes in education have always been in the center of attention, not only in the Romanian system, but in any other European or world system.

Closely related to the initial training of teachers, the continuing one draws some clear directions and establishes some mandatory minimum standards for all the teachers working in the system, in an attempt to ensure a quality education for all beneficiaries. The two training programs, initial and continuing, are designed, at the level of each education system, in a close connection, to ensure the coherence, the unity of the entire professional path.

Given the increasing diversity of learners and their many needs, the increasing use of information and communication technologies (ICT) and the changing requirements of the modern workplace, it is necessary and mandatory to develop the skills and competencies of teachers, to deepen and expand their theoretical knowledge. In order to achieve effective teaching, teachers professional learning (TPL) must be a priority (OECD, 2020a).

Beside the demands imposed at the global or European level, the need for compatibility, harmonization of all education systems, we must also take into account the need to include national experiences, traditions, customs specific to each country, in order to create realistic and effective routes for teacher training. Thus, the elements of educational policy, current and

relevant worldwide, intertwine with the national ones, finding common points of intersection. The differentiating elements of each educational system ensure uniqueness, but also variety, at the same time. What matters, however, is the final result, which is objectified in the "products" of any educational system, i.e. the graduates, whose training profile contains enough common notes as to make it compatible with any system in the world, eliminating borders or language, cultural, social barriers and ensuring mobility and free access to any system in the world.

By virtue of the aforementioned, we believe that the Romanian system of continuing training of the teaching staff, in full reformation process, is trying to harmonize with the European ones and not only, proposing training programs that are consistent with the permanent changes in the social system.

2. The Romanian system of continuing training

The Romanian continuing training system has recently undergone changes, regulated by official normative acts. Thus, in 2022, it was approved, by Ministerial Order no. 4224, The framework methodology regarding the quality assurance of programs for the continuing professional development of teachers in pre-university education. According to art. 2, para. 1 of this methodology "the continuing professional development of teachers in pre-university education is based on the professional standards for the teaching profession, on the quality standards and on the professional competencies, appropriate to the teaching roles".

The continuing professional training of teachers in pre-university education can be achieved through three categories of programs, according to the provisions of the previously mentioned methodology:

- Accredited programs for continuing professional development – considered "forms of continuing professional development of the teaching staff in pre-university education; in the field of specialization corresponding to the teaching position held or in the psycho-pedagogical and methodical field for growth in the teaching career and strategic educational management" (art. 2, paragraph 3)
- Programs for continuing complementary development - which differ from those in the first category in that they represent "forms of continuing professional development of the teaching staff in pre-university education, in fields complementary to the specialization" (art. 2, paragraph 4)
- Programs for personal development and functional facilitation - which represent "forms of personal development of the teachers in pre-university education, in the sense of developing abilities and skills in fields related to the educational field but which ensure support for the pedagogical autonomy and for the development of appropriate social behaviors" (art. 2, paragraph 5).

The three categories of programs offer various and numerous opportunities for continuing training for teachers working in the pre-university education system, starting from the programs carried out under the auspices of the Ministry of Education (for accredited and complementary programs) to those carried out at the school level (in its perimeter or outside of it), which offer new opportunities for recognition of the activity and which take the form of participation in conferences, symposia, scientific communication sessions, workshops or other forms aimed at ensuring the development of professional autonomy, the improvement of the pedagogical style and didactic, methodical practices of teachers (for functional qualification programs).

For each of the continuing education programs, depending on the category they fall in and other administrative or curricular criteria, graduates can receive certificates, together with a certain number of transferable credits. For the first two categories of programs, the number of credits is according to accreditation/ approval, and for the programs for functional qualification, this is established and recognized at the school level, by a committee specialized

in this regard (called *The Commission for Didactic Mentoring and Training in the Teaching Career*), at the request of the teachers, under the condition of not exceeding the number of 15 transferable credits, out of the total of 90 that a teacher must accumulate within the legally statutory period.

The mentioned methodology establishes, for each individual program category, the specific conditions for accreditation/ approval, respectively its implementation, evaluation and certification of learners. In full agreement with the changes that have occurred in recent years, regarding the methods of carrying out didactic activities, regardless of form, level, context, and for continuing training activities, two methods of carrying out are recommended: in a blended-learning system (having a face-to-face component and an online asynchronous one) or in an online system (having both a synchronous and asynchronous component), these being compatible with the recommendations and provisions at European level, in this field of continuing training.

Also, the recommendations of the methodology for the first two categories of mentioned programs (accredited and complementary) also refer to their curricular components, respectively:

- The aims of the training, which must be formulated in the form of competencies and which must relate to sets of professional and quality standards relevant to the teaching profession;
- The training contents – must be up-to-date, include new acquisitions in the fields of science, art, technology, be relevant to the field/ specialization and also adapted to the training needs of the teachers;
- The training strategies – intended to ensure the transmission of contents in an active, interactive, attractive way, resorting to a diversity of didactic methods and procedures, centered on the learner, on the group, on combined forms of organization of the learning activities, on various traditional and modern means, based on the use of new communication technologies, the Internet, digital platforms, etc.;
- The evaluation of the competencies developed by the teachers - relevant for the type of program and its objectives, calling on forms, methods and tools in line with the specifics of the specialization, the topics covered, the acquisitions acquired; for the final evaluation, the portfolio is recommended, as a summative tool that expresses the level and quality of the training, through the selection of the works/ papers/ tasks included, which must reflect the practical-functional component of the training activities and which must be assessed based on an evaluation grid, of rigorously established criteria; the certification, following the assessment, is the official way of recognizing the competencies developed as a result of the continuing training activity.

This entire system of continuing training was designed as to offer numerous and various opportunities that teachers, depending on the stage they are in, can capitalize on in order to improve their own activity, its theoretical and applied components, teaching style, professional and personal skills.

The national strategy for the continuing training of the teachers in pre-university education is also presented in detail in the education law. We propose a brief analysis of this document, from the perspective of the issue that is the subject of this study.

Thus, according to the new recently approved law for pre-university education, (Law 198/2023), the National Center for Training and Development in the Teaching Career is being founded, which is a public institution, subordinate to the Ministry of Education, and has, among its objectives, the following (according to art. 118, paragraph (3), letters a) and b):

- a) "the identification of the training needs, the development of the training curriculum, the training of trainers and their correlation with the teacher evaluation system, with the national strategies and policies and with the specific needs of the educational communities";

b) "the organization and provision of continuing training for teachers, management, guidance and control staff, as well as for the auxiliary teaching staff in pre-university education";

The importance of the continuing training of teachers is thus recognized and regulated in the official document that legislates the functioning of the education and training system in Romania. Within the same previously mentioned art., para. (3), letter m), the law also establishes as an attribution for the National Center for Training and Development in the Teaching Career the annual elaboration and approval, by ministerial order, of a national plan for the continuing training of all human resources working in the pre-university education system. This center must permanently establish the training priorities of teachers, based on an analysis of the training needs which is also in accordance with the national and European educational policies and strategies for continuing training.

The continuing training, designed and implemented at national level, is being monitored at the level of each school. In this sense, the Law proposes the establishment in each school of the Commission for training and development in the teaching career, which, according to art. 130, para. (5), "identifies the continuing training needs of the teaching staff, the programs and projects intended for their continuing training, monitors their career development, as well as their participation in the continuing training programs and projects". Moreover, we must mention the fact that in most educational systems, the school has the obligation to have a plan for the professional development of human resources, the responsibility of which rests with the school principal, the management team or some other person designated with this task (Enache, Goga, 2019; Enache *et al.*, 2019).

In addition to the principles, directions and general training strategies, the Law also imposes minimum criteria regarding the continuing training of the teaching staff. Thus, art. 188, para. (7) mentions: "Teachers in pre-university education must participate at least once every 2 years in no less than one accredited continuing training program, according to a plan decided upon at the school level, based on the training needs analysis developed by The National Center for Training and Development in the Teaching Career"

In accordance with the principle of equal opportunities in education, the aforementioned legislative document also stipulates the need to develop and implement national programs for the continuing training of the teaching staff working in institutions where inclusive education is carried out (art. 67, para. 5, letter. k), as well as in the languages of national minorities (art. 59, par. 8).

Continuing training is considered, according to the Pre-university Education Law, one of the obligations of the teachers (art. 228, letter b).

Summarizing the aspects highlighted in the two previously analyzed legislative documents (Framework methodology regarding the quality assurance of programs for the continuing professional development of teachers in pre-university education, no. 4224/2022 and the Law on pre-university education, no. 198/2023), we can conclude the following:

- The continuing training of teachers in pre-university education is not only a priority, but also an obligation of the system, in order to achieve a quality education, in accordance with the European and global educational policies and strategies;
- Romania has a coherent and unitary national strategy regarding the regulated, officially legislated continuing training, which ensures the continuity of the initial training;
- Continuing training is carried out in the general context of promoting lifelong learning and takes various and complex forms, throughout the teaching career;
- The entire continuing training system is designed in a structure that applies the principles of decentralization, being developed at the national level, by creating a realistic training plan in relation to the needs of the teachers and it is also monitored at the local level of the school, through a commission, which has responsibilities in this regard;

- The legislation provides the normative framework for the development and implementation of continuing training programs of various types, which allow the approach of relevant and current topics;
- An important component of continuing training is represented by entering study programs that allow the certification of competencies for another specialization, in related, complementary fields, professional reconversion programs, organized by higher education institutions, obtaining teaching degrees, necessary for career growth;
- The continuing training methodology also validates other forms of teacher activities, carried out at the school level, both inside and outside it and which take the form of scientific conferences, symposia, scientific events, workshops, round tables, etc. – with a methodical and scientific character, in which they participate and which ensure professional and personal development;
- The methods of carrying out continuing training are not limited to face-to-face activities, but offer hybrid or exclusively online versions, a fact that can represent an advantage for many teachers;
- The participation in continuing training activities aims not only to develop professional and/ or personal competencies, but also to create learning communities, physically organized spaces, but especially visually, where teachers can share their experience and benefit from the good practice examples of other colleagues;
- From an administrative point of view, the Continuing Training Methodology establishes clear criteria regarding the categories of providers that can develop and implement continuing training programs, as well as explicit conditions regarding the necessary documentation;
- From a curricular point of view, the recommendations that are made demonstrate the need to articulate all the elements, so that they integrate the latest acquisitions in terms of content, instructional strategies, methodologies and means used (with an emphasis on active and interactive methodology, the individualizing one, on adult training methods, on means that are based on the exploitation of technology), of the used evaluation tools and methods, all integrated in an instructional design that applies the new educational paradigms.

3. European experiences regarding continuing education: the Norwegian and Latvian models

The European continuing training systems present common characteristics, but also specific aspects.

For example, in countries such as Bulgaria, Spain, Lithuania, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia, the professional development plan (Plan for Professional Growth-PPG) is mandatory in order to progress in career, and it also ensures obtaining additional income. It is, however, necessary for the teachers to prove their participation in continuing training activities (Enache *et al.*, 2019). The previously cited authors mention that in some European countries, such as Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, Portugal, Romania and Finland, there is a minimum number of transferable credits, which a teacher must obtain within a certain period of time, as a result of completing programs or implementing continuing training activities.

Next, we are presenting two European systems of continuing teacher training, from Norway and Latvia, respectively.

The Norwegian continuing training model

Norway has implemented, since 2017, a new model of continuing teacher training, based on a rigorous local analysis of the training needs and collective forms of professional learning. Teachers receive financial support both from the national authorities, in obtaining credits, as a result of completing some priority, relevant and current topics, and from the local authorities, which organize

collective continuing professional training activities. At the local level, the school managers are responsible for identifying the training needs of the teachers working in a particular institution and, starting from this needs analysis, they outline a professional development plan, in collaboration with the universities in the area. The training plans are then discussed in meetings, convened by the authorities at the county level, attended by representatives of the interested institutions (schools, local universities, municipal associations, institutions representing the business environment). Once the training priorities of the teachers are approved, the county authorities allocate the necessary funds to the local representatives. The activity is monitored from the central level, especially following the situations where the objectives are achieved partially or below the accepted level. A third pillar of this decentralized system is represented by an innovative plan that brings together representatives of the municipality and the research communities, in order to develop and test new acquisitions in learning, in accordance with the evaluation and quality criteria imposed by the state.

A centralized structure, the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, is responsible for evaluating and improving the effectiveness of these initiatives regarding continuing teacher training, which has established a set of five criteria:

- sustained duration;
- opportunities for active learning;
- ensuring consistency with the teachers' knowledge;
- educational beliefs and policies, opportunities for collaborative learning;
- focusing on the pedagogical dimension of the contents.

Annually, the representatives of the county authority make reports on the implementation of continuing training, which they send to the Directorate of Education and Training. Also, another criterion of the effectiveness of the training activities is represented by the results of the students, by their learning experience, which is periodically questioned, verified.

Source: OECD, 2020a: 35-36; European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2021

Since, in recent years, the social context, especially the pandemic one, required an acceleration of the implementation and exploitation of new technologies in the didactic activity, all educational systems needed to adapt to these changes, integrating in the initial, but also continuing training of teachers, requirements regarding the use of digital technologies. We are presenting, in this context, how the continuing training system in Latvia tried to innovate the continuing professional training of teachers, through digital technology (after OECD, 2020b, p. 18).

The Latvian model of continuing training

The COVID-19 crisis has accelerated a series of reforms in Latvia, which started in 2018, targeting important areas such as curriculum, teacher training and the transition to digital education. Digital skills, developed at the level of all curricular areas, were brought to the fore in the professional development of teachers, as ways to achieve the curricular reform. The teachers received support for the development of digital skills from the Ministry of Education and Science, to use digital platforms, to create digital lessons. Also, IT specialists provided support to teachers for carrying out online activities, in the context of school closures. The continuing professional training courses for teachers are based on priority themes, established annually at the national level. In 2020, the Ministry of Education and Science allocated additional funds for teacher training activities, carried out both physically and online, meant to develop digital skills. The courses targeted a variety of categories of teachers and school managers, from those teaching pre-school education to those in vocational education. They also considered different school subjects, fields and specializations, with teachers having the opportunity to go through flexible content, at their own pace.

Source: OECD, 2020b: 18

4. Discussions

The comparative analysis of the Romanian system and the two European continuing training systems led us to formulate some conclusions:

- the continuing professional training of teachers is a priority of any educational system, in the general context of promoting lifelong learning and the need to adapt to social changes produced at an accelerated pace;
- most educational systems develop national plans for continuing teacher training, in a more or less decentralized manner, granting, depending on the degree of decentralization, a certain role to local, county or school authorities;
- the general continuing training strategy takes into account the training needs of the teaching staff, which are periodically investigated and it projects activities that capitalize on priority professional, curricular or trans-curricular training themes;
- the Romanian continuing training system, subject to recent changes, contains elements found in many of the European systems, including the two subject to our analysis, namely the Norwegian and Latvian ones: the existence of a centralized body to coordinate continuing education, through those national training plans; the involvement of the school in monitoring the continuing training process of the human resource; the use of transferable credits to meet the mandatory professional development criteria, etc.
- in the context of the pandemic period, all continuing training systems have introduced essential changes of a curricular nature, but, above all, for the development of transversal skills, including the digital skills category.

5. Conclusions

In this study, we set out to analyze the issue of continuing training of teachers, initially starting from a well-known reality, that of the Romanian education system, and then extrapolating the discussions and analysis to other European systems, especially those of Norway and Latvia.

Based on the analysis carried out, we were able to identify common, but also different, aspects between these systems, a fact that confirms the need to harmonize general educational policies, European and national, of the global elements with those that give specificity to each country.

Summarizing, we can say that the continuing professional training system must also be aware of the importance of permanent change, which allows it to keep up with the evolution of society, which offers numerous and diverse opportunities to all teachers to improve educational practices, to develop and deepen the theoretical basis, to combine all formal, non-formal and informal experiences, in order to achieve a quality education.

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SOCIETY AND ECONOMY – MEANS OF MODERNIZING THE COUNTRY IN THE COMMUNIST PERIOD IN ROMANIA

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Abstract: *The end of the Second World War surprises Romania in an extremely ungrateful position, with significant territorial losses, as well as human losses. This whole situation affects the post-war context, Romania being treated as a defeated country in the post-war peace negotiations. With the establishment of the new political regime, significant changes are taking place in Romanian society both politically and economically and socially. In communist Romania, the economy and industrial development reached a level of maximum importance. The purpose of this article is to show the way in which the Romanian Communist Party, after taking power in the state, begins to trigger changes aimed at speeding up the transition to a Soviet-type economy. A new administrative apparatus subordinated to the interests of the newly formed political system was imposed. Applying the principle that in the socialist economy the main role is held by the state, the communist government created the necessary levers to intervene in the production processes, in the distribution of raw materials and in the conduct of internal and external trade.*

Keywords: nationalization, industrialization, planning, development, collectivization

1. Introduction

In 1938, Romania recorded the highest level of economic and social development in a favorable national framework acquired in 1918. The important progress, made after the exit from the economic crisis that broke out worldwide in 1929, in terms of the valorization of raw materials indigenous, the development and diversification of production and modernization, especially in terms of changes in the dynamics of branches and sub-branches of industry, with a view to their more useful articulations, were suspended under the conditions of the mutilation of the national territory in 1940 and the engagement of the country in the war, in June 1941 (Alexandrescu, 2020: 570). After two decades, one of which was marked by economic recovery (1919 - 1924) and overcoming the economic crisis (1929 - 1933), Romania was among the states with a predominantly agrarian economy. The relationship between the economy and agriculture, in terms of their contribution to the achievement of national income and material production, presented the agrarian-industrial character of the economy in Romania, being inappropriate compared to the economy of advanced states, although a mitigation process had been registered gradual of the agrarian elements in favor of the industrial type elements (Alexandrescu, 2020: 570). In March 1945, the process of deterioration of the state of the national economy continued to grow. Obsolete or partially destroyed machinery, the reduction of stocks of raw materials or finished products, the impossibility of making imports, as a result of the state of war, and the lack of stocks of traditional products for export – represented indisputable realities (Alexandrescu, 2020: 570). Shortly after the seizure of power by the government of Petru Groza, important economic changes were imposed in the country, camouflaged behind the idea of reform. The newly imposed government aimed to restore the Romanian economy after the Second World War, a process that took place in the period 1945-1950. The processes of industrialization and collectivization of agriculture constituted the basic components of the modernization policy of the Romanian society by the Party-state. They were carried out in stages, depending on the internal situation and in strict dependence on the own situation of the socialist camp, starting from the model imposed by the Soviet Union.

At the end of 1944 and in the first part of 1945, the economic activity was directed towards meeting the needs of the front, a fact that deeply affected the standard of living of the population. The existence of weak material and financial resources, as a result of the war effort and the destruction caused by it, the status conferred on Romania by the Armistice Convention and its economic duties, required the establishment of measures of a statist-conductor character, aimed at counteracting or at least limiting the states extremely serious work and lead to the normalization of economic and social life (Tismăneanu, 2006: 411).

2. Nationalization and industrial development

Before launching the industrialization program, the communist state must first become the owner of the Romanian economy. This fact was made possible by the nationalization process, which represented the breaking point from the old relations. The transfer of the main means of production from the ownership of individuals to the ownership of the state, which orients them according to unique and centralized plans, constitutes one of the specific characteristics of all communist societies.

The nationalization of the main means of production carried out in June 1948 represented an extensive, systematic, and thoroughly prepared process. The census of economic enterprises carried out in October 1947 provided the state with a clear picture of their number, size and situation, allowing it to select the enterprises that were to be nationalized (Tismăneanu, 2006: 412). Thus, through the law of June 11, 1948 and the decrees that followed it until the end of 1948, enterprises in the mining, industrial, forestry, metallurgical, banking, cinematographic industry, private health institutions, etc. were transferred to the state. Another important moment in the consolidation of state property was the promulgation of Decree no. 92 of April 19, 1950 for the nationalization of real estate belonging to "former industrialists, former landlords, former bankers, former big merchants and other elements of the big bourgeoisie" (Decree no. 92 of April 19, 1950). This was followed by the state ownership of hotels and buildings under construction that were abandoned by their owners.

The nationalization law determined the halting of the development of the Romanian industry in formation and the destructuring of the economy, constituting the end of the bourgeois-democratic revolution and the beginning of the socialist revolution in Romania. Nationalization brought profound changes to Romanian society, ruining not only the class of industrialists, from whom the state took everything, but also the entrepreneurial class, of engineers and economists, all done in the name of class struggle. In the economic plan, the Romanian Communist Party started the process of modernizing the national economy and leveling at the lowest level the economic power of the Romanian population, in accordance with Stalinist principles and to a lesser extent with the specific conditions in the country (Verzea, 2013: 365). The Stalinist plan for Romania, as for all the countries that had come under the dome of the Kremlin, was based on a unique strategy of transforming the national economy and social structures "into indigo copies of the one in the Soviet Union" (Tismăneanu, 2005:145). In other words, it meant the transformation of the economy based on the market and private property "into a centrally planned, state-owned economy" (Tismăneanu, 2005: 145).

The country's industrialization policy thus became the main means of action for economic progress in a society where it was believed that the existence of a developed industry was linked to the existence of the working class, which in turn represented, according to the Political Report of the Central Committee at the conference party from 1956, "the guarantee of the democratization of our public life, the guarantee of the liquidation of feudalism and landlordism" (Bărbieru, 2015: 263-264). Heavy industry was considered the main means of "restoration and reconstruction of the country", and the lines drawn by the party took into account the fact that it should put all the wealth of the country into value

(Bărbieru: 264). Its progress generates the evolution of other economic branches and the birth of new economic branches, as well as the functioning of transport, without which there could not have been a modern economy. Thus, Romania, which at that time had basic raw materials (coal, crude oil, bauxite, chrome ore, magnesium) and a sufficient workforce, would have been capable, according to the communist leaders, of a real economic leap (Bărbieru: 264).

The first measure to create the new planned structure of the economy was the establishment of the State Planning Committee, a key institution in the planned management of the Romanian national economy. Odată ce proprietatea socialistă a devenit preponderentă în economie și odată cu înființarea Comitetului de Stat al Planificării, au fost realizate condițiile necesare trecerii efective la planificarea de tip imperativ a economiei (Iancu and Pavelescu, 2008: 4). The first actions taken in this regard consisted in the elaboration and implementation of the annual plans of 1949 and 1950, followed by the five-year plans starting from the period 1951-1955. By means of the annual plans, the activity in the economic field owned by the state was directed and the achievement of the economic potential of the year 1938, considered as the peak of the economy in the Romanian interwar period. According to official statistical data, in 1950 the national income represented 99.9% and the social product 99.0% in relation to 1938, which represented the end of post-war reconstruction (Iancu and Pavelescu: p. 4). In the years 1949 and 1950, the most consistent part of the reconstruction of the economic potential was realized after the destruction generated by the Second World War. The return in 1950 of the level of the two main macroeconomic indicators used during the command economy to the levels practically equal to those of 1938, took place in the context of the large-scale development of production in industry and construction (Iancu and Pavelescu, 2008 : 4). The activity in agriculture and transport-telecommunications had a slower dynamic, the national income created in agriculture representing 70% in relation to that of 1938, and in the sector of transport and telecommunications, 81% in relation to that of 1938 (Iancu and Pavelescu, 2008: 4). After the restoration, in the period 1951-1989, Romania's economy experienced a development of great proportions. The economic branches that experienced the highest growth rates were the following: industry 10.2%, of which: group A (means of production) 11.1% and group B (consumer goods) 8.6%, car construction and metal processing 13.9%, chemistry 14.8%, glass, porcelain, earthenware, 10.6%, food industry 6.4%, etc. (Iancu and Pavelescu, 2008: 5). In Romania, the branches of the machine-building, extractive, energy, processing, chemical, etc. industry have been developed, by opening factories and plants in all regions of the country and almost in all localities with over 1000 inhabitants (Gorun and Gorun, 2014: 83). Regarding the population employed in the labor field, out of the 22 million inhabitants, more than 12 million inhabitants were employed in different sectors of activity.

Table 1. The structure of the employed population by activity sector, in the first decades of the communist regime

	1950	1960	1970
In the sphere of material production	92,6	91,1	88,1
Industry	12,1	15,1	23,0
Construction	2,2	4,9	7,8
Agriculture	74,1	65,4	49,1
Freight transport	1,3	1,7	2,9
Circulation of goods	2,5	3,4	4,3
Education, culture and science	2,5	3,1	4,2
Health protection	1,1	1,6	2,3
State administration	1,7	1,2	0,7
Other branches	0,5	0,7	1,1
In the non-productive sphere	7,4	8,9	11,9

Source : Mihalache, F., Croitoru, A. (2011). *The Romanian rural environment: evolutions and involutions. Social change and entrepreneurship*, Bucharest, Expert Publishing House, p. 22.

According to table 1, it can be seen that the share of the population employed in agriculture decreases from 74.1 in the 1950s to 49.1 in 1970, against the background of the increase in the population employed in industry and construction. Also, the management's investments at that time also targeted the development of the transport network, the telecommunications network and the irrigation networks.

Therefore, the development of industry and other dynamic branches enjoyed the existence of an important reservoir of labor, especially in agriculture and overpopulated villages, a fact that allowed the command mechanisms to quickly mobilize new contingents of labor (Iancu and Pavelescu: 7).

The methods of supporting the development of industry and construction, together with the suppression, up to the abolition, of private ownership of the means of production and the favoring of physical work at the expense of intellectual work have generated a rapid increase in the number of employees.

3. The process of collectivisation of agriculture

Like industrialization, another method used by the party-state in order to subjugate Romanian society was collectivization. Components of the Stalinist modernization process, industrialization and collectivization, followed the Soviet model. The party-state proposed to manage all industrial, commercial and agricultural services. Thus, one of the most radical changes imposed by all the communist regimes concerned the agricultural structures which, in a few years, were completely remodeled.

Between the spring of 1945 and the beginning of the collectivization process in the spring of 1949, the only major change in the agrarian field was the introduction of quotas, a process considered a real nightmare for the Romanian peasantry in the middle of the last century. The collection system prepared the ground for the imposition of socialist agricultural structures, through the deliberate destruction of well-to-do peasant households that resisted collectivization and through the consolidation of control over the rural population. This system of systematic exploitation destroyed the peasant households, the real engines of the rural economy, thus causing the ruin of the peasant communities as a whole (Tismăneanu, 2006: 426). These forced collections imposed by the Party-state accompanied and prefaced the collectivization campaign.

The process of collectivization of agriculture represented the most extensive political campaign carried out by the Communist Party for a long period of time 1949-1962. The transformation of the rural world allowed the Party-State not only to accumulate vital economic resources to begin the process of forced collectivization; it was also instrumental in redefining relations between local communities (Dobrincu și Iordachi, 2005: 21).

Through this process, the Party-State infiltrated deeply into the life of communities, controlling the means of production and remuneration in the interest of creating a socialist economy (Dobrincu și Iordachi, 2005: 21). The collectivization of Romanian agriculture was launched in the plenum of the Central Committee of the Romanian Workers' Party on March 3-5, 1949, as a simulation of the collectivization imposed in the Soviet Union.

Safe proof, in this sense, was the takeover and implementation of the institutions specific to collectivization from the Soviet Union in the Romanian People's Republic.

Although the collectivization process was built according to the Soviet model, there were some differences between the two that are worth mentioning. Unlike the Soviet Union, Romania did not resort to the nationalization of the entire agricultural area (Andrei, 2014: 25). Also, if the Soviet Union had as its main objective the suppression and liquidation of the "culacs" (chiabs), in Romania, in the first stage, only the "enclosure" of the chiabs was desired, and then the complete abolition of the exploitation of the chiabs in the villages (Andrei, 2014: 25).

In 1948, the rural population in Romania constituted more than half of the total population of the country. Thus, for the communists, the "socialist transformation of agriculture" represented the dispossession of the peasants from the right to individually own an agricultural area.

The economic importance of the action was somewhere in the secondary plan of the Party's priorities, the priority being of a political nature, namely the liquidation, the economic independence of the most numerous part of the country's population, if not an opponent, in the sense of an active attitude of the order established by the Communist Party, the a little refractory, that is, practicing passive resistance, long and with great success (Frunză, 1990: 412).

Relying on the discretionary power of the administrative act and on the mobilization of the Bolshevik Party on the "agricultural front", disregarding the consequences, the human destruction, Stalin collectivized the agriculture of the U.S.S.R., his strategy serving as a model for the Romanian communists (Verzea: 2013: 405-406).

The Romanian Communist Party approached the agrarian issue in the first years after the Second World War taking into account the real powers of the party and the Romanian realities at that time. Until 1949, the year of the effective start of the collectivization process, one of the main objectives pursued by the Romanian Communist Party was fueling and instrumentalizing the conflict between large and medium property, on the one hand, and small and medium property, on the other, the latter having the support of the Party (Verzea, 2013: 406).

The socialization of agriculture also involved the "abolition of class landlordism" and the liquidation of "semi-feudal relations" in agriculture, as a "step in the completion of the bourgeois-democratic revolution", objectives inscribed in the program of the communist party since the pre-war period (Verzea, 2013: 407).

Starting with 1947, with the foreshadowing of the beginning of the cold war, the agrarian policy of the Romanian Communist Party changed its objectives. The Marshall Plan was refused by the U.S.S.R. and implicitly by the states in its sphere of influence, because in the situation in which it would have been accepted, the economic and technological superiority of the U.S. would have canceled the Soviet gains. Thus, in a very short time, the economies subordinated to the U.S.S.R. were transformed. The property structure changed, trade with traditional markets was stopped, the market economy was replaced by the planned economy, and in the agricultural field, the collectivization campaign was launched.

The collectivization process, started in 1949, took place in two main waves, 1949-1953 and 1953-1962, divided, in turn, into numerous stages (Tismăneanu, 2006: 430).

The first wave of collectivization (1949-1953) targeted villages located in regions where agriculture had suffered deeply from the war and the drought of 1945-1946, and where the poor peasants represented a mass of maneuver very vulnerable to administrative pressures of the state party (Tismăneanu, 2006: 430).

The second wave of the final assault in the agricultural collectivization campaign demonstrates the total political submission of the political elites in Romania to the Soviet Union (Oprea: 2005, p. 83). The first phase is marked by the period 1953-1955, being considered a period of stagnation of the collectivization process, since, after Stalin's death, the Communist Party focuses on consolidating the existing households (Tismăneanu, 2006: 432). The second phase corresponds to the year 1956 and can be found only at the level of the discourse and the political project for the resumption of collectivization (Tismăneanu, 2006: 432). The third phase is comprised between the years 1957-1962: starting with 1957, the collectivization process experienced a sharp development, along with the reorientation of the regime's interests for this form of organization (Tismăneanu, 2006: 432).

Table 2. Percentage of registered land at national level

Anul	Gospodării colective	Întovărășiri	Gospodării de stat	Gospodării private individuale
1950	2,8	-	5,9	88,0
1951	2,9	-	6,7	86,4
1952	7,0	2,0	6,9	80,0
1953	7,7	2,5	7,0	75,3
1954	7,9	3,3	7,2	85,1
1955	8,2	4,0	7,2	74,1
1956	9,7	7,8	7,9	69,2
1957	14,5	20,2	9,3	52,0
1958	17,5	24,3	10,4	44,7
1959	27,3	30,3	12,9	26,0
1960	41,8	25,3	13,7	15,7
1961	53,5	13,9	15,9	13,1
1962	77,4	1,5	13,9	3,5

Source: Nica, B. (2021), Collectivization. A dual perspective: qualitative and quantitative, Historical Anthropology Notebook, no. 39, p. 95.

According to statistics, an upward variation of collectivized arable land can be observed since 1958, at the national level. The figures portrayed by different researchers show an overview of what the elimination of property meant in Romania at that time (Nica, 2021: 95).

In the period 1962-1964, the authorities completed the process of collectivization, this period representing the final stage at the national level. After 1964, life in the countryside entered a new phase, the one in which the population developed new relationships with the local authorities, relationships that later materialized through an adaptability as well as a dissatisfaction with the imposed social system. This attitudinal relationship, adaptability versus discontent, led to what may be called "the individual and social strategy of survival under communism" (Siseștean, 2012: 2012).

Regarding the consequences of the collectivization process of agriculture, it can be stated that this process influenced, to a large extent, the conduct, the lifestyle and the existential course of individuals, the opening of the village world and its inclusion in the national economic circuit, as well as the increase in social mobility among the population being elements determined by the transformations imposed by the Communist Party (Mihalache and Croitoru, 2011: 18).

The change in the structure of the rural population is the result of both social homogenization and differentiation processes. There are three evolutionary stages of the process of changing the social structure:

- the first stage, between the years 1949-1962, marked by cooperativeization, represents a stage of homogenization, through which social differences regarding agricultural property are blurred;
- the second stage is comprised between the end of the collectivization process and the end of the 1970s, when social differentiation increases by expanding the share of the rural population employed in non-agricultural sectors; The rural population is differentiated according to the field in which they perform activities: agricultural or non-agricultural, but they also differ from the point of view of salary income;
- the third stage is distinguished by the increase in non-agricultural employment and by the predominance of social categories outside the cooperative segment of agriculture (Mihalache and Croitoru, 2011: 19-20).

The collectivization of Romanian agriculture had profound and long-lasting effects on Romanian society, which are also felt in the post-communist period. Although its main goal was the modernization of Romanian agriculture, collectivization did not lead, over the years,

to "recovering the gaps" neither in relation to the other European states, nor even in comparison to the socialist ones (Tismăneanu, 2008: 440). With the few exceptions of some model collective households, it did not bring the promised material well-being to the collectivized peasants, but led to their starvation, especially in the context of the generalized economic crisis of the late 1980s, when, in some regions, the peasants had to procure some strictly necessary foodstuffs from the city (Tismăneanu, 440).

4. Conclusions

Subject to a careful analysis from the perspective of modernization, the Romanian society during the communist regime responds to many general imperatives of development, but also presents important differences (Gorun, 2012: 172).

Economically, the communist regime supported modernization, industrialization and urbanization - representing the main vectors of the development of the national economy. During this period, the branches of the machine-building, energy, extractive processing, steel, chemical, food, etc. industries were developed by opening factories, plants and exploitations in all areas of the country and in most towns with over 1000 inhabitants. Unemployment was almost eliminated, the entire working population being employed either in the state sector or in the cooperative sector (Gorun, 2012: 172). The network of transports, telecommunications, irrigation networks was expanded and developed, and numerous thermal and hydropower plants were built. Most of the objectives were built by the voluntary work of people (students, pupils, prisoners, soldiers).

The modernization program initiated in 1960, which involved both the accelerated industrialization of the country and a progressive urbanization, allowed part of the population to live better than they had lived in the early years of communism. Throughout this period, positive trends were recorded in terms of the health of the population, the increase in life expectancy and the birth rate.

However, forced industrialization has also generated negative consequences such as lack of competitiveness, poor quality in many areas, environmental pollution, the destruction of some villages and communes, the almost total orientation of food products for export etc.

Viewed through comparative reports to previous historical stages, in the picture of economic modernization, the contours of the forms of modernization imposed by the communist regime can be easily observed. This modernization was achieved through the efforts of the population under the scepter of administrative, political, economic and spiritual constraints.

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FAMILY STRUCTURE AND ITS IMPACT ON SOCIO-EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND LIFE QUALITY

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Abstract: *The purpose of the present survey was to investigate how the family structure influences the quality of life and the social and emotional intelligence of individuals, the conclusion of the research being resonant in the field of sociology and psycho-education. A number of 336 respondents from 218 families were evaluated, of which 100 single parents and 118 nuclear families. A questionnaire-based sociological survey was used as a method to measure the quality of life and the level of socio-emotional intelligence. The results obtained indicated statistically significant differences between the quality of life for adults from nuclear families and those from single-parent families ($t=-2.16$, $df=378$, $p=0.03$, $p<0.05$), in which they fulfill the status of single parent, as well as significant differences between the two groups in terms of socio-emotional intelligence ($t=-2.20$, $df=260$, $p=0.008$, $p<0.05$). Both in the case of socio-emotional intelligence and in the case of quality of life, adults from nuclear families recorded a higher average compared to those from single-parent families. All in all, the family structure is an impact factor on the functioning of the individual.*

Keywords: social intelligence, emotional intelligence, quality of life, nuclear family, monoparental family.

1. Introduction

Social intelligence and emotional intelligence are two relatively recent concepts in the history of psychology and sociology, becoming very popular in the last half century. Although similar and congruent, these two types differ in some conceptual details and are theoretically seen as interdependent. A first definition of social intelligence appears in 1920, offered by the researcher Edward Thorndike (1920: 228) who defines it as "the ability to understand and cause people and children to act intelligently in inter-human relations". At the same time, Goleman (2018: 125-126) brings up the concept of social consciousness in approaching the subject of socio-emotional intelligence and includes four components: primary empathy, emotional resonance, empathic precision and social cognition. We should remark that his term of emotional intelligence is an umbrella concept that includes specific characteristics of social intelligence, emphasizing the congruence of the two. The question from which the present study started was whether this ability that can influence the quality of life is innate or rather influenced by the environment. Thus, initiating the process of knowledge in order to draw a pertinent conclusion, we decided to analyze the social environment with the greatest impact on the individual, namely the family and how it could influence or differently shape the ability of socio-emotional intelligence and implicitly determine a higher quality of life.

From the sociological perspective of Kadri, Bensefiane and Buheji (2019), family represents the main context that regulates the actions of its members, shapes their lives, behaviors, ensures the genetic transmission of legacies from one generation to another and allows the emergence and perpetuation of traditions, customs, behaviors, through the lens of social memory as highlighted by Otovescu and Pârlea (2013: 33), thus fulfilling an important social function. The role it has in influencing social intelligence seems to be indisputable.

2. The literature

2.1. Socio-emotional intelligence and life quality

The quality of life is a concept that involves many areas in its qualitative and quantitative definition. Jenkinson (2016) believes that it illustrates the extent to which an individual is healthy, comfortable and able to participate in and enjoy life events. Historically, this concept is as old as the concept of social intelligence, both being defined at the beginning of the 20th century, more precisely in the 1920s. Pigou (1920: 11) uses the term quality of life, referring to the growth economic, as being a material well-being in the process of development, an aspect that remains the main goal of society. Later the concept acquired social and psychological valences, being approached from a multidisciplinary viewpoint.

Socio-emotional intelligence has been associated in previous studies with various areas of quality of life that revealed the positive impact of this ability on aspects such as: academic success (Blair and Diamond, 2008: 904; Graziano, Reavis, Keane et al., 2010; Denham, Bassett, Way et al., 2012; Voltmer and Salisch, 2017), health status (Mohîrță, 2005; Prathima and Umme, 2013; Kravvariti and Maridaki-Kassotaki, 2010), performance at teh place of work (Douglas, Frink and Ferris, 2004: 9-10) and leadership (Prati, McMillan-Copehart and Karriker, 2009; Cavallo and Brienze, 2006), the state of subjective happiness and balance (Sjoberg, 2001; Won, Heo and Choi, 2018; Dogan and Eryimaz, 2014). However, a series of disadvantages were also revealed, some of the unfavorable aspects being highlighted on the interpersonal level of the individual, and in the psychological health symptoms (Davis and Nichols, 2016), in terms of reactivity and resilience to stress, difficulty of to give negative feedback and claim violated rights, as well as at the level of creativity, with which they are in a negative correlation.

2.2. Family as a shaping factor of socio-emotional intelligence and quality of life

This paper explores the implications of family structure on social and emotional intelligence, starting from a series of research works on its relationship with the quality of family life, and the quality of family and society membership that was explored at a theoretical level on more planes. First of all, it reduces aggression, especially among teenage boys, being an indicator of social popularity and effective communication among peers as Wallenius, Punamaki and Rimplea (2007) point out. It is also associated with a higher level of resilience and quality of life among parents of children with disabilities. Andrioni, Coman, Ghita et al. (2022) highlight the fact that parents who have children with atypical development, compared to those who have children with normal development, tend to seek more social support and communion. On the contrary, parents who show emotional instability and isolate themselves as a result of the child's diagnosis will be affected at the level of emotional and social intelligence and the parenting process will suffer (Narimani and Ghaffari, 2016; Bhagat, Haque and Simbak, 2017; Andrioni, Coman and Ghita, 2022). Emotional intelligence plays an important part in providing social support, both quantitatively and qualitatively. In this sense, the relationship is bidirectional, family functionality being a determinant of socio-emotional intelligence. The safety that family represents as a child's growth and development environment, by ensuring a secure attachment and balanced relationships, determines the development of a higher level of emotional intelligence among children, benefiting from success and social support. Parents may have differentiated but gender-relevant roles in developing these skills. In general, studies focus on revealing the importance of maternal figures in the formation and shaping of social and emotional intelligence. Mojgan Redzuan, Rohani et al. (2010) also highlights the role that the father figure has in shaping emotional intelligence and in the way, children react and educate their behaviors. Thus, the level of socio-emotional intelligence of children correlates positively with that of fathers (Mirza and Redzuan, 2011), and fathers who have a higher level of emotional intelligence will be calmer and will rather use positive reinforcement for pleasant behaviors in children, compared to

fathers with low socio-emotional intelligence who will focus on punishing negative behaviors and aggression.

Furthermore, Goel and Aggarwal (2012) reveal that families with more than one child may contribute to the increase of social intelligence, as children with brothers/sisters show a higher level of general social intelligence compared to children with single parents. Also, Morand (1999: 643-649) highlights a positive correlation between the size of the family in terms of number of members and the level of emotional intelligence, an aspect probably due to the interactional complexity caused by the high number of members.

Thus, starting from underlining the association relations between social intelligence, quality of life and family, we assumed that the structure and size of the family may represent a variable of the development of the level of social and emotional intelligence, as well as of life quality.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research purpose

Taking into account the degree of knowledge of the topic referring to the concept of social and emotional intelligence at a general level, but at the same time the low level of research nationwide, it can be stated that the present study will bring an addition of novelty from a theoretical point of view, but also applicatively, if the conclusions drawn will be approached as directions for action in a socio-educational plane.

The purpose of our study is to assess how family structure, level of social and emotional intelligence and quality of life will interact. As regards the family structure, two types were analyzed: nuclear and single-parent, and we evaluated the differences between the two types of families and their association with socio-emotional intelligence, as well as with quality of life, being expected that within nuclear families there is a positive association between the level of socio-emotional intelligence of the adults who compose it, along with a higher level of life quality. For socio-emotional intelligence as a separate variable, it will be taken into account that good relationship skills are also related to the ability to have a stable, secure couple relationship, transposed in the presence of a life partner in raising and educating children. Starting from the perspective of Lowman and Leeman (2010) which indicates the way in which social intelligence influences the interest and need for involvement in relation to others, the ability to influence others in face-to-face interactions, the ability to identify ways of acting adequate for various situations, we expect this to be the trait possessed by an individual which can ensure greater success in relationships, partnership, a more balanced family life and a lower likelihood of divorce.

For the quality of life variable, the present sociological information regarding the quality of life in Romania was considered, in which family represents the main factor generating individual satisfaction and as known the classic, nuclear family is the main existing form in the Romanian space (Popescu, 2009; Mărginean, 2010). Thus, probably within nuclear families, adults will have a much higher level of social and emotional intelligence, compared to adults from single-parent families, as it is necessary to fulfill two parental gender roles and they will have to make up for the financial contribution of the missing partner, elements that obviously cause a decrease in the quality of the person's life from several points of view, among which financially and socio-affectively.

3.2. Objectives

The conceptual model of the present research aims to identify and validate a conceptual theory of quality of life and socio-emotional intelligence in relation to family structure. The model is an integrative type, as it refers to the way the family structure as an independent variable can influence the relationship between the level of socio-emotional intelligence and the quality of life.

The objectives of the study were to analyze the relationship between family structure (nuclear, single parent) and socio-emotional intelligence and on the other hand to investigate the interaction between family structure and the level of quality of life.

3.3. Research hypotheses

The research was based on 2 hypotheses: 1 - If the family has a nuclear-biparental structure, the quality of life has a higher level and 2 - If the family has a nuclear-biparental structure, social and emotional intelligence will also reach a higher level.

3.4. Field research area

The area of the research is the southwest of Romania, which includes the counties of Dolj, Gorj, Mehedinți, Olt and Vâlcea. The selection criteria of the investigated population were first of all general, that is, the respondents must be adults who are parents, who declare to be available to participate in the study. Demographically, the responding families must come from the southwestern region of the country, which includes Dolj, Gorj, Mehedinți, Olt and Vâlcea counties. Age was not taken into account, and as psycho-emotional elements, people had to be mentally fit, without psychiatric diagnoses, not to have had traumatic or major-impact emotional events in the last year, in order not to generate a response error on the quality of life questionnaire.

3.5. Investigated population

The investigated population included 218 families, that is 336 respondents, categorized by groups of interest for the research, as follows:

The first lot of the investigated population included 100 respondents, adults who hold the role of sole breadwinner in single-parent families with one or more children from Dolj, Gorj, Mehedinți, Olt and Vâlcea counties. 100 single-parent families were involved in the research.

The second lot of the investigated population included 236 respondents who hold the role of parents in nuclear families with one or more children from Dolj, Gorj, Mehedinți, Olt and Vâlcea counties. 118 nuclear families were involved.

3.6. Research methods

The research was based on quantitative research methods, using a questionnaire-based sociological survey to assess the level of quality of life and socio-emotional intelligence.

3.7. Instruments used

3.7.1. The Quality-of-Life Questionnaire - WHOQOL-100

The instrument used to assess life quality is the Quality-of-Life Questionnaire developed by the World Health Organization (WHOQOL-100), which was developed in 15 different cultural contexts over several years and was translated into 29 foreign languages. It includes 100 items and helps to develop a multi-dimensional profile, divided into 6 domains of quality of life: physical, psychological, level of independence, social relations, environment, spirituality. The questions of the questionnaire include 5 response options on a Likert scale (numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) regarding intensity, frequency, and capacity, rated in ascending order. Response sets include the following options: frequency: 1-Not at all, 2-To a low extent, 3-Moderately, 4-Very much, 5-Extremely much; intensity: 1-Not at all satisfied, 2-Not satisfied, 3-Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 4-Satisfied, 5-Very satisfied; capacity: 1-Very deficient, 2-Deficient, 3-Neither deficient nor good, 4-Good, 5-Very good. The questionnaire was translated from English into Romanian so that it could be applied in the Romanian area, namely in the south-west zone of the country.

3.7.2. The Scale of Social/Emotional/Personal Intelligence

The instrument that evaluates socio-emotional intelligence in the case of the group of adults who responded to the present study, is a scale containing 10 items and was translated from English into Romanian by Iliescu (2015). It is made available free of charge for research purposes, on the researchcentral.ro website (Research Central, 2022), from where it was taken to use it for the present survey. It was validated on the Romanian population, with a view to practical application in research and evaluation (Iliescu, Popa and Dimache, 2015: 83). Each item of the questionnaire represents a statement that the respondent must evaluate on a Likert scale from 1 to 5 as follows: 1-Strong disagreement; 2-Disagreement (if the statement is rather false or the respondent disagrees with it); 3-Neutral; 4-Agreement; 5-Strong agreement.

The average time to complete the instruments was approximately 30 minutes and was applied in a physical, pencil-and-paper format, both individually and in groups of up to 5 people.

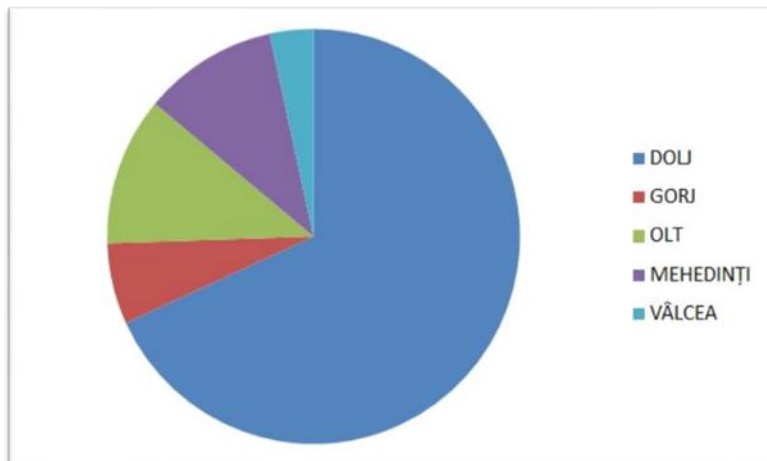
4. Research results

4.1. Analysis and interpretation of quantitative data

The scores obtained in the pencil-paper tests were calculated manually, being later entered together with the qualitative information into the SPSS statistics program (version 26) in the form of a database.

On the whole 218 families were investigated, 100 of the single-parent type and 118 of the nuclear type. The total number of respondents from these families was 336 adults, of which 13 respondents were from Vâlcea county, 44 from Olt, 40 from Mehedinți, 24 from Gorj and 215 from Dolj. They were aged between 32 and 69 years, and in terms of gender, 162 were female and 174 were male.

Figure 1. Distribution of respondents by county



Source: taken from data processing in the Excel program

4.1.1. Descriptive statistical analysis

The Explore procedure from the SPSS 26 program was used, being launched from the menu as follows: Analyze/Descriptive Statistics/Explore. As regards the quality of life, the analyzed data indicated that women have a lower self-perceived quality of life ($m=91.29$) compared to men ($m=93.32$), adults from nuclear families exhibit a higher quality of life ($m=92.77$) compared to those from singleas for the geographic variable, the highest overall level of life quality was recorded in Gorj county ($m=98.50$, $std=5.89$) and the lowest in Vâlcea county ($m=81$, $std=0$), followed by Dolj ($m=91.40$, $std=7.24$) and Olt ($m=92.05$, $std=7.35$).

In relation to the level of socio-emotional intelligence of the respondents, female persons showed a higher average level of socio-emotional intelligence ($m=36.97$, $std.=4.86$), and the members of nuclear families currently have a higher average level of socio-emotional intelligence ($m=36.69$, $std.=4.26$), compared to respondents who are members of single-parent families ($m=35.67$, $std.=2.85$). Depending on the geographical area, the highest average level of the socio-emotional intelligence score was recorded in Dolj county ($m=37.19$, $std.=4.23$), and the lowest level was obtained in Olt county ($m=33.91$, $std.=2.56$).

4.1.2. Hypotheses testing

After analyzing the descriptive statistics, the collected data were also processed with Spss 26, in order to be able to test the two hypotheses of the research.

Hypothesis 1 - If the family has a nuclear-biparental structure, the quality of life has a higher level

Hypothesis 2- If the family has a nuclear-biparental structure, social and emotional intelligence will also reach a higher level

To test the two hypotheses of the research, the t-test for independent samples was used to see if there are significant differences between the group of adults from nuclear families and that of adults from single-parent families, where they are the sole caregivers of the children. The differences between the level of socio-emotional intelligence and the level of quality of life were investigated.

The t-test for independent samples was processed with the SPSS 26 program, using the procedure: Analyze/Compare means/Independent Sample T-test. In the main box, in the Test Variables list, the dependent variables were entered: SEQ-parent (the score obtained on the socio-emotional intelligence scale by the parents) and Quality of life (the global score obtained on the QOLI questionnaire) and the independent variable (group), in the variable Grouping area, respectively Family Structure. Introduced with the Define Groups option, the values that define the two groups, as previously mentioned: 1-Monoparental and 2-Nuclear.

Table 1. Socio-emotional intelligence and quality of life according to family structure

		Independent Samples Test									
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper	
SEQ parent	Equal variances assumed	17.781	.000	-2.208	378	.028	-1.016	.460	-1.920	-.111	
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.652	260.944	.008	-1.016	.383	-1.770	-.261	
Quality of life	Equal variances assumed	.256	.613	-2.169	378	.031	-1.891	.872	-3.606	-.177	
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.144	170.810	.033	-1.891	.882	-3.633	-.150	

Source: taken from data processing with SPSS v.26

From the obtained data, the present hypotheses are confirmed. According to Popa (2008: 296), the first line shows the results of the t-test for the context in which the variance of the two groups (nuclear and single-parent family) is equal, equality being evaluated with the Levene test.

In this case, for the SEQ score, $p=0.00$, lower than $p=0.05$, which means that the equality of variances is not accepted, the result will be read on the second line. Thus, $t=-2.20$, $df=260$, $p=0.008$. Since $p=0.008$ and $p<0.05$, the research hypothesis is confirmed. In other words, there are significant differences between the level of socio-emotional intelligence of people from single-parent families and that of people from nuclear families. In this context, returning to the descriptive statistics presented earlier in this chapter, the values obtained for socio-emotional intelligence are as follows: nuclear families ($m= 36.69$, $std=4.26$) and single-parent families ($m=35.67$, $std=2.85$). So it can be concluded that adults from nuclear families exhibited a higher level of socio-emotional intelligence, statistically significant, compared to those from single-parent families.

For the QOLI score referring to the quality of life, $p=0.61$, higher than $p=0.05$, reveals the fact that the equality of variances is accepted and the result will be read on the first line. Thus, $t=-2.16$, $df= 378$, $p=0.03$. Since $p=0.03$ and $p<0.05$, the research hypothesis is confirmed. In other words, there are significant differences between the life quality level of people from single-parent families and that of people from nuclear families. In this context, returning to the previously presented descriptive statistics, the values obtained for quality of life are as follows: nuclear families ($m= 92.77$, $std=7.43$) and single-parent families ($m=90.88$, $std=7.62$). So we may conclude that adults from nuclear families have a higher level of quality of life, statistically significant, compared to those from single-parent families.

4.2. Interpretation of results

The hypotheses of the present research, *if the family has a nuclear (two-parent) structure, social and emotional intelligence reaches a higher level, and at the same time life quality has a higher level*, are confirmed both in the case of socio-emotional intelligence ($p=0.008$), and when it comes to the quality of life ($p=0.03$). In relation to socio-emotional intelligence and the nuclear structure, one can primarily invoke the role that attachment has in emotional balance as suggested by Malik and Marwaha (2020), as well as in the proper functioning of socio-emotional intelligence. A stable, secure attachment, which is ensured rather by a nuclear family structure in which both maternal and paternal figures are present, and the adult is not alone in the couple, will represent the premise of a harmonious social and emotional functioning. Obviously, this aspect is valid in the conditions of a balanced family climate, without conflicts or abuse of any kind. In other words, personal relationships play a key role in shaping one's personality, and family support figures within the family, such as the presence of a partner, play a major part. This aspect is also true for children in nuclear families. Moreover, the family nuclear context in which adults are in a two-parent family context and take care of raising the child together, may indicate that the fact that these people may, through the prism of their social and emotional intelligence, have made choices more suitable as a couple, to ensure the longevity of their relationship and stability within the family. At the same time, Lowman and Leeman (2010) indicate how social intelligence, interests and personality traits materialize as separate dimensions and concretely influence areas such as the interest and need for involvement in relation to others, the ability to influence others in face-to-face interactions, the ability to identify ways of action appropriate to various situations. Thus, it may be extrapolated that a person with an advanced level of socio-emotional intelligence can maintain appropriate, more balanced relationships with those around them, ensuring success in a couple or family and being more likely to be in a structure nuclear family. A special element that can represent an explanation why social and emotional intelligence is positively associated with the nuclear family structure, is represented by the rules within the group. Thus, as stated by Gottman apud. Pearson and Sessler (1991: 7), the rules created in a family context are usually negotiated, and prove flexibility with respect to the constructed rules is associated with greater family satisfaction. Restrictive families, rigid and inflexible with their own rules, tend to be rather dysfunctional,

while the members of a satisfied family will be more sensitive and responsive to the changes taking place within the family. It can be said that such members have quite high social and emotional skills, being empathetic, receptive to those around them and adaptable according to the social context.

The association between the quality of life and the two-parent family structure is also very interesting, and in this respect, starting from the research carried out on the quality of life in Romania, Popescu (2009) highlights the fact that family life is among the first sources of satisfaction in life, more than the workplace or the professional area, and the population of the present research, as previously presented, is mainly made up of nuclear families. Mărginean (2010) also highlights the fact that the family is one of the support factors that led to an increase in the quality of life in Romania, and this aspect is understandable since, as mentioned before, social relations play a key role in ensuring well-being and happiness. Thus it can be stated that healthy relationships in the family, the existence of a life partner for the adult and both parental figures for the child, generate a higher quality of life. Hernandez, Aranda, and Ramirez (2009) even describe how women who raise their children alone experienced a lower standard of living and quality of life in general, as well as a greater predisposition to depression. Moreover, as regards family structure and children's quality of life, Rattay et al. (2014) reveal the fact that the behavioral or emotional problems of children raised in single-parent or adopted families are more accented compared to those from two-parent families, and also that children from single-parent families exhibited much more frequently the existence of chronic diseases. Practically the authors emphasize the fact that the importance of the family context for the health and quality of individual life of children is closely related to that of the parents. Conversely, if two-parent families tend to have a higher quality of life, single-parent families will probably have a lower level, and as Weiss apud shows. Pearson and Sessler (1991: 11), parents who raise their children alone register problems in 3 areas: overload of tasks, overload of responsibilities and emotional overload. All of these can represent stable arguments that lead to poor life satisfaction. Also, the number of members in the household in which the person resides seems to have a positive effect on the quality of life, thus middle-aged individuals who live alone in a household tend to report a low level of quality of life compared to those who live alone in a multi-person household (Song, Park and Kwon, 2018).

5. Conclusions, limitations, proposals and further developments

The present study investigated how a nuclear (two-parent) family structure will influence both quality of life and social and emotional intelligence in a positive sense. Both hypotheses were confirmed in terms of socio-emotional intelligence ($p=0.008$) as well as quality of life ($p=0.03$). A potential explanation is that a person with an advanced level of social-emotional intelligence can maintain appropriate, more balanced relationships with those around them, ensuring success in a couple or family and being more likely to be in a nuclear family structure. Various authors highlight how individual capacities to be flexible, open, attentive to the needs of the other in the family context ensure a greater functionality of the couple and its members as a whole (Lowman and Leeman, 2010; Pearson and Sessler, 1991). At the same time, being part of a nuclear family, as a supporting adult, implies a series of financial and social advantages that lead to a higher quality of life.

5.1. Difficulties encountered

The practical application of the survey in question involved encountering some minor difficulties, both from the perspective of finding subjects and from the perspective of data collection and processing.

The main situations included difficulties such as reluctance on the part of some respondents to be tested, considering the questions to be too personal nature and possibly

providing false-positive results in certain cases; difficulties in applying a considerable number of instruments in the cities of the counties in the SW area of the country that do not represent the researcher's domicile location; scoring the questionnaires manually and entering responses into the database was a considerable time-consuming task, particularly for the quality of life questionnaire (QOLI), where the items for each scale were randomly distributed as a page layout, making it difficult collecting the scores assigned on each subscale and subsequently on each domain.

The difficulties encountered in the construction of the sample and the collection and processing of the actual testing data were successfully overcome and represent aspects to be improved and optimized in terms of form, manner of approach, with a view to a potential future study or as a perspective of the research activity.

5.2. Limits of quantitative research

At the basis of obtaining the statistical results, it is possible to have found out a series of factors and aspects that influenced them. Some of these may be easier to see, while others may be relative or possible factors of error. Among these, a number of (possible) limits are mentioned.

The truthfulness of the answers given by the respondents, taking into account the familiarity with the researcher in certain cases and the desire to build a desirable image, could have led to possible false-positive answers.

The uneven percentage of respondents depending on the county can be a limit, most of them being from Dolj, through the lens of residential accessibility. In the future, it would be interesting to ensure similar percentages depending on the geographical area.

The existence of certain variables that may have a secondary impact could have influenced the study and may represent concrete inclusion/exclusion criteria in the research, such as the social environment of origin, the judicial antecedents, the number of children in the family; in the case of single-parent families, a differentiation according to the reason for the presence of a single parent: divorce, death of the partner, absence of the partner and adoption of the child as a single parent, etc.

The high number of items on the QOLI measuring instrument may have exposed respondents to the phenomenon of fatigue, influencing their ability to concentrate and pay attention.

The limits of the present study represent aspects to be considered in the future, with a view to a better control both for its replication and for the continuation or enrichment of the statistical and effective complexity at the scientific level.

5.3. Suggestions and future research directions

Today's society is currently undergoing a process of continuous change and transformation, which is natural since a number of factors that cannot be controlled have a direct impact on people, communities and their lives. A brief review for illustrative purposes would include the phenomenon of increased digitization, globalization, pandemics and natural disasters, war. In this context, the isolation and individualization of the person becomes increasingly important, and the need to study man in a social, community context becomes a necessity. By means of this study we intended to highlight the way in which family structure can influence individuals' social and emotional intelligence, which in turn has an impact on the quality of their life, as well as the way in which the type of family may affect the quality of life per se.

As future research directions, it would be interesting to explore the phenomenon at the national level and possibly compare it to specific areas of the country to investigate potential differences, as well as identify cultural aspects that can influence the quality of life or differences in social and emotional intelligence.

Another form would be for additional research to investigate the relationship

between family structure, social and emotional intelligence and quality of life on other target groups, constituted as specific samples. Some examples are members of vulnerable groups, ethnic minorities, young people who have left the child protection system.

The evaluation of a higher number of sociological and cultural variables may represent another aspect of interest that may be taken into account in future research directions. It is possible that variables such as traditional-conservative/liberal values are mediators between family structure, quality of life, and social-emotional intelligence. Also, studying and developing a mediation model, observing the role of variables and whether one of them is the mediator of the other two can be a later opening point in terms of statistical research and the conceptual scheme addressed.

An additional perspective from a methodological and statistical point of view would be the replication of the study after a period of time, since a longitudinal study provides much more consistent information, which can be more easily generalized, taking into account the fact that situational variables can influence the answers collected in a present time frame.

So as to conclude, there are a number of directions for expansion, openness and investigation of the present topic. Our study brings an element of novelty and innovation in the Romanian space, as well as within the international body of research and represents a good basis for further research, which can be enriched in terms of complexity or completed from a quantitative and demographic point of view, since the research and innovation is a process on a continuum without finality, especially in the field of sociology, which investigates man and society that are in perpetual change.

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ANALYZING DOCUMENTS ON FREEDOM OF RELIGION, HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT USING THE UN ODS DATABASE (1985-2019)

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Abstract:

Objectives: *The present article focuses on the document analysis of freedom of religion, human rights and development using the Official Document System (ODS) provided by the United Nations (UN) (data retrieved July-August 2 023) for the period 2 July 1985-5 March 2019.*

Methodology: *The research methodology approaches the document analysis of the UN's main legal framework pointing to the interrelated dynamics between human rights and freedom of religion by carrying out multi-level research of five documents released by the UN in the period July 1985-March 2019, namely: (i) United Nations, General Assembly, Note by the Secretary-General, Elimination of All Forms of Religious Intolerance, A/40/361 (2 July 1985); (ii) United Nations, General Assembly resolution 14/11, Freedom of religion or belief: mandate of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, A/HRC/RES/14/11 (23 June 2010); (iii) United Nations, General Assembly, Resolution 70/158, A/RES/70/158 (3 March 2016); (iv). United Nations, General Assembly, Resolution 71/196, A/RES/71/196 (24 January 2017); (v). United Nations, General Assembly, Report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, A/HRC/40/58 (5 March 2019).*

Results and discussion: *The research engages a social and historical analysis with a global focus on the subjects of religious freedom, human rights and development addressing (i) the relationship between state-society-religion and (ii) the legal and societal conditions and the legal and institutional mechanisms and policies by using the UN jurisprudence released in the last three decades.*

Conclusions: *In conclusion, the research documents religious liberty particularly tracing the guiding principles and the in-depth analysis of other central elements: "freedom of religion", "belief", "tolerance", "societies", "communities", "equal opportunity", "participation", "development" and "liberty".*

Keywords: freedom of religion, human rights, United Nations, development, society.

1. Introduction

The review of the concepts of "freedom of religion" and "human rights" is essential for the protection of the fundamental rights and freedoms (Prove, 2021; Richardson, 2015: 1-19) requiring (i) the comparative study of the relationship between religious freedom, human rights, human determinants and personal autonomy (Ahmed, 2017: 238-262; Johnson, 2018: 379-398; Turiel, Wainryb, 1998: 375-395; Mayrl, 2018: 514-530); (ii) the legal and institutional analysis of the protection of religion with focus on the social, legal, historical and demographic factors by exploring the rights of religious communities and the influence of the public space (Amos, 2016: 27-35); (iii) the correlation network between key elements of human rights and human development: "religion", "belief", "tolerance", "cooperation", "peace", "dialogue" etc. (Breskaya, Giordan, Richardson, 2018: 419-431; de Gruchy, 2012; Wiener, 2019); (iv) the illustration of the conceptual complexities of the topics of "religious freedom" and diplomacy (Fedele, 2023; Richardson, 2015: 1-19), "religious diversity" and communication in public sphere (Fortner, 2023; Bouma, 2012: 281-295; Das, 2013; Mallén, 2021; Sargu, Andrioni, Popp, Netedu, Bularca, Otovescu, Motoi, Negrilă, Goian, Coman, et al. 2023; White, 2023; Olimid, Olimid, 2023); (v) the interfaces with education (Motoi,

Bourgatte, 2020), citizenship and social rights (Reich, 2005: 675-698; Morano-Foadi, 2010: 417-438; Reich, 2005: 675-698), social policy (Offutt, Probasco, Vaidyanathan, 2016: 207-215), health determinants (Olimid, Olimid, 2016: 35-47) and resilience theory (Olimid, Georgescu, Gherghe, 2022: 38-51).

2. Methodology

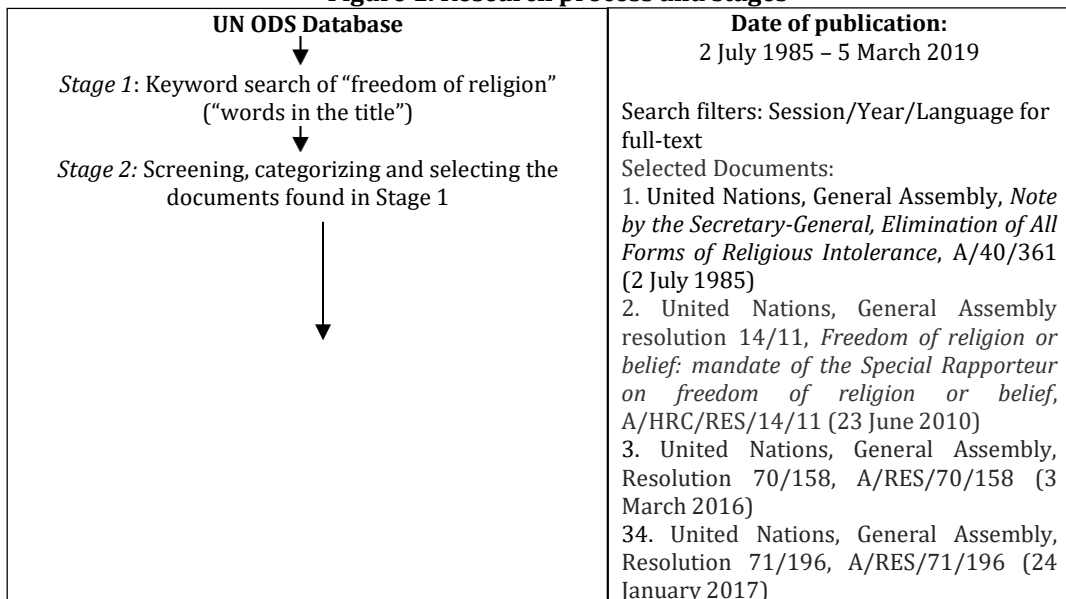
The five selected documents were analyzed using the facilities provided by the UN ODS database (2023) for the period 1985 to 2019 developing a document analysis related to complexities of the topic of “freedom of religion”, “human rights” and related concepts.

For the analysis, we synthesize the criteria provided by UN ODS using the keyword search of “freedom of religion” dividing the research into three stages:

- (a) *Stage 1*-keyword search and results;
- (b) *Stage 2*-screening, categorizing and selecting the documents found in Stage 1;
- (c) *Stage 3*-examination of documents restricting to English documents retrieved from the UN ODS database from 2 July 1985 to 5 March 2019. In total, 185 documents were found (Figure 1. *Research process and stages*). We also examined and conducted a complementary keyword search using the concept of “religious freedom” to explore other combining expressions used in the UN documentation. Thereby, we selected five documents remaining for detailed exploration, examination and evaluation.

The manual selection of the five documents was conducted with the aim to focus the inclusive criteria based on the full text of the document, the relevance of the document, and the compliance with the thematic field of religious freedom and human rights, namely: (i) United Nations, General Assembly, Note by the Secretary-General, Elimination of All Forms of Religious Intolerance, A/40/361 (2 July 1985); (ii) United Nations, General Assembly resolution 14/11, Freedom of religion or belief: mandate of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, A/HRC/RES/14/11 (23 June 2010); (iii) United Nations, General Assembly, Resolution 70/158, A/RES/70/158 (3 March 2016); (iv). United Nations, General Assembly, Resolution 71/196, A/RES/71/196 (24 January 2017); (v). United Nations, General Assembly, Report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, A/HRC/40/58 (5 March 2019).

Figure 1. Research process and stages



<p>Stage 3: Examination of articles restricting to English documents retrieved from the ODS database</p>	<p>5. United Nations, General Assembly, <i>Report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief</i>, A/HRC/40/58 (5 March 2019)</p>
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Source: Authors' own compilation

Results and discussions: analysis and synthesis of relevant documents

1. United Nations, General Assembly, *Note by the Secretary-General, Elimination of All Forms of Religious Intolerance, A/40/361 (2 July 1985)*

The Note released by the Secretary-General on July 1985 points to the prominent role of the principle of tolerance (UN, A/40/361, 1985, Part I, Part II, Part III, Part IV and Part V), freedom of religion (UN, A/40/361, 1985, Part I, paragraphs 20, 21, 23 and 24)and human rights (UN, A/40/361, 1985, Part I, paragraph 24)in the international community focusing on the legal instruments of protection and the significant impact of the “international legal obligations” (UN, A/40/361, 1985, Part I, paragraph 20 and Part II, paragraph 37). Furthermore, the document continues to attribute a key position to national legal and constitutional systems (UN, A/40/361, 1985, Part I, Paragraphs 24 and 30). Moreover, given the particular relevance of the contemporary processes, the Note underlies (UN, A/40/361, 1985) the institutional reality of the state, society and freedom of religion in human history reviewing the relationship between “state policy” and “religious education” (UN, A/40/361, 1985, Part V, Paragraph 88).

In fact, the document argues that freedom of religion requires also legal arrangements at the individual or community levels by reviewing the situation of the manifestation of religion or belief, and also the patterns of “observance, practice and teaching” (UN, A/40/361, 1985, Part I, Paragraph 48). However, the document also reviews the different versions of the legal guarantees of the freedom of religion and the establishment of “models national or local action” aimed to prevent intolerance (UN, A/40/361, 1985, Part III, Paragraphs 49, 50, and 51). Part III also upholds the freedom of religion and freedom of practice one’s belief or religion referring to the “primary responsibility” of the national legislation systems (UN, A/40/361, 1985, Part III, Paragraphs 52 and 53).

The Note (UN, A/40/361, 1985) also encourages the ethical approach pointing the principle of tolerance, the principle of understanding and the principle of non-discrimination (UN, A/40/361, 1985, Part I, Paragraphs 21, 24, 25 and 26). Similarly, by reviewing the social and historical background of the Note (UN, A/40/361, 1985), Part I stimulates and encourages a stronger relationship between social, legal, political cultural and historical determinants.

2. United Nations, General Assembly resolution 14/11, *Freedom of religion or belief: mandate of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, A/HRC/RES/14/11 (23 June 2010)*

The resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council (HRC), General Assembly in June 2010 (2010) confers particular principles of the fundamental rights and freedoms stipulating the right to freedom of thought, the freedom of conscience and freedom of religion. The publication is comprised of two parts.

The first part overviews the pre-ambulatory clauses (“recalling”, “recalling also”, “recalling further” and “recalling”). The second part contains the operative clauses relevant to the forms and patterns of freedom to manifest, safety and freedom of religion, human rights and human development, humanitarian law and religious beliefs, and individual rights.

The pre-ambulatory clauses also address civil and political rights and freedoms in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). The third paragraph recalls the principle of institution-building by adding very broad concepts and guidelines, namely "freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief" [UN Doc A/HRC/RES/14/11 (23 June 2010), paragraph 4(2)]. A main provision of the document focuses on the respect for "religious sites" and "places of worship" [UN Doc A/HRC/RES/14/11 (23 June 2010), paragraph 4(5)].

Moreover, in order to protect and guarantee the freedom of religion, the document ensures a link between the pre-ambulatory clauses and the operative clauses focusing on the extent to general principles of the international law covering a commitment to respect and uphold the rights and values expressed by HRC.

3. United Nations, General Assembly, Resolution 70/158, A/RES/70/158 (3 March 2016)

The Resolution focuses on the individualistic forms of the religious organization ("religious minorities" and "religious communities") including the consequent role and influence of the right to freely exercise religion or belief [UN Doc A/RES/70/158]. The Resolution also attributes increased importance to the internal and external developments of the relationship between freedom of thought, religious expression and "religious and cultural diversity" (UN Doc A/RES/70/158, paragraphs 13, 14 and 15).

Moreover, the Resolution asserts the fundamental role of the protection of rights and freedoms advancing and exposing views on social and legal issues, namely: "promotion of tolerance", and "elimination of discrimination" (UN Doc A/RES/70/158, paragraph 15) and "implementation of the existing laws" (UN Doc A/RES/70/158, paragraph 11). In summary, the Resolution points to the "responsibility" of Member States as a key engagement in the international community asserting the public role of religion and beliefs (UN Doc A/RES/70/158, paragraphs 8, 9 and 10).

More importantly, the same Resolution states the different levels of the "cultural and traditional practices" addressing the significant relationship between rights, faith and traditions (UN Doc A/RES/70/158, paragraph 12). More broadly, the Resolution concerns the private sphere with particular attention on "one's religion or belief" [UN Doc A/RES/70/158, paragraph 15(1)]. As to the specific forefront of the public arena, the Resolution mentions three perspectives in matters of religious participation and sensitivity:

(1) Recalling Member States for responsibility and protection of human rights [UN Doc A/RES/70/158, paragraph 15(7)].

(2) Emphasizing and promoting the relationship between freedom of belief and freedom of expression [UN Doc A/RES/70/158, paragraph 15(8)].

(3) Recognizing the "vulnerable situations" [UN Doc A/RES/70/158, paragraph 15(11)].

4. United Nations, General Assembly, Resolution 71/196, A/RES/71/196 (24 January 2017)

The report approaches a balance between freedom of religion, faith and social and cultural influences. Part I of the Resolution exposes the context of religious beliefs and practices within the international context committed to protecting and respecting freedom of expression and thought (UN Doc A/RES/71/196, paragraphs 1 and 2). The approaches to religion or belief in the pre-ambulatory clauses emerge from respecting human rights, pluralism and freedom to manifest (UN Doc A/RES/71/196, paragraph 6).

Part II comprises the operative clauses requiring a complex awareness of the important provisions of freedom of thought and conscience. These developments also include other themes and patterns related to "equal protection" for all persons and the "right to peaceful assembly" (UN Doc A/RES/71/196, paragraphs 13, 14 and 15). Finally, a key element of the Resolution centers on the relationship between the institutional and legal position of

the various human rights institutions, national authorities, and non-governmental organizations based on religion or belief [UN Doc A/RES/71/196, paragraphs 13, 14 and 15(17)].

Dialogue also exercises a high level of influence over the international community outlining a broader context that focuses on participation, development, respect and tolerance. This combination of elements suggests the launch of a balanced policy based on "mutual understanding" and tolerance [UN Doc A/RES/71/196, paragraph 15(16)]. Therefore, the Resolution underpins the role of "information" and "resources" as a distinctive institutional, structural and functional approach to the mandate of the Special Rapporteur [UN Doc A/RES/71/196, paragraph 15(20)(21)].

5. United Nations, General Assembly, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief*, A/HRC/40/58 (5 March 2019)

The report adopted by the General Assembly in March 2019 (2019) (hereinafter UN Report, 2019) is comprised of seven parts. Part I ("Activities of the Special Rapporteur since August 2018") provides the introduction and presents the general views expressing the activities of the Special Rapporteur in the period 2017-2018 (UN Report, A/HRC/40/58, 2019, Part I).

Part II is entitled "Introduction: freedoms of thought, conscience, religion or belief, opinion and expression" and exposes the primary research and assessment of the report by setting out a conceptual introduction to the issues faced by human mobility, human development, human rights, and freedom of religion. This part of the report seeks to reinforce the importance of freedom of expression or opinion discussing the interpretative function of the report between the "democratic legitimation", "peaceful manifestation", "social dynamics", "competing interests", and "alternative options" (UN Report, A/HRC/40/58, 2019, Part II).

Part III is entitled "International human rights framework" and contains a detailed overview of the legal framework conducting a multi-based analysis of the freedom of religion or belief (UN Report, A/HRC/40/58, 2019, Part III). Part III also addresses a number of rights and freedoms ("human rights", "right to privacy", "freedoms", "freedom of thought, conscience or belief", "freedom of association", "freedom of association", "freedom of expression", "civil and political rights", "the right of individual", "fundamental rights and freedoms" (UN Report, A/HRC/40/58, 2019, Part III, paragraphs 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23).

Part IV ("Restrictions on the freedom of expression and their impact on the freedom of religion or belief") discusses certain restrictions and obligations setting out the contribution to enforcing human rights law (UN Report, A/HRC/40/58, 2019, Part IV). It is important also to note that a number of provisions guarantee the rights of individuals requiring the international community to ensure "global and social harmony" (UN Report, A/HRC/40/58, 2019, Part IV, paragraph 26). Paragraph 29 is of particular relevance to the international legal framework as it sets a broad range of freedoms and rights ensuring the equal respect and protection for "majority and minority religions" (UN Report, A/HRC/40/58, 2019, Part IV, paragraph 29).

Part V ("Emblematic cases") (UN Report, A/HRC/40/58, 2019, Part V) sets out "the protection of public safety" and safeguards the "the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion" (UN Report, A/HRC/40/58, 2019, Part V, paragraph 35). In addition to the expression of belief or religion, the Report (2019) states the framework of public order and measures the impact of online social media. Part VI ("Impact of online platforms and related restrictions") (UN Report, 2019) indicates a clear network between the public sphere and the "religious or belief communities". Additionally, the "communicative actions" and "online platforms" are pivotal in international human rights law (UN Report, A/HRC/40/58, 2019, Part VI, paragraphs 50, 51, 52, 53 and 54). Part VII ("Conclusions and recommendations") (UN Report, A/HRC/40/58, 2019, Part VII) concerns the reinforcement of rights and the

democratic society. A second dimension regards “the manifestation of religion or belief” (UN Report, A/HRC/40/58, 2019, Part VII, paragraph 55) and the initiatives of civil society aimed to provide an increased level of protection for human rights. The final part of the Report (2019) includes two annexes emphasizing a comprehensive framework under international law and providing protection for human rights, namely: Annex I is entitled “Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights” (UN Report, A/HRC/40/58, 2019, Annex I) and Annex II is entitled «18 commitments on “Faith for Rights”» (UN Report, A/HRC/40/58, 2019, AnnexII).

Conclusions

In conclusion, freedom of religion and human rights are central elements of the UN documentation released in the period 1985-2019 viewing freedom of thought and conscience based on a multi-level understanding: individually and collective. The results of the social and historical document analysis provide support for further research on religious freedom associated with freedom of thought, conscience and expression.

Authors' Contributions:

The authors contributed equally to this work.

