



# Journal of Community Positive Practices

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## JOURNAL OF COMMUNITY POSITIVE PRACTICES

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# EFFECTS OF LEADER APPROACH IN THE RECONFIGURATION OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRUCTURES IN THE RURAL AREA

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Gabriel Nicolae PRICINĂ<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** *This article is the result of secondary analysis of data obtained from a research based on the partnership between the University of Craiova and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Dolj County. The information obtained was placed in a wider context, in which there were added the specific influences of globalization and Romania's membership of the European Union. The main objective of the research was to identify the employers' requirements regarding the quality of human resources. Empirical exploration of the attitude of jobseekers revealed a high level of mismatch between employer searches and what is identified on the labor market. Also, you can see the need to prepare those looking for a job in order to attend the job interview with the best chances. The study we refer to in this article shows that professionalism is not enough for a job, looking for the specific skills and personality traits of the candidates, which often provide the score that makes the difference between the candidates. In such a context, the repeated failures of the applications, the low number of jobs and the low remuneration in relation to the European labor market will favor the renunciation of the personal development and the search for professional alternatives abroad, even if activities below the qualification level are performed but are generating higher incomes. The temptation of immediate income becomes stronger than the desire to build a career, which will have negative consequences in the long term.*

**Keywords:** *labor force, labor market, emigration, employers, professional skills*

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## Introduction

The labor market in developing companies is affected by a number of complex factors that influence the supply and demand of jobs in different ways. The economic competition involves a double investment: in modern technology, competitive machines and equipment, on the one hand, and on the other hand in labor resources. If in the first case the choices are easy and conditioned only by the relationship between the quality of the products provided to the customers and the price, that is, the

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potential profit, in the second case the entrepreneurs are facing difficult choices related to the quality of the employees. Migration is one of the phenomena that affect the labor market in Romania and which will make the selection process of labor resources more difficult, as people with high qualifications are prone to emigrating even though they have qualifications in the fields sought on the labor market.

The present article deals with aspects related to the employers' searches on the labor market and the degree of correspondence between the demand and the existing supply, provided that the emigration alternative is permanent. In this context, the opinions of 106 representatives of some companies from Dolj County, either employers or representatives of human resources departments, are analyzed. Opinions were asked regarding the professional qualities and traits of character or personality followed in the employment interviews, the fluctuation of the work force, the satisfaction with the training of the employees and the predisposition to collaborate with other institutions in order to increase the quality of the human resources or to employ trained persons prior to the job interviews.

Such an approach aims to understand the needs of employers and the possibilities of recruiting and maintaining human resources in the conditions of the tendency of Romanian employees to emigrate, regardless of the conditions in the country of destination. An interpretation of the employers' opinions from the point of view of the tendency towards emigration is a consequence of the main cause of the fluctuation of the labor force indicated by the employers who participated in this study.

## **Theoretical explanations of labor migration: in what conditions does an employee give up a job in favor of migration?**

The characteristic phenomena of the labor market can be explained by limited references only to the supply and the demand on the labor market, on the one hand, and on the other hand, phenomena that contribute to the context in which the exchanges between the stakeholders are manifested can be connected.

Many countries, including Romania, are affected by the migration of the working age population. Wage differences are the main reason for migration, but this approach is not sufficient to understand the whole complex of causes that favor the displacement of the labor force. Samuel A. Stouffer (1962: 314) explains migration through "intervening opportunities", which suggests that more opportunities in other societies attract the population from a less developed country. In our case, we are talking about the number of opportunities and not their quality. Everett S. Lee (1966: 47-57) identified four "sets of factors". Thus, the causes are known and understood by emigrants, but in many cases they have information mediated by other people. In the adoption of the emigration decision the way in which the advantages and disadvantages of emigration are balanced.

In this article we seek to explain the decision of emigration from the perspective of the Romanian employers who try to manage human resources inclined towards high

professional mobility. Usually the economic causes predominate, but in reality, the explanations are much more numerous and complex (Arango, 2000: 290).

More complete explanations resulting from the analysis of migrant networks, which allow multiple approaches, are much more complete. Authors such as Guarak and Caces have identified 12 approaches to this analytical perspective (1992: 167). By analyzing the networks of migrants, the limit imposed by the economic references is exceeded and it places the emigrant in a network of migrants that emphasizes his personality characteristics.

No less important for carrying out this study is the perspective of social capital analysis (Massey et. al. 1998 p.170). The network supports the immigrant to integrate socially and get a job. From the perspective of this analysis, we appreciate that the network has become a specific form of social capital that attracts new recruits. This “attraction” compensates for the area of ignorance that the migrants assume. If the aspects are known in the area of origin (Lee, 1966: 47-57), in the destination area the information is provided by the network of emigrants. This information will describe the existing opportunities and will favor the emigration strategy as a form of social success.

Starting from the information that the fluctuation of the labor force is largely due to the possibility of employment abroad, which favors migration and social integration at an early stage, we consider that, in the light of some explanatory theories of emigration, we can refer to the multitude of opportunities in a society as the main factor of emigration. Thus, having a job with income that does not allow economics, but only ensures a satisfactory standard of living by the standards of the country of origin, will not be a factor of retention compared to the emigration perspective, even in positions with a low level of social prestige. Multiple opportunities provide first and foremost the feeling of security for those who choose to emigrate from a society where job loss can be a personal tragedy, and in that society there is little chance of recovery.

## **Statistical perspective analysis of labor force migration**

Theories related to population displacement in different geographical areas are confirmed by statistical data. According to the National Institute of Statistics, the young population emigrating from Romania (aged 0-19) has increasing values. It is about young people who are dependent on parents who emigrate permanently. This fact indicates that a good part of the migrants are over 30 years old, are married, have children and decide to migrate permanently. Statistical data analyzed indicate that between 1992 and 2018, the definitive emigration of young children, aged less than 4 years (10.82% at national level), with 25.96% of children aged 10-14 years, increased; with 45.35% of young people between the ages of 15-19 years. Only in the 5-9 years age segment there is a decrease of 7.80%.

The young people who integrate in the age category 20-29 years old are a category of age whose emigration has decreased. In the case of those aged 20-24 years, the decrease between 1992 and 2018 was 70.84%, and for those in the 25-29 years age group the decrease was 37.04% for the same time interval. It is found that in this period of life there is a lower tendency to migrate permanently, probably due to the completion of

studies and the initiation of a career. The peak of migration of young people in this age category is the year 1992. Trends followed by migration flows, according to age groups, show that in the first part of the studied time period (1992-2000) the tendency of emigration of very young people predominates.

For the age category 30-39 years we attend different flows depending on the two age categories (30-34 years and 35-39 years): in the case of those between 30-34 years the trend was decreasing, being in 2018 with 10.19% lower than in 1992. In contrast, for the 35-39 age subgroup, the trend was increasing by 24.04% in 2018 compared to 1992.

The next age group, 40-49 years, is characterized by the tendency of increasing emigration. Statistical data shows that people aged 40-44 migrated between 1992-2018 with 54.28% more, and people aged 45-49 migrated over the same time period with 61.89% more.

The last age group for which we identify the tendency to increase emigration is made up of people aged 50-54 years, where the values were 6.32%. In the case of the other age groups, there are no significant data due to the relatively small number of people who have emigrated.

Trends from the statistics suggest that persons who emigrate permanently are of mature age (35-49 years) probably family and children. It seems that people who fall into this age category have higher needs than financial interests. This period of life includes those who have made a career and have a certain level of income. The definitive emigration marks the weakening of the links with the country of origin, the community and the family from the country of origin and the assumption of the citizen quality of the country of destination. This decision cannot be reduced to economic needs. It is due to a series of needs valued to the extent that they can be met by immigrants: stability, safety, child protection and the multitude of opportunities in the country of destination. Temporary emigration is recorded in statistics for the period 2012-2018. Trends show that the tendency of emigration is higher in the age categories 30-39 years (156.57%), followed by the age category 40-49 years with an increase of 151.029%.

In the seven years included in the statistics, the migration trends have reached values between 138.13% and 156.57%, which indicates that the temporary migration has a significant economic component. Comparing the statistical data, we find that in the case of temporary migration we deal with a predominance of economic factors, while the definitive migration indicates the predominance of a system of individual values much more complex than the economic one.

## **Behind the statistics**

Statistical data confirm an existing reality at a given moment. These can be considered numerical expressions of phenomena that have complex causes and are in progress. Maintaining some trends indicates keeping those causes and, depending on the context, the need to intervene.

By comparing the two categories of emigrants, we observe the emergence of new values and attitudes, especially in the case of those who have definitively emigrated:



although the initial decision to emigrate is due to economic considerations, over time, they are replaced by cultural, civilization, politics etc. due to the individual transformations generated by the destination society. Research conducted in recent years in the communities of Romanian emigrants (Goga, 2019: 42-43) revealed the emergence and development of a system of radicalization of the opinions regarding the nationals, manifested through contempt and disregard of the Romanian society. The destination society, which offered them the economic balance, is valued by emigrants at a higher level, and a good part of the emigrants become agents of influence and of promoting the potential existing in the developed countries. The emigrant network will transfer not only social capital, but also different values. By comparing the situation in the developed countries with Romania, the individual values will also be ranked.