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THE SOCIAL WORLD OF DIRTY WORK

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Abstract: *Based on the idea of the existence of two worlds from Goffman's perspective (2003), workplaces can be good or bad, clean or dirty, first-hand or second-hand. This article examines how dirt is a component of work order and how removing dirt influences the social process of producing cleanliness. In this regard, we conducted 14 semi-structured interviews with cleaners, both from the execution team and from the management team. The method was supplemented by participatory observations and interactions with direct beneficiaries of professional cleaning services provided by a company specializing in this field. In short, work in the cleaning industry can be considered as supporting other types of work. It is an unappreciated job, often carried out by those with few alternatives, viewed as individuals with stigmatizing features. The research aims to distinguish between cleaning work and how cleaning work is socially produced, and understanding how cleaning agents experience and give meaning to their work is an important part of understanding cleanliness as a social aspect of our lives.*

Keywords: dirty work, social world, stigma, symbolic rewards, dirt

1. Introduction

Contemporary management has brought about a series of improvements when it comes to the workplace, offering us tools through which we can evaluate and improve the quality of our work. When we think about a job, we can approach it subjectively, seeing it as either good or bad.

Like in many other fields, in the cleaning industry, we have several components that tend to be organized, managed, and manipulated. It is a complex activity that involves economic, social, and relational processes, as well as technology, gender relations, power dynamics, and so on. This type of work is generally carried out by people with low qualifications, whether we refer to cleaning in domestic spaces (housekeepers) or institutionalized cleaning (which is carried out by companies in the field).

Drawing on Goffman's perspective (2003, 20), which considers the existence of "two different social and cultural worlds that function parallel to each other, with officially regulated contact points, but with practically nonexistent reciprocal intersections", I will consider both the perspective of working in this field and that of the process when analyzing cleaning throughout this work.

2. The conceptualization of 'dirty work'

Looking at it in terms of first-hand work and second-hand work, we considered that first-hand work involves reversing dirt, and this is the work that ensures work. If conceptually, second-hand work is based on the idea of order, work with dirt ensures the order of first-hand work. The main goal of this paper is to discover the subjective perspective of workers in the cleaning industry, starting from Steven Jackson's concept of "broken world thinking" (2014), which states that the order of things, the infrastructure of objects, contains within itself the idea of decay. Specifically, Jackson believes that any object or infrastructure implicitly contains the fact that it breaks down, which means that our world is a broken, destroyed world. By analogy, we propose the hypothesis of "dirty world thinking". Clean work contains dirt within itself, and this is the side that only those who ensure order see. Any work involves dirt, which must be cleaned so the activity can be carried out under optimal

conditions. Thus, dirt becomes the object of work for a category of people who are invisible to organizations and are strongly stigmatized in society.

Dirty work is the ignored reverse side of first-hand work. Similar to the importance of studying sleep from Brian Taylor's perspective (1993), who sees sleep as the "ignored experience" of the world, work in the cleaning industry, at first glance, seems unimportant. Similarly, a distinction can be made between cleaning work and how social cleaning work is produced. Just as Steven Jackson (2014) says that decay is an intrinsic part of the world and repair involves practices to restore the order of the world's functioning, dirt is a component of the order of work. Work involves dirt. How about analyzing work as a process of producing dirt?

In the same vein, another fundamental perspective of this paper is that of Francisco Martines and Patrick Laviolette (2019), who supports the idea that systems fail. The distinction between how life is and how it should be is a characteristic of ordinary life, which is represented "by system and error, by silence and noise, by dirt and cleanliness" (Martines and Laviolette, 2019, 1). Just as attempting to repair influences social processes, from their perspective, attempting to restore order by removing dirt influences the social process of cleaning production. Similar to the questions raised by Martines and Laviolette (2019, 4), we can think: At what point should cleaning be done? How much tolerance for dirt exists in the space to be cleaned? Where and when do social relationships occur during the process of removing dirt? What are the social relationships that occur around working with dirt?

Work involving dirt is invisible to those who enjoy clean spaces. We come to work, we have our desk, props, coffee cup, everything clean, without thinking about the work put in to maintain this arrangement on a daily basis. We go to commercial spaces, public transportation, have dinner in town, and expect it to be clean without thinking about the entire process behind it. We have factories in various industries from which we expect to simply function without considering that the production lines need to be cleaned, that sensors need to work optimally, and without harming the environment. Cleaning work is the unseen side of all organizations. Perhaps it is the most palpable and most present thing, of which no one is directly aware. The invisible side in which actors, infrastructure, technology, all create cleaning work that ensures an orderly climate and makes things work.

Over time, dirty work has been perceived in various forms, as harmful work (Bergman and Chalkley, 2007; Haber et al., 2011), mostly done by those with few alternatives, by those at lower levels of society or organizational hierarchy (Hughes, 1958; Jervis, 2001). Those who practice it are seen as "outcasts" of society, marginalized (Hughes, 1962, 7) with dirty assignments that devalue them (McMurray and Ward, 2014) and can be viewed as individuals with stigmatizing traits that alienate others (Goffman, 1997). The idea of "dirty work" (Hughes, 1958) refers physically, socially, and morally to unappreciated tasks (ungraceful tasks) (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999) or emphasizes that work is connected to disgust and symbolism of dirt, on culture and protecting dignity threatened by stigmatizing work (Simpson and Simpson, 2018; Galazka and O'Mahoney, 2021).

However, why is it important to distinguish a good job from a bad one? Sociologists have not been able to identify clear criteria that objectively link the characterization of a good or bad job to the subjective perception that a job is intrinsically satisfying (Adamson and Roper, 2019). The type of work is subject to moral evaluation. The level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction can be different within the same job. Specifically, the level of satisfaction of a public sector cleaner may be higher than that of a private sector cleaner. Or, furthermore, a private sector cleaner working in an office space may have a higher satisfaction index at work compared to a private sector cleaner who works in an industrial environment. Observing that people face obstacles when they are required to make that distinction of a good or bad job, based on criteria of objectivity and subjectivity (Kalleberg, 2011; Adamson and Roper, 2019),

usually measured by the indicators mentioned above, I consider it relevant to monitor the perception related to jobs by referring to the difference between a dirty and clean job.

3. Research methods and tools

Understanding how cleaning workers experience and give meaning to the work they do is an important part of understanding cleaning as a social part of our lives. The detailed observation of daily or recurrent cleaning practices places us in a picture that describes not only the relationships within a company that provides professional cleaning services, but also the relationship with the outside, with the beneficiary who, most of the time, is the one who decides the desired level of cleanliness. The satisfaction of the professional cleaning service beneficiary is a testimony that underlies the activity of those who struggle with dirtiness. For this testimony to be positive and for the beneficiary to be satisfied with the quality of the service, there are supervisors responsible for supervising the activities and ensuring their quality.

This part of the research is focused on the nature of the work undertaken, on the types of relationships we have in a company specialized in providing professional cleaning services, following the concerns and needs of the worker who handles and eliminates dirt. People who work in the cleaning industry are called cleaning agents. Cleaning agents interact personally with beneficiaries or clients, most often during the activity. To view cleaning from these perspectives and to outline the dirty world of dirty work from the perspective of the cleaning worker pattern, we conducted 14 interviews with workers in this field, as well as with cleaning team coordinators and cleaning team managers, with experience in this field ranging from about 3 months to about 20 years. The semi-structured interview survey method was supplemented by participatory observations and interactions with both professional cleaning service providers and beneficiaries of this type of service.

4. An unpleasant, demeaning and stigmatizing job

„Did you end up working as a cleaner?”- D., team cleaning manager

An interesting way to describe dirty work was made by McMurray and Ward (2014, 1125), who viewed it as a "necessary evil that repels" or, in common language, dirty work can be seen as "minus work" or "work that maintains work order." Here, a feature of social psychology might come into play, explaining the repulsion towards those who struggle with dirt, while at the same time being aware that cleaning is a need and a necessary aspect. It seems that we are predisposed to label and marginalize workers in the cleaning industry, but at the same time we are aware of their importance when we think about the safe and healthy environment that their work guarantees us. We can even go so far as to say that cleaning work ensures biological security, when we think about cleaning and disinfecting spaces, but we are still not aware of its importance. The cleaning company that is the subject of the research is specialized in providing professional cleaning services primarily in the industrial environment. The reason why I consider it relevant to study such a company and implicitly, its members who work within it, is precisely because the production activity and the quality of the final product are closely related to the degree of dirtiness within that factory. The cleaning worker's activity is, in general, subject to several risks, several rules must be followed, and the organization of the activity is subject to extremely strict requirements.

Seen as dirty work, low-end work, work with grime, cleaning is strongly related to language, the sense of smell, procedures and rules, social relationships, but most of all it is related to stigmatization, labeling, and marginalization of workers. An ethnography that places me in the middle of the action offers me the opportunity to follow aspects such as the relationship within the group, more precisely how the relationships are negotiated within the group of workers. Not only that, through participatory observation and discussions

undertaken, I observe the hierarchical relationship, how work recommendations are interpreted and assimilated by workers, how dissatisfactions are negotiated, and how various aspects related to the worker pattern are managed. The relationships formed at each workplace have an entire process of accommodation and mutual understanding behind them, "I have to be careful. If one of them is a busy bee, I have to be careful to say to the other one a hard worker. Everyone knows they are my right-hand. They will immediately notice if you compliment one of them and not the other. They are like children." (D., team cleaning manager, experience in coordinating cleaning activities for one year). Both directions are directly related to the organization of the activity within a company that provides professional cleaning services.

Although we may be tempted to believe that the overall state of workers who work with dirt is negative in terms of self-esteem and perception of the self, there are studies that prove a reframing, recalibration, and reorientation of the meanings of such contaminated work, in order to have a positive look on professional identity (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999; Kreiner et al., 2006; Tracy and Scott, 2006; McMurray and Ward, 2014). So, what makes a cleaning worker declare a significantly higher level of satisfaction than other employees? "It seems more important to me to be satisfied with the job I do and then wait for the others" (Rodica, cleaning lady, approximately 3 months old in cleaning) or "It's normal. You do your job, you have to be proud of your work" (Luminița, cleaning lady, approximately 2 years old in cleaning). It seems that for cleaning workers, their own satisfaction of a job well done is very important. Probably this is closely related to disappointment and sometimes revolt when their activity is cataloged as unsatisfactory for the hierarchical leader. Expressions such as "Come on boss, don't you like how I did it?" (T, cleaning team manager, experience in coordinating cleaning activities for over 7 years) reveal emotional involvement in serving. There are studies (Lene, 2019) that show a striking phenomenon in which people who hold low-paying jobs with abnormal work patterns and difficult working conditions, however, report significantly higher levels of satisfaction. A phenomenon that other studies (Walters, 2005; Brown et al., 2007; Morgan et al., 2013) explain as being related to the process of adaptation. "Not everyone can work in cleaning and not everyone can work with cleaning people. It takes a lot of patience..." (D., cleaning team manager, experience in coordinating cleaning activities for one year) because there are often situations "where you go and it's terrible. You want to vomit, it smells terrible!" (M., cleaning team manager, one year of experience in coordinating cleaning activities).

Poor job conditions come at a cost both for individuals and for society, as they can endanger general health and well-being, perpetuate gender inequalities (Adamson and Roper, 2019), as well as social class inequalities by stigmatizing and labeling the cleaner. Over time, these reasons have been fueled by sociological studies (Adamson and Roper, 2019) that have viewed job quality as a complex problem rather than a strictly financial one, which is the classification made in general by economists. Most forms of job classification are born and sustained in the culture in which the work is performed. In a single act is summarized the social need to live in a clean environment that clashes with the stigmatization of those who perform the service itself. However, there are situations where those who work closely with cleaning workers claim that "they are proud of the job they have. It's a great gain for us and for society that these people who do cleaning work feel good about it, they don't mind it." (N., cleaning team manager, experience in coordinating cleaning activities for approximately 12 years), "they are proud, they say they work in cleaning" (T., cleaning team manager, experience in coordinating cleaning activities for approximately 7 years). Making things clean is somewhat synonymous with the idea of order and at the same time with the acceptance of the assigned social status. On the other hand, it seems that not only the workers who actually perform the work are stigmatized and disregarded, because "I had a situation when I was shopping and I met a former employee, from the company where I worked before and she tells

me, with pity: Madam, but why did you leave us and ended up cleaning?" (D., cleaning team manager, experience in coordinating cleaning activities for one year). "You ended up working in cleaning?" (M., cleaning team manager, experience in coordinating cleaning activities for one year), but in most cases, managers say that "I don't have a problem. I get on the machine myself. You can imagine that the directors see you and look at you strangely... but I don't care. Many times I do this to see if the machine has a suction problem or just to help people, to finish faster" (D., cleaning team manager, experience in coordinating cleaning activities for one year). If we start from the definition of shame given by Brene Brown (Docea and Stroescu, 2020) according to which shame is "something people don't want to talk about" and we consider the statements of the staff who work in cleaning industry stating that "it's shameful to steal, it's shameful to cheat" (Maria, 15 years of experience in cleaning) or who claim "I tell everyone where I work... and in my apartment building" (Luminița, cleaning lady, approx. 2 years of experience in cleaning), "What's the problem? If I don't have work to be ashamed of" (Rodica, cleaning lady, approx. 3 months of experience in cleaning), we can consider that they have developed resilience to shame, probably through the means mentioned earlier, of making their work respectable.

The idea of shame and stigmatization of the worker in the cleaning industry can be metaphorically associated with the stains on surfaces that transfer onto the workers' equipment. Research in the field of dirty jobs (Stanley and Mackenzie-Davey, 2012; McMuray and Ward, 2014) has looked at how the stain of a certain occupation is constructed. The associations of stains in the cleaning industry can be made both with dirt and harmful and unpleasant working conditions (Meara, 1974; Gervis, 2001; McMuray, 2012; McMuray and Ward, 2014), as well as with the social stain resulting from association with stigmatized public or submission to others (Stannard, 1973; Haber et al., 2011; McMuray and Ward, 2014), but also with the magic they perform in the actual fight against stains, which I consider an important topic to be discussed.

6. Organizational secrets in dirty hands

„I know all the hot spots...I just choose to be silent.”- V., cleaning agent

Whether they work in the office area, in common relaxation areas or in production areas, the worker is often at the center of the action, indirectly listening to the emotional problems and concerns of everyone, from factory workers or clerks to directors or managers. We notice that cleaning workers are the ones who come before everyone else and in most cases leave after the end of their work schedule, and also have access to almost all spaces. These workers, in terms of organizational drama, work behind the scenes and can have access to certain "secrets" of the other workers, those who perform the hands-on work. Dramaturgically, they can be classified under Goffman's (2003) concept of nonperson - they witness performances but are perceived as props (they see everything, but must be as invisible as possible). At the same time, Goffman (2003, 164-166) speaks of "dark", "strategic", "internal", "entrusted", and "free" secrets. They may even have access to "dark" secrets, provided that the workers who perform the hands-on work do not manage the backstage well or underestimate the cleaning agents. In one of the discussions with the cleaning team coordinators, Elena G., with over 15 years of experience in the cleaning industry, tells me how one of her colleagues found out about an extramarital relationship that could jeopardize the company's peace. In another discussion, V., a cleaning agent with over 20 years of experience in the field, mentions in the discussions that "I know everything that's happening here. I know all the hotspots... I just choose to remain silent." All of these make us understand that from an organizational point of view, the worker in the cleaning industry is more than just the person who fights physical dirt, he is the one who fights emotional dirt as well. This is an important pawn who holds information that can denigrate and, in general, affect relationships. Managing the garbage that no one wants for the cleaning woman can represent secondary rewards at

work, both by recovering objects for which they find a new utility, and by discovering a secret, such as an organizational romance.

Working with dirty work is more than just a metaphor that sums up an unappreciated job at the physical, social, and moral level, it is more than disgust towards a person who performs dirty work, but it is about manipulating all the objects, remains or garbage that nobody wants. Dirt is linked to a pungent smell, a bad odor, an unattractive appearance, disgust, and is strongly linked to diseases. Traditionally, contact with dirty tasks or different types of dirt is common and carried out, for the most part, by anyone at some point in their life. So how and why is there stigmatization of workers in the cleaning industry? The framework of the occupational culture of cleaning agents is a broad one, listing various categories of workers who work in street cleanliness, industrial environments, retail, pharmaceuticals, and so on. Working with dirt has a heterogeneous character; there are different types of dirty work that reflect the specialization of work in general. For example, there may be various risks that are more related to the characteristics of hands-on work, such as activating sensors on production lines, rather than the actual cleaning work.

In an attempt to initiate a discussion about how we imagine job places, the answers could represent general categories of good or bad jobs, clean or dirty jobs, literally or figuratively. These categories do not appear without a foundation, but they are representations of characteristics such as job quality, complexity, an individual's image associated with the job, deterioration and improvement of an individual's image based on the category they belong to. Some people don't even think about whether a job satisfies them, they simply say "I don't know what I like, I like the work, my body is used to the work, I can't sit still" (Maria, 15 years of experience in cleaning). The importance of job quality issues continues to attract the attention of researchers, being an essential component part of any organization. It is as if each individual is destined for a certain job based on the social class they belong to, we tend to evaluate people based on their job: "tell me where you work and I'll tell you who you are." The complexity of the duties listed in the job description reveals a perspective related to human resources and which brings with it discussions related to health and safety at work. Often, this perspective is strictly linked to the worker's attitude and can create difficulties for the direct hierarchical superior, a aspect that I will address throughout the study. At first glance, working in cleaning seems devoid of symbolic rewards. The relationships they develop with the actors involved being a basic criterion in categorizing a job, "I like to go to the office to clean up people, I really like it. And people like me." (Maria, cleaning woman, 15 years of experience in the field).

Although it is a common topic, the workplace raises a series of difficulties, and the specialists of the Labor Organization for Sustainable Development, from Agenda 2030, have identified the need to include three main attributes, such as productive, high-quality jobs for inclusive labor markets, for both men and women. In the same direction, the agenda is complemented by the plans of the European Commission in the Annual Strategy for Sustainable Growth for 2023, through which it has proposed to increase skills, strengthen social protection systems, and make efforts to create more and better jobs. However, it is possible that this strategy reflects more actions to support and grow the middle class and less the lower class. Moreover, the working class in the cleaning industry is represented by diverse people who often have a low level of education and find it difficult to manage various aspects of life and who do not have a medium to long-term thinking, but rather a short-term thinking. "70% of them do not know how to read or write. Among them, there are also people who do not know what time it is" (D., cleaning team manager, one year of experience). Working in the cleaning industry is "first of all challenging. Every day is different, you never know what to expect. It's always something else and no day of the week is like the other" (D., cleaning team manager, one year of experience), because "many of the people we work with have problems... they can't do more, that's their level" (T., cleaning team manager, seven years of experience),

"we display them the cleaning plan and they don't know how to read" (D., cleaning team manager, one year of experience).

Workers in the cleaning industry often have a low level of education that makes communication between parties difficult. The distance between the cleaning lady and the direct beneficiary of her work is a "social class" and this can often cause conflicts. Generally, power struggles, class struggles are talked about, which often have to do with the need for showing off, the desire to show power. However, in the study of work in the cleaning industry, with all its implications, such a theory cannot be considered valid, but rather it is a struggle that has behind it the need to understand and to be understood. Nevertheless, it seems that when people meet a cleaning lady, they begin to perform a class spectacle, and the phenomenon of worker dehumanization arises. Elena B., a cleaning lady who has been working in the cleaning industry for about 3 years, told me about the experiences she had in interacting with the beneficiaries of her cleaning services. She says that most of the time people behave nicely towards her, but one of her experiences explains the idea of the humiliation process found in Goffman (2003, 38-52). Elena B. recounts how at one point she felt humiliated when she was cleaning the toilet and a man said to her: "You should have finished your studies if you wanted different treatment. And he continued to do his business next to me..." (Elena B., cleaning lady, about 3 years of experience in cleaning). Moreover, in a conversation with A., a director with over 10 years of management experience, we find the labeling of the cleaning worker. The implicit attribution of a series of negative characteristics such as low level of education, low level of understanding is not new when it comes to cleaning agents. A. explains how you cannot expect much from these people and how "you cannot make a fish fly". The subject becomes interesting when everyone knows better how the service should be executed and what cleanliness looks like. "It's all my grandma used to do, with homemade soap and a brush, they use detergent and machines...what's the big deal?!" (V., cleaning service beneficiary), it seems like a struggle of identity. The hierarchical relationships that are formed do not have identity negotiations behind them, the cleaning worker is directly assigned to a category that predominantly has negative characteristics, from which exceptions may be included, but never the other way around. Moreover, even cleaning team managers sometimes go through similar situations. In a conversation with a manager, D.I., who has been coordinating cleaning activities for about 5 years, he tells me how in an attempt to explain to a difficult beneficiary the difficulties encountered in performing the activity, he received the reply: "The door to my office says CEO. I'm not interested in anything related to cleaning, I just want it to be done. I have more important problems than the color of the water used for cleaning" (M., factory manager with over 20 years of management experience). On the other hand, the winning recipe in relationships with cleaning agents is considered to be "listening. It is very important. No matter how busy I am, I tell them that we will sit and discuss. To see me as a support. Especially since you are their boss and give them advice, an opinion...because they see you as their boss, they say that it was given by God. That's how they interpret it" (D., cleaning team manager, one year of experience). This panorama of hierarchical relationships formed based on class differences offers us a starting point in describing the work with dirt and identifying the characteristics of the cleaning worker pattern.

An important issue is that of respect. Workers internalize the idea that they are dirty, but that doesn't mean they don't seek respect. Rodica, who has work experience in other fields, has only been working in cleaning for 3 months and brings up the importance of respect in relationships with cleaning agents. She supports reciprocity within a relationship, stating: "As long as I respect, I want to be respected." From the same perspective, Luminița (a cleaning woman with approximately 2 years of experience in cleaning) highlights, by referring to both beneficiaries and superiors, the importance of respect in subordinate relationships: "Do not talk to me like someone on the street." The environment, problems and situations they face, attitudes and perceptions of those around them, and most importantly, how they affect the

worker, are aspects considered in the study of the institutionalized cleaning process. In the discourse of workers in the cleaning industry, the distinction between "us and them" often appears, in line with the distinction between clean and dirty. Luminița, a cleaning woman with 2 years of experience, believes that "the rules should be for them too. We clean up dust, we pick up paper, we do not leave dirt. But they should also not mess it up and maintain it...". In other words, she understands that she is hired to do cleaning, but she also believes that beneficiaries should not dirty the space.

7. Conclusions and discussions

It is expected that employees in such companies will be stigmatized because they are often associated with the negative characteristics of the occupation: dirt, bad odor. Marginalization and exclusion can make you think that the cleaning worker accepts their level and will have low self-esteem. This is contradicted by the reality that "we are not the last people" is the general phrase heard when the cleaning worker's stains on their equipment are counted and they are placed in the lower class of society. This would mean that cleaning workers may seek ways to make their work respectable or worthy of respect. As mentioned earlier, research suggests that high levels of satisfaction may reflect a phenomenon of subjective adaptation (Lene, 2019), considering that workers can get used to the situations and jobs they are subjected to, thus ending up declaring themselves satisfied. My attention is directed towards understanding the circumstances that make an employee in a company specialized in offering cleaning services declare themselves satisfied or dissatisfied with the activity they undertake. Identifying these characteristics allows us to understand the particularities that influence and change the direction of a highly stigmatizing job towards high job satisfaction. All of these are important factors in creating working environments that offer a high degree of stability, with the lowest possible percentage of resignations. However, studies that consider workers capable of adapting to the conditions and circumstances they face at work, rather than resigning themselves (Brown et al., 2007; Budd and Spencer, 2015), as well as those that consider it important to track the worker's previous course, practically comparing their current situation to their previous one (Bosmans et al., 2016), should also be taken into account. What is more important for a cleaning worker? What happens when resignation disappears? Or when the current situation becomes insufficient?

The work in the cleaning industry involves a focus on a phenomenon that concerns more than just removing dirt, it is a type of work that supports other work. Viewed throughout the work as second-hand work, dirty work is invisible, but supports or makes possible fisthand work. In this sense, restoring order by removing dirt influences the social process of producing cleanliness. As we have seen, dirt is the object of work for a category of people who are invisible to organizations and heavily stigmatized, and who have a low level of qualification. In general, the type of work is subject to moral evaluation, and dirty work seems to be a "minus job".

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE FEELING OF SHAME AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIORS

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Abstract: *Interest in shame experiences and their associations with other aspects of individual functioning and psychological well-being is growing in psychological research. In an attempt to confirm and extend previous knowledge on this topic, we investigated experiences of shame in a large community sample (N: 388 women), attempting a multidimensional conceptualization of shame. We correlated the construct of shame with aggression and all its facets: hostility, verbal aggression, physical aggression and anger, using the Compass of Shame Scale (CoSS) and the Aggression Questionnaire (AQ) as instruments. The results showed a positive and medium correlation with hostility and anger, but a direct and weak correlation with physical and verbal aggression. Therefore, looking from the pathological perspective of shame, we believe that our research is clinically important because it targets the psychopathological symptoms of the multiple facets of shame.*

Keywords: Shame, aggression, anger, hostility, verbal aggression, physical aggression

1. Introduction

The emotion and the concept of shame began to be studied, with slow steps, only 20 years ago. The growing interest in this construct is due to the association of shame with different aspects of psychological functioning, as well as with numerous maladaptive behaviors and psychopathologies.

A series of scientific studies have provided evidence regarding the negative consequences of intense shame on the individual. For example, in his psychoanalytic analysis, Levin (1967) identifies the significant role that shame plays in narcissistic disorders. Then, the concept of shame was approached by psychologists such as Nathanson (1992), Lewis (1987) and Scheff (1988), who demonstrated that shame manifests itself in anger and depression, and in its extreme forms, the individual can experience the deterioration of the Self. to the point of psychosis (Lewis, 1992). Kaufman (1996), states that shame is a feeling that can be considered the source of depression, alienation, self-doubt, isolation, schizoid and paranoid phenomena, compulsive disorders, cleavage, perfectionism, inferiority complexes, feelings of failure and inadequacy, as well as borderline and narcissistic personality disorders. Taking a less pathological perspective, Bradshaw (1993) describes a wide range of clinical symptoms associated with emotional shame felt in everyday life, expressed mainly through compulsions, co-dependencies, addictions, perfectionism, and a pressing need for achievement, all leading to personal or family collapse of the individual. Hardner (1993), using an empirical approach to shame, discovered correlations between the feeling of shame, interpersonal sensitivity and neuroticism, while Reimer (1996) discovered implications of shame in the issue of self-esteem and the development of individual psychopathology, and Shreve (1991), considers shame to be the central component of suicidal behavior in adolescents.

1.1. Dispositional shame, chronic shame and shame as predisposition

It is important to frame how the concept of shame has been classified in the literature, namely: situational shame, chronic shame (as a trait), shame as a predisposition, in order to understand the effects of shame on the individual.

Dispositional shame (as a state) differs from chronic shame as a trait. At the state level, emotions produce momentary reactions to shame-inducing conjunctures that have no

long-term repercussions. They may generate certain thoughts or specific behaviors, but after a period of time their effect diminishes and individuals can function in a manner related to normal parameters. Instead, at the trait level, emotions are experienced frequently and have a severe impact on the functionality and adaptability of the individual (Ferguson et al., 1995 apud Sedighimornani, 2018).

Dispositional shame means a transient emotion of shame in response to a particular situation. At this level, shame can regularize social conformity and interactions (Ferguson et al., 1995 apud Sedighimornani, 2018). In studies of shame, participants are often asked to recall an episode of a shameful situation from their personal life (Tangney, 1992). Although experiencing shame is unpleasant, both emotionally and physiologically (muscle tension, increased heart rate, hot flashes) and people tend to avoid it, dispositional shame does not indicate an emotional disorder. But the inability to feel shame, which is often socially unacceptable and can sometimes be considered a sign of immorality (Tantam, 1998).

In certain situations, dispositional shame can be considered healthy, normal shame. Bradshaw (1993), believes that it is necessary to experience this emotion, in order to feel human. Shame allows us to be human, to set limits. Shame keeps us within the limits of humanity, warning us that we can also make mistakes.

Chronic shame (as a trait) refers to a constant emotion of shame. Chronic shame is a state of being, more than an emotion (Tantam, 1998). At the level of chronic shame, the individual's identity is immersed in a sense of uselessness, powerlessness, and inadequacy (Ferguson et al., 1995 apud Sedighimornani, 2018). Bradshaw (1993) calls shame chronic, toxic and believes that it represents shame transformed into identity. Toxic shame is unbearable and always requires the creation of a false self, as the individual considers his real self to be flawed.

Some theories of shame, such as that of Tangney and colleagues, consider shame predisposition to be defined as a tendency to feel shame in response to negative situations (Tangney, 1996). Namely, Tangney suggested that shame-prone people experience the emotion of shame more easily when they are in a situation with a negative connotation. Chronic shame and shame as a predisposition are related to a wide range of psychological symptoms. For example, unlike situational shame, chronic shame and shame proneness are related to psychological conditions such as depression and anxiety (Allan et al. apud Sedighimornani, 2018).

1.2. Shame and other constructs: conceptual delimitations

In the literature, shame is often included in the same category as embarrassment or humiliation, or it is categorized as a moral emotion, such as guilt, regret, and remorse (Kroll et al., 2004a). Despite this confusion, there is evidence that these are distinct emotions, each associated with unique nonverbal expressions, actions, and behaviors.

Shame and guilt

Guilt is as intense as shame, only its influence is positive, while shame's is destructive. Brown (2019: 72), states: I have found in my research that shame erodes our confidence that we can change and do better. Instead, the psychological discomfort felt from experiencing guilt, similar to cognitive dissonance, is what motivates us to make a change for the better, being correlated with remorse and regret, while shame makes us feel terrible about ourselves and block. Guilt motivates productive behaviors, while shame is an unproductive and most often disabling emotion (Deblinger et al., 2005).

Sedighimornani (2018) posits that there is a common belief that we act differently when we feel shame compared to how we act when we feel guilt. Shame seems to be about avoidance, such as avoiding situations that cause shame, withdrawing, hiding. However, guilt is correlated with the approach of others in an attempt to repair the harm done (by asking for forgiveness). As I mentioned, experiencing shame focuses on oneself, while in guilt,

individuals are able to focus on the well-being of others. This is why guilt has been associated with a change in perspective and empathy towards others, while in experiencing shame, the concern being towards oneself, makes the individual self-absorbed and unavailable to the demands and needs of others (Tangney et al, 2002). It can be hypothesized that shame, especially chronic shame and shame-proneness, makes social encounters more difficult, not because shamed individuals lack the capacity to empathize, but because they are too self-focused to show their own feelings and vulnerabilities. For them, social situations are threatening, with the potential to embarrass them, so they will avoid them in most situations

Shame and embarrassment

Keltner and Buswell (1997), state that the feeling of embarrassment has certain characteristics similar to shame, but differs from it because shame reflects the violation of moral standards, while embarrassment is less intense and is associated with social transgression. Therefore, the difference between shame and embarrassment is their level of intensity. Embarrassment is considered to be a milder form of situational shame (Lewis, 1998).

After an examination of the specialized literature, Crozier (2014) discovered that shame differs from embarrassment according to several criteria: duration (shame is longer lasting than embarrassment); intensity (shame is of greater intensity); breaking social rules; the self (shame is related to a negative self-evaluation and a damaged self); morality (shame is associated with morality); the audience (in experiencing the feeling of embarrassment it is necessary to be seen); uncertainty (after embarrassment comes a state of confusion) and non-verbal expressions (laughter, when the individual is embarrassed). After reviewing these distinctions, Crozier (2014) found that there is no consensus in the literature regarding these differences. For example, while some researchers believe that laughter occurs after experiencing embarrassment, others state that it would follow shame, to soften the impact.

1.3. Shame and humiliation

Humiliation represents a person's perception of being degraded, ridiculed or criticized by someone, at the same time as the development of the feeling of guilt of the one who denigrates (Stuewig et al., 2005). Therefore, humiliated people do not take responsibility for the negative circumstance, and blame others for their loss of dignity. They assign the source of the event to external rather than internal causes. Humiliated individuals consider themselves victims of certain situations (Tantam, 1998). Shame, on the other hand, is more connected to feelings about oneself, and people who feel humiliated think that they don't deserve to live in humiliation. For example, a person who has betrayed his life partner may feel the emotion of shame, while the one who has been betrayed will rather feel humiliation (Klein, 1991).

It is important to note, however, that these feelings can be felt simultaneously (Sedighimornani, 2018). Namely, a person who has betrayed their partner may feel both shame and guilt, and we often hear, in everyday conversations, *that was humiliating, I feel so embarrassed!* So it is vital to understand that these differences between emotions can blur. It is also possible that what we experience in the first moment is very quickly replaced by another emotion. So, distinguishing between these feelings can become a difficult objective.

1.4. The relationship between shame and aggression. Influences and causality

It was Helen Block Lewis (1971) who noted, in her clinical observations, a relationship between shame and anger that she called humiliation anger. She observed an interesting dynamic between shame and anger: her clients' emotions of shame were often preceded by anger and hostility. According to her, hostility is directed, initially, against one's own self. But, since shame involves a mental imagery of a disappointed 'other', this hostility is easily directed outwards, towards those who can be held responsible for the sense of shame felt. This way of redirecting hostility performs a defensive function. By redirecting aggression

outside the self, individuals who feel shame try to regain a sense of control, which is often impaired in experiencing shame (Tangney, 2001).

So, we can draw attention to a perception of self-discrediting, implicit when we talk about shame, which may be the first link in the chain linking shame to aggression (Elison et al., 2014). It could start with a devaluation of the self, which leads to the emergence of the emotion of shame; then, the shame can turn into a strong feeling of anger, which leads to the expression of aggression towards the source of the initial devaluation. In a relatively recent study, experiencing shame was associated with anger, and this relationship is based on the role of anger reactions to criticism (Heijdenber et al., 2011). In this chain, maladaptive regulatory emotions can play a mediating role.

Tangney and his colleagues (1996) demonstrated that shame as a predisposition is related, throughout the individual's life, to destructive responses to shame, including malicious intentions, direct and indirect aggression. Also, Stewing and his colleagues (2010) successfully extended previous research, using both self-assessments and external assessments of subjects' behavior, to assess aggression within four different categories (students, adolescents, adolescents at risk and inmates grownups). They discovered a significant indirect the link between shame and aggression in all the researched groups, a relationship mediated by the feeling of guilt. Tangney, Stuewing, and Hafez (2011) reviewed the literature, and identified evidence regarding the link between shame and a range of criminal behaviors, highlighting the fact that shame as a predisposition is often specifically related to aggression and not only of generally antisocial attitudes.

Shameful circumstances can lead to withdrawal from social life. Also, these situations can make people act aggressively towards each other. Throughout life, individuals with a sensitivity to the feeling of shame end up expressing themselves by blaming others but also by showing anger and aggression (Tangney et al, 1996). Situations of induced shame create similar reactions (Bennett et al., 2005). Aggression induced by shame thus becomes a function of self-protection (Tangney et al., 2002). By expressing guilt and anger toward someone else, individuals can prevent damage to their self-esteem. Aggression shifts the focus from the painful feeling of a devalued Self. By adopting an aggressive attitude, people can save their image in front of others. Summing up, Thomaes and his colleagues (2008) conclude that the aggression induced by the feeling of shame has its basis in the most basic needs to keep esteem and self-image intact.

2. The objective of the paper is to identify the relationship between the feeling of shame and aggressive manifestations. We want this research to discover what are the manifestations of shame, what are the behavioral springs that are set in motion, when an individual experiences this emotion. Can aggressive manifestations, in their various forms, become a form of coping with this emotion?

3. Assumption. *It is assumed that there is a significant positive correlation between the level of the feeling of shame and the aggressive manifestations of the participants, which include the subscales 'hostility', 'physical aggression', 'verbal aggression' and 'anger'.*

4. The group of participants

This research was carried out through the study conducted on a sample of 388 women, aged between 18 and 63 years. These women come from different backgrounds, with extremely different social status, diverse educational level and a wide range of professions. All the participants are from Constanța county, Romania, both from rural and urban areas.

5. Work tools

To carry out this research, two questionnaires were used, each measuring one of the studied constructs and representing the research tools. The first questionnaire we will refer to

is the Compass of Shame Scale (CoSS). It was created by Nathanson (1992) to measure the level of general shame felt by an individual. The CoSS format is made of a series of descriptions of situations that can cause shame, called triggers, followed by four answers, which represent the items of the questionnaire, consisting of characteristic reactions to this emotion. A second tool used in this research is the questionnaire that measures the construct of aggression, the AQ Aggression Questionnaire. It was created by Buss and Perry (Buss et al., 1992), with the aim of measuring four aspects/dimensions of aggression.

This 29-item instrument measures four aspects of aggression: physical aggression (PA); verbal aggression (VA) anger/anger (A) and hostility (H), on a 5-point Likert scale. The AQ is an adaptation of the Hostility Inventory, a widely used instrument developed by the first author over thirty years ago.

6. Ethics

The research was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the ethical code, the participants were assured of the confidentiality of the data provided, according to the General Data Protection Regulation and of the fact that they will be used only for the purpose of scientific research. The statistical processing of the data provided was analyzed at the sample level and will not be presented individually in any scientific publication. Participation was requested, but with the mention of the fact that it is strictly voluntary. Also, the subject's decision to participate in the study, to answer the questions or to give up participation was respected. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, received information for informed consent and were guaranteed confidentiality. Also, at the end, they were given a short debriefing.

7. Procedure

The research could be done with the help of a GoogleForms type document, where all the questionnaires mentioned above were uploaded online. This document was then distributed on various communication and social networks (Whatsapp, Facebook), on general or specific groups (one of them being a group exclusively for women, with the specific purpose of living and mutual support), with the aim of completing them by the participants.

8. Verification of assumption

Assumption. *It is assumed that there is a significant positive correlation between the level of the feeling of shame and the aggressive behaviors of the participants, which include the subscales 'hostility', 'physical aggression', 'verbal aggression' and 'anger'.*

The results, analyzed from a statistical point of view, are as follows:

Table No. 1. Correlation table for the variables shame and aggressivity and all its subscales

Correlations			
Shame	Aggressive behaviors	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed)	,480** ,000
	Hostility	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed)	,524** ,000
	Physical aggression	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed)	,263** ,000
	Verbal aggression	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed)	,290** ,000
	Anger	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed)	,460** ,000

As can be seen in the table no. 1 above the work hypothesis: *it is assumed that there is a significant correlation between the level of the feeling of shame and the aggressive behaviors of*

the participants which include the subscales 'hostility', 'physical aggression', 'verbal aggression' and 'anger', is scientifically validated.

9. Discussion

Our research supports the results of studies existing up to this moment in the specialized literature, namely the fact that there is a significant correlation between the feeling of shame and *aggressive behaviors*, the correlation coefficient is .480, which proves that it is a positive (direct) and average correlation.

Thus, we can draw a first conclusion regarding the psychological explanation of the link, empirically proven by this study, between shame and aggression: shame is an emotion of painful self-awareness, which forces the individual to do everything possible to remove both the source of shame (possible exposure to other people, hence the need for isolation) as well as one's own feelings, even if this means resorting to aggressive manifestations.

Greenberg (2020) formulates a somewhat similar theory. He postulates that shame is a primary emotion (the first that appears in consciousness), in the form of an immediate, reflexive reaction to a certain situation, and anger is a secondary emotion, which covers a person's shame for having lost his self-esteem self.

Therefore, the feeling of shame undergoes a process of transformation by accessing the anger felt due to the abuse suffered. The tendency to 'enter the land of shame' can be transformed by the tendency to burst out full of anger in the face of boundary violations. Therefore, here too we can speak of a process of emotional recalibration in the face of a maladaptive feeling so strong, that it leads to accessing defensive functions, in an attempt to gain a sense of control over oneself.

Regarding the relationship between shame and *hostility*, the correlation coefficient is .524 (>0.4), which proves that it is a positive (direct) and average correlation. We can explain the correlation between shame and hostility by the fact that shame is an extremely painful emotion that involves a threat to one's sense of self-worth and self-efficacy. Through outwardly directed hostility and blaming others, the person sets the affected self in motion at the same time saving the self from further condemnation.

The correlation coefficient is .263, for the relationship between shame and *physical aggression*, which proves that it is a weak positive correlation. Therefore, in the process of explaining the weak correlation between physical aggression and the feeling of shame, we must consider 2 key elements: the fact that the sample used in this research is made up exclusively of women, and the suppression of emotions (specific to women, when they feel shame). We can conclude, therefore, that women who feel the emotion of shame suppress their aggression internally, and its physical externalization does not occur at the level of the majority.

Another possible explanation can be extracted from the behavioral gender differences between women and men. It is true that, globally, men are more violent than women (Denson et al., 2018). However, women frequently resort to other forms of aggressive behavior (Richardson, 2005 apud Denson et al., 2018). Research shows that women use indirect aggression in an equivalent or greater manner than men (Archer et al., 2005 apud Denson et al., 2018). Such examples of indirect bullying include: spreading false rumors, gossiping, excluding others from a social group, insinuating and criticizing others' personality or appearance.

Biosocial interactionist perspectives show us that social norms become relevant for explaining these gender differences because most cultures are patriarchal (ie men hold more power and status than women). Thus, most cultures reward men for being warriors and punish women for being aggressive. Indeed, social norms prohibit physical aggression in women (Eagly et al., 1986 Denson et al., 2018), and girls internalize these norms from an early age (Crick et al., 1996, apud Denson et al., 2018). When women have aggressive or

domineering behaviors, they are often met with negative, rejecting reactions (Barber et al., 1999 apud Denson et al., 2018). This is how gender differences and sociocultural construction work together to produce the direct manifestation of aggression to a lesser extent in women than in men, almost everywhere in the world.

For the link between shame and *verbal aggression*, the correlation coefficient is .290, which proves that it is a weak positive correlation. Indeed, Tangney and Dearing (2002) demonstrated that, compared to people who do not tend to feel shame frequently, those who are prone to shame engage in externalizing aggression through verbally expressed blaming through indirect aggression (e.g. by talking behind the targeted person's back), as well as unexpressed ruminative anger. Also, Velotti and his collaborators (2017) identified the fact that, for the segment of women in the studied sample, higher levels of characterological shame were associated with lower levels of verbal aggression.

An explanation for the weak, therefore less intense, correlation between shame and verbal aggression can be the fact that shame is considered to be a moral emotion, an emotion that, by revealing it through an aggressive-vocal manner, puts the individual in the position of to be blamed socially. This makes the aggressive manifestation of shame not so verbalized, since the aggression that follows the emotion of shame occurs in a covert manner, possibly, as mentioned above, in the form of blaming and backbiting or criticism.

The correlation coefficient is .460, for the relationship between shame and anger, which demonstrates the fact that it is a positive (direct) and average correlation. The explanation of the correlation between the feeling of shame and anger can be explained from an evolutionary perspective, by the fact that experiencing the feeling of shame in early development can be replaced later by chronic anger, adopted as a measure to distance others, so that the feelings of shame cannot be detected or activated (Framer et al., 2009; Bennet et al., 2005; Tangney et al., 2002). Bradshaw (1993) agrees with this theory, of the defensive function that anger takes on, in this correlation with shame, declaring: Anger is probably the most natural form of masking shame. It is very close to being a primary defense mechanism of the ego. Also, Schultz (2013) and Tangney (2001) believe that anger is what replaces shame, and the stimulus is the shame caused by humiliation.

Regarding the analysis of the correlation between shame and anger/anger for the sample studied, consisting exclusively of women, we can make assumptions based on the results of the research carried out by Heijdenberg and Andrews (2011): bodily shame was associated with feelings of anger especially in women, suggesting that the perception of flaws in their physical appearance could be a trigger for anger and outbursts of aggression.

Also, studies based on interviews carried out by Brown (2019), concluded that, in the case of women, the primary trigger of shame is the way they look, even after so many years of activism by feminist groups and efforts to raise awareness of the harmful cultural influence of the last 10 years on women's body image. It seems that the unattainable (and essentially shaming) ideals that society imposes on women, largely through advertising and conflicting expectations about the roles they should fulfill, contribute to body shaming as a product of harmful factors.

Our research brings new evidence, which is in agreement with these theories, through the result obtained in one of the items of the Compass Scale of Shame questionnaire, used in the conducted study. It is about the item: *When I am dissatisfied with the way I look*, item to which 69.3% of the women participating in the study answered I take it out on other people.

Indeed, in Romanian society we observe with the naked eye, the increasing number of women who resort to invasive cosmetology or even surgical measures, with the aim of changing their appearance and body image. This is how complex the psyche and human nature is, which reveals to us the fact that, behind this growing need among women, lies both shame and the discomfort of aggression directed at those around, as a result of experiencing a painful shame.

We can conclude that these aggressive manifestations lead to a form of isolation from peers and those close to them, to the human disconnection of these women. Is the basis of the desire to change one's physical appearance not only the attempt to escape or avoid the feeling of shame, but also a need for authentic reconnection with those around, following the isolation caused by anger? And if so, do these women, after the physical transformations they produce, reach this beneficial result of healthy interpersonal connection? Our research does not focus on this subject, but we propose, through these questions, new, future research directions.

So, knowing all this, we can conclude that shame and aggression go hand in hand. Desperate to escape from painful feelings of shame, individuals are able to turn the situation into a defensive point, externalizing guilt and anger on a convenient scapegoat. This blaming of others and outwardly directed aggression helps the individual regain a sense of control and superiority in his life, but the costs can be devastating. She can end up alienating friends, colleagues and family, through this impersonal style of interrelationship, characterized by hostility and anger.

10. Conclusions

Therefore, looking from the pathological perspective of shame, we consider that our research is also important from a clinical point of view, because it targets the psychopathological symptoms of the multiple facets of shame: aggressiveness and exclusive access to maladaptive cognitive-emotional coping mechanisms. Our research contributed to the advancement of previous knowledge on shame, indicating that promoting learning, in a therapeutic setting, of adaptive cognitive coping strategies, in the case of individuals with tendencies towards the emotion of shame, could be an important aspect in preventing or reducing psychopathological symptoms.

This study has several limitations. First of all, the use of self-report questionnaires can influence the sincerity of the answers and implicitly, the results of the statistical analysis of the data. Second, the generalizability of these results is limited by the recruitment of an all-female sample. Another possible problem is the fact that the variance of several demographic categories (for example, socio-economic status) and personality characteristics (for example, impulsive or antisocial traits) that may be related to some of the variables examined in the present study (eg, aggression). However, the findings of this research may help design longitudinal studies to test new associations between shame and other related constructs.

We believe that these findings extend current knowledge about the emotion of shame, providing new insight into the role of specific shame experiences. The current study advanced previous knowledge and promotes the fact that the use of adaptive emotion regulation strategies in the therapeutic setting could be important to prevent or reduce psychopathological symptoms and aggression.

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THE REVENANCE: ATTEMPTING A REAPPROPRIATION OF OBJECTS OF AFRICAN ART. THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE RESTITUTION DEBATE

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Abstract: *The revenance by the property that it transfers to Africans on their works of art preserved in Europe proposes to rely mainly on their economicity as a framework for discussion for the management of the question of restitution. Inserted since their arrival in Europe in commercial circuits, the mobility of African art objects generates income which should also benefit African countries. However, the revenance by recognizing the right of ownership of Africans, preserves at the same time the possibility of Western museums to enjoy these objects according to demand and needs, like the 10-year loan granted by Nigeria to the Germany on twenty of its bronzes.*

Keywords: Revenance, Works of art, Restitution, Economicity, Cooperation, Sharing.

The question related to requests for the return of African art objects looted since the colonial period and kept since then in European museums mainly, to the different communities of origin of these is becoming more and more significant. The promise of restitution made by French President Emmanuel Macron during his speech in Ouagadougou followed by a vote by the French National Assembly making the restitution of works of art effective in Benin and Senegal, and the promise of new law to come in France governing restitution within the framework of a new African policy presented by President Macron during a speech at the Elysée Palace on February 27, 2023 on the one hand, the evolution of the debate in Germany going into the direction of the restitution marked by a beginning of restitution of the bronzes of the kingdom of Benin in Nigeria on the other hand, give more acuity to this problem. It is important to emphasize that the demands for restitution from African countries in reality do not date from today, on the contrary. "At the end of 1962, a few weeks after gaining its independence, Algeria asked France for the restitution of approximately 300 works belonging to the Museum of Fine Arts of Algiers in respect of the integrity of its Cultural Heritage". Thus was effective a few years later "the return of 300 works of art to the Museum of Algiers by France in 1969". In 1973, a conference of the International Association of Art Critics was held in the DRC (formerly Zaire) under the aegis of President Mobutu with the aim of demanding the postcolonial restitution of works of art from Third World countries. It should be noted in the wake of the French restitution to Algeria, that an African cultural manifesto was adopted by the States within the framework of the Pan-African festival of Algiers in 1969. This manifesto supports the idea "that by restoring the confiscated elements of their past from the former colonized peoples, the former colonists redress the wrong and ensure an endogenous and authentic development, in conformity with the cultural identity of the peoples". Precisely, this manifesto states that the conservation of culture has saved the African peoples from attempts to make them peoples without soul and without history. [...] and if [culture] links people together, it also drives progress. This is why Africa attaches so much care and value to the recovery of its cultural heritage, the defense of its personality and the emergence of new branches of its culture (Leturcq, 2008: 4)

In fact, this claim for restitution by African states has not been conclusive; if so, very little because of the attitude of the countries holding these works of art. It was therefore necessary to wait for President Macron to come out in favor of restitution for this question to take on more importance. Today more than yesterday, it has become necessary for the various

parties involved to find a common course of action for the settlement of this question, because if these works of art are part of African heritage, they are under European property. So how can we arrive at a consensual solution on the issue of restitution? The objective being to arrive at a common solution for a better management of this problem, it is therefore a question in this article of opening a line of thought in this context, taking into account the implications both historical, political, legal, economic, socio-cultural, and even identity linked to this problem. "Revenance" (Gilliard, 1958: 73). As we develop it, it is a theoretical proposal for managing the question of the restitution of African art objects with regard to identity issues, but above all economic issues.

1. Conceptualization of Revenance

1.1. Definition

Revenance is a concept that we borrow from Edmond Gilliard and that we define "as the imperative need to assert the rights of ownership, return, enjoyment and/or contact of Africans on their works of art acquired during the colonization and preserved exclusively until today outside the continent" (Bandah Panga, 2021: 342). In the arrangement of these rights, the property regime is the basis for the implementation of this policy. By this decentralization of the right of ownership, we inaugurate a proliferation of possibilities of management on a bilateral scale of these works of art. The return then appears as a new model of cooperation by promoting a rapprochement between the different States involved in the management of African art objects with regard to the different issues that this raises. From this point of view, it is part of the contemporaneity because of its consideration of the evolution of interstate relations in an environment of openness and interweaving that has become more global. This is why the revenance perceives restitution through its integration "in the internationalization of the economy, for exchanges as for services (Boisvenue, 2015: 2). The globalization of the world space therefore now requires the participation of all for a different management of the restitution of art objects about the acuteness of this question.

The revenance as it is conceived therefore proposes to preserve the rights and interests of the countries of origin of these works of art, while opening or preserving the possibility for the countries currently holding them to be able to enjoy them, according to Requirement. It has the particularity of considering an often overlooked or even forgotten aspect of the management of the issue of restitution, namely the integration of these objects as movable property in the countries that keep them until today. As movable property, these works of art have become economic property and are the basis of significant capital movements from which until now only the museums of the countries that hold them have benefited. We will come back to it. In reality, the revenance is a new language, a set of musical notes that States must agree to create a symphony leading to a consensual solution to the question of the restitution of cultural property acquired under colonial domination. From this point of view, it is an open avenue for research on heritage while suggesting a new reflection on its future; but above all it appears as a real challenge for a different international cooperation.

Indeed, more and more voices are being raised, in particular civil societies in Europe, a place of detention and in Africa a place of looting of these objects, to demand "the definitive and unconditional return of heritage objects to the continent African" (Sarr and Savoy, 2018: 24). The restitutions decided by President Macron, such as the German government's decision to return the Benin bronzes to Nigeria in 2022, thus sweep away decades of Western indifference and call into question the selective historical amnesia shown by Western powers on "the wrongs of colonial domination". The revenance therefore proposes to revisit this past, not in an accusatory sense, because it is impossible to put it into practice without bringing out the truth about these acquisitions, but with the aim of founding a new partnership between States, between researchers and between different institutions in

a horizontal dynamic for the purpose of sharing and mutual enrichment. For this, she suggests that the West in general get out of the psychological confinement that conditions its narrow vision of Africa; embastillation maintained since the 16th century by slavery, colonization and poverty (underdevelopment) of African societies. Overcoming this arrogance would open up possible fields for further rapprochement with Africans.

1.2. The stakes of the revenance

The memory issue

In its second movement, the revenance is a memorial duty. The collective memory that she senses here is a continuation, a continuity of practices and knowledge that can be transmitted and transmitted through the symbolic elements that found an identity. The absence of this abundant heritage has created a break, an absence of continuity in the transmission of identity knowledge. By progressive and systematic removal of this wealth, the peoples despoiled until today have entered into a process of ignorance of themselves (Mbaye, 2018: 3). The revenance therefore by the possibilities of return that it envisages allows through the repossession of the genius of yesterday, to come into contact with the spirit and the values of the Ancients, and therefore, to recreate the memorial link which would serve as identity referent to each of these peoples. As Théodor Monod, curator at the IFAN Museum of African Art in Dakar, said, "it is not only a question of restoring objects, we also bring back symbolic things, a memory, a story. We restore technologies that translate know-how". The mnemonic capacity of the revenance therefore takes on a singular hue.

Indeed, by reconstituting a heritage, these objects make it possible to "rediscover the sensitive trace of the past, to rediscover the memory. This is part of a self-reconstruction project [...] the works bear witness to history and heritage and teach us things", "because the world of heritage is one of conservation and memory" (Paquette and al, 2020: 6). The revenance therefore prohibits exclusive conservation of cultural property and instead promotes collaboration between different parties involved because of the origin of these objects and because of their current possession. Telling the story of the peoples of Africa today through its works of art is impossible because of the absence of these historical artistic landmarks; most of the collections to tell the local story being absent from the local museums. However, if the revenance opens the possibility of contact with this missing knowledge through their translocation in Africa, it also considers the economic advantages linked to their property regime (Jonathan Paquette,

The economic stakes of income

This economic necessity of the revenance unfolds in a universe that has become essentially commercial; in reality the economic dimension through the management of income generated by the circulation of African art objects is the foundation of the revenance. The "artification" (Ivanoff, 2014: 3) to which these art objects have been subjected has plunged them into silence, because they are now defined in relation to their materiality, the only result of which is their commodification. From the word artification, we must understand the mechanisms that lead to the integration of African art objects into circuits of exhibition, exchange and marketing of modern, that is to say Western, art. Indeed, African art objects have been integrated since their acquisition into a capitalist system that makes the sacred profane, taking into account since globalization only the market value always "in search of the best places of valorization" (Moulin, 1994: 169) on the international market. In this capitalist system, speculation on the value of African art objects becomes more important. Works of art from Africa have been particularly appreciated by amateurs and collectors since the end of the academic convention, and their influence on Western art at the beginning of the 20th century.

The revaluation of these on international market places puts a spotlight on the income that their mobility could generate. This mobility would constitute significant inflows

of foreign currency towards the countries of origin of these objects. Already in 2012, the Turkish journalist Özgen Acar in an editorial asserted that "there are three areas which have not suffered from the economic crisis: trafficking in arms, drugs and cultural works" (Olivier, 2012: 3), which suggests that these are therefore large sums of money which should now also benefit Africans in particular. In 2021, for example, "Africa remains a safe bet [...] it is once again well established at the head of the tribal arts market with 57% market share". During this same period, despite the Covid 19 pandemic which slowed down transactions, African art objects reached prices above a million dollars, such as the Fang reliquary head from Gabon sold at 3,129. \$562 at Sotheby's in New York.

The position of Beninese President Patrice Talon regarding the income generated by the mobility of art objects from Benin legitimizes the need to put a reversion policy into practice. Indeed, taking into account these significant revenues, the latter affirms that "the restitution, sharing and circulation of cultural property are now [...] a means of combating poverty, a factor in the creation of jobs and wealth, a tool for socio-economic development. Anything that falls within the objectives of development aid and cooperation". This economic dimension of the Beninese president is based on the proposals of the Representative Council of Black Associations of France (CRAN). Indeed, "for the Beninese government, these objects are at the heart of a tourist offer necessary for economic growth" (Cabouret, 2018: 2). The objective for the Beninese authorities is to develop local tourism through a cultural tourist offer with the main attraction of the art objects resulting from the restitution. As Louis George Tin, then president of CRAN, pointed out when this request for restitution was introduced, "it is a question of culture, of justice, but also of development". In the context of this article, the economic dimension of the reversion, contrary to the example of Benin, does not impose an automatic translocation of these works of art in Africa. Rather, it is about seeing them as financial assets by Africans themselves; assets likely to generate income through their mobility in Europe in general. Beforehand, and as Bénédicte Savoy pointed out in 2018 during a TV5 Monde appearance, the privilege of mobility enjoyed by Westerners must be abolished.

On the other hand, we cannot ignore the aspect of copyright in the analysis of the economic stakes of the reversion. Before colonization, in different societies, the artist who designs and produces a work does so for the needs of the community by responding to a specific request from the latter. This solicitation finds all its relevance in the different moments of ritual and religious celebration, or in other circumstances specific to community life. This means that the function, the reasons for which they are designed eliminate the concern for paternity on the work which at this time becomes a community asset. The reason is that these works have one thing in common: "it tells about life, death, marriage, adolescence, stories, men, women, war, subsistence activities (hunting, fishing) the rules of social behavior" (Notue, 1988: 43). All these steps are marked with extremely precise codes. And all these codes are present, and it is the works that translate them. The work of art then appears as a marker of common social values. From then on, the notion of individual property becomes obsolete, because the work finds its *raison d'être* eminently in its expression and its community acceptance.

However, the absence of individual property does not elude the notion of property which induces that of copyright. A work belongs to a community that creates it, and whose particular values and signs contained on the work create a link that binds it to the members of the community. It is precisely these canons that today allow us to talk about the art of such a region. It appears from there that within society, in the anthropological sense, there are canons, values, manners, in short, an artistic aesthetic which is collective and which singles out works of art from place to place. Another. The notion of property therefore becomes collective. This collective ownership is recognized by law. In Cameroon, for example, the copyright law, in its first paragraph of article 11, stipulates that "the first holder of the copyright in a collective work is the natural or legal person on the initiative and under whose

responsibility the work was created and who published it under his name". Very clearly, Bamoun art or works belong to the Bamoun, Bangwa works belong to the Bangwa, Senufo art to the Senufo, etc... This notion of collective property therefore automatically induces the notion of copyright, not in the *intuiti persone* sense but in the gregarious sense, because the work belongs to a community, recognized, determined, identified and identifiable from specific aesthetic elements. Clearly these works of art belong to their designers. It therefore becomes difficult to understand that these today are presented as Western properties. Where does it come from, then, that Western museums in general own the bangwa statuettes of Cameroon? Which amounts to saying that the locality of Bangwa would be somewhere in the West; it would be an *aporia*.

In addition, another significant dimension of economicity around African art objects is the appropriation to which they have been subject. This state of affairs has been the work of painters in particular. Moreover a whole expressionist current developed at the beginning of the 20th century due to the influence of African art in Germany. "These self-taught artists developed a radical visual language in an effort to break away from their bourgeois origins and refined fin-de-siècle style and create 'true' representations of their time" (Gilbert, 2012: 11). One such artist whose paintings have become famous is Ernst Ludwig Kirchner. The Ethnographic Museum of Berlin abounds in this sense with a large number of his drawings and the sketches he made while looking at Bamileke art objects. A series of paintings produced by the latter is particularly inspired by these objects. One of his characteristics was to introduce into his paintings the royal stools whose platform was supported by a panther. These are abundant in his representations; we can also mention here drawings representing masks of the said populations integrated into the decoration of some of his paintings. The resemblance between his designs and the seats that inspired him cannot be denied; this is moreover the whole meaning of the book published by the Rietberg Museum in 2008 and entitled *Ernst Ludwig Kirchner und die Kunst Kameruns* (Rietberg Museum, 2008: 1). This publication accompanied an exhibition called *Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and the art of Cameroon*. It was for the museum through this exhibition and this publication to "show how much this source of inspiration was decisive" by the influence that the art of Cameroon had on the work of this artist.

2. Conditions of the revenance

2.1. An obligation to inventory stocks and acquisitions

As President Macron said in Ouagadougou, "African heritage cannot be the prisoner of European museums". What is he talking about? How can he quantify it? Is it likely to envisage a real restitution without accurately measuring the extent of the transfers of art objects to the colonies of yesterday while listing the objects present? Such an attitude would be hypothetical. Consequently, the first step, better the first materialization of a real restitution consists of a scientific research in the stocks and the archives of the museums holders of this heritage. In this sense, the priority is to train teams of researchers from the countries concerned, or independent, as the case may be, to accelerate this process underway in certain museums. Indeed, the revenance by proposing this efficient reconciliation contributes to the possibility of a bilateral or multilateral systematic scientific work on the inventories, because to restore suggests knowing what one restores. This is why "the first step in restitution would therefore be to fight for the opening of inventories and archives" (Kalibani Mèhèza, 2020: 3). Consequently, "it would require general detection work which should lead to the establishment of a precise cartography of African heritage" abroad, as certain Western museums are gradually doing. The revenance through such a cooperation regime is based on the development of research on these collections by intensifying the aspects related to the contexts of collection of the objects and their journey. Although in November 2022 "the Horniman Museum in London, which is a private charity, returned dozens of items, including

Beninese bronzes, to Nigerian owners, making it the first museum in the UK to officially take such a measure on this scale", Germany and France are at the forefront of this policy. The Provenienzforschung program (research on the provenance of objects) has thus been set up in the first case, and a master's degree at the University of Paris Nanterre on provenance research in the second case. Indeed, the archives of the museums which are gradually opening up in these two countries contain a set of information specific to each of these objects. The mapping of objects once available constitutes the ground from which specific research can be carried out; at the same time that putting it online would make access to information horizontal by disseminating it within the various communities that are victims of spoliation, including within the host societies.

On the other hand, it should not be forgotten that museums maintain cooperative relations between themselves which result in the mobility of art objects through loans, sales, exchanges or rentals. The implementation of such an inventory would make it possible to trace the trajectory of each object since its acquisition, to locate those of the objects which would be outside the European field or the public field. This prerequisite is now made possible thanks to the political changes observed in Europe, particularly in France and Germany. In Germany, since the last Merkel government, under the impetus of German Foreign Minister Heiko Mass and Monika Grütters Minister of Culture, there has been a real desire on the part of the authorities in favor of restitution. Indeed, on March 25, 2020 Mrs. Grütters during a meeting held with national and regional political leaders, museum directors and experts spoke of a turning point regarding restitution. At the end of it, she declared that "we are ready to assume our historical and moral responsibilities and to carry out a work of memory on the colonial past of Germany". From this point of view, "restitution would constitute a sincere approach to the analysis of the German colonial past" hence the setting up of a "restitution strategy", one of the measures of which has obliged German museums to publish the lists of bronzes of the Kingdom of Benin in their possession no later than June 15, 2022. After census, German museums would keep 1100 pieces, 22 of which have actually been returned to Nigeria by the new German Minister of Foreign Affairs, Annalena Baerbock, in December 2022. This method sufficiently demonstrates that it is difficult to address the question of restitution in any form whatsoever without first carrying out an inventory of stocks. However, limiting this inventory to public collections summarizes the research and does not provide a more global view of the extent of the transfers. Many objects since their acquisition escape public collections for various reasons. Objects thus devoid of interest were generally intended for the art market, or even intended for other museums. This is also suggested by Savoy and Sarr in their report. Arrived in Europe, the most spectacular objects are integrated directly into the national collections (Louvre, British Museum, British Library, National Library in Paris, ethnological or colonial museums specially created for this purpose). Others are sold at auction and supply the art market en masse, which ensures their capitalization and redistribution on a European scale. Museums of all nations draw from this source [...] private collectors also get their supplies (Sarr: 5).

In the field of collection, one cannot obliterate missionary collection. The latter constituted important stocks which do not fit into the public collections of the States. The Basel Museum was of great importance for researchers during the colonization in the same way as that of Berlin because of the abundance of its stocks of works of art, because "the missionaries were one of the first sources of information for ethnologists" (Ratschiller, 2014: 248). From this point of view, it is difficult to envisage a real policy of restitution without considering missionary uptake. This is even more so since in the implementation of the colonial fact, the mission like the army were the secular arms which allowed a certain domination over the subjugated peoples in order to facilitate their exploitation. It is therefore not incongruous to think that the missionaries were generally at the forefront of acquisitions, being most of the time aware of and in contact with the most symbolic pieces of the

communities in which they inoculated the gospel. To obliterate this part of history, as was the case in the context of the mission entrusted to Mrs. Savoy and Mr. Sarr by President Macron, would be to think of an overblown restitution. Such an orientation would have the consequence of postponing a new wave of restitution requests for a later date and leading to a new cycle of tension. Unlike Sarr and Savoy whose roadmap required them to base their report on public collections, the question of restitution through inventories is a global issue whose variables are public and private through their different collections; the private variable referring to missionary captures. All the variables must be considered to provide a consensual and lasting solution to this question. Thus, to avoid a partial restitution (considering only the public variable in particular), the African States must, each one, integrate in their strategy of complaint the local missionaries in order to open and engage the discussions on this question with the various Christian congregations which worked in the colonial field. It is precisely these Christian missions that were able to export a significant number of objects. "All over Europe, in addition to these State establishments, there are so-called missionary museums, where many ritual objects (fetishes, masks, entire tombs) are collected and exhibited, taken by Catholic and Protestant priests from the peoples of Africa targeted by their Christianization efforts" (Sarr: 10). In colonies, "mission stations served as transshipment points for African objects" (Bozsa, 2019: 29).

2.2. On the recognition of the historical responsibilities of the colonizers

One of the corollaries of true scientific research beyond the establishment of a cartography of objects, is the unveiling of historical truth based on the facts described for posterity and preserved in archives still inaccessible, Western buyers of these works of art in Africa under colonial domination. The question of historical responsibility, better of its recognition is sine qua non in the process of restitution, because it would come to give it an authentic character. Achille Mbembe thinks for this that "all restitution, if it is to be authentic, must enacted on the basis of a corresponding recognition of the seriousness of the suffered prejudice and the wrongs inflicted" (Mbembe, 2019: 79). The emotion it arouses is a factor of rapprochement, at least of serene collaboration between the parties concerned. It is important to mention that the word responsibility in this analysis does not create obligations in the strict sense. It appeals to morality, a notion inherent in the conscience which imposes on the conscious being an acceptance of reality, better, of the truth by surpassing its desires, its interests or its objectives. It is this aspect of responsibility that leads France and Germany to now assume their colonial past by demonstrating "capacity for truth". Sarr and Savoy in their report show us that the return to Benin by France of its art objects was preceded by a condemnation of colonization and its atrocities by President Macron. Then in the running for the presidential election, he declared in Algiers in the middle of the campaign that "colonization is part of French history. It is a crime against humanity, it is a real barbarism. And it is part of this past that we must face up to, apologizing to those to whom we have committed these acts" (Sarr: 1).

Therefore, restitution does not only mean transferring a property regime from one holder to another, it is above all an act of historical contrition based on the responsibility and the capacity for truth of Westerners with regard to their colonial past. The interest targeted is the establishment of a new type of relationship between countries and people by increasing the capital of shared trust. This is what the Germans understood about their colonial history; the latter are now determined to learn and inform more about their colonial past. Indeed, on May 28, 2021 the German Foreign Minister recognized the massacre of Hereros and Namas as genocide, establishing on the occasion the historical responsibility of the Germans. He explains that in light of Germany's historical and moral responsibility, we will ask forgiveness from Namibia and the descendants of the victims" (Wieder, 2021: 2). This recognition completes a series of restitutions of art objects that have already taken place between the two

countries since 2017. That year, Ms. Grütters presented the restitution as "a clear signal that we recognize our colonial past and that we let us seek and find with the countries of origin the means to have a respectful cohabitation". By expressing the wish for a respectful cohabitation based on the recognition of the colonial past, Mrs. Grütters gives more relevance to the reversion. In view of the reversion, and like the arguments developed above, the recognition of historical responsibility does not act as a condition of restitution; it imposes itself on it in the light of the posture of the politicians in Germany and in France in particular as a moral obligation and a conscious challenge of the recognition of the damage suffered by the colonized with the aim of creating henceforth with them a new type of relationships.

3. Geostrategy of the reversion

3.1. Absence of museum culture in Africa and strategic management of property rights

At this level of analysis, do we ask the question of what becomes of art objects once they are returned? To try to answer it, we rely on Beninese case law regarding the management of the 26 works of art returned by France. These objects are initially exhibited inside the presidential palace until their final transfer to a museum dedicated to this purpose in the Ouidah region. It should be recalled here that these objects should have been returned to Benin since 2019. At the request of the Beninese government, the return was postponed for two years on the grounds of the absence of an adequate structure allowing them to be received. Note, with regret, that most African countries do not seem interested in reclaiming their art objects acquired in a colonial context. Moreover, including for African peoples, in this case Benin, these objects have become museum objects. The main way of bringing them to life therefore seems to be to relocate the exposure regime to which they have been subjected since their acquisition. In reality, it is simply a matter of perpetuating a practice by importing it while now becoming its agents. However, to keep these objects in a museum is to consecrate by the Africans themselves the scoop to the materiality of the latter; Doesn't Kum'a Ndumbe III define museums as "concentration camps of African genius" (Ndumbe III, 2015: 3), which now makes Africans conscious and voluntary executioners of the second generation of these art. Since museum activity is also economic, the materiality of these objects is what determines their market value. If it is planned to preserve and exhibit them, it is the tacit recognition of their transformation as economic goods.

Indeed, in a capitalist environment, this value generates currency through the mobility to which these objects are subjected with the enthusiasm aroused by museums. By way of comparison, museum activity took off in Germany before the start of the First World War due to the development of ethnology, but also thanks to the emergence of a middle social class which could now invest in leisure and travel. "Most of these people are new urban dwellers. Many of them were part of a new white-collar class, and all of them were living in the world's that were quickly shifting around them in the wake of rapid technological advances" (Glenn, 2002: 36). In this context, the museum has become a privileged destination for school or family outings. In Africa in general, this middle class remains to be built, because "the three categories, lower middle classes, upper middle classes and rich, represent approximately 18% of the wealthy population" (Jacquemot, 2012: 21). According to a study by the African Development Bank (ADB), "they are in a vulnerable position and face the constant possibility of dropping back into the poor category in the event of any exogenous shocks". This middle class therefore remains to be built and consolidated in Africa. Once the effects of announcement and the enthusiasm aroused by the act of restitution have passed, it is questionable to bet on a large mass of local visitors in the long term in the museums dedicated to this purpose, despite the 275,000 visitors of which we speak. Madame Zinsou for an exhibition of works of art from Benin, property of the Quai Branly in Cotonou in 2006. Considering therefore an exchange, loans or rentals, in short integrating these objects into

mobile circuits would certainly provide additional income for local museums, or African states which now consider them as export goods.

3.2. What if restitution does not absolutely mean return?

In Africa, we do not seem to take sufficient account of the financial windfall that could generate these works of art present in Western museums. If we take as a reference the places where tourists frequented in France in 2018, particularly in Paris, museums were one of the places of frequentation par excellence. To magnify this attendance, De la Vaissière compares this influx of tourists to "a good vintage". Among these, "the musée du quai Branly - Jacques Chirac welcomed 1, 261,817 visitors, i.e. an increase in attendance of 7% compared to the previous year". Admission prices to this museum are 12 euros for the full price and 9 euros for the reduced price. Other price adjustments being planned by the museum, we see that these are significant sums generated by non-Western art objects, African in particular because "Africa remains a safe bet" for enthusiasts. This attraction of tourists and the income that these generate for museums explain why one of the sticking points on the management of restitution between the countries that keep them and those that claim them is the refusal of the very idea of return of objects despite the existence of sporadic restitutions. However, in a logic of concerted management, there is a state of mind that should evolve.

In this wake, the question of restitution should leave the political framework to think about its economic dimension and the possibility of looking at the latter as a factor of development. Economic management would make it possible to balance the forces between Africa and the West, which holds these goods. The backward advance of Europeans is based on the notion of force, expressed by the current exclusive possession of these works of art so far. Taking into account the base of profits generated by these African arts and its extension to African countries, if not a line of thought, appears to be an efficient approach that would adjust behaviors capable of promoting cooperation (between museums or between states) through the integration of Africans into the international art economy. The strategic necessity of this common interest certainly makes it possible to go beyond the colonial past, the reminiscences of which still weigh on the meaning to be given to restitution, and to think together about the colonial present. The management of the colonial present therefore suggests setting up this cooperation, which must be innovative, through this concerted system of remuneration of the dividends produced by the mobility of objects through different museums. From this point of view, the ownership that Africans would have over certain objects would no longer automatically mean transfer to the continent. The income generated by these African art objects appears as a valve for the management of restitution. Like the German example, the ownership of Nigeria is recognized on the bronzes mentioned above. However, this property does not act exclusively in the sense of a total or definitive translocation of objects; a 10-year loan agreement has been concluded on some forty bronzes between the states of Nigeria and Germany in order to ensure a continued presence of these works of art in German museums. In the absence of having the merit of existing, this proposal for cooperation should be more intelligent.

In short, the problem of the restitution of African works of art remains stuck in discussions that have not allowed it to be given a significant scope, the purpose of which is to allow Africans to become acquainted with their history. On the one hand, and to enjoy the benefits inherent in the presence of these cultural assets on and outside the continent on the other hand. Through the concept of the revenance, priority is placed on the economic aspect for the management of the restitution of African art objects. This reflection through the implementation of the revenance is a proposal for a concerted solution. The revenance then appears as an approach, a process of cultural economy whose goal is to allow international harmony in the management of African cultural property, considering historical truth and comparative advantages resulting from the current environment marked by globalization in

order to allow a horizontal redistribution of flows generated by the mobility of African art objects. From this point of view, it is an innovative, supportive, and integrative approach, with the economy-cooperation-innovation triptych as its pillars. However, there are prerequisites for this policy: an exhaustive inventory of African cultural property in Europe must be made, emphasizing the contexts of acquisition in order to establish historical truth, not in an accusatory sense, but in a moral and ethics. The unilaterality shown by France in the choice of the objects to be returned to Benin would come to de facto disappear within the framework of a dynamic like the one mentioned above. Targeted restitutions, which until now have been the chosen method, would at least have the advantage of being the result of a consensus between the countries concerned. This historical truth is ultimately the facilitator par excellence of a new perception of the type of new relationships necessary for the implementation of the reverence. "These goods can be found in certain museums, outside Africa, and belong to Africa, to African states, to the kingdoms that have seen their works leave. It is important that this part of Africa can be universal, can be valued in all places of culture, in all places where we can have this materialization of the dialogue of cultures" (Padonou, 2021).

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EATING DISORDERS AND OBESITY IN CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF EVIDENCE-BASED SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK

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Abstract: *Nowadays, the prevalence of eating disorders among children and teenagers has increased; these eating disorders have become an extremely worrying epidemiological problem in teenagers in most Western countries, which endangers their mental and physical health, causing them even death. Many people who face eating disorders and who do not meet the entire set of diagnosis criteria for anorexia nervosa (AN) or bulimia nervosa (BN), are diagnosed with „partial syndrome” or „eating disorder without other specifications”. The article presents an effective and modern way, empirically supported, to work with this category of people, which starts from the explanation of eating disorders and processes responsible for their “self-maintenance”. If in the '70s, bulimia nervosa had been recognized as an eating disorder and was considered to be “untreatable,” in the '80s and '90s, the cognitive behavioral theory optimized for bulimia nervosa has proven to be an effective intervention to solve this problem. Research continued, and Fairburn found, after another five-year experiment in two UK treatment centers (Oxford and Leicester), that optimized cognitive behavioral therapy for all eating disorders (OCBT) is more effective and can be used for the full range of eating disorders. Specialists working with children and adolescents with such disorders can be considered “lucky”, as most of them can be helped and completely healed.*

Keywords: eating disorders, anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, cognitive behavioural therapy, evidence-based school social work.

1. Introduction

Evidence-based social work has developed over the past 20 years, aiming for the accuracy of social work practice based on the professional's experience and skills, on the specific features of the ongoing case, but, above all, on the results of the scientific research in the field. The evidence-based social work relies on the model of evidence-based medicine (EBM¹), which represents an integration of the best results obtained in the current medical research where the experience of the clinician, the particular features of the case, the concrete situation and, above all, the values of the patient become relevant (Sackett, Straus, Richardson, Rosenberg and Haynes, 2000 apud Sandu, Unguru and Frunză, 2020). „The evidence-based practice is defined as an assistance practice based on enabling the decision-making processes obtained in order to improve the efficiency of the offered social services and of the results obtained by the beneficiaries” (Drisko and Grandy, 2015 apud Sandu, Unguru and Frunză, 2020: 15).

The evidence-based social work was founded by analogy with medical practice, whereas the professionalization was, from the beginning, based on the social diagnosis, which enables the practicing professional social worker to know the beneficiaries and the community, and to intervene efficiently, according to the plan. *Social work based on edifying data* is similar to Evidence-Based Medicine, which focuses its therapeutic strategies on "the best available data" (Sackett and Rosenberg, 1995, apud Briffault, 2010), which are obtained from scientific studies, by the integration of information into the clinical experience of the practitioner and into the responsible and well-informed choice of the beneficiary who makes decisions on previously confirmed results. Briffault says that relying on the evidence is

actually organizing it, selecting the best according to its source. The ranking of evidence, in the phrase "evidence-based", becomes relevant for subsequent recommendations.

Webber (2008) defines *evidence-based social work* as follows: *evidence-based social work is the conscientious, conscious and judicious use of the best evidence in making decisions about the well-being of beneficiaries in need of social services.* This adaptation represents a conceptual transfer from medicine to social work. Some authors see this "colonization of the practice" of social work by medicine, whose traditions, values and origins are different and possibly in disagreement with others. However, other authors argue that this concept validates the interventions of social work by producing efficient evidence in practice.

2. The elements of evidence-based school social work

The key elements of evidence-based social work are: first, the conscientious practitioner is the one who uses interventions with efficient evidence useful for the intervention. For this purpose, professional competence becomes crucial for the future of social work. A good practice needs us to explain to the beneficiaries with whom we work what, when and especially why we intervene, by reviewing the options available to the users of social services, and we inform them by a thorough, in-depth assessment of their needs and the good knowledge of the current research and relevant to the efficiency of the intervention. The judicious practice is based on the sound, prudent and sensitive judgment, which requires that practitioners not be influenced by external demands (Weber, 2008).

The proofs in health and social work that are considered largely valid and reliable are based on scientific principles. The epistemological paradigm was synthesized by Bolton (2002) and is based on the following elements:

1. *The objectivity of observation, which is the categorical opposite of a subjective approach, based on the sensory experience and on the intuition.*
2. *The experiment, in which knowledge is not based on observing reality, but mainly represents a process of intervention and observation.*
3. *Causality, where the purpose of the experiment is to determine a causal process and to find explanations of events, and also to make predictions.*
4. *Generality, where causality becomes vital.*

The specialty literature reveals that the field of the social work sees the usefulness of the process based on edifying data, where social workers are supported to use all the best available evidence in addressing the critical issues for educational institutions.

Kelly, Reines, Stone and Frey (2010) start from four hypotheses in the effort to point out the practical efficacy of evidence-based school assistance.