This hierarchy also serves as a provider of professional goals. Thus, the job offers from abroad are valued higher by the Romanian employees, being sought and accepted in relation to the hierarchy that each one performs and without reference to the social context or any other arguments pertaining to the community in the country of origin.

The existence of such a value system, accepted by a large number of Romanian employees, affects the labor market in Romania. Recruitment of human resources becomes difficult affected by the high volatility of the workforce. The professionalization and the professional experience acquired at a given moment become skills that will facilitate the emigration process in case of contact with the present value system.

The general data revealed that the labor market in Romania is affected by major discrepancies. In many cases there is a demand for the labor force not covered due to the lack of the required qualifications. Although it is a country that supplies immigrants, in many areas, such as the construction and textile industries, it has resorted to employees from Asian countries. Starting from such a context, the study on which this article is based was conducted. It was desired to identify the problems encountered by the employers in Dolj County. The lack of skilled or inadequate workforce in accordance with the quality standards of employers can be considered paradoxical in a region affected by poverty and economic decline. The migration of the prepared workforce and the inability of the young people to replace them reveal a crisis of the labor resources with certain specific qualifications and characteristics, and the governmental policies for generating new jobs will be affected by the lack of the necessary socio-professional categories.

People looking for a job have a choice between two possibilities: the first refers to employment according to their expectations, while the second alternative is even emigration. Remuneration superior to Romania is a factor of attraction of labor, even if the jobs offered are under the training of the employees.

The social capital formed by the networks of emigrants works as a factor of attraction. From the perspective of the explanations offered by the French sociologist Bourdieu (1986: 241-258) we consider that belonging to a group ensures an exchange of information and recommendations that support the credibility of the candidate emigrating to employers in developed countries. Successful integration models in

developed companies become arguments in favor of labor migration. James Coleman (1988: 98) stated that the functions performed define social capital. The author identified three forms of social capital (1988: 199): “*obligations and expectations, which depend on trustworthiness of the social environment, information-flow capability of the social structure, and norms accompanied by sanctions [...]*”. In the sense of the present research, we note that expectations trust in the information flow, norms and sanctions are the elements that guide the behavior of the employees trying to make a decision regarding their own occupation. Accepting a job abroad has as a substrate the greater confidence in the social success that can be achieved through emigration. The international mobility of mature, experienced work, family and children reveals that trust in social success is based on the opportunities that are already informed by those who have already emigrated and which allow the transfer of social security to children, which satisfactorily explains the acceptance of some jobs that suppose a lower level of preparation than the children.

## Human resource recruitment standards

The data from the study showed that 32.1% of companies lost more than ten employees in the last year, 17.9% lost between one and three employees, 14.1% lost between four and six employees, and 2.7% between seven and nine employees. The reasons for leaving a company are the job offers abroad. A percentage of 47.4% of the respondents mentioned that over time they were affected by the departures of the employees to work abroad. On the second place are the conflicts with the colleagues of service, which shows that in the first case it is a judgment regarding the future opportunities, and in the second case the importance of the atmosphere at the workplace is highlighted.

In the third place is the salary as a reason for leaving the job, which indicates that the incomes obtained are highly correlated with the current level of the Romanian society. The level of wages is followed by the quality of working conditions. These can be factors of retention or rejection of employees. In these conditions, in which over a third of the employers participating in the study mentioned that they lost employees who chose to emigrate for jobs abroad, we find that the process of recruiting work resources is complicated. Thus, for management functions are sought qualities such as decision-making ability, organizational spirit and communicativity. Professionalism is indicated on the fourth position, at a great distance from the first two options. To these requirements are added work experience (56.4%), proven skills (46.2%), professionalism due to the knowledge acquired over time (44.9%) and the general intelligence level (43.6%). The diplomas and certificates of proficiency held were indicated by 32.1% of the respondents, and the health status by 30.8%. Advanced knowledge of two or more foreign languages and the use of the computer are also factors that influence the selection process, as well as the possession of the driver's license and the availability to travel around the country. This combination of factors reveals that the qualities that can be proven practically and not by evidence demonstrating a certain theoretical and institutional preparation are sought.

In the case of execution functions, adaptability (39.74%), professionalism (39.74%) and intelligence (37.18%) are sought, which indicates that the specific dynamics of an execution job also implies certain adaptations of the personnel. Added to these are proven skills (53.8%), work experience (48.7%), professional performance (44.9%), professional results (39.7%) and physical ability (32.1%). The ability to use the computer, knowledge of a medium or satisfactory level of foreign languages and the driving license contribute to the assessment of the submitted applications.

The rejection of the candidatures for a position is most often due to the lack of necessary studies (24.62%), the lack of seriousness (10.77%), the lack of professionalism (10.77%) and the lack of interest and motivation (10.00%). Another dimension of analysis concerns the causes that determine the dismissal of some employees. Several causes have been invoked by each employer, depending on the experience of each company: firstly there is the non-observance of the service tasks (44.9%), the non-involvement in reaching the company objectives (32.1%) and the unmotivated absences (25, 6%). A general profile of the sought employees is that of men aged 35-44 from the urban area, with over 10 year's professional experience. It is found that the mentioned interval is almost similar to that of the persons who emigrate definitively from Romania.

Candidates with the best professional knowledge were graduates of master's and bachelor's degrees. Also, candidates who are active at the time of application and from other companies where they have worked without interruption are appreciated. The main factor of employee retention and motivation is the increase of salaries and material bonuses (bonuses, rewards, commissions, etc.). The second measure is the creation of an attractive working environment, and the third measure is the qualification, retraining and implementation of practical training programs. The estimations regarding the Romanian labor market are predominantly pessimistic. Almost half of the respondents (46.2%) mentioned that they need assistance in identifying the necessary workforce, and 30.8% mentioned that the workforce is insufficient. Stakeholders have not made the necessary efforts for a necessary labor market, and those in need of labor are not sufficiently supported. As a result, half of the respondents indicated that the labor market will have a negative evolution.

The statistical analysis of the collected data revealed that the respondents' opinions are influenced by the following factors: the personality traits, the knowledge of the profession at the time of employment and the reasons for which employees were dismissed in the past. This perspective describes the fact that, in the first place in the searches of the employers, certain personality traits of the candidates are appreciated. From this point of view it is observed that there are two dimensions that underpin the analysis: the first refers to personality traits and morality, and the second to the level of professionalism and experience. The extent to which candidates are able to comply with the requirements of the two dimensions is influenced by multiple elements, but the need to cultivate certain traits, behaviors and attitudes can be satisfied by developing a training and instructions system.

## Conclusions

Through this article we explored the relationship between the Romanian labor market, the possibilities of the entrepreneurs to recruit the necessary human resources according to their own standards, the influence of emigration and the choices that Romanian employees can make in different contexts.

The main conclusion of the study is the increasing migratory flow is due in part to phenomena such as those resulting from the study. Thus, the standards required by the employers are close to the western ones. It is required character traits, proven professionalism, uninterrupted activity, work experience, computer operating knowledge, foreign languages, etc. But the difference between the countries and the lower competitiveness of the Romanian economy generates lower incomes. Part of the profit of the companies operating in Romania, regardless of the origin of the capital, is due to the lower labor costs. In such a context, in which the capital flows from different countries are different, and the human capital tends to be equalized in value, at least in certain fields of activity, we assist in the development of migrant networks and the increase of the influence of social capital, which will favor labor displacement. The retention of highly qualified workforce is increasingly difficult, given that the job provides only a part of the needs. For middle-aged people, who have family and children, the education of children, health services, existing opportunities, etc. are important. As described in this article, opportunities play a significant role in the decision to emigrate.

Emigration is in fact a component of a vicious circle made up of wage differences, reduced economic and professional opportunities, the precariousness of the medical system and the action of the networks of emigrants. Solving the problems generated by such a context requires a complex action to fill the differences of opportunities.

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# THE POLITICS OF EDUCATION REFORMS IN KENYA: CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM FROM 1963-2020

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**Abstract:** *The study conducted a critical appraisal of the education system and reforms in Kenya as influenced by the regime of the day. There are various factors that influence educational development in any particular country, namely political, historical, geographical, technological, religious, and ideological factors. The political factor is seen as the steering wheel of education in Kenya during pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods. There is no doubt that educational policies on system reforms are significantly dependent on political and social conditions, which are no longer consistent with the current predominant economic reality. This has made it difficult to come up with better, reliable, and sustainable policies. The historical design was adopted in reviewing educational development under the leadership of the four presidents of Kenya. So far, the first and the second presidents remain known as the ones who have brought the most educational changes in the country. The new 2-6-6-3 education system emphasizes continuous assessment tests rather than the end of cycle tests and is more competencies-based than exam-based (as is the 8-4-4 system). The policy designers in the education sector should comprehend and embrace education policies since they are expected to give effective leadership and management practices in the development of education. Good education development can only be realized when a country tries to separate educational policies from national politics, clear stipulation of educational policies and their role in national development and a sound implementation of educational reforms. This article digs deeper into education policies and implementation in Kenya in an attempt to provide recommendations and suggestions to improve the educational sector.*

**Keywords:** *educational system; educational reforms; Kenyan Government*

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## Introduction

There is definite confirmation that education improves societal well-being; this explains the reason why societies invest profoundly in comprehensive and quality education.