1. A process of Evidence-Informed Practice (EIP²) is useful to collect, organize and evaluate practice, whereas the choices would improve the ability of school social workers to approach the multitude of problems existing in schools;
2. School social assistance represents a unique specialty that should align the practice choices with contemporary educational models, currently known and appreciated by teachers;
3. Although no information should be excluded from taking into consideration, in an evidence-based process, we must mention the fact that it is necessary to supplement it with academic practices and interventions, based on the current research;
4. Although it is informative, the evidence-based practice is not adequate for the coordination of the practical activity.

3. Eating disorders present in pupils

In the contemporary society, the prevalence of eating disorders among children and teenagers has increased; the eating disorders among pupils have become in time, an extremely worrying epidemiological problem in teenagers in most western countries, which

endangers the mental and physical health of the affected persons, causing even death. Many persons who face eating disorders, who do not meet the entire set of diagnosis criteria for anorexia nervosa (AN) or bulimia nervosa (BN), are diagnosed with „partial syndrome” or „eating disorder without other specifications” (Mennuti, Christner and Freeman, 2016).

In recent years, clinical psychologists and psychiatrists often deal with eating disorders, whereas research focuses on enabling the assessment, the diagnosis of eating disorders and the creation of programs to treat this type of disorder successfully by therapeutic interventions. Researchers have studied whether this type of disorder occurs in the presence of other personality disorders or separately from them, so those studies pointed out the relationship between the personality of the individual and the eating disorders. Two of the personality traits that have been associated with eating disorders are mainly impulsivity and compulsivity: the first is a behavioral trait, and the second is a personality trait (Aniței, Chraif, Burtăverde and Mihăilă, 2016).

In addition to the two mentioned traits, the eating disorders are also closely related to the borderline personality disorder, characterized in a variety of contexts and, according to the specialty literature, in minimum five of the following:

1. The beneficiary makes desperate efforts to avoid real or imaginary abandonment;
2. The inter-personal relationships are intense and unstable; they are characterized by the alternation of the two extremes of idealization and devaluation;
3. There are identity disorders where the self-image and the self-feelings are unstable;
4. Impulsivity that can be obvious by spending money excessively, by getting involved in many intimate relationships, the abuse of alcohol and psychoactive substances, driving aggressively and recklessly and, last but not least, eating excessively;
5. There are suicidal thoughts and attempts, or another self-harming behavior;
6. Affective instability is present, caused by the increased reactivity of mood states, among which we mention the intense episodes of irritability, anxiety and dysphoria, which can last from a few hours to a few days, but not longer;
7. A chronic feeling of emotional emptiness appears;
8. There is a feeling of excessive anger and the inability to control it;
9. Transient paranoid ideation is also present, which is usually related to the level of stress/dissociative symptoms (Aniței, Chraif, Burtăverde and Mihăilă, 2016).

Borderline personality disorder is also presented in specialized literature as a „limit case that is defined nosologically and structurally as intermediate or „borderline” between a neurotic and a psychotic structure” (Larousse, 2006). Sansone and Levitt (2006) state that in the case of individuals with anorexia and nervous bulimia, there is an incidence of borderline personality disorder between 10 and 28%. In people who experience excessive eating, 12% of them suffer from borderline personality disorder. The same researchers reveal that there is a relationship between avoidant personality disorder and eating disorders, and it is relevant that for a person to be diagnosed with avoidant personality disorder, they must manifest at least four of the following characteristics:

1. The person avoids professional tasks that involve interaction with other people, being afraid of being rejected and/or criticized;
2. The person has the desire to act only with people who he knows they are accepted by;
3. The person behaves restrained within the couple relationship, so as not to be criticized and/or ridiculed;
4. The person is concerned not to be criticized in social contexts;
5. The person considers himself/herself incapable, unattractive and inferior to others;
6. The person is reluctant to take risks and to carry out new activities, also for fear of criticism and rejection;

7. The person is inhibited in new personal relationships, a reaction caused by the presence of the feeling of inadequacy (Aniței, Chraif, Burtăverde and Mihăilă, 2016).

Ghaderi and Scott (2000) outlined the relationship between the Big Five Model of personality and eating disorders. People suffering from eating disorders have low levels in terms of agreeableness, conscientiousness and emotional stability, and have an increased desire in terms of openness to experience (apud Aniței, Chraif, Burtăverde and Mihăilă, 2016).

4. Obesity in children and adolescents

Obesity represents a major public health problem, as well as a particularly important economic problem. Some authors reveal the fact that if people ate healthily, 169 billion dollars would be saved annually (Rădulescu, 2021). SAD (Standard American Diet)-In the United States of America, two out of three adults are overweight, and one out of three is obese. Therefore, 70% of the adult population is overweight and 36% is already obese. The CDC (Center For Disease Control) reports that 34 million Americans have type II diabetes, and approximately 88 million have prediabetes. These symptoms are associated with metabolic syndrome, cardiovascular disease, neurological disease, and others just as serious, all of which are mainly generated by the American diet, which consists of soda, fried foods, chips, red meat, unhealthy fats, fast food, and other foods with a lot of added sugar (Rădulescu, 2021). It has been demonstrated that a „normal weight adult ingests about 900,000 kilocalories in a year. If the intake exceeds the energy expenditure by 2%, within a year there will be a surplus of 18,000 kcal, i.e. 2.3 kilograms” (Rădulescu, 2012: 40). Also, the big food corporations manipulate and exploit our addictions, food manufacturing companies and food chemistry labs to date produce foods with greater addictive capacity than nicotine and psychoactive substances and resort to various „commercial subterfuges” which aim to keep us dependent on the products they sell, and the incidence of obesity, especially in children and adolescents, is increasing (Moss, 2022). Obesity is not a psychiatric diagnosis, but its burden is significant, with most children seeking professional help not as a motivation for the medical complications of obesity, but mostly for psychosocial issues such as teasing. Obese children are disliked and stigmatized as lazy, unattractive or unfriendly, which is why they have fewer friends, which can lead to isolation and depression (Enea, Moldovan and Anton, 2017). Obese children and adolescents are victims of bullying. Bullying victims present a certain type of personality, being insecure, distrustful, dependent, a fact that provides the aggressor with fertile ground for practicing hostile intentions. The victim continues to develop „anxiety, seemingly unjustified sadness, isolation from colleagues, drop in school performance, absences from school, change in eating patterns” (Shore, apud Pânișoara, Chirca, 2019: 345). The victim of school bullying may have the following characteristics: the presence of symptoms of depression, low self-esteem, the presence of feelings of loneliness, the presence of anxiety and certain mental problems, low popularity, difficult sociability, eating disorders and suicidal ideation (Palaghia, 2019).

To be in a healthy state, the child needs positive attention, love, respect, warmth, care and acceptance. Carl Rogers (apud Șoitu, 2012) considered that, during childhood, but also in the following years, the child receives only conditional attention from parents and others, and feelings of value develop if the individual behaves in a certain way, since conditional acceptance teaches him to feel valued only when he behaves in accordance with the wishes of others. Thus, the child may deny or distort a perception when someone on whose approval he depends sees the situation differently, becoming aware of inconsistencies between self-perception and experience. If a child does not behave as adults want, he will not be accepted or valued, but if he conforms, he will open a gap between his ideal self (what he wants and strives to become) and his actual self (what he is). The further the real self is from the ideal self, the more maladjusted the child becomes.

A characteristic of the victims of bullying is the physical stigma given by being overweight or obese and implicitly, an unpleasant physique, which is often a starting point for attracting aggression, especially since it is often accompanied by the wearing of glasses or a hearing aid, ineffective coordination, and hence, the inability in recreational activities such as catching, hitting and throwing the ball, rollerblading, swimming, etc. This lack of athletic ability is often a pretext for bullies to tease and ridicule the student, opening the way to bullying, a long-lasting violence with devastating effects. The stigma of obesity favors student bullying especially when it is the only pretext available to the aggressors in identifying potential victims (Curelaru, 2013).

Research (Olweus, 1993 et al.) outlines the psychological characteristics of bullying victims, among which we find reduced academic skills and a low school performance, which is mainly due to the existence of sensory disabilities and less to the existence of cognitive disabilities. Also, students who are victims of bullying show a low emotional intelligence. These deficiencies make them precise targets and with increased vulnerability in the face of aggressors with an above-average ability to understand those around them, especially the climate of the classroom, and to direct and implement effective violent scenarios. Also, overweight or obese victims of bullying often have low self-esteem, a negative self-concept, with a negative reaction to their own person, presenting anxiety and depression. Of course, both victims and aggressors, in cases of repeated violence, have low self-esteem, but the latter try to feel better by making others feel bad (Smith, 2021).

Vulnerability itself "characterizes not only certain populations, but also each individual in certain relationships with external reality, with some social contexts of individual action, and may be a result of individual interpretations given to these contexts" (Cojocaru, 2005). The vulnerability of overweight and obese students is primarily physical and generates multiple medical problems, then psychological, generating complexes, maladjustment, behavioral disorders, etc. School staff must be aware of the fact that the number of cases of eating disorders has increased substantially, even among pupils as young as seven years old, since in recent years, the „ideal of suppleness" has influenced even adolescents. Any student who develops an eating disorder under the age of thirteen is unlikely to have premorbid pathology such as depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, or other anxiety disorders (Rosen, 2010 apud Menutti, Christner, Freman, 2016).

5. Bulimia and nervous anorexia in adolescents

Nervous bulimia is characterized by an excessive, recurrent desire to eat, with overeating present, accompanied by the experience of losing control over eating behavior, inappropriate compensatory behaviors, cognitions and associated emotions (Enea, Măiran and Dafinoiu, 2016). Bulimia is defined in specialized literature as „a behavioral disorder characterized by uncontrollable fits of hunger, with massive food intake, followed by induced vomiting or sleep states" (Larousse, 2016). Nervous anorexia, even if it does not have the incidence of depression, represents the mental disorder with the highest risk of mortality in adolescents, and the difficulty of addressing this disorder comes from its peculiarity of becoming a fashion among young people (Enea and Dafinoiu, 2012). Nervous anorexia is defined as a „concept of sociological origin created to characterize the situation in which the individual finds himself when social frameworks and rules are absent, incompatible with each other or have lost their power to regulate behavior, representing an eating behavior disorder characterized by a more or less systematic refusal to feed, acting as a response to certain mental problems" (Larousse, 2016). A person's weight is fluctuating or normal, a fact due to attempts to lose weight, with the help of medicinal teas, drugs or through diets, all of which are accompanied by feelings of guilt and a depressed mood.

Classically, bulimia corresponds to the excessive consumption of food, linked to excessive hunger, being also recognized as being associated with certain mental pathologies,

such as schizophrenia or dementia. There is a frequency of bulimic behavior, especially during the period of decline of anorexia. The alternation of episodes of bulimia and anorexia was called „bulimiarexia” in specialized literature. Bulimic behaviors are found mainly among students, or in professions that value aesthetics, such as mannequins or ballerinas/dancers. It should be noted that most people who experience impulsive eating do not have an eating disorder, since in their case impulsive eating is more occasional than frequent and does not affect their quality of life; but, if they consider compulsive eating to be a problem, it means that they really have an eating problem. There are a significant number of people whose impulsive eating habits are detrimental to their health and quality of life, and these people actually have an eating disorder. Three eating disorders are present in adults and adolescents: 1. nervous bulimia; 2. nervous anorexia; 3. hyperphagia. Studies reveal that it is not unusual for people to have an eating disorder that does not fit into these three categories, being categorized as „atypical behavior disorder” (Fairburn, 2021).

6. Eating disorders and CBT-O

Eating disorders are fundamentally cognitive disorders, whereas CBT-O („optimized” CBT for eating disorders) includes a strategy and a structure of therapy, which includes cognitive behavioral „procedures”. CBT-O is equally suitable for all the patients: women, men, the young or the elderly. Practice reveals that some of the most difficult patients to treat are the highly intelligent ones who are prone to intellectualization. Generally, CBT-O has a fixed duration of 20 sessions during 20 weeks (Fairburn, 2014: 41-44). There is also the variant with 40 sessions for patients with a BMI between 15 and 17.5. There are patients who suffer from binge eating disorder when they eat compulsively. Eating disorders generally start in adolescence, and young patients respond to treatment better than adults. Therefore, it becomes extremely important to treat overweight adolescents. "The danger of medical complications that can occur with eating disorders are particularly serious among young people: anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa, as well as the secondary diagnosis of eating disorder not otherwise specified.

CBT-O is "an extremely efficient approach for young patients because they are concerned with ‚being in control’. Therefore this therapy aims at strengthening their feelings of their own control, according to the need of adolescents to develop their autonomy and independence and by managing to increase their motivation” (Fairburn, 2014, p. 288). It is also taken into account the fact that most patients still live with their parents and are dependent on the latter.

7. Conclusions

The specialty literature reveals that the field of the school social work sees a usefulness in the evidence-based process, where school social workers are supported to use the best available evidence in approaching critical issues facing educational institutions.

Eating disorders, as well as personality disorders, depression, anxiety in children and adolescents can be related to both constitutional predispositions and experience; it is extremely important for a child facing depression to be supported by an adult to overcome it, so that this affective condition does not become a destructive force, even threatening life (Ellis, Bernard, 2006). Eating disorders and cognitive-behavioral therapy go together, especially optimized cognitive-behavioral therapy for eating disorders (CBT-O), which is a treatment for the psychopathology of eating disorders (Fairburn, 2014). Most children with eating disorders will be treated on an outpatient basis by a multidisciplinary team, coordinated by a case manager who is a school social worker, and it is extremely important that any approach from outside the school be integrated with the efforts of the team within the school, in order to strengthen the nutritional goals of the pupils, the cognitive techniques and the collaboration between school, family and community.

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PREVENTING DISCRIMINATION THROUGH ACTION RESEARCH

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Abstract: *Discrimination is a complex phenomenon increasingly present in modern society. The problem of this research is related to the presence of discrimination in everyday life against students of different ethnicity, socio-economic background, physical appearance, way of dressing, religious beliefs, and skin colour. Consequently, the main goal of this research is to prevent discrimination among students by resorting to action research. Firstly, the researchers identified and formulated the problem, which was followed by devising activities (a workshop, audio-visual presentations, and a debate). The research went through several phases and it was conducted in a form of experiments, comprising an experimental and control group. The experimental group comprised 24 students, 13 girls and 11 boys, while the control group comprised 24 students, 15 girls and 9 boys attending a primary school in Pirot, Serbia. The data obtained through the research indicate that there has been some advancement in preventing discrimination, as well as that implemented activities had a positive effect on students in the experimental group. The students in the experimental group significantly developed and started manifesting prosocial behavior in comparison with the control group. Through discourse analysis with the students from the experimental group it has been established that there were positive changes in their behavior and in understanding the significance of observing a situation from another person's perspective. Preventive action against the occurrence of discrimination in schools should become an integral part of educational practice because this would create a positive atmosphere and encourage prosocial behavior among students.*

Keywords: discrimination, prevention, school, prosocial behavior, action research

Introduction

Modern society is susceptible to everyday changes in all spheres of life. In every society, regardless of ethnicity, race, or gender, democracy and equality of its citizens when it comes to equal chances for a dignified life and education should be the social values nurtured in practice. However, this is not always the case, because the aforementioned values are affected by other factors.

In a large number of countries around the world, one encounters different social layers characterized by the existence of superior and subordinate citizens. Such a social structure enables the distribution of power and roles among its members. Discriminated groups often hold attitudes and values which vary from the values of the dominant group to a certain extent, which makes social acceptance by the majority somewhat difficult. Socially discriminated groups can differ from the dominant group in terms of their financial status, ethnicity, way of life, and values. In that sense, the school plays a significant role as it is a place of learning for young people, but also a place of socialization and meeting individual needs of children and youth (Ondoua Samba, 2021). Discriminated students are excluded from the dominant social group in a much broader sense because they lack the opportunities to fully participate in social activities. However, they are excluded from the dominant social group in a much wider sense. Discriminated individuals do not have the possibility to be fully included in social activities. Unfortunately, they become deprived of education to a certain degree, which is a necessary precondition for their professional vocation that could greatly improve their lives. Some circumstances can be improved by investing serious efforts. However, in the case of a developmental disability an individual needs special social support even in the process of inclusion into the formal system of education and upbringing. It is not an easy task, neither for an individual nor for the dominant group. This begs the question as to how can this

phenomenon be prevented. First, we should work on improving the educational culture of the school by the encouraging and nurturing prosocial behaviors and habits in interactions with peers and teachers (Țiroiu, 2022). In addition to a number of possibilities, action research is a way of preventing discrimination among students. Applying qualitative research in the study of educational practice is a challenge for researchers because they mostly focus on the negative effects of the system of education (Gundogan, 2021). For example, the outcomes of action research, or projects implemented with the aim of providing assistance to children and their families from marginalized groups, have shown that a large number of participants successfully changed their habits and improved their well-being through the implementation of prosocial behavior (Georgescu, 2020).

Action research is a complex process that can improve educational practice which is mostly implemented in a natural environment, school, classroom, laboratory, etc. (Barcelona, 2020). Action research provides opportunities for adopting a research approach that incorporates the perspectives and contributions of practitioners, specifically teachers in schools (Mertler, 2019). Accordingly, teacher can devise strategies and take initiative in the process of innovating and improving educational practices based on current issues in practice. Through systematic thinking and involving collaborators in the implementation of innovative activities and method, teacher enhance their personal capabilities through action research (Mertler, 2019).

Since discrimination at school is unfortunately increasingly present, this paper presents one of the possibilities to address this issue. It aims to present the role of action research in preventing discrimination at school.

1. Discrimination among students

Discrimination is a complex phenomenon which is today represented in democratic society. It refers on situations in which comes to unequal treatment towards an individual person or group, exclusions, labeling, rejection, that is discrimination one or more students by another students. Reasons for that kind of discrimination can be various: poverty, nationality, some development issues, way of dressing, interests, etc. Discrimination represents act of different treatment two generally equal persons, based on some individual characteristic, behavior, gender, religion, etc. Discrimination which is caused by race is called racial discrimination and can be called racism. Discrimination by gender is called gender discrimination (Wenz, 2020). Discrimination is usually represented in natural environment and it manifests itself towards certain individuals, objects or situations consciously or unconsciously. In the field of education, discrimination can be reflected in unequal treatment towards all individual students, materials or conditions. For example, in German education system was noticed discrimination in terms of educational achievement and socioeconomic student status or social class (Bos et al., 2016.; OECD, 2016b.). In our country, discrimination is usually observed in peer interactions, based on belonging to a certain social class or based on socioeconomic student status. Labeling is procedure in which student is somehow discriminated. When it is established that an individual belongs to certain category or is unique in some way, peers constantly point to a concrete specificity that mostly negatively affects the individual (Polančec, 2020.).

In order to maintain positive atmosphere in school and prevent labeling between persons of the same age, it is necessary to undertake some measures and activities, in order to provide a chance to all students to be who they really are. School needs to affect on students respecting the unique system of values, by endeavoring to undertake certain measures and activities aimed at prevention of a specific problem. It is significant that system of values is based on prosocial values such as tolerance, empathy, etc., and thereby tries to encourage prosocial student behavior. Tolerance is a concept which represents acceptance of diversity between persons of the same age (Avgustinović, 2020), respecting individual specificities and

fostering assertive communication between persons of the same age which are all unique in its own way. Empathy is defined as an ability to recognize and understand other people's feelings (Šantl, 2021). This term in psychology means the process of immediate immersion in emotional states, thoughts and behaviors of other people (Boljkovac, 2019). This phenomenon should be frequently observed in our environment, considering its nature. Recognition, appreciation and understanding of other people's emotions contributes a lot in achieving positive and friendly relationships between people, particularly between students of the same age. Empathy can be encouraged and developed through daily interactions with the environment and its level of manifestation speaks significant about the individual who nurtures it. In close connection with empathy is prosocial behavior that is, empathy is a mediator of prosocial behavior because it enables a better connection with altruistically motivated behavior (Boljkovac, 2019). Prosocial behavior refers to a number of behaviors that are considered socially desirable which is necessary to develop and nurture among students, in order to contribute in solving the problem of discrimination. In this action research, a contribution was made in possibilities for reorientation from discrimination towards prosocial behavior.

2. Research methodology

Problem identification of this research started with consultations between school pedagogue, classroom teacher and practitioner that is, the author who participated in realization of this research. Teachers presented one of the most active problems among sixth grade students and significantly hinders implementation of educational goals in school. Discrimination problem can occur as a consequence of modern circumstances. Since parents spend most of their time at work in order to ensure existence of their family, it gets the impression that education is gradually being withdrawn from the hands of the parents. Children are thus given an example that material values are important for life, where it seems that moral and spiritual values are given less and less attention. Discrimination phenomenon can arise from different individual needs (need for supremacy, for attention, for domination over persons of the same age, etc.). Research problem reads: *Can action research prevent discrimination among students?*

The subject of this research is the function of action research in preventing discrimination in school. The goal of this research is prevention of discrimination among students through the action research. Based on that, attention is focused on: teacher training for the application of action research and prevention the phenomenon of discrimination; encouraging prosocial behavior among student. The researcher followed next tasks: Can discrimination among students be prevented using this action research; Do teachers have knowledge and skills to conduct class workshops; Does the application of class workshops have effects in developing and fostering prosocial behavior, positive attitudes and desirable models of behavior among students; Does the review of short audio-visual contents raise awareness among students and encourage the development of empathy; Can debate led by groups of students contribute to the development of critical thinking and create a feeling that other people's opinions and diversity should be respected; Are students satisfied with realization and implementation of all activities; Would teachers pass on acquired experience and innovations to their colleagues.

The research included 48 students. The experimental group consisted of 24 students, 13 girls and 11 boys and control group consisted of 24 students, 15 girls and 9 boys. The groups were heterogeneous in all characteristics, except for the size of groups. In the first phase of this research the selection of appropriate activities was determined, which were designed with the aim of preventing discrimination. During the meeting, teachers who wanted to participate in research were getting familiar with specific characteristics of this kind of research and on that occasion the participants had chosen specific strategies, in accordance

with needs and goals. In next phase, implementation of chosen strategies were done and agreed activities were realized. The evaluation phase included an assessment of the effects of implemented activities, as well as possible guidelines for a new cycle of research.

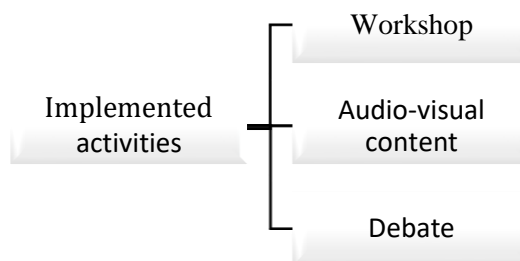
3. The planning phase

To begin with action research, it is important that teachers be made aware of the need to continually improve and introduce innovation in their educational practice. When planning the implementation of this action research, the researcher first identified the problem to start from. Educational practice should be changed by introducing innovations and improving its quality in every respect. Since there are various problems present in the current practice, prior to conducting the research by organizing a group interview including all participants, it had been established which elements should be changed. It has been established that it would be good to work on the prevention of discrimination among peers. Through joint efforts and collaboration, various ideas have been considered about activities to be implemented with the aim of preventing discrimination.

4. Implementation of activities

The action usually includes the introduction of intentional practical changes or „interventions” to improve, change and develop a situation. Therefore, in addition to gaining new knowledge, action research enables a systemic approach to problem-solving (Bagceci & Yigit, 2017.). According to the previously established strategy, to prevent discrimination and encourage pro-social behavior, various activities have been undertaken. The choice of activities to be implemented has been made on the basis of the group interview results, whereby the respondents resorted to the brainstorming method to find as many ideas as possible. The following activities have been implemented with students: an educational workshop *on Discrimination in school (the significance of respecting diversity)*, a presentation of symbolic audio and visual content, and a debate (Scheme 1).

Scheme 1: Schematic representation of implemented activities



➤ An action researcher started hosting a **workshop** by telling a story that required students to think if they had ever done (and/or experienced) something similar (a real example of discrimination). Then, the action researcher and students established some ground rules for workshop activities and asked students to abide by them. Some of the set rules were related to the process of mutual listening, without interrupting, providing honest answers, and so forth. For the purpose of this research, a 60-minute workshop on *Discrimination in school (the significance of respecting diversity)* was devised. The goals of this workshop were oriented towards raising awareness in students about the harmfulness of discrimination at school by becoming acquainted with the notions such as stereotypes – prejudice – discrimination – violence, as well as towards training students for prosocial behavior, and developing and nurturing prosocial values. *The introductory activity* lasted for

15 minutes and it aimed at encouraging students to reflect upon negative feelings that occur when discrimination takes place. *The central activity* (dramatisation-role-playing) lasted for about 30 minutes and it involved dividing students into pairs by resorting to a suitable method. The pairs then drew pieces of paper containing short descriptions of situations with elements of discrimination (for instance, A: I thought we will invite her to come with us. B: No way! I have no intention of spending time with that ugly thing! She is disgusting! Her hair is horrible and her clothes ancient!). Students were required to play the situation in front of everyone until the last pair ended the role-play. Then a discussion would ensue, whereby the researcher would facilitate the conversation by posing the following questions: How did you feel when amid play you were insulted with a bad comment, judgment, or rejection? What were the feelings of students who had to give discriminatory comments to their friends as part of the role-play? Have you ever had a similar experience and how did you feel? What do you think, why do people need to discriminate against others? *The final activity* – a workshop, lasted for 15 minutes and the goal of this activity was to change students' attitudes towards desirable behavior patterns thus encouraging prosocial values. Its significance is reflected in offering students the opportunity to think about the beauty that lies in each person, about virtue, a good aspect of each person, and how important it is to point out the positive aspects of every individual and respect the faults but never put them under the spotlight. Students were given a piece of paper. Each student was asked to draw a mirror and decorate it any way they wanted so that symbols represent their personalities, i.e. whatever makes them special. Then each student distributed his/her paper with a drawn mirror to peers to their right (and each of them received the mirror of peers to their left). Students were asked to write a positive comment or draw something symbolical, something that makes their peer to the left special, and then to pass the paper on. In the end, each student wrote a positive comment about each one of their peers. After completing the round, each student received their piece of paper with their mirror embellished with many comments, images, and virtues. The point was to show students that each one of them is special and unique, and different from others and that their peers know how to recognise that.

➤ The presentation of **audio-visual content** is the second activity devised for the purposes of this research. Students were explained that examples of everyday situations represent a valuable possibility to critically reflect on certain problems and think about how each of us should act. In that respect, they were suggested to carefully observe the presentation of the examples that followed and think about their meaning. Students were presented with three audio-visual content, available on the Internet. Each example illustrated discrimination in the domain of education, peer interaction, and general characteristics of discrimination.

➤ After each audio-visual content, a qualitative interview was conducted with students. Students were asked the following questions: Did you like the video? What did you notice? What was the video about? What do you think about how each of the participants in the video felt? What would you do if you were discriminated against? Would you ask for help? How would you react if you saw someone in your environment (or a friend from school) being discriminated against? How would you protect the discriminated person?

➤ Afterwards, a **debate** was devised for the purpose of this research. The debate aimed to enable students to observe a situation from a different perspective and encourage them to think about accepting diversity and nurturing prosocial values. The debate was organised in such a manner that students were conveniently divided into two groups. One group was given a task to advocate the stance that black horses are smarter and more beautiful, and the other group had to advocate the stance that white horses are smarter and more beautiful. Each group had one minute to present their argument, and then the other group had one minute to refute it and present their argument. When students ran out of ideas for providing arguments, they switched roles, i.e. perspectives, and another round of debate was held.

5. Evaluation of the effects of the action research

The final phase of this research included the evaluation of effects achieved by the implementation of specified activities. In this section, we will present the results we obtained and thus establish if the implemented activities contributed to the prevention of discrimination at school.

The summative evaluation was conducted at the end of the action research. Its purpose was to provide feedback and indicate the advantages and disadvantages of the implemented research. The evaluation included: 1) a qualitative interview with a pedagogue and two female teachers; 2) a knowledge test for students of the experimental and control group; 3) observing and participating in civic education classes of the experimental and control group; 4) discourse and content analysis.

1. A **qualitative interview** was conducted with two female teachers and a pedagogue, whereby a critical review was carried out and a discourse analysis was initiated about activities, advantages, disadvantages, and the like. The qualitative interview included the following questions: 1. What are your impressions about the conducted action research? 2. What did you like the most? 3. Which segments would you pay more attention to during some future action research? 4. Do you think that there have been some changes for the better? 5. Would you share this experience with other colleagues and encourage them to take action themselves to implement action research? The presentation of a segment of obtained responses can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1: A summary of the responses of pedagogue and two female teachers

Answers obtained by interview		
Questions	Pedagogue	Teachers
What are your impressions about implemented action research?	„I think that this is a successfully implemented project, considering the knowledge you have as a researcher. Perhaps action research should be organized more often because it is very interesting and fun for students. They experienced you as someone who is closer to them in age and activities were interesting so I believe that a positive effect was achieved. Next time, we should include more teachers and associates.”	Teacher 1: „I was in the beginning afraid and unprepared, but I must say that I am overjoyed now!” Teacher 2: „I don't know what to say... It took courage to dare to do something like this, but I didn't regret it. I think we're done a good job.”
On which segments would you paid more attention in some future action research?	„I think it would be good to accept some help from associates during the technical organization, arrangement of objects and materials for work in the room, in order to prevent unnecessary wasting of time.”	The answers of the teachers are in agreement and indicate that is necessary to include more participants in the future action research.
Do you think that there has been achieved a change for better?	„I honestly think so. General impression is that they should participate more often in educative and interesting activities because in that way they learn a lot of important things for development of their own personality and enrich their experience. Through the conducted activities, the majority of students were encouraged to think about their own behavior and were enabled to see positive and negative properties of individual actions.”	The teachers believe that it is significant that the action researcher was there to encourage and educate them for such an undertaking.

In this way, it is established that is extremely significant that the activities are designed to be interesting for students. Based on qualitative interview, it was concluded that by increasing motivation and appropriating student's attention is accomplished positive effect in education and informing students about terms like discrimination, empathy, assertive communication, prosocial behavior, etc. Based on acquired knowledge about significant aspects of discrimination problem (positive and negative properties), students were

encouraged to think about these phenomena. It is concluded that students had the opportunity to present personal examples through the realization of the activities, which is very useful because provides an opportunity for them to listen each other, to present a critical opinion about given example, to talk about personal feelings in different situations. Positive impressions were also received when it comes to the presentation of audio-visual contents, because it enables a complete experience of everything that was said before. It is established that a more comprehensive perception of the previous mentioned terms and information is enabled, which created a more complete picture of discrimination problem for the students. When we talk about the debate, it is concluded that the debate was realized in the right moment, after receiving the information, that is, after a more complete picture about positive and negative properties of discrimination was formed. Teachers think that this activity was very good opportunity for expressing positive and negative attitudes about a problem, expressing arguments, critical thinking, first from one point of view, and then from another. Since the students for this activity were divided in two groups, first group presented arguments for and second group arguments against certain situation. After that, the groups switched their roles and that created an opportunity to see the same situation from two different perspectives. It is believed that this procedure awakened feelings and stimulated thinking about how someone feels in the case when individual student exhibits some form of discriminatory behavior. It can be concluded that this activity contributed significantly in understanding negative properties of discrimination and the encouragement and nurturing of prosocial forms of behavior among students. When analyzing the discourse and content of the control group, pedagogue and teachers expressed their views that the mentioned advantages of the students in experimental group were not really noticed in the behavior of the students from the control group.

2. Through the **implementation of the class workshop**, it is concluded that students are familiar with the meaning of terms stereotype, prejudice, discrimination, violence, prosocial values and prosocial behavior. It is considered that based on class workshop, students are encouraged to think about disadvantages of the discrimination procedure and to direct their own thinking and behavior towards other, socially acceptable actions. However, realization of the class workshop and conducting freer communication by action researcher in school had led to the situation where students themselves showed their undisguised and hasty reactions to certain examples of discrimination. After the activity was finished, students were instructed to complete a knowledge test related to the evaluation of the effects of class workshop, that is, the acquired knowledge. Instruction read: Try to remember everything that we talked about today and try to connect concepts from left column with explanations of concepts in the box on the right side.

Scheme 2: Knowledge test for students: Discrimination and related concepts

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Violence ▪ Prejudice ▪ Discrimination ▪ Prosocial behavior ▪ Stereotype ▪ Prosocial values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A term that refers to wiling, intentional behavior that has a positive effect on the people around it. ▪ Behavioral actions that an individual cultivates and whose ultimate goal is to provide help, perform a good deed, empathy, tolerance, etc. ▪ Hardly changing attitude towards someone or something (racial, ethnic and social intolerance). ▪ Abuse of force or aggression with the aim of injuring a person or destroying something material. ▪ The kind of attitude that is not based on reasonable evidences.
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correctly. A large number of students did not know the difference between prejudice and stereotype, prosocial behavior and prosocial values. When completing this test, the majority of students in the control group called action researcher to ask what these terms actually mean.

3. Observation the civic education lessons with participation

A week after the activities were realized, it was observed a class of the civic education of experimental group of students and an analysis of teaching activities, student behavior and applied knowledge was performed. For the purposes of this procedure, the method of observation with participation was applied, where the researcher was a participant observer and table 2 shows anecdotal notes from the class.

Table 2: Part of the data obtained by observation with participation of the civic education class of the experimental group

Anecdotal notes from action researcher	
○	Students actively participate in the activity that was related to the teaching unit about tolerance.
○	The students had the task to act out certain situations in pairs or in groups (e.g. Luka is in the school yard and sees Marko standing and makes fun of Janko because his skin color is different).
○	Almost all students strive to set a positive example that shows empathy and appreciation.
○	In the role play, the students try to use appropriate terms so as not to offend or discriminate against their accomplices.
○	The students are friendly, they help their accomplices by putting themselves in their role and presenting an example of how he could act in the given situation (e.g. in relation to one situation, one girl raises two fingers and says: „You can apologize because you misunderstood and then you say it doesn't matter that he wore a ripped sweatshirt. He sure didn't get a good look and that's no reason to make fun of him. Be fair and explain to him that he shouldn't feel like he doesn't belong in the group anymore“).
○	It seems that students are encouraged to think about their behavior before they display a certain behavior or initiate communication.

By observing with participation of civic education class for the students of the control group, the action researcher and the other participants gained a completely different impression, compared to the observation of the class with the experimental group. It was observed a significantly less motivation of students to engage in teaching activities. The role play seemed rather pointless, considering that the students were not overly interested, but were deliberately saying slang words to try to be interesting. The pedagogue tried to encourage the use of more appropriate terms when they expressing themselves, to point out to the students that greater engagement will leave a better impression and that everyone present will feel more comfortable. However, the general impression is that the class was rather interrupted and the goals were not achieved either. The students were not cooperative, which caused anger among the civics teacher and the class teacher. On the basis of what was observed, a group interview was conducted in which the teachers and the pedagogue agreed that there was indeed a positive shift in the behavior of the students of the experimental group, compared to the control group.

3. During a **qualitative interview and discourse analysis** in which participated the students of the experimental group, teachers and pedagogue in the role of a critical friend, it was established that a positive change was achieved in practice and that this change ensured positive effects in the behavior of students. It was observed that the students of the experimental group increasingly apply assertive communication, tolerance, support diversity, show empathy and cultivate other prosocial values in interaction with the persons of the same age. It was also noticed that the students of this group made new friends, that is, they started hanging out with students from other classes, which also represents the positive side of this research. In this way, students notice more and more diversity but they realized that being different is a very valuable thing and they learned to respect and cherish specifics, using empathy, assertive communication and prosocial behavior. Critical friends and action researcher expressed their satisfaction and argued positive comments on the conducted research.

An extremely important and interesting fact is that the students were highly motivated and actively participated in all activities. The students curiously presented

examples from their personal experience and presented constructive proposals for solving certain situations. This data can also be linked to the changed circumstances that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the students attended school according to the hybrid teaching model, it gets the impression that they lacked freer activities in school, the opportunity to express their own opinion, teamwork, conversation, etc. According to their reactions and comments, the most interesting thing for them was the debate.

4. Limitations

One of the limitations is an insufficient amount of information about the essence of action research. On this occasion, we noticed that teachers and associated were not sufficiently acquainted with the manner of implementation of this type of research, its purpose, and its effectiveness. Likewise, one can assert that a large number of teachers believe that they already have too many obligations. Thus, they claim not to have enough time to introduce changes and innovations into educational practice.

5. Conclusion

Based on the literature on this topic, as well as on the conducted action research, one can deduce that action research is very often applied in situations where there is a problem that requires a solution. Hence, initiating action research is conditioned by the lack of satisfaction among the stakeholders of an educational institution with the current practice, and then also by the need to introduce innovation to improve the practice.

During the visit to the school and on the basis of conversations with class teachers and other teachers as well, it was established that among students there was a certain amount of tendency to discriminate against peers on a different basis. Teachers and associates have been fighting this problem for a long time. Consequently, as triggers for action research, they cited the exclusion of individuals from group activities, refusal to work in pairs with a person who has lower grades, judging someone's way of dressing, mocking someone's socio-economic status, and the like. The stated information was the basis to begin planning the action research implementation, and then a workshop was devised, video content was prepared and a discrimination debate was designed. In comparison with the control group, one can conclude that activities devised for this action research had positive effects. By implementing the workshop, students in the experimental group were given the opportunity for maximum inclusion and acquisition of new knowledge which constituted the basis for a more comprehensive understanding of subsequent activities. Due to their effects, audio-visual content attracted special attention among students, made them think, and encouraged them to present similar examples. Furthermore, the debate offered an opportunity for students to provide arguments when advocating certain qualities, whereby they would not exclude the opinions of their opponents. In the second part of the debate, students changed positions, whereby observing the situation from different perspectives significantly contributed to raising awareness of the need to respect diversity.

All implemented activities have been thus conceived as to provide students with the possibility to think about different forms of discrimination, to picture themselves as individuals excluded from play, to learn how to react in case they notice discrimination or experience it, as well as to realise that discrimination cannot bring anything good, i.e. that friendship, respect, nurturing prosocial behavior and assertive communication are a key to the success of every individual. In that respect, one can conclude that the students from the control group have been deprived of these benefits, so the participants stated that significant changes have been observed in the behavior of students from the experimental group.

Presentation of this action research can constitute the basis for initiating new action research studies which would observe the issue from another perspective. The possible implications for future action research are reflected in the potential inclusion of secondary participants in the process of education. In that case, this research could be expanded by

including parents, older students, or employees in institutions that play important roles in education (for instance, employees in libraries, galleries, historical archives, theatres, and other institutions of culture).

Based on what has been presented, one wonders how one can tell that educational practice has been improved. Bearing in mind that school is an important environment for acquiring and exhibiting certain behavior patterns (assertive communication, cooperation, altruism), it is very important to work on creating a positive atmosphere in school which is a starting point for learning, socialising, and forming one's personality. In that process, an important role is played by action research, because it contributes to a tangible improvement and innovation of educational practice.

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ASPECTS OF THE INTERACTION BETWEEN RELIGIOSITY AND CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR

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Abstract: *Although since evolutionists in the sociology of religion, the prevailing opinion is that the development of science will eventually lead to the weakening of religion and religious beliefs, empirical research shows that in recent times there has been an increase in the religiosity of the population precisely in the most scientifically and industrially developed countries. If it is taken into account that the modern era also records an increase in crime, then the often expressed opinion, both in science and among citizens, that religiosity has a preventive and preventive effect in relation to crime, seems contradictory. On the other hand, a less widespread understanding rejects any influence of religion on criminal behavior. By analyzing the results of research conducted using mathematical and statistical methods, on which both positions are based, it is possible to prove that both claims in their absolutist form are unfounded, one-sided and limiting. The power of spiritual influence on the formation of collective and individual identity makes religion an important factor in the process of adopting moral values appropriate to time and space, and consequently an unavoidable factor when considering criminal behavior. However, the analysis of the interaction between religiosity and criminality in the context of historical, social, economic and other relevant conditions, shows that religiosity, in addition to its preventive and awareness-raising effect on criminal behavior, also carries the potential of a kind of criminogenic factor.*

Keywords: criminogenic factor, crime, criminal behavior, religion, religiosity

1. The functions and role of religion as a regulator of individual behavior

The term religion was first associated with the Latin verb *relegere*, which means to bring together again, and it indicated the tendency of Christian writers to give it the meaning of a collection of sacred traditions that are followed over and over again. Critic of paganism, professor of rhetoric from Africa, *Lucius Caecilius Firmianus signo Lactantius* at the beginning of the 4th century, he connected the origin of this term with the Latin verb *religare*, whose meaning to bind refers to the relationship between man and god (Loma, 2020: 28). Due to the intellectual limitation of knowing the cause of things (*cognitio rerum per causas*), a belief in the existence of a supernatural force that governs human destiny, i.e. connects the Universe and humanity, has developed among people. It would be wrong to talk about religion as a belief in god, because religions such as Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism and others do not preach the existence of god. In this regard, Šušnjić (2009: 37) notes that the history of civilization has shown that the existence of religion does not depend on belief in God, and that religion survives even without the gods from Greek and Roman mythology. He expresses the view that man depends on the absolute and mystical power in which he believes, but he can only “influence it, if he behaves in certain ways” (2009: 38), adapting them to the circumstances of life because this absolute and mystical power through time reveals itself in different forms (2009: 61). A person can express his experiences of this power in a cognitive, emotional, practical and mystical way, i.e. “in the form of learning, ritual, community of believers or charismatic personality”. Experiencing that power and expressing such an experience have a certain meaning for the individual, “and a certain significance for the

community, because without it his life and the life of the community would look completely different" (2009: 53-54).

Therefore, religion is primarily a personal matter because it fulfills the spiritual and psychological needs of the individual, but it also fulfills his social needs, and it is rightly said about its social functions. There are very different views among sociologists and theorists of religion in general on this issue. Thus, in the opinion of Durkheim (2008: 272, 443–446), who is considered the first sociologist of religion, the basic function of religion is social integration, that is, the creation and preservation of social solidarity, because by participating in rituals and ceremonies, people connect with each other spiritually and integrate into society, so the relationship to society is actually a relationship to God. The function of social integration can be seen in his explanation of the higher suicide rate in Protestant countries than in Catholic and Jewish societies, which is based on the claim that Protestant communities rely more on the subjective responsibility of individuals, and Catholic and Jewish communities on community (Marković, 2020: 34). The well-known sociologist and Protestant theologian Peter Ludwig Berger believed that "the key function of religion was its ability to regulate or 'normalize'", i.e. that "religion offers a protective canopy of transcendent legitimacy, meaning and order to the precarious constructions that society calls 'reality'" (Dorrien, 2002: 32). The basic function of religion is to ensure respect for social norms, because religion, with its authority, sets moral values that condition certain behavior.

Đorđe Šušnjić (2009: 383–485) gave one of the most detailed elaborations of the social functions of religion, which is why it is probably more acceptable for understanding the connection of religious ideas, beliefs, rituals and other religious values with personal and social needs and desires. This elaboration includes 11 functions: *cognitive function, communication function, identity and identification function, integrative function, orientation function, adaptation function, compensation function, legitimization function, regulative function, prophetic function and ideological function.*

For the purposes of the topic of this work, that is, to explain the links between criminal behavior and religiosity, we can highlight the following elements of these functions in the shortest terms and to the extent that they are significant for the achievement of that goal:

- *cognitive function*: it is believed that religious knowledge is the highest form of knowledge, which originates from the deities themselves (revelation) and enables man to clearly distinguish good from evil; believers are not so much required to know about religious morals in general, but to respect moral norms and the knowledge of achieving salvation, i.e. belief in God's mercy and wisdom;

- *the function of communication*: the need for communication with God, but also with oneself and other people, nations and cultures, as well as with nature and the dead, is satisfied through religion; communication with God mainly takes place silently, through prayer or questioning the correctness of one's actions (repentance), and loudly through confession individually, and at church services individually and in communion with other present believers; these are also conversations with oneself, honest and self-critical questioning of one's own conscience; it is important to communicate, not only with members of one's own religion, but also with believers of other religions, as well as with different categories of those who are not theists; in conversation with other non-believers, people: a) expand and deepen themselves for their experiences, b) get closer to the truth, c) realize fellowship;

- *the function of identity and identification*: To identify with God means to know him in oneself, to identify with universal human values, with the best possible human being. God is the model of the perfect man, the ideal "I"; identification with a religion is extremely strong, stronger than identification with a nation or any other community, for which we have an example in the region we live in and, unfortunately, the civil war in the area of the former SFRY, which finally led to its disintegration and stratification not only on a national basis, but

also on a religious basis; a characteristic of identifying with a group through religiously based violence is the change of personal identity by restraining the "I" to radical self-estrangement;

- *integrative function*: The integrative function of religion builds on the previous function, given that it is reflected in the integration of individuals into the community; it is very sensitive, because it is easily misused as a means to achieve another goal; in societies where the integrative power of religion has weakened, its place is taken by other symbolic systems (nationalism, fascism, clericalism, etc.);

- *function of orientation*: when under the weight of circumstances that caused a personal or social crisis, all other ideas are brought into question, religion is the last refuge, the one in which the believer especially, and often also the one who was unbelieving until that moment, sees the last hope; every religion, even the one without god, such as Buddhism, points to the meaning of life, which is reflected in gaining a blessed life in the kingdom of heaven, i.e. reaching the state of nirvana or blissful peace, and both are achieved by getting rid of passions, because they mostly cause suffering;

- *the function of adaptation*: all changes, especially turning points in a person's lifetime, require him to adapt to them, which is often a tightrope walk that separates order from chaos; no matter how "incomprehensible and contrary to individual consciousness or common sense" they are to man, religion gives these changes the most complete meaning; it achieves this by assigning to each change a certain meaning and, consequently, an ultimate meaning, and thus contributes to the establishment of order and stability of the community; in difficult moments, in periods of various crises (political, economic, social, moral and emotional), in meeting borderline questions of life and death, the hope for reasonable exits weakens; man first of all looks for solutions and salvation in "worldly ideas, beliefs and values", so when he realizes that there are no adequate answers in them, "he is simply forced to look for them beyond ordinary human wisdom, in some system of religious belief";

- *compensation function*: the form of reward expected in the form of salvation differs from religion to religion, and their common denominator is an eternal and blissful life in another parallel world, or in a new reincarnation on this planet; the function of compensation in relation to different experiences of frustration and suffering is based on expectations of compensation for deprivations and pains, and the ways of compensation can be psychological, economic, social, ethical, cognitive and physical; bearing in mind the multitude of internal and external factors that make it impossible to satisfy all human needs and desires, frustrations and deprivations in life are inevitable; by means of the idea of another world, religion gives a compensating hope for sufferings, disadvantages, unrealized prestige, and the like;

- *function of legitimization*: Šušnjić sees in religion the ability "to design and justify every individual act (e.g. the death of an individual), every group act (e.g. a conflict between two groups), or every social event of wider significance and meaning (e.g. a natural disaster or social crisis)";

- *regulatory function*: this function is directly related to the functions of compensation and legitimization - it is not enough to justify the social order and make it acceptable, but the behavior of the members of the community must be regulated in such a way that it does not in any way threaten the functioning and survival of such an order; physical coercion is one of the inevitable options that every state resorts to, but its role is positive only as long as it is preventive; each force begets a new force, extending the circle of violence to infinity; a certain way of behavior qualifies as God-pleasing, or as blasphemy, with the former being rewarded and the latter being punished; thoroughly adopted religious norms, in such a way that they "pervade the entire personality and its relationships with others", are a very "strong guide through the life of the individual and the community";

- *prophetic function*: the time of crises, individual and collective multiplication of problems, is the time of intensified "turning" to God, the time of strengthening religions, the time of the appearance of "prophets", but also of returning messages to true prophets; in

religious records, prophets warned people to refrain from doing evil to each other, and history testifies to the futility of those warnings – people generally became worse than they were;

– *ideological function*: when religious communities subordinate their interests to the essence of religion, then they become part of an ideology, and religious ideology turns into a distorted interpretation of religion; ideological deviations often lead to the absurdity of equating the universal idea of religious salvation with the idea of national liberation.

2. Criminal behavior and religiosity

2.1. Multidimensionality of religiosity

Religiosity is another in a series of concepts that are difficult to define, primarily due to the fact that several academic disciplines are interested in this phenomenon, each of them starting from specific positions (Holdcroft, 2006: 89). Unlike religion, which is manifested externally as an objective socio-cultural phenomenon, religiosity has a subjective character, because it is a manifestation of an individual's inner beliefs and feelings. That inner manifestation, which can be defined as a religious belief, is correlated with the religious beliefs of other members of religious communities, which further complicates the definition of religiosity. The mere belief that there is a god, that is, a mystical force that created the world and governs it with superhuman, supernatural powers, is not the same as religiosity, but only its prerequisite. In order for faith to grow into religiosity, it is necessary that the believer at the same time loves God and strives daily to work on himself, with his actions, and not only with words, to get closer to the image of God. In the process of developing one's own religiosity, i.e. raising faith to a higher level of commitment, numerous challenges and temptations arise. Whether these trials will be recognized as a chance and a challenge and, in this way, represent progress in getting to know oneself, and thus recognizing and discovering God within oneself, or whether there will be a temporary or permanent stoppage – it depends on the strength of our faith, which actually it is never strong enough (Jerotić, 2016).

Although the term religiosity indicates the degree of subjective experience of religious postulates about a transcendental being with unique power over everyone and everything in the universe, this phenomenon is much more complex, multidimensional. Among the authors, there are disagreements about the number of dimensions that round up the multidimensionality of religiosity into one functional whole, and in different approaches there are three (Wolf, 2005), four (Glock, 1962), five (Glock and Stark, 1965), or even ten dimensions. (Vaillancourt, 2008). Of course, it is possible to decompose each “proposed” dimension into at least two new dimensions, or to add some completely new ones, as Vaillancourt did, but the question arises as to the expediency of such an approach. In principle, we could agree that the multidimensionality of each social phenomenon is variable, bearing in mind the character of that phenomenon and its relationship to other social phenomena, which is the subject of a certain research. Given that they appear in most authors, we consider the relationship between religiosity and criminal behavior taking into account the most widely accepted dimensions of religiosity highlighted by Glock and Stark: the dimension of faith (ideological), religious practice (ritual), the dimension of experiencing faith (experiential), the dimension of knowledge (intellectual), and the dimension of consequences (consequential).

The ideological dimension consists of religious beliefs – through people's attitude towards certain religious ideas and dogmas, an attempt is made to see the content and scope of beliefs. The ritual dimension indicates the involvement of believers in expressing their piety and belonging to a religious community. The experiential dimension is expressed through experiencing religious feelings and spiritual communication with the transcendent, which can range from feelings of fear to elation. The intellectual dimension includes acquired knowledge about religious content, including knowledge about the origin and historical path and all other facts that complete the knowledge of one's religion. The consequential dimension shows how religion affects a religious person, and primarily his behavior.

2.2. Religion and crime

In the criminological literature, religion is classified among ideological factors that in certain circumstances can have a criminogenic influence, and in others it can be an ideological form that leads to the suppression of all forms of antisocial and antisocial behavior (Milutinović, 1988: 356). Among the very founders of criminology as a scientific discipline, the prevailing opinion was about the preventive role of religion in the occurrence of criminal behavior. It was considered that the preventive action and reduction of criminality is a social function of religion, and that in the case of an increase in criminality in a social community, one can speak of the failure of the religious institution to educate its believers and direct them to moral coexistence with other members of the community (Garofalo, 1905: 154– 155). This point of view was understandable, bearing in mind the position and influence of religious organizations on the social life of that era despite the pronounced sacralization of politics and nationalism as the dominant lay religion. However, with the spread of myths about the supremacy of race and nation, and the idea of national sovereignty and the development of a sense of loyalty to the national state, cultural and political movements were created that pushed religion to the margins of social life (Marković, 2019: 6). This was especially pronounced in totalitarian regimes based on the ideas of Bolshevism, Fascism and National Socialism. With the development of man's ambitions to become God himself, there were consequences in the form of revolutions, wars, slaughterhouses, the disintegration of society and the crisis of modern man who was overrun by those forces that he himself had unleashed and now he was no longer able to overcome. The trend of modernism was accompanied by the appearance of new religions and new idols, placed on altars so that man would worship himself. In this sense, it can be said that there are no essential differences in the neglect of the role of religion in totalitarian secular states and neoliberal secular states (Djentile, 2009: 214–215). Despite the claims of evolutionists among sociologists of religion that religion will disappear with the development of science, reality has shown that in modern times, characterized by industrialization and modernization at a dizzying speed, religiosity is not only not declining, but also growing. Huntington (2000: 110–111) believes that this was contributed by the need of the population that migrated from villages to cities to find emotional and social support in religious community. The influence of religion in social life grows with the modernization of society, excluding periods of economic crises and impending natural and social dangers with threats of partial or total destruction of humanity. However, it is precisely in the circumstances of such challenges and threats that modern society has been living for the last few decades. Therefore, but not only because of this, the influence of religion is still present in the personal lives of a significant part of modern states. Especially in those countries that are not secular, as well as where the line between secularism and theocracy is not entirely clear. In any case, religiosity is a personal characteristic and therefore its influence on any type of human behavior, including the tendency to criminality, cannot be ignored.

2.3. Religiosity as a function of criminal behavior prevention

Durkheim (1912: 446) saw in religion a generator of strength to resist the temptation of existence, because from communication with God the believer not only arrives at the truth that is not reasonable to the unbeliever, but also becomes stronger. It is a constant of the ideological dimension of religion. In the ranking of sanctions for violating different types of norms - religious, moral, customary and legal - for a religious person, religious norms have the greatest strength. Behind these sanctions stands the power of God, which is mystical to the human mind and, therefore, causes anxiety. The fear of God's punishment, which can be radical and eternal (the end of earthly life by sending the soul to hell) is stronger than any other fear of time-limited and less radical sanctions. Such fear is not characteristic of non-religious persons. The higher octave of religiosity is pure love for God, and God's commandments are not experienced through emotions of fear, but of respect, even if it is awe. Then religiosity is not only a relationship to God, but also to oneself and others. By building his religiosity on the adoption of God's commandments as a lifestyle, a religious person simultaneously aligns himself with the moral principles of the community. It is not difficult to

prove that there is no absolute mutual conditioning of immorality and illegality, but on a theoretical level it is reasonable to claim that religiosity is a state of consciousness opposite to that which leads to criminal behavior.

Empirical research does not give such an idyllic picture of the correlation between religiosity and criminality. The reason for this can be found in the impossibility of including a large number of religiosity variables (locality, age, gender, education, family and other social circumstances). Equally important reasons lie in differences in the quality and quantity of the sample, as well as in the time frame of data collection (cross-sectional data or longitudinal data). Research interest in this topic gained momentum in the middle of the 20th century. Although conducted by competent scientific researchers, initial research was conducted on a small sample, usually in a local context, and relied on a smaller number of parameters. Thus, the conclusions about the absence of a significant relationship between religiosity and moral behavior of Hirschi and Stark (1969: 212) were derived from research in which the degree of religiosity was measured according to the respondents' personal impressions and the frequency of attending church services. With the growth of scientific interest in this problem, which was accompanied by the development of research techniques, the number of researches on a much wider sample, from local, through regional to global level, with the inclusion of a wide range of elements of religiosity, also grew. Already by the mid-eighties of the last century, more than fifty serious research studies were done that covered this issue on a wider scale. To a greater extent, they are aimed at determining the crime rate in the major Western religions, and especially among the believers of the major organized religions that preach belief in the afterlife. These studies corrected the picture created from the aforementioned conclusions of Hirschi and Stark, indicating a milder crime rate among regular visitors of religious services, especially in the Jewish community compared to the Christian community as a whole, and a milder crime rate among Protestants compared to Catholics (Ellis, 1985 : 501). Meta-analyses of over 60 studies published in the last three decades of the last century showed that religiosity has "a moderate negative effect on individual's criminal behavior" (Adamczyk, Freilich and Kim, 2017: 194). Research on the relationship between religiosity and criminality in industrialized countries has also confirmed that more religious people are less likely to commit criminal acts, especially those of a property nature (Ellis and Peterson, 1996). When it comes to the manifestation of aggression, in a research sample of 270,227 adults in the USA, an inverse correlation of religiosity with self-aggression was determined, but a positive relationship between religiosity and a reduced tendency to be aggressive towards others was not determined either (Ghossoub et al., 2021). Research conducted in China, using multilevel logistic regression, indicates a positive influence of the religiosity of followers of Islam on the suppression of deviance, while such an influence was not confirmed for followers of Christianity and Buddhism (Wang and Jang, 2018). Comparing crime indices (Numbeo, 2023) with the rate of religiosity of countries in Europe (Gallup International 75, 2023), we observe the absence of regularity in the mutual correlation of these two parameters. Thus, in Romania, where 78% of respondents consider themselves a religious person, a relatively low crime index was recorded (28.8). On the other hand, France is second only to Belarus (58.4) in terms of crime rate (52.4), and at the same time among the least religious countries (27%). Georgia (91%), North Macedonia (89%), Moldova (84%), Serbia (75%) and Greece (63%) are considered highly religious, but at the same time they are also among the countries in Europe with the highest crime rate. The example of Switzerland also denies the great importance of religiosity for reducing crime, given that Switzerland is one of the least religious countries (12%), but at the same time has a very low crime index (21.7).

2.4. Abuse of religion in the function of criminal behavior

It seems that the correlation between religiosity and certain forms of violent crime is more noticeable, especially in the context of political violence, although there are other forms of abuse of religion and religious feelings that can be linked to crime and have a strong resonance in the public.

Information about sexual abuse of children in theological schools, in religious institutions in general, as well as in Christian missions around the world, is coming to light more and more often. There are opinions that criminals in clerical robes are not actually religious, and that "their faith is therefore not relevant to their criminality" (McBay, 2016). In addition, we believe that this is an abuse of religiosity for criminal purposes, because the victims of these crimes found themselves in that role and position precisely because of a high degree of personal religiosity and, under its influence, unquestioning trust and obedience. The promise of a holy person to a deeply religious person, especially in childhood and youth, is the exploitation of the mental state of that person (victim) due to which he is not capable of resistance or is not capable of understanding the true significance of what is being done to him. At the same time, the victim of his own religiosity in such circumstances also finds himself in a relationship of subordination or dependence. It stems from perceiving a holy person as God's emissary, so submission to him is equated with submission to God's will, which is not questioned and whose disrespect produces incalculable harmful consequences. Tolerating this type of violence and remaining silent about it is a consequence of the religious belief that it is a "generous victim" (Marković and Zirojević, 2021: 312).

The history of monotheistic religions is full of disagreements, bigotry and conflicts, even those of an armed nature - both against each other and within the religions themselves. Wars with a religious background are among the bloodiest wars in the history of mankind (Marković and Marković, 2015: 421). The most serious threats to the peace of modern society, in addition to war as a conventional threat, today are organized crime and terrorism. The ideology and form of manifestation of terrorism are prone to change over time (Marković, 2016: 212). A particularly significant classification is according to program-target orientation - ideologically motivated, ethno-separatist and religiously founded terrorism. The ideological basis of the last one listed are the distorted teachings of the great world religions and sectarianism. The first religiously based terrorist act was carried out by the so-called white extremists, with an explosive attack on a Jewish synagogue in Seattle (USA), on January 28, 1970 (Zirojević and Marković, 2020: 108; Marković, 2016: 215). The first case related to Islam also took place on the territory of the USA, on January 18, 1973, with the murder of two adults and five children, members of the family of the leader of the branch of the oldest Sunni school of law, Sunni Hanafi, based in Washington, by members of the organization Black Muslims (Marković, 2022: 191). In recent years, discussions have intensified, including disagreements between authors, about the relationship between religion and suicidal terrorism. Some believe that the reasons for the emergence of terrorism are deeper than religion, but that motivation and belief come from it. Others believe that there is no such connection, or it is minor. Others believe that religion has a driving force and is inseparable from the concept of suicidal terrorism. Practice shows that terrorist organizations, especially those that practice suicidal terrorism, are focused exclusively on promoting their distorted version of religion (Zirojević and Marković, 2020: 106). Religious-based terrorism is the most extreme form of criminal behavior, which is simply conditioned by a distorted perception and interpretation of religion. The religiosity of individuals who are recruited to commit terrorist acts prevents them from seeing their acts as evil. They believe they are legitimate fighters, fighting for what they believe in, using all possible means at their disposal. Religion is probably the most powerful of all cultural identifiers, because it contains very deep values. Religious extremists challenge the authority of secular authorities and legal systems that are not based on their religious beliefs. They see the modernization of society as a danger that threatens their

traditional values (Bjelajac, 2017: 371–373). This ideology is increasingly implanted in the heads of women, who appear as suicide terrorists, as well as children, who are recruited as soldiers. When we talk about the participation of women in terrorist activities, Wafa Idris, who, armed with explosives, blew herself up in a busy street in Jerusalem, killing one person and injuring about a hundred bystanders. Today, she is celebrated as the first Palestinian woman to carry out a suicide attack. Her name and that act are celebrated in Palestine as an act of heroism, and she is the idol of many girls, who want to be like her - to sacrifice themselves for a higher goal (Zirojević and Bjelajac, 2014: 96). During the Iran-Iraq war (1980–1988), both warring parties recruited children, and Iraq also did so in the so-called Gulf War (August 2, 1990 – February 21, 1991). Although they declared themselves opposed to child recruitment, the Taliban and the United Front (Northern Alliance) in Afghanistan did so (Child Soldiers in Afghanistan, 2007). In addition to the use of coercive methods, recruitment was also carried out through ideological indoctrination, especially of children at the youngest age, who were trained for fighting and suicide attacks through videos. Indoctrination is carried out by convincing them that it is their duty to wage jihad against the infidels who terrorize Muslims, as well as against the state security forces (Tanzim, 2018). In the war in Syria, the participation of boys as young as 15 years old was recorded, who were previously kidnapped by ISIS and subjected to physical torture and religious indoctrination for brainwashing (Marković and Marković, 2022: 194–195). Precisely because of the extraordinary destructive power of religious fanatics, who hide under the cloak of religion, the international community must find a comprehensive answer, which would be balanced in the context of preventive and repressive action (Bjelajac and Subotin, 2018: 155).

5. Conclusions

Contrary to the belief of evolutionists in sociology that religion and religious beliefs will eventually be suppressed from social life, numerous empirical studies, as a confirmation of the reality we live in, show that in recent times there has been an increase in religiosity among the population, even in industrially developed countries. The increase in criminality, which is recorded in most countries of modern society, imposes the need to reexamine in the public, even in theory, not insignificant opinions that the religiosity of individuals and groups has a positive effect on the reduction of criminal behavior.

Analyzing the results of research from the second half of the 20th century to the present day, we did not notice any regularity in the relationship between religiosity and criminality, on the basis of which an appropriate axiom could be built. This is a consequence of the fact that religiosity cannot be measured with an objective instrument, but conclusions about its intensity are derived mainly from data collection techniques that rely on respondents expressing their views on the questions posed to them. At the same time, connecting any phenomenon with religiosity, including criminality, requires an insight into its external manifestation, and religiosity primarily springs from the inner being. The respondents' statements about their own religiosity are imbued with a subjective experience of their commitment to respecting God's commandments. Therefore, relying on statistical data cannot lead to valid conclusions on a wider scale in this case.

With its spiritual influence on the formation of collective and individual identity, religion occupies a very important place in the process of adopting moral values in the appropriate space and time. Therefore, religion must also be viewed in the context of its possible influence on criminality.

Although the analysis of existing empirical research conducted in the period from the second half of the last century to the present day, it is not possible to draw a constant on which to base an explicit conclusion about the positive or negative influence of religiosity on crime, a pragmatic conclusion is nevertheless noticeable. Religiosity to a certain extent and in appropriate circumstances can have a preventive and awareness-raising effect on criminal

behavior. However, bearing in mind the bond between religiosity and the deviance it leads to, including the extreme connection with terrorism, it is justified to claim with even greater certainty that religiosity also carries the potential of a kind of criminal behavior.

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PREDICTORS OF JOB SATISFACTION

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Abstract: *In this paper, we will present the results obtained following a research that aimed to analyse the associations between job satisfaction and a number of its predictors, such as: attachment style, friendships at work, gender, age, marital status and level of education. The first part of the present work presents a brief foray into the consulted specialized literature. The second part focuses on the methodology used – research questions, hypotheses and tools used in assessing the association between the previously mentioned variables. The obtained results show that people with a secure attachment style experience higher job satisfaction, compared to avoidants. Moreover, it seems that friendships at the workplace and the higher level of education of employees have a positive influence on increased job satisfaction. In contrast, there appear to be no significant differences between married and single employees, nor between male and female employees when it comes to job satisfaction.*

Keywords: job satisfaction, attachment styles, gender, age, education level.

1. Introduction

Attachment styles, gender, age, workplace friendships, marital status, but also education level can have a significant influence on job satisfaction. Job satisfaction can reach lower or higher levels, depending on the influence these factors manifest in the employees' professional life.

The first part of the present study proposes a foray into the specialized literature, which provides a series of relevant information for the research topic, such as the fact that increased job satisfaction is influenced by: a secure attachment style, the presence of friendships at the work place, the male gender of the employees, the advanced age of the employees, their marital status, but also the higher level of education among the employees.

The second section of the paper presents the methodology used in the research, where we find the research questions and the hypotheses on the basis of which we carried out the present research, through 137 participants, contacted in the online environment.

The last part of the paper brings into attention the results we reached, ascertaining the confirmation of some of the study hypotheses. It has been observed that employees who have an increased level of job satisfaction are employees with a secure attachment style, those who engage in friendships and those who have higher education. In contrast, no significant differences in job satisfaction were found between women and men, between young versus older employees, or between married versus single employees.

2. Literature review

Job satisfaction is seen as the pleasant or positive emotional state resulting from the overall evaluation of the workplace or professional experiences and is a factor of the extent to which individual needs are met in the work environment (Tziner et al., 2014). Consequently, it can be both intrinsic, deriving from internally mediated rewards, such as the job itself, and extrinsic, deriving from externally mediated rewards, such as salary satisfaction. Furthermore, increased job satisfaction has been shown to be related to individual characteristics such as personality dispositions (Tziner et al., 2014).

Attachment could also be considered an individual characteristic that can be associated with job satisfaction. However, research has paid little attention to the relationship between attachment style and job satisfaction. Therefore, it was hypothesized that attachment styles would relate to job satisfaction, such that the secure attachment style is associated with higher levels of job satisfaction than the avoidant and anxious styles (Leiter, Day, & Price, 2015).

Hardy and Barkham's (1994) findings summarize the impact of these attachment styles and work attitudes and behaviour: individuals with anxious attachment experience anxiety about interpersonal relationships with colleagues (poor relationship quality, lack of intimacy) and low anticipated levels of job performance (either assigning low ratings to themselves or expecting to receive low ratings of job performance from others). Moreover, it appears that attachment style would also be associated with job satisfaction, such that employees with secure attachment would report higher levels of job satisfaction than individuals with anxious attachment (Tziner et al., 2014).

Friendships at work play an important role in determining job satisfaction. Employees who have strong and positive friendships with their coworkers generally report higher levels of job satisfaction (Felps et al., 2006). Friendships at work can provide social support, emotional support and a pleasant atmosphere, which can contribute to greater job satisfaction. These relationships can also facilitate effective communication, collaboration, and trust among colleagues, which can promote individual and team satisfaction and performance. At the same time, Felps et al. (2006) highlight that the presence of negative members in a group can have a negative impact on the job satisfaction of other members. Colleagues' negative and confrontational behaviours can destroy the work atmosphere, damage interpersonal relationships, and negatively affect employee satisfaction and performance.

The 2019 study „Job Satisfaction and Gender” by Andrade, Westover, and Peterson explores the link between job satisfaction and employee gender. The results of the study indicate that there are small but significant differences between men and women in terms of job satisfaction. In general, women reported a lower level of satisfaction compared to men. This difference can be explained by several factors, including existing gender inequalities in the organization and structuring of the workplace. Thus, the authors suggest that there are gender differences in job satisfaction, with women reporting a lower level of job satisfaction compared to men. Understanding these differences and the factors that influence them can contribute to improving working conditions and reducing gender inequalities in the occupational environment.

The results of the "Age and Job Satisfaction" study conducted by O'Brien and Dowling in 1981 indicate that there is a significant relationship between age and job satisfaction. In general, older employees reported a higher level of satisfaction compared to younger employees. This relationship can be explained by several factors, including job stability and security, increasing experience levels, and satisfaction from professional achievement over the course of one's career. The authors also note that there are individual differences in the relationship between age and job satisfaction. Some older employees may experience a decline in satisfaction due to career stagnation or difficulty adapting to technological change, while others may benefit from a sense of accomplishment and recognition for their experience and contribution.

Although the available resources are quite limited in the specialized literature on the relationship between marital status and job satisfaction, a study started by Azim and colleagues in 2013 suggests that married employees declared themselves less satisfied at work than single ones.

The level of education is an important factor in determining job satisfaction, Vila and García-Mora (2005) note. It was found that people with a higher level of education generally recorded a higher level of job satisfaction. Other important factors influencing job satisfaction have also been identified, such as income, occupational characteristics and environmental

factors. The authors emphasize the importance of educational policy and labour market policies in promoting job satisfaction. They suggest that investments in education can help increase individuals' job satisfaction and ultimately improve their quality of life. In terms of job performance, the study found that education level is associated with better job performance. Employees with a higher level of education tend to achieve better results and perform more efficiently in their work tasks.

3. Methodology

The purpose of our research was to identify the relationships that exist between job satisfaction and a number of its predictors, such as attachment style, interpersonal relationships at work, gender, age, marital status and education level. Starting from here, I proposed a series of research questions: *Q1: To what extent is job satisfaction influenced by an employee's attachment style? Q2: How do friendships at work influence an employee's job satisfaction? Q3: What influence does gender have on job satisfaction? Q4: What influence does age have on job satisfaction? Q5: How does marital status influence job satisfaction? Q6: Is job satisfaction influenced by the level of employee's education?*

Having as a starting point the studied literature, as well as the proposed research questions, I resorted to stating six research hypotheses, one for each research question. Hypothesis 1 (H1) assumes that attachment style influences job satisfaction, in the sense that people with a secure attachment style will be more satisfied with their work compared to people who have an anxious attachment style. Hypothesis 2 (H2) assumes that friendships at work have an influence on job satisfaction, in the sense that job satisfaction is higher where the relationships employees engage in are friendships. In Hypothesis 3 (H3) we estimate that the gender of employees does not influence job satisfaction, in the sense that there are no gender differences in terms of job satisfaction for women or men. In Hypothesis 4 (H4) we assume that age influences job satisfaction, more precisely, older employees show a higher level of job satisfaction. Hypothesis 5 (H5) assumes that job satisfaction is influenced by marital status, such that married employees have higher job satisfaction compared to single employees. Finally, Hypothesis 6 (H6) considers that job satisfaction is influenced by the employees' education level, so that employees with a higher level of education also have higher job satisfaction.

The questionnaire was the research instrument used for data collection, and it was composed of three subscales: the first is the Experiences in Close Relationship Revised (ECR-R) scale that assesses the attachment style through 42 items, resulting in three styles of attachment: anxious, avoidant and secure; the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) scale that assesses the aspects of a job that an individual finds satisfying through 20 questions, and the third scale is composed of a set of seven questions focused on the nature of interpersonal relationships from the participants' workplace.

The *ECR-R questionnaire* - Experiences in Close Relationships Scale-Revised taken from "An Item Response Theory Analysis of Self-Report Measures of Adult Attachment" (Fraley, Waller and Brennan, 2000), was developed by Brennan et al. (1998) as a tool for large-scale analysis of all self-reported attachment measures in adults during that period and later, Fraley et al. (2000) developed the ECR-R to improve the psychometric properties of this instrument.

The *Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire* (MSQ), taken from the "Manual for the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire" (Weiss, Dawis, & England, 1967), is designed to measure an employee's satisfaction with his/her job. The MSQ provides more specific information about the aspects of a job that an individual finds satisfying than more general measures of job satisfaction. The MSQ is also useful in exploring clients' vocational needs, advising on further studies, and generating information about workplace reinforcers.

The third component of our tool involves a set of 7 questions focused on the nature of interpersonal relationships at the participants' workplace, with a focus on types of

relationships - hierarchical / collegial / friendship, time spent with colleagues and willingness to provide them support.

Our study was conducted by completing online research tools. The batch consists of 137 respondents.

4. Results

Of the total of 137 participants in the present research, 51.1% are men and 48.9% are women. Among the participants, 22.6% are between 18-25 years old, 30.7% are between 26-35 years old, and 46.7% are over 35 years old. Regarding marital status, 52.6% of the participants are single and 47.4% are married. Among the participants, 18.2% have high school education, 10.2% have post-high school education, and 71.5% have higher education. When it comes to attachment, we find that 21.2% of participants have an anxious attachment style, 12.4% of participants have an avoidant attachment style, and 66.4% of participants have a secure attachment style. Analysing job satisfaction, we note that 65% of participants have increased job satisfaction, 32.1% have medium job satisfaction, and 2.9% of participants have low job satisfaction.

In the analysis of the association between attachment and job satisfaction, we observe in Table 1 that 51.7% of subjects with anxious attachment have increased job satisfaction, 64.7% of participants with avoidant attachment have medium job satisfaction, and 74.7% of participants with secure attachment have increased job satisfaction. Based on the association coefficient $\phi = 0.374$ there is a positive trend of the association relationship between the two variables. We can thus conclude that hypothesis of Q1 (attachment style influences job satisfaction, in the sense that people with a secure attachment style will be more satisfied with work), is confirmed.

Table 1 – Association between attachment style and job satisfaction

Attachment style		Satisfaction level			Total
		Increased	Medium	Low	
Anxious	% of Attachment Style	51,7%	37,9%	10,3%	100,0%
Avoidant	% of Attachment Style	35,3%	64,7%	0,0%	100,0%
Secure	% of Attachment Style	74,7%	24,2%	1,1%	100,0%
Total	% of Attachment Style	65,0%	32,1%	2,9%	100,0%

Analysing the association between friendships at work and job satisfaction, we find in Table 2 that 78.2% of participants who claim that all or most of the relationships they engage in are friendships at work have increased job satisfaction, 40% of participants who claim that some of their relationships at work are friendships have medium job satisfaction, and 5.4% of those who claim that their relationships at work are not relationships of friendship, have low job satisfaction. The coefficient of association $\phi = 0.239$ shows us a weak association of these two variables. However, we can say that hypothesis in Q2 (friendships at work have an influence on job satisfaction, in the sense that job satisfaction is higher where the relationships involving employees are friendships) is confirmed.

Table 2 – Association between workplace friendships and job satisfaction

Friendship relationships		Satisfaction			Total
		Increased	Medium	Low	
All and Most of the relationships	% of Friendships	78,2%	20,0%	1,8%	100,0%
Some	% of Friendships	57,8%	40,0%	2,2%	100,0%
Few and None	% of Friendships	54,1%	40,5%	5,4%	100,0%
Total	% of Friendships	65,0%	32,1%	2,9%	100,0%

To verify the hypothesis in Q3, as seen in Table 3, we associated the gender of the participants with job satisfaction and we observe that 61.4% of the male participants have increased job satisfaction and 68.7% of the female participants have increased job satisfaction. The association coefficient $\phi = 0.101$ shows us a weak association between these two variables, and it seems that hypothesis in Q3 (gender of employees does not influence job satisfaction, in the sense that there are no gender differences in terms of job satisfaction in women or men) it is confirmed.

Table 3 – Association between respondents’ gender and job satisfaction

Gender		Satisfaction			Total
		Increased	Medium	Low	
Male	% of the Gender	61,4%	34,3%	4,3%	100,0%
Female	% of the Gender	68,7%	29,9%	1,5%	100,0%
Total	% of the Gender	65,0%	32,1%	2,9%	100,0%

In order to verify hypothesis in Q4, as can also be seen in Table 4, we associate the age of the participants with job satisfaction and find that 71,4% of the participants aged between 26-35 years have an increased job satisfaction, only 2.4 % of participants aged 26-35 have low job satisfaction, and 64.1% of participants over 35 have high job satisfaction. The association coefficient $\phi = 0.161$ suggests a weak association between the two variables. Hypothesis in Q4 (age influences job satisfaction, more precisely, older employees show a higher level of job satisfaction) is confirmed.

Table 4 – Association between age and job satisfaction

Age		Satisfaction			Total
		Increased	Medium	Low	
18-25 years old	% of Age	58,1%	41,9%	0,0%	100,0%
26-35 years old	% of Age	71,4%	26,2%	2,4%	100,0%
Over 35 years old	% of Age	64,1%	31,3%	4,7%	100,0%
Total	% of Age	65,0%	32,1%	2,9%	100,0%

The association between marital status and job satisfaction (Table 5) shows us that 63.9% of single participants have increased job satisfaction, and 66.2% of married participants have increased job satisfaction. The coefficient $\phi = 0.028$ shows us a very weak association of these two variables, and hypothesis in Q5 (job satisfaction is influenced by marital status, so that married employees have a higher job satisfaction compared to single employees) is not confirmed.

Table 5 – Association between marital status and job satisfaction

Marital status		Satisfaction			Total
		Increased	Medium	Low	
Single	% of Marital Status	63,9%	33,3%	2,8%	100,0%
Married	% of Marital Status	66,2%	30,8%	3,1%	100,0%
Total	% of Marital Status	65,0%	32,1%	2,9%	100,0%

Associating the level of participants’ education with work satisfaction, according to Table 6, we observe that 52% of the participants with high school education have an medium work satisfaction, 64.3% of the participants with post-high school education have an increased work satisfaction, and 73 .5% of higher education participants have increased job satisfaction. The coefficient of association $\phi = 0.446$ shows us a strong association of the variables. Hypothesis in Q6 (job satisfaction is influenced by the education level of employees, so that employees with a higher level of education also have higher job satisfaction) is confirmed.

Table 6 – Association between education level and job satisfaction

Education level		Satisfaction			Total
		Increased	Medium	Low	
High school	% of Education Level	32,0%	52,0%	16,0%	100,0%
Post-high school	% of Education Level	64,3%	35,7%	0,0%	100,0%
Higher education	% of Education Level	73,5%	26,5%	0,0%	100,0%
Total	% of Education Level	65,0%	32,1%	2,9%	100,0%

5. Conclusions and openings

Attachment styles have a significant influence on job satisfaction. Individuals with a secure attachment style may exhibit higher levels of job satisfaction because they are able to develop healthy relationships and mutual support with coworkers, as also suggested by Tziner, Ben-David, & Sharoni, 2014. Friendship relationships at work play an important role in determining job satisfaction. Employees who have close and positive relationships with coworkers tend to have higher levels of job satisfaction due to the support they feel from coworkers, as we also note from Felps et al., 2006. Gender can also influence job satisfaction in a complex way. According to Andrade, Westover and Peterson (2019), although there are no significant gender differences in the general level of job satisfaction, there are variations according to specific aspects, with the tendency for men to have higher job satisfaction. Then, as we also see in O'Brien and Dowling (1981), older people may show higher levels of job satisfaction due to the accumulation of experience and professional maturity compared to younger employees. Marital status can also influence job satisfaction. Married employees tend to have higher levels of job satisfaction, as noted by Azim et al. in 2013. Educational attainment may also play a role in determining job satisfaction. Employees with higher levels of education may have broader perspectives, better results and increased efficiency in solving tasks, as Vila and García-Mora (2005) also note.

Our study paves the way for future research to explore in depth the complex interactions between our proposed variables and to investigate additional factors that may influence job satisfaction. For example, other factors could be: organizational culture, work-life balance or working conditions. It is important for future research to include larger and more diverse samples to obtain more generalizable results and to investigate contextual and cultural influences on job satisfaction. It may also be useful to use qualitative methods, such as interviews and observations, to gain a greater understanding of employee experiences that influence job satisfaction.

It is important to further investigate how age and marital status may interact and influence job satisfaction, also taking into account contextual and cultural variables because, in this direction, the available studies are quite limited.

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VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN IN ALGERIA: THE CASE OF TEBESSA PROVINCE

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Abstract: *The study discusses the serious issue of violence and sexual exploitation against children, emphasizing the significant impact these phenomena have on the lives of young individuals. It highlights that these acts are considered as violations of human rights, particularly concerning children's well-being and security. The study recognizes various forms of sexual violence, including abuse, usurpation, harassment, trafficking, sexual exploitation and dissemination of children's pornography. The negative effects of such experiences on children's physical, psychological, and social well-being are addressed, leading to long-term health problems and emotional traumas as personality disorders, engaging in toxic unhealthy relationships, depression, anxiety and other dangerous issues. To fight these complex issues, the study proposes comprehensive strategies such as awareness-raising, education, strict regulations, and laws, reporting mechanisms, and providing psychological and legal support for affected children. It stresses the importance of cooperation between governmental agencies, civil society, and international institutions to reduce these spread phenomena and ensure the protection of children's rights and safety. Since child sexual exploitation is considered as a serious matter all over the world, the presented study took the city of Tebessa as a prominent example of it. This province is located in eastern Algeria. Efforts are being made in the region to fight this problem, including awareness programs for families, support services for affected children, and collaboration between authorities and civil society organizations. The Algerian government, in partnership with local and international entities, is committed to addressing child sexual exploitation not only in Tebessa, but throughout the country.*

Keywords: Sexual violence, sexual exploitation of children, usurpation, personality disorders, prostitution of children.

1. Introduction

Sexual violence and child sexual exploitation are considered as serious and alarming issues threatening children's lives worldwide. Children are exposed to these harmful phenomena in various societies including their cultures and social classes. They occur in different areas such as homes, schools, streets and institutions. Child sexual violence includes a wide range of harmful behaviours as sexual assault, sexual harassment, child trafficking for sexual exploitation purposes, child pornography, and other forms of sexual exploitation. Children are used in these despicable acts to fulfil the desires of adults as well as their financial gains. In fact, sexual violence and exploitation of children have a severe negative effect on the physical, psychological, and social side of children's lives. They get shocked and have a psychological distress and depression. They also suffer from personality disorders in addition to the risks of severe physical injuries, sexually transmitted diseases. All these may take place through coercion, blackmail and threats. It is of paramount importance to fight sexual violence and exploitation of children by adopting comprehensive strategies such as awareness raising, education, strong deterrent legislative decisions, enhancing reporting mechanisms, and providing psychological and legal support to affected children. Governmental institutions, non-governmental organizations, families, schools, healthcare

sector, the judiciary and the whole community must work together to identify, prevent, and punish those responsible for these cases. Continuous efforts must be made at the national and the international levels to fight such dangerous deadly phenomena, promote children's rights, and ensure their protection. Cooperation between governments, institutions, non-governmental organizations, and civil society is crucial to reduce violence and sexual exploitation and create a safe environment to children.

2. Procedural Concepts

2.1. Sexual violence

Various studies and researches in the field agreed upon the fact that sexual violence refers to any sexual act, attempt, or threat that is carried out without the victim's acceptance whether being a male or a female. According to the United Nations' High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), sexual violence is any form of rape, sexual assault, harassment, exploitation, and coercion to engage in immoral acts. It is clearly emphasized that any sexual activity or act with a child under the age of 18 is considered as a sexual violence and has devastating effects on the child's growth, physical health, and mental well-being. The UNHCR argued that physical violence such as beating, abuse, disfigurement, and murder with or without weapons, is often associated with non-physical forms of sexual violence, including emotional and psychological abuse.

2.2. Sexual exploitation of children

According to Samia Ben Driss in her article entitled "The Crime of Sexual Exploitation of Children: The Crime's Images and Implications", sexual exploitation of children is an act that involves forcing a child to engage in sexual activities. It generally refers to the use of children or their images in sexual activities to satisfy the desires of adults, whether it took place in reality or through simulation with money or for free. Sexual exploitation is also defined as any harmful behaviour or act towards a child under the age of eighteen, starting with sexual abuse without his/her acceptance. The notion of a child's consent in such behaviour is irrelevant, as no child willingly accepts abuse. In such cases, the child is considered as a victim since he/she has been subjected to deception or manipulation from one side or has been influenced by the surrounded social and economic circumstances from another side, without fully understanding the impact and consequences of the situation. These activities may involve actual sexual contact or the viewing of children in specific sexual positions for personal enjoyment or exploitation in the production of pornographic materials, such as taking pictures and videos or encouraging them to engage in deviant sexual behaviour. It is argued that in most cases, sexual exploitation of children is done with commercial purposes involving financial compensation or personal services, as well as other benefits such as protection and shelter. This exploitation is considered a form of sexual violence.

There are several types of sexual exploitation of children and the following are some of them:

Child Prostitution

Child prostitution, which is also known as child trafficking, involves the commercial exploitation of a child for sexual purposes. This despicable activity is generally done by a group of beneficiaries such as hotel owners, who profit from using children. It is declared that even parents sell their children to these individuals in some cases. The child here is used in sexual activities so that to make exchanges for rewards as money or other forms of compensation that may involve providing necessities such as housing, food, and clothing. (Ouchaaou Rachid, 2016)

Exploitation of Children in Pornographic Materials

According to Mr. Ouchaaou Rachid, exploiting children in pornographic materials refers to the process of filming or photographing a child, by any means, and focusing on his/her external genitalia to satisfy sexual desires. These pornographic materials can take various forms, including images or videos showing children engaging in sexual activities with other children or adults, or highlighting their external genitalia so that to be used in images, movies, TV shows, CDs, magazines, internet, and social media platforms.

News Groups

Based on the claims of Awda Youssef Salman (2018) in his article "Child Sexual Exploitation in Light of Constitutional Principles and International Standards of Children's Rights." and Ahmed Houssam Tammam (2000) in his study entitled. "Crimes Arising from the Use of Computers (Criminal Protection of Computers): A Comparative Study", one can say that a news group is an online space where individuals can speak and discuss various topics through text, audio, or video communication. It is clearly stated that within these groups, the crime of child sexual exploitation can occur through the exchange of images and videos. These groups allow anyone to share video content and hold discussions. Emailing is also one type in which children can be exploited through. It often takes place via internet in written messages, voice messages or images. Additionally, there are email messages sent from mobile phones to the internet through available services.

Moral Decay

In fact, the collapse of moral values has the worst impact on societies since it leads to the increase of crime rates and child sexual exploitation. It is obvious that when individuals lack the ethical values that prevent them from committing such crimes, it becomes easier for them to engage in these despicable acts. The presence of religion is very important and its absence is one of the most dangerous factors contributing to the existence of child sexual exploitation. Nadia Ayadi and Murad Kechichab (2017) argued that the religious values have a powerful influence on individuals, to the extent that they can prevent them from committing crimes. As Karl Marx said, "Religion is the opium of people," that is to say, it affects individuals to the point of numbness, causing them to accept its rules without thinking. No one can easily violate his religion since its values are the strongest deterrent against crime. The collapse of religious values opens the door for committing crimes without restraint.

Incitement to Immorality

This image involves attempting to influence and persuade individuals who are particularly under the age of 18 to engage in immoral and unethical acts. It often occurs among children facing difficult social conditions and living. Some criminals exploit these circumstances by enticing, or luring children through modern means of communication, such as mobile phones, to involve them in prostitution. Others exploit sensitive areas of a child's body to arouse their sexual desire or incite them with explicit images that encourage deviant behaviours. This is considered as one of the most significant forms of child sexual exploitation. (Awda Youssef Salman, 2018)

In fact, there are other types of exploitation, such as the commercial and non-commercial exploitation of minors, sex tourism, and many other forms of exploiting children.

The presented piece of work is a descriptive-exploratory study that has been approached through the theory of social support by the great scholar Eric Fromm, who emphasizes the importance of social support in an individual's life and psychological well-being. According to Eric Fromm, an Austrian-American psychologist and social philosopher, humans need connection and communication with others. They need to feel with their belonging to a community that provides support and care. Fromm's theory suggests that social support can

contribute to psychological satisfaction and happiness, besides; it can also enhance feelings of security and self-confidence. Fromm considers love, belonging, social participation, and interaction with others as the foundation for personal satisfaction and psychological balance.

In fact, Fromm's theory is based on the fundamental idea that social support and strong relationships with others contribute to the mental and emotional well-being of individuals, giving them the strength to face challenges and difficulties in life. This social support enhances feelings of acceptance, appreciation, and belonging and contributes to building trust and psychological resilience. In general, Eric Fromm sheds light on the importance of positive emotions and social support in achieving the psychological satisfaction and personal success, considering them essential factors in enhancing quality of life and psychological balance. Therefore, the absence of social support can lead to severe consequences.

Since the presented topic entitled Child Sexual Exploitation is a very sensitive subject especially in a conservative society, the pace of this research faced many difficulties in accessing the samples, requiring significant efforts and intervention from certain parties to reach the research's purposes. The aim was to answer some questions related to the theme and identify the key factors contributing to the spread of such despicable phenomenon in a very conservative society that is still sticking to its long-standing traditions as well as culture. It was important to examine the living conditions of the sexually exploited children and criminals, as well as the influence of the surrounding environment on the spread of this phenomenon. Shedding light on this issue is crucial, considering its impact on the personal development and well-being of children.

The study was conducted in the city of Tebessa, an eastern city in Algeria, known for its historical significance. A considerable population density of around one million inhabitants characterizes it. It consists of 28 municipalities covering a vast geographical area. The study took place from January to July 2023. It was a descriptive-exploratory study on child sexual exploitation in this city and some of its affiliated municipalities. There were some difficulties in accessing the samples due to the sensitivity of the topic in this highly conservative community. Although the Tebessian society is totally an Islamic society, which is attached to its religious values as well as cultural customs, it falls in the trap of globalisation and openness to the world. Cases of child sexual exploitation were very rare in the past. However, with the technological development and the cultural invasion, Tebessa marked an increased societal openness. It witnessed some foreign influences that have penetrated the society, including child sexual exploitation. The current study focused on the selection of the snowball sampling method to identify samples from children who have experienced the sexual exploitation.

According to the conducted research, the first sample of this study took place in a new built urban area known as Al - Dukkan neighbourhood. The investigations led to the discovery of a sexually exploited third grade primary school pupil named B.R. After contacting the teacher of the seven years old girl, we were informed that the teacher used to ask about her pupils' situations outside the classroom so that to provide help. She found out that the father, who migrated to another city, abandoned the victim. Therefore, her eldest aunt took the responsibility of raising her along with her own children. However, what is suspicious about the situation is that the child does not receive any attention from her family. Taking into account the nature of Al - Dukkan neighbourhood that witnessed many criminal phenomena, moral decay, and other harmful practices. After a long discussion, we discovered that the adoptive mother herself is engaged in various immoral and shameful acts and that she is careless about this child at all. After some time, the teacher came to an end that some individuals were sexually exploiting this girl in her neighbourhood, whom their age varies between 15 and 27. They enticed her with money to enjoy her body. The victim who didn't know what is she doing, was provided by the basic needs that any child want in her age such as food. To make a long story short, one can say that the overwhelming social conditions and

the absence of parents are the main reasons for the sexual exploitation experienced by such type of children.

Talking about the second sample of the conducted study. He is a thirteen years old boy named Sh.M. he has been subjected to sexual exploitation by some young people in exchange for money so that to be able to ride bicycles. As for his family upbringing, the victim lived with five siblings, a working father and a housewife mother. They lived a comfortable life inside their house, but the surrounded social environment they lived in, with its dense population, witnessed numerous criminal and moral decay as well as other deviant behaviours. The lack of the family attention and the neglect of their child outside their house led him to fall in the trap of sexual exploitation by some young people. From this point and according to this case, one can declare that the external environment is the first responsible of transforming the child's life to the worst. We observed that the sexually exploited boy has completely deviated after a period of four years and became a real criminal with violent behaviour. As a result, the external factors led to his imprisonment. Therefore, we can say that the sexual exploitation he experienced in his childhood had a significant impact on his psychological as well as his personal development and led him to become a violent criminal.

As for the third sample, he is an eight years old boy who lives in Cheriah area in Tebessa. His parents are well-educated teachers who have a comfortable financial situation. Unfortunately, their son named M.R, who looks attractive and has charming appearance, became a sexually exploited victim by a barber. The barbershop was located near the victim's house. He was the target of the barber's sexual desires. The victim used to attend a very close school in the neighbourhood and he used to go to school alone most of the time, providing the barber with an opportunity to lure him into his shop and sexually exploit him. After several instances of assault on the victim, the mother noticed a change in her son's behaviour and his reluctance to go to school. On one occasion, she found drops of blood in her son's intimate area, specifically in his anus. She immediately informed her husband about it, and they questioned their son about what had happened. The child informed them that the barber was behind these actions. The parents then went to the police to report the incident and investigations led to the barber's admission of his deed. The barber has been arrested and sentenced to several years in prison. It is worth noting that the barber was not married and had no prior sexual relations. He lived a repressed life, which he unleashed on this innocent child. The parents also revealed that their son experienced a psychological depression and he received a treatment from a psychiatrist. Briefly, speaking, physical appearances can be another reason behind children's sexual exploitation.

Concerning the fourth sample, our study dealt with a nine-year-old child named B.S, who lives in a remote village from Morsset area with his divorced mother and far away from his father who is working in the desert. The boy attends a school that is about 4 kilometres away from his house. The school is located in a neighbourhood known for drug selling, frequent robbery and prostitution houses. Forcefully, a group of middle school children aged between 15 and 16 sexually assaulted the little boy and threatened him with violence in case of telling others. However, his mother knew suddenly that a group of young people were sexually exploiting her son. She reported the incident to the police and investigations took place to end up with arresting the perpetrators. As a closing remark, one can note that the absence of the family care in addition to the mother's illiteracy have contributed to the situation. Additionally, the corrupted environment in which they live plays a significant role in growing such shameful behaviours.

Regarding the fifth sample, a 16 years old high school pupil named B.S. She shares a luxurious life with her retired father, who spent his career in the military services and her mother, who works at the local postal centre at Al-Awainat municipality. The wealthy girl had a poor classmate who was involved in many troubles such as the drug abuse. The poor boy became infatuated with the girl and manipulated her until he sexually assaulted her until she

became pregnant. Finally, the mother discovered her daughter's situation and led her to report the incident to the police who arrested him lately. Through questioning his classmates, it was declared that the boy was influenced by foreign TV series. There was a clear imitation of what is happening in western societies. Later on and considering the nature of the society in this area, the girl was forced to marry him so that to hide the scandal. Thus, one can say that although people are still sticking to their traditional customs and cultural values, cases of sexual exploitation still occur and this is due to the western cultural invasion that took place in our conservative society.

As for the sixth sample, a mother noticed that her son named B.Z, who was living in good conditions with his educated parents, started to reject going to school. The little boy became a nervous person and he started to urinate involuntarily at night. Although his parents tried to question him several times, he remained silent until the day where his father decided to follow him while going to school. The father noticed a group of middle school pupils were harassing his son. They took him behind their school walls and were about to take off his clothes, but the father intervened immediately and apprehended them, then he reported the incident to the police. After long investigations, it was revealed that they had been watching videos about child rape and were imitating those actions on this child. They targeted him because of his good appearance and neat clothing. These young criminals had already engaged in criminal activities at a very young age, they grow up in an environment characterized by numerous crimes and lately they became sexual exploiters. The boys were transferred to a rehabilitation centre for minors. As the previous sample, it is clearly shown that western cultural invasion played a crucial role in destroying our society's conservative values.

Concerning the last sample, it was about a fifteen years old girl named B.H, who lives in Tebessa city with her divorced mother. The girl's father is currently in prison. According to her grandmother's declaration of the hidden aspects of her life, we end up knowing that the girl's story can be traced back to her mother's deviant lifestyle after being divorced, thus, neglecting her teenage daughter. Unfortunately, the little girl imitated her mother and she was engaged in prostitution. She abandoned her studies and she get used to escape with young men. It is important to mention that the family has a significant role in the upbringing of children. The miserable social conditions experienced by this family led the mother to delve into a world of deviance and prostitution in order to make a living. As a result, the girl became a victim. These actions are not carried out openly but in secret. Briefly speaking, parental supervision and the family living circumstances play a great role in building good manners for children.

3. Conclusion

Sexual exploitation of children is considered as a very dangerous and a serious and phenomenon that needs collaboration and empathy between every society's individuals. Protecting children and ensuring a safe environment for them is our moral, legal, and social responsibility. In fact, Algeria is one many other countries that faces significant challenges in fighting such despicable phenomenon that frightens the entire society. Poverty, social marginalization, lack of awareness and sex education are examples of factors that contribute to the spread of this alarming phenomenon. The Algerian government and various entities are in full swing working to fight the sexual exploitation of children. Important steps have been taken in this struggle such as amending legislation to punish those involved in these crimes and strengthening the penal system. Previously, criminals involved in the sexual exploitation of children benefited from reduced penalties on national occasions, known as presidential pardons. However, in 2023, they are not allowed to benefit from such pardons due to the worsening of this crime. Many other efforts are made to raise awareness and educate individuals about the importance of protecting children and reporting any suspicious cases. It

is of great importance to bear in mind that it is high time for all of us to work hand in hand as a society so that to fight this shameful crime. Families, schools, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the media should be encouraged to collaborate and maintain continuous communication to identify cases of sexual exploitation, prevent them, and push the perpetrators to get the needed punishment. It is incredibly needed to provide support and comprehensive care to the victims and their families. Psychological, social, and legal support should be offered to these children, ensuring their rights and protecting them from retaliation and discrimination. Briefly, we must collaborate to eradicate the sexual exploitation of children in Algeria and worldwide. We need to be vigilant, report any suspicious cases and work together to build up a safe and a healthy society that protects our children and provides them with opportunities to grow safely.

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DETERMINANTS OF YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN BANDITRY IN SANKERA AREA OF BENUE STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract: *The study examined the determinants of youth involvement in banditry in Sankera Area of Benue state, Nigeria. The study specifically examined the relationship between political thuggery, unemployment, poverty and gets rich quick syndrome and their relationship with youth involvement in banditry in Sankera Area of Benue, Nigeria. Cross-sectional survey design was chosen to accomplish the goals of the study. The study employed purposive sampling technique. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to test the study hypotheses with a threshold of significance of 0.05. The findings of the study revealed that political thuggery, unemployment, poverty and get rich quick syndrome have a significant relationship with youth involvement in banditry in the study Area. The study concluded that the etiology of banditry in the study area is multi-faceted. Thus, the study recommended among others, that government should as a matter of urgent concern address the concerns of unemployment, poverty, neglect of the rural areas, and social injustice as this will help to improve the socioeconomic conditions of the population and lessen the propensity for turning to crime as a means of survival. Also, government should as matters of urgent concern equip the security services with weapons that are more effective than those used by armed bandits for a more proactive and reactive patrol in the area.*

Keywords: Political Thuggery, Unemployment, Poverty, Get rich quick syndrome, Banditry.

1. Introduction

Nigeria is among the developing countries of the world and is experiencing prevalence of rising crime waves, criminal behavior and varying degrees of delinquencies amongst which include banditry. Banditry is on the rise in Nigeria, particularly in the Northern part of the country. The Northern Region is afflicted by numerous security issues, the most serious of which include amongst others Boko Haram insurgency, Banditry, Herdsman militancy, terrorism, ransom driven kidnapping and armed robbery. North central Nigeria, formerly a haven of security and stability, has been heavily hit by rural banditry.

Rural banditry is defined as armed violence motivated primarily by the criminal intent to steal and plunder. It is motivated by the desire for economic gain. Okoli and Okpaleke (2014) defined banditry as the occurrence or prevalence of armed robbery or violent crime. Individuals and communities with material riches are often times the victims. Armed robbery, kidnapping, livestock rustling, and village raids are the most prominent forms of rural banditry in Nigeria. Banditry has primarily affected states in Northwest Nigeria, including Kastina, Kaduna, Zamfara, Sokoto, and Kebbi. Kastina and Zamfara have been the most critical hotspots among these states. Banditry is not exclusive to Northeastern Nigeria; it is also prevalent and prohibited in various regions in the North-Central, including states such as Niger, Kogi, Nassarawa, Benue, and Plateau, all of which are considered hotspots (Kuna and Jibrin, 2016).

According to the 2015 Nigeria Police report on crime rates in Benue state, Nigeria, one of the zone's states, ranked third in armed robbery (Sunday punch, 2016). Sankera been one of the areas in Benue State that comprises of three (3) Local Government Areas namely; Kastina-Ala, Ukum and Logo, and in these areas there is growing concern over insecurity

exacerbated by activities of bandits. Mbumega (2019) observed that the inadequate handling of the amnesty in Benue state in 2016 left the youth with little choice but to retrograde to armed banditry to survive. Some of these youths were *ab initio* recruited by wealthy political elites and are now in possession of illegal weapons which they now utilized to commit numerous violent crimes including banditry. The youths are at the vanguard of all of these initiatives. In many of these cases, the unemployed youth have become dependent clients of political entrepreneurs and other criminal organizations; they have formed nearly impregnable networks controlled by kingpins. Political elites employ this pool of vulnerable adolescents to terrify voters, maim, assassinate opponents, suppress dissidents and disrupt campaign rallies, demonstrating a link between political rivalry and armed violence (Centre for International Cooperation and Security CICS, 2006).

Poverty in Benue State has driven unemployed teenagers to turn to banditry for a living, because providing functional education to people without a commensurate enabling environment for such people to work, earn a living, and meet their basic requirements is a recipe for violence. Anifowose (2006) observed that the most conducive to political instability is a society in which modernizing leaders are devoted to a quick increase in the number of educated people within the population but there is no consistent growth in the level of economic empowerment. Lack of economic options for many Sankera school leavers was a big source of discontent and disconnect, and school leavers were thus prepared to join criminal gangs and political thugs that engaged significantly in banditry, ransom driven kidnapping, armed robbery in order to get rich quick. There is a worrisome upsurge to get rich quick among the Nigerian youths, those of Benue State inclusive. In their bid to meet up with their get rich syndrome, the youths in Benue state in general and Sankera in particular do the unimaginable. They engage in all manners of evil, including banditry which is an aberration to the values and norms of the society.

By examining the determinants of youth involvement in banditry from Sankera area of Benue State standpoint an extra comprehensive knowledge of the determinants of youth involvement in banditry will be brought to bear. This contributes to knowledge in terms of broadening scientific understanding of the determinants of youth involvement in banditry. This comprehensive understanding will help in building synergy for robust workable policies and programmes that will help curb youth involvement in banditry in the study area and beyond

The impact of armed bandit assaults can be perceived as devastating, especially for crimes as armed banditry, which takes a toll on its victims, both in terms of material and other damages, as well as social and psychological implications. Material losses, bodily injury or death, social intimidation, restrictions on freedom of movement, and even the psychological fear of impending victimization could result from this (Shalangwa, 2013).

Muggah and Batchelor (2002), noted that armed banditry can have a significant impact on the supply of cash crops since public and commercial transit to markets is frequently disrupted, forcing farmers to forsake commercial harvests. When this occurs on a significant scale, social investment frequently drops, with broad ramifications for both foreign investor confidence and foreign sponsorship and development assistance. The threat of armed banditry will thus not only result in an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty; it will also lead to increased incidences of forced migration, food insecurity, displacement and the destruction of lives and properties as well as the boycott of markets or companies inside and around these border regions, but will also result in the diversion of routes elsewhere, resulting in significant income loss and a negative impact on the economy of these places. Little or no attempt has been made to uncover the determinants of youth involvement in banditry in Benue State in general and study area in particular. Against this backdrop, the study seeks to understand the determinant of youth involvement in armed banditry in Sankera area of Benue state, Nigeria.

2. Statement of the Problem

In Benue State, the Sankera Area is made up of three (3) Local Government Areas in the North-East Senatorial Zone. The area is the major producer of yams and groundnuts in Benue state and Nigeria, attracting visitors from all across the country. In the Sankera area, however, following the disastrous management of the amnesty in Benue state in 2016 led to the return to criminality by hitherto repented criminals back to their criminal activities was more destructive than ever, leaving youths with no other alternative but to turn to armed banditry to survive. Armed banditry, ransom driven kidnapping, rape, assassinations, and communal conflict over the ownership of marketplaces and fish ponds, among other forms of armed violence, have all happened in the Sankera Area. Despite the growth in armed banditry in the area, the state administration is doing nothing to stop it and protect civilians from armed violence. As a result, there have been fatalities, displacements, severe economic disruptions, destruction of critical infrastructure, disintegration of national unity and cohesion, complicating the already security crisis and also increasing the violence between herding and farming communities. There is also a possibility of further attacks.

In 2021, the Kastina-Ala axis received terrifying reports of several attacks on various towns' dwellings, as well as public facilities including a Municipal Council Offices, marketplaces, schools, and police stations. Until recently, the Tor-Donga Market in Katsina-Ala LGA, which sells massive amounts of farm produce on market days, served as a haven for criminals. This feature turned off many buyers, and they avoided buying agricultural produce from the area. Business people in the state are now terrified of being attacked at any time by these bandits (Ushahemba, 2016). On market days, however, the Katsina-Ala Local Government Authorities have stepped in to address the insecurity by stationing security agents in strategic locations around the market square to prevent dare-devil armed criminals from taking advantage of the lax security to rob buyers and sellers of their money and other valuables.

Scholars have also linked the incidence of armed banditry in rural areas to the development of weaponry (Egwu, 2016). Anifowose (2006) observed that the most conducive to political discontent is a society in which political leaders are devoted to increasing the number of educated individuals in the population but with no corresponding increase in their economic prospects. The lack of professional opportunities for many Sankera school graduates was a major source of unhappiness and disconnect and school leavers were eager to join political thugs and terror organization to learn criminal agog to make ends meet. Furthermore, Mbumega (2019) observed that the political elites who acting on their selfish interests arm the youngsters with weaponry and ammunition in order for them to realize their political goals and meet their goals.

Numerous studies have found that armed banditry has a negative impact on both the individual and the society. Shalangwa (2013) noted that armed bandits can be perceived as destructive, particularly for crimes such as armed banditry, which takes a toll on its victims in terms of material and other damages; as well it's social and psychological implications. Thus, material losses, bodily pain or death, social intimidation, restrictions on freedom of movement, and even the psychological fear of impending victimization could all have an impact on both the primary and secondary victims.

Because of this disparity, it is critical to investigate the factors that influence youth engagement in banditry. Despite the quantity of material on governance and rural banditry in Nigeria, evidence on the factors that predispose youth to banditry is limited. The objective of this study, therefore, is to understand the determinant of youth involvement in armed banditry in the Sankera Area of Benue State, Nigeria. However, the study raised the following questions: what relationship exists between political thuggery, unemployment, poverty, get rich quick syndrome and youth involvement in armed banditry in the Sankera Area of Benue State, Nigeria.

3. Statements of Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between political thuggery and youth involvement in armed banditry in Sankera Area of Benue state, Nigeria.
2. There is no significant relationship between unemployment and youth involvement in armed banditry in Sankera Area of Benue State, Nigeria.
3. There is no significant relationship between poverty and youth involvement in armed banditry in Sankera Area of Benue state, Nigeria.
4. There is no significant relationship between get quick syndrome and youth involvement in banditry in Sankera Area of Benue state, Nigeria.

4. Review of Related Literature

Armed banditry, in the researcher's opinion and for the purposes of this study, should be defined as the practice of raiding and attacking victims by members of an armed group, whether or not premeditatedly, using weapons of offense or defense, particularly in semi-organized groups, with the goal of overpowering the victim and obtaining loot or achieving some political goals. Such bandits are typically regarded as outlaws and desperate lawless marauders who have no fixed location or goal and traverse the forest and mountains in order to evade detection or imprisonment.

According to the Defending Human Rights Report (2002), "growing unemployment and the dissolution of conventional social institutions have resulted in an increase in violent crime in recent years, which the Nigerian Police has been ill-equipped to confront." Armed banditry can thus be seen as the climax of a larger phenomenon in which there is a symmetrical relationship between poverty, unemployment, political stability, and spreading lawlessness. However, studies on the association between unemployment and crime have produced contradictory results. Some research found a negative association between unemployment and crime, i.e., when unemployment falls, crime rises, and vice versa. Other studies show a positive association (when one increases, the other increases), while others show no relationship (Lynch, 2008). Another reason that perpetuates armed banditry is elite conspiracy, which is motivated by the primordial buildup of power and wealth, thereby attracting youths into thuggery. Some desperate politicians also turned them into foot troops in order to gain and keep political power. This heinous murder exacerbated the problem of armed banditry and heightened political tensions in the zone and throughout the country. For example, political elites from various political parties who lost the election and are disgruntled with the state leadership have supported and collaborated with bandit organizations to discredit political leadership and weaken its legitimacy in the eyes of voters. Traditional rulers, in addition to political elites, were involved in assisting and suppressing rural banditry in the Northwest.

Abdullahi's (2019) empirical research demonstrated that some traditional rulers provide safe home for bandit groups in order for them to continue with their unlawful operations. They were accused of openly refusing to take action against the actions of rural bandits in their communities. It is no longer news that rural bandits enjoyed unparalleled protection from traditional rulers and were seen openly dealing with hazardous weaponry in local markets. On local market days in Shinkafi, Birnin Magaji, and other local settlements in Zamfara state, they attacked innocent people, imposed toll collection, and demanded ransom from traders and purchasers. Traditional rulers may assign agents to negotiate the terms and circumstances of partnership with bandits on their behalf in particular cases. In this regard, accusations of banditry brought before traditional rulers were either dismissed without any serious inquiry or had a negative impact on the communities.

Poor service delivery and poverty among Nigerians, particularly in the Northwest, have been cited as important factors in the formation of bandit organizations throughout the region. As stated at the outset of this section, the Northwest geopolitical zone is huge in terms

of geographical area and population when compared to other geopolitical zones in Nigeria. While Nigeria accounts for almost two-thirds of the 320 million people in the ECOWAS area, the Northwest accounts for roughly one-fifth of Nigeria's population (Abdullahi, 2019).

Abdullahi (2019) investigates poverty and banditry in the Northeast and discovers that, despite its population endowment, the Northwest zone is the poorest, with major infrastructural and social service deficits when compared to other parts of Nigeria. According to the United Nations' 2015 multidimensional poverty index statistics, 80.9 percent of people in Northwest Nigeria live in absolute poverty, which is greater than the Southern Region and the National Average (UN, 2015). Many families lacked access to adequate education, health care, and basic security in this area. According to empirical evidence, a huge majority of the zone's youth does not have access to quality education and do not have meaningful jobs. Some of these desperate teenagers joined rural bandit groups and were utilized as a political weapon by some elites to advance their personal interests.

Moklokwu (2022) investigates the predictors of crime among Nigerian youth and found that the youths are being drawn into banditry and ritual killings by their avaricious drive to become instantly wealthy in the face of the severe unemployment and economic hardship. Undoubtedly, banditry has grown to be a serious threat to Nigerian youngsters and continues to harm Nigeria's reputation. The frequency of banditry, which is now nearly daily reported in Nigeria, has seriously hurt that country's standing among other countries.

5. Theoretical Framework

The study adopted Robert K. Merton's theory of anomie. Durkheim defined anomie as the inability of weak social regulation to restrain people's aspirations during economic turmoil, whereas Merton defined it as the lack of a structured and legitimate means for most people in society to achieve what is universally regarded as the ultimate goal – material wealth. Not everyone will be able to achieve such wealth, but everyone is required to try or risk being labeled as lazy or unambitious. As an extension of the functionalist perspective on deviance, Merton created structural strain theory. According to Merton's Strain theory, the origins of deviation may be traced back to the tensions generated by the difference between cultural goals and the means available to people to accomplish those goals. The inference is that in a well-integrated society, people employ acceptable and proper tactics to attain society's goals. In this instance, the society's aims and means are in balance. This misalignment between cultural goals and structurally available means can lead to aberrant conduct. In other words, if legitimate desires cannot be met or satisfied by socially acceptable activity, lower-class people are forced towards crime and delinquency.

Economic success is a goal that everyone aims for in the United States. Education and employment are recognized as valid paths to economic success. Because the legitimate means for achieving material success are not uniformly distributed, those from wealthier backgrounds typically have significantly more access to legitimate means than those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, the result is strain, which generates and produces certain 'modes of adaptation.' Simply defined, it generates coping techniques that the disadvantaged employ to deal with stresses placed on them. Alemika and Chukwuma (2001) noted that the institutionalized mechanisms for attaining these goals and aspirations are constrained by the distribution of talents and opportunities, as well as structural impediments. Furthermore, cultural goals are stressed without corresponding possibilities for achieving those goals. Deviance arises as a result of society's inequality in placing undue focus on material desires while failing to fully provide approved tools for achieving these aims.

This aberration, on the other hand, does not directly lead to aberrant behavior; rather, it presents opportunities for individuals to evolve alternate strategies of pursuing those goals. Merton (1957) also observed the pressure felt by those who are excluded from the institutionalized mechanisms of achieving cultural goals might lead to five modes of

adaptation. Conformity ++, Innovation + -, Ritualism - +, Retreatism - -, and Rebellion ++. Merton goes on to say that the modes of adaptation of innovation, retreatism, and rebellion constitute aberrant forms of life that may involve crime and delinquency. These adaptations are accounts of how humans may react when they are under stress. The various reactions are not mutually exclusive either. The relationship between these alternative responses and other phases of the social structure must also be prefaced by the observation that individuals may shift from one alternative to the other as they engage in various social activities, and these categories primarily refer to role adjustments in specific situations.

Lynch (2008) observed that when economic conditions deteriorate, more people suffer from deprivation and turn to crime to alleviate that misery. Lea and Young (1984) also argued that relative deprivation, a conflict between socially diffused goals and needs, and the limited availability of legitimate means of achieving them would most likely be resolved by a turn to criminality among those groups who were also excluded from participation in the political processes of modern industrial societies. It is worth noting that relative deprivation is not a sufficient explanation for why people turn to crime because not everyone who appears to be comparatively disadvantaged turns to crime. Second, while relative deprivation may be an important component in explaining different types of economic crimes (such as theft, robbery, armed banditry, and so on), it is completely insufficient in explaining why people murder each other or conduct sexual crimes, among other things.

The strain hypothesis implies that crime may be prevented or reduced if there is alignment between cultural goals and institutionalized means of achieving them, and that crime and delinquency will increase if there is a misalignment between the means and the goals. The semblance of this theory to the study is that the structure and culture of society constrains individuals. Thus, in the process of trying to adapt, some innovate, retreat, and rebel in order to make ends meet.

6. Methodology

For this study, a cross-sectional survey design was used. This research strategy was considered because it allows the researcher to use the drawn sample to reflect the many components of the population under consideration. The study sampled people's thoughts and perceptions on the determinants of youth involvement in banditry. As a result, the study's population consisted of all residents of Sankera, Benue State, Nigeria. These include both young and old individuals of different genders, ages, marital status, educational qualifications, and employment status residing in the area. Sankera has an estimated population of 826,200 people, according to the National Population Commission (NPC) 2017 projected population. The representative sample for the study was taken from this demographic data.

Males and females of varied ages, marital status, educational qualification, and work position who live in the area make up the study's sample. The Taro Yamane (1967) sample size determinant was utilized to arrive at a more precise sample size for the investigation. Taro Tamane's sample size determinant formula is quantitatively stated as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(s)^2}$$

As a result, the study's sample size is 400 (including key informant interviews) in Sankera area, Benue State, Nigeria. To get a representative sample for the study, the study used a multi-stage sampling technique. The multi-stage approach was chosen since the study population is vast and diverse in terms of socio-demographic factors. The most convenient and purposeful sampling procedures were used for each stage of selection. The researcher believes that this technique is suitable because the respondents for this study are sensitive figures who would not want their identities revealed. As a result, the researcher deemed this technique suitable for dealing with the flaws in selecting respondents for the study.

The study location (Sankera region) and study population were chosen via purposive sampling in stage one. The Sankera Area is the seat of the North-east Senatorial Zone in Benue State, Nigeria, as well as the state's economic hub, attracting people from all walks of life. Furthermore, Sankera is the state's leading producer of yam and groundnuts, therefore many groups of people are expected to assemble for various activities. In addition, for stage two, the purposive sampling technique was employed to identify specific regions in Sankera that is prone to the activities of bandits and banditry. This concept is founded on the researchers' knowledge of the specific location where these crimes are committed. Thus, Sankera's Kastina-Ala, Ukum, and Logo Local Government Areas are among the arrears affected by banditry as well formed the research area.

The sample respondents for the study were chosen at step three. The 400 respondents were chosen via convenient sampling technique. The lack of a sampling frame or sample registry for respondents' socio-demographic data necessitated the requirement for a convenient sampling procedure in this investigation. As a result, random selection of responses was nearly impossible. In addition, participants for the key informant interview were easily chosen from among the 400 representatives sampled for the study.

For data collection, quantitative and qualitative instruments were used. The questionnaire is the quantitative tool, and the in-depth interview is the qualitative instrument. For data collecting instruments, quantitative and qualitative methodologies were used. These two instruments were chosen because they were thought to be more reliable than any other tool for gathering data in this investigation and they complement each other hypotheses were tested statistically using Linear Regression at the 0.05 level of significance. The researcher retrieved three hundred and eighty eight (388), completed questionnaires used for the study analysis from the four hundred (400) dispersed surveys. However, eleven (12) surveys were either not returned or were incorrectly completed, and hence could not be used in the analysis. A total of 88 in depth interview were conducted.

7. Result/Findings

Hypothesis one

H₀: There is no significant relationship between political thuggery and youth involvement in armed banditry in Sankera Area of Benue state, Nigeria

Table 1
One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) measuring the relationship between political thuggery and youth involvement in armed banditry

Sources variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	25.849	3	2.350	.803	.637
Within Groups	1103.513	377	2.927		
Total	1129.362	388			

*The mean difference is significance at the 0.05 level

Source: field data, 2022

The objective of hypothesis one was to determine whether relationship exists between political thuggery and youth involvement in armed banditry in the Sankera Area of Benue State, Nigeria. The result of the analysis as presented in table 1 shows the value of F is .803 which reaches significance with a P-value of .637 (which is greater than the .05 alpha level). With this outcome, the null hypotheses were rejected while the alternate hypotheses were accepted. The alternate hypothesis holds that there is statistically significance relationship

between political thuggery and youth involvement in armed banditry in the Sankera Area of Benue State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis two

H₀: There is no significant relationship between unemployment and youth involvement in armed banditry in Sankera Area of Benue State, Nigeria.

Table 2. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) measuring the relationship between unemployment and youth involvement in armed banditry

Sources of variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	25.880	3	2.588	.887	.546
Within Groups	1103.483	378	2.919		
Total	1129.362	388			

*The mean difference is significance at the 0.05 level

Source: field data, 2022

The objective of hypothesis two was to determine whether relationship exists between unemployment and youth involvement in armed banditry in the Sankera Area of Benue State, Nigeria. The result of the analysis as presented in table 2 shows that the value of F is .887 which reaches significance with a P-value of .546 (which is greater than the .05 alpha level). With this outcome, the null hypotheses were rejected while the alternate hypotheses were accepted. The alternate hypothesis holds that there is statistically significance relationship between unemployment and youth involvement in armed banditry in the Sankera Area of Benue State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis three

H₀: There is no significant relationship between unemployment and youth involvement in armed banditry in Sankera Area of Benue State, Nigeria.

Table 3: One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) measuring the relationship between poverty and youth involvement in armed banditry

Sources of variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	28.374	3	2.579	.883	.557
Within Groups	1100.989	377	2.920		
Total	1129.362	388			

*The mean difference is significance at the 0.05 level

Source: field data, 2022

The objective of hypothesis three was to determine whether relationship exists between poverty and youth involvement in armed banditry in the Sankera Area of Benue State, Nigeria. The result of the analysis as presented in table 3 shows the value of F is .883 which reaches significance with a P-value of .557 (which is greater than the .05 alpha level). With this outcome, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternate hypothesis was accepted. The alternate hypothesis holds that there is statistically significance relationship between poverty and youth involvement in armed banditry in the Sankera Area of Benue State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis four

H₄: There is no significant relationship between get quick syndrome and youth involvement in armed banditry in Sankera Area of Benue State, Nigeria.

Table 4: One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) measuring the relationship between get quick syndrome and youth involvement in armed banditry

Sources of variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.589	3	1.196	1.702	.166
Within Groups	270.673	385	.703		
Total	274.262	388			

*The mean difference is significance at the 0.05 level

Source: field data, 2022

The objective of hypothesis four was to determine whether relationship exists between get quick syndrome and youth involvement in armed banditry in the Sankera Area of Benue State, Nigeria. The result of the analysis as presented in table 4 shows that the value of F is 1.702 which reaches significance with a P-value of .166 (which is greater than the .05 alpha levels). With this outcome, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternate hypothesis was accepted. The alternate hypothesis holds that there is statistically significance relationship between get quick syndrome and youth involvement in armed banditry in the Sankera Area of Benue State, Nigeria.

8. Discussion of Findings

Hypothesis one was tested using analysis of variance (ANOVA), presented in table 1 at 388 degrees of freedom and a 0.05 level of significance. The hypothesis tested whether there is relationship between political thuggery and youth involvement in banditry. The result of the hypothesis showed the value of F is .883 which reaches significance with a P-value of .557. Based on this outcome, the alternate hypothesis was accepted while the null hypothesis was rejected. The alternate hypothesis states that there is statistically significance relationship between political thuggery and youth involvement in armed banditry in the Sankera Area of Benue State, Nigeria. With the sole purpose of winning elections at any costs, politicians engage in election improprieties by recruiting willing youth as thugs and equip them with arm and ammunitions to help scuttle the entire electoral process and facilitate their wining of elections. However, after elections, the majority of these weapons were not recovered from these thugs as such remained missing. In addition, most of the thugs who seized these weapons were not compensated as promised by their political patrons as such they hold on to the weapons. Yecho (2010) holds the same conclusion as respondents, who believe that the rise of prebendal politics and the legitimization of political thuggery as a profession are two of the main causes of the rise in violent crimes in Nigeria. Because the contest for political power in Nigeria is viewed as "a do or die affair," participants carry weapons and ammunition to enable them skew the entire process to favour them.

When asked of those prevailing conditions that led to political thuggery in the area, a discussant reported thus:

During his tenure as governor of Benue State in the 6th and 7th republic, the governor did everything in his power, within the constraints of the resources at his disposal, to protect the lives and property of the people of Benue State and to create for them a peaceful environment in which to pursue their goals. In both my personal and professional capacities, he did not provide any individuals or organizations with weapons of any kind, nor did he promote any kind of criminal activity or violence (In-depth interview participant).

When asked whether it is only in the 6th and 7th republic in Benue State that thugs were not sponsored, a discussant opined that:

There is, however, no government that is free of crime; rather, what raises alarm is how severe and pervasive the violence is. Before the 6th and 7th republic in Benue State, the issue of armed youth existed there. There are numerous indications that party politics in Benue State enjoy the continued use of weapons. Political parties in Benue have been in the habit of arming the youth with arms and ammunition during electioneering periods (In-depth interview participant).

In the same vein, another discussant lamented that:
However, to further address your query, it pertains to creating jobs. No young person, in my opinion, wants to carry a gun and randomly start shooting and killing people; they only do it because there is no other option (In-depth interview participant).

This remark from the respondent supports the idea that arming and funding teenagers in Benue State was a "party issue" that existed before the 6th and 7th republic government in Benue State was elected. Again, according to The New Times (2003:1), a high-ranking member of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) accused another of using PDP weapons and ammunition intended for elections against his people in the communal clash between the Ikurav-Tiev and Shitire in Katsina-Ala Local Government.

Another hypothesis was tested using analysis of variance (ANOVA), presented in table 2 at 388 degrees of freedom and a 0.05 level of significance. This hypothesis tests whether there is relationship between unemployment and youth involvement banditry. The result of the hypothesis showed the value of F is .887 which reaches significance with a P-value of .546. Based on this outcome, the alternate hypothesis was accepted while the null hypothesis was rejected. The alternate hypothesis states that there is statistically significance relationship between unemployment and youth involvement in armed banditry in the Sankera Area of Benue State, Nigeria.

The conclusion of this hypothesis supports National Bureau of Statistics' (NBS, 2009; 2012) assertion that Nigeria's high unemployment rate is a factor that encourages banditry. Nigeria's unemployment rate was 23.1 percent in 2019 and 2022 it was expected to reach 33 percent according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), with youth unemployment accounting for 55.4 percent of the total. Likewise, the Northwest's poverty rate is 77.7 percent. (NBS, 2012; Rosenje and Moliki, 2016). As Nigerian universities continue to graduate students in large numbers with the expectation that they will find better jobs and opportunities following graduation, these numbers have continued to dramatically rise each year (Adegoke, 2019). The majority of these bandit attacks and security concerns in the country have their roots in the uneasiness of Nigerian graduates, which eventually develops into frustration and finally hostility towards the government (Suleiman, 2017; Mustapha, 2019).

Further, Kilishi, Mobolaji, Usman, Yakubu, and Yaru (2014) presented evidence suggesting the rise in crime in Nigeria has been attributed to the country's rising unemployment rate. As a result, idle adolescents often participate in illicit activities to keep up with current trends. It suffices to remark that the country's pervasive "get rich quick syndrome" attracts young people who are readily seduced by wealth. As a result, they often take whatever measure necessary to become wealthy as soon as possible. Therefore, Nigeria's high unemployment rate, particularly the rising incidence of youth unemployment, is a major contributing factor to the country's unemployed youth turning to violent crime like banditry (Adagba, Ugwu and eme, 2012; Epron, 2019).

According to empirical data, a significant part of the young in the zone lack access to high-quality education and are unemployed. Some of these impoverished adolescents established bands of bandits in the countryside and were exploited as political pawns by some elites to advance their own agendas. Some desperate politicians turned them into foot troops

in an effort to seize and hold onto political power. This heinous deed increased the problem of rural banditry and oftentimes sparks political unrest among the study populations and the nation as a whole. A vigilante group's leader bitterly expressed his disgust with the government over its near utter disregard for the supply of jobs for young people.

Would you blame certain young people who indulge in acts like armed banditry, he bemoaned? Rural places like mine have been ignored. Our existence is unknown to the government. We lack excellent roads, healthcare facilities, schools, and employment opportunities. What are you hoping they will do? How are we going to manage them all? You ought to consider our circumstance as well. Is it decent?

You too know that is real, a participant echoed.

What do you expect when the majority of young people today lack employment, resources, and access to electricity, water, education, and safe roads, while only local politicians are occupied with the distribution of tax dollars from the local government, which belong to the people? Do you really expect them to do anything than stand by and observe? The government needs to take serious action to salvage the situation

Hypothesis three was tested using analysis of variance (ANOVA) as presented in table 3 at 388 degrees of freedom and a 0.05 level of significance. This hypothesis tests whether there is relationship between unemployment and youth involvement banditry. The result of the hypothesis showed the value of F is .883 which reaches significance with a P-value of .557. Based on this outcome, the alternate hypothesis was accepted while the null hypothesis was rejected. The alternate hypothesis states that there is statistically significance relationship between poverty and youth involvement in armed banditry in the Sankera Area of Benue State, Nigeria.

The results further support Adeolu's (2018) assertion that Nigeria's previous administrations have failed to address the issues of unemployment and poverty. The results of this hypothesis are consistent with those of Abdullahi, A. (2019), who found that in the Tillaberi and Tahoua region of the Niger Republic, rural banditry, including cattle and sheep rustling and the killing of innocent people in border communities, is closely related to the general poverty situation of the population brought on by the nation's poor governance. The results are also consistent with those of Adeolu (2018), who highlighted that life has become difficult and that only the strongest survive due to Nigeria's consecutive administrations' failure to address the issues of poverty plaguing the country. According to Adeolu (2018), who agreed with Adebayo (2018)'s assessment, 87 million Nigerians, or over half the country's population, are believed to be living on less than \$1.90 per day, surpassing India as the nation with the biggest number of people living in extreme poverty. Alao, Atere, and Alao (2015) connected poverty to terrorism, banditry, and other criminal activity. Although not all criminal behavior can be attributed to poverty, it has been argued that economic hardship leads people to turn to illicit means of obtaining daily necessities. It was found that most people, especially young people, tend to join bandit groups in the Northwest of Nigeria because of the alluring perks associated with banditry activity (Epron, 2014; Adegoke, 2019). This opinion was shared by a police officer who remarked thus:

Basic services like power, schools, health care, banking, communication, and hospitality services and skill acquisition centres are not provided. This singular acts create on told hardship on the youth and predispose them into banditry.

The desire for material possession is one among the prevailing issues in Nigeria. The eagerness of people in Nigeria especially the youths to acquire material possession prompted some of them into engage in criminal activities especially violent crimes.

The last hypotheses was tested using analysis of variance (ANOVA) as presented in table 4 at 388 degrees of freedom and a 0.05 level of significance. This hypothesis tests whether there is relationship between get rich syndrome and youth involvement banditry.

The result of the hypothesis showed the value of F is 1.702 which reaches significance with a P-value of .166. Based on this outcome, the alternate hypothesis was accepted while the null hypothesis was rejected. The alternate hypothesis states that there is statistically significance relationship between get quick syndrome and youth involvement in armed banditry in the Sankera Area of Benue State, Nigeria. The finding is in line with the findings of Ojolo (2017) who noted that indeed, we live in a society that exalts material success. The lifestyles of the so-called "celebrities" further support the attitude of Nigerian society that glorifies wealth. Numerous well-known Nigerian hip-hop songs, glorify the lifestyle of the criminals (Zittrain, 2008). Additionally, music videos by some artists feature them partying with young women, driving exotic cars, drinking champagne, and flaunting large sums of money they have amassed through criminal activities. The benefits of that act as inducements to banditry are the recurring themes in both the music videos and the lyrics.

An in-depth interviewer corroborated thus;

The unspeakably repulsive behavior many young Nigerians engage in these days in their frantic quest for wealth is extremely distressing, in addition to being disgusting and depressing. The desire to become wealthy quickly is on the rise among Nigerian youth, including Sankera youth. The young people do the unthinkable in an effort to satisfy their get-rich-quick syndrome. They engaged in a variety of terrible deeds, such as ritual slaughter, human sacrifice, and occasionally, the sacrifice of family members. On social media, there are countless horrifying and offensive films that depict young guys committing atrocities in order to get money that circulate every day.

The research findings are in line with R. K. Merton's theory of anomie adopted for the study. The findings supported the theoretical assumption that the culture and structure of society constrains the individual through the misalignments between the cultural approved goals and means of available to achieve the goals. Thus, in trying to adapt and make ends meet some youth innovate *via* banditry.

9. Conclusion

The main factors contributing to armed banditry in the Sankera Area of Benue State are multifaceted and include, among other things: political thuggery, rising youth unemployment, difficult economic circumstances leading to poverty and get rich quick syndrome in Nigeria. The disruption of economic activity, the decline in business activity as a result of travelers' and service providers' fears of insecurity, and the psychological trauma experienced by locals, victims, and relatives of victims of armed banditry are the most notable socioeconomic effects of armed banditry. Armed banditry has been poorly controlled and prevented by individuals, local communities, and government law enforcement organizations. The majority of attempts entailed putting up vigilante organizations and roadblocks, but these were not enough given the geography and how the bandits operate—they assault and flee into the hills or bushes for shelter. The study concluded that political thuggery, poverty, employment and get-rich quick syndrome are some of the determinants of armed banditry in the study area.

10. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study; the following policy recommendations are made:

- In order to improve the socioeconomic conditions of the population and lessen the propensity for turning to crime as a means of survival, government should address the concerns of unemployment, poverty, neglect of the rural areas, and social injustice. Government should do this through the establishment and proper funding of workable skill acquisition centres and poverty alleviation programmes that will take the bottom top approach as against the top bottom approach. This will help bridge the gap between unemployment and poverty and help promote social justice.

- The research showed that while armed robbers are equipped with highly advanced weaponry like the AK-47, government security forces are ill-prepared, under-resourced, and under-trained to deal with such crimes as armed banditry. Therefore, it is advised that the government equips the security services with modern weapons that are more effective than those used by armed bandits. The government should fund the security forces and provide the force with a state of the art security system and policies and programmes put in place for the training and retraining of security forces to keep them up to date with the modern practices to enable the security forces deal adequately with banditry.
- In order to encourage hard work and academic brilliance, the educational system needs to be changed. As a result of the lack of emphasis and importance placed on education, many young people are expected to take their education seriously and refrain from engaging in criminal activity, which has become closely associated with them.
- Churches, communities and governments at all levels should condemn the practice of according honour and respect to criminals and other irresponsible people on the basis of wealth questionably acquired. This will serve as a deterrent to would be individuals who may wish to engage in get rich quick syndrome to the purpose of acquiring honour.

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SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES OF UNDERSTANDING THE URBAN PLANNING ACTIVITIES: THE CONVERGENCE PRINCIPLES OF SPECIFIC INTERESTS

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Abstract: *This article highlights the complexity of urban planning efforts in contemporary cities. The heterogeneity of urban life is illustrated by a multitude of scientists from different fields: architecture, construction, urban planning, anthropology, sociology. The opinions expressed have provided and still provide diverse analytical perspectives, which respond to certain specific aspects of urban life and stand out for their theoretical validity at a separate level, but which, as some sociologists concerned with studying the urban environment have pointed out, can only ensure functional unity through their integration into a unitary whole. Thus, the selection of authors cited in the article is characterized by the tendency to explain urban life from the perspective of the factors that characterize the various urban dimensions that, in one way or another, influence the social life of cities. This theoretical perspective is associated with the requirements of the present related to European directives, environmental protection requirements and the high competitiveness specific to the global world. In an evaluation stage of the current situation and the priorities related to the urban planning of the city of Craiova, a sociological survey was carried out in which items related to the investment needs in urban regeneration activities were included. The obtained results highlighted aspects that enjoy the appreciation of the population, but also aspects flagged as deficient. In addition, data was collected regarding the hierarchy of factors that contribute to the formation of citizens' opinions. There were 732 questionnaires collected distributed in nine areas of the city, applied to a group of respondents balanced in terms of distribution according to gender, age, level of education and occupation. The conclusions of the study are integrated into the conclusions of the present article, which contain the ideas arising from the theoretical documentation and the comparison with the perceptions expressed by the citizens participating in the sociological survey.*

Key words: urban sociology, urban planning, population, urban development, quality of life

1. Introduction

Urban planning is a complex activity to ensure a harmonious course of development of a city. The dynamics of contemporary societies is fast, and the transformations are unpredictable due to the dimensions of the elements in interdependent relationships.

The specific phenomena of cities, conditioned by specific socio-economic aspects, will have a double analytical perspective: the first refers to the generative causes of some consequences that presuppose, as the case may be, intervention for support or correction, while the second perspective presupposes a cognitive effort of understanding urban phenomena as effects of some causes. In short, a complete analysis involves identifying the position of the studied phenomena in the causal chain. Otherwise, work strategies deduced from erroneous conclusions will be adopted.

These findings imply clarifications generated by the objectivity of planned development approaches and solutions. The population of a city is heterogeneous, consisting of different categories of people, interests and concerns. The unity of interests and concerns appears in certain situations and according to certain events affecting certain social groups. The unit of action is temporary and concurrent with the immediate effects of manifest events. Thus, urban planning represents an effort to catalyze the interest of a city's population and stakeholders in correlation with urban needs.

Public debates dedicated to urban planning highlight at least three perspectives of understanding: the first refers to the city, understood as a community, where citizens are seen as a relatively unitary community; the second refers to the interests of the business environment, especially those involved in real estate business, in the administration and development of commercial and industrial spaces; the third perspective refers to the administrative concern of ensuring urban functions and urban infrastructure, of the harmonious configuration of administrative, residential and economic areas of cities.

The specialized analysis will highlight that in the case of each direction of action an objective logic is formed, based on causal relationships. However, when the three courses of action are put in parallel, they will generate the suspicion of subjectivity in the prioritization of the planning stages. The coordination of the specific objectives of the three approaches is the most important point in the implementation of urban planning actions.

2. The search for the balance point

We can appreciate that this approach resembles a mathematical problem in which the point of balance between the three perspectives of understanding is sought. This requirement presupposes the identification of certain scenarios, which we sense without claiming to cover the entire issue.

1. In the first scenario, citizens' opinions regarding the needs of the city are prioritized and expectations related to the occupational offer, housing comfort, quality of life, ensuring an aesthetic appearance, the development of leisure, relaxation and socializing spaces will be taken into account, simultaneously with the provision of public and institutional services at the highest possible standards. Authors such as G. Simmel (1950: 412), emphasize an aspect that should filter the understanding of communities in the urban environment: city dwellers do not behave independently in the urban space; under the pressure of intense socio-economic processes, they adapt to the requirements of urban dynamics. For example, pocket watches suddenly appeared and became indispensable, and a likely disruption of their operation would have significantly disrupted the entire economic activity of cities. Compared to the historical perspective of the social structure of cities, industrialization brought, according to Simmel (2005: 283-298), a significant level of freedom, by increasing the importance of money, which mediates the social life of cities and eliminates relationships based on dominance. The debt is transferred from the personal level to the level of work products. In addition, markets based on financial intermediation allow unlimited convertibility of goods and services. Simmel associated urbanization with the emancipation of the population from traditional forms of coexistence, emphasizing the possibility of asserting one's own individuality under conditions of autonomy and identity. In this sense, cities are not only economic, financial markets or architectural ensembles, but even "arenas" in which individuals can "distinguish themselves from one another" (Simmel, 1950: 423).
2. The second scenario refers to the prioritization of investments in the real estate sector, with all the necessary conditions, considering the economic importance for the development of the city. It creates jobs, expands the tax base for public authorities and ensures the exploitation of urban land at a very high level of efficiency. Along with the real estate development, there is also the need for economic development, for the sites necessary for the industrial and commercial development of the city, for the connection with local and financial institutions. The attractiveness of cities depends on the economic dynamics and the opportunities offered to the business environment and people looking for quality jobs. This scenario results from the scientific approaches related to the classical studies dedicated to urban sociology. For example, for Max Weber (1958: 67) the city is a commercial space, which provides

markets for the trading of various goods. Since the Middle Ages cities have grown and developed around the markets provided by the city leaders and the facilities made available to those interested, such as warehouses, security, roads, trade routes.

The transformations of cities are permanent and in the study of cities spread over various continents we will observe characteristics of past eras. Following the visit to the city of Naples, Benjamin (1997: 169) noted the ways in which it has built over time by reserving the possibilities to build in the future. Such a finding goes beyond the simplicity of physical observations by appealing to meanings with multiple connections related to concern for the future. Current real estate markets are governed by the need for expansion, urban renewal efforts and permanent updating to the requirements of the present, but without closing the possibilities of future investments.

3. The third scenario refers to the prioritization of public investments in the development of urban functions. Ensuring the flow of traffic, the quality of public transport, places to relax and socialize, green spaces, an educational system adapted to the needs of the labor market, a quality medical system, air and water quality, as well as urban utilities (water and sewage) represent only some of the general directions of action of the public authorities. The quality of life of the urban environment is dependent on the complex interdependence of several heterogeneous factors. Urban functions favor urban dynamics by facilitating the aggregation of the population specialized in various fields of activity. Thus, following the study of the historical development of cities, M. Weber (1958: 67) found that the infrastructure built for the benefit of the nobility became attractive also for other categories of people, such as workers or artisans who contributed to the diversification of the social structure and led to a higher degree of autonomy of these communities. Administrative functions created the socio-political framework through which markets functioned in a regulated manner. The military function was added to the administrative functions, ensured within the medieval fortresses (Weber, 1958: 75). Thus, urban planning is hampered by the tendencies of a crowded diversity in a relatively unitary ensemble, this because the present has historical foundations, but which it has not aggregated into a unitary system capable of eliminating contradictions (Lefebvre, 1976: 76). As a Marxist author, Lefebvre continued the line of analysis of cities by considering that the export of the division of labor beyond administrative boundaries transformed cities into central commercial areas surrounded by deprived areas and wealthy enclaves. Referring to the development of cities, Lefebvre uses the example of Venice where the social space is produced and reproduced in relation to the forces of production, which according to the development do not take over "a pre-existing space, empty or neutral, or a space determined only by geography, climate, anthropology or other comparable considerations' (Lefebvre, 1984: 77). In Lefebvre's opinion, the elements with mediating power and a transformative role must be understood, such as social groups, their action, ideologies, knowledge or the way in which the representations of the population are manifested. Lefebvre (idem) mentioned that the social space comprises a great diversity of objects, both natural and social, including the networks and paths that facilitate the exchange of material things and information, which makes social relations contribute to their rearrangement in diverse configurations of spatial-temporal nature.

The balance between the three approaches involves efforts to correlate the expectations of all stakeholders. The analysis of Romanian cities reveals the difficulties encountered by communities where urban development planning was carried out through a

simplistic and reductionist approach. Manifestation of negative effects is constituted by generating factors of undesirable phenomena in the life of cities.

For example, in the case of the first scenario, of prioritizing the opinions of the population, as a group of city residents, we find that urban planning will generate permanent costs with the maintenance of unnecessary spaces in the event of economic decline due to the lack of investment in real estate or economic activities. The prioritization of urban comfort will affect the circulation of financial flows, the creation and maintenance of jobs and entities that contribute by paying taxes to the growth of local budgets. Also, the complexity of urban phenomena will contribute to the formation of public opinions of an ideological and political nature in opposition to the interests of the business environment or the need for efficient management of urban space by public authorities.

In the second scenario, economic competition may become intense, and in the first stage, we will witness a decrease in air quality and environmental indicators. Moreover, there is a tendency to increase the pressure on some areas of the city, the emergence and increase in the speed of manifestation of the gentrification process, simultaneously with a process of disinvestment of some urban areas considered less attractive for housing or investment. Overcrowding in these areas will affect urban comfort, create difficulties and degrade the quality of urban life, ultimately causing a drop in investment prices in the area. Urban regeneration offers the opportunity to re-stimulate economic activities, and economic growth will help solve many of the problems of cities. In certain situations, we witness dilemmatic situations, related to the possible costs of economic growth and technology.

Prioritizing the activity of local authorities to ensure urban functions and limiting the business environment through successive and inflexible regulations, especially by eliminating public-private partnerships, will slow down the economic growth of the city, without ensuring the increase of the population's satisfaction with the quality of life in urban area. Urban infrastructure becomes, in our opinion, useful when it complements the real estate development of the city, becoming a function that ensures on the one hand an appropriate degree of civilization of the city and an addition to the value of newly built residential spaces. In addition, the economic dynamics of cities is correlated with the propensity towards real estate investments. It is found that where the economic sector is dynamic, real estate investments know a remarkable momentum.

Cities function as a whole and integrating all dimensions into a coordinated course of action will contribute to increasing the quality of urban life. For example, S. Parker (2004: 39) describes the importance of the development of the city of Chicago on urban sociology studies. The rapid urbanization of the city influenced the sociological school that bore its name, being a real open-air laboratory: "the city grew from a population of 4470 inhabitants in 1840 to a population of 1.1 million inhabitants in 1890 and of 3.5 million inhabitants in 1930". The rapidity of the urbanization process was due to the transport industry, railway or shipping, intensive trade and real estate developers. The intense transformations of the city have drawn attention to those concerned with the human condition affected in various ways by the process of urbanization (Parker, 2004: 39).

The analyzes dedicated to the current Romanian cities are affected by the current economic difficulties, being affected by the rather high frequency of crises, either global or local. We appreciate that the detachment of the real estate market in relation to the other economic sectors is due to the lack of coherence of the economic system, the unpredictability, and the preferences of investors towards this field of activity is the logical expression of the lack of opportunities in business.

3. Prioritizing the objectives of urban planning from a holistic perspective

The approaches to knowledge and scientific understanding of cities included in the definitions the demographic factor (Berger, 19778: 9), which was supplemented with aspects

related to the economy, production, the diverse occupational structure, formal social relations, the decrease in the importance of kinship relations and the preponderance of non-agricultural occupations (Mihăilescu, 2003: 272).

Cities developed and expanded rapidly with the industrialization of developed countries. Thus, the approach of the first researchers of urban spaces was guided by the social phenomena and inequality generated by economic development (Parker, 2004: 3). In the contemporary period, international experience (Urban Trask Force, 1999: 14) has emphasized an important aspect of urban planning: the achievement of a harmonious coexistence between urban residents and the business environment. Starting from the connection between the city, understood as a space of concentration of a large population, on the one hand, and, on the other, as a space of intense and diversified economic activities, we consider that the approach to the human community as a form of collective coexistence creator of social spaces, in the sense defined by Lefebvre, is the most connected to the needs resulting from the unfolding of urban processes, simultaneously with the effort to preserve the possibilities of future evolution and to allow the generations to come to create their own space.

Internationally, the role of the real estate industry in the development of cities is mentioned, being considered the main source of special interests that contribute to the creation or destruction of a city (Gottdiener and Hutchison, 2011: 17). The ecological approach assumed that urban organization is the result of separate interests, such as those of global corporations or investment firms, which generate an investment flow that contributes to the growth or decay of a city by mere presence or absence. Added to them are the special interests of real estate developers who are only the interface of a conglomerate of interested institutions: "corporations, banks, land developers, construction companies, which invest in the development of land use and housing, including the land and the built environment itself" (Gottdiener and Hutchison, 2011: 17). The profit pursued by investors can change the appearance of cities, living areas and can change the destination of urban spaces (Gottdiener and Hutchison, 2011: 17). However, recent history has preserved the memory of the experiences related to the economic crises generated by the collapse of financial speculations made around real estate markets. We note that the return to the equilibrium situations are directly proportional to the strength of the societies affected by the economic crises, a fact that implies the regulation and avoidance of blocking the process of the production of social space by urban communities by slowing economic growth.

Currently, the approach to socio-spatial phenomena is adopted as part of social relations, being closely related to everyday life. In past approaches, space was seen as a container of social activities (Gottdiener and Hutchison, 2011: 19), which assigned it a passive role in the unfolding of social activities. However, assigning a specific destination to a vacant place, such as turning it into a basketball court (Gottdiener and Hutchison, 2011: 19), will change "the type of activity and the interaction of groups of people in that space".

Assuming the theoretical principles and research conclusions that led to the previous mentions, we carried out a study in the municipality of Craiova in Romania in July 2023. Unused spaces, overcrowded spaces in the neighborhood areas and disused industrial areas of the city were targeted. Citizens' assessments were also collected related to the way certain urban processes are carried out and the degree of satisfaction of the needs identified following personal experiences. The conclusions of the investigation underlined the opposition between the interests of the citizens and the tendency to build in the already congested housing areas and which eliminate green spaces and socializing places. As a fact to the city, we can remember the idea of a differentiated distribution of housing prices according to certain judgments related to the quality of the inhabitants. Thus, these neighborhoods are sought, where overcrowding and traffic intensity already generate inconveniences. The collected data highlight the fact that the urban space, understood only as a support for social activities, tends to become a blocking factor of the city's development. It is observed that in economically

developed societies, expansion towards metropolitan areas is preferred, by creating several development zones, some with specialized functions. In the case of the city of Craiova, it is found that real estate interests exceed community needs and investments are preferred in areas with significant potential from the point of view of the real estate market, but which over time will probably depreciate.

Statistical data analysis (<http://statistici.INSSE.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>) highlights the decrease in the city's population, mainly due to emigration, which suggests a downward trend in housing demand in the future. Emigration also suggests the persistence of economic problems over time, which we identify by the lack of jobs, the low absorption of young people in the labor market and a significant percentage of vulnerable jobs. By comparing with the constitutive factors of the production of social space and with the approach of socio-spatial phenomena as part of social relations, we find that the current aspect of urban dynamics in Craiova is due to the maintenance of the current validity of the real estate market without connection with other markets.

The efforts of the public administration to realize coherent development programs are limited from the point of view of assuming long-term objectives in the conditions where the three analytical perspectives (the urban community, the economic environment and the public administration) are somewhat unbalanced by the instability of the economic environment dependent on by local conditions, but by global phenomena. Public debates conducted on a background that excludes the congruence of socio-spatial factors can affect the development perspective of the city and the possibilities of future generations to ensure the factors of social space production adapted to the changes specific to globalized societies.

4. Conclusions

Urban planning involves a constant effort to balance development policies in relation to global phenomena and national society, on the one hand and in relation to internal development needs, which implies the elaboration of development strategies on several levels of action.

This perspective is also hampered by the current dynamics of socioeconomic phenomena that reduce the possibilities of predicting future evolution. Thus, it becomes important to plan actions to solve immediate needs and to project future activities over moderate periods of time and in ways that allow rapid corrections according to the changes that can occur with high speed and unpredictable consequences.

Establishing principles of future action, which guide the way of working regarding the needs of the community, business opportunities and the degree of permissiveness or limitation of the regulatory possibilities of the local administration can be solutions that ensure the convergence of specific interests and the preservation of the possibilities of action. Future Authoritarian tendencies can even affect the principles that ensure the specificity of urban life, such as the autonomy of individuals ensured by the possibility of competition and the fruition of individual potential.

The legal provisions that allow the public debate of local development strategies incubate two aspects: they can be constructive when all aspects related to community and business interests are put in correspondence and they can create reports of oppositions when divergent interests are not mediated during the debate process public. Thus, local regulations are optimal if they target the functional aspects of the city and uninspired when they supplement existing legislation or by which they try to intervene in already manifest conflicts of interests.

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MIGRATION IN A SOCIETY MARKED BY INSTABILITY

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Abstract: *Contemporary society is a society strongly marked by instability that launches many challenges and intensifies the dynamics of processes and phenomena at political, economic, demographic and social level. One such example is migration, especially international migration. In this context, the reshaping of society becomes imperative and all its laws must be revised, strategically applied and respected, even at the cost of applying coercive but respectful human rights measures. Even if the process is complex, a number of organizations and institutions fight to achieve the order of common interest and reduce illegal migration. A focus on such actions could contribute to respect for human rights and lead to successful management of migration. Regarding this article, its purpose is to observe and analyze the approaches of some institutions and organizations in the field that outline several directions that will serve as a starting point in ordering migration in order to be controlled. Setting the target on international migration, supporting the human dignity and well-being of migrants coupled with the implementation of correct and coherent public policies on migration lead to meeting migrants' needs and can lead to the reduction of problems related to international migration.*

Keywords: instability, international migration, human rights, public policies

1. Introduction

The term migration is so complex that a generally accepted definition has not yet been developed, despite numerous research papers carried out in this area of interest. With the rapid evolution of society in general, defining migration seems to become more difficult because the reality in which it manifests itself is continuously changing, generating changes in volume, intensity, meaning, new causes, other means of manifestation, various flows, modern networks and various attraction factors. However, migration tends to occur regularly and is characterised by the movement of a person (both voluntarily and driven by environmental factors, political, ethnic, religious conflicts) from one place to another both within the host country and across its borders.

In the Glossary of Migration, published by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), migration is defined as "the movement of a person from where he or she normally resides, either across an international border or within a state" (2019).

"Migration is a social phenomenon known in all epochs of evolution of society and has marked it, in certain historical periods, taking place both nationally and internationally. The movement of people from one territory to another, from one geographical area to another, and from one continent to another, has not, in past ages, been an insurmountable impediment, despite the magnitude of distances and natural barriers, as long as they have been able to benefit from the means of transport existing in each historical epoch. (Otovescu A. 2010: 617).

"Migration is a phenomenon in the same sense that << death and birth events, for example, by aggregation define mortality and fertility feomens respectively >>. Migration is also a process in the sense that the migration phenomenon involves a series of qualitative and quantitative changes in time, such as: changes in volume, intensity, meaning, causes and mechanisms of production, etc. In the sense of process, migration is seen in the dynamics of the manifestation of the phenomenon (i.e. the changes in the characteristics of the migration phenomenon from one time interval to another, during a certain historical period." (Otovescu A., 2016: 27; Sandu, 1984: 20).

"Since the nineteenth century, migration has been an object of study for demographers, economists, geographers, historians, anthropologists, sociologists and other specialists, who sought to discover the factors and conditions that favor the territorial movement of people" (Otovescu A., 2016: 91). In this context, six scientists (two sociologists, two economists, a geographer and a demographer) elaborated in 1998, in Oxford, a paper, starting from the consideration that international migration will be an emblematic problem at social, political and economic level of the twenty-first century. Worlds in *motion*. *Understanding international migration at the end of the millenium*, written by the six scientists (Douglas massey, Joaquin Arango, Graeme Hugo, Ali Kouaouci, Adela Pellegrino and J. Edward Taylor) analyzed aspects of who has social and economic responsibility for international migration to developed or expanding nations, description of key elements in geographical movement, appreciation of immigration policies, relations between national migration and community development. The same paper, acknowledging that migration is one of the major factors influencing the global political and economic situation, applies systematic steps to provide a unique overview not only of where migration takes place, but also how it works, crucially detailing the major factors influencing the international movement of population.

Another representative work is the one written in 1999, by Douglas Massey and Kristin Espinoza – *Migration and Transnational Social Spaces*. The book discusses the fact that although globalization brings work to places around the world, the increasing international mobility of workers (and migrants) will be one of the strongest social and political challenges at the end of this century.

Given the different perspectives regarding the definition of migration, it can be said that "Migration, regardless of type, boils down to the same fact: the disappearance for a period (which can become definitive) of an individual in space (Constantinescu, 2008: 278).

In recent years, the world has witnessed historic changes globally. On international migration, two Global Compacts have been finalised: the Global Compact for Refugees and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. In addition, the United Nations Organization for Migration came into being.

Unfortunately, millions of people have displaced due to conflicts (Arab Republic, Syria, Yemen, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Ukraine), extreme violence (Rohingya forced to seek safety in Bangladesh), economic and political instability (Venezuela), environmental change (Mozambique, Philippines, China, India, USA). All these have led to phenomena specific to human mobility such as: planned relocation, resettlement.

2. Problem Statement

The emergence of globalization has required cooperation between states in order to be able to live in peace and overcome the threats that concern them. "The discrepancies that exist between the countries of the contemporary world, in terms of the level of efficiency of economic activity and material endowment, deepen the differentiations between large collectives of people in terms of their human development" (Otovescu, D., 2009: 314)

International migration has always been closely linked to economic and social development, but only recently has it become a real concern of international politics. Policy challenges are of major interest as they seek to adapt to the new levels of pressure imposed by migrant flows, not only at European level, but also globally.

Appropriate policies could harness migration and contribute to sustainable economic growth in both communities of origin and host communities. It is often migrants who meet the requirements in terms of employment, and entrepreneurs benefit from this because some migrants contribute to the development of science and technology, but also to the enrichment of cultural diversity.

IOM promotes the principle that "orderly human migration benefits both migrants and society" (IOM, 2020). Together with its international partners, IOM provides assistance to

address the operational challenges of migration: advanced understanding of migration issues, encouraging social and economic development through migration, and supporting the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

Migrants' access to education enables them to overcome their limitations by first acquiring the skills to communicate in a foreign language. Building a competence of any kind "reinforces this personal effectiveness, making the person more willing to take risks and pursue more serious challenges. Overcoming these challenges in turn increases the feeling of personal effectiveness. This attitude helps people make better use of their skills or develop them" (Constantinescu, 2004: 223)

What our research will demonstrate is that migration, an individual decision, is a normal action that can benefit both the migrant and society (origin or host) as long as the communication mechanisms between the migrant and society function optimally.

3. Research Questions

A first question expected to be answered concerns migration policies. It is interesting to see whether current migration policies manage to adapt to the daily realities that have generated the increase in the number of migrants. Moreover, it remains to be seen whether migration policies will be implemented correctly and whether they will alleviate the pressure generated by migrants for work, migrants for family reunification or refugees.

The access of immigrants to any state must be facilitated both from the legislative point of view and from the point of view of internal policies regulating the possibility of living, studying, starting a family. In contemporary times, the migration specificity of the population (especially the young population) is situated in the natural activities that occur in the life of an adult person and wants to benefit from freedom of movement and unhindered access to knowledge and training, but also from the possibility of a better standard of living, both in the international and national environment.

4. Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to analyze the evolution of migration policies and their degree of adaptation to contemporary reality, in accordance with the needs and aspirations of migrants, with the needs and projections of modern society. In addition, it will be seen whether the competent bodies must show control over the migration flow and provide assistance to solve operational challenges, to understand migrants' problems by supporting their human dignity and well-being, and to encourage social and economic development.

5. Research methods

It has been said in the literature that "the object of every science is to make discoveries" (Gorun, A., Gorun, H.T., 2021:14). In this case, the aim is to discover the degree of evolution of migration policies in order to discover their effectiveness.

A first method used in the present study is the historical-logical method (Méndez López, 2011:588) intended to read existing laws on international migration, to examine the literature on migration systems, migration flows and their orientation in time. This method selects key concepts, creates connections between them, traces their historical evolution to highlight the impact on the result.

In its turn, the method of analysis proved its efficiency at the level of building the overall picture of the presented phenomena and processes, sensing the defining aspects, "relations of interdependence between different social institutions". (Otovescu, D., 2009: 125). Synthesis, a related method, involves the logical ordering of information and the construction of the whole. The research had as starting point the laws previously formulated by the specialized institutions (from abstract to concrete) and represents the starting point for identifying the new characteristics and trends highlighted in the present study.

6. Public policies in managing the migration phenomenon

Public policies are the set of measures taken by a legal and responsible authority, aimed at improving the living conditions of citizens or designing measures to stimulate economic growth. In general, public policies are expressed in the form of regulations or incentives that influence the social and economic environment. One thing to understand about policy making is that it can be seen as both an analytical process (solving a problem) and a political process (Institute for Public Policy, 2009:17).

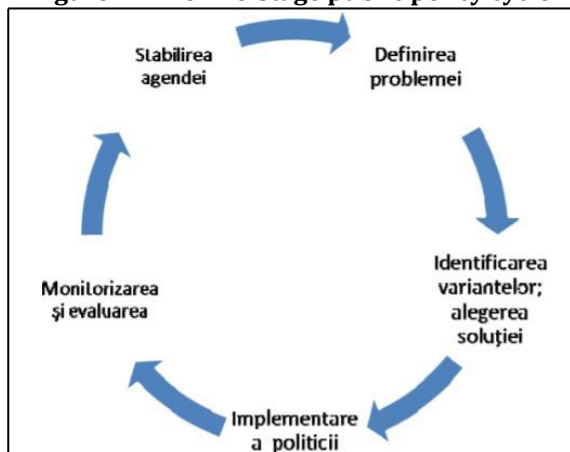
These public policies must be implemented by power structures, which have legislative authority, must reflect real-world problems at the level of society, and solve them, in an assumed, decisive way.

European migration policies are objectives that must be managed efficiently and viewed dynamically, as the evolution of the immigration phenomenon is difficult to forecast. European migration policy is based on European traditions regarding asylum and migration, respectively on respect for human rights and humanitarian aspects, on the benefits of the European Union, migrants and their countries of origin (Popa, Ungureanu, Oneaşcă, 2013: 4)

By analysing public policies, they have the role of creating solutions to be applied to convince citizens about what they need to know to do or act.

The cycle of public policies is in fact a logical deductive process, where the decision-making actor follows a step-by-step path to find the solution to a real problem in society. (Popa, Ungureanu, Oneaşcă, 2013: 4) Once these steps are completed, the cycle resumes.

Figure. 1. The five-stage public policy cycle



Source : Institute for Public Policy, Public Policy Manual for students from the faculties of political science, public administration and management

One act stating that human beings must enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms is the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and other European Union norms and directives.

The commitments regarding migration, assumed by the countries of the European Union, are expressed in directives and regulations, which are constituted in accordance with European legislation and conventions concluded by the Member States (Lăzărescu, L., Șerbănică, C., Prisacariu, L.M., Smaranda Witec, S., 2016: 20-21).