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Households and citizens support public education systems by funding their children's education and by paying taxes (Ngware, 2019). Equal access to quality education is vital for addressing socioeconomic problems of poverty, unemployment and inequality (Reynolds et al., 2014; UNESCO(d), 2017), and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) appropriately capture this idea. The greatest and working tool a nation can offer its youth is education, and a healthy society is nurtured through the provision of quality education that is accessible and relevant (Njagi, 2018; Digolo, 2006). Immediately after gaining independence in 1963, the Kenyan government vowed to eliminate or reduce the three "enemies" of development: poverty, illiteracy, and disease (Imana, 2017). In developing countries such as Kenya, education provision and training of citizens are crucial for economic and social development. For example, Kenya's vision 2030 blueprint, sessional paper No.1 of 2005, and the new constitution of 2010, clearly explained the education policy framework and the county's developmental plans. In order to vividly explain the trend of the education policies and reforms in Kenya, this study divided the explanation into four presidential eras.

Kenya's budgetary allocation to education in the current financial year stands at 494.8 billion shillings which is about US\$4.95 billion. This means that the education sector receives twice combined allocations for defense, health and the presidency (Ngware, 2019). Generally, there are over 17 million children and youth in education and under training in Kenya. There are over 13 million children and youth currently in primary and secondary schools. In 2018 alone, enrolment in public universities accounted for about 513,000 students, while the rest were in early childhood education and non-universities tertiary institutions. The education budget is split as follows: 50% to the Teachers' Service Commission, 20.9% to public universities, 21.7% non-salary allocation to basic education programmes and 3.6% to technical and vocational training (Ngware, 2019).

The education sector transformation and restructuring can be traced back from the pre-colonial to the post-colonial era. The educational system during pre-colonial era was based on the western form of education. Christian missionaries launched the western form of education in Kenya around the 18th century and their main aim was only to serve religious purposes and to support western ideologies (Imana, 2017; Sheffield, 1973). The educational aims were further widened to contain basic practical skills in order to meet the colonial government demands at the time. The colonial administration brought in a racially-based education system whereby Africans were taught separately from whites and other races mostly to study "industrial education", whose aim was to prepare them for their colonial masters. Education and training for all empower citizens of a particular country to improve their living standards through participating greatly in economic productivity and growth, alleviating poverty, and utilizing the available socioeconomic opportunities (Romer, 1990; Rosen, 1999; UNESCO(e), 2006; Bwonda, 2013). Owing to the prominence given to education internationally, the United Nations (UN) declared education as a basic human right in 1948. African countries met in Addis Ababa in 1961 and agreed to attaining Universal Primary Education (UPE) by 1980 and at the same time planned to expand all other levels of education. The management of education was re-emphasized in 1990 when 1500 participants from 155 countries including Kenya gathered in Jomtien in Thailand

and re-affirmed education as a human right by adopting the World Declaration on Education for All (Republic of Kenya, 2005). Therefore, provision of high quality education remains the top most agenda for the African countries as they strive to achieve development and join the league of developed nations in the world. However, quality issues still block the education systems in developing nations (Njagi, 2018; Imana, 2017; Digolo, 2006).

Access to education has generally improved in sub-Saharan Africa with both boys and girls reporting better completion rates in the last two decades (Lewin, 2009; UNESCO (c) UIS, 2018). According to UNESCO(d) (2017), the inequity gap has greatly improved, particularly for girls, although full parity has not been attained generally and learning gaps continue to be high. There is no doubt that Kenya is striving hard to provide quality and affordable education for all. Kenya is amongst the best education providers on the African continent although this being undermined by bad policies, limited educational financing, ethnicity politics, and poor income distribution policy that makes it difficult for Kenya to improve even further as expected. Kenya has had several education commissions that influenced government education policies (Wa Mberia, 2016). Policies guiding the education sector evolved since independence with over six commissions and committees established to review or develop education policies that led to developing self-expression, discipline and self-reliance in an all-round educational experience for learners (Mutuku et al, 2019). Some of the key commissions that have been undertaken to review education during this period include the Phelps-Stokes Commission (1924), the Beecher report (1949), the Binns Commission (1952), the Ominde report (1964), the Bessey report (1972), the Gachathi report (1976), the Mackay report (1981), the Kamunge report (1988), the Koech report (1999) and the Odhiambo report (2012). When a country invests more in education development, a number of benefits will be witnessed: an increase in economic growth, an increase in wealth and income distribution, more skilled and trained manpower, more quality opportunities, a drop in population growth, and high life expectancy and good health. Additionally, low crime rates, national peace, and political stability were witnessed (Abuya, & Musyoka, 2013; Ojiambo, 2009; Amutabi, 2003; Psacharopoulos, 1988).

## **Problem Statement**

The development of education in colonial Kenya was politically directed and the same trends were realized in post independent period. There is no doubt that educational policy and system reforms are significantly dependent on political and social conditions, which are no longer consistent with the current prevalent economic reality, which makes it difficult to come up with better, reliable, and sustainable policies (Imana, 2017). The ruling and various political parties have been using free basic education policies to win votes from the electorates in Kenya. Political interference by heads of states, delay in reviewing education curriculum and policies, poor policy formulation and implementation are some of the problems that undermine the growth of education in Kenya. The new education system of 2-6-6-3 has been introduced in Kenya to nurture not only academic professionalism, but is also meant to give skills and power to create ideas that propel the economy. This is because the 8-4-4 system deviated from its

original envisioned purpose and progressively resorted to preparing learners towards passing examinations, acquiring white collar employment and general wealth creation. This article therefore, probes the new education system of 2-6-6-3, compares education system in Kenya, UK and USA, and lastly, explores historical trends of education policies and reforms under the four presidents of Kenya from 1963 to 2020.

## **Objective**

The main objective this article is to explore historical trends of education policies and reforms during pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial period in Kenya. The following specific objectives have been identified:

1. To critically assess the educational reforms and development in the republic of Kenya;
2. To examine the new education system of 2-6-6-3 in Kenya;
3. To find out education policies contributions by the four presidents of Kenya (1963-2020);
4. To compare the education systems in Kenya, UK and USA up to secondary level.

## **Education System in Kenya**

The government of Kenya has increased universal access to basic education in an attempt to support National Educational Goals, International Conventions on education, and UNESCO instruments by supporting fully free primary and Free Day Secondary Education (Ndonga, 2017). The education system in Kenya has undergone various reforms and restructuring. It first began with the 7-4-2-3 system, then moved to the 8-4-4 system, and to the new 2-6-6-3 education system.

### ***Education System of 7-4-2-3 (1967-1984)***

The 7-4-2-3 systems meant seven years of primary education, four years of secondary education, two years of high school, and three-five years of university education. Under the 7-4-2-3 system of education, children were to do three kinds of examinations before joining the university. Firstly, the East African Certificate of Primary Education (EACPE) for primary education that was done at the end of every seven years. Secondly, the East African Certificate of Education Examination (EACE) for secondary education done at the end of four years. Thirdly, the East African Advanced Certificate of Education (EAAC) for high school education was done after two years.

### ***Education System of 8-4-4 (1985-2021)***

The second president of the Republic of Kenya, His Excellence the late President Daniel Torotich Arap Moi, introduced the 8-4-4 system of education in 1985. The 8-4-4 system was tailored to improve the problems related to academic education, for example, a scarcity of technical skills. The government of Kenya initially introduced vocational subjects at both primary and secondary education levels under “the



umbrella” of the 8-4-4-system syllabus (Mwiria, 2002, Republic of Kenya, 2003). The 8-4-4-system consists of eight years of primary, four years of secondary, and four years of university education. At the end of 8 years of study at the primary level, pupils take a national examination (Kenya Certificate of Primary Education - KCPE). If a pupil passes the KCPE he/she will join a secondary school, which takes 4 years before the student will sit for the secondary school national examinations (Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education – KCSE) in order to study at a higher education level.

*Primary Level:* This is the first stage of entry to the 8-4-4 education system and students normally take 8 years to complete it. The eight years are divided into three levels: lower primary (grade 1-3), middle primary (grade 4-5), and upper primary (grade 6-8). Grades one to eight are commonly referred to in Kenya as standard 1-8 or class 1-8. Primary education caters to children aged between six and thirteen years or above. The basic education provided at the primary level is meant to prepare students to contribute the talents, skills, and knowledge that they have acquired to the country’s development in the future. Although primary education is free for all, it is not compulsory, which makes it difficult for all parents to have their children study. Primary pupils sit for their final examination after eight years of study; the pupils take the Kenya Certificate Education Examination (KCPE), which is controlled by the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) under the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology. Upon receiving the examination results, normally at the end of December of every year, students are able to know if they will be able to join national, provincial, or district secondary schools.

*Secondary Level:* This is the second phase of the education system in Kenya whereby students take four years before sitting for their final national examinations, commonly referred to as Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE). When students pass the KCSE examinations, it enables them to go to university after attaining the required pass points. Public secondary schools in Kenya are categorized into national, provincial, and districts schools. In order for a student to get admitted to above-mentioned categories of secondary schools, he/she needs to have passed the primary school leaving examination (KCPE) where the selection is made according to the students’ scores and grades. This means that students that score the highest scores/points get admitted to national schools while those that get scores slightly above average or average get admitted to provisional and districts secondary schools respectively.