A number of communications, directives and regulations on migration management at European Union level are:

Regulation (EU) No .../... Regulation (EU) No 516/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 establishing the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund,

amending Council Decision 2008/381/EC and repealing Decisions No 516/2014. No 573/2007 and no. Regulation (EC) No 575/2007/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Decision 2007/435/EC.

Regulation (EC) No .../... Regulation (EC) No 862/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 July 2007 on Community statistics on migration and international protection and repealing Regulation (EEC) No 862/2007. Council Regulation (EC) No 311/76 on the compilation of statistics on foreign workers.

Regulation (EU) 2019/1896 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 November 2019 on the European Border and Coast Guard and repealing Regulations (EU) No .../... 1052/2013 and (EU) 2016/1624.

Regulation (EU) 2019/1240 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on the creation of an immigration liaison officers network.

Regulation (EU) 2016/399 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2016 on a Union Code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders (Schengen Borders Code).

Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection.

Directive 2009/52/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 providing for minimum standards on sanctions and measures against employers of illegally staying third-country nationals.

Council Directive 2003/86/EC of 22 September 2003 on the right to family reunification¹.

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the protection of children in migration.

Commission Communication COVID-19: Guidance on the implementation of relevant EU provisions in the area of asylum and return procedures and on resettlement.

The Global Compact for Migration, adopted by most United Nations countries in 2018.

New Pact on Migration and Asylum proposed by the European Commission in 2020

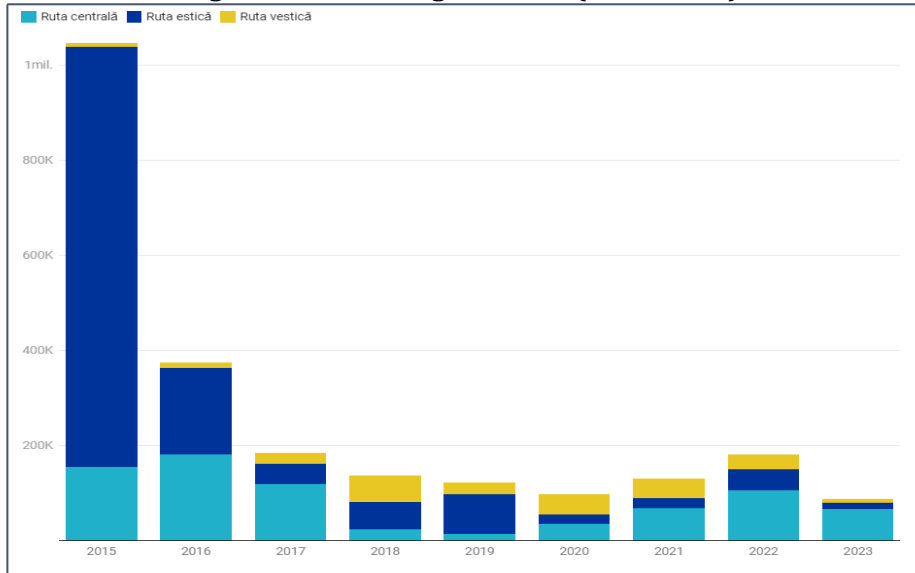
The Asylum and Migration Management Regulation (AMMR) of June 2023, which should replace the Dublin Regulation.

7. Findings

„The 2015 Eurostat report estimated that over 30,000 trafficked persons were identified in the EU in the years between 2010 and 2012. Of that total, 65% were EU citizens. 69% were trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation, of whom 95% were female, while 19% were trafficked for labour exploitation, 71% of whom were male. Fewer than 27% received at least some form of assistance, while of the 7,704 people that were prosecuted for THB, only 2,700 were convicted. 73% of those prosecuted were EU citizens” (Rubio Grundell, L., & European University Institute. Migration Policy Centre. (2015).

The situation of migrants in Europe continues to be tense as refugees and migrants continue to head to Europe either legally or illegally. The four main migration routes existing until 2022 (Eastern Mediterranean Route, West-West Mediterranean and West African Route, Central Mediterranean Route, Western Balkans Route) have been added to the flow of refugees from Ukraine with Russia's armed attack on Ukraine. Migrants flee persecution, wars, calamities, and in their desperation risk their lives trying to reach even illegally EU countries or countries where they feel safe and protected.

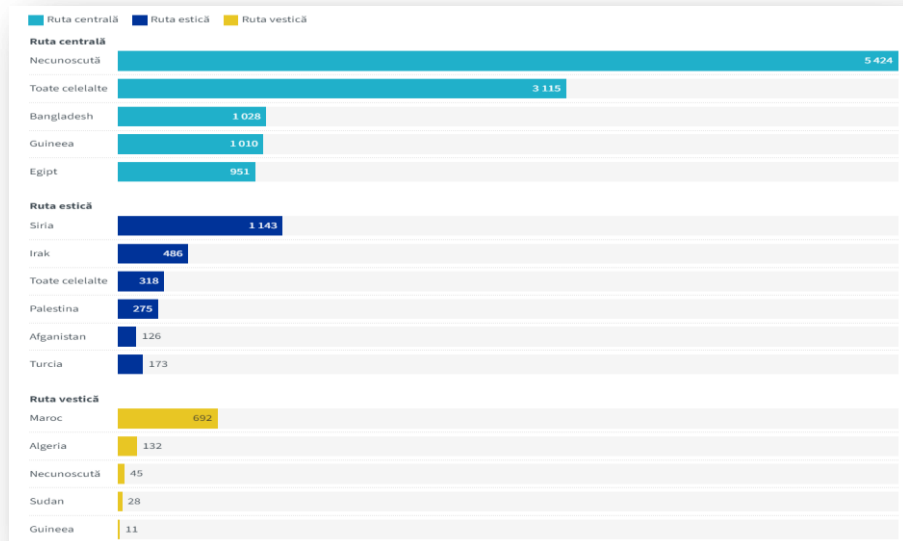
Figure 2. Annual illegal arrivals (2015- 2023)



Source: Frontex and Spanish Ministry of the Interior in Infographic- Migration flows: Eastern, Central and Western routes

The numerical situation in 2023, on each migration route, registered a significant decrease compared to 2015 when peaks were reached in the migration crisis. The total number of illegal arrivals is 87313, with the Central Route being the most requested (65 571), followed by the Eastern Euta (13 167) and the Western Routes, i.e. the Western Mediterranean and West African route (8575).

Figure 3. Main nationalities by route



Source: Frontex in Infographic

Most illegal arrivals were recorded on the Eastern Route, with 1143 migrants coming from Syria, followed by the Western Route, 692 migrants coming from Morocco. The nationality of 5421 people has not been identified.

Since Directive 2004/81/EC on residence permits issued to third-country nationals who are victims of THB or the subjects of smuggling, persons who have been victims of trafficking in human beings or persons involved in smuggling have been given the opportunity to cooperate with the authorities by denouncing their oppressors. In return, these people benefited from civil protection, access to medical services, housing, translation services. This was the first step towards reducing illegal migration.

The decrease in the number of illegal entries into the territory of the countries targeted by migrants is due to the joint efforts made by EU agencies (Frontex, European Asylum Agency and Europol) and the legislative effort to create coherent laws, adapted to a constantly changing reality. The Dublin Regulation, which laid down rules for determining which Member State was responsible for examining an asylum application, has been replaced by the Asylum and Migration Management Regulation (AMMR), which simplifies the old rules and shortens deadlines.

Joint international efforts for safe, orderly and regular migration were embodied in the Global Compact for Migration, which was a truly important step towards fair, efficient and sustainable migration.

8. Conclusions

Societies marked by instability are characterized by a high rate of migration, because their citizens want to emigrate in search of the desired stability and coherence in everyday life. Instability has direct consequences on migration, through its forms of manifestation (armed conflicts, climate change or poverty), affecting the political, economic or social spheres.

Migrants prove vulnerable to traffickers and expose themselves to major risks by suffering exploitation, discrimination, poor living or human rights violations. Indirectly, host countries for migrants from unstable areas face difficulties related to social integration, but may also have benefits linked to filling a labour market gap or cultural benefits.

Host countries for legal or illegal immigrants must have a well-defined migration management policy whose strategic implementation works absolutely. This is only possible through international cooperation, because the phenomenon is complex. It is imperative to bear in mind that migrants are human and need their rights protected. In this context, it is necessary to comply with the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and other specific instruments of impact. Migration is in the spotlight, putting pressure on all levels of society. It can only be approached through a global perspective, involving respect for human rights, international cooperation and steps towards stability.

Responsibility for migration policies falls under the competence of the European Union, which provides incentives and supports all Member States' actions for the integration of migrants. The European Union also fights to prevent and reduce irregular migration, respecting fundamental rights, providing a high level of security, facilitating access to justice and embarking on actions to continuously adapt treaties and laws to everyday reality. Civil society, anti-trafficking organizations and NGOs that have knowledge in the field also contribute to the development of coherent laws through their specific activities.

Current migration policies are designed to solve the operational challenges of migration, encourage social and economic development through migration, uphold human dignity and well-being of migrants. The correct implementation of these policies ensures that human migration is carried out in a controlled manner so that its beneficiaries (society and migrant) are harmoniously related in terms of mutual benefits.

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POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION AND PARTICIPATION IN CAMEROON: THE NEW PHASE OF TRADITIONAL PARAMOUNCY AND THE QUESTION OF NATIONAL INTERGRATION AND UNITY AMONG THE FONDOMS OF NDOP

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Abstract: *This paper presents the contribution that the fondoms of Ndop made in animating the political landscape of Cameroon in general and the Northwest region following the 1990 laws on social, economic, and political liberalization. It argues that ,while the new dispensation gave the opportunity to ordinary citizens to stake for new opportunities ,it placed traditional authorities of Ndop in a state of "tough calls" as Fon Fosi yakum mtaw of Bambalang, Fon Doh Gah Gwanyum of Balikumbat and Fon Chaffah XI of Bangolan , all of the Ndop plain , attempted to impose themselves in what Paul Kennedy terms Imperial overstretch with unequivocal support by government to one camp against the others , resulting in the creation of unions and associations of fons in the North west region that failed to stand the taste of time .The paper concludes that ,this attempt by the fons to diplomatically or forcefully impose a partisan and or philosophical orientation did not only show the high handed nature of these traditional authorities ,but it puts into question the debate infavour of national integration and unity in Cameroon.*

Keywords: Cameroon, Ndop, Political Liberalization, Fons, Paramountcy, Northwest Region

From the 1990s the Cameroonian authorities bowed to national and international pressure to liberalise the Cameroonian society .The liberalization of the political space in Cameroon made participation in politics a daunting task for traditional rulers and made them victims of the interest of political actors (Awason,2003:363).The economic crisis from the 1980s dealt a blow on the income of Cameroonians and this had a direct and indirect impact on the fons whom in a majority depended on their people especially the elites for survival. Consequently the fons saw the period of political liberalization as an opportunity to rise to prominence and make up for the deficits that came with the economic crises .Thus the decision by most of the fons not to be at the periphery but at the center of political events .All political actors whether pro government or opposition wanted the support of traditional rulers ,but none liked to see a Fon support his adversary .While such altitude compelled the Fon as a "political animal" to behave unnatural ,other political actors were free to react in matters of politics according to their whims and caprices(Awason, 2003: 365).

Following this state of affair, the task of a traditional authority was how to effectively be a "good father" to a warring group of children with divergent ambitions. Under such circumstances, politicians played the Chameleon, calling on traditional authorities to refrain from partisan politics but as "double standard actors", instigated Fons into politics. The reading we make from such action by the politicians was that political neutrality for traditional rulers means loyalty to the party to which the politicians belonged (Amaazee 2000:80). It is given a better understanding when he states that to think of insulating traditional rulers from politics is a myth constructed out of utopianism. Conscious of the fact that, every human being is a political animal and Fons are human beings, and no political animal can be apolitical, Fons cannot be apolitical (Amaazee, 2000: 81). Out of this controversy emanated three schools of thought each opposing the other on the question of traditional rulers and political participation.

A critical examination of these different schools of thought and the extent to which they can provoke crises within a community holds true of Ndop. In the wake of political liberalization, partisan politics within the ranks of Fons in Ndop was at the origin of several crises that with time was translated into other perennial sphere of conflict in the area. The consequence was that for a very long time, government continued to see these problems as the old land disputes characteristic of the area and failed to see it as an excuse by local elites to express a new form of crises that had developed out of political liberalism and the carving of new spheres of political competition and influence (Herald, 1995: 3).

Some Fons perceive politics as an institution which can be profitable when they compromise with the major power broker or ruling regime in any modern (Fru, 2010: 255). There are three explanations to this perception. The first is historical. Traditionally, it has been customary for their predecessors to engage politically. It is therefore a practice transmitted unto consciously or unconsciously. Secondly, in a changing context where survival as an individual (the Fon) and or an institution (the chieftaincy) was increasingly becoming a necessity, Fons perceived that they could survive by establishing a "marriage" even for convenience's sake with current regimes believed to be the major purveyors of resources. The third aspect is that as auxiliaries of the administration, they were de facto and de jure participants as enshrined in the law on chieftaincy institutions (Fru, 2010: 259).

To some Fons of Ndop like elsewhere in the Northwest Region, politics is perceived essentially as siding with current regimes seen as major controllers of resources necessary for their survival and the survival of the institution. The necessity to survive in a context of economic hardship explains in part why Fons look up to politics as an instrument for personal self-satisfaction and aggrandizement. In the pre-colonial and early parts of the colonial periods, Fons often received gifts of some value from their subjects. Such gifts helped to sustain the Fons and the chieftaincy institution. With change in the status of Fons, and the liberalization of the socio-economic and political milieu, open competition between Fons and their subjects was not uncommon. Some Fons have even left the palaces to search for greener pastures in the towns and cities of the country and even abroad. This, contrary to the situation that prevailed in the pre-colonial times as the political environment did not permit competition (Angwafor III, 1994: 4).

The impact of liberalization and political competition caused the Fons to realize that except they increase their challenge quality in the face of an emerging and challenging elite, they have little chance to survive. Even the modern elites who were thought of sharing part of the proceeds of their achievements with Fons have refrained from doing so, at least for free. By implication "gift-givers" may give to Fons in return for support, especially political. Thus, the necessity to survive in a "hostile" political environment explains in part why the Fons commercialized traditional symbols and artifacts (Warnier, 2007: 306). Even the monopoly they used to exercise over the distribution of land was stripped off by government although they are still part of the land committee in which they have little or no influence. Caught in this situation political efficacy became the mobilization of support around the ruling government and the ruling party. Here the ruling government is perceived as the major purveyor of resources which are necessary for the survival of the Fon. To some this was a rational and realistic perspective of looking up to political engagement. By consequence politics and political participation was perceived as a struggle to win the favour and recognition of the national power brokers in return for an advancement of one's socio-economic and political status (Angwafor III, 1994: 4).

1. Ndop Fons and the extension of the paramount stake

The Fons of Ndop in a persistent struggle for national recognition, legitimacy, and paramount image moved beyond the boundaries of their villages and the Division to sell their programs especially political to the rest of the Fon's and population of the North West Region.

Such was an attempt to reassert themselves within the ranks of Fons who already constituted a force to reckon with as far as the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial period. The Fons seemingly conscious of the opportunities presented by the period of democratic transition, wanted to be part or at the head of the concert of Fons. From the 1990 they campaigned vigorously for the re-establishment of the house of Chiefs scrapped in 1972 (Awasom, 2003: 365). Through this it was hoped they would achieve a lot but their hopes were undermined by division within their ranks generated by the desire for personal interest and the wish for a paramount status or an equivalent position. That three Fons of Ndop were instrumental in the creation of associations for Fons tells the extent to which they wanted to promote the image of their different villages and a status for themselves.

1.1. Creation of the Northwest Fons' Association (NOWEFA)

Following the liberalization of the political space in Cameroon and the quest to grasp positions in what was to be a very competitive political environment; Northwest Fons met in Bamenda at the palace of the Fon of Nkwen and founded the Northwest Fons Association (NOWEFA) in April 1993. The brain behind this initiative was the Fon of Bambalang, Fosi Yakum Ntow who also assumed the position of its maiden president, with Abumbi II as secretary General, Fon Doh Ganyonga as Treasurer and Fon Martin Asanji Forbuzie as organizing secretary, they together formed the executive of the association (Angwafor III, 1994: 4).

The objectives of NOWEFA were to foster mutual co-existence among traditional rulers and their Fondoms and to lobby for development aid to the North West Region in general and their respective Fondoms in particular. Though individual members were involved in partisan politics, the Association opted for neutrality in politics. Just retiring from Governorship, the Fon of Bambalang, saw the Fon's Association as a forum to bounce back into administration and politics. Through this he would receive national recognition for himself in the Union of Fons and for his village in the Ngoketunjia Division where the struggle for paramountcy was evidently clear amongst the Fons. An eloquent testimony to this fact was that the existence of NOWEFA was short-lived and opposition to the Association and its founder came from Fon Doh Gah Gwanyin of Bali Kumbat. This notwithstanding, the Fon opened a new chapter in the history of Ndop, exporting the question of paramountcy out of the Division. Fon Doh Gah Gwanyin of Bali Kumbat stole the show from him in what some considered will remain historic in the regional and National politics for long. (The Herald, 1997: 4).

1.2. The Destabilization of Northwest Fons Association

The liberalization of the political space meant that individuals as well as groups or Associations needed each other than ever before. While government needed groups for political support so as to control the state machinery, people needed to organize themselves at any cost so as to lobby for development projects that were hard to get. It was against this background that with the support of the Prime Minister, Fon Doh Gah Gwanyin cajoled the initiators of NOWEFA into submission. They perceived the followers of NOWEFA to be a pro-SDF Union (Guardian poste, 1996: 2).

With government backing, he went ahead to receive a pro-government Fon's Association called Northwest Fon's Conference (NOWEFCO) brandishing it as authentic and representative of the majority of the Fons of the Northwest region. This was the beginning of trouble for NOWEFA and Fon Fosi Yakum-Ntow. The situation became difficult to manage when Fon Angwafor III shocked his fellow members of NOWEFA by recognizing and declaring his support for the government sponsored NOWEFCO (Angwafor III, 1994: 5). In the face of this confusion there were calls by some Fon and the population for the creation of a new and more united Association and the dismantling of the two "Moribund" associations. On the other hand,

there was another school which argued that in the context of liberalization there was need for many Fons' association if they were out to protect collective interest (The Herald, 1998:5). This notwithstanding efforts continued aimed at bringing Unity amongst the Fons of the Province. Here we see another Fon from Ndop playing the role of mediator, which was seen by some as strategic for his rise to prominence within the Ngoketunjia Division and the Northwest region.

2. NOWEFA-NOWEFCO mediation

On 30th May 1998, an all Fons' meeting held at the Nkwen Fons' palace to find a solution to the crises rocking the Northwest Fons. Under the initiative of Fon Chaffah XI of Bangolan, the intention was to fuse the two opposing associations and create a new one acceptable to at least the majority. In attendance were renoun Fons such as Fon Angwafor of Mankon, Ganyonga of Bali and Sehm Mbinglo of Nso. In attendance were many members of NOWEFCO though its president Fon Doh Gah Gwanyin opted for a boycott. This notwithstanding, the meeting resulted in the dissolution of the two associations and the creation of a new association called the North West Fons' Union (NOWEFU) (Sama, 2006: 350). This was a clear message that enough ground work for a proper mediation was not done. The absence of fon Doh as a major actor at the time demonstrated that the new union did not receive the blessings of all the fons. This had a direct impact on the intergration and unity process that the fons claimed to defend (Abwa, 1998: 8).

NOWEFU was out to promote friendly relations among Fons based on mutual respect, revaluation and restoration of the dignity of North West traditional rulers, promotion of peace and reduction of inter-tribal wars and finding amicable and durable solutions to land disputes. It advocated for decentralization that would give a place for traditional rulers and the creation of regional Houses of Fons where peers would elect traditional rulers (Fru, 2010 :302). It also called for the neutrality of Fons in party politics. As a union with majority of the traditional rulers from the seven Division of the Northwest region, NOWEFU represented the socio-economic and political interest of the region even at the National level. It explains why the union was to play a major role in the reconciliation of the region, promotion of peace, integration, and unity in Cameroon

The Union functioned through Divisional and sub divisional branches. Its first President was Fon Abumbi II followed by Fon Sehm Mbinglo of Nso. The third president of the Union was Fon Chaffah of Bangolan the brain behind the creation of NOWEFU. The Fons of Kom and Mankon acted as advisers. Despite this effort to bring peace within the ranks of traditional authorities in the province Fon Doh Gah Gwanyim of Bali Kumbat undermined the effort of the Fons and subjected the region into a crisis of leadership that found expression in division amongst the Fons. According to Fon Doh, NOWEFCO was still alive and continued with acts of sabotage by convening meetings of NOWEFCO each time NOWEFU planned to hold a meeting. He continued to brandish NOWEFU as a faction of the SDF and an arm of the secessionist SCNC (Jua, 2003: 7). In June 1998, a delegation of Northwest Fons went to the Prime Minister's Office to present the new association and to lobby for support. But the Prime Minister was not happy with the delegation because member failed to send or express a "motion of support" for the CPDM government at the end of the Nkwen meeting. To the Prime Minister, this confirmed the suspicion that NOWEFU was a pro-opposition wing as claimed by Doh Gwanyim. However, later developments proved Doh Gwanyim wrong as his faction never stood the test of time indicating that he and his faction never received the blessing of the people. (The post, 2005: 3)

2.1. The NOWEFU/NOWEFCO Discord and The Implication on The Integration and Unity Debate In Cameroon

From the creation of NOWEFA TO NOWEFCO and finally NOWEFU we discovered that the initiators brandished similar objectives. The had among others to work for the

cooperation and development of the region and especially to promote the integration and unity of the entire country. What then was the problem between these groups? Our findings, interviews and consultations on existing literature showed that the problem was with the personalities in the different groups and the interest they stood to defend whether perennial or recent. Thus, it was a personality conflict that emerged out of the desire for some to maintain power and influence gained since the pre-colonial periods and others who had the desire and will to force their way to the helm of power and influence in their immediate environment and the entire region.

Prior to this period of wrangling between NOWEFCO and NOWEFU the country had witnessed the council and parliamentary elections of 1996 and 1997 respectively, which the Fon of Bali Kumbat emerged victorious in the two elections, and made for himself and his village a name in the good records of the regime in a region that was still "hostile" to the CPDM and anybody that identified himself with it. Even worst was the fact that he was a Fon, emerging within a domain that was seen by the majority or at least a good proportion of the population as "bad" for Fons to attempt a hand in. More interesting though complicated was the fact that he was emerging in an environment where some Fondom believed such positions were naturally reserved for them because of their so-called first class Fondom status. Added to this he was emerging in an area where his immediate neighbour had a perennial history of enmity with his village. All these put together is the fact that, majority of Fons were still paying lip services to the CPDM for fear of what the new political atmosphere in the country may have to offer soon or better still for sympathizing with their son Ni John Fru Ndi and founder of the main opposition party in the area (The Herald, 1998 :7).

While this feeling and perception was looming in the Northwest and the nation in general, an attempt was being made by Northwest Fons to form a single Union from the ashes of NOWEFU and NOWEFCO. According to some writers the Fons were struggling to play the "political Chameleon" and in the process crush Fon Doh Gah Gwanyin of Bali Kumbat. That is why it was argued that:

In trying to form a united front for the Northwest Fons, the organizers soon betrayed themselves when a shabby campaign was launched over Radio Bamenda for two weeks running against the Fon of Bali Kumbat. It then became apparent that the aim of organizing the reconciliation meeting in the Nkwen Fon's Palace was to bring down the Fon of Bali Kumbat rather than unite the Fons. Otherwise, how does one account for the fact that the radio carried interviews of "lay men" who spoke bitterly against the idea of a Fon being a mayor and a parliamentarian? Who was such a Fon other than the Fon of Bali Kumbat? As was expected, the reconciliation meeting in the Nkwen palace reconciled nothing. Instead, it merely organized the previously dormant faction under the Leadership of Fon Abumbi of Bafut (Amaazee, 2002: 85).

As a counter move the Fon of Bali Kumbat organized his own meeting in his compound in Bamenda station. This happened in the face of brutal opposition from the Northwest Administration and the other traditional rulers. The administration banned the meeting and denied the Bali Kumbat Fon and his followers the use of all halls and hostels in Bamenda. The Mezam Fons of the other faction sent a crude and unkindly letter to the radio asking the Fon of Bali Kumbat to go and hold the meeting in his native Bali Kumbat. One wanders where the fons kept the much-talked intergration and unity campaign they claimed to be working for. Surprisingly, they received the visa of the Northwest Administration. Public opinion on this was as varied as there were schools of thought about the issue. Some onlookers were worried as to why a Fons union which claimed to be uniting the Fons of the Northwest should ask one to go to his division of origin. In the face of these obstruction the

Fon of Bali Kumbat had to go to Yaoundé to get a permit and radio coverage for the meeting that finally held in his compound (Amaazee, 2002: 87).

With the ongoing stalemate and confusion within the ranks of Fons, accusation and counter accusation became the order of the day. The pro-Bali Kumbat Fons claimed that they were the victims of a perennial domination especially from Mezam. They referred to the 1950s when Mezam Fons saw nothing wrong when Endeley took the Fon of Bali as a member of the KNC delegation to the 1957 London conference. But when the very Endeley took the Fon of Bum to the London conference of 1958, the Mezam Fons led a campaign against the Fon of Bum as if he was not a Fon. To show that beside the common good, there is always personal or group interest, the pro-Bali Kumbat Fons also complained that the Mezam led group wanted a Fons secretariat to be built in Mezam so that the day the association breaks up, the House will remain the property of Mezam. The protesting Fons cannot see why having contributed in the building of the Bamenda congress Hall in Mezam, they should again build the Fon secretariat in Mezam (Amaazee, 2002: 88).

While this argument expresses the wishes and desires of a people or group of people, it is not very tenable when we consider the following: Bamenda is centrally located and harbours the regions administrative institutions that can be of assistance to the Fon. It is easily accessible from every direction. Throughout history the seats of important organization have always been located where accessibility is most available. In the context of the Northwest, Bamenda is most appropriate for this. To add there is always provision for an amicable solution in case separation occurs. Let us consider the southeastern Federation that was made up of Nso, Ndop and Bafut. Since Ndop was centrally located it harboured the seat of administration with the administrative structures planted there. When the federation collapsed in the 1960s all the structures were taken into consideration when compensation was due (Afuhngang, 2013: 278). Consequently, the opposition was good but not tenable in this context because a bit of reflection would have convinced them on why the location of Bamenda was appropriate. Unlike the Fon Doh group, the Abumbi group claimed many things, firstly that a Fons union is not a political grouping. Secondly NOWEFCO is pro-CPDM. Thirdly it includes many frontline heavy weight CPDM Fons. Following this position, Amaazee (2002: 88), again steps in and opines that:

What is clear is that it is a mixture of schools of thought united by their dislike for the fon of Bali Kumbat. Their reasons for hating the Fon of Bali Kumbat are as varied as the schools of thought. Some hate Bali Kumbat because he is CPDM. The CPDM members of this group hate Bali Kumbat because they are envious of his rise to prominence in the CPDM. Some say that Bali Kumbat is high handed. This may be true. But all Fons are high handed, if given the opportunity. There is no easy going Fon when it comes to property acquisition. If the Fon of Bali Kumbat had not succeeded, no one would have noticed his high handedness. His real problem is that he gambled successfully, while the other Fons whether pro-SDF or pro-CPDM, did not gamble successfully.

While Amaazee's argument is tenable, some people argue that it is not watertight for the following reasons. Why did Fon Doh boycott the reconciliation meeting in Bamenda, which had nothing other than reconciliation on the menu? Often it is held and has been proven that the initiators of a meeting usually assume leadership in its initial state and the memory of a pioneer leader or initiator lives on. That Fon Fosi Yakum-Ntaw of Bambalang and Fon Chaffah of Bangolan were at the centre of the creation of NOWEFA and NOWEFU respectively never escaped the vigilance of Fon Doh whom it is believed saw in that, what O'Neill (2007: 225) calls an attempt to export imperialism to the outside World.

The Pro-Doh camp saw in this a type of mental imperialism by which the Fon of Bambalang and Bangolan were to sell their ideas to the rest of the Fons. This was to give them

directly or indirectly influence in the Ndop plain and beyond as initiators of a successful Fons' Union. With influence, political power will follow and it will naturally open way for the acquisition of wealth. Through this, one would acquire unofficially a paramount status which the Fons of Ndop all yearned for. Thus we agree vehemently with Amaazee that all Fons are high handed if given the opportunity especially when it comes to amazing wealth and selling their ideas to the others. Through this they and their villages will serve as a center for political ideas. Therefore, be it NOWEFU or NOWEFCO they were all forums for the exportation of idea with the hope of maximizing something either as individuals or as a group. What was different was their approach which fortunately for some and unfortunately for others was perceived and appreciated differently by the different social groups in society.

While NOWEFCO opted to sell their idea of unity by declaring openly for the CPDM the NOWEFU group opted to sell theirs by declaring neutrality in political activities. By accident or by design they failed to consider the role and perception of political actors and the environment in which they were operating. The most important political actors to the Fons at the time were the regime compromiser who had to help them achieve their objective. To deny declaring for CPDM means, declaring for the SDF. While NOWEFU was caught in a web, NOWEFCO was fortunate to have made a "better" decision, declaring for the CPDM and promising to save as a veritable link between the CPDM and voters. This was consequently the situation in which the Fons found themselves, gamblers, and victims of a situation not of their making. The truth is that this situation produced "victors" as well as "victims" with far reaching repercussions at the regional and national level.

2.2. Fon Doh Gah Gwanyin Consolidates his Position

Having "gambled" his way to success in the political scene, Fon Doh Gah Gwanyin was bent on consolidating what he worked hard to achieve by winning for himself and his village the council and parliamentary seats. Besides, it is alleged that he relegated his political opponent by any means and remained unbended in his political choice. He doubled his efforts to this direction when he realised that Fons who formerly paid just lip services to the CPDM began to be more aggressive and genuine in their support, while those who sat on the fence began taking definite positions in favour of the CPDM. So only those with a high competitor courage could survive the competition. When the political space was let loose in the 1990s, strategic holdings became the order of the day. It is important to state that Fon Doh from inception welcomed the SDF party, as many others. But the party watered down their interest when it declared that it was not going to participate in the parliamentary elections of 1992. In what has been described as a flexible move, Fon Doh easily switched camps for security and for convenience. Though he did not stand as candidate, he worked for the success of the party in his area and very importantly he won the recognition of the regime. With the SDF out of context, it was easy for him to handle the UNDP. As a step toward the fulfillment of his political position, he attempted to stuff ballot papers on the counting commission, and it resulted into a clash with UNDP militant. According to Peter Kings Manyong, quoted by Fru;{ 2010:276}.

In the confrontation that followed, Fon Doh opened fire on the crowd seriously wounding one Henry Doba. The crowd which saw him dead decided that a Chieftaincy title provided no immunity for a murderer and started raining blows on Fon Doh after overpowering and disarming him. The Fon would have been lynched but for the ingenuity of a traditional doctor who... asked him to fall and pretend dead. The doctor then raised an alarm saying the Fon was dead. He warned the Bali Kumbat population of an impending ancestral wrath. many of the UNDP activities quit the battle ground. Meanwhile Fon Doh had instantly heeded the doctors' voice and acted his part very well by pretending to be unconscious

Following the same incident, Sama (2006: 399) adds that;

He opened fire on his subjects for questioning his "fraudulent election tactics" on the day of election in March 1992, which resulted in the death of three people. When his subjects took on a rampage, 600 gendarmes moved into Bali Kumbat and placed it under siege in protection of the Fon. It is alleged that he later shot and killed a gendarme

It is also believed that since he became a member of parliament with the advantage of immunity bestowed on him, he has often used that as advantage of the state or government patronage to play a hegemonic role in the politics of the Ndop plain through which old scores are settled. He shocked many in 1995 when he mobilized his village to attack and almost completely destroyed the neighbouring village of Bafanji leaving about fifteen dead and forcing thousands to take refuge in the West Region (HRDG, 2002: 14) Commenting on this, the Herald (1995:6) newspaper reported that:

The Fon of Bali Kumbat is viewed in the Northwest as not unconnected to the organized destruction of Bafanji village. Moreover, North Westerners have still not forgiven the Fon, over widely held allegations that he shot and killed a subject of his who raised alarm when he observed that his Fon was apparently involved in some malpractices during the March 1992 legislative elections. These allegations may indeed be untrue, yet public perception of the Fon remains one of stigma, which is why sensible politics should have steered clear of him.

From the positions of Manyong cited in Fru, that of Sama and the Episcopal conference, the Fon's reaction during and after the elections indicates a number of issues. Firstly, even if their position were exaggerated or different as seen from the quotations one thing is clear, there was the use of a gun and intimidation to compel the people into fear and submission so as to consolidate his position. Another means employed by the Fon to consolidate his position involved verbal intimidation that had the effect of instilling fear and unconditionally forcing villagers on his side. This was especially so because people to a certain extent still was afraid for royal authority and the curse from the gods in case of disobedience to royal authority. A case was how he boasted shortly after his victory in the 1997 legislative elections that "my dominion in Bali Kumbat is the Rey Bouba of the Northwest Province I am not only a Lamido but also king of lions "The people of Bali Kumbat have never and will never vote for the SDF in any elections". (Ngah 1997: 2).

In the run up to the 2004 presidential elections, Fon Doh concretized his move of consolidating his position with a murder scandal. In 1997 parliamentary elections, Fon Doh stood and won in what was the only CPDM seat in the Northwest region. This victory increased his challenge potency and circuits his connection with the regime. The issue at stake was how to consolidate his position and the CPDM in Bali Kumbat and at the same time contain any potential adversary. The uncertainty about the political future of Bali Kumbat came to pass in the 2004 presidential election. The Fon created a scene that attracted not only national but international condemnation and has remained to be termed the Fon Doh and John Kohntem affair (The Post, 2005: 3).

A major challenge to the CPDM in the wake of the Presidential election of 2004 was the SDF. The task to conquer Bali Kumbat was entrusted to John Kohntem, SDF district chairman for Bali Kumbat. The struggle became a personality conflict between Fon Doh and John Kohntem. In a preparatory meeting for the 2004 presidential election chaired by Koumpa Issa, the Northwest Regional Governor, the conflict between the two became evident to everyone. During the meeting quarrel ensued and Kohntem accused the Fon of electoral malpractices, preventing SDF militant from registering their names on the electoral registrar.

It is purported that he called the Fon an electoral fraudster (Chronicle, 2005:2). An individual with many caps including, Lord Mayor, Honorable, Member of the central committee of the CPDM and Fon of Bali Kumbat, saw this too much to bear. In reply the Fon declared that "nobody challenges a lion and gets away with it" (Chronicle, 2005: 3).

After the meeting on his way back home, Kohntem was manhandled and killed at the Bali Kumbat market square some 10 kilometers away from his compound. The Fon was widely believed to have been responsible especially following the utterances he made during the meeting. This was mere speculation, and the court was still to prove this.

Pressure mounted from the SDF and Human Right Activist demanding that justice be brought on the Kohntem matter and particularly that the Fon be arrested. The pressure yielded fruit when the legal Department of the Northwest Region led by prosecutor Ewande Muambo, carried out preliminary investigation resulting in the arrest and detention of eleven suspects. While this happened, the Fon maintained a confident profile relying on his immunity as parliamentarian. Investigation continued and at the end of the findings, it was discovered that Fon Doh was not only connected to the murder but it was even alleged that he had participated in the act personally (The Post, 2005:3). Request was then made for the Fon to be interrogated by the Attorney General of the Northwest Region.

The Minister of Justice wrote to the speaker of the House. In March 2005, the Bureau of the National Assembly, sitting on behalf of the House decided overwhelmingly to lift his immunity as parliamentarian. With immunity, an MP is protected from prosecution, arrest, detention and molestation (Fru, 2010:280). Fon Doh was tried and found guilty in connection with the murder of John Kohntem and was sentenced to fifteen years in prison, though he was released shortly on grounds of ill health. This notwithstanding his political career was never to be the same again as he ensured instability in the social and political arena leading to some loses. The release of Fon Doh was seen as a scandal by national and international observers especially human right groups. It intensified animosity between supporters of the CPDM and the SDF particularly in the North West region and dealt a serious blow on the much preached reconciliation, integration and unity that was dear to the government at the time (Chronicle, 2005:4).

The condemnation of the Fon stripped him off some political rights. Following the electoral law (section 15) no person shall be entitled to enter his name on the register of electors to vote, who has been convicted of a felony, has been sentenced to a term of imprisonment, accompanied by suspension of sentence or probation of more than six months. Fon Doh was guilty of all these electoral disqualifications. He was caught into the dragnet of the law, though the law seemed to have been in contest with politics. Did this imply an end of Fon Doh's political career? The law certainly did not envisage other opportunities especially the right of support to a candidate. This was exactly what Fon Doh did, thus we argue that he lost just a battle and not a war. By giving support to another candidate, Fon Doh wanted another avenue he could use to bounce back onto the political scene and continue to dictate the pace of political activities within his area of competence. In principle, the Fon might have been deprived of the rights to vote and stand as candidate but voting and being voted are not the only political activities available in our repertory. This is certainly another advantage we have for extending our concept of political participation.

While the struggle continued between the state (law) and the party on Fon Doh's candidacy, he seemed to be fighting a war on two fronts as the situation had divided the village in to two, those who opposed him and those who supported him. The Fon was no longer accepted by a cross section of his community as Fon. The chairman of the council of Kingmakers of Bali Kumbat and two others wrote a memo dated 16 October 2008 to the Minister of Territorial Administration and decentralization (MINATS) titled "Reminder to the Dethronement of Fon Doh Gah Gwanyin III of Bali Kumbat village" (The Post, 2005:8). Copies were sent to the Presidency of the Republic, the Prime Minister Office, the speaker of the

National Assembly and Human Rights Organizations. According to them the Fon had violated tradition and so needed to be replaced. But the administration did nothing about it. While this was going on, news reached the village of the Fon's bail and the division in the village changed to fear and Panic given that revenge was imminent.

Covered by the non-conviction certificate given to him from Yaounde, the Fon presented his candidature and it generated a lot of discussion even at government level. What mattered to him was how to get to power or support somebody incase he could not. The outcome of the primaries in Bali Kumbat had to play a decisive role. In Bali Kumbat he has always had things his way. Despite a new challenger on the CPDM list, the primary for parliamentary nominee was not any problem to the Fon. Meanwhile Dinga had earlier defeated Edward Banla in the primaries to emerge as section president. Thus, the competition was now between Dinga and Fon Doh. The Fon put in place a strategy to bring down his adversary through intimidation. The Central committee intervened to stop the Fon, but it was too late. The Fon had successfully emerged as parliamentary nominee for Bali Kumbat but his candidacy had to be validated by the central committee charged with taking the final decision.

To the utter dismay of the Fon, the central committee ruled against his candidature in what many believed was a strategy to clean the image of the party (Afuhngang, 2013: 281). Emmanuel Banmi was endorsed by the party and in what many considered was motivated by the Fon, his supporter stage violent demonstration, protesting the decision of the central committee. On Monday 28 May, 2007, his supporters mounted barricades on the highway and carried placards that read; "No Fon Doh, No CPDM in Bali Kumbat, No Fon Doh, No Election in Bali Kumbat, and we cannot accept Emmanuel Banmi" (Afuhngang, 2013: 286).

Protesters went as far as presenting a memo to the SDO for Bali Kumbat subdivision Jean Claude Owautou Owoutou stating in it that Fon Doh was the choice of the people and that the control committee had no right to change the will of the people, questioning why they did not disown him in the primaries. They further threatened Emmanuel Banmi and Ignatius Dingha Banyin who had called on them to respect the decision of the central committee (Divisional Archives Ndop, 2008: 14). Situations were seemingly difficult for the CPDM not only at divisional level but also at the regional and national level. The animosity that was noticed between the SDF and CPDM was now vivid within the ranks of the ruling party, another blow to the national integration and unity campaign launched by the government to reconcile the country.

Despite the protest, the central committee maintained its decision. Though this decision did not appease supporters of the Fon, public opinion was generally in support of it. In an automatic move Banmi's candidacy was turned down in favour of Gabsa Sixtus as main CPDM hopeful for 2007 in what many considered was a move to support or appease the Fon. In retaliation to the decision of the central committee, pro-Banmi supporters in turn mounted roadblocks in strategic entrances to the village (Divisional Archives Ndop, 2009: 3). In fact, the Central committee whose decision must have been influenced by the Fon expected that by supporting the Fon's proposed candidate, Bali Kumbat people were to be appeased and calm restored, but it was not the case. Thus, negotiations continued, reactions and counter reactions were gotten from both side and finally the pro-Banmi camp came out victorious. Certainly, exhausted from one problem to another, elites of Ndop understood that it was time for reconciliation amongst members of the same party and especially amongst villages, which it was widely believed was at the centre of lack of development in Ndop. Besides, the negative image of Ndop, the Northwest Region and the country had to be redressed before the international community to give way to a true reconciliation between the Fons, their people and major political actors with the goal to foster the integration and unity of all ethnic origins in Cameroon.

Throughout the history of human existence, traditional rulers have never ceased to employ every available opportunity and possibility to gain influence within and beyond the

perimeters of their sphere of influence. The liberalization of the Cameroonian society in the 1990 revealed the high handed and double standard nature of most of the traditional authorities who saw and considered the era as one to stake or gamble for new opportunities in the new dispensation. Investigations reveal that to stake for new opportunities, traditional rulers attracted public opinion that was expressed in what became known as schools of thought on whether they should take part in active politics. The results were the birth of three schools of opinions, the traditionalist, the evolutionist, and the neutralist. The school of opinion were as divided as the traditional authorities. No wonder within a short period of time, Cameroonians witnessed the creation of a plethora of unions and associations of Fons in the region with far reaching effects on the development of the region and at the national level, the much talked national integration and unity process was seriously Impacted . The division within the ranks of the traditional authorities soon found expression in a bitter tussle between political actors who supported the ruling party against those who supported the main opposition party and finally within the ranks of the ruling party .Thus the 1990s that came with so much euphoria as far as political liberalization and participation was concerned ended up in the annals of Cameroons political history as an era that witnessed a deepening level of acrimony among political actors especially traditional authorities .The greatest loser in this political embrioglo was the state of Cameroon .As demonstrated in the paper, not only was there division amongst traditional authorities and their people, National integration and unity propounded by authorities gradually gave way to disintegration and disunity.

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THE LIMITS OF DECENTRALIZATION IN THE URBAN COMMUNITY OF BERTOUA (UCB): 1996-2020

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Abstract: *The constituent operation begun a few years in Cameroon and which ended with the promulgation by the President of the Republic of Law No. 96/06 of January 18, 1996 revising the constitution of June 2, 1972 did not neither to a federal state nor to a regional state. If there was no revolution, it must however be recognized that a significant evolution has been achieved. This same law elevates the Region, like the Commune, to the rank of decentralized territorial collectivity. In its decentralization component, the execution of the first phase of the National Governance Program (NGP) has led to adoption of three important laws: a general orientation law and two laws on Communes and Regions. For their implementation, the central state should be transferred to the Municipalities and Regions, a certain number of powers and resources. This process is experiencing enormous difficulties. This paper is based on the limits of decentralization in the Urban Community of Bertoua (1996-2020). Four major barriers were identified: institutional barriers; the lack of mastery of urban planning by the various actors in Bertoua; the insufficiency in the service of sanitation and the insufficiency in the financing of decentralization. These particular obstacles testify that the process of decentralization is irreversible in Cameroon in general and in Bertoua in particular. The study required field surveys using interviews and questionnaires techniques. We also used documentary research to analyze the phenomena of decentralization in Cameroon in general and Bertoua in particular.*

Keywords: Bertoua, decentralization, Urban Community, Cameroon, limits.

The constitutional operation initiated some years ago in Cameroon and which ended with the promulgation by the President of the Republic of Law No. 96/06 of January 18, 1996 revising the constitution of June 2, 1972 has birth neither to a federal State nor to a Regional State. The Constituent expressed his preference for a "Decentralized Unitary State" (Tchenkeu, 2021 :2). If there was no revolution, it must however be recognized that a significant evolution has taken place. The same law elevates the Region, like the Commune, to the rank of the decentralized territorial collectivity. The constitution of January 18, 1996 makes Cameroon a unitary and decentralized state (Tchenkeu: 3). The new context features new actors, but called upon to take crucial initiatives in the management of local affairs. And this, in the various areas where competences are specifically devolved to them, at the economic, social, health, educational, cultural and sporting levels. Efforts to popularize the founding texts of decentralization, to promote their optimal appropriation by the various social actors through numerous seminars and capacity-building workshops to enable local elected officials to master their role in order to make municipalities centers of application of good governance, and municipal councils, authentic schools of local democracy. This article analyzes the limits of decentralization in the Urban Community of Bertoua (1996-2020). The field surveys made it possible to interview more than two hundred people classified into four categories. Documentary research complements the vagaries of field surveys. The central concern is to know: What are the limits of decentralization in the Urban Community of Bertoua? In other words, what are the areas that make it possible to affirm that decentralization encounters difficulties in its process? Our work consists in presenting the institutional obstacles, the lack of mastery of urban planning documents, the insufficiency of the urban sanitation service, the insufficiency of the financing of decentralization (Nguema, 2023 :2).

1. Institutional obstacles to decentralization in the UCB

Like the CTDs (Decentralized Territorial Collectivities) in Cameroon, the UCB is faced with the problem of conflict of competences between on the one hand the other branches of the State and the CUB, on the other hand between the UCB and the CUABs; and the problem of equalization.

1.1. The administrative supervision of the State: a brake on local development

Relations between the UCB and the central State are governed by decree. The local elected officials of the city of Bertoua are directly or even indirectly subject to the authority of the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Decentralization and Local Development, the Governor or the Prefect. Indeed, with regard to the powers transferred to decentralized local authorities, in particular to the Regions, out of 20 draft texts relating thereto expected, only four (04) are already the subject of a presidential decree. These are precisely the Decrees setting the procedures for exercising certain powers transferred by the State to the Regions in terms of the environment; tourism and leisure; public works; and town planning and housing, all signed as indicated, on December 28, 2021 by the President of the Republic. The constitution of January 18, 1996 in its article 1 paragraphs 1 and 2 proclaim the indivisibility of the Republic of Cameroon. Article 55 (1) defines Communes and Regions as CTDs. Paragraph 2 states that any other type of CTD is created by law. Administrative supervision stipulates that in return for the autonomy enjoyed by the CTDs, they are subject to a control which constitutes administrative supervision. Supervision means that autonomy does not in any way mean independence, the precaution being to avoid abuse while preserving the general interest (Nguema, 2023 :4).

In practice, the supervisory authority acts in place of the bodies under supervision. The supervisory authority has the power to suspend, cancel or reform, which allows it to defer the entry into force of a decision taken by the controlled authority, or to delete it or even modify its content. The autonomy enjoyed by the decentralized territorial collectivities is subject to a control which constitutes administrative supervision. "The State ensures the harmonious development of all decentralized territorial communities on the basis of national solidarity, regional potential and inter-regional balance". The State has granted the country laws and regulations in order to frame the public action of the various governments (national, regional, local) (Bird: 344). To this end, the powers of the administrative heads of the decentralized entities (administrative districts) and those of the heads of the decentralized entities (territorial districts) are defined. The entire Cameroonian territory with regard to administrative districts is divided into 10 regions, 58 departments and 360 districts. The Region is placed under the authority of a governor, the Department under the authority of the prefect and the Arrondissement under the authority of the sub-prefect. They are all appointed by decree of the President of the Republic. In their respective administrative district, the Governor and the Prefect are the representatives of the President of the Republic, of the Government and of each of the ministers; the Sub-prefect is the representative of the Government and of each of the ministers. They are also all placed under the hierarchical authority of the Minister in charge of territorial administration. Some territorial constituencies were created by the constitution (Region and Communes) and other types of Communes by law (Urban Community and District Commune). However, Cameroon has 10 Regions, 14 Urban Communities, 45 District Communes and 315 Communes (Nguema, 2023 :8). The Regions and the Communes are placed under the State supervision of the Governor and the Prefect. The prerogatives of these officials are important on the CTDs (El Khdari, 2015 :5). They are at the center of the CTD control mechanism. Unlike hierarchical control, which places the agent under the authority and close dependence of his superior, supervisory control brings together a controller (the supervisory authority) and those controlled (the

organs of the public entity under supervision). Guardianship means that autonomy does not mean independence, and its purpose is to enforce legality, avoid abuses and provide good administration that takes into account the general interest. It is no doubt the mark of mistrust towards decentralized authorities who lack experience or competence, show partiality or negligence. But it is organized in such a way as to avoid the subordination of the controlled bodies to the central power, which would destroy decentralization. The means of supervision, not very different from the means used by the hierarchical power, can be exerted on the agents or organs, or on their actions. With regard to agents or organs, the most energetic procedure results from the fact that the central power can appoint them and therefore dismiss them itself (Tchenkeu, 2021 :2). This is what often happens for the leaders of public establishments. On the other hand, the supervisory authority has disciplinary power over agents (Nguema, 2023 :12). According to the law n° 2004 title IV of the supervision on the territorial communities, article 67 paragraph (1) stipulates that the governor is the delegate of the State in the region. As such, he is responsible for national interests, administrative control, compliance with laws and regulations and maintenance of public order; it supervises and coordinates under the authority of the government, the services of the civil administrations of the State in the region. (2) the prefect ensures State supervision over the municipality (Bird: 346). The prefect had a right of veto on the actions of the mayor and on the personnel but in no case could revoke it. In the context of decentralization, supervision is no longer burdensome, i.e. it no longer has the last word. Now she has a say. The Mayor of the city consults the prefect and within 15 days, if the latter does not give him his opinion on a question on which he has been consulted, he implements his decision. We see that all the powers are in the hands of the central power because all the decisions taken at the local level must be approved by the representatives of the State in the Regions and the Communes. We also have the municipal authorities who face the impossibility of recruiting certain key personnel of their administration like the secretary general, the accountant, the municipal collector and certain executives. It would seem that the State does not want to give way to CTDs to manage and take decisions themselves that concern their own municipalities because they always have an eye on everything (El Khdari, 2015 :7).

1.2. The problem of equalization

According to Law No. 2009/011 of July 10, 2009 regarding funding at RLA level, the State is preminent. Article (11) provides that a local authority may only make a levy in the form of a tax or duty if it is provided for by law, voted on by the deliberative body and approved by the competent supervisory authority. . Article (12) stipulates that the tax revenues of local authorities include: Local direct taxes; Additional cents on state taxes and duties;Deductions made from State tax revenue;Direct and indirect taxes; Any other tax levy provided for by law. Article (13) provides that the terms and conditions for the assessment, issue, collection and repayment of taxes and duties intended for local authorities are set by law (Tchenkeu, 2021 : 5). This principle of the financial autonomy of local authorities, ensuring them the freedom to dispose of the resources from which they benefit. This principle is regularly reinforced and the question of local finances has evolved considerably over the past thirty years, both in terms of control, local taxation, local expenditure and the indebtedness of local authorities. The Constitution specifies that the resources of the local authorities come in whole or in part from taxation of all kinds, as well as tax revenues specific to the local authorities. In addition, the local authorities of Bertoua also receive resources from the State, in particular in the event of transfers of powers, which must be accompanied by "resources equivalent to those which were devoted to their exercise". The responsibility for preparing the budget rests with the mayor. The effective responsibility for the preparation falls to the financial department under the control of the secretary general and under the directives of the mayor (Bird: 350).

1.3. Conflicts of jurisdiction between CUAB and UCB

Since the transfer of powers in 2010, conflicts between the Urban District Municipalities of Bertoua and the Urban Community of Bertoua are visible and constitute an obstacle to the development of the city. Indeed, the law relating to the rules applicable to the Communes in its Article 79 stipulates that: The communal executive gives its opinion at the request of the representative of the State or in accordance with the legislation and the regulations in force. It is responsible in particular for: Establishing the agenda for meetings of the municipal council; The implementation of development actions and in particular popular participation actions; Supervising the collection of taxes, duties and municipal duties, of which it proposes, where appropriate, measures aimed at improving performance; Monitoring the execution of municipal works. This is a conflict between the CUA of Bertoua 1st and the CUB on the central market of Bertoua, this problem has been going on for years; the conflict in the Nkolbikon market; the conflict over the slaughterhouse, the personal conflict between the Mayor of the city and the mayor of the commune of Bertoua 2nd (El Khadari, 2015 :5). Alongside these inter-municipal disagreements are superimposed the plurality of administrations, that is to say the ministries to which the municipalities must resort, the loans, the twinning of the municipalities of Bertoua are done under the watchful eye of the ministerial supervision of the area of cooperation (Nguema Elvire, 2023 :19).

2. Urban disorder: lack of mastery of urban planning

Our methodological progress reveals at this level the lack of seasoned personnel in local affairs, local elected officials requiring adequate training in urban planning, and unsuitable urban plans in relation to the demographic growth of the city of Bertoua.

2.1. A lack of seasoned staff in the town halls of the city of Bertoua

During the period 1996-2020, there was a problem of qualified personnel in the municipalities of Bertoua. The problem of the quality and quantity of local human resources of the CUB is a crucial problem characterized by the lack of a competent framework capable of defining and designing strategies for the management of the UCB ; the inability of municipal magistrates to understand the tools of commercial management and to promote an effective policy for the management of UCB affairs. However, the regulatory framework defines the different categories of personnel that the local authority can employ. These are engineers, doctors, associate professors who can be employed in local communities. But this is not the case in the CUB. This is where the CUB faces a paradox, the lack of financial resources and the need for competent and qualified personnel (Nguema Elvire, 2023 :22).

2.2. Mismatch between Law No. 2004-003 of April 21, 2004 governing urban planning in Cameroon and the urban management of Bertoua

Article 34 (1) stipulates that the initiative for the development of an Urban Master Plan belongs to the Mayor of the municipality or to a group of municipalities concerned. Article 34 (4) provides that the Urban Master Plan is approved by order of the Prefect of the department concerned, or by joint order of the Prefects of the departments concerned if its scope includes the limits of several departments. These legal provisions demonstrate the room for maneuver of local elected officials in Bertoua. The city of Bertoua is sparse with a spatial organization where 90% of the city is made up of spontaneous fabric, lack of land map accessible to the public. The idylls of the city of Bertoua although they have urban planning cells in their structures have problems of interpretation of urban planning documents (Tchenkeu, 2021 :7). The Urban Master Plan (PDU) is a document that sets the fundamental guidelines for the development of an urban territory, the general destination of the soil and the programming of equipment on a scale between 1/20,000th and 1/25,000th. A PDU

consists of a Supporting Report and graphic documents, regulations and any annexes. Like other cities in Cameroon, despite urban renewal, even the multiple sectoral programs of the UCB and CUAB, the urban landscape of Bertoua is marked by dilapidated, unmaintained urban networks (roads, electricity, drinking water, telephone), dominant spontaneous housing, poorly configured outlying districts invaded by swamps, the absence of public lighting, the difficulties of pre - collection of household waste and other urban waste within the districts. The problem of urban disorder and the anarchic occupation of the land, as well as the right-of-way is known in Bertoua, despite the operation "Bertoua clean city" of the Government Delegate (who became Mayor of the city after the municipal and legislative elections of February 2020). Indeed, the city center is invaded by travel agencies and motorcycle taxis, all things that do not facilitate traffic in the city. Town of Bertoua, thus creating indescribable congestion (Bird: 356).

Table 1: Place of disposal of household waste in five districts of the city of Bertoua in 2012

Terms	Ekombitié		Monou		Tigaza		Nkolbikon 1		Birpondo		Together	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Garbage bins	13	5.4	14	5.8	5	2.1	7	2.9	4	1.6	43	17.8
Channels	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.4	0	0	1	0.4
brushwood	19	7.9	18	7.4	23	9.5	21	8.8	26	10.7	107	44.2
Garden	1	0.4	0	0	3	1.2	3	1.2	4	1.7	11	4.5
Garbage can	3	1.2	10	4.1	20	8.3	10	4.1	10	4.1	53	21.9
big manure	7	2.9	6	2.5	4	1.7	3	1.2	7	2.9	27	11.2
Total	43	17.8	48	19.8	55	22.8	45	18.6	51	21	242	100%

Source: Archive notes of the urban community of Bertoua, 2012, p.3.

Table 1 presents the places of disposal of household waste during the period concerned. The undergrowth is the place par excellence of waste disposal according to this table.

Table 2: People in charge of waste disposal per household in five districts of the city of Bertoua in 2012

Terms	Ekombitié		Monou		Tigaza		Nkolbikon 1		Birpondo		Together	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Parents	5	2.5	1	0.5	7	3.5	5	2.5	8	4	26	13
servants	5	2.5	6	3	1	0.5	1	0.5	0	0	13	6.5
Children	22	11	24	12	17	8.5	21	10.5	11	5.5	95	47.5
Everyone	8	4	9	4.5	15	7.5	13	6.5	21	10.5	66	33
Total	40	20	40	20	20	40	40	20	40	20	200	100%

Source: rchive notes of the urban community of Bertoua, 2012, p.4.

Table 2 presents the type of people in charge of waste disposal per household in five districts of the city of Bertoua during the period concerned. Children represent the large part in this picture.

2.3. Housing typology in the town of Bertoua : Inadequate collection of household waste

The housing typology in the city of Bertoua distinguishes anarchic popular housing and luxury housing. Anarchic housing can be grouped into three essential forms: central, pericentral and peripheral or semi-rural anarchic housing. Luxury housing comes in two forms: planned luxury housing and administered luxury housing, in the form of state or communal housing estates. According to the Bertoua PDU, 23% of constructions are of the spontaneous anarchic type; 45% scalable economic housing 31% medium-class housing and 01% high-class housing. At the CUB, we observed the insufficiency in the collection, in the

transport and the insufficiency in the treatment or even the recovery of waste. In Bertoua, HYSACAM (Hygiene and Sanitation of Cameroon) collects 61% of the city's garbage, the rest is thrown into the swamps, shallows and alleys. The level of cleanliness in housing is still very approximate, with 68% of the population pouring their wastewater on the ground, or in the gutters (12%). This is an indicator of very few septic tanks in homes. In the city of Bertoua, there is a pre-collection, an operation by which the inhabitants of a housing group collect their waste for disposal (Bird : 360).

Urban sanitation suffers from a lack of legal texts governing pre-collection operations, collection and transport of garbage to the landfill. There is no law severely punishing public health offenders. Decentralization creates a confused situation because of the plurality of stakeholders in the sanitation sector: state actors, CTDs, non-state actors (NGOs, GIC, GIE) and the public-private partnership. State actors are made up of ministerial departments, namely: The Ministry of Decentralization which oversees the CTDs; The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, responsible for fertilizer control; The Ministry of Energy and Water, responsible for nuisance problems and industrial discharges, pollution control, industrial waste and sanitation; The Ministry of the Environment and Nature Protection, which ensures the protection and management of the environment; The Ministry of Town Planning and Housing, responsible for urban planning, management of hygiene, sanitation and urban aesthetics; The Ministry of Public Health, responsible for the health aspects of household waste; The Ministry of Finance, partly responsible for financing sanitation-related activities. With regard to the Communes, there is a conflict of competences between the Urban Communities and the Urban District Communes. This conflict is caused by the provisions of Law N° 87/015 of July 15, 1987 establishing Urban Communities. This law granted the said entities competence in terms of hygiene and sanitation while the Urban District Municipalities were responsible for the collection and treatment of household waste. In the absence of the implementing decree for Law No. 2004/018 on the rules applicable to the Communes, the CUBs continue to play the role of local superstructure. Institutional vagueness does not facilitate urban waste management. (Nguema, 2023 :25).

The lack of coordination of the action of the various stakeholders and the multiplicity of decision-making centers generate leaks of responsibilities at the level of the city of Bertoua. The unstructured habitat makes it difficult for trucks to access household waste collection because 80% of the city of Bertoua is made up of spontaneous fabric. The waste treatment site was made available to HYSACAM by the UCB located in Koumé-Bonis. This is a temporary site. The first site, located in the Toungou district, was the subject of a dispute with the Cameroon airports company, which forced the CUB to clear out. It has acquired a five-hectare site which it has made available to HYSACAM, pending a final site which will serve as a controlled waste dump. The Koumé-Bonis site was chosen without a real environmental impact study (Tchenkeu, 2021 :8). The CUB has a truck for emptying septic tanks. Any user wishing a septic tank emptying service pays thirty thousand francs. The water treatment plant is in the ENIA district, but it is no longer functional. The main treatment of waste in Bertoua is landfilling, using a bulldozer and a loader shovel (Bird: 370). The city of Bertoua considered as part of our analysis poses the problem of efficient waste management not only by demographic growth but also by the plurality of actors involved in the urban sanitation sector. The lack of a coherent land use planning policy has led to uncontrolled urbanization and a population explosion not controlled by the public authorities in Bertoua. City composed mainly of marshy lowlands where access to the removal of household waste is not easy. Apart from the burial of waste, there is no extension in Bertoua in the recycling or even treatment of waste (El Khdari, 2015: 11).

3. Inadequate funding for decentralization

This section examines the problem of the modernization of the management of the UCB, the insufficiency of the general endowment of decentralization and the discrimination in the distribution of the resources of the central State. These problems are inherent in the state of national finances and national political will.

3.1. The problem of modernizing the management of the UCB

Despite the modernization requirements defined in the laws and regulations on the management of public finances, the Mayor is still content with a traditional and archaic management of the funds of the CUB. However, local authorities must comply with the budget nomenclature when developing, voting, executing, and producing the administrative account and the management account, finally. Thus, any reorganization of the UCB, in these different departments, requires enormous financial and human resources. However, the current state of local finances does not allow the CTDs to proceed with any increase in charges. So, the problem of reorganizing municipal services is totally dependent on the financial health of the community and its territorial extent. The problem of the quality and quantity of human resources of the UCB is a crucial problem nowadays. It is characterized by the lack of competent managers capable of defining and designing UCB management strategies; the insufficient number of municipal staff and the inability of municipal magistrates to understand the tools of commercial management and to promote an effective and efficient policy for the management of UCB affairs. However, the regulatory framework clearly defines the different categories of personnel that the local authority can employ. It emerges from this framework that engineers, doctors and associate professors can be employed in local authorities. However, this is not the case in the current state of UCB personnel.

Thus, the UCB faces a paradox, the insufficiency of financial resources and the need for competent and highly qualified personnel. Although in the urban community of Bertoua engineers and staff with university degrees are employed, the majority of the staff is made up of agents holding the CEPE, the Brevet or having graduated from the CEFAM (El Khdari, 2015 : 16). According to the new communal sectoral accounting plan, local management must be characterized by the distinction between the accounting operations of the municipal magistrate, grouped together in the accounting of the authorizing officer and the accounting operations of the municipal tax collector, grouped together in the accounting of the accountant of the last. At the end of each fiscal year, the municipal magistrate must keep an administrative account, which traces all the revenue and its actual use during the year (Tchenkeu, 2021 :10). This account must be approved by the guardianship. On the other hand, the municipal revenue collector keeps the management account which must have the same result as the administrative account. This distinction in procedures was designed with a view to allowing honest management of local revenues through reciprocal checks between the authorizing officer and the accountant. The archaic character of the management of the UCB thus presented does not guarantee the good management of the enormous resources which will be transferred to the CTDs, after transfer of competences. The central State, the main actor in the implementation of decentralization, should therefore insist on the modernization of local management circuits, for example by increasing the number of training seminars for local managers and the definition of recruitment criteria for certain positions. Responsibility at the local level. Based on this observation, the implementation of decentralization comes up against the problem of lack of human resource capacity, especially given the enormous skills to be transferred to the CTDs. It seems urgent that the human capacity building policy of RLAs be accelerated for their proper integration into the decentralization process (Nguema, 2023 :29).

3.2. Insufficiency in the general endowment of decentralization

At the level of the national government, several structures have been created with a view to supporting the decentralization process in Cameroon. These include the National Council for Decentralization (CND), the Interministerial Committee for Local Services (CISL), the National Committee for Local Finance (CNFL), the Interministerial Commission for Decentralized Cooperation (CICD) and the National Program for Participatory Development (PNDP). However, in view of the procrastination (action of postponing what could be done at the very moment) that this process of decentralization accuses, the role and the effectiveness of the said structures can be questioned. The Special Fund for Intermunicipal Equipment and Intervention (FEICOM), according to its reorganization decree, is another ambiguity in terms of decentralization in Cameroon in general and in Bertoua in particular. FEICOM is placed under the technical supervision of the Ministry of Decentralization and Local Development and under the financial supervision of the Ministry of Finance. In a context of decentralization, the most surprising thing is that the main heads of the administrative staff of FEICOM (the President and the members of the Board of Directors, the Director General and his deputy) are appointed by presidential decree. FEICOM is perceived as an organ of the national government controlling in an opaque way (which is not transparent) the income from local taxation. Some former senior officials of this structure have been sentenced for acts of embezzlement of public funds (El Khdari, 2015: 20). Despite the transfers of certain financial resources to the municipalities by FEICOM, the municipalities remain unable to assume the operating and investment costs included in their budgets. FEICOM is currently facing a low rate of recovery of loans and cash advances granted to municipalities. The impact of certain strategic choices of FEICOM must be questioned. In recent years, significant financial resources of the structure have been directed towards the construction of buildings to house its headquarters and regional agencies (also at staggering costs). However, several municipalities are housed in makeshift shelters and lack competent technical personnel.

3.3. Discrimination in the general allocation of decentralization

In Cameroon, the provisions of Decree No. 2009/248 of August 5, 2009 settings the terms of evaluation and distribution of the DGD distinguish between the general operating grant (DGF) and the general investment grant (DGI). The finance law sets each year, on the proposal of the government, the fraction of State revenue allocated to the DGD (article 25 paragraph 2 of the general code of RLAs). However, Bird & Vaillancourt (1998) argue that the annual determination of the amount reduces the predictability of local government revenues, but in theory allows transfers to be better adapted to changing needs (Tchenkeu, 2021 :12). With regard to the payment methods, it is important on the one hand to specify that from 2010 to 2018, the distribution criteria and the beneficiary municipalities of the DGD were chosen at the central level, and on the other hand that the creation of the Ministry responsible for decentralization and local development (MINDDDEVEL) in March 2018, introduced innovations in terms of defining the amounts and redistributing the DGI. Since its operationalization in 2010, the DGD has been shared with a few municipalities according to criteria that were not clear. The communes benefiting from the DGD were chosen at the central level. This mechanism for sharing funds disadvantages certain municipalities that are often less well off. This state of affairs has not contributed to the reduction of disparities between the CTDs, insofar as the joint decrees of the Ministry in charge of local authorities and MINEPAT (Ministry of Planning and Regional Development) on the release and allocation of certain shares of the DGI harmed certain municipalities between 2010 and 2018 (El Khdari, 2015: 22).

Our communication focused on the limits of decentralization in the UCB between 1996 and 2020. We presented institutional obstacles, the lack of mastery of urban planning, the inadequacy of the urban sanitation service and the scarcity of resources. In financing

decentralization in Cameroon. According to the law n° 2004 title IV of the supervision on the territorial communities, article 67 paragraph (1) stipulates that the governor is the delegate of the State in the region. As such, he is responsible for national interests, administrative control, compliance with laws and regulations and maintenance of public order; it supervises and coordinates under the authority of the government, the services of the civil administrations of the State in the region. (2) the prefect ensures State supervision over the municipality. The prefect had a right of veto on the actions of the mayor and on the personnel but in no case could revoke it the context of decentralization, the supervision the autonomy enjoyed by the decentralized territorial collectivities is subject to a control which constitutes the administrative supervision. "The State ensures the harmonious development of all decentralized territorial communities on the basis of national solidarity, regional potential and inter-regional balance". The State has granted the country laws and regulations in order to frame the public action of the various governments (national, regional, local). To this end, the powers of the administrative heads of the decentralized entities (administrative districts) and those of the heads of the decentralized entities (territorial districts) are defined. In fact, the Mayor of the city consults the prefect and within 15 days, if the latter does not give him his opinion on a question on which he has been consulted, he implements his decision. We see that all the powers are in the hands of the central power because all the decisions taken at the local level must be approved by the representatives of the State in the Regions and the Communes. We also have the municipal authorities who face the impossibility of recruiting certain key personnel of their administration like the secretary general, the accountant, the municipal collector, and certain executives. The State does not want to give way to CTDs to manage and take decisions themselves that concern their own municipalities because they always have an eye on everything. Since the transfer of powers in 2010, conflicts between the Urban District Municipalities of Bertoua and the Urban Community of Bertoua are visible and constitute an obstacle to the development of the city. Indeed, the law relating to the rules applicable to the Communes in its Article 79 stipulates that: The communal executive gives its opinion at the request of the representative of the State or in accordance with the legislation and the regulations in force. This is a conflict between the CUA of Bertoua 1st and the CUB on the central market of Bertoua, this problem has been going on for years; the conflict in the Nkolbikon market; the conflict over the slaughterhouse, the personal conflict between the Mayor of the city and the mayor of the commune of Bertoua 2nd. Alongside these inter-municipal disagreements are superimposed the plurality of administrations, that is to say the ministries to which the municipalities must resort, the loans, the twinning of the municipalities of Bertoua are done under the watchful eye of the ministerial supervision of the area of cooperation. The absence of local human resources, municipal executives unfit to interpret urban master plans, inappropriate urban plans and competition from the central state and the private sector in local development plans have been noted. The problem of household waste is based on the insufficiency in the collection of household waste, the limited means in the transport of waste, the insufficiency in the treatment of waste and the fate of non-household waste. All these obstacles noted here serve to dismantle the utopia of national policy in terms of decentralization. The concept is well and truly used in the Cameroonian administrations but its daily practice is burdened by the central State which yields limply to let go of the ballast for the transfer of competences to the Communes of Cameroon in general and to Bertoua in particular. However, this research, which is at the center of the decentralization process in terms of transferring resources to RLAs, will serve as a basis for future studies that will focus on the issue of financing RLAs.

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FORCE AND MANIPULATION OF LAW IN KAMERUN: AN EXAMINATION OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE GERMAN-DOUALA TREATY OF JULY 12, 1884 AND THE IMPERIAL DECREE OF JUNE 15, 1896

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Abstract: *The search for land to be conquered was not a departure for the German empire, nor a necessity. But faced with the pressures of those who saw in the conquest a way to boost the German economy, and to face the rise of France and Great Britain, it became a necessity. It is thus that Germany engages in the conquest and establish, following the signature of the treaty of July 12th, 1884, the protectorate on the Kamerun. Except that unlike the colony, the protectorate is a little more liberal, which is an obstacle to German policy on the territory. Even so, the douala chiefs, co-signers of the treaty, had been keen to protect their interests over trade and land. To circumvent these difficulties and establish its authority on the territory, Germany adopts a decree governing the land administration, on the creation, taking possession and the disposal of the domain of the crown, on June 15, 1896. Acquisition and alienation of lands in the Kamerun colony. The purpose of this article is to analyze the influences, interpretations and implications of the law in such a situation. The establishment of the German protectorate on the Kamerun is a good example. It allows us to understand what a protectorate is and especially why Germany broke the treaty of 12 July 1884 by adopting the decree of 15 June 1896. In arrogating all lands, Germany cancels the prerogatives that the protectorate regime grants to local populations in order to subject people to its authority. Because to control the earth is to control the territory and the men by reorienting the politics, the economy, the social relations and the culture. The use of law here proves indispensable and unavoidable insofar as it is he who shapes and guides the policy of domination of Germany over the Kamerun.*

Keywords: Law, Protectorate, land, Kamerun

Law is a concept that cannot have a single and unanimous definition. But, in general, it is made up of four fundamentals, namely: a set of rules, the sanction, the content and the purpose. The law, as a set of rules of conduct is understood as a codification which according to the societies, may be composed of laws, customs, jurisprudence, doctrine, or models of behavior, intended to govern the relationship between men and compliance with which is ensured by an authority. As a sanction, He punishes in one way or another anyone who contravenes the order He establishes. Thus, the rule of law is sanctioned by coercion. To this end, a rule that is not mandatory is not a rule of law. The law also depends on its content. The content of the right is understood here as the inspiration, origin or foundation of its statement. It is this statement which, after approval, is adopted as a rule of law. Finally, the law depends on its purpose and the objective pursued or to be achieved. Generally, the purpose of law is to secure order and achieve justice. Its purpose is to organize and preserve human societies in such a way that they structure and develop in time and space (Revet, 2008:8). In this case, the law can be defined as a set of mandatory prescriptions with a social purpose enacted and sanctioned by a power, by means of methods making it possible to produce, interpret and apply the mandatory prescriptions. This definition of law reveals that it is an indispensable instrument in society. It can also be an instrument of conquest, of segregation. As was the case in the colonized territories. The imperial powers used the law not only to cover themselves but also to submit the local populations to their authority.

Thus, the law underwent manipulations and interpretations according to the objectives of the politics of the dominating power. In German Kamerun, manipulations of the

law began with the establishment of the protectorate. Because, this occupation regime as defined by international law did not have the same definition among the Germans who did not appreciate sharing power with the natives. For this they will break the agreements of the treaty of July 12, 1884 by adopting the imperial decree of June 15, 1896 relating to the creation, the taking possession and the alienation of the domain of the crown. This leads us to question the value, importance and implications of the law applied in the protectorate of Kamerun. It is therefore a question of examining the articulations establishing the German protectorate over Kamerun and its corollaries, in relation to the economic and social implications of the imperial decree of July 15, 1896.

1. The Establishment of the Protectorate on the Kamerun

The establishment of the protectorate over Kamerun by the signing of the German-Douala treaty of July 12, 1884, was a choice of the German Empire. The latter wanted through the limitation of the involvement of the government in the conquest, to reduce the expenses that it could generate. Except that the protectorate over the colony enjoyed certain privileges. And it is the latter who will slow down German action during the first ten years of its occupation of Kamerun.

1.1. The general principles and the German conception of the protectorate

The occupation of a territory according to Mérygnac is carried out either in the form of annexation (colonization), or under that of the protectorate. In the first case, the colonizing power organizes the conquered territory as it sees fit, and according to its objectives. To this end, she becomes the absolute mistress of the new territory. From now on, the colonial soil is part of the national territory. Annexation thus gives absolute power to the colonizing state, which has nothing to fear from the intrigues, conspiracies and more or less open resistance of the former local powers that have now disappeared. From that moment, it is the colonizer who sets the laws. With regard to the protectorate, the protector remains in the presence of the established powers of the country to which he juxtaposes an organization which must function concurrently with these powers. We are therefore witnessing a sharing of power between the protective power and the local populations. The protectorate thereby maintains the local institutions, safeguarding among the populations the prestige of the preserved government which the protective power will move at will. The establishment of a protectorate over a territory by an imperialist power presupposes that this power recognizes, undertakes to respect local institutions and agrees to coexist with them. To achieve this, the two parties conclude an agreement by which they determine the terms of their collaboration. The protectorate therefore constitutes a conventional combination where the treaty determines the rights of the two parties (Mérygnac, 1912: 28).

Generally, the sovereignty of the protected territory is seriously compromised from the internal point of view, by the surrender to the protector of certain essential rights, such as that of administering justice, collecting taxes, commanding or controlling military forces, to direct public works and public instruction. From the external point of view, the immutable character of the protectorate consists in the fact that the protegee no longer has a personal policy and must absolutely conform his line of conduct to that of the protector, who becomes his representative in the relations that the latter might maintain with other countries, states or territories (Mérygnac, 1912: 29). But, with regard to the negotiations on the subject of the entry or not of the German Empire in the conquest of the lands where it was already lagging behind and taking into account the image that Germany wanted to convey in the world and especially among the other powers already engaged in the conquest, it is difficult to envisage a peaceful coexistence between the German administration and the local authorities. This is all the more so since Germany does not share the definition of the protectorate set out by Mérygnac in his work *Précis de législation et d'économie coloniale* (Mérygnac, 1912: 29).

The protectorate for the Germans is a relationship of legal subordination between two nations and the ability of one of them to command and prohibit certain practices from the other (Owona, 1996: 19-24). Here, we do not see the idea of cohabitation but rather a balance of power where the strongest imposes its principles. The Empire therefore exercises over all its protectorates a political sovereignty in the form of legislation, administration and justice and it extends this sovereignty to jurisdiction, public order and the protection of the territory against attacks. other powers. By occupying a territory, Germany took control of all administrative and institutional bodies. "The German Empire being a sovereign organism, it follows from this fact that its power in the protectorates has the quality of sovereign, since a State cannot be at the same time sovereign and legally subject to a superior power [...] Thus, from the point of view of its protective power, the Empire is not subject to any political power; it is therefore sovereign. Once again, we understand that the protectorate for the Germans is synonymous with annexation. This can be justified by the fact that most of the protectorates held by Germany were devoid of any real political and social organization with the exception of Togo and Kamerun. On this subject, Paul Laband reveals that: During the establishment of the German protectorate, we found ourselves in the presence of an organization of the population subject to chiefs or kings who exercised the right to levy taxes, to return justice, to command in case of war, etc. Nor were these peoples devoid of the idea of law; they have the idea of property and other rights of possession, family law, right of inheritance (Owona, 1996: 25). This organization, according to the definition and vision of the protectorate of the Germans, poses a problem for German sovereignty over the local populations. The particularity of Togo and Cameroon is that, unlike other German possessions in the Pacific and Asia, they have peoples governed by a political and legal organization (Andler, 1915: 57). To support it, V. Stengel thinks that the state of civilization in these territories is not among these peoples in the savage state, as among the Pacific islanders, and that there were in reality among them authorities native. This situation forced the Germans to reconsider their conception of the protectorate, by adopting collaboration with the local authorities. This collaboration is determined by a treaty (Laband: 692). This is what led to the signing of the German-Douala treaty, for the establishment of the German protectorate over Kamerun (Owona, 1996: 27).

1.2. The articulations of the German-Douala treaty and their influence on the relations between the local populations and the Germans

Signed on July 12, 1884 by the Douala chiefs and the German Empire represented by the merchants of the firms C. Woermann and Jantzen & Thormählen, the German-Douala Treaty transferred to the German Empire the rights of sovereignty, legislation and administration. territory and populations of Kamerun. But some reservations had been expressed by the Douala chiefs with the aim of preserving their interests and their customs (Owona, 1996: 27). To this end, they had issued that: the territory could not be ceded to a third party; all other treaties that had been concluded with other foreign governments were to remain fully valid; the cultivated land and the sites on which the villages are located were to remain the property of the owners and their descendants; tolls were to be paid annually as in the past to local kings and chiefs; local customs and usages had to be respected. The signing of this treaty made the territory of Kamerun a German protectorate. But we realize that the Germans, that is to say the traders, still remained on the coasts of Kamerun (Owona, 1996: 196-197). However, one would have expected them to immediately invest the hinterland to trade there, whereas no reservation in the treaty of July 12, 1884 restricts this. Among the points of contention that led to the Germans contesting the treaty was the trade monopoly held by the populations of the coast (Owona, 1996: 196-197). Does this mean that the clauses of the preliminary treaty which really resulted from the consultations between Douala and the Germans and where we find the real reservations expressed by the Douala leaders, weighed

their weight on the relations between Douala and the Germans, this by the simple fact that the Doualas always kept in mind the restrictions they had issued at the start. V. J. Ngho aptly points out that the final treaty of 12 July 1884 generally mirrored the preliminary treaty (Julius Ngho, 1990: 25). We understand by this that the final treaty had undergone some modifications. It should be noted in this regard that in the preliminary treaty, the Douala chiefs had expressly requested the insertion of a clause on trade in which they had clearly said: Our wish is that the Whites should not go inwards and trade directly with the Bushmen, have nothing to do with our markets; they must stay here along this river, trusting us to deal directly with our Bushmen (bushers) (Julius Ngho, 1990: 25).