*University Education Level:* This is one of the higher education sector levels in Kenya that includes universities, higher professional education institutes, polytechnics, and industrial training institutes. In this study, the university education level was used as a representation of the higher education level and the study concentrated more specifically on public universities. In order to propel Kenya’s economy, there is a need to educate more people at higher levels of learning, such as universities. According to Wanjala and Malechwanz (2016), there are many individual and social benefits when one obtains a higher education, which has been directly linked to social and economic development as witnessed in rising economic giants such as China. Regarding Kenya’s university programs, undergraduate study takes 4 to 6 years, postgraduate (master) study takes 1 to 2 years, and the PhD programs take 3 years.

In Kenya, the bachelor's programs frequently end with a research project without which one would not be allowed to graduate. Apart from engineering, architecture, veterinary science, and medicine programs, which take 5 to 6 years, the rest of the disciplines take 4 years. At the masters level, one studies between 1 and 2 years and in most cases, the first year is for lectures and the second year is for doing thesis/research work. The highest level in the education hierarchy is the doctoral program, which takes 3 years to complete. Upon successful completion of this program, the titles of PhD or Dr. phil. are awarded to graduates. In addition to the bachelors, master's and doctoral program provided at the universities, the national polytechnics offer higher professional education and confer diplomas and certificates. Upon completion of a diploma course at the national polytechnics, one can then move on to enroll in a university bachelor's program.

### *Reasons against the 8-4-4 Education System in Kenya*

The following were the reasons provided for scrapping the current education system (8-4-4):

- it keeps pupils in primary school for too long;
- pupils were taught more subjects which required more textbooks and funding;
- learning amenities were overstretched with the implementation of the 8-4-4 system;
- pupils and teachers needed more time to complete the syllabus, which forced them to have extra learning hours during the schools' closure.

Despite the task forces' recommendations led by former Moi University Vice Chancellor Douglas Odhiambo on the benefits of the new form of education system, parents and major stakeholders criticized it by saying that it was costlier than the current system. In reply to their claims, the task force explained that the new system of education would be costly of course, but it will be an essential investment that a country makes for its people and that the cost should not be a factor in dismissing the proposed system.

The new education system was tailored to accommodate other disciplines, for example, technical work, self-employment, and wealth creation in the country. The Kenyan pupils would benefit more if only the new system of education would be well organized and implemented. The appraisal for the new education system would be through continuous assessment tests, offered by the respective schools, to enable the learners' transition by evaluating the students' skills, capabilities, and abilities. This is the major reason for scrapping the national examinations for the primary and secondary levels.

### *New Education System of 2-6-6-3*

The structure of the new education system in Kenya is as follows: 2 years of pre-primary, 3 years of lower primary, 3 years of upper primary, 3 years of junior/lower secondary, 3 years of senior secondary and 3 years of tertiary education (Wanjohi, 2017). The new education system replaced the 8-4-4 education system, marking the end

of both the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education and the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examinations. According to the task force led by former Moi University Vice-Chancellor Douglas Odhiambo, they recommended that primary and secondary examinations be terminated by 2018 and 2021 respectively. The fourth President of Kenya, H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta approved the proposals for the new system of education.

The new education system of Kenya of 2-6-6-3 puts less emphasis on examinations just like USA does and students remain generalists all the way through to the end of secondary school. The 2-6-6-3 education system emphasizes on continuous assessment tests rather than the end of cycle tests and is more competencies-based than exam-based as in 8-4-4 education system. It was estimated that 2-6-6-3 could cost Kshs 340billion annually to implement it and Kshs 2 billion out of this cost will be used to hire new teachers (Kwach, 2019). In Kenya, it is estimated that 90,000 teachers should be employed to meet the recommended Pupil-Teacher ratio of 40:1.

Pre-primary level of education covers 2 years, namely pre-primary 1 and pre-primary 2 for children aged between 4 and 5 years. Digital literacy and pertinent and contemporary issues will be integrated across all subjects. Lower primary education takes 3 years, covering grade 1, 2, and 3. The age bracket is expected to be between 6 and 8 years. There will be both formative and national assessment. Upper primary education covers grade 4 to 6, starting from age 9 to age 11 years. There shall be formative and national assessment to assess learning outcome. Primary education emphasises on practical oriented learning areas such as Home science, Art and Craft, Music, Drama, Agriculture, and Foreign languages such as French, German, Chinese and Spanish. Secondary education advocated for practical subjects such as Home science, Art and craft, Agriculture and woodwork. Other subjects are more of practical and learners at this stage start specializing in their preferred profession (Wanjohi, 2017).

Junior secondary education covers grade 7, 8, and 9 for those aged between 12 and 14 years. Upper secondary education covers grade 10 to 12 for the age bracket between 15 and 17 years. In this level, there are three learning pathways, namely arts and sports science, social sciences and STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) (Wanjohi, 2017).

**Table 1: Comparison between 8-4-4 and 2-6-6-2 Curriculum**

Topics	8-4-4 Curriculum (Old)	2-6-6-3 Curriculum (New)
<b>Rationale</b>	It is about skills preparations for the World of work. The basic academic education thought to lack the necessary content to promote widespread sustainable (self) employment	It is about education sector reforms aligned to 2010 Constitution of Kenya, Vision 2030 and the Global Standards
<b>Goal</b>	Intended for knowledge acquisition (cognitive development)	It is grounded in competencies (proper application of knowledge) to real life state of affairs.
<b>Focus</b>	Emphasized competition for examination grades	Emphasizes on excellence and competitiveness

Topics	8-4-4 Curriculum (Old)	2-6-6-3 Curriculum (New)
<b>Curriculum Basis</b>	Objective based participants	Competency based
<b>Mode of learning</b>	Teacher at the centre of learning with learners being more of passive	Learners at the center of learning and teachers' duty is to facilitate learners
<b>Methodology</b>	More rigid in content, learning time and strategies	Flexible, responsive and supportive in embracing diverse learning needs and abilities
<b>Mode of assessment</b>	Concentrates on summative assessment (KCPE, KCSE)	Balances between formative and summative assessment
<b>Parental involvement</b>	Very little parental engagement and support	Engage parents through empowerment and allow shared responsibility in all tiers and levels of basic education
<b>Transition</b>	Not guaranteed especially for learners with disabilities	Transition is guaranteed for all learners through different pathways, except for special cases of disabilities

## Research Methodology

The article used desk research and qualitative methods to gather data and give interpretation of it. The researcher majorly relied upon secondary levels reviewing of literature and drawing on national and regional level educational policy documents. The literature was additionally verified with selected key informant and institutional level interviews in Kenya. The researcher used qualitative research approach in this article to unearth deep details of the education system and reforms since independence in 1963. In addition to that historical design was adopted in reviewing educational development during colonial and under the leadership of the four presidents of the republic of Kenya in post-colonial times.

## Trends of Education Policies and Reforms

The education sector in Kenya has undergone several changes and challenges since independence. In order to overcome these challenges, the government has formulated and implemented various policies through the past five decades. It is worth noting that various educational commissions, committees, and task forces in most cases were formed to address the education sector problems. Since the education system was adopted from the colonial British government during independence, the education commissions and reports at first were tailored towards promoting national unity and the creation of adequate human capital. Later in the 1980s, reports in addition to national unity and sufficient human capital focused on social, economic, and cultural undertakings. The national goals and vision towards the education sector focused on a wider dimension. The 1990s' and 2000s' education policies and reports focused on education funding, quality, relevance, and general education problems, such as insufficient teachers, school infrastructure, and cultural-related issues.

It is important to note that until today, the majority of Kenyans, about 74.4 percent, live in rural areas (World Bank, 2015) with limited access to well-resourced primary and secondary schools and only between 24 and 36 percent of the students that finish primary school join secondary schools. Inequality and complex physical terrain without

access to infrastructure and poverty are among the leading factors that limit access to education among the majority of the Kenyan rural population five decades after independence. Since 2007, the government has extended free basic education to secondary schools. In this case, the government provides funding for tuition and learning materials. The parents on the other hand are required to pay for other costs such as lunches and infrastructure development. This policy has been unable to address the inequality in education because in most cases, the cost of infrastructure development is often higher than the majority of rural poor parents can afford. As a result, schools that have already developed their infrastructure tend to do better than the majority of those that have not. Among the most critical challenges that the education sector faces still today are increased inequality, lack of access to education, high costs of basic and higher education, and quality (Somerset, 2011).

### ***Education Policies During Early Missionary, Colonial and Independence Times***

In order to understand the colonial education policies in Kenya and how their legacies have continued to impact the context of education policies today, three historical events are important: 1) early Christian missionary activities, 2) early European and in particular British interest in Kenya, and 3) education during independence.

Christian missionaries who built schools, hospitals and churches in Kenya in the 1800s started the first and dominant education for Africans. German missionaries were the first to establish schools along the Kenyan Coast in the 1840s. Access to education provided by Christian missionaries was limited to the areas that the missionaries had reached and the resources they had as missionary activities were not funded by governments. It is also important to note that the most dominant missionary communities, namely German, American, and British, settled in different parts of the country, and came from different Christian denominations, for instance Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Lutheran, Quaker, and Presbyterian. Since missionaries came from different countries, they came with different education policies, approaches, and resources. Each provided education independent of the others (Keshavjee, 2010). By the 1920s, for example, a number of Christian missionary organizations had established schools in Kenya (Amatsimbi, 2013). Even though early British settlers had arrived in Kenya by 1846, education for Africans was not funded by the first British education department, therefore making it difficult for African children to join schools.

As a result, Christian missionaries remained the sole financiers of education for Africans. They owned all of the schools and financed public education (Mwiria, 1991). At the end of the First World War, Kenyan soldiers returning from the war abroad had been exposed to global politics. They had been recruited into the British Army, fought alongside their British counterparts, and learned English as well as about political organizations. They used their skills in war and politics to mobilize and organize the local people to form political organizations to resist British racial policies. Local political organizations such as the Kikuyu Association and Young Kavirondo Association were formed. These groups were instrumental in pressuring the colonial government to fund education and to provide equal quality education for all since it

was collecting high taxes from the locals (Amatsimbi, 2013). In the 1920s, local political pressure and resistance pushed the colonial government to get involved in education. However, not much was achieved until Kenya's independence in 1963.

In 1884, Germany's imperial chancellor, Otto von Bismarck, convened the Berlin conference (November 1884-February 1885). The goal of the conference was to partition Africa among European powers. This would prevent conflict and possible war among the European powers over Africa. Before 1884, European powers such as the U.K., Spain, France, Portugal, Belgium, and Germany had been involved in different parts of Africa where they made trade treaties with local kingdoms and councils. Africa had been all along a great source of resources, including minerals and raw materials. However, this was culminating into a conflict among the European powers as each European nation sought to expand its territory in Africa (Okeke-Agulu, 2010). It is important to note that the 19th century was the peak of industrialization in Europe. Raw materials, most of which were drawn from Africa, were essential for the European economy and a long-term strategy to control these resources was necessary.

Prior to the Berlin Conference, two European nations were dominantly involved in East Africa (Present Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania). The United Kingdom occupied present Kenya and Uganda, and Germany occupied Tanzania. Their early involvement was tied to commercial explorations and interests that were based on treaties with local community councils and kingdoms. These treaties were viewed as temporal and were hence exposed to uncertain change if and when a new European nation would come into the region with a more lucrative trade deal. A common understanding among the European powers was to find an international political and economic mechanism that would enable them to protect the resources in the areas in which they were involved in Africa for the benefit of their countries. In the United Kingdom, the economy was on the decline following the impact of, among other things, the United States of America's independence. Establishing protectorates in Africa as a source of free or cheap raw materials was a necessary alternative.

In the 1884/85 Berlin Conference, the U.K. acquired Kenya and Uganda as a British East Africa protectorate. From that time on, the U.K. established a formal presence in and occupation of this region. Its economic and political structure was basically one multinational company, Imperial British East Africa (IBEAA), backed by a lean British Authority. The company brought together a swath of British investors with interest in agriculture, mining transport etc. The local British authority was meant to build the confidence of the British people in investing in East Africa (Gjersø, 2015). In 1888, Imperial British East Africa was granted the Royal Charter to exploit the British spheres of influence in East Africa. In 1895, the U.K. declared Kenya a British protectorate. Soon afterward, white settlers from the U.K., Australia, and South Africa began to arrive and settle in Kenya (Mwiria, 1991). It is important to note that from the start, the U.K. did not have a clear policy for developing an economic development strategy for East Africa but rather a policy to extract resources and protected this extraction.

The inequality in education in Kenya is rooted in the fact that right from the start, the British state did not have a definitive education financing policy for all of its 47 colonies around the world, Kenya included. This approach to education prevailed until the

1960s. As a result, the education sector was guided by flexible general principles controlled by the Secretary of the State for the colonies. Therefore,

education financing policies depended on 16 well-outlined factors such as the attitude of the colonial governor towards educating local people in the colony, the status of the director of education in the colony, the influence of Christian missionaries in the colony and in London, the conditions of the local economy, and Strength of Local African pressure groups amongst other factors (Whitehead, 2007). In 1920, Kenya was declared a British colony and Africans opposed the decision. At the time, a sizable number of British settlers had settled largely in the Kenya highlands and in major towns where infrastructure was centralized. Education soon became a key instrument of colonization. A number of measures formed early British education policies: 1) the Kenyan society was categorized into three racial categories, namely Africans, Asians (mainly Indians), and Europeans; 2) national values were organized along racial ideology that became the ruling ethic; and 3) resources allocated to the education sector were distributed. While all Kenyans were taxed, more revenue to the education sector was allocated to European followed by Asian (Indian) schools even though these were the minority. European schools used a different curriculum, which was defined as superior to the one used in African schools (Mwiria, 1991). The colonial education system was based on a model of discrimination, which saw the establishment of separate educational systems for Africans, Asians and Europeans, a factor that perpetuated inequalities in accessing education more so for the African population” (Keriga & Bujra, 2009: 2; Mulwa et al., 2011).

By 1925, there was no single public high school for Africans in the country. In response, the Kiambu Local Native Council decided to build the first high school in Githunguri for the community. Mobilized by the Kikuyu Association, they sought permission from the colonial government, which at the time controlled licensing. Other Local Native Councils countrywide, namely, Nyeri, Murang’a, North Nyanza (Abaluhya), Central Nyanza (Luo), and South Nyanza (Kisii), each voted to raise £10,00 for the construction of the schools. Even though local communities had their own resources to build schools, the colonial government refused to grant the permit. In protest and civil disobedience, the Local Native Councils began to raise funds for the schools and opposed the government authority in their areas. The resistance took 5 years until 1930 when the colonial government granted the permits, having realized the growing agitation (Wamagatta, 2008). Access to primary education was also restricted for Africans. Colonial policies limited the number of primary schools for Africans on the basis of cost control.

On the other hand, European and Asian children were entitled to open access to seven years of primary and four years of secondary education. In 1947 for example, European children received 60% of government funding compared to 0.4 % allocated to African children. In order to curb the inequality, missionary schools provided 41% of the funding to African children through missionary schools while African communities through community self-help organizations provided 54% of the funding for African children. However, inequalities prevailed. By the 1950s, about a decade to independence, 98% of Europeans were attending secondary school. In 1953, 90% of the students enrolled in schools public and private combined were Africans. However,

only 10.7% of the total expenditure, recurrent and non-recurrent, was allocated to the education sector. Furthermore, only 49% of this was allocated to the education of Africans even though Africans constituted the majority of the population in need (Somerset, 2011).

The independence was the turning moment of education provision, especially for the black Kenyan population. All Kenyans were now able to attend schools without racial or any restrictions as existed during colonial masters. This study has divided education reforms and development into four presidential eras as discussed below.

### *Education Policies and Reforms Under Different Presidents (1963-2020)*

#### *President Kenyatta's Government (1964-1978)*

The first president of Kenya and founding father was His Excellence the Late Mzee Jomo Kenyatta and he was the president from 1963 to 1978. He had just taken power from the British Imperial colonizers and it was during his leadership that many sectoral policies were put into place, including education policies. Kenya established an education commission in 1964 immediately after its independence in 1963. This commission was to meet for two goals. One was to develop reliable and skilled “manpower” to propel the economy, and second, to help in eradicating poverty in the country (Eshiwani 1993). A number of education policies and reforms to kick-start the education sector after the colonial masters had left were formed during this period. His Excellence the late President Mzee Jomo Kenyatta was at the forefront to fight three main “enemies” of development: illiteracy, poverty, and disease. This essence was meant to improve human power through the provision of education and the improvement of poor citizens’ welfare during independence. The elimination or reduction of these three “enemies” of development was crucial for a young nation that needed more skilled and enough manpower in order to improve its economy. In the first decades after independence, the approach to education policies did not change much. A number of reforms and changes in education policies relied deeply on the recommendations of education commission reports (Opondo, 2000).

The first education reforms were based on the 1964 Ominde Report, which basically provided recommendations on reforming the colonial education system. It was meant to provide a policy framework for restructuring the education system in Kenya, from a colonial-oriented system to one that would foster national unity and development during the post-independence era. The commission had 160 policy recommendations on different aspects of the education system. As a result of the report, the government brought to an end racial schools and a racial education system. It also granted bursaries for African students to join former European and Asian schools (Soft Kenya, 2020). By 1966, the number of community owned and financed schools (Harambee Schools) had increased to 226 compared to 199 government funded schools. As a result, the government in 1967 began to assist the Harambee schools by paying qualified teachers. Under the First president of Kenya and the founding father, His Excellence the late Mzee Jomo Kenyatta and who was the president from the year 1963-1978. He had just taken power from British Imperial colonizers and it was during his leadership time that many sectoral policies were put into place, including education policies.