The absence of this clause in the final treaty may be the work of Adolph Woermann. The latter, according to Etoga Eily, by having his brother Edouard Woermann write, then sign by the Douala chiefs, texts carefully prepared in advance and which Nachtigal only had to make public, he irreversibly ensured the success of his activities because he had asked to obtain the commercial monopoly in specific regions, his desire being to open up to the hinterland. This omission opposes two very important pillars of historiography, namely speech (orality) and writing (text), which reveals the first manipulations of the law. For the Germans, it was enough that it was written to assert what was right. On the other hand, among the Douala chiefs, what is said, is said and is waiting to be put into practice. By dismissing this clause, A. Woermann knew that the written text had the force of law before the word, especially since it has always been said: words fly away, writings remain. Yet in African society, speech has as much value as writing in Western societies. This would mean that the Douala chiefs remained faithful to the agreements of the preliminary treaty in which they had expressed all their wishes and which the Germans seem to have accepted, given the fact that they had never opposed the commercial monopoly of the Doualas despite the fact that this clause does not appear in the final text that can be described as official (Julius Ngho, 1990: 35). Any reaction from the Germans, from a legal point of view, was difficult to imagine. Because, as Etoga Eily demonstrates so well, by allowing the Douala to express their essential wishes, the Germans had implicitly given a legal basis to the trade of the intermediaries whom they had moreover undertaken to protect (Eily Etoga, 1971: 139). One of the fundamental questions to be asked after the signing of the July 12 treaty is whether the Germans were going to support protecting a territory where the population holds the monopoly of trade, land and demands respect for its customs and customs? If not, what would have been the use of signing this treaty, the purpose of which was to protect German commercial interests. Seen from this angle, it was difficult to envisage that this treaty would last. Etoga Eily thinks in this regard that if Germany accepted these conditions it was for the needs of the cause. Although this was one of the points of disagreement between the Douala leaders and the British. It therefore appears that Germany was obliged to accept the conditions set by the Douala chiefs in order to hope to obtain Kamerun (Eily Etoga, 1971: 139).

In view of the enormous profits reaped from the *Zwischenhandel* (the trade of intermediaries), the disputes of the treaty begin to be heard. German traders felt disadvantaged by the fact that their activities were limited only to the coast and that middlemen made a great profit there. All the more so as part of the trade of the hinterland was diverted towards the North by the English installed in Nigeria and towards the South by the French installed in Congo; which only amplified the protests of traders. The monopoly of intermediaries was accentuated on the one hand by their good organization. In order to avoid rivalries and conflicts, the Douala chiefs divided up the areas of influence. On the other hand, a lack of organization has been observed among German merchants to deal with the monopoly of intermediaries. They were rather preoccupied with their internal rivalries which prevented the formation of a front for the defense of their affairs (Eily Etoga, 1971: 141).

In 1886, Governor Von Soden was already developing restrictions on this text. He considered that the monopoly recognized in the Douala concerned the relations they

maintained with the tribes which, until 1884, traded with them. Therefore, they had no rights to the newly explored areas. This argument was shared by German traders. This is all the more so since the Douala chiefs had shared the areas of influence. This would mean that undefined areas could be occupied either by other natives or by the Germans. This is how traders began to find loopholes to conquer the hinterland. Despite the multiple interpretations found in the treaty so that traders had access to the hinterland, the intermediaries did not intend to give up their privileges so easily. The German traders thus relied on the arguments of the governor and began the conquest of Kamerun.

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From their establishment in the hinterland through the installation of factoreries, the Germans will deploy to definitively eliminate the commercial monopoly of Douala. Through the police regulations of May 22, 1895 and the law of June 19, 1895, the German administration formally prohibited the Doualas from carrying on business in their respective localities while withdrawing their labor. They were also banned from hunting afterwards. These decisions demonstrate that the German administration did not skimp on the means to assert its rights of sovereignty, administration and legislation over Kamerun. As if to completely annihilate the intermediaries, it proceeds to the devaluation of the local currency: the kroo. Before 1884, the kroo was worth 20 marks (Eily Etoga, 1971:158). In 1885, it was reduced to 12, then to 10 marks in 1891. Finally, it was dissolved by the decree of April 6, 1894 and at the same time, the mark became the only currency in circulation in Kamerun. Now German traders control the economy of the territory. From the above, we can see that the German administration is unilaterally breaking an agreement that is nevertheless bilateral. If it is true that a treaty has the force of law and that, according to article 55 of the French constitution, the treaty is superior to the law, it would mean that if a conflict arises between a law and a ratified treaty, the treaty takes precedence over the law. Although this is the French constitution, it is nonetheless true that an analogy would like an agreement between several parties to influence a unilateral decision. And its dissolution also requires the approval of the signatory parties. To this end, we can conclude that the terms of the Germano Douala treaty were still in force because the leaders had never waived them. This is the reason why the Douala had never ceased to oppose the attacks on the clauses of the treaty perpetrated by the German administration (Eily Etoga, 1971: 158).

The problem that arises here is that by signing the treaty of July 12, 1884, the Germans undertook to respect local habits and customs. Yet the legal basis of the protectorate, among the Germans as defined by Paul Laband, is an occupation in the sense of international law, the unilateral establishment of domination over the protected territories. By making concessions to local chiefs, Germany opened the door to resistance because the treaties signed are not without consequence. Which from a strategic point of view reflects a lack of foresight, something difficult to accept for a people who want to dominate the world. The Germans by this fact were obliged to come to arms to conquer and submit the protectorate under their authority. If the administration succeeded in imposing itself despite the resistance, it is because it gave the force of law to the principles of law stated by the various texts through the obtaining of the rights of administration and protectorate legislation. Paul Laband supports this point of view by determining the legislative role of the State. Thus he affirms that: It is the business of the State to create the content of the law and to find its expression; it is even one of the most important duties of the State; finding the maxim of law that will have to be sanctioned is part of the legislative activity; but the proper activity of the State, the exercise of sovereignty, is manifested by the sanction of the law, and not by fixing the content of the law; the State manifests its authority by giving the force of law to a principle of law (Eily Etoga, 1971:159).

To this end, whether the treaty is above the law, it is up to the German administration to decide. Although Kamerun was not a state, that is to say an actor in international relations. It is difficult, as many authors have demonstrated, to classify this agreement as a treaty. These are all reasons that comforted the Germans in their enterprise. Indeed, after having excluded the Douala from all trade circuits, it was now a question of moving on to the production of the resources that Europe needed. Once again, the Germans come up against this restriction of the treaty which stipulated that: "the lands cultivated by us and the sites on which there are villages must remain the property of the owners and their descendants". However, where and how to find land to satisfy this new need. The only solution available to them was simply to break the treaty by circumventing local customs in order to have the land. This is how the imperial decree of June 15, 1896 on the creation, taking possession and alienation of the domain of the crown was adopted.

2. The implications of the imperial decree of June 15, 1896

The analyzes made above show that the signing of the German-Douala treaty was only a formality to be completed so that the Germans could regain possession of Kamerun. But this formality proved to be the Achilles tendon to the imposition of the sovereignty of the German administration over the protectorate. To definitively establish its authority over the territory, the German administration promulgates the imperial decree on land management. Beyond the land, this decree was also intended to submit Kamerun to German authority. The purpose of this decree was therefore to restore the political and economic sovereignty of Germany over Kamerun (Laband: 697).

2.1. The political aims of the imperial decree of June 15, 1896: the assertion of the administrative, legislative power and sovereignty of Germany over Kamerun

The German-Douala treaty already posed enormous problems for the Germans who, despite their access to the hinterland, still could not move as an imperial power. Some Germans, like Adam, faced with this blockage that the treaty constituted, declared that these treaties were absolutely worthless; and that they would be fictitious deals, concluded simply for political reasons, with which considerations of law have nothing to do. His reason here is that the barbarians had not had a clear awareness of the legal significance of their statements. From there, he concludes by saying that the chiefs had preserved their sovereignty only in appearance; they were organs of the Empire only as long as the imperial power deemed it appropriate to grant them this situation because the Empire had no more the duty to leave them all the rights recognized in the treaties than they did had the right to exercise their function. According to Adam, the Empire believed itself to be in the presence of a malleable population. But she realized that was not the case, although J. C. Weaver tells us that:

Arriving in Africa, the Europeans thought they would find alienated territories, but they realized that these territories are under the influence of custom, coming from the vicissitudes of local history, the requirements of human ecology, the imperatives arrangement of sociological reality with economic necessities [...] To obtain land in such an environment, Westerners are obliged to establish their system of land management and carry out conquests, expropriations, verification of traditional titles and laws freeing inalienable lands held by tribes and religious orders (Laband: 698). Thus, the Germans began by denying the legal nature of the treaty as if to say that the prescriptions of the treaty were part of the generosity of the Empire that the chiefs and their populations deployed to abuse. The creation, taking possession and alienation of the domain of the crown as well as the acquisition and alienation of land in the colony of Kamerun had for the purpose of reclaiming the protectorate in order to definitively establish the sovereignty of the Empire. This law made the territory of Kamerun a land of the Empire. The first article provides that in Kamerun, the lands are deemed to be without masters and are part of the domain of the crown: they belong to the Reich. Following

the above, Paul Laband reveals that "The protected territories are not foreign territories for the Empire; they are national territories; they belong to the Empire." (Laband: 699). Protectorates are therefore extensions of the Empire. That said: a subject of the empire living in Kamerun enjoys the same rights as one living in the empire. The declaration of the lands of Kamerun as part of the crown lands was done in order to protect German nationals living in Kamerun, so that they do not lose their nationality. In any case, the local populations should in principle become subjects of the empire and enjoy the status there. But if they were not, it is because, according to Paul Laband, the protected territories are not incorporated into the Empire; they are not part of that portion of the globe which constitutes the material basis of the political personality of the Empire; they are not elements, but dependencies of the territory of the Empire. We can see in this declaration a desire to exclude local populations from the political scene. This is the reason why they had not been taken into account in the elaboration of the decree of June 15, 1896. Because, it was not necessary to run the risk of offering them another opportunity to oppose German policy. , although they remained attached to the treaty of July 12, 1884. This text put an end to the sharing of political rights distributed between the local chiefs and the imperial administration. Now the Germans were the only decision-makers. Paul Laband, in relation to what he said above and to the observation that we have just made, returns by saying that: The territories of the protectorates are "foreign", when it comes to vigor and the application of the laws of the Empire, the competence of the authorities and the effect of the acts and decisions of the administration. Because, in this sense, the foreigner is not the territory subject to a foreign political power, it is the territory opposed to that which the Constitution has determined to make it a legal unity (Adam: 697).

For this, the texts issued by the imperial administration, such as the decree of June 15, 1896, did not apply to local populations, but rather to the territory of the protectorate and to the German nationals who lived there. We come to this conclusion based on the fact that the German conception of the protectorate is opposed to the conventional conception. As we had to emphasize (in the first part of this analysis, with regard to the conception of the protectorate), the protectorate for the Germans is a relationship of legal subordination between two nations and the faculty of one of them command and forbid certain things to the other. That said: the protectorate is a balance of power where the strongest imposes its philosophy on the weak. This being so, the two actors cannot enjoy the same legal status. This is the reason why the imperial decree could not incorporate the local populations in its codification because they would have been placed on the same level as the citizens of the Empire. Which they are hardly, at least with regard to the vigor and application of the laws of the Empire, the competence of the authorities and the effect of the acts and decisions of the administration, to take up the words of Paul Laband. Where appropriate, he rightly points out that: Certainly, the natives are subjects of the Empire and subject to the sovereignty of the Empire; therefore, the Empire can enact laws and ordinances relating to the natives, exercise justice over them, etc. however, in South West Africa, in Cameroon and Togo and in Samoa, the exercise of public rights over the natives is reserved to the native chiefs. Thus, in these colonies, the natives are subjects of the Empire indirectly. But this does not prevent the Empire from also asserting, from certain points of view, its political power directly. They are subject to the jurisdiction of the Empire only insofar as this is expressly ordered [...] On the other hand, the natives are not nationals of the Empire; they take no part in the political community, in the unitary association which has been established by the Constitution between the subjects of the Confederate States of Germany and the land of the Empire; they are, in the sense of the laws of the Empire, foreigners (Laband: 699).

These words of Paul Laband come to comfort what we noted above, namely that the decree of June 15, 1896 applied to the territory and to the German nationals of Kamerun, while the local populations remained under the administration of the chiefs and the laws

customary. Despite this, this law had a great impact on the natives. We thus had a double administration which was undoubtedly not a collaboration as would be required by a conventional application of the protectorate. But rather a relationship of interests where the status of the native migrates according to the ambitions, the will and the purpose of the policy of domination of the German administration. This migration was intended to muzzle the natives who had proved to be an embarrassing factor for the Germans who perhaps thought they were dealing with a people who knew nothing of the law (Adam: 697).

The first objective of the decree of June 15, 1896 creating the domain of the crown was to break the administrative collaboration between the Germans and the local chiefs by arrogating all the lands. By this act, the Germans intended to destabilize the social structure of the natives whose land was the central element. In his article where he exposes the work of Léon Walras, Gwénaëlle Merz underlines that: The right of ownership of a person on a thing is the right, for this person, to apply this thing to the satisfaction of a need, even by consuming it [...] The person vested with the right of ownership over a thing has the moral power to apply this thing to satisfy the need he feels for it, and the other persons will have the moral obligation to respect the right of the first. The customary communities have thus been victims of "the iron law of the oligarchy" it is a law which demonstrates that, if a group has a collective interest, it must do everything to protect it. If they can't, another group that feels the need for that interest and its importance will do whatever it takes to exploit it. This is what happened to the traditional communities of Kamerun with the adoption of the decree of June 15, 1896 because the custom could not resist the pressure of the new land management system introduced by the Germans, and this despite the restrictions laid down in the German-Douala treaty. This law came back to put the Germans afloat because they were losing momentum on the establishment of their policy of domination. To this end, the work of Mr. Ntsama Ndoh emphasizes that: "the control and possession of land is a means of prestige. This means for the human group: the maintenance of their sovereignty, because ... a group without land was threatened by dislocation, dispersion, dependence. It emerges from these remarks that the sovereignty of a people is exercised over a well-defined territory. That said, a people without territory is a dominated people, who have lost their sovereignty (Laband: 699).

After having lost control of trade and land following the veto imposed by the leaders, the Germans really had no space in which to assert their power and especially to carry out their projects. This observation makes us notice that, to carry out any activity, you must have control of a space, a sector or an area to make your activity prosper and above all to avoid being supplanted by another more ambitious. This is what gives rise to lobbies. Speaking of lobbies, Rudin notes that the decree of June 15, 1896 would have been adopted two years earlier, that is to say in 1894. But the government under the supervision of Von Zimmerer had insisted on consulting Woermann and the Jantzen cabinet & Thormahlen on the matter. The delay experienced in the adoption of this text testifies to the influence not only of the above-mentioned companies, but also of the consortium of traders. Going through this text, we feel their imprint (Laband: 700).

The imperial decree relating to the creation, taking possession and alienation of the domain of the crown had the political objective of restoring the administrative and legislative domination acquired by the signing of the German-Douala treaty, but by dismissing the local chiefs. From now on, we no longer had a division of powers. Each party administered according to its own rules. The consequence here is the pursuit or defense of the same interests, which results in clashes.

2.2. The economic and social scope of the decree of June 15, 1896

The promotion of the local economy, with the aim of supplying the West, was the leitmotif of the imperialist powers present in Africa. Germany present in Kamerun did not intend to derogate from this rule, a guarantee of prosperity. That said, beyond the political

reasons that we found in the decree of June 15, 1896, the purpose was to provide German operators with guarantees allowing them to conduct their business in peace. This is the reason why all the unoccupied lands of Kamerun and those whose use could not be justified had been declared belonging to the crown (Laband: 701). . This article thus came to circumvent the restrictions of the Douala chiefs, carried in the treaty of July 12, 1884, which stipulated that the sites on which their houses were located and the lands on which they made their fields had to remain the properties of their holders and their owners descendants. We can therefore assume that, for the Germans, this would mean that all other lands were free of any occupation, including without owners. The earth here presents itself as being the essential link in the economies of African territories in general and that of Kamerun in particular. That said, having control over the land means controlling all sectors of the economy, such as production (agriculture, industries, etc.) and distribution (trade, transport). Until now, these two sectors, if we stick to the German-Douala treaty, were controlled by the local populations, to the detriment of the Germans, whose control and management of these sectors guaranteed the success of their expansion on the territory of Cameroon. Henry George notes on this subject that: Land is the source of all wealth. It is the mine from which are drawn the materials that shape the work. It is the substance to which labor gives form. And therefore, when labor cannot satisfy its desires, can we not conclude with certainty that it is because the earth is closed to labor. In this case, access to the land was still closed to the Germans. This is the reason why they set out to solve this problem so that it no longer constituted an obstacle to the exercise of their policy of domination and especially economic policy (Laband: 700). Collart Dutilleul and F. Garcia rightly point out that "States put at the service of their development a law that carries values that the social community chooses according to its own culture, its history, its traditions and its location." The laws of Kamerun being not only incompatible with German laws, but also difficult to apprehend, it was necessary for the Germans to introduce a system that responds to their development policy. This is why thinking about development without consideration for the law means accepting to submit to the rights of others. And to think of development with the help of a law with no other values than those of commercial exchanges is to accept to submit to the law of the strongest. These remarks by François Collart Dutilleul reflect exactly what happened in Kamerun. The Germans, no longer wanting to undergo the pressure of the local populations, had set up their own system. The adoption of the decree on the organization of land management having thus provided the guarantees that German operators needed, the administration could therefore launch an operation to occupy the newly acquired land, at least as far as exploitable land is concerned. To this end, he set up an economic system based on the policy of large concessions and that of large plantations. The strategic and immediate objective of the large concessions was to divert towards the West of the territory, the commercial flows of the hinterland, which tended to move either towards the North or towards the South. On the economic level, the large concessions were, among other things, to exploit the land granted; improve transport conditions within the territory; build roads and bridges and develop land concessions. The objectives of the large plantations were specifically agricultural. It was for them to ensure the productivity and profitability of the land through the cultivation of cocoa and rubber which were the flagship products (Boudon, 1977: 4)

The large concessions were the first to be set up, given their strategic role both politically and economically. Two concessions had been set up, namely: the Gesellschaft Sud-Kamerun (GSK) and the Gesellschaft Nord-West-Kamerun (GNWK). The GSK occupied approximately 20,000 km² which covered the localities of Lomié, Yokadouma, Moloundou, as well as part of Ebolowa and Yaoundé. The GNWK for its part had approximately 100,000 km² which covered part of Douala, Edéa, Yaoundé, Ngaoundéré and almost all of the locality of Dschang. It also covered the localities of maritime Sanaga, Nyong and Sanaga and Noun. It can be seen that these two concessions covered almost the entire territory. This confirms the

strategic objective mentioned above. The interest of the Germans was to secure the territory in order to avoid intrusions by other powers. The large concessions were then responsible for framing the territory while exploiting the resources of the conceded areas: picking, collection of spontaneous products of nature at the time of occurrence. They also managed trade in their area of influence.

Economically, this policy of large concessions was not profitable. However, it allowed the conquest of land by the administration and the subjugation of local populations hostile to the German occupation, synonymous with land grabbing. The GSK and the GNWK thus financed the expeditions to conquer the territory, which probably led them to bankruptcy. Following this failure, the German administration introduced the policy of large plantations. (Ntsama Ndoh: 10).

The advent of large plantations was the beginning of the real development of the lands of Kamerun. It is she who will make Kamerun a "colony" of plantation with nearly 36 commercial companies and farms distributed between the three main constituencies: Douala (12 companies, 89 counters), Victoria (13 companies, 39 counters) and Kribi (11 companies, 87 counters). The constituency of Victoria alone had about 30 plantations which covered no less than 84, 659,846 km² of arable land. Unlike the large concessions, the large plantations had kept their promises. In 1898, Kamerun was already exporting cocoa for a value of 313,115 marks. In 1902, this figure rose to 692,693 marks. In the same vein, the export of rubber also experienced considerable growth, with a production of 352,502 kg, or 1,102,802 marks and 971,494 kg, or 3,870,344 marks obtained from 1895 to 1905. Between 1896 and 1900, import-export transactions went from 9, 320,213 to 20, 131,472 marks. In 1913, they reached 42, 456,000 marks (Ntsama Ndoh: 10).

The establishment of these societies was the concretization of the imperial decree regulating the management of the land. It stipulated to this effect that: unoccupied lands belonged to the crown (Art 1); they could only be occupied by the government (Art 2); only the latter could assign them as property or lease (Art 6); by decision of the Chancellor, the governor could authorize certain natural or legal persons to occupy vacant land in regions where land commissions had not yet been formed (Art 12). This is how the German administration had succeeded in circumventing and excluding the local populations from the political scene and especially from economic circuits. François Collart Dutilleul notes the consequences of such an act by demonstrating that: Access to land is a guarantee of freedom because the farmer, for example, has the latitude to direct his activities according to his own objectives and to work at his own pace. This is not the case when access to land is limited because it becomes the prerogative of a group that sets and dictates the laws. It is this group that directs production and sets the prices of commodities. With its means, this group transforms the peasant into a worker and diverts him from his activities. This is how he loses his freedom. By losing his freedom, he opens the door to starvation and poverty. No longer having enough land to meet his needs, he was forced to turn to the new owners who offered him work. Thus, he no longer has enough time to devote himself to cultivating the little land he has left, hence food insecurity. By losing his freedom, the peasant also loses his means of production. From now on, he produces what he cannot consume directly (cocoa, coffee, rubber, wood, minerals, biofuel, etc.). Even though he produces what he can consume, he must buy it from his solicited employer and sometimes at a high price. This observation by François Collart Dutilleul is the perfect description of the consequences of the land grabbing carried out by the Germans. The expansion of plantations led the Germans to move people from their villages to reserves where they did not have enough land to flourish because they lived in promiscuity. Thus diseases and epidemics (typhus, dysentery) developed. In addition to grabbing their land, the administration helped the planters to force the natives to work on the plantations. This law contributed to asphyxiate the natives by monopolizing their land, diverting them from their duties because they had to devote themselves to the plantations of the Germans. They thus

became unable to take care of themselves. This leads to the development of poverty, hunger and conflicts. Following François Collart Dutilleul, Paul Rougier emphasizes to this effect that: The colonies of plantation or exploitation arrive much more quickly than the others at ease and prosperity, but they are subjected to many more economic crises and climacteric. They have a particular social condition, often full of perils, owing to the inequality of conditions between the colonists and those whom they employ. (Ntsama Ndoh: 10).

The new law conflicted not only with the German-Douala treaty, but also with local customs in the matter (Rudin, 1938: 15). It was a real political, economic and social reform in which the local populations did not recognize themselves. Despite the changes observed in the protectorate, the natives felt abused and betrayed. This feeling could only push them to oppose German policy. J. P. Dozon points out to this effect that: The land question appears in the framework of the plantation economy in a completely empirical way. It is the sum of conflicts, disputes, sales of "unfinished" land, the uncertainty of ownership, which gives rise to a particular analysis. Then, it is the policy of the States, that of consolidation, the reforms of agrarian structures, the operations of developments, of colonization of new lands, which requires a simplification or a rationalization of land to make room for an increase in labor productivity and ground. The policy of large concessions and that of large plantations was quite simply a system set up to grab land from Kamerun. Land grabbing thus refers to the control of access to land and the benefits linked to its exploitation. This is the reason that pushed Germany to adopt the imperial decree of June 15, 1896. Because it was beginning to encounter difficulties in acquiring land from the populations (Ntsama Ndoh: 12). That said, grabbing is inherently political, beyond its economic implications, as what is at stake is the power to decide how and for what purposes land and resources can be used. Land grabbing is thus analyzed in the context of the omnipresence of colonial power whose desire for profit prevails over the meanings, uses and systems of land management rooted in local communities. In many cases, formal and pre-existing legal frameworks are bent, altered, redefined or reinterpreted to give land grabbing a semblance of legality. Land grabbing displaces and dislocates communities, destroys local economies and cultures, as well as the social fabric. It jeopardizes the identity of communities, whether peasants, herders, fishermen, workers, indigenous peoples. This is how Germany succeeded in establishing its sovereignty over the populations and territory of Kamerun. Which is to say that controlling the land is: animating the political scene, directing the economy and controlling society.

Law in general is the social bond that a human community adopts as a common, legitimate and binding mode of organization. It is a system for regulating human relations and exchanges which has legitimacy for all citizens and which integrates the general interest. But in a colonial situation, the law turns out to be a system of domination with particular orientations; beneficial for some and segregationist for others. It can be noted here that the law served the interests of the Western powers to the detriment of those of the local populations. The case of Kamerun, a German protectorate, is quite instructive. Insofar as, after the signing of the German-Douala treaty of July 12, 1884, the Germans found themselves trapped in the face of the reservations carried by the Douala chiefs. Despite the treaty, the activities of the Germans were limited to the coasts of Kamerun because the local populations controlled the entire economy. This situation made it difficult for Germany to exercise protective power over Kamerun. To this end, Germany had promulgated an imperial decree on June 15, 1896, relating to the creation, taking possession and alienation of the domain of the crown in the territory of Kamerun. This text had thus enabled Germany to restore its sovereignty over the populations and territory of Kamerun. The land appears in this context as the central element of any society. It is even the founding element of the latter because, to speak of society, three entities are essential: the territory, the people and the law. Of these three entities, land alone has political, economic and socio-cultural properties. That said, having control over the land, better still the territory, is: to master the political scene; guide

economic fluctuations and channel social movements. But to achieve this, we resort to the law. We agree with François Collart Dutilleul who thinks that, the right here is the means by which a group shapes its identity in order to distinguish itself from others and especially not to undergo external influences. This is all the more so since a community that is not governed by laws specific to its identity will seek to identify with another community. Thus, it will end up drawing inspiration from its laws to make an identity for itself. To this end, laws must have a strong cultural, historical, social and contextual imprint in order to overcome external influences. Since the customary laws of the populations of Kamerun are not compatible with Western laws, in this case those of Germany, it was necessary for Germany to establish laws that reflect its policy and its ambitions, in order to avoid being subject to customary laws. And it is in the language of the law, with the resources of the law and with the force of constraint of the law, that all the solutions envisaged by the German administration had to be shaped and applied. The law was thus the object of mercantilist and segregationist tampering and manipulation. These manipulations transform ambitions and expansionist objectives into principles of law that the administration confers with the force of law. In this case, the law ceases to be an instrument of equity to become an instrument of submission, subjugation, domination in the service of the strongest. This observation poses a crucial problem: that of the orientation attributed to the laws intended to promote the development of our country Cameroon.

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MANAGEMENT OF (PLASTICS) INDUSTRIAL WASTE BY THE BRASSERIES DU CAMEROUN AND HEALTH RISK AT THE SOUTHERN ENTRY OF THE TOWN OF YAOUNDÉ

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Abstract: *The management of (plastic) industrial waste is a major concern to modern companies. At the southern entrance of the town of Yaoundé, the establishment of brewery and gaseous product company the Brasserie du Cameroun, is a situation that produces a large scale of plastic bottles in the town of Yaoundé in general and especially in this locality. It is with the aim of bringing out the consequences of this reality on the population and the environment that the current work is written. So, using field surveys and different observations, it is realized that the management of (plastic) industrial waste by this company at the southern entrance of the town of Yaoundé accounts for the different illnesses affecting an increasing population that is carrying out agriculture in the marshy areas situated below the brasseries du Cameroun. This requires sensitization and a synergy between the actors in order to ensure that the collection and recycling of these waste is instead beneficial to the company as well as the riverains populations.*

Keywords: Industrials wastes, plastics wastes, environment, recycled waste, modern company

1. Introduction

Cameroon is no stranger in the multiplication of this type of waste, from the size if this town and the economic activities that it accommodates. Population pressure and the evolution of consumption modes increase the production of industrial wastes that stockpile daily. These wastes contaminate water and biodiversity, either by threatening the survival of some species, or through the health risks of these wastes. The southern entrance of the town of Yaoundé is a marshy area drained by the Mfoundi and its tributaries. This situation favours the flow of different sorts of plastic waste produced by the industrial enterprises situated at the mouth. Plastic waste is manufactured by the enterprises and emptied onto the environment by the population and the breweries. The massive production of plastic waste by Brasseries du Cameroun has a significant health and environmental impact. The observation on the issue of industrial waste management gives the latitude to analyse the role of Brasseries in the production of plastic waste in Yaoundé. It focuses on the management and treatment of these wastes and detects the health consequences of the later on the population of this area.

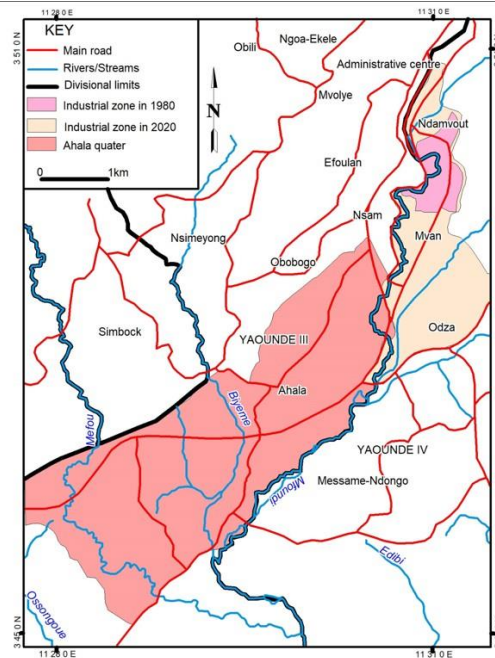
2. Methodology of the study

The current work covers the spatial extent of the town of Yaoundé through its quarters found at the southern entrance. This space is made up of the Yaoundé 3 and 4 Sub-divisions. Here are planted the factories of the multinational enterprise of Brasseries du Cameroun. This area is bounded to the North by the Yaoundé 5 Sub-division and to the West by the Yaoundé 3 Sub-division with about 59 quarters spread over the localities of Ndamvout where the Brasseries du Cameroun factory is found. The zone is found between 3° 46' 0" and

3° 51' 0" N and 11° 28' 0" and 11° 31' 0" E. Its popular quarters are Ahala, Nsam, Mvolye, Efoulan, Nsimeyong, Messamendongo, Olezoa, Mvan, etc. It is in this area that all the motor packs receiving passengers from the metropolises of Douala and Ebolowa and secondary towns of Mbalmayo, Mbankomo, Akonolinge, Ngoumou, Akono, are concentrated. The zone is endowed with several infrastructures: the Yaounde-Nsimalen motorway linking Yaounde to the Nsimalen international Airport, the flyover linking the Centre Region to the East Region and to the Northern Regions by the N°1 National Road, the junction linking the Centre Region to the South Region extending to Gabon and Equatorial Guinea by the National N°2. A perfect industrial zone as it has the MAGZI (Mission d'Aménagement et de Gestion des Zones industrielles), as well as several industries such as Source du Pays, TAMPICO, and SOFAVINC as concerns food production industries, the SIM and Patrice Bois for the wood industries, PHARMACAM for pharmaceutical products etc. A tourism centre is equally found on this site, Ekopark lodge at the Ahala neighbourhood. The presence of several valleys in which rivers such as Mfoundi and Ndamvout flow is also very evident.

In order to collect data, the systematic and hypothetical and deductive approaches were adopted. The systematic approach was developed to show the interconnection and dependence of elements. It highlights the interrelation analysis between actors in the management of plastic wastes. Data collection involved field observations, secondary and primary data collections. Several field trips involving interviews with resource persons and the riverain populations and employers of Brasseries du Cameroon were carried out. In order to have a relatively complete image of the phenomenon under study, a survey was carried out to have an idea on the management of industrial plastic waste by the Brasseries du Cameroon, their impact on the environment and the health of the population. The sampling was done based on topographic stratum, to show differences in the level of vulnerability of the populations based on the topographic units they are settled on.

Figure 1: The industrial zone of the southern entrance of Yaoundé



Source: NIC :2017

3. Results and Analyses

1. The Brasseries du Cameroon: an enterprise at the source of a large production of plastic industrial wastes at the southern entrance of the town of Yaoundé

The Brasseries du Cameroon Limited Company (B.C.L.C) is a food production industry specialised in the production and sale of beer, liquors, gaseous drinks and mineral water. Created in Douala on the 3rd of February 1978 by a group of French business men, its initial capital was 60 000 000 FCFA with the Brasseries and International Icebox (BII) group having the largest shares. Affiliated to the Castel group since 1990, the company is, today, spreading throughout the Cameroonian territory with 4 regional factories and 42 distribution centres with a capital of 5736360000 FCFA. Its principal areas of operation are Douala in the Littoral, Yaoundé in the Centre, Garoua in the North and Bafoussam in the West. It has implanted its 42 distribution centres throughout the national territory leading to the huge volumes of plastic wastes it produces and the necessity for a better management of the waste by the company itself and by the households after use.

1.1. A high capacity to produce plastic waste by the factory in Yaoundé

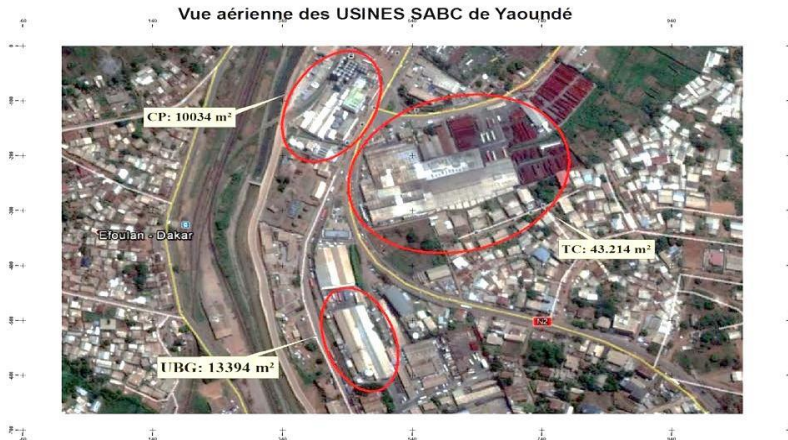
In Yaoundé, the BCLC supervises the distribution of finished products in the three regions of the Centre, South and the East through nine distribution centres: Yaounde, Mbalmayo, Ebolowa, Sangmelima, Bafia, Sa'a, Akonolinga, Bertoua and Eseka. The development of these units on the Ndamvout site at the southern entrance of the town of Yaounde has been characterised by the construction of vast infrastructures in the course of time take care of the performance objective of the group. The creation of 7 chains of bottling with 2 beer production chains of 45 000 bottle/hour each, a chain of gaseous with a capacity of 30 000 bottles/hour, a chain of gaseous drinks in PET with a capacity of 9 000 bottles/hour, a mixed chain with a capacity of 45 000 bottles/hour, a chain for uncocking the barrels of pressure beer. Under the authority of a director of operations, there are three (03) factories: the production centre that ensures the production of beer, neutral syrups (hot syrups at the beginning of the production of bottled gaseous drinks), and the production of utilities (CO₂, air, production water). It also contains the main laboratory and covers a surface area of 10034 m² (Order form report of CASTEL, 2010).



Photo 1: CP factory (source: BCLC quality manual version 2022)
Source: Field Survey (2021-2022)

PET (polyéthylène téréphtalate). The TC (terrain Court) on its part is the packaging factory for all the drinks manufactured by CP. They ensure the packaging operations (beer and gaseous drinks) and the preparation of all syrups (cold syrups). Finally, the gaseous drinks factory by itself is destined to produce and package gaseous drinks in PET bottles

Photo 2: Aerial view of the BCLC factory of Yaoundé



Source: Google Earth, January 2021; Field survey 2022

Inaugurated on the 27th of November 2015, with an investment of 10.7 billion FCFA, it produces about 28 000 bottles per hour. It is the second chain of this capacity in Africa after South Africa. The UBG ascertains the production and bottling of gaseous drinks PET, in all the formats (1 litre, 0.35 litres, 1.25 litres, and 2 litres). The factory also houses the MPC warehouse meant to store consumable raw materials for all the sites. It covers a surface area of 13394 m².

1.2A management of industrial wastes though regulated by an institutional framework

In Cameroon, the management of wastes of all nature is regulated by an institutional framework that emanates from the National Strategy for the Management of Wastes elaborated since 2008. Its analysis takes into consideration the category of actors based on their different functions. In this context, several institutions and structures are involved at different levels of waste management. These are the ministry in charge of specialised issues such as the environment, the Protection of Nature and of Sustainable Development. It's attributes relative to the management of waste aim at the elaboration of the sectorial master plan for the protection of the environment, the elaboration and follows up of the respect of norms, directives and environmental standards. Other texts elaborated by specific ministries promote the control and respect of environmental norms in terms of rehabilitation, examination of files related to recycling and burying of wastes. From the sensitisation of the public aimed at encouraging them to participate in the management, to the protection and restoration of the environment; of the control and checking of transborder pollution; of the periodic control of waste disposal, of the collection and centralisation of statistical data, etc. the ministry of agriculture, for example ensures the promotion and transformation of agro-industrial and urban wastes into organic manure; the transformation of the wastes and residues from harvest and animal rearing in rural areas. These missions and other texts involve other domains in relation with the management of municipal wastes through Decentralised Territorial Units. In the same vein, the ministry of public health focuses on the rehabilitation, sanitary inspection of decentralised units and the promotion of sanitation; the normalisation of pollution criteria and the regulation of certain deviations in collaboration with the organconcerned.

Apart from these local institutions, the support of Non-Governmental Actors(NGA) who participates in the execution of missions of general interest such as the collection and or

treatment of wastes can be distinguished.

1.3 The ISO Norm and domain of application

This is an international norm that specifies the requirements related to a system of environmental management permitting an organ to develop and put in place a policy and objectives. It takes into consideration the legal requirements and those to which the organ has adhered to with emphasis on environmental aspects. This international norm is applicable to all organs wishing to establish, set up, update and ameliorate a system of environmental management. All the requirements of this norm destined to be integrated in any environmental management system. The degree of application depends on different factors, such as the environmental policy of the organisation, the nature of activities, its products and services, and location and conditions under which it operates.

2 A variety of plastic wastes produced by the UBG

All in all, 15 different categories of plastic wastes can be existing in UBA can be distinguished with two concerning plastic wastes. In effect, the barrels and other reusable packaging materials, as well as plastic materials for protection, packaging and films are plastic materials, which after use constitute plastic wastes. The other categories of solid waste found there are mainly the common or dangerous industrial wastes. Found therefore, are: wastes smeared by dangerous substances; metals (loose or on barrels); papers and cartons, wooden pallets and crates; clothes; textile, cables; electronic, computer and office materials; worn filters; cooking oil, residues of greasy tanks and greasy food wastes; mercurial waste etc.

Table 1: Typology of waste present at the UBG

Category of waste	Remarks and category of waste	I : inert ; B ; common D ; Dangerous	Present ?
Waste smeared by dangerous substances	Packages, rags, gloves, masks, smeared by hydrocarbons, paint, solvents.	D	Yes
Barrels and other reusable packages	Plastic packages, metal, cartons, wood (barrels, crates, ...)	B	Yes
Metals (outside and inside barrels)	Iron and non-iron waste, cables	B	Yes
Paper and cartons	Packages, advertisement material, office paper	B	Yes
Plastics	Packages, protection films, mandrel, scraps, tubes	B	Yes
Wooden pallets and crates	Lost or enhancing packages	B	Yes
Cloth, textile and ropes	Used or new, clean or soiled by non-dangerous products	B	Yes
Electronic material, computer and office equipment	Printer cartridges, monitors, computers.....	B, D	Yes
Used filters	Dust, breathing, engine	B, D	Yes
Kitchen oil, residues of greasy tanks and fatty elements	Waste from food industries, restaurants and canteens,	B	Yes
Food waste	Primary products, remains	B	Yes
Mercurial waste	Thermometers, neon tubes, laboratory remnants	D	Yes
Batteries and accumulators	Knob batteries, sticks, rechargeables....., batteries	B, D	Yes
Aerosol bombs	Lacquer, solvents, cleaners	D	Yes
Non-dangerous mud	Residue from the treatment of effluents, non-dangerous mineral mud	B	Yes

Source : Field Survey 2021-2022

2.1 Origin and characteristics of plastic wastes found at the UBG

Solid wastes found at the UBG originate from activities at the premises of each workshop (warehouse MPC, syrup production, maintenance, offices, laboratories); but especially from the production chain of gaseous drinks (packaging). Several types of wastes are encountered especially: plastic wastes; cartons and papers; metals and other types of wastes equivalent to household wastes. Wastes from plastic materials originate mainly from production failures (incomplete filling, non-respect of standards etc.); the destruction of damaged production stocks (8 months and above, photo 6); tests of the functioning of equipment (production of gaseous water, Photo 10 and 11).



Photo 3: Scraps of bottles in PET



Photo 4: Destruction of damaged products



Photo 5 : Empty container (plastic barrels)



Photo 6: Scrap préforms

Source: Photo by TOUTOU, January 2021

All these plastic products have a relative long live span based on the use and actors present on the field. Clearly speaking, the production of plastic wastes at the southern entrance to the town of Yaoundé is not without consequences on the health of the riverine populations.

3. A production of plastic waste with multiple consequences to the population of the southern entrance of Yaoundé

The production of industrial plastic wastes has serious consequences on the population of Cameroon in general and on the population at the southern entrance of the Yaounde in particular. These consequences are observable at the post consumption phase by individuals and based on their destination with considerable health impacts on the population.

Numerous health problems

The Brasseries du Cameroun produces close to 600 000 tons of plastic wastes annually. Once disposed onto the environment after consumption, the drains, river beds and gutters in the urban area generally and of the southern entrance to the town of Yaounde specifically are blocked by these plastic bottles provoking floods during heavy rains. This phenomenon is partly linked to increasing uncontrolled urbanisation of the town of Yaounde as a whole and especially to the burgeoning population in the urban centre. This increases the urgency and complexity of the recurring issue of the management of plastic waste in the town of Yaounde.

Plate 2: Emptying of plastic bottles in drains



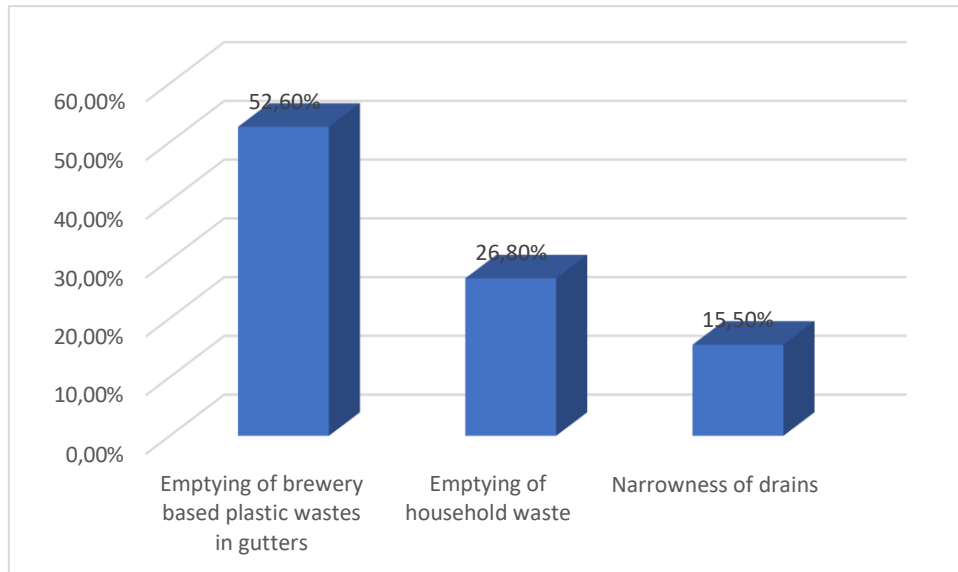
Source: Photo by TOUTOU, February 2021

This plate shows how plastic wastes from the brewery companies are emptied in drains and water channel gutters. Photo 1 is a drain of the Efoulan quarter. Photo 2 is a drain in the Ahala quarter constructed to channel water from diverse sources instead of serving as a trash can for plastic wastes. Photo 3 is a stream at the Mvan quarter, which is completely filled by varied plastic wastes emptied by the population impeding the free flow of water leading to periodic floods.

The emptying of plastic bottles into drains and water channelling gutters constitutes obstacles for the drains and runoff waters in gutters. These obstructions from plastic bottles and other household wastes lead to the stagnation of water in these drains. Such rapidly

increasing phenomenon is preoccupying as concerns the evacuation mode of these plastic wastes by the surrounding population. Stagnating waters constitute a serious health risk for the population living in these and surrounding areas.

Figure 2: Causes of the development stagnant water pools in the southern entrance of the town of Yaoundé



Source: Field survey 2022

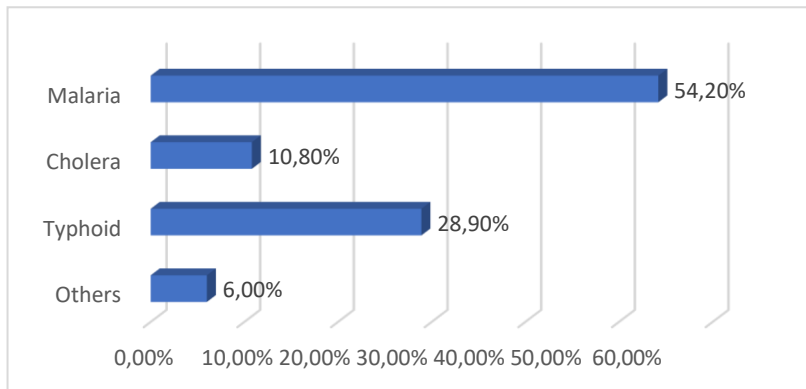
According to field observations by the surrounding populations, the emptying of wastes originating from brewery industries is the main cause (52.8%) of stagnating waters in pools. This is followed by the emptying of other household refuse at 26.8% and the narrowness of some of the drains and stream courses at 15.50%. This distribution is explained by the fact that other household refuse especially resulting from food produce decay faster and as such he broken down material is easily carried away by flowing water. The plastic bottles on their part will not degrade that fast and by their nature are too obstructive especially when chocked in a tight channel as is the case here. The channels by their narrowness instead become victims and not contributors to the stagnation because in the absence of the plastic wastes these channels would smoothly evacuate the waters without problem. The way plastic bottles have blocked the channel under the bridge on photo 1 is clearly testifying to their being a major problem in waste management.

3.1. Water borne diseases caused by stagnating waters.

The emptying of plastic bottles in drains and waters channelling gutters by the populations impede the flow of water causing them to stagnate. This phenomenon of stagnating waters creates a biotope for insect that are vectors to malaria such as mosquitoes. Apart from malaria, surveys of health institutions found in theses vicinities demonstrate a permanent upsurge of cholera. Here plastic wastes are often emptied in streams and wells used by the populations for various household needs. These plastic wastes create favourable pollution conditions of these waters making them unfit for consumption and when consumed ignorantly by the population, they develop diarrheal illness such as cholera that is increasingly noticed in these areas. The presence of cholera at the southern entrance to the town of

Yaoundé is an indicator of absence of sufficient balanced social development. The high presence of Typhoid is equally noted among the population. This is a potentially deadly disease caused by a bacterium called *Salmonella typhi*. It is generally propagated by contaminated water and food. When water is already contaminated, it can no longer wash clean food to be fit for consumption. Once these bacteria are ingested, it multiplies and is absorbed into the blood system.

Figure 3: Disease caused by stagnating waters of the southern entrance of the town of Yaoundé



Source: Field survey, January 2022

According to this graph, malaria tops the chart of diseases (54.2%) caused by the emptying of plastic wastes in drains, gutters and stream beds of the southern entrance to Yaoundé. It is followed by typhoid (28.9%), cholera (10.8%) and other illnesses (6%) connected directly or indirectly to this phenomenon. One of the non-negligible causes of these transmissible diseases is the urban growth, the proliferation of shantytowns and settlement on unauthorised areas characterised by poor and unregulated construction conditions irrespective of any urban norm. Populations of such quarters live under unhygienic conditions close to stagnating water pools, since most of these populations empty all their wastes in gutters and drains tampering with the normal flow of water and are consequently vulnerable to these transmissible diseases.

Photo 7: A housing structure pitched by water draining gutter,



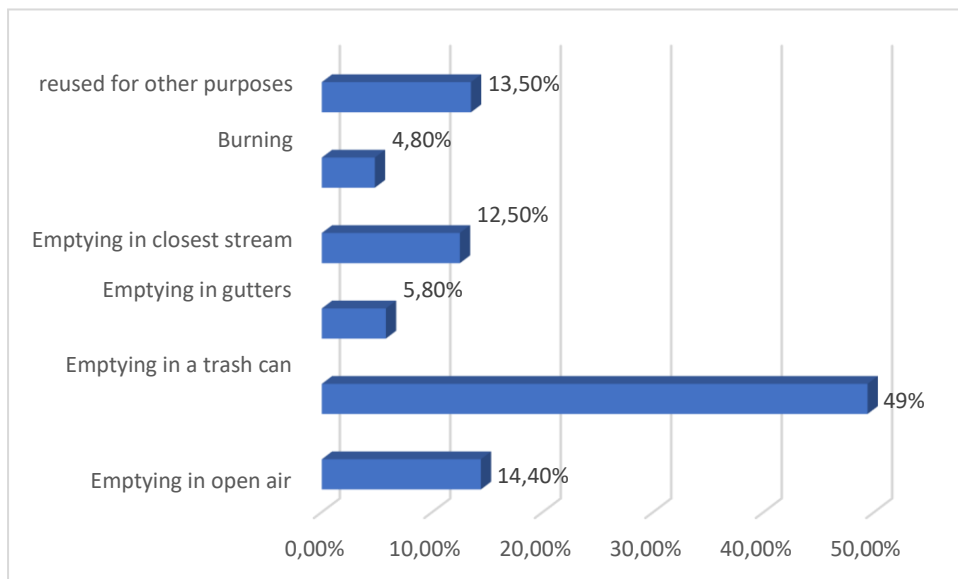
Source: Photo Toutou, March 2021

This photo is in valley floor, in the Mvan quarter at the southern entrance to Yaoundé, and is also affected by the massive production of plastic wastes by the brewery company. 1 = residential house, 2 = water channelling gutter with stagnating water due to emptied household wastes, 3 = the main access path.

3.2. The pollution of wells and streams

In Cameroon generally, access to portable water is still a basic primary necessity. Even in certain high standing quarters of Yaoundé, taps are often dry for long periods. To make up for this deficit, populations dig out wells in order to access water. At the southern entrance of Yaoundé, several households' recourse to wells in order to satisfy their water needs. Field surveys indicate that most of these households (70%) mainly use water from wells against 30% only who depend on other sources. It becomes evident that water from wells is imbued with several bacterial pathogens, coliforms and faecal streptococcus. The variation factors are the environment of the well, maintenance, level of the water table in the well, and the geographic situation. The most contaminated wells are situated less than five meters from the source of pollution such as pit toilets, wild deposits of household wastes, plastic bottles and the absence or regular treatment of water. Constructed wells, that having a cover that is properly used with concrete walls, a depth of at least 15 meters above the source of a kind of pollution and regularly treated, produces water of a better quality. Diseases linked to the pollution of wells are thus, among others, skin diseases, amoebic dysentery, cholera, typhoid etc. This situation is linked to the mode of evacuating plastic waste by these households.

Figure 4: Evacuation modes of plastic waste by households.



Source: Field survey, January 2021

At the southern entrance of the town of Yaoundé, households use trash cans (49%) to evacuate plastic wastes from the brewery company. This makes it possible for enterprises involved in recycling of such waste to collect them easily. Other households empty their wastes in streams (12.5%), while some of this waste is found in gutters (5.8%), or in open air

(14.4%). This situation has negative effects on the environment; most of these wastes being non-biodegradable.

4. Strategies to better manage plastic wastes by BCLC

The waste management chain at the factory gaseous drinks comprises activities of pre-collection or sorting of plastic waste by employees of the “NIKO” company; a subcontracting firm in charge of hygiene at the UBG. Its work consists in classifying the collected garbage in four categories: plastics, metals, diverse papers and cartons. A fifth category concerns special waste, that have been smeared by toxic or dangerous substances.

4.1. Collection and transportation

The collection and transportation activities of wastes depend mainly on the nature and the category of waste. So, for dangerous wastes, (waste smeared by dangerous substances: used filters, mercurial wastes, batteries, condensers and aerosol bombs). The collection is done by employees of the “Nking Environmental” company based in Douala; another subcontracting company specialised in the management of special and dangerous wastes. The transportation of these special wastes is generally done by a light van of the company that uses high density polythene plastic bags as storage containers. For other wastes found on the site, they are sorted out into four categories. Papers and cartons come from the packaging meant to protect the primary products, office materials, advertisement materials and from other activities.

The collection of these wastes is ensured on the site by agent of the NIKO company, who assemble them from the collection containers. They then stored in a metallic container where they are transported by an elevator chariot to the elimination site (incinerator). The different metals include the waste assimilated to household waste. The collection of metals is done by scrap merchants or dealers of old metals, when they are in large quantities and assimilated wastes collected from the trash cans and later transferred to the HYSACAM company. The collection of plastic waste is ensured by workers of the “Namé Recycling” company. This is an enterprise specialized in the valorisation of plastic waste situated at Ahala. This company ensures the collection of plastic bottles in the town of Yaoundé, but also at UBG. The authorisation to do this followed the signing of a contract to treat and valorise plastic wastes with the Chief Executive officer of BCLC, to take over waste generated by their company.

Photo 7: Namébins



Source: Photo TOUTOU P.L., January 2021

Collection mode of plastic bottles by the Namé Recycling company. This iron container called Namébins carries sensitization messages encouraging the population to empty their plastic wastes in it.

Plastic wastes collected involve mainly primary packaging materials (bottles, PET), plastic films, mandrels, PVC pipes and other plastic wastes. These are transported by minitrucks in the name of the company and at times by trucks.

The brasseries du Cameroun (BCLC) and the Hygiene and Sanitation Company of Cameroon (HYSACAM) have concluded a partnership for the recovery and recycling of plastic packages produced by BCLC and its associates, the Mineral Water Company (SEMC). According to BCLC, this partnership made it possible for 2 million bottles that otherwise would have been emptied into streams and open air, to be collected. The initiative was to make it possible for about 7 million plastic bottles to be collected 2021 and be treated by HYSACAM, and then hand them over to the specialized enterprise in recycling to be transformed into new products (watches, bags, watering cans, pullovers, etc.).

Photo 8: The picking up of plastic bottles by HYSACAM in the Ahala quarter.



It is to pick them up and later take to recycling partnership companies who will transform them into decoration objects in view of promoting sustainable development.

5. Discussion

According to a study carried out in Douala on the management of household waste, this activity is the responsibility of the state that must carry its incumbent duties of ameliorating the living environment of its population (Tchuikoua, 2010) in reality, this situation enforces the phenomenon of inertia that surrounds this issue. Elsewhere in the world, states set up mechanisms for the and strategies to recycle waste of all nature. This goes through the pre-collection, to the collection and transportation to treatment centres that are generally industries. The efficient treatment of waste leads to the create of enterprises and employment. The state of Cameroon is struggling to maintain its control over this activity. It is for this reason that abnormalities can be found here and there due to individual interests. Up

till today, the production of all kinds of waste and their treatment is incumbent to the state that regulates this sector of activity. In this context, even the implication of MGOs and local associations in terms of pre-collection and collection is regulated by law. At the southern entry of the town of Yaoundé, the activities of the BCLC have deterioration and different risqué effects on the surrounding populations. So, considering the existing texts and laws, authorities at times prefer to 'turn a blind eye' on certain limits of the actions of the enterprise in favour of economic returns in terms of taxes. In spite this, the population notwithstanding their level of awareness are increasingly desiring and settling on spaces neighbouring the establishment sites of this enterprise. Beyond the advantages offered by these sites for agricultural activities, it is important to highlight that even these agricultural products produced there are potential health risks for the population. This is why a veritable education operation, sensitisation, and synergy in action between the State, the authorities of the enterprise, decentralised territorial units and the surrounding population who are potential victims of the activities of the enterprise.

6. Conclusion

At the southern entrance of the town of Yaoundé, the activity of BCLC in the production and management of plastic wastes has consequences on the environment and on the health of the riverain populations. These populations are mainly youths whose interest on the activity is attached only on the huge potentials in terms of revenue generated and employment. This situation is encouraged on the spot by a variety of factors from the rapid spatial expansion of the town to the inability of the state of Cameroon to provide the resident population permanent sensitisation means and an adequate supervision. Plastics are the source of new food consumption behaviours in the central town of Cameroon. The environmental and health implications of this activity are justified by its integration in a form of circular and subsistence economy at the reach of all strata of the society as well as the distribution of the anchorage points of its exercise. So, in a context of the fight against poverty and amelioration of the living conditions of the population, the state had to better regulate and strictly organise the production and management of plastic wastes by providing them an adequate and well-constructed space in the town of Yaoundé in general and at the southern entrance in particular.

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THE PERSISTENT INCIDENCE OF GENDER INEQUALITY AND CHILD MARRIAGE IN NIGERIA

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Abstract: *The persistent incidence of gender inequality and child marriage in Nigeria calls for concern. This study, therefore, examined gender inequality and child marriage in Nigeria. The objective of the study is to identify socio-cultural factors responsible for gender inequality and child marriage, ascertain the desirability of child marriage and gender inequality, and enumerate the consequences of child marriage and gender inequality in Nigeria. The study sample was selected from two major cities through a mix of purposive sampling and stratified random sampling. A combination of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews was used to elicit responses from respondents. The result of the test of the hypothesis established a positive linear correlation between gender inequality and child marriage with a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.25496$. Traditions, religion, poverty, and illiteracy were identified as socio-cultural determinants of gender inequality and child marriage. Beyond these factors, docility and dogmatism were found to influence child marriage as individuals who are educated and wealthy are also involved in child marriage. The study, therefore, recommends re-orientation and sensitization of the people about the demerits of gender inequality and child marriage. State Governments in northern Nigeria are encouraged to domesticate the child rights acts.*

Keywords: Gender inequality, Child marriage, Child rights act, Docile-dogmatic perspective, Northern Nigeria

1. Introduction

Gender inequality seems to be a factor encouraging the continuous perpetration of child marriage over the years. Gender inequality denotes unequal treatment or perceptions of individuals based on their gender and socially constructed gender roles (Wood, 2005). In most societies, gender inequality continues to exist because power lies with men (Van Hooff & Jenny, 2011). Gender inequality emanated from proven physical and biological distinctions as well as socially constructed distinctions. Gender inequality seems to predispose child marriage in Northern Nigeria because child marriage is common and more pronounced in environments where females are considered subservient to males. In these environments, individuals that belong to the feminine gender are not given equal opportunities with their male counterparts. This unequal treatment of males and females is visible in social interaction, as well as across different institutions of society. Women are relegated in the market, as most shops and businesses are owned and managed by men. In fact, businesses considered as the preoccupation of women in the southern parts of Nigeria are dominated by men in the northern parts of Nigeria. Equally, such relegation is visible in religious centers or places of worship as women are pushed to the back and given second-fiddle roles. Female children are controlled both with care and a mix of power and authority. A female child in an environment where child marriage is predominant has little or no control over her body as she lacks "body freedom" and decision-making power.

Gender inequality made women to be seen as mere housewives, mothers, sisters, and daughters with major responsibility for childbirth and nurturing with little or no income. Also, gender inequality restricted women from having equal inheritance opportunities with their male counterparts and limited women's freedom of association, expression, and movement

(UNESCO, 2014). According to Bala et al. (2022), the trauma associated with gender discrimination and stigma epitomized by gender inequality resulted in physical pain, social phobia, and psychological distress.

The persistent incidence of gender inequality and child marriage in the 21st century in spite of the enactment of laws protecting the rights of a child and women globally, and most especially in Nigeria calls for urgent attention. Child marriage according to UNICEF (2021) refers to a formal or informal union between a child under the age of 18 and an adult or another child. In other words, Child marriage is a socially recognized matrimony between a person whose age is less than 18 years and another person whose age is less than or greater than 18 years. The use of the term 'socially recognized matrimony' in this definition is deliberate because marriage with a person under the age of 18 is allowed in some religions and customary laws. However, such marriage could be deemed illegal considering the child rights act adopted in a number of countries like Nigeria among others. It must be noted that child marriage demands certain obligations and responsibilities from the individuals involved. It is unfortunate that girls below the age of 18 years are still being given out in marriage or forced into marriage after the child right act was enacted about two decades ago in Nigeria. Besides the fact that young secondary school students were kidnapped and forcefully married by members of the Boko Haram terrorist group as seen in the case of Chibok girls kidnapped in 2014, and also, the case of 13 secondary school girls from Federal Government College Birnin Yauri in Kebbi State abducted and married off to Bandits as reported by Abdulaziz (2022); some parents are still willingly receiving bride price from suitors and giving their daughters out in marriage without recourse to the marriage act and the consequences of early marriage. The report of UNICEF (2017) estimated the number of child brides in Nigeria as 22 million. This number constitutes 40 percent of child brides in the region. The United Nations Statistics Division (2020) in its United Nations Development Program report noted that 43 percent of women between the ages of 20 to 24 had been married by the age of 18 in Nigeria. Gaffney-Rhys (2011) observed that in situations where the marriage is not forced, young girls are often too immature to give well-reasoned consent to the union. An examination of 25 young girls who are 18 years old across two cities in northern Nigeria in a pilot study shows that majority of them are not well developed physically and otherwise to qualify for marriage. Some of them noted that they started menstruation at the age of 14 while the stature of some of them is not physically different from the stature of a 12 years old girl. This is understandable based on individual differences and their attendant effect on maturation. Girls in this situation, that are not well developed physiologically and anatomically, might have complications during childbirth. Nour (2006) highlighted the reasons for high death rates and obstructed labor in a study of the health consequences of child marriage in Africa. He noted that the pelvic of some of the underage brides are too small to allow the passage of the fetus during delivery thereby resulting in obstructed labor. Raj, Saggurti, Lawrence, Balaiah & Silverman (2010) in a study submitted that those young underage girls who are married off risk sexual abuse and violence in marriage. Raj & Boehmer (2013) equally noted that early pregnancies as a result of early marriage increase the risks of disease and even death of the mother or child. Similarly, Ivanova et al. (2018) observed that the exposure of young girls to early and forced marriages increases the risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases and sexual violence.

Goody (1990) in a study of patterns of marriage across the world identified reasons for the preference of young brides in traditional societies. He observed that young brides are seen to have long period of fertility ahead of them. In addition, young brides are docile and more obedient to comply with the instructions of their husbands and the modus operandi of the new family in which they find themselves. Dixon (1971) on his part linked the age long practice of child marriage in India, Arabia, Japan, and China to the prevalence of lineages and

clans that provides social and economic support to newly married couples, and the clamour to have children that will strengthen and sustain the clan. Contrarily, the emphasis on individualism and individual responsibility in western societies predisposes that married couples will cater to themselves and their children which causes marital delays in order for spouses to acquire skills, resources and maturity to manage the family.

According to Moghadam (2004) the association between family honour and female purity encourages child marriage. A situation in which the honour of women is tied with their virginity and good conduct. Girls are kept pure through seclusion or the use of purdah. Many underage girls are equally married off to avoid sexual exposure that would tarnish their purity.

Child marriage no doubt prevents young girls from accessing educational opportunities and prevents them from earning income in some cases. This study, therefore, examined the nexus between gender inequality and child marriage in Northern Nigeria in view of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals' call for global action to end Child marriage among other human rights violations by 2030 (UNICEF, 2021).

2. Problem Statement

In the southern part of Nigeria, a woman is considered ready for marriage in the 21st century after acquiring a tertiary education degree or after acquiring skills in a trade. In some instances, the acquisition of a tertiary education degree or skills in a trade is not enough; women are expected to be gainfully employed so as to support the family economically when they get married. This is not applicable in many cases even in big cities in Northern Nigeria, especially in North-west and northeast geopolitical zones where people are equally educated and enlightened.

Some girls are married off while studying in secondary schools or shortly after secondary school before the age of 18 and in a few cases as soon as the girl clocks 18 years irrespective of preparedness physically, mentally, economically, and emotionally. Acquisition of a tertiary education degree or skills in a trade is not a yardstick for marriage, rather, the onset of menstruation seems to be the determining factor. Many teenage girls married off when they were less than 18 years old, ended up being full-time housewives totally dependent on their husbands thereby reducing the GDP that would have accrued to the country. Some of these teenage girls are not emotionally mature to run the home and rear children. They end up raising children who are not well grounded in the norms and values of the society thereby contributing to extremism and insecurity that is now a subject of immense concern especially in Northern Nigeria and in the entire country.

One could easily infer that child marriage in Northern Nigeria provide a veritable ground for the recruitment of more children who lack care into the Almajiri system. Gender inequality seems apparent in the continuous incidence of child marriage. According to Abdullahi, Adekeye, and Shehu (2011), gender inequality permeates all aspects of Nigerian life as it manifests across the broad spectrum of family institutions, educational institutions, economic institutions, and politics. An X-ray of the female situation in the family indicates a lot of inequalities linked to son preference across different ethnic groups. In some communities, particularly in the closed, patrilineal communities in northern Nigeria, girls are considered transitory members of the family because the ultimate aim of the parents is to marry them out obligatorily into other families at the onset of puberty. This study, therefore, examined gender inequality and child marriage in Northern Nigeria.

3. Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To identify socio-cultural factors responsible for gender inequality and child marriage in Northern Nigeria
2. To ascertain the desirability of gender inequality and child marriage in Northern Nigeria.
3. To enumerate the consequences of gender inequality and child marriage in Northern Nigeria

4. Hypothesis

There is a correlation between gender inequality and child marriage in Northern Nigeria.

5. Theoretical Framework

Over the years, scholars and researchers on gender inequality and child marriage have identified factors responsible for gender inequality and child marriage, and proposed quite a number of theories. For instance, Bicchieri, Jiang & Lindemans (2014) proposed a social norms perspective and submitted that a list of explanations was given by Loaiza & Wong (2012) and Verma, Sinha, & Khanna (2013) on the origin and persistence of child marriage. This list included conciliation between two families, the value placed on chastity and chastity norms, conformity with traditions, Housewife syndrome for girls, and so on. The chastity-norm explanation is a variant of the social norms perspective of child marriage. The chastity norm explanation is hinged on the fact that the slightest suggestion of premarital sex is capable of destroying the reputation of a girl child, and reduce her chances of getting married. Therefore, some parents would prefer to give their girls out in marriage early enough, in order to maintain the chastity norm and to prevent premarital sex. In the light of this explanation, parents marry off their girls to prevent illicit love affairs. This explanation emphasizes the moral preference for chaste brides in such societies. A normative belief that predisposes normative expectations about what people should do, and what should not be done, as well as beliefs about what others think (Bicchieri, 2006). This explanation is equally applicable to gender inequality because women are treated unequally with men in many societies because of social norms. Normative expectation for men and women are quite different in societies that favours gender inequality and child marriage.

Braimah (2014) in a study noted that the culture and traditions of the Hausa-Fulani intertwined with the Islamic religion, and exemplified by Prophet Muhammad's marriage to Aisha, as reported in the Hadiths endorses child marriage. Braimah equally posited that poverty is a major cause, and also, a consequence of child marriage. Moreover, Siddiqi and Greene (2022) noted that the key drivers of child marriage include poverty, gender norms, and poor opportunities for education and employment for women and girls. Child marriage is linked with girls being taken away from school with other attendants' gender-based violence, and poor mental health among others (Siddiqi & Greene, 2022)

A careful examination of the incidence of child marriage in Northern Nigeria shows that the factors responsible for child marriage go beyond the list cited by Bicchieri et. al. (2014), Braimah (2014), and Siddiqi and Greene (2022) because individuals who are wealthy, well-educated, and well-traveled are also caught in the web of child marriage. These individuals are not solely interested in bride price, conciliation, traditions, or chastity norms. It seems a force beyond their control is responsible for the inclination toward child marriage. This study, therefore, proposes the Docile-Dogmatic perspective as a new framework for the explanation of child marriage and gender inequality.

The Docile-dogmatic perspective presupposes that some persons are conservative and compliant with the status quo irrespective of their level of education, exposure, and wealth. Such individuals have a dogmatic orientation and are highly opinionated. They maintained

their ideas or beliefs even in the face of severe sanctions or reasonable arguments. This perspective is equally applicable to extremists and their activities across political or religious climes. The perspective explains the persistent incidence of gender inequality in many African societies where men are keen on maintaining the status quo. The docile-dogmatic perspective appears to be pessimistic in nature as it foresees a continuous and persistent incidence of child marriage and gender inequality most especially in countries where the level of child marriage is still high in spite of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, the perspective recognizes the possibilities of attitudinal change through continuous orientation, persuasion, socialization, and sanction.

6. Child Rights Act and Underage Marriage

The child right act stated that the best interest of a child will be of paramount consideration in all actions. It further stated that a child will be given the protection and care necessary for his well-being. Part II of the Act stated the rights and responsibility of the child based on the application of Chapter IV the of 1999 Constitution. These rights include the right to survival and development, right to name, freedom of association and peaceful assembly, freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, right to private and family life, right to freedom of movement, right to freedom from discrimination, right to dignity of the child, right to leisure, recreation, and cultural activities, right to health and health services, right to parental care, protection and maintenance, right of a child to free, compulsory and universal primary education, right of a child in need of special protection measure, right of the unborn child to protection against harm, contractual rights of a child, responsibilities of a child and parent among others.

Part III deals with the prohibition of child marriage as expressed in the prohibition of child betrothal; punishment for child marriage and betrothal, abduction, removal, and transfer from lawful custody, unlawful sexual intercourse, etc. Unfortunately, it is difficult to identify individuals who were punished for violating the child right act in Nigeria. This partly explains its persistence. For instance, a number of persons who were terrorists that participated in the abduction of Chibok School girls have surrendered and are considered repentant Boko Haram members. They were not punished for abducting, forcefully marrying, and impregnating underage girls.

Section 10, sub-section 1 of the act stated that a child shall not be subjected to any form of discrimination merely by reason of his belonging to a particular community or ethnic group or by reason of his place of origin, sex, religion, or political opinion. It is disappointing to note that this clause is constantly being violated by individuals that favors child marriage. Moreover, part III of the Act, section 21 stated that no person under the age of 18 years is capable of contracting a valid marriage, and accordingly, a marriage so contracted is null and void and of no effect whatsoever. Section 22 of the same Act stated that no parent, guardian, or any other person shall betroth a child to any person and that a betrothal in contravention of this Act is null and void. Unfortunately, most girls involved are ignorant of these laws and they lack basic knowledge of fundamental human rights. The Act in section 23 prescribed punishment for child marriage and betrothal. It stated that a person who marries a child; or to whom a child is betrothed; or who promotes the marriage of a child; or who betroths a child, commits an offense and is liable on conviction to a fine of five hundred thousand naira (₦500,000) or imprisonment for a term of five years or to both such fine and imprisonment. However, it is hard to identify individuals convicted based on this act since its inception. Hence, it is necessary to ascertain the desirability of child marriage, as well as the socio-cultural factors responsible for child marriage in northern Nigeria.

7. Materials and Methods

This study employed a combination of the quantitative, and qualitative methods of data collection epitomized by the use of questionnaires and structured interviews to elicit information from respondents. The population is made up of inhabitants of Kano and Kaduna in northern Nigeria. These two cities were selected based on purposive sampling due to their peculiar characteristics. Kano is the center of commerce in northern Nigeria while Kaduna, on the other hand, is the center of learning in northern Nigeria. Indigenes of different towns and villages could be found in these two cities and inhabitants of these cities are well enlightened enough to know the dangers of child marriage and gender inequality. They are therefore in a good position to explain the reasons behind the sustenance of gender inequality and child marriage in the region.

Stratified random sampling was used to divide the two cities into different strata from which respondents were selected based on purposive sampling techniques. A total of 500 copies of the questionnaire were administered out of which 484 were retrieved. 20 young girls who were married before the age of 18 years were interviewed in both cities to know their opinion on child marriage and gender equality. Informed consent were sought from respondents before the administration of the research instruments.

The services of five research assistants were secured to facilitate the data collection process. Data generated from this study were analyzed and presented using frequency distribution, percentage, and Pearson product-moment correlation (PPMC). Information collected during the interview was transcribed and analyzed with a view to identifying common themes which served as a basis for which summarized interview reports were given.

8. Results

Table 1: Socio-demographic data of Respondents

Respondents' Age	Frequency	Percentage %
8 – 18 years	202	41.7
19– 29 years	101	20.9
30 – 40 years	82	16.9
41 years & above	99	20.5
Total	484	100
Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage %
Single	130	26.9
Married	308	63.6
Divorcee	46	9.5
Widow/ Widower	-	-
Total	484	100
Religion	Frequency	Percentage %
Christianity	102	21
Islam	356	73.6
Others	26	5.4
Total	484	100
Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage %
Primary School Certificate	96	19.8
Secondary School Certificate	286	59.1
Tertiary Education Certificate	102	21.1
Total	484	100
Respondents' sex	Frequency	Percentage %
Male	158	32.6
Female	326	67.4
Total	484	100

Table 2: Opinion of Respondents

Table 2.1 Opinion of Respondents on whether child marriage and gender inequality are common in northern Nigeria or not.

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	402	83.1
No	62	12.8
Indifferent	20	4.1
Total	484	100

Table 2.2 Opinion of Respondents on factors responsible for child marriage and gender inequality

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Traditions	201	41.5
Religion	224	46.3
Poverty	18	3.7
Illiteracy	38	7.9
Indifferent	2	0.4
Total	484	100

Table 2.3 Opinion of Respondents on whether child marriage is desirable or not

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	248	51.2
No	152	31.4
Indifferent	84	17.4
Total	484	100

Table 2.4 Opinion of Respondents on whether gender inequality is avoidable or not

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	142	29.3
No	270	55.8
Indifferent	72	14.9
Total	484	100

Table 2.5 Opinion of Respondents on whether they would give their female child out in marriage before the age of 18 years or not.

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	262	54.1
No	202	41.7
Indifferent	20	4.1
Total	484	100

Table 2.6 Opinion of Respondents on willingness to get married before the age of 18 years (Females only)

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	192	39.7
No	127	26.2
I'm not concerned	165	34.1
Total	484	100

Table 2.7 Opinion of Respondents on whether females and males should be treated equally

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	186	38.4
No	202	41.7
Indifferent	96	19.8
Total	484	100

Table 2.8 Response about familiarity with the child rights act.

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
I am aware of Child Rights Act	62	12.8
I am not aware of Child Rights Act	422	87.2
Indifferent	-	-
Total	484	100

9. Discussion

Table 1 presents the socio-demographic data of respondents. 41.7% of the respondents belong to the 8 -18 years age group while other respondents are distributed across different age groups. It is noteworthy that females within the 8 -18 years age group are victims of child marriage. 26.9% of the respondents are single while more than half of the respondents are married 63.6%. The larger percentage of married respondents seem to be a product of the culture of early marriage. A few percentages of respondents 9.5% are divorced probably due to incompatibility between spouses. There is no widow or widower among the respondents. This could be linked to the fact that individuals are allowed to marry more than one wife, hence the death of a spouse does not necessarily make a person a widow or widower in the study area. The largest percentage of respondents 73.6% are Muslims. This is because Islam is the dominant religion in the study area. 21% of the respondents are Christians while 5.4% of the respondents belong to other religions.

The majority of the respondents 59.1% have secondary school certificates while 21.1% have tertiary education certificates and 19.8% of respondents have primary school certifications. This percentage could be linked to the level of school enrolment in the study area. 67.4% of the respondents are females while 32.6% of the respondents are males. This is deliberate and purposeful because the major crux of this study revolves around females.

Table 2 presents the opinion of respondents with respect to different hypothetical questions. 83.1% of the respondents observed that child marriage and gender inequality is common in northern Nigeria, 12.8% of the respondents noted that child marriage and gender inequality are not common in northern Nigeria and 4.1% of the respondents were indifferent. This data corroborates the United Nations Statistics Division (2020) program report that 43 percent of women between the ages of 20 to 24 had been married by the age of 18 in Nigeria.

Table 2.2 shows the opinion of respondents on factors responsible for child marriage and gender inequality. 41.5% of the respondents linked child marriage and gender inequality to traditions, 46.3% of the respondents linked it with religion, 3.7% of the respondents noted that poverty is responsible for child marriage and gender inequality, 7.9% of the respondents identified illiteracy as a factor while 0.4% of the respondents were indifferent.

Table 2.3 indicates the opinion of respondents as to the desirability of child marriage. Surprisingly, 51.2% of the respondents noted that child marriage and gender inequality are desirable. 31.4% of the respondents noted that child marriage and gender inequality are not desirable while 17.4% of the respondents were indifferent.

Table 2.4 indicates the opinion of respondents on whether gender inequality is avoidable or not. The majority of the respondents 55.8% representing more than half of the total number of respondents believed that gender inequality is not avoidable. They noted that gender inequality is inevitable. 29.3% of the respondents noted that gender inequality is avoidable while 14.9% of the respondents were indifferent. This result clearly shows that a lot has to be done to change the orientation of people about gender inequality.

In table 2. 5, respondents expressed their opinion on whether they would give their female child out in marriage before the age of 18 years. 54.1% of the respondents are willing to give their female child out in marriage before the age of 18. 41.7% of the respondents are not willing to give their female child out in marriage before the age of 18, while 4.1% of the

respondents were indifferent. It is rather unfortunate that some people are still willing to give female children out in marriage at an age in which they could barely fend for themselves in the 21st century. This clearly shows the significance of this study and the need to look for measures to stem the tide of child marriage and gender inequality in northern Nigeria.

Table 2.6 shows the opinion of female respondents on their willingness to get married before the age of 18 years. A larger percentage of respondents 39.7% are willing to get married before the age of 18. 26.2% of them are not willing while 34.1% of the respondents are not concerned with the question. In table 2.7, 38.4% of the respondents noted that women and men should be treated equally, 41.7% of the respondents submitted that women and men should not be treated equally and 19.8% of the respondents were indifferent. This result clearly shows that many people still support gender inequality in the study area. Table 2.8 shows that majority of the respondents 87. 2% are not aware of the child rights act, while 12.8% of them are aware of the act. This partly explains why many people do not see anything wrong in child marriage.

Respondents enumerated domestic violence, divorce, poverty, poor economic growth, low GDP, emotional instability, unequal access to opportunities, poor socialization of children, and insecurity as direct and indirect consequences of child marriage and gender inequality. Analysis of the information elicited by respondents interviewed shed more light on child marriage and gender inequality in northern Nigeria. Some excerpts of the responses given were presented as follows:

I got into marriage when I was 16 years old after completing my senior school certificate examination. It was not my choice. My father asked me to marry him, and I cannot say no (Female, 19 years old, Kano).

I was given out in marriage on my eighteenth birthday. The man that married me is a family friend of my Parents. My parents chose him for me and convince me to accept him as my Husband (Female, 23 years old, Kaduna).

The responses elicited above supported the position of Gaffney-Rhys (2011) that in situations where child marriage is not forced, young girls are often too immature to give well-reasoned consent to the union.

My first wedding night experience was terrible, I cannot imagine myself sleeping on the same bed with a man old enough to be my father. I locked myself in the bathroom overnight. My Husband pleaded with me to open the door but I refused. My father came to talk to me on the second day. I opened the door when I heard my Father's voice (Female, 17 years old, Kano).

I was in my first year at University when my wedding was arranged. I knew the man earlier and I love him. Although I did not plan to get married as a teenager, I accepted the proposal to marry him because it is right for me to do so in my religion and my friends are getting married too. I have deferred my studies at the moment. I will go back to the University after the delivery of my first child (Female, 18 years, Kano)

This response supported Siddiqi and Greene (2022) that child marriage is linked with girls being taken away from school with other attendant gender-based violence.