### *President Moi's Government (1978 – 2002)*

Since independence, investment in education was based on the belief that education would trigger economic growth and development. This idea prevailed in the second era of Kenya's presidential regimes (1978-2002). After 14 years of Kenyatta's post-independence regime (1963-1978), Kenya was still facing pressure to meet the social demand for education since the education infrastructure was still inadequate to meet the growing demand for education at the time (Muricho & Chang'ach, 2013). The provision of subsidized education in Kenya has been a major "tool" for political party campaigns to gain fame and to be voted in. The previous governments' manifestos placed the provision of free or subsidized education as a top priority. The leadership of the former second President of Kenya, the late President Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi, failed to expand education in a sustainable way even though key policy reforms were formulated and implemented during this period. The reports of Mackay (1981), Kamuge (1988), and Koech (1999) were crucial during this era and led to the recommendation of the 8-4-4 education system, the cost-sharing of school costs, and the introduction of research policy in that order. Another notable reform was the introduction of the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) in 1980 to manage and conduct examinations for primary, secondary and some tertiary institutions. This was in an attempt to regulate examination management and to raise education standards and trust in the system.

Foreign aid played a significant role in financing Kenyan education policies. According to Barkan (1994), president Moi's government represented the voice of the marginalized communities located in the comparatively underdeveloped areas inhabited by the poor and underprivileged people. Barkan (1994) explained that President Moi was committed to ensuring a more equitable distribution of resources for education and in 1978 he announced free primary education in as a measure to enable more participation by poor children. Later President Moi introduced free milk program to help feed poor children attending all public schools in Kenya. Foreign aid in part reduced the direct cost of education that had in the earlier years become a burden to parents, especially since parents were required to pay infrastructure levies that kept increasing. As a result, enrolment rates fell during the early years of this period because many poor parents could not afford the levies. Furthermore, structural adjustment programs forced the government to reduce spending on education and to re-introduce use charges.

The government also halted the expansion of public schools in areas that did not have access to education. In this case, areas formerly marginalized remained largely without access to education. Communities, however, continued to build more community (Harambee) schools, and the community schools continued to absorb more students than government schools even though they had limited infrastructures. From the late 1980s to the early 1990s, Kenya was transitioning to a multi-party democracy. Politicians made access to education a political campaign agenda, forcing a shift in government education policy, and the government began to embrace and support community schools (Colclough & Webb, 2012).

*President Kibaki's Government (2002 – 2013)*

Just like his predecessors, the third president of Kenya, H.E. President Mwai Kibaki, made education a centerpiece of his electoral manifesto and without finding the best ways to sustain free education, his party quickly implemented a third Free Primary Education initiative in 2003. The introduction and implementation of FPE in 2003 was tricky because of the fact that sound analysis and assessment were superseded by political expediency, which led to inadequate preparation, consultation, planning, budgeting, and a smooth implementation of the program (Sifuna, 2007). Even with the above mistake, the expansion of access to basic education was the cornerstone of this presidential era and can be explained by the following reasons. First, the foreign aid for education that had been frozen in the late 1980s to early 1990s was reintroduced and increased. Second, Kenya had domesticated the Millennium development goals and had additional support as a result of that. Third, Kenya's vision 2030 was strategically anchored in improving access and quality of education as an instrument of sociopolitical transformation. Fifth, Kenya's 2010 constitution made access to education a constitutional right and obligated the government to re-distribute and devolve resources to the education sector on the basis of constitutional imperative measures.

Kenya's long-term development plan, Vision 2030, is an aspirational document with the intention to transform it into an upper-middle-income country by 2030 (GoK, 2017). The framework for the document is based on three pillars: economic, social and political. According to Vision 2030, the aim of the economic pillar is to improve the prosperity of all Kenyans, the social pillar seeks to attain a just and cohesive society with social equity in a clean and secure environment while the political pillar endeavors to realize a democratic political system founded on issue-based politics that respects the rule of law, and protects the rights and freedoms of every individual in Kenyan society' (GoK, 2017).

In the years 2003 and 2007, the NARC government reversed the cost-sharing policy that included user charges and infrastructure levies. The policy was unpopular and had been a key component of the NARC campaign agenda in 2002. Basic education was meant to be free of indirect and direct charges. This resulted in the increase in primary school enrolment (Somerset, 2011). Despite all these changes, access to secondary education remained low. In 2009 for instance, secondary school enrolment rate was at about 50 percent while the primary to secondary school transition rate remained low at 55 percent (Odhiambo, 2016). Free Day Secondary Education was introduced in 2008 under the leadership of President Mwai Kibaki and Prime Minister Raila Amolo Odinga in their coalition government. This secondary education policy was introduced to help the students from poor household access secondary education, which was low in terms of enrolments. Also, during this period, the introduction of Kenya's blueprint (Vision 2030) was introduced in 2008 and the New Constitution of 2010, both of which supported education initiatives and emphasized equitable resources.

### *President Uhuru's Government (2013 – to date)*

The current government under the leadership of H.E. President Uhuru Kenyatta has done much in the last 5 years on education policies and reforms. The notable education policies include provision of a Laptop/Tablet project for class one pupils in lower primary schools countrywide, and the Basic Education Act (2013) which failed. This is an Act of parliament to give effect to Article 53 of The Constitution and other enabling not the provisions to promote and regulate free and compulsory basic education but also to provide room for the establishment of the National Education Board and the Education Standards and Quality Assurance Commission.

President Uhuru's Jubilee Party in 2013 promised to give laptops to all pupils joining primary school during their party national campaigns. The Jubilee party won election and the laptop promise was among its first to fulfill. The aim of the project was to promote digital literacy and prepare the young learners to thrive in ICT based economy (Mugendi, 2019). The laptop project promise was fulfilled in 2016, but with tablets instead of laptops. The project was silently retired six years after the announcing and three years after the implementation. The truth about the impossibility of sustaining the project started to be clear and this explains why the most politically motivated promises are done without regard to many basic principles of public policy formulation. In 2019, the government of Kenya sunk Sh8.4 billion into this controversial laptop project that has so far gobbled up in excess of Sh50 billion. The Jubilee government allocated the laptop project Sh17.6 billion, Sh13.4 billion and Sh13.4 billion in the years 2015, 2016 and 2017 respectively. Later in 2018, the government allocated Sh6.3 billion and as one can see, the budget allocated to this project kept on varying not progressive in nature (Odhiambo, 2019). It is good to note that during the project period, the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) report exposed that only 39 per cent of the teachers use the gadgets to teach (Odhiambo, 2019).

According to Mugendi (2019), this project was bound to fail because of the following reasons: Firstly, it would be extremely costly to run the project; secondly, the government lacked skilled personnel to run the program which was a major hindrance; thirdly, the priorities of the government were wrong from the beginning since schools lack teachers, classrooms, connection to the grid, and in some places, there are no schools; fourth, lack of requisite infrastructure – only 10% of schools were connected to the grid while 50% were far away from the national grid; and lastly, lack of support mechanism when technology failed – this left both teachers and learners stranded. The best thing the government could have done to sustain this project was to build computer labs in all primary and secondary schools in Kenya.

## **Challenges, Conclusion and Policy Recommendation**

### *Challenges of Education Reforms in Kenya*

The Kenyan government has been in the forefront to bring changes and reviewing education policies through various education commissions. These education commissions have shaped the education system since independence to the level it is at

the moment. Nevertheless, the following are the key challenges that have gone against the spirit and objectives of education reforms (Muricho & Chang'ach, 2013):

1. There has been resistance to education change or reforms from some stakeholders such as KNUT, parents, Teachers and International organizations such as UNICEF.
2. Political interference – major education policies were suggested by major political parties that only needed votes.
3. Lack of reliable and sustainable funding to implement education reforms such as free primary and secondary education.
4. Lack of enough time to assess the policy, poor planning and non-implementation of reforms.
5. Almost  $\frac{3}{4}$  of Kenyan population are youth – explaining the greater number of youth being unemployed.
6. Physical facilities are insufficient leading to overcrowding in learning institution henceforth the quality of education is low and not to standards.
7. Population growth is also a big challenge – more pupils and students enroll to schools each year big numbers and this has overwhelmed the government in providing free education to all.
8. Many reforms failed to be implemented for example laptop project, free primary and secondary education.

### *Conclusions*

The Republic of Kenya has a principled idea and plan of education devolution in the 21st century, which is allied to democracy, openness and transparency in all the public institutions found in the country. Transfer of decision making to secondary schools, when efficiently applied, can result to higher student performance, more well-organized use of resources, increased skills and support for the school. To decentralize education is not an easy thing, many countries have tried it but failed and Kenya has not been spared. Kenya should strive to overcome any limitations towards effective decentralization of education so that it may enjoy benefits that come with it.

The government had to introduce free primary education in 2003 in an effort to increase enrollments, reduce dropout rates, and increase completion and transition rates. The third president of Kenya, H.E. President Mwai Kibaki, was the person that led this second free primary education in Kenya and this time around it covered all primary expenses. The free primary education programme has brought significant benefits to the country despite the challenges it has brought. Some of the poor and marginalized communities have been able to take their children to school, and if it were not for the free primary education program, the children could not have received basic education. The government's efforts in promoting and making education accessible can be seen in its ever-increasing financial allocation to the education sector. The fourth president of Kenya, H.E. President Uhuru Kenyatta introduced payment KCPE and KCSE examinations fee for standard eight and form four students respectively.

### ***Policy Recommendation***

The policy planners would understand and appreciate education policies within which they are supposed to operate in providing effective leadership and management practices in the development of education. In order for education to foster development, this article recommends the need to separate educational policies from national politics, clear stipulation of educational policies and their role in national development and a sound implementation of educational reforms. The following are specific recommendations:

1. There is need to come up with a legal document probably to replace or improve the Education Act of 1968, would be very necessary since that will not be legally challenged, in comparison with other policy documents, which can easily be legally challenged. Therefore, a comprehensive legal document should be aligned with democratic governance, devolution of decision making and services in education sector.
2. Students should be practically involved in decision making through democratically elected students' councils. The introduction of the students' council might help Kenyan democracy in the long run by teaching the students a few things about civic duty and peaceful competition for elected office.
3. The role and capacity of the stakeholders should be well defined and developed, respectively. All the stakeholders need to be trained on their role in a decentralized system. Teachers should acquire the necessary skills and attitudes through induction and re-training and, where possible, some skills such as financial management should be emphasized on during training in colleges and universities.
4. Useful strides toward stimulating access and transition in primary and secondary schools
  - a) The governments through the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology needs to recruit additional teachers to support the 100 percent transition policy of the government a longer period of time.
  - b) There is need to build computer labs in primary and secondary schools in Kenya so as to embrace use of technology and be at par with rest of the World.
  - c) There is need to expand educational infrastructure in that way allowing higher student enrollment and transition rates.
  - d) Developing and adopting a unit cost of education and training for each learner and trainee with disability that will inform its allocation.
  - e) There is need to increased capitation to Free Primary Education and Free Day Secondary Education.
  - f) The government to continue providing examination fees for all students doing KCPE and KCSE examinations each year.

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# PERSPECTIVES OF THE SOCIAL ECONOMY IN ROMANIA

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**Abstract:** *For a sector with high development potential, like social economy in Romania, a precisely designed research method was used, focused rather on the future than the past or present status. The Delphi method can produce relevant information about evolution perspectives of any topic observed, mainly emergent facts or domains with uncertain progress. Initially developed in the Cold War context, to anticipate the impact of the technology on warfare, it starts from the premise that individual predictions were better than group ones. This tool aims to reach the best consensus on opinions from a group of experts within the specific domain studied, using questionnaires applied individually and mixed with relevant feedback from the researchers.*

*The present research used the Delphi technique and dedicated experts' contribution, in order to scrutiny analyze the evolution of the social economy in Romania, the current situation and the encountered problems, the legislative, institutional and fiscal framework and also how the European financial support works for this domain. Not least, a 10-year scenario is tested and advanced, along with some conclusions and questions for the future.*

**Keywords:** *Delphi method, Social economy*

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## Argument

Social economy represents a large and increasing provider of social utility within a plural economy, between the capitalist and public sectors, with a major role in addressing new social issues. Social economy is a complex and diversified domain, through its organization forms, types of activities, and the way it interacts with public institutions and profit-oriented entities.

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All over the world, mainly in Europe, social economy is experiencing an accentuated development as an Amos response to the traditional economic systems generating new forms of social problems or perpetuating the existing ones.

The rising interest on this topic is due to organizations implementing projects financed by the European Social Fund, through the Sectorial Operational Program Development of Human Resources (POSDRU 2007-2013) and also the Operational Program Human Capital (2014-2020), and carries activities in social inclusion and employment of persons from vulnerable groups, but also promoting visibility raising activities. Also, the social economy is mentioned in Law no. 292/2011, as a sector of economic activities including social objectives, but it is the subject of two legislative (framework) proposals, submitted by the Ministry of Labor, in September and December 2011.

The current study aims to present the perspective of a number of researchers and experts in social economy, regarding the stage of this field in today's Romania, as well as its development perspectives in the Romanian social environment, as viewed in the middle of 2012. This research is part of a long-term effort of evaluating the social economy sector in Romania from the perspective of its development capacity in a mid-term perspective. With the help of a group of experts, we realized a diagnosis of the social economy sector at the 2012 moment, and we also analyzed its potential 10-year development.

## 1. Introduction

Social economy has been, for a long time, a slightly studied topic in Romania, and the academic interest for the subject developed only in the last years, at the same time with the promotion of this concept by the European Union and with the financial support offered by Social European Fund, offered to organizations interested in developing this economy sector.

In the last years, some universities introduced the study of social economy in their curricula (Toronto University, Maastricht University, Bologna University, and others), the majority of scholars interested in researching this topic being sociologists or economists with a background in the study of the non-profit sector (also known as "the third sector"). In Romania, some universities (Babeş-Bolyai University from Cluj-Napoca, West University of Timisoara, Oradea University, and University Dimitrie Cantemir from Bucharest) managed to obtain European funding through POSDRU 2007-2013 and introduced master's programs in social economy.

Even if the research domain is new in Romania, the authors' connection to it, either through practice stages or volunteering in organizations involved in this field or through the implementation of financing programs within the responsible institutions, amounted to our growing scientific interest for this topic.

To study this novel but with a high development potential domain, we chose a research method designed precisely for this type of study, focusing on the future and less on the past or the current situation. Less used in Romania, the Delphi method produces important information about evolution perspectives of any study field, research, public

policies, or merely of fresh ideas, very new or with uncertain progress but important to predict.

## 2. Delphi Method

### 2.1. General description of the research method

The mankind of all times wanted to know the future. For thousands of years, Greeks and Romans had been appeased the thirst for understanding the after time by calling the oracles. The name of this research method comes from the most popular one, the Delphi Oracle.

In Greek mythology, at the Delphi site was the most famous oracle, the place where Apollo God was worshiped, who might have been its owner after killing the dragon Pathos. Apollo used to communicate his prophecies through a woman called Pythia. All kinds of people, more important or not, from neighborhoods or far away, used to visit the oracle to receive personal or political advice or even to know how the wars ended.

The Delphi technique was developed at the beginning of the Cold War to anticipate the impact that technology might have on warfare in general (Custer, Scarcella and Stewart, 1999). In 1944, General Henry Arnold has requested US Air Force a report about the possibilities of technological development that might be used in the future in military conflicts, but the answer to this demand was not a satisfactory one, because the conventional future „prediction” was not enough studied and developed. Within a report sent to the Secretary of War, General Arnold wrote: *„During this war, the Army, Army Air Forces, and the Navy have made unprecedented use of scientific and industrial resources. The conclusion is inescapable that we have not yet established the balance necessary to ensure the continuance of teamwork among the military, other government agencies, industry, and the universities. Scientific planning must be years in advance of the actual research and development work”*<sup>1</sup>. The first type of Delphi research of high amplitude started in 1946 when Douglas Aircraft Company initiated the RAND project (from *research and development*) to study the eventual possibilities for intercontinental firearms. A multitude of already known techniques was put in practice, but these have not the expected success. There were interviews achieved, questionnaires were applied, trends were followed. The focus groups were the most closed to success, but their deficiencies (the influence of dominant personality or the pressure group) persuaded the researchers that this is not the method to provide satisfactory results in the related conditions (Dalkey, 1969).

The RAND project developed the Delphi method from the premise that individual predictions were better than group ones, therefore they requested some experts for their individual opinion. Following data analysis and without a clear response, the researchers decided to ask once again the opinions of the same experts, explaining to them the reason, that a clear decision was not obtained the first time. The same experts were the subject of this process until the researchers were able to extract useful conclusions for their purpose. From this incipient stage, this method developed having

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.rand.org/about/history.html>, accessed on April 15, 2012 and June 10, 2020

at this moment various versions and being used in many domains, including social (Edwards 2002; Sowell 1989).

Delphi method has been defined as a study unfolded in several stages, focused on obtaining a consensus from the interviewed persons. Delphi is a tool used to reach the best consensus on opinions from a group of experts within a specific domain, using a set of questionnaires applied individually, mingled with feedback from the researchers. The definition determines that the purpose of this method is to obtain a conclusion from several experts regarding a topic.

There are several varieties of the Delphi method, these being adapted to different situations or domains where it is applied. The classical version and, also, the original one, consists of two or more questionnaire rounds sent individually to a group of experts. These can be administered using an online panel, by phone, via email, post, or face to face. The first questionnaire contains open questions as general as possible regarding the topic targeted by researchers. The experts are asked to answer as widely as possible, openly, and creatively, to each of these questions. The answers are analyzed *and rephrased* by the researchers, are then returned to the respondents in a second round, in the form of statements or questions. The experts will rate each affirmation on a *Likert* scale, per the agreement level of each respondent with these statements. After this second round, the researchers analyze, quantitatively, the answers received to each item from the second questionnaire. If an initially agreed level of consensus is reached on all or part of the statements, the study is completed. If, on the other hand, a convenient level of consensus is not obtained, the second round is repeated until the desired degree of consensus is reached or, depending on the study design, the initially established number of attempts is reached.

Compared to the second round, the next ones contain, for each item, the answer provided by the expert in the previous round and also the consensus level reached by the entire panel of experts (Keeney, Hasson and H. McKenna 2011).

The Delphi method does not have, in all cases, the purpose of obtaining a consensus on a matter, but sometimes it can be used to identify research priorities in some domains. This form is used mainly in the academic sphere and mostly in the social sciences. In the public policy field, the Delphi method is used to discuss different points of view that arose on the brink of newly implemented policies or are pending implementation. The reason for which an agreement on a single usage mode for this method does not exist consists of the multitude of domains where this tool is used.