My delivery experience was painful. I had prolonged labor. The doctor said my pelvic region is not big enough to allow easy passage for my Baby, so I delivered the baby

through a caesarian section. I became sick shortly after delivery (Female, 18 years old, Kaduna).

This response corroborated the position of Nour (2006), that obstructed labor is one of the consequences of child marriage due to the small size of the pelvis.

I do not see anything wrong in child marriage, it is not a bad idea. Some of our parents married at a younger age too. It is okay and I am comfortable with it. (Female 20 years old, Kaduna).

I won't really say I regret my early marriage experience, but I really feel it would have been better if I waited till I become 24 years old with better experience and maturity (Female 26 years old, Kano)

I did not get married early just because of poverty or illiteracy. My parents are wealthy and educated. I think child marriage is not just about poverty and illiteracy (Female, 25 years old, Kano)

This supported the docile-dogma perspective which submitted that the cause of child marriage goes beyond the issue of poverty. It also negates the position of Verma et al. (2013)

Yes, I think poverty is one of the reasons for which I was given out in marriage before 18 years. My parents were convinced that my husband will take good care of me due to his wealth (Female, 22 years old, Kaduna).

This partly corroborated Siddiqi and Greene (2022); and Braimah (2014) claim that poverty is one of the key drivers of child marriage.

The information elicited during the interview clearly shows the opinion of young girls married off at an early age. A negligible percentage of the ladies interviewed experienced violence in marriage as observed by Balaiah & Silverman (2010). None of the Interviewees experienced diseases as a result of early marriage. This negates the position of Raj & Boehmer (2013) that early pregnancies as a result of early marriage increase the risks of disease and even death of the mother or child. This result could be linked to the advancement in healthcare delivery in recent years.

10. Test of Hypothesis

Pearson's product-moment correlation (PPMC) was used to test the correlation between the variables of the study. The hypothesis stated that there is a correlation between gender inequality and child marriage in northern Nigeria. The data in Tables 2.3 and 2.4 were used for this purpose with the aid of an online PPMC calculator. The result of the test of the hypothesis shows that there is a positive linear correlation between gender inequality and child marriage in northern Nigeria with a correlation coefficient value of $r = 0.25496$.

11. Conclusion

This study clearly shows the continuous and persistent incidence of gender inequality and child marriage in northern Nigeria and by extension Nigeria as a country. The study no doubt lends credence to the report given by UNICEF with respect to the rate of child marriage in Nigeria. The result of the study shows a correlation between gender inequality and child marriage in northern Nigeria. Traditions, religion, poverty, and illiteracy were identified as socio-cultural factors responsible for gender inequality and child marriage in Northern

Nigeria. Beyond these points, the dogmatic and docile disposition of people is seen as a major cause of gender inequality and child marriage irrespective of the sociocultural factors earlier identified.

The study also shows that gender inequality and child marriage is seen as desirable to a lot of people in spite of a series of laws enacted to stem the tide of such occurrences in the country. The consequences of gender inequality and child marriage were enumerated to include domestic violence, poor economic growth, low GDP (Gross Domestic Product), and insecurity among others.

12. Recommendations

The following recommendations will go a long way in reducing and curbing the rate of gender inequality and child marriage to a minimal level:

- State Government in northern Nigeria should make concerted efforts to domesticate the child right act of 2003
- Efforts should be made to sensitize members of the public about the demerits of child marriage.
- Programs targeted at re-orientation should be aired on mass media outlets e.g. Radio, Television, and Social Media.
- Traditional rulers and religious leaders should be encouraged to propagate a dynamic shift from the status quo with respect to child marriage and gender inequality in northern Nigeria.

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MIGRATION AND REFUGEES – THE EXPERIENCE OF TRAUMA

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Abstract: *Forced migration – today a major global phenomenon – marks the shift in focus specifically on the status of refugees. She highlights certain parts of this potentially traumatic experience and sees it as a kind of displacement for the purpose of resettlement to a new country. Armed attacks on countries have led to instability not only territorially but also internationally. The Russian-initiated war against Ukraine has created tensions on the borders with Turkey, Poland and Romania, but has also put direct pressure on the European Union, which was already facing its biggest wave of migration since World War II. The conflict has degenerated in such a way that it has created countless traumas, dividing families, endangering the entire safety and security of the powerless (elderly, children, women, disabled people and young people), but also of those who were forced, being healthy, to go in the middle of armed conflict. The article presents reflections on trauma and resilience processes, combining general theoretical ideas with those of transactional analysis.*

Keywords: social responsibility, refugees, intercultural interventions, displacement; asylum.

1. Introduction

Forced migration is a global phenomenon with significant consequences for individuals and societies. This refers to the movement of people from one region or country to another, involuntarily and often as a result of situations of conflict, persecution, natural disasters or extreme poverty.

One of the most obvious examples of forced migration are refugees from armed conflicts, such as the wars in Syria or Yemen, the conflict in Ukraine. These people are forced leave their homes to escape violence and persecution, facing numerous difficulties during their journey and at their destination.

In addition to conflicts, climate change has led to an increase in forced migration. Rising sea levels and extreme weather events can destroy entire communities, causing people to seek refuge elsewhere.

Forced migration raises questions about the human rights and protection of these vulnerable individuals. Organizations such as the United Nations and the Red Cross play a crucial role in providing assistance and protection to refugees and forced migrants. Forced migration is a complex and delicate phenomenon that poses significant humanitarian and political challenges to international society. It is important to develop effective policies and strategies to manage this problem and ensure the rights and well-being of those affected by it. (Levine, 2010).

Statistical analyses in recent years show that forced migration is a growing global phenomenon. Data for 2016 from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) showed that one in 113 people is forced to migrate.

In modern Europe there have been several migrations: after the end of World War II, after the dissolution of the USSR and the disappearance of the Iron Curtain, and now, after the emergence of ISIS.

Migration is defined in several ways, according to several authors, as the movement of people and their resettlement, permanent and temporary, and from a legal point of view implies the intention of some people to permanently leave the state of origin in order to settle in another state.

The typology of migrations is appreciated by specialists as being global and regional; legal and illegal; temporary and permanent.

The notion of refugee refers to those persecuted ethnically, nationally, religiously and outside the country of origin according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Refugee Status Conventions of 1951, the UN Refugee Statute of 1967 and the UN Resolution in the field.

In 2016, 66.5% million people worldwide fled their countries for various reasons, including famine and war. Of these people, 22.5 million are refugees. Italy is an access point for migrants arriving in Europe. In the same year, 370,000 people landed in Europe, while another 5,000 perished in the Mediterranean while trying to reach the mainland. The individuals came from Nigeria, Bangladesh, The Gambia, Morocco, Côte d'Ivoire, Eritrea and other countries in Africa and Asia.

The social structure and human relationships have been changed because of this phenomenon, and it is not a temporary social emergency, but has long-term implications. For this reason, we are obliged to analyse the situation in terms of geopolitics and social responsibility, and it is necessary to combine a vision of individual intervention with a broader vision of the politics and ethics of human coexistence. This is complex, and in different parts of the world, repressive policies (difficult to implement and often in violation of human rights) or open-door policies (which often lead to difficulties in integrating migrants into local communities) are the alternatives. Working with refugees is a way to be involved in the present while building a more harmonious and secure future.

Forced migration is discussed using various terms, some of which place greater emphasis on the legal status of the individual (e.g. "today's applicant" and "refugee") and others highlighting social and psychological conditions ("immigrant" or "displaced person"). Papadopolus (2014) instead used the term "involuntary dislocation". This phrase can refer to the displacement of a shoulder or hip – a sudden, painful experience – and is appropriate to describe the detachment and surprising experience of leaving behind the country, loved ones, home and native environment, all parts of an individual's basic identity.

However, the term "displacement" implies resettlement. This is the case for integration into an individual host country, with all the associated difficulties: residence permits, recognition of status, search for housing and employment, all fundamental to the processes of acculturation and assimilation in the host country.

Migration is never a neutral event, as Rotondo (2014) reminded us of his reflections on the research experience with migrant families. Rather, migration is a critical situation, a disruption of the mechanisms that regulate individuals, groups, and a potentially traumatic experience. Breaking an existing balance is what leads to the need to seek a new balance. The outcome of this process depends on an individual's personal history, resources, and the possibilities offered by the individual's environment.

The individual stories are in a continuous dialectical relationship with social, political and collective contexts. Therefore, it is not important to understand whether migration was a person's choice (often to improve living conditions). If so, an exploration project was at stake, with the individual motivated to reach a certain place. These aspects protect and propel the migrant not only during the journey, but also upon arrival at the destination. A migratory project offers a better possibility of to direct one's own choices and not become a victim, but an active participant, integrating and modifying different ego states of the person. The migrant is able to have a realistic vision, to take into account aspects of protection, such as curiosity and motivation towards migration.

The UN Protocol against the smuggling of migrants by land, air and sea requires Member States to make smuggling of migrants criminal offences, but also attempts to indirectly support the bringing of irregular migrants.

The EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime of 7 December 2020 provides for global sanctions for trafficking in human beings or human rights abuses.

The European Union provides assistance and protection to smugglers through the "EU Strategy on Victims' Rights 2020-2025" and the "Anti-Trafficking Strategy 2021-2025", the "Strategy on the Rights of the Child".

2. Migration and trauma

Today, there is an extensive literature on trauma and agrees with a number of general ideas that will be considered here to better understand the many implications of the trauma experience and treatment. As is generally known, the origin of the word *trauma* is associated with an injury, a break or an experience that delimits a period before and after. Trauma occurs when external events disrupt the ego's ability to process and manage them, thus leading to deep feelings of helplessness (Person, Cooper & Gabbaard, 2005: 561). The experience overwhelms the person's ability to react and act effectively and leaves them feeling affected by something beyond their ability to resist, cope, and "be there."

In Bin Swanger's existential vision, rooted in Heidegger's ontological concepts, "being there" or "dasein" is essential to human existence. An individual exists in time and space in a process of self-awareness that is necessary to become oneself as an individual who is constantly oriented towards reality. Various theoretical models confirm that the ability to think and reflect on oneself and one's relationships with the world is the foundation of subjectivity by narrating and understanding one's story, and often having a sense of existential continuity.

When an individual loses subjectivity, he or she is reduced to an object, with many individual and collective consequences. We recall the dramatic history of Europe in the first half of the twentieth century and the testimonies of various survivors of the Holocaust concentration camps, being paramount in understanding the aspects of trauma.

In traumatic experiences, an individual's ability to think, act, and react purposefully is impaired and disturbed. To better understand the processes of interruption and repetition caused by traumatic experiences – a misperception in the passage of time – there is a continuous fluctuation between the need to forget and leave behind and the need to remember with the ability to forget.

Illegal migration is a global phenomenon that involves moving people from one country to another without legal documents or permits. This migration often involves significant risks and can generate profound trauma for those involved. In the following, we will discuss the traumas generated by illegal migration. It can cause severe psychological trauma. Individuals embarking on this risky journey face the dangers of human traffickers, detention in inhumane conditions, and constant fear of deportation. These experiences can lead to post-traumatic stress, anxiety, depression, and other mental disorders.

Physical trauma is also a major concern. Illegal migrants can be subjected to physical abuse, including sexual assault, exploitation and medical negligence. They also go through dangerous journeys and may be exposed to accidents or illnesses during their illegal migration.

Another important aspect is the separation of families. Illegal migrants may be forced to separate from their family members during travel or detention. This separation can cause deep emotional trauma for both adults and children.

In addition, illegal migration brings uncertainty and economic difficulties. Irregular migrants often face joblessness and exposure to economic exploitation. This uncertainty and financial stress can aggravate psychological trauma.

It is important to understand that the trauma of illegal migration affects not only the individuals involved, but also the reception communities. These communities face challenges in managing flows of irregular migrants and providing humanitarian assistance.

Illegal migration can generate profound trauma, both psychologically and physically. A comprehensive approach is needed to address these traumas and provide adequate support and assistance to irregular migrants and reception communities. Education, awareness and the development of more effective humanitarian policies are essential in this respect.

Illegal migration, unfortunately, continues to exist and thousands of people lose their lives trying to reach the territory of another state illegally. It was the Central Mediterranean route that recorded a large number of deaths from boats stranded unsuitable for the large number of beings they were carrying. Human trafficking is a real threat to any society, which is why the European Union has discussed preventing and combating migrant smuggling, a key element of the new Pact on Migration and Asylum. It was created to provide safety, security and decent conditions for people arriving in the EU legally. At the same time, the pact aims for Europe's citizens to feel, through its implementation, the efficient management of migration, respecting European values and international law.

3. Vulnerability of migrants and refugees

Illegal migration is a global phenomenon that involves moving people from one country to another without complying with immigration laws and procedures. This illegal activity can have tragic consequences for those involved, including deaths. In the following, the number of deaths and the number of victims of illegal migration in a global and regional context will be discussed.

Firstly, illegal migration can be extremely dangerous, as people engaging in this activity are often exposed to major risks. These risks include dangerous journeys in inhumane conditions, human trafficking, sexual exploitation and economic exploitation. Another major risk is crossing borders or dangerous geographical areas, such as deserts or seas, by unsafe means.

Around the world, the number of deaths from illegal migration is difficult to determine precisely because many illegal migrants go missing or are difficult to trace. However, international organisations such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) monitor and record known incidents. In recent years, numerous deaths and tragedies linked to illegal migration have been reported in areas such as the Mediterranean Sea, where overcrowded boats have sunk and caused loss of life.

Illegal migration also has a disproportionate impact on children and women, who are often vulnerable to exploitation and trafficking. International organizations and governments work to combat these problems by creating prevention and assistance policies and programs.

Illegal migration is known to be a complex and dangerous problem that can lead to deaths and human suffering. It is important that the international congregation continues to work together to find solutions to this problem and protect the rights and safety of irregular migrants.

Illegal migration can have devastating consequences for the individual and the community as a whole, especially in terms of induced trauma. These traumas can have a profound impact on the mental and emotional health of illegal migrants, as well as host societies. In the following, some important realities regarding the trauma induced by illegal migration will be discussed.

The trauma caused by illegal migration varies according to the circumstances: trauma can take many forms, from physical trauma, caused by dangerous journeys and physical exploitation, to emotional and psychological trauma, due to family separation, violence or uncertainty about their legal status.

Migrants and refugees face a number of vulnerabilities during their journey and in host countries. These vulnerabilities can have serious consequences for their well-being and security. They are in a situation of vulnerability due to separation from their family and community of origin. This separation can have a negative impact on their emotional and psychological state.

During their journey, migrants are exposed to significant risks, such as human trafficking, sexual exploitation and labour exploitation. These forms of abuse are worrying and can leave deep scars on victims.

Access to poor health services is another vulnerability of migrants and refugees. They may have difficulty getting the necessary medical care, which puts them at risk for undiagnosed or untreated illnesses and conditions.

Protecting their legal rights is a crucial issue for migrants and refugees. They often lack access to lawyers or adequate legal information to defend their rights, making them vulnerable to deportation or detention.

Illegal migrant children are exposed to high risks: children who are brought into illegal migration by their parents or guardians are vulnerable to severe trauma. They may suffer from anxiety, depression, and trauma related to family separation and uncertainty about their future. (Otovescu, 2021: 115-118).

Trauma can persist in the long term: the effects of trauma induced by illegal migration can persist in the long term, affecting the mental and emotional health of individuals as they adapt to their new environment and face obstacles related to integration and social inclusion.

Limited resources can aggravate trauma: illegal migrants often face limited financial and social resources, which can make it difficult to access mental and psychological health services. This lack of access to treatment can worsen trauma and contribute to social isolation.

Addressing trauma is key: To help irregular migrants cope with trauma and successfully integrate into the host society, the provision of adequate mental health services, legal aid and community-based support is crucial. These resources can contribute to their recovery and build a more stable life.

Illegal migration is a complex issue that can generate profound trauma for both irregular migrants and host societies. Understanding these traumas and providing appropriate recovery support is key to promoting the well-being of irregular migrants and building more resilient and inclusive communities.

Trauma induced by illegal migration is a serious problem affecting both irregular migrants and host societies. To help alleviate these traumas and facilitate the integration process, governments and international organizations have implemented a number of ameliorative measures. These measures and their importance in addressing the trauma induced by illegal migration will be discussed below.

Mental and psychological health services: a key measure is to ensure access to mental and psychological health services for irregular migrants. These services can provide therapy, counselling and support to help migrants cope with trauma and adapt to their new environments.

Cultural and linguistic integration programme: The integration programme can help irregular migrants become familiar with the culture and language of the host country. This can reduce social isolation and help establish a stronger connection with the local community.

Legal aid: providing legal aid can help irregular migrants know their rights and protect their interests. This is particularly important in cases of trafficking in human beings and exploitation.

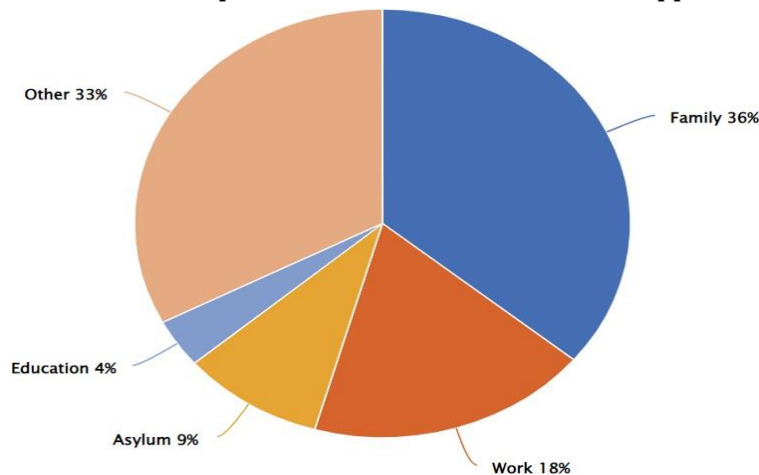
Family reunification programmes: For illegal migrants who have been separated from their families, reunification programmes can facilitate reunion with their family members. This can reduce the stress and trauma associated with separation. (Otovescu, A., 2016:80).

Community support: Non-governmental organizations and faith-based organizations can provide community support for illegal migrants. These groups can provide food, shelter, and emotional support during difficult times.

Vocational education and training: an important measure to facilitate integration is the provision of vocational education and training opportunities. They can help illegal migrants develop their skills and find better and more stable jobs. (Gorun, A., 2020).

Relief measures against the trauma of irregular migration are essential to ensure that irregular migrants receive the support they need to rebuild their lives and integrate into host societies. These measures not only help alleviate individual suffering, but can also help create more inclusive and resilient communities in the context of irregular migration.

Figure 1. All residence permits valid at the end of 2021, if applicable



Source: Eurostat

As a result of the efforts undertaken by the European Union agencies to have a safe and coherent migration, the percentage of reasons for immigration has changed, with family reunification being occupied by the first place, followed by finding a job, asylum and education. 33% are other reasons.

4. Conclusions

When a trauma recurs it is accompanied by turmoil, feelings and flashbacks. There may even be an active search for emotionally extreme experiences and dangers, almost as if reproducing the same emotional tone and tension of the traumatic experience. This is generated by implicit memory, which activates primary emotional survival responses.

Therefore, a real network must be created to help migrants, to make new places more familiar and safe, and to help individuals interact effectively with their new surroundings. Like migrants, refugees are called upon to break away from what is well known and endure uncertainty, pain and the unfamiliar, while maintaining a sense of well-being, and the challenge for host societies is to see forced migration as a chance to transform and develop into an active-participatory migration procedure.

The new challenges posed by international conflicts have required international migration specialists to come together to work together to adapt migration laws, so that migrant people acquire the security they aim for from the beginning of their journey. This creates networks of migrants who develop trust in legal procedures and follow this path,

protecting themselves individually and at family level, but, at the same time, discouraging those who practice illegal migration.

Frontex has joined forces with representatives of countries at whose borders there are pressures from migratory flows and have largely managed to control migration by channelling it towards legal action.

It must be understood that the efforts of government agencies of the European Commissions and NGOs need to be supported by each individual, through efforts to understand migration and to see migrants as people, fellow human beings who deserve to be appreciated, respected and given the chance for social inclusion. to better integration.

The traumas suffered by refugees are multiple and each person has a story, which is why, among some universities, programs have been developed to support these people, through which they offer them the opportunity to tell their stories, to use their experiences to help those in a similar situation.

The migration issue is far from being completely solved because the international imbalance is accentuated, but if we look at the migration phenomenon and consider it a normality, the internal pressure will decrease, and society's openness towards integration will diminish any traumas that may arise in the host country. Real support helps migrants from educational institutions, which provide them with language courses and access to the right education to have a quality life and successfully integrate into the host country, covering their need to develop, marry or settle in a state that offers them safety and protection.

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DELINQUENCY - THEORY AND BEHAVIOURS

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Abstract: *The idea of this article is based on the fact that, in over 25 years of experience in social reintegration work, we have found that efforts to reintegrate people into society are ineffective if the activities that are part of this goal do not start from identifying the causes of the behaviour we want to change. Humans are differentiated from other living creatures by their cognitive capacity, by their use of reason, and by their being the product of society, of respect for the collective contract. One of the functions of the social group is to establish norms, which define situations and modes of behaviour as desirable or undesirable. Violation of norms makes the individual a deviant. Deviance is not a simple property, present or absent in certain behaviours, but the product of a complex process often involving societal reaction to those behaviours. In the spectrum of deviance, delinquency is the most dangerous form. The features that distinguish it from simple forms of deviance are that, first and foremost, a particular law is broken. Therefore, delinquency is no longer defined according to the reaction of other members of society or according to a label, but it is in a legal relationship with social values, and the importance of fully understanding it can be found in identifying the causes and processes that led to the manifestation of this behavior so that later, by making a report with the individual resources of each person, an individualized plan of measures can be developed that can lead to increasing the chances of social inclusion of each person.*

Keywords: delinquency, theory, behaviours, aggression, society.

I. Theoretical framework

1. Social learning theory of aggression

The most comprehensive explanation of human aggression has been proposed by Bandura (1971), in his "Social learning theory of aggression" (Drămnescu, 2020). Bandura was the first to test the learning of aggression through direct experiences consistent with basic learning paradigms. Aggression is seen as mostly controlled by the possibility of reinforcement and punishment. It is also under stimulus control. Apparently, a large part of behaviour, including aggression, is learned by observation - in other words, without direct experience. Bandura is the only one outside the Freudian tradition who has recognized the specifically human capacity to process information and elaborated its implications for investigating, maintaining, modifying, and controlling aggression. Bandura developed insights to explain the effects of substitutive reinforcement and substitutive punishment.

The first major insight concerns the informative function of the observed results. By witnessing the consequences of other people's responses, the observer becomes aware of the possibility of reinforcement and punishment and can coordinate his or her behavior so as to maximize rewards and minimize punishments in the observed environment without having directly experienced these possibilities. Knowledge about the likely consequences of the response, gained through observation, can thus serve to facilitate or inhibit responses similar to those observed. According to this view, it is the anticipation of consequences based on observation of others' behaviour, rather than immediate experience, that guides one's action.

A. The intergenerational transfer of the violent relationship model

Once learned in childhood, this pattern of relating becomes a pattern for the child that applies to all the social relationships he or she will enter into as an adult. In 74% of cases (Killen, 1998) this pattern of violent behaviour in the family is repeated from one generation

to the next.

However, there are also individuals who have the opportunity to break away from the pattern in which they were nurtured. Eric Erikson believes that this privilege belongs to adolescence.

Children who grow up in violent families develop behaviours and physical condition that make them easily recognisable. They exhibit:

- physical problems, unexplained illnesses, exposure to accidents in and outside the home, slower physical development;
- emotional and mental problems: increased anxiety, feelings of guilt, fear of abandonment, isolation, anger, fear of injury and death;
- psychological problems: lack of self-confidence, depression, comparison with the happier life of their peers;
- behavioural problems: aggression or passivity to aggression by others, sleep problems, bedwetting, bullying, running away from home, pregnancies at young ages, relationships to escape from home, mutilation, drug and alcohol use, defensive lying behaviour;
- school problems - mistrust, elimination, sudden changes in school performance, lack of concentration, lack of social manners;
- identification with negative role models.

Less considered so far is the fact that the phenomenon of suicide and suicide attempts has increased among young people and that the main causes are a deteriorated family climate and poor communication within the family.

B. Interpersonal aggression

What is aggression?

The phenomenon of aggression tends to generate some confusion because the amateur's concept of aggression differs somewhat in its undetermined use from what social psychologists study. The latter define aggression as a pattern of conduct intended to harm, cause pain, suffering or death to another. The crucial element of the definition is intention: the person must intend to do harm for his or her act to be considered aggressive. It is also not necessary that the harm caused by an aggressor must be physical. A boss who continually sexually harasses a female subordinate, causing her stress, anxiety or depression, may not do physical harm. However, he is causing psychological harm and is therefore an aggressor. Aggression can also be directed at inanimate objects. Someone may break the window of the neighbour's car because of a real or imagined conflict with him. We are often tempted to compare the action of a police officer, who in the course of his duty kills a murder suspect, with the action of a contract killer, who kills for profit. However, the label of aggressor can only be applied to the latter.

Violence, aggression is not new in human history, before the Christian era, the Romans exterminated the population of entire cities. Medieval religious leaders used poison to get rid of their enemies. The Nazi regime exterminated millions of Jews. How is it that people can treat their fellow human beings in a cruel manner? What kind of people can destroy the lives of others with such nonchalance? Even bullying on a medium scale is pathetic: it's not pleasant to watch one person verbally abusing another.

2. The theory of anomie

The term anomie, which comes from the Greek language, refers to the state of disorder in the functioning of a social system or sub-system due to the depreciation of social norms. Of course, it has a relative character because it is not possible to conceive a society without norms or with a global disorder (Zamfir; Vlăsceanu, 1993: 37). In the Durkheimist view, one of

the factors maintaining social equilibrium is anomy itself, which is a natural factor - in the sense that it exists in all types of society. This legitimises its existence in society through its positive aspect.

Durkheim did not consider the profession of delinquency - or other "condemnable" professions - an aberrant, abnormal form, but saw it as a way of differentiating work. Just as cancer is a new specialisation of biological functions, delinquent activity is a form of survival. Hence the need to examine the socio-cultural conditions and contradictions of delinquent activity at different levels, of different nations (Besnard, 1987).

Through R. Merton (1938), the theory of anomy, reformulated, will be developed to provide a broader explanation of the socio-cultural conditions of delinquency. The starting point of the Mertonian analysis is given, as in other macro-sociological theories, by the distinction between social structure, values and social norms, in this context he does not view delinquency as a result of individual traits/characteristics, but as a normal response of people to different ways of matching socio-cultural elements (goals) with pathways to them. The idea is that it is not within individuals that the root cause of delinquency or criminality lies, but rather in structural differences and contradictions in society, even when speaking of an inherited tendency that some individuals possess in their behaviour.

The structural contradiction identified by R. Merton (the disjunction between the cultural value of success and the lack of equal access to the legitimate means to achieve it), although formulated in the context of American society, is identifiable in any type of society. This is because certain groups of individuals are systematically denied access to recognised cultural goals through various structural barriers, class for example.

Hence, several ways of adaptation that correlate one's personal needs with one's means of achievement, ensuring a minimum of visible signs of self-worth.

R. Merton identifies 5 types (or methods) of adaptation to a social structure:

1. the conformist, the one who accepts cultural goals as the institutionalized means of achieving them;

2. the ritualist, the person who has given up valuing 'cultural' goals, while scrupulously conforming to recognised norms;

3. the escapist, who rejects both the goals and the recognised means of achieving them; they usually retreat into a world of illusions (through drugs, alcohol, tranquillisers, etc.). This category is characterised by asocial adaptive activities - which is why they often come into conflict with the law;

4. the rebel - or protester - refuses both the cultural ends and the means, while coming up with substitutes, alternatives. As a rule, they are attached to ideas or doctrines with socio-political ideals;

5. the innovator strongly values cultural goals, but rejects (probably due to lack of access) the institutionalised means to achieve them; this is why delinquency, in a certain segment, is an innovative way to success, a method to obtain what is refused.

In conclusion, we can say that if E. Durkheim's theory of anomy refers to the limitation of goals (Besnard, 1987), Robert Merton puts actors in conflict with situations that close their possibilities of success, in both cases, the immediate practical utility of the theory is low.

But because it refers to the system, to the global society, the recommendations that derive from it also have a macro-social character: the multiplication (widening) of legitimate opportunities/means of access to the various socio-cultural goods/goals. The general observation is that delinquency can be seen as a rational response (matching of purpose and means) to social conditions. Delinquency can therefore be approached and treated from the perspective of a social deficiency rather than a psychological definition of behavioural pathology.

3. The theory of delinquent subcultures

Developing a number of ideas from the theory of anomie, the theory of delinquent subcultures is widespread among specialists, particularly when discussing urban delinquency.

The starting point are the social norms, with their two aspects: prescription implies the existence of a prohibition just as any prohibition delimits the field of the conventional.

Therefore, the norms that define legitimate practices also define illegitimate ones (Cloward; Ohlin, 1989: 143-153). It can be stated that the role of norms is to draw the boundary between legitimate and illegitimate means; so that the possibility of using alternative means is recognised, at least in a silent way.

There are variations in the degree to which members of different social groups acquire the values, knowledge and skills that facilitate their social careers. These variations are even socially structured and implicitly define differential access to non-legitimate means. Cultural transmission theory and differential association theory focus on developing such ideas. The former emphasises that value systems are distributed across different urban areas or zones, while the second theory states that it is the system of social relations that facilitates or hinders the appropriation of delinquent values.

The conclusion is that the access to illegitimate roles (like the access to legitimate roles) is bounded by social factors and reinforced by psychological ones.

This results in a specific relationship between social learning structures and a delinquent career. First, the individual must have access to environments favourable to the assimilation of these values and skills. This access must be in line with the fulfillment of a particular role, which must be sustained after it has been learned. This support takes a long time and the individual ends up being a good offender: able to respond to all demands.

But it is the community that provides the offender with materials and habits, precisely because delinquent behaviour is learned and reinforced through interaction with other people: attitudes, example, motivation, incentives, contacts, communication.

These favourable conditions for the fulfilment of a delinquent role as well as those favourable conditions for the learning of such a role can be called with a single syntagm, that of illegitimate opportunity or the differentiated opportunity, which is also found in the theory of anomie, but on a different level of universality. The idea is that there is also a differentiated access to the learning of delinquent behaviour placed at the level of social structure, adaptive differentiation, group-specific adaptation. In other words, not everyone can become a genuine and successful offender. This relativity of the learning of delinquent behaviour is particularly useful for differentiated diagnosis and the development of a staged strategy.

There are 3 major types of delinquent sub-culture, especially among adolescents in urban areas.

The first type is mainly based on delinquent type values; the principle of organisation and operation refers to obtaining material gains (which can sometimes be means of subsistence) by using illegal means: theft, fraud, extortion, etc. This type can be called the delinquent model.

The second type is based on violence: members of this group use force or the threat of force; it can be called the conflict type or model.

The third type refers in particular to drug-addicted subcultures, whose members abuse various harmful substances (narcotics, alcohol, tobacco, etc.) to the point of total dependence. They have alienated themselves from conventional roles and retreated into a world of their own, governed by the supreme value of sensation. It can be called the elusive or isolationist model.

These patterns often appear in combined forms, either in the period when the sub-culture pressures members for behavioural consistency (especially in the early period, when

social roles are not yet abandoned in favour of delinquent roles), or in forms of polymorphous delinquency.

4. The Social Control Theory

In its most widely used form it was developed by Travis Hirschi (Hirschi, 1969) and has at its core a totality of knowledge we possess about the personal and demographic characteristics of the offender; the profile of the typical offender is as follows: young male, raised without a father, in an urban slum, with difficulties in school history, currently unemployed.

From this definition of the typical delinquent, we can make some assumptions. First, some of the social actors behave differently from the others, the conventional ones, and the question that arises is why this happens. Second, their activity is perceived negatively by others as contrary to social desirability and expectation. Hence the risk of punishment that offenders take on themselves. Another assumption is that they are reluctant to accept a change in their convictions and behaviour in order to comply with the law. Finally, the assumption that delinquent acts are of a lasting nature (and therefore imply a career of this type, with specific mobility) also stems from the information that they are unemployed.

The question that arises from the perspective of this theory concerns the presence or absence of that element in social life that determines a certain behaviour. How much control is lacking in the offender's living conditions and how much is present in non-offending environments to suppress other social actors.

Thus, the problem that this theory seeks to make explicit concerns the determination of what it is that makes conventional people normal, and not delinquent - so that by finding a lack, the etiology of delinquency can be inferred. And four forms of control are listed which operate in conventional society and which are restrictive in teaching undesirable behaviour. These are attachment, moral obligation, involvement and conviction/belief.

The attachment refers to the social actor's emotional connection to others and involves a relationship of mutual appreciation. Attachment is constructed in terms of symbolic figures (people with high social significance, role models) and reference groups (highly attractive groups). For the childhood stage, these elements are set at the level of the family group, so that a projective variable for predicting delinquent behaviour concerns attachment deficiencies between children and parents.

The first form of control manifests itself at the family level - and often sanctions external to the family are threats of sanctions at the level of family control. Consequently, if the family is flawed/disorganised (lacking affection, attachment, interest), then the risk of failure in the child's socialisation will certainly increase.

The commitment concerns the degree to which the actor invests time and energy in building a legal social career. If the investment is considerable and is matched by appropriate rewards, then the risk of diverting it into delinquent activity is excluded - as the losses would outweigh the benefits. But the reverse is also true: the more attractive the stakes, the lower the effort. the more likely it will be to commit crime. So it is the unemployed, the cheater, the poor - those whose social stakes are low and who do not stand to lose much.

The involvement is a consequence of the mode of engagement and expresses the degree of social engagement. One thesis states that engagement in legal activities reduces exposure to committing illegal activities while engagement in illegal activities increases the risk of penalties.

The conviction refers to the acceptance of social rules and prohibitions that order human behaviour. It is a result of accepted moral values at a given time. The more constraints imposed by moral belief/conviction are absent, the easier it is to detach and transgress conventional norms. However, an individual's belief system cannot be said to be the direct

cause; rather, offenders act in accordance with an impulse and then justify their act by statements that reflect a lifestyle rather than a normative system.

The control theory emphasises, like the theory of differential association, that delinquents reinforce their belief system in the company of like-minded individuals (see the role of the prison in the case of a 'first-time' offender), but does not recognise the existence of a specific ethic reflected in restrictive rules of conduct. It is rather, that the offender's weak ties to society are shown, than the special kind of relationship between them.

The immediate usefulness of the theory is that it provides a guide to working with such subjects; when the offender's level of attachment, involvement or conviction is low and therefore unusable, action can be taken at community level to accept him into a lifestyle close to the conventional one. However, we should not be under any illusions about the level of acceptance of the 'moral communities'.

In conclusion, the theories mentioned above do not attempt to explain the behaviour of that small percentage of delinquents/criminals who show a profound contempt for conventional values or even exhibit asocial behaviour; they are mostly psychopaths and treatment in this case must be done in special clinics. But for others, who have come to this difficulty because of special external conditions, the theories offer some useful guidance in understanding this type of behaviour and the conditions that have led to it.

II. Typology of delinquent behaviour

In a simple definition, it can be said that delinquency is the particular form of deviance, of the greatest social danger because it attacks the most important social values and flagrantly violates the legal rules that guide social behaviour (Banciu; Rădulescu, 1985)

Therefore, delinquency becomes identifiable with a stable class of human behaviour - given that changes in legal texts occur at relatively long intervals; consequently, its variability can be easily controlled.

The high mobility of today's social field supports horizontal and vertical amplification, together with the diversification of types of delinquent behaviour, including the emergence of non-traditional forms.

The appropriate relationship between these two fields is, from a logical perspective, a gender-to-species one, delinquency being only one of the manifestations of deviant behaviour.

The first applicable principle, the social visibility of these behaviours, divides the field into two main types: hidden delinquency and sanctioned delinquency. The first type includes those categories of acts which the social group either ignores - for distinct reasons - or effectively cannot punish because they remain secret (at the level of the act or the actor).

Actions generally tolerated by the social group are part of what is called "social indiscipline" and are considered as minor in the economy of social space; sometimes even the police intentionally tolerate visible behaviour in order to control the dynamics of severity by category of actors. At other times 'judicial tolerance' manifests itself as an effect of the inability to prove/predict legality.

It can be said that this type of delinquency, by its quasi-generality (as a statistical normality), is an epiphenomenon inherent to the socialisation process since, in most cases, it is part of the period of social learning which is inevitably marked by trial and error.

The second type, sanctioned delinquency, is a result of judicial - or administrative - judgement on behaviour considered unacceptable at the time. Included here are those acts spotted by the professionals of direct social control institutions; characteristic of these acts is that they violate various laws and special regulations in force and thus justify prompt and explicit intervention. From a statistical point of view, they are always more limited than the first type because they represent acts filtered through selective intervention by the social regulation system. From the perspective of the particular forms of intervention, sanctioned

delinquency manifests itself in a more consistent, significant and intrinsically homogeneous way.

Applying another classification principle, one of the nature of the acts themselves, we obtain two operational categories, particularly for the social worker: (relatively) mild or statutory delinquency and serious delinquency (or "criminality", in the sense used in the Anglo-Saxon literature). It is diffuse and often manifests itself randomly; in the second case, it refers to those violations of social prohibitions which, by their illicit nature, turn into crimes; they are unanimously blamed and rejected by conventional society. The social reaction in this case is harsh and stable over time; society mobilises material and human resources against such acts.

According to a third principle, which considers the action of social definition and reaction, institutions specifically empowered to detect and punish delinquency are listed. Each of the three types of institution (police, courts, prisons) defines a type of offender:

- a) delinquency sanctioned by the police;
- b) delinquency sanctioned by the court;
- c) delinquency sanctioned by detention or imprisonment.

In conclusion, based on the observations made so far, the definition of delinquency refers to: those minor acts involving conduct derogating from official normative prescriptions which can be incriminated by its illegal character, validated in part by arrest, this in view of comparing the actor with a judicial decision, followed by the possibility of imprisonment for cases of high social dangerousness.

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ILLICIT ACTIVITIES OF MARITIME PIRACY AND TERRORISM: THE COAST OF CAMEROON: BETWEEN THREAT, FIGHT AND OBSOLETE OF INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS

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Abstract: *Piracy and maritime terrorism: the coast of Cameroon between threats, fight and obsolescence of international conventions. The influence of piracy and maritime terrorism on the stability of States, regional balances, the commercial and financial implications make of these illicit activities a permanent concern and always worthy of great interest for research. Located in the heart of the Gulf of Guinea, the Cameroonian coast combines large reserves in natural resources and a large population diverse in the port cities. These assets are proof of the intensity of the commercial activities fortified by the presence of the sea which covers 71% of the Earth's surface and remains for a space free of any illicit same initiative. Also, since the 1980s, appearing certainly contradictory, piracy and maritime terrorism are a well-known reality and a threat in the territorial waters in the coastal towns of Cameroon. At the base of these acts of violence, beyond a set of political and socio-economic motivations exogenous, the porosity of the maritime borders, the mediocrity of the regional order, the weakness of the strategy of the State to control its space appear to the rank of the fundamental disadvantages of securing of the Cameroonian coast. Aware of the amplification of these attacks that remain over the years a threat to sovereignty of States and the risks of their neglect, Cameroon undertakes permanently maritime affirmative actions by the establishment of security mechanisms. However, they remain generally unproductive without an international legal framework of conventions available today and not updated that illustrate the opportunity that reveals the absence of rule of law for Cameroon to fight effectively against piracy and maritime terrorism still mentioned at the top of Yaoundé from June 2013.*

Keywords: Piracy, Terrorism, Threats, International conventions, Security

This scientific contribution takes a look at the maritime aggressiveness suffered by the Cameroonian coast since the 1980s. Certain international conventions obviously remains a real handicap. Very few researchers have so far focused on this reading of things. Indeed, since the ancient period, the perception of the sea has remained not only as a *res communis*, "common thing", but also, as a *res nullius* "which does not belong to anyone". This status, to which is added its natural immensity, has always made it an environment free from all activity, as well as one conducive to various forms of aggression. This is the case of piracy and maritime terrorism, which seem contradictory and which are not immune to coastal States such as Cameroon. Enjoying its sovereignty since January 1, 1960, the country has been the victim of permanent or rebounding threats since the 1980s from the two illicit phenomena that are at the crossroads of transnational maritime criminal activities. However, beyond the similarity of maritime operating methods, any illustration of which reveals a great "mastery of the sea" and the transcendence of the border limits of Cameroonian territory, if piracy would be limited to the satisfaction of socio-economic needs, terrorism would be altruistic and generally intended for the pursuit of objectives among others, political, religious or ideological. However, standardized by their illegality and their criminality, the acts of piracy and maritime terrorism of which Cameroon is a victim and which the country is trying to deal with in its territorial waters and even up to the level of coastal cities such as Douala and Limbé are nevertheless universally condemned by numerous international conventions. The case of

the obsolescence of certain aspects of which is beyond doubt, if States want to fight effectively against this specific maritime violence. Is it possible for the State of Cameroon to effectively address the threats of piracy and maritime terrorism on its coast in the face of the lapse of certain international conventions?

The search for an answer to this question imposes a triple attitude: first, it is a question of highlighting the origins of these criminal acts, then of presenting the reality of this threat on the coast of Cameroon and the palliative actions of the State, finally dwell on the obsolescence of certain international conventions for an effective fight against these illicit acts. To achieve this, this reflection is based on the adoption of a methodology that does not depart from fundamental data collection techniques. It was a question of exploiting many sources, in particular general works and scientific publications, dissertations, theses for a better capitalization of the information used which was subjected to criticism.

1. The genesis of very old and “contemporary” phenomena

Today, although they are perceived as contemporary phenomena, piracy and terrorism by their disturbing resurgence remain realities whose origins are not always very well known.

1.1. Maritime piracy

Etymologically, the word pirate has a Hellenic and Latin origin. In Greek, the term comes from *πειρατής* (*peiratês*), a derivative of the verb *πειράω* (*peiraô*) whose meaning is “to strive for”, “to try to”, “to try one's luck at adventure”. In Latin, it comes from *pirata*: the one who tempts fortune, “who is enterprising”. Piracy is an unlawful act of violence, detention or depredation committed by a private vessel acting for private purposes directed against a vessel, persons or property on the high seas or in a maritime area beyond the jurisdiction of that State. no state. Since the ancient period, it exists and is known to historians. In the 3rd century BC, the first writings reporting acts of piracy appeared. In his book: *Naturalis Historia*, Pliny the Elder notes that “archers must take place on board commercial ships sailing off the Tamil country”. This implies that the sea south of India was at that time infested with pirates (Kane and Francis, 2005: 38-39).

In the Middle Ages, the meaning of the word “piracy” had a restriction and its name referred to acts of banditry and rhymes surveying the maritime space to rob merchant ships. Piracy was therefore a great threat in the Mediterranean Sea after the fall of the Roman Empire during the High Middle Ages. Similarly, after the decline of the Muslim kingdoms driven out of Spain, the first of which were the Moors, the race of the Barbary corsairs-mujahideen who lived on piracy began, as the maritime jihad receded behind the simple lure of profit. Also, all the ancient civilizations that appropriated a navy experienced the phenomenon of piracy. The case of the Phoenicians and the Mycenaeans (Kane and Francis, 2005: 40-42), because a consideration of the sea gave them advantages in a free space where the “law of the strongest” reigns.

Piracy is also known to jurists like Cicero who thought of pirates as *communis hostis omnium* or enemies common to all. He provided an explanation in his treatise *De officiis* that as an “enemy of all” (*communis hostis omnium*), the pirate should not be considered a legitimate enemy towards whom one is bound to respect certain duties; thus, according to the Roman philosopher, the obligation to keep one's word and honor one's oaths did not apply when dealing with pirates (Heller, 2010:13-22). This perception of their identification came back to them because of their detachment from legal categorization). Moreover, in the field of international law, piracy is generally considered to be the oldest example of the use of the principle of universal jurisdiction. Looting ships on the high seas, blocking trade routes or endangering maritime communications was considered by sovereign states to be *hosti humanis generis* (crimes against humanity). Since piracy, by definition, is practiced outside

national jurisdictions (Heller-Roazen, 2010: 13-22). Prosecutions by sovereign states against pirates therefore constitute an exceptional legal situation.

Until 2011, the IMB (International Maritime Bureau) compiled a directory of 406 incidents, 153 ships attacked, 49 hijacked and 120 were shot at. Nearly 1,052 crew members were taken hostage; there are 68 wounded and 8 killed. The North East zone of Africa alone totals 217 incidents. We also note the attacks that have taken place so far in the Gulf of Aden, in the Indian Ocean and up to 1000 nautical miles from the coast of Somalia. Between 2001 and 2011, the IMB uncovered numerous compliant attacks worldwide, namely: 254 (in 2001), 341 (in 2002), 445 (in 2003), 329 (in 2004), 276 (in 2005), 239 (in 2006), 263 (in 2007), 293 (in 2008), 406 (in 2009), 445 (in 2010), and 439 (in 2011) revealing both an increase and sometimes a decrease in these crimes (see graph below). Among these, several countries in the Gulf of Guinea (Nigeria, Cameroon, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and Angola) revealed a significant increase in attacks initiated by pirates or rebel movements against oil tankers and offshore platforms, often preceding a hostage-taking of their personnel. The Niger Delta has been the scene of regular violence perpetrated by armed groups which, since 2006, have increased the kidnappings of oil sector employees, attacks on oil installations and various sabotages. The vast majority of incidents have been observed in the territorial waters of Nigeria and the same actions tend to take place on the high seas. In September 2008, around fifty heavily armed "sea gangsters" landed in Limbé, a Cameroonian town with their fast boats. They stormed six downtown banks. This attack was the cause of a death during the robbery, then the pirates took off again. This "amphibious attack" probably served as a test of Cameroonian coastal security.

1.2. The maritime terrorist

Etymologically, the concept of terrorism comes from the Latin *Terror* which means "terror" and *Oris* which means "dread, dread". However, the recognition of a definition of terrorism in general or of a convention relating to maritime terrorism in particular still remains a real problem for specialists (Roche, 2000: 8). Beyond this difficulty, there is no doubt that acts of terrorism in their diversity are committed for generally political or public ends. For J. L. Marret, it is a "substitute for the guerrillas, a means of expression for the weak, an alternative use of state diplomacy, it still designates those who are seen by others as resistance fighters, 'terrorists' as "fascist [...]" (Marret, 2000: 98-100). The Universal Dictionary, for its part, defines it as a: "systematic use of violence (attacks, destruction, hostage-taking, etc.) to which certain political organizations to promote their designs in order to impress the population and create a climate of insecurity" (Le Dictionnaire universelle, 2002:1191). The terrorist himself being perceived as a supporter or an agent of a regime of terror or a revolutionary activist. In truth, terrorism was born in the modern era of our era. The author J. Michelet seems to situate it within the church. He also affirmed: "Our terrorists of the fifteenth and of the sixteenth century were monks. Monastic prisons were always the most cruel" (Michelet, 1845:17). In his work, there clearly emerges a close link between cruelty and terrorism whether on land, in the air or at sea.

Specifically, maritime terrorism is a reality of the 21st century. For many authors like Roche, it is a derivative of piracy adapted to the modern world. This is for example in the case of the taking of hostages on board. Roche traces the origin of the expression back to the French Revolution (Roche, 2000: 54). Indeed, the prior exercise of maritime terrorism is directed towards merchant ships because they arouse great covetousness due to the permanent transhipment of dangerous substances very often linked to biological or chemical weapons. Moreover, maritime terrorism generally attacks ports, port, tourist or industrial buildings, warships, banks and even populations. Still little known on the European continent, this form of gangsterism remains widespread in Southeast Asia. However, it is a reality in the

Gulf of Guinea. The reasons are those of an abusive exploitation of oil in the Niger Delta to the detriment of local populations far from all enjoyment of the economic benefits, but are victims of the environmental consequences. This situation is at the origin of certain armed movements such as the MEND (Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta) whose objective has remained to blow up oil pipelines or pipelines. In terms of the economy, the group's actions have had a real influence if it is estimated that Nigeria's oil production, concentrated in the Niger River delta, currently stands at around 1.8 million barrels per day against 2.6 at the start of 2006, instead of rising to 4 million barrels per day according to its estimates in 2016 (Eudeline, 2018).

2. The Cameroonian coast: an environment threatened by maritime piracy and terrorism

Organized from the sea by the option of conventional or unconventional attacks, piracy and maritime terrorism are characterized by actions carried out everywhere against coastal populations, ships, their passengers and their crew. Cameroon, thanks to a geographical position on the coast in the Gulf of Guinea, is not immune to this type of attack. Events attest to the reality of these threats.

2.1. Acts with multiple causes

While the causes of acts of maritime piracy and terrorism are characterized by their diversity and variety, they are nevertheless based on several factors. In the analysis of contemporary acts, of which the BMI is constantly making an inventory, acts of maritime piracy and terrorism are generally based on political and socio-economic factors that many appetites normalize. It is difficult today to dissociate piracy, maritime terrorism and political instability (Frecon, 2002: 21-22). In truth, political instability and the theatricalization of violence as a direct consequence experienced by some countries in the sub-region are at the origin of many known acts of piracy and maritime terrorism in Cameroon (Frecon, 2002:56) . Author E. Ngodi also notes: "The Niger Delta is the scene of regular violence perpetrated by armed groups which, since 2006, have multiplied the kidnappings of oil sector employees, attacks on oil installations and various sabotages" (Ngodi, 2010: 34). Thus perceived, the violence experienced by neighboring countries such as Nigeria and CAR, in a situation of political instability, has repercussions in Cameroonian territorial waters. The news of these two countries respectively reveals the religious war with the Islamist movement Boko Aran and the fratricidal war between various factions and armed militias. This situation, if it causes real anarchy, it also favors piracy (Bateman & Joshua., 2008: 43-44) on the coast of Cameroon. This is illustrated by the porosity of its maritime borders, the weakness of security measures (weak border surveillance, corruption, impunity, lack of rigor in the application of texts): the country's inability to be able to manage the security of its territorial waters due to a lack of maritime and land surveillance equipment and difficult internal collaboration in the surveillance of coasts and maritime areas. With appropriate bodies such as the French Navy and the BIR Delta, coastal surveillance prerogatives remain in the hands of the army.

If the acts of maritime piracy and terrorism of which the coast of Cameroon is a victim stem from reasons linked to a process of collapse of certain neighboring States resulting from the destructuring of the social fabric without neglecting the criminalization and predation of politics, it remains difficult to ignore the particular case of poverty. Basically, it is a poignant argument to justify such criminal acts in the Cameroonian maritime space (Burnett, 2003:117). With a considerable increase in unemployment and poverty in many States of the Gulf of Guinea, piracy is an opportunity for hope or one of the ways out of poverty and to campaign for illicit enrichment. What made a Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations on African soil say: Poverty, the lack of employment, the difficult

environment, the pitifully low level of income, the reduction of maritime resources due to the drought and illegal fishing and the unstable political security situation all contribute to the rise and continuation of piracy (Ahmedou Ould Abdallah, 2008:15).

Moreover, if the aim of maritime terrorism remains political, that of piracy is the search for profit. Hostage-taking of individuals and assaults on ships orchestrate killings and are generally linked to the quest for profit by pirates. Moreover, among many motivations that develop modern piracy and that can be noted, beyond the crews of cargo ships which are few and unarmed (about twenty men on a 150-meter ship), there is also the disturbing reality of merchant ships whose movement at low speeds (between 20 and 40 kilometers per hour) and difficult maneuvering, for lack of a large tonnage. Then, in the register of this rosary, there are also large sums of cash which are most often found in ships. Indeed, mostly from developing countries in Asia and Africa, the crews who sometimes embark for a long period, on average 6 to 9 months, receive most of their salary in cash on board. Therefore, pirates having little interest in the goods transported, their attraction is rather based on the personal belongings of the crew and on the safes which have the pay of the personnel and the port taxes. Also, in his testimony before the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, the Subcommittee on Shipping and Coast Guard, of the United States Congress, on February 4, 2009, Peter Chalk, a policy analyst with the Rand Corporation, a non-profit organization whose purpose is to help improve decision-making through objective research and analysis, believed that "piracy is first and foremost an economic phenomenon, with the main objective for its authors, the making of a profit" (Chalk, 2009: 66). Therefore, it therefore appears as a for-profit activity whose objective remains a great support to criminal organizations for a guarantee of financial support. Such a dynamic is thus favorable to the growth of the said organizations which, from now on, can acquire weapons, logistical means and constitute a financial power with high corruption capacities either for the purchase of any protection or even a commitment of the leaders in The political life.

Furthermore, the aim of piracy and maritime terrorism is to support the media. In truth, the primary aims of pirates and terrorists at sea in their different modus operandi are very often attacks at dockside or at anchor and theft of the crew's personal effects and attacks at sea with the aim of hijacking the ship. With the aim of turning it into a "ghost ship" or with the aim of obtaining a ransom. However, they are generally devoid of the will of a simple slaughter or killing of individuals. It is most often question for these criminals to obtain also by the scandal a vast media campaign. It is ensured by audio-visual information organs thanks to immense publicity. Because piracy and maritime terrorism, for their survival, need media support. However, it should be noted that the publicity that the media gives to these criminal acts is not only a source of stimulation and propagation of such practices, but also has the objective of revealing the vulnerability of the victim State.

2.2. Indisputable realities on a coast with porous borders

Maritime piracy in ancient times was any act of crime or pillage perpetrated against a trading vessel on the high seas to seize its cargo. Today, it is any criminal act, theft, pillage or burglary knowingly perpetrated against a ship, its crew or its cargo, or any similar act carried out against an offshore installation or its personnel, or against an onshore resource since sea or by sea. We can go further by adding acts of poaching in the marine environment that destroy species that are becoming scarce and therefore protected; fishing in prohibited areas using prohibited practices are nothing but acts of piracy.

Indeed, until 1980, piracy and maritime terrorism were almost unknown on the coast of Cameroon. It is then towards the second half of these painful years of the country by the economic crisis that particularly trigger acts of piracy off the peninsula of Bakassi. Gradually, these acts experienced a considerable evolution between 1990 and 2008 with characteristics

that emerge from an analysis by geostrategist Ntuda Ebodé: Burglaries on drilling platforms; dynamite fishing in oil exploitation areas riddled with submarine high voltage electric cables and submarine pipes carrying gases and liquids (including oil) under high pressure; small-scale and industrial fishing practiced by local canoeists and trawlers with little concern for compliance with the ban on any other activity in perfectly demarcated areas strictly reserved for oil activities; thefts on commercial ships at anchor in the waiting area and at the port of Douala and attacks on trawlers at night during which the crews are relieved of their personal belongings and sums of money and boxes of fish are recovered (Ntuda Ebode, 2010:43.). It should be noted that these acts of violence unveiled a certain truce as early as January 1994, following the start of the dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria relating to the claim of the two parties to the Bakassi peninsula as the property of each. Because the armed forces of the two countries now controlled the area until June 2006, the date marking the signing of the Green Tree Accords. The said agreements make Cameroon the owner of the Bakassi area. In this tense situation, we did not enumerate, worryingly, acts of piracy and maritime terrorism. They were then very few counted. However, about a year after the Green Tree agreements, the Bakassi Peninsula having already been returned to the State of Cameroon in accordance with the decision of the International Court of Justice, the coast of the country has known since the end of 2007 to our days, more than fifty attacks classified as serious with terrorist appearances. On September 28, 2008 nearly fifty heavily armed "sea gangsters" landed in Limbe with their fast boats. They stormed six downtown banks and killed one during their robberies, then set sail again. A few days later, having noticed a complete lack of action or reaction during their test on Cameroonian coastal security, the maritime criminals repeated their exploit. More specifically, on October 31, 2008, pirates whose identification later came to light as terrorists departing from Nigeria struck their blow by attacking a Supply boat (SS SAGITTA) maneuvering to secure a loading tanker, as well as this tank and took 10 hostages including 7 French; 2 Cameroonians and 1 Tunisian. Two attacks on Cameroonian army posts in Bakassi were also attributed to these terrorists, on November 12, 2007 and June 9, 2008, during which several soldiers of the Cameroonian army were assassinated, a sub-prefect and equipment carried away.

Undoubtedly, the objective of these attacks is the disruption of interregional trade flows by creating a manifest state of coastal insecurity in Cameroonian territory and the latent installation of economic uncertainty and destabilization populations in order to achieve political objectives. This is what the author Eudeline called: "strategic terrorism" (EUDELIN, 2018: 143 -151.) which is closely linked to the maritime strategic theories of Julian S. Corbett. Indeed, if for Corbett, the priority method by which victory or preponderance at sea to influence the enemy population in order to impose peace is the capture or destruction of enemy property, private or public; for Admiral Aube at the same time, the opposing population and economy are perceived as centers of gravity with a recommendation of war against trade (EUDELIN, 2018: 143-151.). Hence the attacks on banks in Limbe and hostage-taking on the Cameroon coast.

Faced with security and economic threats on the Cameroonian coast due to irreversible acts of piracy and maritime terrorism, a certain awareness of the State of Cameroon has favored some actions. Beyond the surveillance of the coast, the objective is to thwart in time and space maritime crime internally and externally. In the internal or national context, in fact, from the beginning of these phenomena during the 1980s, Cameroon mobilized itself by the creation of the "Dynamite" operation that the National Navy carried out. The aim was to deal with burglaries and illegal fishing with dynamite in the oil fields. This operation ended in 1994 and its replacement was accompanied by the establishment of Operation Galilee. However, in order to respond effectively to the resurgence of maritime gangsterism in its territorial waters and even in the coastal towns, according to the popular adage "for great evils, great remedies",

Operation Galileo was combined with the creation and deployment in Bakassi of a formidable body of the Cameroonian army: the BIR Delta (NTUDA EBODE, 2010:43). Moreover, within the framework of the pursuit of the maritime initiatives of the State at sea, the Cameroonian authorities have put set up legislation with the decrees of November 2007 on State Action at Sea, that of June 2008 on the creation of a national maritime safety committee and the last, in November 2009, relating to pollution at sea. Finally, in a context where the acts of Boko Haram cause many tragedies including the death of thousands of Cameroonian civilians and soldiers in the Far North of Cameroon, the Parliament of Cameroon adopted during its November 2014 session, Law No. 2014/028 of 23 December 2014 on the suppression of acts of terrorism. It was deliberated and adopted by Parliament and promulgated by the President of the Republic. This law is therefore part of the implementation, at the internal level, of the measures recommended at the international level in the fight against terrorism. More clearly, for example, the UN instruments (Resolution 2178 of 24 September 2014 of the United Nations Security Council) and African instruments (OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism or its Protocol) recommend strong actions to against the perpetrators of acts of terrorism.

In the external or sub-regional framework, Cameroon has rallied several sub-regional organizations for synergistic actions in the fight against maritime piracy and terrorism. This is the case of the Regional Center for Maritime Security of Central Africa (CRESMAC) with civil and military prerogatives attached to the Secretariat of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). Its main axes remain:

- Community Information Management by setting up mechanisms for research and exchange of information between States;
- Community Surveillance by setting up joint operational procedures and interoperable means of surveillance and intervention;
- Harmonization of the Action of the States at Sea at the legal and institutional level;
- the Institutionalization of a Community Tax on the basis of existing mechanisms;
- the Acquisition and Maintenance of major Equipment dedicated to the Strategy to guarantee a minimum operational capacity for each State concerned
- and the Institutionalization of a Maritime Conference in order to maintain the mobilization of all operators in the marine environment (Ntuda Ebode, 2010:43.).

In the same vein, beyond numerous other actions within the framework of the maritime security of its territorial waters, to promote regional maritime cooperation and the establishment of a stable maritime environment likely to contribute to peace, order and the maintenance of prosperity in Africa, Yaoundé organized the Summit of Heads of States of the Gulf of Guinea from June 24 to 25, 2013. A summit which remained in accordance with Article 100 of the Montego Bay Convention of 1982 This releases an obligation of cooperation for the repression of piracy. A Code of Conduct on a transitional basis in this context for West Africa and Central Africa has been signed by many States

Thus, all the States of the Gulf of Guinea cooperate as far as possible for the repression of piracy and terrorism on the high seas or in any other place not under the jurisdiction of any State. At the end of the meeting, he created an Inter-regional Center for the Coordination of Operations against Maritime Insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea (Cameroon Tribune, 2013).

3. The obsolete international conventions: a thorny controversy against piracy and maritime terrorism

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1918, adopted unanimously in April 2010, on the proposal of Russia, called on all States "(to) criminalize piracy in their domestic law, (to) consider favorably the prosecution of persons suspected of piracy who have been

apprehended off their coasts and imprison (them)" (United Nations, 1918). This measure, already requested by other resolutions, including that of 1846 and that of 2008, while it made each State responsible for maritime insecurity, it also had the objective of raising the problem of the obsolescence of certain international conventions on the sea. , the case of the Conventions on the law of the sea of 1982 and that of Rome of March 10, 1988 which were undoubtedly ratified by the State of Cameroon in the face of the acts of maritime crime of which it is generally a victim. However, beyond the two mentioned above, there are a multitude of conventions relating to the sea. These include, among others: the International Convention on Load Lines of 1996; the 1974 International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea; the 1973 International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships; the 1972 Convention on International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea entered into force on 7 January 1993, the 1978 International Convention on Standards of Training for Seafarers, the issuance of certificates and watchkeeping as revised in 1995 ; the Convention concerning minimum standards to be observed in merchant ships of 1976; the 1992 International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage, the 1989 Convention on Salvage ratified by a law of August 28, 2003 (NTUDA EBODE, 2010: 43).

3.1. The Montego Bay Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982

In international law, the expression international convention most often describes formal declarations of principles which do not initially have binding force. Conventions must generally be ratified by States to obtain binding force and thus become genuine international treaties. Indeed, maritime crime and insecurity have always preoccupied States. In this context, the UN through a convention on the law of the sea, also called the Montego Bay Convention, opted for a definition of piracy in its article 101. This defines piracy as:

(a) any unlawful act of violence or detention or any depredation committed by the crew or passengers of a private ship or aircraft, acting for private purposes, and directed:

- against another ship or aircraft, or against persons or property on board, on the high seas;
State; - against a ship or aircraft, persons or property, in a place outside the jurisdiction of any

b) any act of voluntary participation in the use of a ship or an aircraft, when its author has knowledge of facts from which it follows that this ship or aircraft is a pirate ship or aircraft;

c) any act intended to incite the commission of the acts defined in letters a) or b), or committed with the intention of facilitating them" (United Nations Convention, 2013.).

There is no doubt that through this convention, the United Nations has revealed a real desire to concern itself with the phenomenon of violence at sea by identifying some maritime criminogenic acts such as those of piracy. However, from this definition, there emerges a current limitation of the international law of the sea in the qualification of piracy and even maritime terrorism and for an effective fight. Going further, the drafting of Article 101 of the Montego Bay Convention was done without a forecast of current forms of piracy and maritime terrorism, almost non-existent until one time, was not a concern for the international community. Thus, legally, there appears a disqualification in the field of any unlawful act of violence or detention or similar committed in the territorial waters of a country. Each time it has been the victim of this form of crime, Cameroon has remained in difficulty within the framework of the applicability of international law for the response and the pursuit of pirate ships beyond the high seas. In this case, even if there is an openness in principle for any warship to intervene against any act of aggression on the high seas, more particularly when it comes to piracy, such an intervention is no longer possible in the territorial waters of a third State. The Rapid Intervention Battalion (BIR) Delta remains in difficulty and can only pursue a

pirate ship which takes refuge in the Cameroonian territorial sea (NTUDA EBODE, 2010: 43). Then, there is theoretically cessation of all pursuit when the pirate ship enters the territorial waters of any other State. Mastering these universal legal principles, we therefore understand why it is rare on the Cameroonian coast that pirates or terrorists emerge defeated, capture and punishment being the exception.

3.2. The Rome Convention of March 10, 1988

It is a convention relating to the repression of unlawful acts which threaten safety and maritime navigation. In truth, the Rome Convention has its origins after the attack on the ship named: Achille Lauro. Following this, the United Nations and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) adopted the Rome Convention of March 10, 1988. Its main objective was to grant States the right to prosecute perpetrators of acts of violence maritime, in particular terrorist acts at sea and piracy in the territorial waters of a State. On reading this international convention, a favorable assessment of its provisions can be made. First, it provides an advantage by requiring state parties to assert jurisdiction over unlawful acts of maritime crime. Moreover, its codification of the obligation *aut dedere aut judicare* which predisposes the State party in whose territorial space the alleged perpetrator of an offense against the convention is not found to extradite him to one of the State parties having jurisdiction, if it does not submit the case to its courts (Sauriol, 2018: 23-24). However, beyond the merits of this convention relative to its extensiveness on prohibited maritime acts, there is nevertheless something to say about some fundamental legal shortcomings related to its obsolescence. The absence of punitive mechanisms and preventive measures, its refusal to grant States Parties the power to inspect and immobilize pirate or terrorist vessels and its inapplicability to all States Parties are all flaws.

Previously on the subject of the absence of punitive mechanisms, it is revealed from the Rome Convention that it did not envisage provisions for the repression of pirates or maritime terrorists. However, those who engage in this activity operate illegally and deserve reprisals, once trapped. In the event of an attack, it remains difficult to punish the perpetrators due to the impossibility of recourse by the victim States against a State party remedying the action. Likewise, "the fear of the police is (generally) the beginning of citizen wisdom", according to a popular adage valuing prevention for compliance with the laws of a republic. However, we do not detect in the Rome Convention a desire to effectively prevent unlawful acts of which States are victims. Judging by its article 13, it seems rather to give way to reactivity. Moreover, beyond the universality of jurisdiction over offences, the Rome Convention does not grant States Parties the power to inspect and immobilize pirate ships. A measure that seems to give free rein to the activities of piracy and maritime terrorism. Indeed, from the Rome Convention, it appears that even when apprehended or suspected in the midst of criminal activity in territorial waters, States Parties have no right to seize criminal vessels, even less the right to search them. Such a provision, if it makes the fight against maritime crime difficult, it is also a thorn in the prevention of such acts and the punishment of the perpetrators of the *flagrante delicto*.

Finally, the Rome Convention does not have a universal constraint for its application to all States. In other words, it is not applicable only to States Parties, for lack of its essence without customary consideration. In truth, in the general principles of law, it is customary to distinguish among its sources, those written (constitution, law, etc.) and those unwritten: custom and case law. However, if the custom is not written until it has been drafted, the case law does appear in the written documents (Arrests, judgments, etc.). It is true, however, that the principles or rules that may emerge from these sources are generally not written down as such. So they are neither legislated nor even formalized. Therefore, obviously, custom does not play an important role in international law, the case of the Rome Convention, even if it is

often discussed there. However, this does not prevent various practices from giving rise to uses with mandatory considerations, even if they are not elements of positive law (Teboul, 1986: 97).

At the end of our analysis, it is important to say that we wanted to take a look at the question of maritime aggressions suffered by the Cameroonian coast. However, the State of Cameroon has a real will and acquires the means, albeit limited, to thwart these criminal activities. Defense bodies such as the BIR Delta, the National Navy and the various security operations they carry out in its sovereign waters remain an example in Central Africa. However, the security of maritime coasts must also be a permanent international response to deal with maritime piracy and maritime terrorism. Admittedly, the limits of the aspects of certain international conventions such as those of Montego Bay of 1982 and Rome of 1988 are a real obstacle to the effective fight against these criminal acts. However, it is important today for Cameroon to strengthen the framework of the partnership between the States of the sub-region, the support of the structures responsible for maritime security and the harmonization of national policies in the fight against piracy and maritime terrorism while waiting for an adaptation of international law in the face of modern forms of maritime violence which today are different from traditional ones. Because the fight against maritime aggression on the Cameroon coast, within the framework of a rule of law and in accordance with outdated international law of the sea such as the Montego Bay Convention and that of Rome, must be superior to a military response. It must integrate all aspects of the control of the sea for a better security of the territorial waters and the coasts of the Cameroonian State.

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THE ECONOMIES OF CEMAC ZONE COUNTRIES IN THE FACE OF THE RESURGENCE OF THE COVID-19 EPIDEMIC: BETWEEN RESILIENCE, PROBLEM AND REVISION OF PRODUCTION AND TRADE POLICIES

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Abstract: *Based on electronic sources, reports from international organizations and official documents and mainly press and scientific articles, this article aims to present the effects of the global health crisis at Covid 19 on the system of production, distribution, consumption, and trade within the CEMAC zone located in the heart of Africa. It is an economic area made up of six nations (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Gabon, Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Chad) most of whose economies are dependent on the agricultural sector and cross-border trade. Thus, the resurgence of Covid 19 has led these States to take rapid drastic measures (willy-nilly) through the restriction of the movement of people, goods and goods, the closure of borders or quite simply that of internal markets. And sub-regional. The rigor of these measures will push the various Member States of this international organization to adopt a certain number of measures aimed at reviving the economy of this area on the endogenous and external level.*

Keywords: Economies, CEMAC, Covid-19, Production, Trade policies

The Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) is an international organization bringing together the countries of Central Africa, namely Gabon, CAR, Cameroon, Chad, the Republic of Congo and Equatorial Guinea (Kalieu Elongo, 2020: 13). It was instituted on March 16, 1994 in N'Djamena and came into force in June 1999 (Hassan, 2022: 23-30). Created to take over from the Economic Customs Union of Central Africa (UDEAC), CEMAC brings together a set of institutions allowing the harmonious management of the monetary aspect and strongly contributes to a dynamism of sub-regional integration. This community is created within the framework of a sub-regional integration which will lead to the creation of a continental integration from the point of view of the moderates of the creation of the African Union. Its headquarters are located in Bangui in the Central African Republic and has been chaired since March 24, 2019 by the President of Cameroon Paul Biya. The major objective of this community is to make the CEAMC an integrated, emerging economic space where security, solidarity and good governance reign (Nguema Edou, 2021). It is in a context of globalization that the economy of this sub-regional community is located within the large international economic group. However, this context is not exempt from issues of health insecurity. It is in this logic that the Corona Virus disease came to influence the Court of operation of International organizations in general and CEMAC in particular. The Corona Virus, baptized Covid-19 (referring to Coronavirus Disease 2019) is an infectious disease (zoonosis) caused by a virus from the Coronaviridea family, the origin of which is still debated. This disease emerged in December 2019 in the city of Wuhan in Hubei, China, more precisely in a seafood market, (WHO, 2021: 3-10).

Thus, the corona virus pandemic quickly spread first throughout China and then abroad by the return of certain emigrants to their country of origin, causing a global epidemic. This is how the world entered confinement and the member countries of CEMAC also in March 2020, thus undermining the economy of the sub-region. This therefore raises the problem of the deployment of the CEMAC zone in the dynamics of the fight against Covid-19. We ask

ourselves as follows: How have the countries of the CEMAC zone reacted to the rise of Covid 19 on the economic and financial level? Better, what has been the impact of this global pandemic on the current economy of the "Cemacien" countries? Answering this question leads us to first present the state of play of the economy of the "Cemacian" States before Covid-19; then its repercussions in the various member countries of the CEMAC and finally to make attempts to resolve the management of the harmful effects of this health crisis.

1. The economy of cemac zone states before Covid-19: state of play and global data

It is important to return briefly to the economic condition of CEMAC before the arrival of Covid-19. We have an interest in the economic situation, integration issues and projects planned for 2020.

1.1. The health of interstate economic exchanges

CEMAC is one of the politico-economic organizations insofar as it simultaneously pursues political (integration of peoples, harmonization of legislation, political cooperation, etc.) and economic (development of trade, political and monetary, etc.) objectives.

From its creation until today and especially before the COVID19 pandemic, the CEMAC, born of the will of the Member States to establish greater cooperation between them, pursued despite some border crises its objectives which essentially consisted in:

- Jointly develop all natural and human resources for the well-being of peoples in all areas;
- Give impetus to integration in Central Africa by harmonizing economic policies and legislation between Member States;
- Ensure the convergence of performance, economic policies by means of a multilateral surveillance mechanism;
- Transfer part of the sovereignty of the States to the community, particularly at the legislative and judicial level;
- Institute a community integration tax TCI levied on all extra-community imports (Bamou, 2108: 69-73).

Beyond these objectives that the Member States work to respect, CEMAC has specific areas of intervention, namely: working in synergy in the participation in the functioning, constitutional cooperation, and commercial cooperation (School manual, 2000: 179). In the practice of all these principles for better integration in the sub-region, we note that Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Congo, Gabon, Chad and Equatorial Guinea, having decided to work together, are struggling to apply the principles signed in the founding act, namely the Treaty of Ndjamena since 1994 (Hassan, 2022: 5). This is due to internal difficulties of the member countries of the sub-region which is characterized by several imbalances including leadership conflicts, the unequal level of development of the States, political instability, cross-border violence in Cameroon, Congo, Central African Republic, the rigidity of borders which prevents the free movement of people and goods and increasingly in the Gulf of Guinea, maritime piracy, particularly in Gabonese waters (Dibas-Franck, 2018).

This is how the free movement of men and goods, a vector for the development of CEMAC scheduled to take effect since 2014, is not yet operational, due to tensions and security crises with Cameroon, which is causing the temporary closure of land borders (Bamou, 2108: 10). In addition, the signing of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) between Cameroon and the European Union (EU) without taking into account the contrary opinion of its neighbors, calls into question the contract of the Cemacian countries. On the other hand, the accumulation of multi- and bilateral agreements weakens the organization's management, because a report by an economic expert state that intra-community trade is leveling off at

around 3%, making the area the least integrated of the five zones of the continent (www.afrique.latribune.fr, consulted on February 1, 2021). Regarding hydrocarbons, constituent elements of the economy of the CEMAC zone, has experienced a decline. Oil, which represents 60% of CEMAC exports, experienced a collapse in its prices which led to the reduction of oil revenues by half between 2014 and 2016 (Extraordinary Summit Report of CEMAC Heads of State, 2019: 17). The region's current account deficit thus widened significantly, from 3.9% of Gross Domestic Product in 2014 to 9.3% of GDP in 2016 (www.cemac.int, accessed May 8, 2019). Public debt has increased from 29% of GDP in 2014 to 47% of GDP in 2016 (Extraordinary Summit Report of CEMAC Heads of State, 2019:17).

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As for the growth rate of the sub-region, it was positive and competes with those of the different sub-regions of the continent. Over the period 2010-2015, it is 3.9% (Extraordinary Summit Report of CEMAC Heads of State: 17). But since 2015 until today a decline is happening. We thus recorded 1.4% in 2015 and -0.2% in 2016 (Extraordinary Summit Report of CEMAC Heads of State, 2019: 17-18). The deterioration of the security climate in the Lake Chad region and in the CAR, which comes on top of structural weaknesses, in particular the lack of diversification of the economies and a weak level of institutional governance, are at the origin of the poorer economic performance. which translate into a substantial reduction in economic growth in the region (Extraordinary Summit Report of CEMAC Heads of State, 2019: 21-22).

Ultimately, the economic health of CEMAC before the introduction of COVID presents several ills in the assessment of the diagnosis of its economic indicators, which would then fall under a problem of governance of CEMAC institutions which will be seen again hit hard with the arrival of the corona syndrome, a health crisis, which is severely testing the socio-economic fragility of countries.

1.2. CEMAC projects before COVID-19: from dream to ambition

CEMAC projects before the arrival of this pandemic were essentially centered in the economic framework, in order to further renew good neighborly relations and promote the economic development of each member country of this sub-region. Well before the coronavirus pandemic, the member countries of CEMAC had put two major projects on the launching pad: economic and financial reforms and the rationalization of the regional economic communities CEMAC-ECCAS (Economic Community of African States Centrale) (cf. www.cameroon-tribune.cm, consulted on January 4). So from these two large ensembles, here are the different projects that until November 2019 were in progress:

- The Institutional Reform Program (PRI): the Performances firm had been recruited with a view to reflecting on the mechanisms for financing the community (automatic deduction of the Community Integration Tax), rotation in the post of chief executive of the six major Community institutions (BEAC, BDEAC, Commission, Community Court of Justice, Community Court of Auditors and Community Parliament), the empowerment of community training schools, and the procedures for electing members of the Community Parliament (Extraordinary Summit Report of CEMAC Heads of State, 2019:10);

- The Economic and Financial Reform Program (PREF): It is based on five (05) pillars, namely: budgetary policy, monetary policy and financial system, structural reforms, regional integration and international cooperation (Extraordinary Summit Report of Heads of State CEMAC, 2019:11);

- Rationalization of Regional Economic Communities in Central Africa. Cameroon's current mandate could contribute to the creation of the new Community and to the choice of the seat of the said Institution (Extraordinary Summit Report of CEMAC Heads of State, 2019: 12). On the sidelines of these projects, we have the continual problem of the complete free circulation of goods and merchandise. However, some States are facing problems of insecurity which would affect the entire sub-region. Equipment to guarantee the free exchange and movement of people in complete safety was therefore being installed with the technical support of INTERPOL (International Police) and the outcome of this process gave the right to think that free full circulation of people and goods would be effective in 2020 (Extraordinary Summit Report of CEMAC Heads of State, 2019: 14-15).

In addition, the CEMAC Commission had initiated reflection on the free establishment of persons in the area. At the same time, the sensitization of authorities along the corridors and the reduction of checkpoints were suggested.

In order to set these major projects to music, the highest instructions from the CEMAC Heads of State meeting in December 2019 in Yaoundé, relating to the financing of the regional economic program (www.cemac.int, consulted on January 8, 2021), lead to set up 11 projects. These are grouped into four axes.

Axis n°1: facilitation of transport and exchanges

- Construction of a bridge over the Ntem River and facilitation of transport and road safety on the Kribi-Campo-Bata transnational road linking Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea;

- Construction of the Lolabé-Campo expressway (40 km) between Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea;

- Construction of sections ranging from 179 km of the Ndendé-Dolisie road to the Libreville-Brazzaville corridor;

-Construction of the Kogo-Akureman Road (230km) to link the South-East of Equatorial Guinea to Gabon;

-Corridor Brazzaville-Ouesso-Bangui-Ndjamena (Congo-Centrafrigue-Tchad) (www.cemac.int, consulted on January 8, 2021).

Axis n°2: production and interconnection of electrical and communications networks

- Hydroelectric development of Chollet and power lines (Cameroon-Congo-Gabon-Central Africa);

- Interconnection of Cameroon-Chad electrical networks;

- Interconnection of Cameroon with the CEMAC countries by optical fiber (www.cemac.int, consulted on January 8, 2021).

Axis n° 3: Common market and economic diversification

- Construction of the dry port of Beloko (Douala-Bangui corridor)

-Construction of the dry port of Dolisie (Gabon-Congo corridor) (www.cemac.int, consulted on January 8).

Axis n°4 Human capital

-Cameroon-Congo Inter-State University

These projects are carried out in synergy with the national development plans of the CEMAC countries to effectively meet the main challenges of sustainable development. Their achievement by 2025 should sustainably accelerate the physical and commercial integration of the sub-region (www.cemac.int, consulted on January 8, 2021).

Despite this vision that CEMAC is committed to putting in place, Covid-19 will disrupt everything, having harmful effects (www.cemac.int, consulted on January 8, 2021).

2. Repercussions of Covid-19 in Africa: the fragility of CEMAC economies formalized

Covid-19 entered the CEMAC zone in March 2020, due to trade and trade flows with China, the country of origin of this crown virus. Thus, its effects are visible on the political, economic and social levels.

2.1. Closure of borders and restriction of socio-cultural activities: painful economic measures

The detection of cases of diseases carrying the corona virus quickly led to the closure of the various borders of the CEMAC member states (air, land and sea). Indeed, the border represents one of the important elements in the constitution of a State. It can be defined as a visible or invisible boundary that separates two or more state entities. It is also above all a line of demarcation of the power and sovereignty of a State, constituting the sphere of influence of a State. And, in the context of sub-regional integration, this remains an obstacle. Thus, given the projects of the CEMAC zone for the year 2020, it can be seen that this measure has had a negative impact on the implementation of the sub-regional integration process (CEMAC annual report, 2022-2021).

This measure of border closure has been done in various ways by the States. We can identify partial air border closures. This was the case of Chad and Gabon, which suspended flights, authorized the landing of one international flight per week (KPMG Africa Network, 2020: 14-21). At this level, we understand that these States are aware of the danger of the pandemic, but are also concerned about the benefits that migratory flows bring to the development of their economy. All its restrictions have been accompanied by diplomatic and consular measures which want that if the borders are closed, the granting of visas and passports also be stopped. These are the recommendations that were prescribed in Equatorial Guinea to embassies and consulates in order to limit travel as much as possible and in parallel the spread of the virus (CEMAC annual report, 2022-2021).

On the socio-cultural level, the closing of borders has accompanied the cessation of cultural activities. With its lush and flourishing landscapes, the countries of the CEMAC zone have seen their tourist activities stopped in view of the closing of the borders. (www.cemac.int, accessed 8 September 2022). Admittedly, this activity represents a tiny part of the income of the economies of the sub-region, but it remains important for most of the economic opportunities that it could create for visitors. In addition to this, measures such as the closure of restaurants, performance halls and games, the banning of fairs and any gathering of large numbers of people, were implemented by all the States of the sub-region. These restrictive measures have a real negative impact on the promotion of arts and culture in the sub-region (CEMAC Annual Report, 2022-2021). Human societies during this period of Covid-19 remain distant. As the expression says, we see social distancing. In each state, the proclamation of partial containment is effective in order to reduce physical contact between populations. But this situation has led to an unemployment rate (CEMAC annual report, 2022-2021). Indeed, since the populations were reduced to strict displacement, and taking into account a high rate of small trades, the majority of the populations saw themselves staying at home doing nothing and living in somewhat precarious living situations. . This impact on society has also led to the cessation of school and academic activities (CEMAC Annual Report, 2022-2021). In short, Covid-19 has led to the establishment of a climate of social psychosis and the cessation of all activities. The fact that this disease remains until today without real and universally recognized treatment, it still leads to mistrust between the CEMAC member states.

2.2. Paralysis of economic exchanges in the sub-region

The establishment of barrier measures established between States such as the closing of borders, confinement, and the reduction of the circulation of goods and especially of people (physical and social distancing) has contributed to the reduction in trade. Thus, a paralysis of the economy has been greatly felt since April 2020. With the pandemic, we are witnessing a sharp drop in the prices of raw materials and mainly crude oil, the prices of which have reached the record levels observed more than 18 years ago (UNDP, 2020: 6). The slowdown in global economic activity has lowered demand for oil, causing oil prices to fall to multi-year lows (UNDP, 2020: 7). Indeed, for several years already the price of oil on the international scene has fallen and the States of the Organization of Petroleum Exploiting Countries (OPEC) have suffered the consequences. This phenomenon has had a significant impact on the CEMAC States, which with the Covid, has increased. Since 2019, oil still represents nearly 75% of the region's merchandise exports and the main source of tax revenue for countries in the CEMAC zone (www.afrique.latribune.fr, consulted on January 11, 2021).

Currently therefore with the Covid, we are observing a contraction in oil exports exerting pressure on the budgets of States dependent on black gold (www.afrique.latribune.fr, consulted on January 11, 2021), in particular Congo, the first major producer of the sub-region with 68% contributing to the country's budget revenue and Equatorial Guinea with 80% of the national budget (CEMAC Annual Report, 2022-2021). We can thus say that the highly profitable oil sector has a great impact on the budgetary system; and whoever says budgetary system says Gross Domestic Product GDP. Thus, the CEMAC countries would find themselves cut off from their oil revenue by 30 to 50% (FERDI, Rapport, 2020: 22-23). Trade itself is suffering a slowdown or even a halt. The situation of the tomato agricultural sector in Cameroon has raised concerns with this pandemic. Always considered to be the breadbasket of the CEMAC sub-region, Cameroon has a large part of its agricultural export production withering away, especially the tomato sector, all this following the closure of borders (CEMAC Annual Report, 2022- 2021). Thus, in July 2020, despite the mobilization of the Cameroonian authorities to raise this sector, we witnessed a drop in tomato prices on the counters of

Cameroonian markets. But with the relaxation on some preventive anti-covid measures, we are facing a considerable drop in trade overall. We can see that the trade sector of all Member States is greatly affected, thus having a negative impact on budgets and by extension on public expenditure (CEMAC Annual Report, 2022-2021).

The decline in international trade will have significant consequences for African economies and therefore for CEMAC as well (UNDP, 2020: 8). China being Africa's largest trading partner, when its economy is affected, Africa suffers. When there is a 1% or 2% reduction in China, it has real implications for growth in Africa through trade (UNDP, 2020: 9). It is also important to mention the drop in external funding because the whole world experiencing this pandemic and even the northern states, the most affected, are working to stop the pandemic than to manage the situation of the southern states. In general, we are witnessing on the international scene and even in CEMAC, an economic situation. However, faced with this situation, "a global threat, a global response".

3. Attempts at crisis management solutions

Based on the report of the international network KPMG Central Africa, here are the few solutions with which we corroborate in order to better manage the economy of the sub-region.

3.1. Solutions from experts for the community

- Implementation of the short-term community response plan (March-May 2020) against the Coronavirus adopted in Douala on March 12, 2020 by the ministers in charge of health of the Member States. This concerns in particular the strengthening of awareness-raising and prevention actions as well as the strict application of barrier gestures and social distancing measures taken by the Authorities;

- Reallocation of non-priority public expenditure towards the strengthening of health systems to allow faster care for people at risk;

- Reinforcement of social protection and institution of free access to medical services for the most vulnerable;

- Facilitation of intra-community trade, while strengthening health control measures on road corridors and border crossing points;

- Adoption as soon as possible of the 2020 amending finance laws to align the management of public finances with updated and realistic budget revenue forecasts and to strengthen the means of combating the spread of the Coronavirus pandemic while guaranteeing the service of debt;

- Implementation of a package of support measures for the benefit of companies hit by the COVID-19 crisis. These support measures should be both fiscal in order to reduce the pressure on companies, the States should postpone until 2021 the new fiscal measures affecting the most affected sectors;

- Engage in negotiations with the main bilateral and multilateral partners in order to reschedule the current maturities of the external debt so as to reduce the extent of the budgetary adjustments;

Adoption of three-year multilateral convergence plans centered on the systematic constitution by the States of the budgetary margins resulting from the alignment with the community standard relating to the reference budgetary balance. In this perspective, the CEMAC Commission should finalize, in consultation with all the parties concerned, the establishment of the Multilateral Fund intended for the management of financial savings from oil revenues (KPMG Africa Network, 2020: 31-32 and CEMAC Annual Report, 2022-2021).

3.2. Laudable but scattered national initiatives

Immediately after the detection of cases of Covid-19 in the CEMAC zone, the States quickly set up solutions specific to each State. Thus, Cameroon will enact 13 government measures to prevent and avoid the spread of the virus as much as possible. These health measures are the same in the sub-region. However, in addition to health measures, we have some national economic measures to prevent economic recession:

- In Congo, exemption for a period of six months from all taxes, duties and fees on the import and sale of inputs and pharmaceutical products

- In Gabon, we have the reduction of the discharge tax by 50%, tax rebates to corporate citizens;

- In Cameroon, we observe the implementation of a new grid of petroleum products.

On the sidelines of this, we cannot elude the contributions at the medical level, with the research carried out on the development of a drug that can treat the coronavirus (KPMG Africa Network, 2020: 10-12). It is in this perspective that research was carried out in Cameroon and Gabon. In particular, these two states will finance their national scientific research institutions and centers in order to release an effective drug (KPMG Africa Network, 2020: 15-20). The results are visible with the development of the treatment by Archbishop Kleda Samuel, Archbishop of Douala in Cameroon, which was very effective against Covid-19 (KPMG Africa Network, 2020: 22-26).

Still at the national level, "mini-companies" have emerged, especially in the textile field with the manufacture of mufflers. Some small fashion designers have made a fortune with these private initiatives by selling mufflers at very high prices. Thus, each State has developed its strategy taking into account its immediate needs in order to prevent and counteract the corona virus (KPMG Africa Network, 2020: 25)

Ultimately, it was a question for us in this analysis of dealing with the deployment of CEMAC countries in the dynamics of the fight against Covid-19. It shows that the latter has had an impact on the current world economy and on that of the CEMAC countries in particular. With an economic health weakened by the monetary and financial crises, the repercussions of the Corona Virus in the CEMAC zone were felt through the paralysis of economic exchanges in the sub-region, the closing of borders and the restriction of socio-cultural activities. Thus, attempts to resolve the crisis are taken and international solutions such as the strengthening of health systems and national solutions such as the manufacture of face masks and the promotion of traditional medicine are applied. Thus, we realize that not only is a bitter failure of the sub-regional integration of Central Africa camouflaged by its leaders, but also we are witnessing States dependent on a single sector, in particular the oil sector. Deemed to be very devastating and deadly, Covid-19 allows CEMAC member states to regroup on the primary object of sub-regional integration, but also to review the organization of national economies in terms of balanced national development. than sub-regional.

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JAPANESE ANIMATION MARKET IN ROMANIA

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Abstract: *The study of the anime market has begun in the virtual space, the first information about this kind of animation being received by Tv or Internet. That's why the author's surveys were developed on the online forums of the entertainment consumers. There were a lot of studies made about this subject but of main importance are the economic and social implications. The analysis of the anime market evolving started with surveys addressed to the consumers, continued with the transformation of data into informations and finished with the interpretation of these information using different methods, like the information statistics, specialized programs, even mathematical modeling, to finding the future possibilities of this market. Using the available data, it was established significant connections between the knowledge of this culture and the purchase of its derivative products, therefore, implicitly, the evolution of the market associated with them. The research demonstrated the influence of the anime knowledge upon its market of derivate products, boosted by the surprising and interesting properties of the anime style, and all its other qualities, in the first place, its artistic side.*

Keywords: modeling, marketing, statistics, anime, cyberspace

1. Introduction

The subject of the evolution of Japanese animation market has been a preoccupation of the author for several years. Observing the appearance and development, the implications of this kind of art worldwide, as well as its appearance in Romania, starting with the 90s, the author conducted several surveys with the aim of studying the phenomenon at the level of our country as well (Cazacu, 2016a; Cazacu, 2016b; Cazacu, 2016c; Cazacu, 2017a; Cazacu, 2017b; Cazacu, 2017c; Cazacu, 2018a; Cazacu, 2019a; Cazacu, 2019b; Cazacu, 2020a). For the scientific study of the phenomenon, the author designed a research model, called "*cognitive model*", based on similar specialized works from the specialized literature. The article was published in the volume of an international conference, used and perfected in numerous subsequent articles (Cazacu, 2017d). In essence, the model starts from the study of the anime phenomenon at the global level, then analyzes the emergence and evolution at the national level, involving the factors that determine the purchase decision of consumers of different ages and occupations. The exogenous and respectively, the endogenous factors, discussed and analyzed by international authors (Kotler,1969; Veblen,2009) have also constituted the reason for further in-depth research, regarding the studied phenomenon.

To understand the interdetermination of these factors and the implications on the purchase decision, implicitly on the evolution of the anime derivative products market, the author introduces data obtained in surveys in the context of the information theory (Cazacu, 2018b).

The phenomenon has not been studied in our country until this moment, as a result, it was necessary for the conducted studies to be presented in works published in nationally or internationally recognized journals.

A first step was the analysis of the entertainment consumer's perception of the new cultural trend, the expectations of the consumer public, his opinion about the new genre of art that had arrived in Romania through the Internet, discussion forums, online stores and finally, even in within specific events, organized at the level of cultural institutions or independently.

The importance of communication in the context of this phenomenon and the public's perception were the subjects of other articles published by the author, in collaboration, two of which in the international conferences (Mihaita and Cazacu, IBIMA 2018; Mihaita and Cazacu, IBIMA 2019)

Returning to the study of the determining factors of the purchase decision, using the same data extracted from the surveys, the author also introduces other research tools, widening the methodological range: informational statistics formulas, the use of specialized software and predictive mathematical modeling (Cazacu, 2019c; Cazacu, 2019d).

For the more accessible use of informational statistics, the author introduces the formulas of the informational gain and the informational contribution of a variable or group of variables on another factor, together with all their related entities, in MS Excel registers, containing spreadsheets with these formulas (Cazacu, 2020b; Cazacu, 2021b; Cazacu, 2022a, Cazacu, 2022b; Cazacu, 2022c)

Analyzing the determining factors of the anime products market, the interdependence of endogenous and exogenous factors that influence the consumer's decision, in the context elaborated by the proposed knowledge model, the author reaches a final conclusion, namely the cyclical nature of the studied phenomenon, cyclicity that comes back to the need to buy. The method is generalized and applicable to any market, moreover, the results of the informational analysis are checked by means of a specialized software, in the appropriate mathematical context, within deterministic mathematical models that also allow the visualization of the future behavior of the phenomenon, starting from the current data(Cazacu, 2021a; Cazacu, 2022b;Cazacu, 2022c)

The present article, summarizing the entire approach and using the same methods of analysis, closes the research with the last observations.

On the one hand, the results obtained at the level of each survey and during the advanced studies at the time of the author, are also confirmed for the set of data, related to both surveys.

On the other hand, the importance of two of the adjectives assigned by the respondents, the ones with the highest weight, is emphasized. Thus, after verifying the connection between the knowledge of the new trend and the purchase of products from the anime products market, the influence of the adjectives *surprising*, respectively, *interesting*, are consecutively inserted, in two 2³ experiments, and the obvious increase of interdeterminations were observed.

2. The research data

Common or similar questions in the two surveys, led to the selection of the following numerical data, which refer mostly to the anime style knowing, the best preferred adjectives for it, and the need of their consumption, meaning the actual anime market development.

Table 1. How familiar is the fact that anime is an animation style?

Familiar with anime (more or less)	400	98%
I do not know what anime is!	9	2%

Source: author's first survey

Table 2. The knowledge of anime culture

Know the ANIME	Do not know the ANIME
260	8
97%	3%

Source: author's second survey

Table 3. Summing the results concerning the familiarity with the anime style

KNOWING ANIME	SURVEY 1	SURVEY 2	RESULT/TOTAL
Familiar	400	260	660
I do not know what anime is!	9	8	17

Source: author research

Asking “Which adjective would you associate with anime?” the most used responses were: interesting, artistic, surprising, special. Along the research, in both two surveys, as for the anime consumer perception, the respondents mentioned their opinion, by selecting some of an adjective’s list, but they could make many options, not only one, so the number of total responses was about 660, which can be seen in Table 4.

The frequency of watching animes subtitled by the Romanian fandubbing was considered, in the first survey, as being related with the interest for these products, in Table 5. Also, the achievement of the anime products determined by the events participation, in the second survey, in Table 6.

The main interest for the anime market is the acquisition of its products, so, it was selected the related data in both two surveys, watching, analyzing the purpose of them (see Table 7 and Table 8).

Figure 1. Graphical representation of the anime familiarity total data results

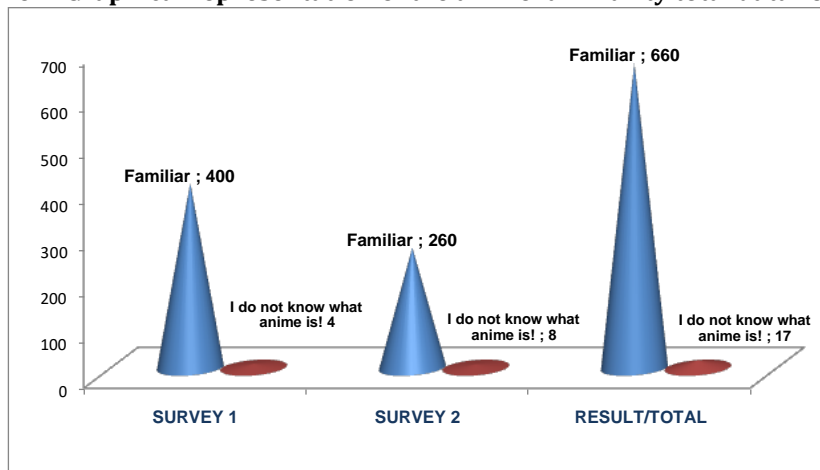


Table 4. The number of each selected adjective, in the positive and negative form of answer, in both the two author’ surveys

ADJECTIVES	SURVEY 1	SURVEY 2	TOTAL POSITIVE	SURVEY 1	SURVEY 2	TOTAL NEGATIV
SURPRISING	298	158	456	124	110	234
INTERESTING	376	231	607	46	37	83
DRAMATIC	259	149	408	163	119	282
COLORFUL	191	122	313	231	146	377
ARTISTIC	310	170	480	112	98	210
SUPERIOR	194	122	316	228	146	374
INFERIOR	5	7	12	417	261	678
SPECIAL	271	148	419	151	120	271
MARVELOUS	236	123	359	186	145	331
INTELLIGENT	252	140	392	170	128	298
EDUCATIONAL	220	117	337	202	151	353
CULTURAL	257	128	385	165	140	305

Figure 2. Graphical representation of the assigned attributes of anime

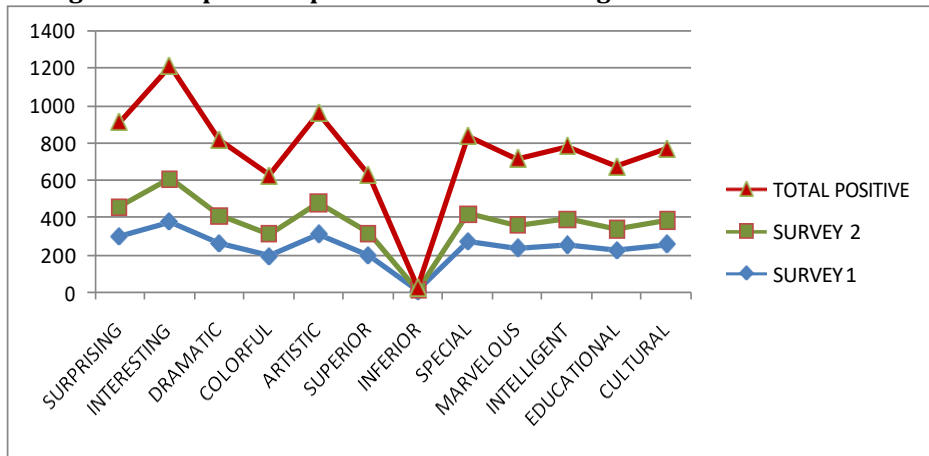


Table 5. The interest in watching anime translated by the funsubing groups

All the time	73	17.7%
Often enough	122	29.5%
Sometimes	93	22.5%
Never	125	30.3%

Source: author research

Table 6. The interest in achievement of anime products, as consequence to the participation at the anime events

Very interested	Some interested	A little interested	I do not know	Not interested
84	86	24	70	3
31,5%	32,2%	9%	26,2%	1,1%

Source: author research

Table 7a,b. The purpose for acquiring anime related products

FOR ME	I DID NOT	FOR A PRESENT
	For me	308
	To make a gift	12
	Did not buy	89
167	92	8
62.5%	34.5%	3%

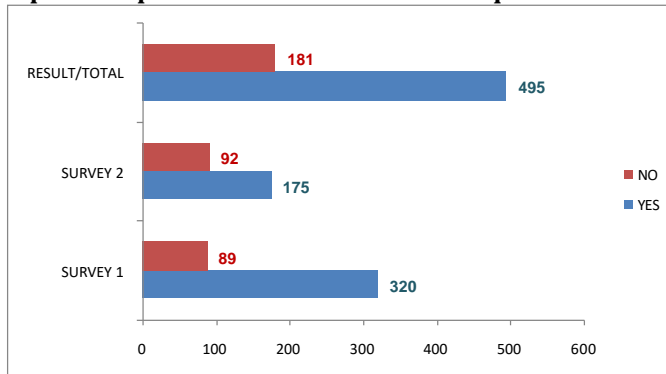
Source: author research: first and second survey

Table 8. Summing the results concerning the anime related products acquisition

BUYING	SURVEY 1	SURVEY 2	RESULT/TOTAL
YES	320	175	495
NO	89	92	181

Source: author research

Figure 4. Graphical representation of the anime acquisition total data results



II. Formulas used (information statistics)

Informational energy E , the adjusted energy E_a and the informational entropy H , also the attribute alternatives energies, Y_1 and Y_2 , are calculated using the formulas, thus:

$$E(Z) = \sum_{i=1}^{m=2} \frac{Z_i^2}{T}; E(Y) = \sum_{i=1}^{m=2} \frac{Y_i^2}{T} \tag{1}$$

$$E_a(Z) = 2 \times E(Z) - 1; E_a(Y) = 2 \times E(Y) - 1$$

$$E(Y_1) = \sum_{i=1}^{n=2} \frac{y_{i1}^2}{Y_1} \quad H(Y_1) = - \sum_{i=1}^{n=2} p(y_{i1}) \times \log_2 p(y_{i1}) \tag{2}$$

$$E(Y_2) = \sum_{i=1}^{n=2} \frac{y_{i2}^2}{Y_2} \quad H(Y_2) = - \sum_{i=1}^{n=2} p(y_{i2}) \times \log_2 p(y_{i2})$$

The importance of the variable of interest is calculated using entropy:

$$R_H(Y_1) = (1 - H(Y_1)) / (2 - H(T)) \tag{3}$$

or, using the Onicescu adjusted

$$R_H(Y_2) = (1 - H(Y_2)) / (2 - H(T)) \tag{4}$$

$$E_a(Y_1) = 2 \times E(Y_1) - 1 \quad R_E(Y_1) = E_a(Y_1) / S_{Ea}$$

$$E_a(Y_2) = 2 \times E(Y_2) - 1; S_{Ea} = E_a(Y_1) + E_a(Y_2) \quad R_E(Y_2) = E_a(Y_2) / S_{Ea}$$

The $E_a(Y_1)$, $E_a(Y_2)$, $R_E(Y_1)$, $R_E(Y_2)$, using the informational entropy, and respectively, the global importance I_G , using the informational energy are obtained as follows: ($W_1 = W(Y_1)$ and $W_2 = W(Y_2)$ are the weights)

$$I'_G = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^m W(Y_j) \times R_H(Y_j)}{\sum_{j=1}^m W(Y_j)} \quad I_G = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^m W(Y_j) \times R_E(Y_j)}{\sum_{j=1}^m W(Y_j)} \tag{5}$$

Calculations for adjusted gl using informational energy:

$$I_a(Y) = \frac{I_E(Y)}{I_G} = \frac{W(Y_1) \times R_H(Y_1)}{I_G} \tag{6}$$

$$I_a(Y) = \frac{I_E(Y)}{I_G} = \frac{W(Y_2) \times R_H(Y_2)}{I_G}$$

Similar calculation, using informational entropy.

$$I'_a(Y_1) = \frac{I_H(Y_1)}{I'_G} = \frac{W(Y_1) \times R_H(Y_1)}{I'_G} \tag{7}$$

$$I'_a(Y_2) = \frac{I_H(Y_2)}{I'_G} = \frac{W(Y_2) \times R_H(Y_2)}{I'_G}$$

To calculate the informational gain, using the weighted average with their specific masses, energies were used, the formula using the weighted average with their specific masses.

$$\Delta(Y/Z) = W_1 \cdot E_a(Y/Z_1) + W_2 \cdot E_a(Y/Z_2) - E_a(Y)$$

the same result being obtained using the restricted formula:

$$\Delta(Y/Z) = (E(Y/Z))_a - E_a(Y) \tag{9}$$

For the calculation of the information input, $AI(Z,Y)$, the transinformation, respectively the input brought by Y to the variable Z, or by Z to the variable Y, similar formulas were used:

$$AI(Z/Y) = E(Z/Y) - E(Z); AI(Y/Z) = E(Y/Z) - E(Y) \tag{10}$$

Correlation coefficient K m

$$C(Y/Z) = \sum_{i=1}^{m=2} \frac{y_{i1} \times y_{i2}}{T_{1.} \times T_{2.}} \quad K(Y/Z) = \frac{C(Y/Z)}{((E(Z/Y_1) \times (E(Z/Y_2)))^{1/2}} \tag{11}$$

The value of the

$$V = \frac{y_{11} \times y_{22} - y_{12} \times y_{21}}{\sqrt{T_{1.} \times T_{2.} \times T_{.1} \times T_{.2}}}$$

III. Research results

Entering the data from previous paragraph in the 2³ experiment table, it has obtained the results/informations in Table 9, then the informations thus processed is used in the workbook in which the gain and the informational contribution brought by the determined variables, placed horizontally in the table, to the determined variables, located vertically in the same table, are calculated. It was considered as determining variables the sum of the numerical values obtained in the two surveys, for the familiarity with this new trend of art, and respectively the surprising quality of its derived products. As for the determined variable, in the decision-making system, it was selected the consumer's need to buy (see Table 9). It was obtained the results in Figure 5. Similarly, considering for the determining variables, the sum of the numerical values obtained in the two surveys for the familiarity and respectively, the interesting quality of its derived products, and the consumer's need to buy as determined variable (see Table 10), it was obtained the results in Figure 6.

Table 9. Numerical data concerning the familiarity, surprising adjective and need of anime products acquisition

X(A) FAMILIARITY		Z(C) SURPRISING		Y(B) ACQUISITION	
				NO	YES
NO	17	NO	13	10	3
		YES	4	2	2
YES	660	NO	221	26	195
		YES	439	143	296

Source: author's first and second survey

Figure 5. Informational statistics results concerning the familiarity, surprising adjective and need of anime products acquisition

VARIABLES INTERACTIONS ANALYSIS					NOTATIONS:
X (C)	Z (A)	NOT Y (B1)	YES Y (B2)	Totals	
	Z ^o	Y ^c	Y ⁱ		NOT Z=Z ⁱ ; NOT X=X ^c ; NOT Y=Y ^c ;
X ^c	Z ⁱ	10	3	13	YES Z=Z ⁱ ; YES Y=Y ⁱ ; YES X=X ⁱ
	Z ⁱ	2	2	4	
Total X^c		12	5	17	EXEMPLU:
	Z ^c	26	195	221	X(C)=KNOWLEDGE
X ⁱ	Z ⁱ	143	296	439	Z(A)=SURPRISING
Total Xⁱ		169	491	660	(ADJECTIVE)
TOTALS		181	496	677	Y(B)=ACQUISITION

AI=INFORMATIONAL CONTRIBUTION					A=INFORMATIONAL GAIN
$\Delta(Z/X)$	Z from X	Z from Y	Z from X,Y	$\Delta(X/Z)$	
2%	1%	2%	6%	0%	$AI(Z/X) = E(Z/X) - E(Z)$
	C from A	A from B	A from BC		
$\Delta(Z/X)$	AI(Z/X)	AI(Z/Y)	$\Delta(Z/X,Y)$	$\Delta(X/Z)$	
0,02	0,01	0,02	0,06	0,00	$AI(Y/Z) = E(Y/Z) - E(Y)$
	Y from X	Y from Z	Y from X,Z	$\Delta(Z/Y)$	
3%	1%	1%	6%	3%	$\Delta(Y/X,Z) = E(Y/X,Z) - E_a(Y)$
	B from C	B from A	B from A,C		
$\Delta(Y/Z)$	AI(Y/X)	AI(Y/Z)	$\Delta(Y/X,Z)$	$\Delta(Z/Y)$	
0,03	0,01	0,01	0,06	0,03	
	X from Y	X from Z	X from Y,Z	$\Delta(X/Y)$	$\Delta(X/Y) = (E(X/Y))_a - E_a(X)$
2%	0%	0%	1%		$A(Y/X) = W_1 \cdot E_a(Y/X_1) + W_2 \cdot E_a(Y/X_2) - E_a(Y)$
	C from B	C from A	C from A,B		
$\Delta(Y/X)$	$\Delta(XY)$	AI(X/Z)	$\Delta(XY,Z)$	$AI(X/Z) = E(X/Z) - E(X)$	
0,02	0,00	0,00	0,01		

The obtained results by using the informational statistics demonstrate that the contribution, respectively the informational gain brought by the knowledge variable of this kind of art, is influenced differently under the action of these two qualities, among the most checked by the respondents of the two surveys.

In the first representation, based on table (Table 9), we observe a relatively weak informational contribution, brought by the variable X=knowledge, to the variable Y=consumption need: $AI(Y/X)=2\%$ (Figure 5).

Table 10. Numerical data concerning the familiarity, interesting adjective and need of anime products acquisition

X(A) FAMILIARITY		Z(C) INTERESTING		Y(B) ACQUISITION	
				NO	YES
NO	17	NO	12	10	2
		YES	5	2	3
YES	660	NO	71	15	56
		YES	589	154	435

Source: author's first and second survey

Figure 6. Informational statistics results concerning the familiarity, interesting adjective and need of anime products acquisition

VARIABLES INTERACTIONS ANALYSIS					NOTATIONS: NOT Z=Z'; NOT X=X'; NOT Y=Y'; YES Z=Z'; YES Y=Y'; YES X=X'
X (C)	Z (A)	NOT Y (B1)	YES Y (B2)	Totals	
	Z ^c	10	2	12	EXAMPLE: X(C)=KNOWLEDGE Z(A)=INTERESTING (ADJECTIVE) Y(B)=ACQUISITION
X ^c	Z ⁱ	2	3	5	
Total X ^c		12	5	17	
	Z ^c	15	56	71	
X ⁱ	Z ⁱ	154	435	589	
Total X ⁱ		169	491	660	
TOTALS		181	496	677	
AI=INFORMATIONAL CONTRIBUTION					
A=INFORMATIONAL GAIN					
Δ(Z/X)	Z from X	Z from Y	Z from X,Y	Δ(X,Z)	
	C from A	A from B	A from BC	4%	
4%	2%	0%	4%	1%	
Δ(Z/X)	AI(Z/X)	AI(Z/Y)	Δ(Z/X,Y)	Δ(X,Z)	
0,04	0,02	0,00	0,04	0,01	
Δ(Y/Z)	Y from X	Y from Z	Y from X,Z	Δ(Z/Y)	AI(Y/Z) = E(Y/Z) - E(Y)
	B from C	B from A	B from A,C	0%	
0%	1%	0%	2%	0%	
Δ(Y/Z)	AI(Y/X)	AI(Y/Z)	Δ(Y/X,Z)	Δ(Z/Y)	Δ(Y/X,Z) = E(Y/X,Z) - E _a (Y)
0,00	0,01	0,00	0,02	0,00	
Δ(Y/X)	X from Y	X from Z	X from Y,Z	Δ(X,Y)	Δ(X,Y) = (E(X,Y)) _a - E _a (X)
	C from B	C from A	C from A,B	2%	
2%	0%	0%	2%		Δ(Y/X) = W ₁ E _a (Y/X ₁) + W ₂ E _a (Y/X ₂) - E _a (Y)
Δ(Y/X)	Δ(X,Y)	AI(X/Z)	Δ(X,Y,Z)	AI(X,Z) = E(X,Z) - E(X)	
0,02	0,00	0,00	0,02		

Also, in the same figure, selecting the significant informational gain, brought by the two variables X and Z=*surprising* quality, to the variable Y, we find the first higher result: Δ(Y/X,Z)=6%. The relationship seems to be reversible, in the sense that the same result is noted for the influence of the combination X and Y, upon Z. In other words, following the knowledge of the new artistic style and the purchase of the genre products, also grows the influence of the *surprising* side of it: Δ(Z/X,Y)=6%, even higher than the first, with 0.45%. Figure 6, based on the data in the table 10, brings new results. Thus: while the informational contribution of knowledge upon the need to buy remains constant, AI(Y/X)=2%, there is not a relatively significant increase in the informational gain brought by the knowledge variable in the presence of the *interesting* adjective, even this quality presents the highest score in the two surveys. The informational gain achieved by combining the knowledge of this style of animation with its *interesting* aspect is Δ(Y/X,Z)= 2%, and the reversibility remains valid in this case as well, but on larger scale, in the sense of obtaining greater interest when there is more knowledge and you can purchase gender products: Δ(Z/X,Y)=4%.

In order to verify these results, the percentages in Table 10(or Table 9) can be inserted as elements of a state matrix, in the composed dynamical system, with initial conditions, Σ, in which all the matrices' coefficients are square, positive and constant. This method is applying a mathematical model and algorithm which were used by the author in many of his works (Cazacu, 2016c). Therefore, the present paper is limited to specifying the mathematical context necessary for the translation of the trifactorial tables in form of the dynamic systems or deterministic models. The initial conditions required by the specialized

literature (Kalman and Falb&Arbib,1969) being obviously verified, given the simplicity of the particular cases which are referred to, it remains to mention who the variables are, as well as the additional condition for solving the code made in Mathematica 7.0, and adapted for every example, meaning: $\det(A+A^t) \neq 0$, where A is the state matrix of the system and A^t is its transposed matrix. Also matrix B is the coefficient of the disturbing factor ω , $x(t)$ is the state vector, and $y(t)$ is the system result. In this case, the matrix coefficient C, of the vector $y(t)$, is I_2 , so the exit vector is, in fact, the state vector, and the trajectory evolution is the state's vector trajectory.

$$\begin{cases} \frac{dx(t)}{dt} = A \times x(t) + B \times \omega; \\ y(t) = I_2 \times x(t) \end{cases} \quad (1)$$

$$A = \begin{pmatrix} 0,07 & 0,01 \\ 0,93 & 0,99 \end{pmatrix} \Rightarrow \det(A + A^t) = \det \begin{pmatrix} 0,14 & 0,02 \\ 0,01 & 1,98 \end{pmatrix} = 0,6 \neq 0$$

In detail, the dynamic system associated with the interaction between the three factors in table 10 is presented as follows:

$$\begin{cases} \frac{dx(t)}{dt} = \begin{pmatrix} 0,07 & 0,01 \\ 0,93 & 0,99 \end{pmatrix} \times x(t) + \begin{pmatrix} 0,70 & 0,30 \\ 0,10 & 0,90 \end{pmatrix} \times \omega; \\ y(t) = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \times x(t) \end{cases} \quad (14)$$

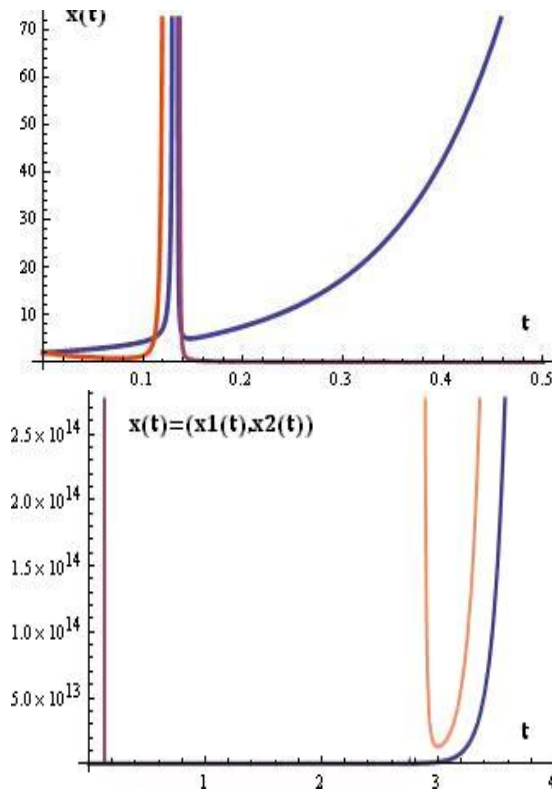
The elements of the state matrix and, respectively, of the disturbing matrix, are derived from the percentages associated with the numerical values from table 10. The state matrix was formed with the results corresponding to the determined variable Y, under the influence of the interesting adjective, in this case, having associated the numerical values corresponding to the variable Z.

Table 11. The numerical data in table 10, presented in the percentage form

X(A) FAMILIARITY		Z(C) INTERESTING		Y(B) ACQUISITION	
				NO	YES
NO	17	NO	70%	10	2
		YES	30%	2	3
T1				7%	1%
YES	660	NO	10%	15	56
		YES	90%	154	435
T2				93%	99%

The evolution of the trajectory of the state vector demonstrates the behavior of the need to buy, which, for a short period, due to the novelty of this artistic trend, has an exponential rise which can be noted, followed by a period of stagnation of these products market.

Figure 7. Evolution of the solution trajectory: during half of one unit, respectively, during a longer period, four units of time



Therefore, we could refer again, as in the previous works (Cazacu,2022), to the cyclical nature of the evolution of this market, with periods of growth and respectively decline, as can be seen in any market economies. One certain peculiarity, belonging to the group of such products, is the inclusion in the narrower sphere of the luxury products. This is one of the reasons why the anime products entered Romania, mainly using the virtual environment, not everyone can buy them, even if they would like to. The other reason remains, of course, the novelty of this Japanese style of animation.

IV. Conclusions

As it was mentioned in the introduction, the present goal was to verify the close connection between the knowledge of this genre of art and the natural need to purchase products derived from it, under the influence of its qualities.

The assimilation by the Romanian public is not singular at all, if we refer to the numerous gender manifestations in England, Europe in general, America, etc. The strongest echo seems to be among young people, although they have no purchasing power.

1. Analyzing the connection between the knowledge of anime and the increase in the need to buy for genre products, under the action of subjective factors, such as surprise or curiosity about something new, interesting, we demonstrated that, at least for a period, the market of these products derived from Japanese animation is going to make more and more room, despite the fact that they are not cheap at all. Mathematical forecasting also leads to an

overall optimistic result, the trajectory of the associated dynamic system having, periodically, upward evolutions.

2. As to the educational side and, regarding this, to the perception of the public of all ages regarding this aspect, it might be useful the result of the interdependence between *knowledge of the genre* and the *need to buy*, under the action of the *artistic factor*, meaning that the educational side must be understand mainly from the artistic point of view, as it is about a new style of art. There were approximately 690 answers, in both surveys, because the participants had the opportunity to tick several options, respectively to associate several qualities to the new artistic trend.

As for the artistic adjective, we can understand the consumer's perception regarding the educational artistic side, since the majority, in both surveys, checked this quality. Thus, out of the 690 answers, 480 were in favor of the artistic quality of the Japanese animation.

Table 12. 2³ experiment with data concerning the three factors: familiarity, artistic influence and acquisition

VARIABLES INTERACTIONS ANALYSIS					NOTATIONS:
X (C)	Z (A)	NOT Y (B1)	YES Y (B2)	Totals	
X ⁰	Z ⁰	10	0	10	NOT Z=Z ⁰ ; NOT X=X ⁰ ; NOT Y=Y ⁰
	Z ¹	6	1	7	YES Z=Z ¹ ; YES Y=Y ¹ ; YES X=X ¹
Total X⁰		16	1	17	EXEMPLU: X(C)=KNOWLEDGE Z(A)=ARTISTIC (ADJEC TIVE) Y(B)=ACQUISITION
X ¹	Z ⁰	66	134	200	
	Z ¹	99	361	460	
Total X¹		165	495	660	
TOTALS		181	496	677	

Source: author's first and second survey

Since the number of answers related to the purchase of products was taken into account, the total of 677 (instead of 690) is sufficient to form a correct image of the interaction between the three factors (Table 12).

As a result, using the informational statistics formulas in Excel worksheets, it was obtained a significant informational gain brought by the combination of knowledge X, with the *artistic factor* Z, to the variable Y, i.e. the need to buy: $\Delta(Y/X,Z) = 6\%$. Note also the gain determined by Z factor (artistic influence) to the need to buy Y: $\Delta(Y/Z) = 5\%$. (Figure 7)

Figure 7. Informational results concerning three factors interaction: X=knowledge, Y=acquisition, Z=artistic influence

$\Delta(Y/Z)$	Y from X	Y from Z	Y from X,Z
	B from C	B from A	B from A,C
2%	2%	1%	6%
$\Delta(Y/Z)$	AI(Y/X)	AI(Y/Z)	$\Delta(Y/X,Z)$
0,02	0,02	0,01	0,06
$\Delta(Y/X)$	X from Y	X from Z	X from Y,Z
	C from B	C from A	C from A,B
5%	1%	0%	1%
$\Delta(Y/X)$	$\Delta(X/Y)$	AI(X/Z)	$\Delta(X/Y,Z)$

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GEOPOLITICS AMONG THE PRECOLONIAL OMVANG: A HISTORICAL ASPECT OF THE PEOPLES OF EASTERN CAMEROON

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Abstract: *The history of the Omvang people today in the district of Nguelemendouka in the department of Haut-Nyong in Eastern Cameroon is that of a society that was once poorly known and little known, sociopolitically and culturally, yet research sufficiently demonstrate that they have put in place solid traditional instruments which have nothing to envy to the other peoples of Cameroon; It raises the issue of knowing how the Omvang of yesterday and today succeed in the solid hierarchical society set up by Chief Nkal Mentsouga where each family member had a considerable place and a well-defined role promoting the peaceful management of disputes and inheritance crises for the benefit of social harmony, peace and harmony. Omvang society before Nkal Mentsouga is lineage or segmental. Their institutions are identical to those of the peoples of the Beti-Bulu-Fang forest in particular. These peoples have imagined and applied mechanisms and stratagems of power to ensure the most harmonious management possible of populations and property. We then witness around 1850 the transformation of the lineage structure into a large chieftaincy as a result of military conquests, hence a warlike geopolitics. This research aims to be a demonstrative approach to the anteriority of structures in traditional African societies in general and East Cameroon in particular. He rebels against the Eurocentric conception which has made its strength disappear following the arrival of colonization. This study aims to present a traditional aspect of the history of the peoples of Eastern Cameroon. . Our study also makes it possible to present the interactions between the lineage populations in order to respond to the questioning of Cheikh Anta Diop who already invited Africans to look into the history of their society, their civilization and to study them to better know themselves and to make known in our own way a traditional aspect of the history of the peoples of Eastern Cameroon all this through a reading that is both descriptive and analytical constituting the epistemological approach of this article.*

Keywords: Geopolitics, Omvang, Precolonials, Eastern Cameroon, War.

During the period prior to the influence of modernity among the Omvang, the populations had developed traditional mechanisms for the resolution of intra- and inter-village disputes whose aim was to promote social harmony through the peaceful resolution of disputes. It is in this logic that Catherine Makouka subscribes when she rebels against the Eurocentric conception which makes war an emanation of international relations; for her, war is part of traditional African life and is a phenomenon older than international relations, because long before the arrival of imperialism, the African peoples including the Omvang were already living in contact with their neighbors.

1. Geopolitics among the precolonial OMVANG

The geopolitics of the history of the Omvang society is centered on the perpetual wars and their processions of derivatives.

1.1. The place of war among the Omvang

Safeguarding the territorial integrity of the group has always been the primary concern of any given human community. During the pre-colonial period, the societies or peoples of Cameroon constantly had to defend their territory, either against internal aggression, or against foreign invasions. The defense of living space: a source of conflict. We limit only to the Omvang. The world outside the village, of its patrilineage was for the populations of the precolonial era a hostile universe. There was a permanent state of war.

Relations between the villages were placed under the sign of fear, insecurity and violence. During the day, you could not leave your village or your family without running the risk of being ambushed, arrested or sold as a slave and being murdered and eaten. Women and men in the fields were guarded. At night, we slept little and with one ear. "We killed each other and ate each other," respond our informants laconically. This climate of permanent tensions was even present within the same village (Bateranzico Léonidas, 1987: 12). Various ethnic groups in Eastern Cameroon, like all the other ethnic groups in Cameroon, experienced intense warlike activity before the arrival of the first Europeans. It is this aspect that the latter highlight when evoking the thesis of pacification. Their intensity was due to the mastery of firearms (Edjondj Mempouth: 57). The reasons for these wars are manifold. They can be grouped into three main ones. These are wars for the needs of space, wars of hegemony and those of slavery (Ango Mengue Samson: 10). Historians do not always agree on the nature of the relations between these groups before colonization. For others, we cannot really speak of "ethnic wars" (Meillassoux: 22).

We would surely delude ourselves by imagining a pre-colonial golden age free from all conflict. To ensure the survival of their community, many groups believed they had to conquer other spaces by subjugating the peoples who originally occupied them. Quarrels often broke out within the village. "Women's affairs," that is, adultery, were chicanery (litigation, misunderstanding), pride, which were all grounds enough to fight it out. Theft and accusation of witchcraft could also trigger hostilities. These hours, after all, localized, individual could nevertheless degenerate into a scuffle and set the entire small village community ablaze. The hostilities between two neighboring village communities broke out following disputes over cultivation land, hunting territory, gathering or gathering and fishing areas. The conflicts resulting from these motives seem however to have been few compared to the clashes generated by the assassination before the goal or followed by cannibalism and the expeditions of revenge which followed (Bateranzico Léonidas, 1987: 39). For example, the Maka would kill and eat anyone who was foreign or not related by marriage to the village in order to guarantee their safety. These were the captives of war and the unknown. Also, warriors ate their enemies in order to seize their power and magical powers. Finally, revenge was one of the main causes of cannibalism. Murder occurred when a person traveling or visiting relatives or friends was betrayed or ambushed. But also, the abduction of another woman or the murder of a woman sent in marriage by the family of the parents-in-law led to reprisal expeditions that ended in murder and cannibalism. These vendetta operations could naturally lead to open hostilities between rival or enemy communities. Insecurity has therefore in the past engendered or at least amplified the practice of cannibalism. Vice versa, cannibalism has fueled social tensions. This phenomenon must be very old. It is also found in the origin myths of the Béti (Bateranzico Léonidas, 1987: 54).

Under these conditions, villages sought to expand or forge alliances in order to better protect themselves against neighbors. One of the common tricks was war expeditions. War captives were either subjugated Meluwa (slave) and more integrated into the family, or eaten. The women were married or married; children integrated into the village community by adoption. The "Njaw bud" patria-lineage was growing. His power increased along with his prestige and fame, which temporarily guaranteed the security of the village. It was like going to war for your own safety. The skirmishes were short-lived, however. They remained very limited in space (Carin ZE AYE, 1997).

Ethnic wars caused by land disputes have started since the migrations. Men looking for living spaces jostled each other. Some only wanted to control the vast territories. The Maka and the Omvang have thus waged multiple wars for control of the space of Nkal Mentsouga. Indeed, the region was once occupied by the Maka. The Omvang left the Yebekolo country where they were in captivity and swept there following a committed migration from their

original habitat. Their journey under the leadership of Patriarch Nkal Seleg led them to the current site of Nguelemendouka (geographical location map of the Omvang in Nguelemendouka below) to the chagrin of the Maka Ebessep and Mbwanz populations whom they found settled in the surroundings. The latter had expressed their hostility towards the group of newcomers. A conflict immediately arose between these Omvang fugitives in search of living space and the Maka natives who were defending their lands. There followed, at the initiative of the Omvang, a confrontation (Mbeng Dang, Hanse Gilbert: 12)

Under the authority of Nkal Seleg, the Omvang formed a squadron of a hundred daring warriors who launched the assault on the defenses of the enemy Maka in order to secure the space thus conquered. The Omvang "Nkang domb" warriors numbering about 70 equipped with bows, arrows, spears and a few trade guns, defeated the 14 Maka warriors of Nkang Domb (General Maka), Nkamba Melendou armed only with bows. To negotiate peace, the Nkang Domb Melendou paid Nkal Seleg a tribe in women and delivered his eldest son Ifaga who was now called Ifaga i Nkal, that is to say Ifaga son Nkal. At the same time, he inherited his fetishes, the "Boubouya" ((Mbeng Dang, Hanse Gilbert: 14). From that moment on, he became a Nkang Domb, that is to say a formidable warlord and feared as he possessed magical gifts. The Ebesseps also had to break their camps to take refuge in Samba in the northeast, about eight kilometers from Nguelemendouka. Despite this exodus, they continued to suffer the Omvang assaults which had become aware of their numerical and technical superiority (Mbeng Dang, H. G: 26).

Nkal Seleg and his people, in order to better manage their new space and consolidate their position in an environment which, a priori, was hostile, devised a new power stratagem. They proceeded to build a strong politico-military institution. The warlike action of Nkal Seleg, therefore, knew no bounds. He organizes the second phase of the migration of a branch of the Omvang settled in Ayos. He also died very far from his village, during a military campaign in Bamvele country in Upper Sanaga (Mbeng Dang, Hanse. Gilbert: 29).

He is succeeded by his son Nguélé Mendouka who was also a formidable warrior. Nkal Mentsouga, son of Nkal Seleg and Mentsouga was born around 1868 in Badisham, his mother's village. His name was associated with that of his mother, especially since he was born of polygamy. It was a way of differentiating the children in absence from the first names that Christianity would bring later (Ahanda, D, 1987: 140). This is why he was called Nkal Mendouka, that is to say Nguélé, son of Mendouka. It was therefore he who succeeded his father Nguélé, son of Seleg (Kpwang Kpwang, Robert, 2010: 28). He had been initiated into the art of war by the latter. Oral traditions claim that he had inherited all of his fetishes. He had various weapons that he handled with dexterity: spears, arrows and above all firearms that he obtained from his friend the chief Yekaba Nanga Eboko (Mbeng Dang, Hanse. Gilbert: 29). He therefore continued the work of conquest begun by his father. He constantly harassed his enemies with a series of wars that affected entire villages. All who were subject to him paid him tribute. His prowess marked the consciences in the same way as those of his father so that in popular imagery, Nkal Seleg and Nkal Mendouka represent one and the same person. Nkal Seleg referring to his paternal filiation and Nkal Mendouka to the maternal one (Mbeng Dang, Hanse. Gilbert: 30).

1.2. Ethnic group: the word and the thing among the Omvang

Referring to its Greek etymology "ethnos", the term ethnicity can be defined unambiguously as "people", "nation". It is true that the word people says nothing in itself about the characteristics that make a people a social unit made up of people recognizing a certain bond. With the word nation, this void is filled in that it denotes the idea of a common birth, of a bond of belonging to the same ancestral ancestry, known or simply mythico-

legendary, but whose representation is sufficiently decisive for the feeling of this common belonging (Mbeng Dang, Hanse. Gilbert: 34).

However, the lack of ambiguity in the use of etymology quickly gives way to real confusion when we follow the use of these terms both in anthropological literature (therefore in scientific discourse) and in everyday language where we see, placed in the same semantic register, the terms ethnicity, race, tribe, etc. However, several anthropologists agree on the definition of ethnicity by a certain number of traits such as language, space, customs, values, a name, the same ancestry, and the awareness that social actors have of belong to the same group. But despite this relative intellectual convergence on the signifier, the geographical and above all cultural identification of groups designated as ethnic groups remains the site of multiple controversies. Some have even wondered if ethnic groups are not mere "inventions". Broadly speaking, these controversies oppose a primordialist, subventivist or essentialist conception of ethnicity and a constructivist conception of the same community.

It should be noted from the outset that a number of ethnological monographs relate to ethnic data which one seems to be able to situate in space and time, and whose characteristics one tries to describe: history, religion, habitat, language, habits and customs, etc. Just like physical geography, which maps the mountains, forests, savannahs, rivers and rivers of a country, ethnology also has its ethnic maps, where each group is located. In addition, ethnological literature presents an anthology of cultural and sometimes physical descriptions and latitudes of each group: "Death among the X", "Marriage among the Y", "The corruption of the old man among the Z"... If we add to these "scholarly" descriptions the epithets with which the groups reciprocally adorn each other (Bazin, Jean, 1985: 116), here is each ethnic group defined and constituted in its essence. Who could therefore think that ethnic groups are only fictions, and to take up the beautiful idea of Jean Bazin, how could a being rich in attributes miss existence? (Bazin, Jean,: 91).

Ethnic groups would therefore correspond to something substantial and assignable in determined spaces, which others only discover, study, classify or caricature. Ethnologists, faithful to the epistemological requirements of neutrality and objectivity, would only describe and classify pre-existing realities, moreover from the testimonies and explanations provided to them by these peoples themselves. Who could therefore deny that there are, in Cameroon, Bassa, Sawa, Béti, Ovang, Maka, Gbaya, Bulu, since there are people who recognize and affirm themselves as such? , through their claims and their relationships with others?

Despite these "evidences" which seem to be blindingly obvious, one should be wary of these essentialisations of ethnicity (ELikia M'bokolo, 1985: 187). The data to which we refer to define the ethnic groups are much more fluctuating and arbitrary than they would immediately suggest. Many ethnonyms, which are supposed to designate homogeneous entities, bring together segments of populations that sometimes have very little in common. In fact, as Meillassoux shows, "most indigenous societies rarely give themselves a name" (Meillassoux, Claude, 1997: 19). Pejorative, another group. But the fact of recognizing oneself in the name of an "ethnic group" does not necessarily confer on this name an anthropological consistency. "If the one we call turns around, it is because he is effectively 'responding' to this name " (Loup Jean, Amselle et al, 1985: 123). This act of responding to an interpellation is nonetheless a functional operation. The game of interpellation and response can however exercise a performative and "constitutive" function among the Ovang, which means that, from an arbitrary, factitious, "illusory" identity, an identity can be born that is at least functional and capable of become a "centrifugal force of mobilization" and belligerent.

Ethnicity is not a substance, but a moving reality that is composed and decomposed arbitrarily according to history. Even if certain data such as language, values, beliefs, seem to constitute human groups in their specificities, in their identity differences, it must be noted that there is no "ethnic group" in itself" (Dominica Darbon: 126). IT is necessary to "consider

that there are no cultures locked up in a face to face with themselves, African cultures no more than others; cultures, too, are historical constructions that are constantly changing and recomposing " (Ricœur, René Paul, 1988: 14). Whether it is a question of "ethnic groups" which are ultimately not ethnic groups, if we hold to the criterion of language community, or groups of people effectively linked by the same cultural traits, a W ethnic group is that an entity with imprecise outlines on which, unfortunately, all sorts of political strategies and disputes with different motivations can be built.

2. "Ethnic justice" among the OMBANG

Ombang justice can be understood as a certain way of distributing goods, of guaranteeing rights between individuals according to a pre-established procedural criterion, expressible in the formula "to each according to his merit and what he must received. In reality, there are several criteria of justice among the Ombang of Eastern Cameroon, which can take the empty place left in this formal rule (Mbeng Dang Hanse Gilbert: 45). In a caste system, we will say: "to each according to his caste"; in a hierarchical society, "to each according to his rank"; in a capitalist society: "to each according to his work and his contribution", etc. Michael Walzer spoke of the multiplicity of spheres of justice, which makes it difficult (but not impossible, as the attempts of Kant and Rawls show) to work out a single and universal criterion of justice.

2.1. Ombang justice: a social and political "virtue"

Ombang justice is not only a concept, it is also a social and political "virtue", the function of which we must now specify. As David Hume (Treatise on Human Nature) and John Rawls (Theory of Justice) have clearly shown, for the question of justice to arise, the goods to which the persons concerned claim must not be not immediately acquired. Take, for example, freedoms. They can only be objects of a rule of justice if one finds oneself in a context where without this rule, it could not be expressed. Men who are solitary and dispersed in nature according to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, living in a certain tranquility and independence, do not need rules of justice to guarantee this independence. But, brought together in a context where the free will of one can meet and thwart that of the other, it would impose the need for a principle of justice that should fix for each the extent of his freedom in order to make it compatible with that of others (Mbeng Dang Hanse Gilbert: 45). The same is true for other goods (social and economic). In a regime of abundance, it is not necessary to proceed to a distribution of goods. "There is abundance, says Philippe Van Parijs, when the level of society's resources and the structure of its members' preferences are such that it is possible for each of them to have access to everything they want. without however working more than he wishes. There is abundance, in other words, when it is economically possible for all members of society to simultaneously reach a state of satiety, both in the order of consumption and in the order of leisure " (Van Parijs, Philippe, 1990: 241-242).

Justice therefore presupposes a regime of scarcity. This is a condition that is not difficult to obtain. Even when, thanks to science and technology, there is a certain multiplication of consumable goods, there will always remain forms of goods whose quantity can only be limited. This is, for example, the domain of power where certain positions are condemned to be rare (a single presidential chair, a few positions for ministers and other high-ranking State officials, a limited number of seats in the National Assembly and in the parliaments, only a few places for access to the civil service, etc.). For pre-colonial and colonial Ombang society, the notion of resource scarcity applies without any nuance. Most individuals, as their history shows, were forced to establish justice to avoid any insubordination to tradition. (Van Parijs, Philippe, 1991: 243). In addition to the problem of the scarcity of goods, it is necessary to emphasize the divergence of the interests of social cooperation. The question

of justice would not arise if there were homogeneity of interests and if individuals were perfectly altruistic. Every individual is naturally concerned with maximizing what contributes to their well-being and minimizing anything that may hinder it. And in a context of scarcity, no one is indifferent to the way in which the resources, advantages and burdens of social cooperation are distributed. Failing to always claim more than the others (in accordance with the real desires to always have more than less), they do not spontaneously accept to receive the smallest share. When there is a certain altruism, it is more or less extended to the family, the party, the tribe or the ethnic group. But in any system of distribution of goods, the place or the part which belongs to oneself or to the entity to which one belongs cannot leave anyone indifferent.

2.2. Omvang justice: an objective and subjective condition

Omvang justice therefore presupposes these two conditions - an objective condition, the scarcity of goods, and a subjective condition, the interest of the individual or the group - its function consists in arbitrating the competing claims of individuals or groups, in equitably by establishing distribution criteria acceptable to all. For example, for goods that not everyone can access simultaneously, the criteria for access to these goods must be judged by all partners to be fair. In a situation of scarcity, the sharing of goods can only be unequal, but the distribution is fair "if there is a procedure recognized by all the members in the settlement of conflicts " (Ricœur, Paul: 132). Justice therefore does not consist so much in an egalitarian distribution of all goods. Essentially, two things are important here: the procedure for the distribution of property and the consensual nature of this procedure. The absence of these two elements would necessarily open the field to modes of appropriation of income and also to no less violent forms of claim. Omvang justice, beyond the resolution of disputes, was understood as a certain way of distributing goods, of guaranteeing rights between individuals, according to a pre-established procedural criterion, expressible in the formula "to each according to his ". In reality, there are several criteria of justice, each of which can take the empty place left in this formal rule. In a caste system, we will say: "to each according to his caste"; in a hierarchical society, "to each according to his rank"; in a capitalist society: "to each according to his work and his contribution", etc. (Walzer, Michael: 44).

The objective of this article was to show the anteriority of structures in traditional African societies in general and in East Cameroon in particular through geopolitics among the pre-colonial Omvang; an antithesis of the colonial Eurocentric conception. This study presented a traditional aspect of the history of the peoples of Eastern Cameroon, the interactions between the lineage populations existing since then in traditional African societies with a view to revealing the history of this once poorly and little-known people, in terms of sociopolitical and cultural. The problem of the existence of the Omvang people has been solved showing that they just suffered the invasion of the Maka but that did not cause their disappearance. This history shows us that the Omvang society has experienced significant shocks with enormous influences on the traditional conflict management systems. She shows us that conflict is inherent among the Omvang. The authority of the chief, which seems the most distant, is thus relayed by all the traditional institutions. But alas, as in all of Africa, these traditional values will disintegrate with the arrival of Western colonization and its procession of cultural reforms which have come to erase this mutual respect and this solidarity among the Omvang, now subject to a framework of colonial jurisdiction. It is clear, through these developments, that at the dawn of the colonization of the country by Europeans, all the populations of the region formed an original and colonial social model. This allows us to conclude that at the dawn of European colonization, there were ongoing dynamics in the region, revealed by the constitution of large political groups and the growth of trade, but they were stopped dead by imperialist momentum. Nevertheless, this people occupy today and forever the territorial space of the West of the Arrondissement of Nguemendouka in Haut-

Nyong in East Cameroon. Under a important superior chiefdom comprising three sociological components, the Omvang Sikonda, the Maka Ebessep and the Omvang Ngomeya group. Without claiming to have exhausted this subject, we hope that other aspects of the question emerge more clearly, if possible, to allow the scientific community to know more and more, these people and by extension the true history of this part of the country which suffers from so many erroneous facts.

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STRATEGIES TO PREVENT DROPOUTS IN THE UNIVERSITY SISTEM

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Abstract: *Within the framework of the "Education and training Strategy 2020" launched by the European Commission, among the five common strategic objectives for Member States in the field of education and training, we mention: promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship, showing that education and training should enable all citizens to acquire and develop skills and competences for employment and intercultural dialog. The study aimed to investigate the opinions of first-year students from Ovidius University of Constanta on the causes of the abandonment of university studies and the ways to prevent it. 270 first-year students from Ovidius University of Constanta, Romania were evaluated who participated in the 2021-2022 academic year in the project on secondary Education (ROSE), the grant scheme for universities, the SAPIENTIA-OVIDIUS Learning Center, grant agreement no. 106/SGU/C1/II/2018.*

Keywords: students, causes of the abandonment of university studies, quality of education

1. Introduction

The university dropout is a constantly evolving social phenomenon that has led the phenomenon observers to carry out various research to identify and prevent university failure. With the passage of time and the emergence of new factors contributing to this negative phenomenon among students, changing the educational-informative and formative vision, equal opportunities for education, psycho-pedagogical support offered in universities, it is necessary to involve all the strategies that contribute to university training in order to stop and eventually eradicate this phenomenon.

By university dropout is meant the set of actions that violate or transgress the norms or values of university education. Therefore, university dropout will include all behaviors that deviate from the norms and values that regulate the academic environment and facilitate the early leaving of university studies. University education is perceived as a function of fundamental formation of society. The university is perceived as the main institution through which the society pre-egates and trains its specialists.

2. Theoretical references

2.1. Educational policies on university education in Romania in the European context after the Bologna Convention (2009)

The recent history of higher education in Romania has recorded a number of specific characteristics determined by the impact of educational policies and educational reform measures related to the structure of the education system in compliance with the provisions of the Bologna Convention, conditions of access to the higher education system, curricula, methods of certification of the quality level of university studies, quality assurance systems. The efficiency of the higher education system and the evolution of educational phenomena

such as the abandonment of university studies is also influenced by the socio-economic context specific to Romania.

The complex identification and evaluation of the causes of the abandonment of university studies, the consequences and frequency of the evolution of this phenomenon is a very complex issue both in Romania and in the other countries of the As stated at the *World Education Forum in Incheon* (Republic of Korea, May 2015) in the Education 2030 Declaration – “for inclusive education and quality equitable education for all, throughout life”, recognition of the right to education is interconnected with all fundamental human rights.

“Access to and participation in education, promoted today by the vast majority of the world’s States, are not only aimed at welcoming all children into the educational system, but involve active participation, regardless of their developmental, socio-cultural, and belonging characteristics.” (Vrasmas, 2016) European Union, having implications both in educational and social terms.

Social inclusion must be one of the goals of educational programs and policies promoted at all levels of schooling. Promoting the values of equity in higher education focuses on the efforts of higher education institutions, government and other actors to increase participation in higher education, especially for underrepresented groups (Green, 2009). Discrimination is identified as one of the reasons why equal opportunities is not respected as a social principle. Many aspects of discrimination show that discrimination manifests itself in exclusion, restriction and differentiated treatment of individuals, groups, communities to the disadvantage of some.

Equal opportunities are based on ensuring the full participation of every person in economic and social life, without distinction of ethnic origin, gender, religion, age, disability or sexual orientation. Discrimination is any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on the criteria laid down by the legislation in force

Many studies point to inequalities in accessing and participating in quality education. These inequalities also derive from the ethnic, economic, social and residence background of students. Belonging to Roma ethnicity, residence in poor rural or urban areas, low economic resources, are the variables that in Romania are negatively associated with access to education, as well as with the quality of education. The problematic aspects of the entire educational system in Romania, which particularly affect pupils in disadvantaged social categories, are the lack of material resources, poor motivation, school dropout and discrimination.

2.2. Equity in higher education

Romania has made a series of commitments in the Bologna process (started in 1999) regarding the development of the social dimension of education and equity in higher education. The first mention of the responsibility assumed by the Member States of the European higher Education Area (SEIS) was made at the Ministerial Communication adopted at the end of the Ministerial Conference held in Prague in 2001. In the European Commission’s Europe 2020 decade Strategy, the social dimension of education is reflected among the 5 main objectives for the smart, sustainable and inclusive development of the European Union. European and national policies specify the need to increase access to higher education with an adaptation of the quality of education to a greater number of students and to provide opportunities for unrepresented or under-represented groups.

The role of student organizations in promoting equity in education. Higher education institutions are democratically organized, with the real participation of student representatives in the governing bodies. The students League of Ovidius University of Constanta, the largest student organization in the university, supports and represents the interests and rights of students, in relation to the academic environment, but also in relation

to the national trade Union structures, the private sector and local authorities, in terms of educational, social, economic and cultural aspects.

Principles guiding the Plan of measures for improving equity in education in the University of Ovidius in Constanta

The organization and functioning of Ovidius University of Constanta is based on the following principles promoted by the Charter of Ovidius University of Constanta:

- a) the principle of university autonomy;
- b) the principle of academic freedom;
- (c) the principle of public liability;
- d) the principle of quality assurance;
- (e) the principle of ethics and equity;
- f) the principle of managerial and financial efficiency;
- g) the principle of transparency;
- h) the principle of respecting the rights and freedoms of students and academic staff;
- i) the principle of ideological, religious or doctrinal political independence;
- j) the principle of freedom of mobility at national and international level of students, teachers and researchers;
- k) the principle of consulting the social partners (trade union organization / university student organizations) in decision-making;
- the organization of the union / student organizations in the university) in decision-making;
- l) the principle of student-centered education.

Ovidius University of Constanta promotes:

- a) the principle of relevance – on the basis of which higher education meets the needs of personal and socio-economic development;
- b) principle of decentralization – on the basis of which the main decisions are taken by the forums directly involved in the components of the education process;
- c) the principle of guaranteeing the cultural identity of all romanian and foreign students and intercultural dialog;
- d) the principle of promoting and preserving the national identity and the romanian cultural values;
- e) the principle of recognizing and guaranteeing the rights of students belonging to national minorities – the right to preserve, develop and free expression of their ethnic, cultural, linguistic and confessional/religious identity.
- f) the principle of equal opportunities;
- g) the principle of freedom of thought and independence from ideologies, religious dogmas or political doctrines;
- h) the principle of professional inclusion of university graduates;
- i) the principle of basing all decisions on dialog and consultation;
- j) the principle of respecting the right to opinion of the student, as a direct beneficiary of the education system.

2. Methodology of research

2.1. Objectives of the study

The study aimed to investigate the opinions of first-year students from Ovidius University of Constanta on the causes of the abandonment of university studies and the ways to prevent it.

2.2. Description of the sample of participants

There were evaluated 270 first-year students from Ovidius University of Constanta, Romania who participated in the 2021-2022 academic year in the project on secondary

Education (ROSE), the grant scheme for universities, the title of the subproject: SAPIENTIA-OVIDIUS Learning Center, grant agreement no. 106/SGU/CI/II/2018.

The sample consists of 270 students

1.1.1. Distribution of students by residence environment:

- 41.5% come from rural areas
- 58.5% of the urban environment

1.1.2. Distribution of students by gender:

- 74.1% of respondents are female and female
- 25.9% of respondents are male.

1.1.3. Distribution of students according to the level of academic studies at the time of involvement in research:

- 30.4% have been enrolled in a college but failed to complete their studies
- 69,6% are first-degree students and face difficulties in adapting to the academic environment, exacerbated by the Covid pandemic period 19 – in the period 2021-2022

Distribution of scores on the abandonment of university studies

Of the first-year students surveyed, 28% attended another university and left their first faculty. We were interested in identifying the reasons why they abandoned their studies for a year or two, but decided to resume their university studies.

-33% of students believe that their field of study did not match them according to their psychological profile and personality traits

-10.74% of students believe they have chosen a higher ranked field in the labor market

-4.44% believe they could not afford to continue financially studies

-5.92% preferred to go to another college in the public system

-15,8% of students did not attend another university, and they had to drop out of university studies.

1. I realized that the field I studied did not fit me according to my psychological profile and my personality traits 55 answered yes (20.37%) and 36 no (13.33%)

2. We chose a higher rated field on the labor market 29 answered Yes (10.74%) and 47 No (17.4%)

3. I could no longer afford financially 12 answered Yes (4.44%) and 61 No (22.59%)

4. I preferred to attend a college in the public system 16 Yes (5.92%), 55 No (20.37%)

5. Not applicable, I did not attend another faculty 41 Yes, 41 No.

2.3. Description of assessment methods

- Elaboration and application of the questionnaire for preventing the abandonment of university studies and academic disintegration, a personal tool structured in nine areas of interest (quantitative method of processing research data).
- Achieving a group focus on preventing the abandonment of university studies and conducting tutoring activities and workshops.

3. Results of the research

The statistical analysis of the answers offered by the students aimed at structuring and interpreting the answers according to the following scales:

- 1) the reasons why students abandon university studies
- 2) institutions or persons with whom students may consult before making the decision to abandon their studies
- 3) professional options of students after completing their studies
- 4) the opportunities offered to students to give up the decision to abandon their university studies
- 5) the opportunities offered to students to continue their undergraduate or post-graduate studies
- 6) how students perceive their own level of professional skills development
- 7) willingness to participate in a career counseling and development program that would help them identify an alternative to dropping out of studies (knowing that this service is free for all students)
- 8) the needs or directions of vocational counseling of students

We will analyze the answers offered at each of these scales, mentioning the percentage distribution of students who opted for each category of answers:

Reasons why students leave university studies

Regarding the way in which they make decisions based on the assessment of professional skills or interests, 50% of students mention with a very high frequency that the personal decision on leaving studies was aimed at identifying professional skills and interests and 26% of them mention with an average frequency that the personal decision regarding the abandonment of studies was based on the assessment of professional skills or interests.

Important percentages of students claimed that university dropout was determined by factors of academic infrastructure such as: The attitude of academics, the study facilities offered by the university, the students' relationship with the secretariats or other structures of the university, the social facilities and entertainment facilities offered by the university, or the difficulties of passing exams.

Half of the graduates do not know their professional skills or interests and are aware of the need to participate in vocational counseling activities. In another register we can see that 14% of students mention a low or very low frequency of personal decisions regarding the abandonment of university studies by referring to their own skills and interests.

In order to be able to correctly analyze the phenomenon of university dropout we should analyze the causal factors that lead to the triggering of actions. Among these factors we mention

Individual factors – are influenced by the student's personal ability to react, that is, personal resources, wealth and quality of adaptation schemes, which refer to the fact that some students have a higher potential for adaptation and others a lower one (they are more rigid, less permissive in relationships with others). An important role is also represented by the student's adolescent life. If a student has lived in a positive social and family environment, it is considered that the psycho-affective development has gone well. Otherwise, the student may experience certain mental disorders, such as hypermotivation, phobias, anxiety, inadaptation. Lack of will, low level of aspirations, interests, motivation, insufficient development of the operating capacity of thinking. (Mihai et al., 2015)

Family factors - the family represents the first and most important context of life, with a special role in the socialization and formation of the individual. The family configures the young man's sense of security, the only one that allows man to emancipate himself and shape his personality. The family environment depends on the following conditions:

Protection against outside aggressions, satisfaction of basic needs, coherence and stability of the maturing framework. It is also the family that gives the child the feeling of being accepted by his family as a Member, of being loved, of accepting his individual characteristics, of having the opportunity to act and of acquiring a personal experience (Opre et al., 2013).

Material factors a very important role in the decision to go through the entire university stage is the type of family from which the student comes:

-families with many children cannot afford to send them to school due to lack of material resources;

-families where children are put to work, representing a source of income, especially in rural areas where children contribute to agricultural work;

- single-parent families that do not have the financial potential to support and develop a student. This is due to the fact that the number of working women is increasing and can no longer take care of the education of children;

-families whose parents have emigrated and can no longer contribute (or contribute very little) to the university education of young people born in that family.

Statistics show that more and more people are opting to go abroad, especially from rural areas, due to the very low standard of living; - disorganized families whose parents are alcoholics, victims of domestic violence, addicted to drugs, aspects that have a major influence on the evolution within the university course. Regarding the opinions of family members 21% of students consider that they consulted with family members with a very high frequency and 26% of students with an average frequency, 53% of students consulted with family members with a very low frequency.

We conclude that, above the age of majority, students prefer to assume their own professional decisions and academic decisions, also being aware of the need to develop personality traits such as conscientiousness, self-confidence and the need to develop self-esteem. Only 10% of students attach particular importance to the opinions of the group of friends, especially those who have had a social group where they feel secure and have not benefited from the support of their parents or mentors, teachers or psychological counselors.

- The efficiency and role of the ways of designing and carrying out the program of course, seminar and practice activities

The attitude of the university teachers and the vocational counseling and mentoring activities carried out by them occupy a very important place for 43% of the students interviewed. Teachers perform an essential role both in the design of theoretical or practical-applicative academic activities and in the implementation and evaluation of the progress of the learners or students. In this context we will not address a number of methods to facilitate the transfer of academic knowledge and skills described by Opre D., Fritea R. (2019):

Stages of activities	Methods to facilitate academic transfer
Design of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stimulate the motivation of future students - Involvement of the supervising teacher directly in the training activity
Implementarea activității Implementation of the activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain student motivation for learning - Increase motivation for transferring knowledge or practical skills - Combining learning objectives with implementation intentions and self-management techniques - Use of specific training techniques that stimulate the application of knowledge
Evaluation of the activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of follow-up techniques - Applying coaching techniques - Implementation of specific actions to promote the transfer by the supervisor

The evaluation of academic activities takes place in two forms: Continuous formative evaluation (throughout the semester) and summative evaluation at the end of the study of an academic discipline or at the exam for the completion of studies of a school cycle. For the cycle of undergraduate studies the completion exam usually comprises two tests aimed at assessing fundamental knowledge and academic skills in the field of undergraduate studies and a test aimed at developing a bachelor's work.

For the evaluation of the bachelor and dissertation papers, the evaluation committees assess the performance of the graduates based on the following criteria: The quality of theoretical foundation, the relevance of the chosen theoretical landmarks, the correct use of concepts and theories, the synthesis achieved, autonomy from sources: the ability to reformulate ideas personally, honest citation, critical processing, the value of bibliographic documentation, the correctness and clarity of the presentation of the research object, the ability to process, analyze data, and interpret the results, the style and correctness of the writing, the conclusions of the bachelor's work.

Following a focus group, the students mentioned the following opportunities offered by Ovidius University of Constanta that led them to abandon the decision to abandon their university studies:

- The opportunity for students to influence strategic decisions at the level of faculty boards, board of directors or university Senate

Organization and structure of practice activities

- The opportunity for students to participate in recovery activities, tutoring, mentoring

- The possibility of students to carry out activities for the benefit of the academic Community for which they would benefit from certain facilities (activities at educational fairs, activities at the canteen or other social services, activities for the maintenance of green spaces) or volunteer activities

- Evaluation system during the studies and at the completion exams of the studies

- The opportunity for students to participate in projects, workshops, complementary courses, university camps

- The possibility to interact with teachers outside of class hours directly or via email or personal page

- Quality of teaching, schedule of course and practice activities, provision of course support and teaching materials

- Quantitative and qualitative endowment with equipment for laboratory and practical activities

- The condition of the buildings, the dining facilities in the canteen, the accommodation facilities in the dormitories

- Access to the library and the virtual library

- The possibility to participate in national and international projects, in study mobility through the Erasmus Program

- Possibility to participate in vocational counseling and personal development activities

The students were also informed about the opportunities offered by Ovidius University of Constanta to continue their undergraduate or post-graduate studies:

- 1) Master studies

- 2) other post-graduate training programs: Information technology courses, language courses

- 3) doctoral studies

- 4) the courses of another faculty

author revealed once again that if growth were a viable promise, he would put away his perfidious criticisms and his contempt for money, and let the economists sing the praises of monetary enrichment (p89). Nevertheless, since it is not possible to grow more, and this is the primary lie of the economists, we must denounce the other lies that feed this one. The explanation lies in the fact that the price of money creation is itself a growth phenomenon; it is the interest rate. We know that interest is what we give to our creditors to thank them for giving us credit. The author just wants to emphasize, for the moment, that interest rates are directly linked to the logic of growth and accumulation. In other words, they couldn't care less about the consequences of what they advocate, which is systematically heading in the same direction, the methodical and increasing destruction of our rare resources, climate and biodiversity. They do this partly out of a fear of death, which is a poor advisor when it comes to saving scarce resources.

The sixth chapter overcomes the question of 'growth'. It is entitled "In the long term, we (and growth) will all be dead, "There's no such thing as a free lunch". Economists like to say it to mean that everything has to be paid for and that if the money does not come in, no activity can last. Borrowing is the most obvious form of present preference in economics. An agent "in need of financing", as we say, and which, as its name suggests is looking to raise capital, could very well decide to wait a while and save enough to raise this sum before spending it. The "a little more expensive", as you will have realized, corresponds exactly to the amount of interest he will pay to his lender. For centuries, the Catholic Church denounced this way for lenders to make money "on the back" of God's creation since interest is the price of money, but also, and above all, the price of time. On the other hand, from the Industrial Revolution onwards, for an entrepreneur, this preference for the present became a necessity if we wanted to allow everyone to be entrepreneurial, this is because the loans that enable a business to be launched will be paid for by the profits that this activity will generate. It is therefore inevitable to borrow immediately the money that you expect to earn later. What's more, the level of interest rates charged by creditors is proportional to the risk taken by the entrepreneur in his business. The higher the risk, the less certain the expected gains, but the higher they will be. This gamble on the future has a cost, in the form of interest paid to creditors.

In the last chapter, the author focuses on the solution of reducing inequality in order to save the economy and natural resources, which is why he has reserved the last chapter for those economists he calls Keynesians, and who are capable of criticizing growth in the name of a better distribution of wealth. The question is whether inequality, so long neglected by economists (p103), is destined to become the primary concern of economics. Of course, inequality should have been the main concern of economists from the outset, as Marx intended. All these inequalities, as Marx saw it, are a matter of power, even if capitalism's supreme trick has been to make every consumer an accomplice in the great resource-predatory system, thus diluting responsibility, at least in appearance.

To conclude, the author presents a synthesis of the following main points:

Firstly, the neoclassical model assumes that "more is never enough" and that one must constantly put more workers to work and more machines into operation in order to bring down prices and increase the overall surplus. This school of thought also believes that there is such a thing as measurable individual productivity, and that wage differentials are based on individual merit. Secondly, Keynesians, by never abandoning the myths of labor productivity and job- and wealth-producing economic growth, are accomplices of the economist thinking. No matter how much they want to put redistribution at the service of environmental resources and the poorest people, no matter how much they try to loosen the monetary constraint, they fail to go so far as to think about the unproductiveness of the productive system. Thirdly, the importance given to the value of labor prevents us from

thinking about the part of the predation of the world that is due to the mobilization of productive energy resources. Yet the working classes would also be capable, if given the means, of destroying the world without exploiting anyone. Lastly, the Schumpeterian ones are perhaps the worst because they are convinced that technical progress will provide the solution to the environmental limits that they believe they will be able to overcome (e.g. we will manage to make the oceans absorb more CO²). Innovations are seen as the solution to all their problems, but they fail to understand that by causing an inevitable rebound effect and being compulsive consumers of energy and scarce resources without ever replacing themselves, technological innovations are the problem and not the solution.

Note :

*John Maynard Keynes: *A British economist, known notably as the founder of modern macroeconomics.* [online] available at: https://www.abcbourse.com/apprendre/biographie_john_maynard_keynes-

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