The Delphi method only requires the selection of some individuals from the population, those whose opinions are considered worth taking into consideration in a certain domain. The selected experts are persons with a high level of knowledge in that domain and can provide reliable information related to the topic. The participants should not know of each other, but this is not mandatory.

A very important feature of the Delphi method is that it is not meant to deliver good or bad, correct or wrong answers. The participants are requested to express their own opinions, endorsed or not by proofs, but for which there is no evidence requested at all. Even if a Delphi research may seem very similar to a focus group research, there are

many differences between them, taking into consideration some criteria. First, the Delphi method provides at least partial anonymity for the participants, allowing them to respond freely to questions, without the constraint of group pressure. This anonymity allows, by case, the shift of participants' opinions in the third or subsequent rounds (Keeney et al. 2011).

The question of the Delphi method's adherence to a paradigm is still under debate. A classical Delphi study incorporates a qualitative stage and a quantitative one, which makes it difficult to position it. For the most part, the sociological literature appoints the Delphi method to the positivist paradigm (Day and Bobeva, 2005). Other authors consider this method should be categorized as an interpretative paradigm, namely social constructivism (Amos and Pearse, 2008), being considered a technique that uses subjective analysis and has a qualitative nature. Accepting the fact that the study subject of the Delphi research represents a succession of the participants' constructions of reality, it is clear this is not a positivist method. Blass (2003) concludes that, because the method extracts quantitative data from qualitative analysis, this method cannot be strictly positioned in one single paradigm, but it sits at the crossroad between positivism and social constructivism.

## **2.2. Application**

The expert selection was conducted based on the criterion that each of them must have experience either in practice or studying social economy. All participants have a Ph.D. in sociology and experience in implementing social economy projects. The experts' profiles with relevant information are listed in Annex 1. The interviews and questionnaires were applied, depending on the availability of each respondent, face to face or online. The interview guide is listed in Annex 2, and the questionnaire is listed in Annex 3.

The first round consisted of a 4 question interview, intending to learn the experts' opinions about the status of social economy, the necessary steps for further development, the most relevant factors for the domain's evolution, and also to predict one or more scenarios for the 2022 horizon. For each question, the respondents provided, openly and independently, concise and extensive answers ideas, with descriptive details and real examples. All the answers were valuable and allowed us to outline their position regarding the research topic.

This stage's answers revealed that the experts' opinions were not majorly distinctive but revolving around the same disappointment towards the Romanian government and, at the same time, showing hope for the development potential of this sector.

The polarization of the experts' opinions was tested in the second round, where the experts were asked to rate their agreement about three sets of affirmations on a 1 to 7 *Likert* scale. In this round, the experts were presented with a total of 44 statements that resulted from the interviews' analysis. In short, each affirmation used in the second round was generated directly or indirectly by one or more open answers obtained in the first round. Following the analysis of the second-round answers, we noticed the expert's opinions were close and we obtained consensus on most statements, so a third round of questions was not necessary.

From the 44 items, 25 were evaluated with between 4 and 7 by all experts, while for 16 items there was only one expert evaluation lower than 4, while the rest of the experts gave a higher score. Only three affirmations from a total of 44 were evaluated radically different by the experts, as we show in Annex 3, this fact proving no internal contradiction to the other answers.

Apart from the quantitative part of checking the experts' consensus, the analysis is predominantly qualitative, the experts' opinions being similar. We will highlight the most important ideas resulted from our analysis and will try to correlate them with other information obtained from the interviews and from the scientific literature.

### 3. Data analysis

#### *3.1. The evolution of the social economy in Romania in the recent years*

It is a well-known fact that the social economy sector's evolution after 1990 was not a very encouraging one, and this trend doesn't seem to have left room for too many optimistic appraisals regarding the future of this domain, even if starting with the European fund's contribution after 2007, in promoting and developing it.

During the communist regime, the cooperatives were strictly controlled by the state, the farmers having no alternative but to the transfer of land in favor of the agricultural production cooperatives. This has led to the construction of a negative image among the population towards this form of economic organization.

For this reason, the first years after 1990 meant a dizzying decline of cooperatives, those during the communist regime being, for the most part, disbanded. In the 1990s, non-governmental organizations, associations and foundations, as opposed to cooperatives, saw a slight increase due to freedom of opinion with the removal of the Communist Party from the country's leadership. They have been active in various fields, especially where the state has failed to cope (Cace, Arpinte, and Scoican 2010).

*„The evolution of non-profit organizations, mutual aid houses and cooperatives in recent years is not encouraging and there are no concrete forms of state support. Beyond the lack of a strategy for the social economy sector, there are no clear measures addressed to social economy organizations. Of the three types of entities, cooperatives are the ones with the sharpest decreases in the volume of activity and the number of employees. It is worrying that the unfavorable economic environment does not seem to be the main cause, considering that the average turnover and the number of employees has decreased constantly in recent years. “(S.C., May 2012)*

The decline of the forms of social economy after 1990 is obvious, the only exception being, in the opinion of I.S., the mutual aid houses for pensioners (Arpinte, Cace and Cojocaru, 2010).

*„The only, but major, exception are pensioners' mutual aid houses” (I.S., May 2012).* The explanation for the smooth running of mutual aid houses for retirees is given by their very low dependence on the economic system. At the same time, retirees are not very interested in banks either, leaving the service of lending to the elderly in the service of

mutual aid houses for pensioners, employees or other or other non-banking financial institutions.

However, the good functioning of mutual aid houses for pensioners is not a conclusive indicator for the evolution of the social economy, precisely because of their relative independence from the country's economy, while other forms of social economy are directly dependent on the economy and financial-banking system.

*”The sector of consumer or craft cooperatives is represented almost symbolically in terms of job absorption [...] cases where these structures are directly aimed at increasing employment for disadvantaged groups are rather isolated” (S.C., May 2012).*

This lack of correlation between the economic environment and the cooperative sector proves the clear shortcomings of the state in supporting these organizations which, although seemingly uninfluenced by economic factors, are in continuous decline, failing to become what they could be in a developed country, an important source of employment, especially for people from disadvantaged and socially marginalized groups.

Despite all the efforts made in recent years, both by the European Union and, to a lesser extent, by the Romanian government, it has not yet been able to answer one of the main problems that is, according to some definitions of the social economy, finding a solution to increase the number of jobs. Structures such as non-profit organizations, mutual aid houses or cooperatives have failed to absorb a significant number of people from vulnerable groups, due in large part to policies to support these types of organizations.

*”The history of the social economy is reduced to mutual aid houses and cooperatives, these being the only forms of organization in which people associated and shared profits equally”.* (C.L., May 2012). According to C.L., the only concrete forms of social economy are mutual aid houses and cooperatives.

This view is not shared by the other respondents, but it can be justified if taking into account the principle that the profit from the association of persons must be distributed equally to them. We think this his view is not wrong, but it should not be overlooked that, in addition to redistributing profits among the members of the organization, the social economy also means reinvesting profits in the organization, in the community, to help marginalized people or even for ecological purposes, a fact that may be too easily overlooked, when talking about the social economy.

The political class showed little interest in the fate of this sector, those interviewed in this study unanimously agreeing that there are not the politicians who need convincing of the benefits of the social economy, but people who have the opportunity to associate and help each other and people in their communities. However, it is the politicians who adopt the social policies and laws that govern this sector, and their internalization of the concept of social economy is relevant at least enough to lead them to take actual measures to support it.

*"All these people, because this is about mentality, because people do not have, because they do not think they can have and then I think that an important role is played by counseling, mentoring among these people and their effective support, tutoring to develop social economy"* (C.L., May 2012).

This idea of tutoring may be a good one, but not necessarily effective. The social economy was born from the desire of people to solve various problems on their own. The tutoring can have an informative role, so that the people who could organize themselves in various forms do not go through all the exploratory steps and trials that those before them had to go through. At the same time, tutoring can give rise to ideas, can highlight needs that people did not know before learning about the social economy.

Through intervention on various types of disadvantaged or marginalized social categories, their balance changes and those who intervene in any way must be aware of the direct or indirect effects, desired or not, of their intervention. By this, we bring into question the fact that the inability of those who could intervene through various methods, to meet their newly created needs, can ultimately be harmful if these people are not given more than information. People need to realize their own needs and not to be told from the outside that they have or should have certain needs.

Both in Romania and in other countries in Central and Eastern Europe, especially in countries that joined the European Union in the last two waves of accession (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Poland), recent years have been strongly marked by the affluence of European funds. This resource has been and still is available in almost all the important fields (agriculture, industry, education, medicine, social work, etc.). Unfortunately, for many of these countries, most of the public institutions tasked to manage these funds failed to manage them properly. This led to problems within countries, but also at the Union level. With the advent of problems in the world's economic systems, many people questioned the capitalist system and looked at social economy as an alternative. In this context, social economy received and still receives a lot of attention and large amounts of funds, both in Romania and in the other states.

### ***3.2. The current state of the social economy in Romania***

First, the social economy sector in Romania is dominated by the insertion of European funds. This funding influx led to a dizzying increase in the importance given to this sector and it is expected that this external influence will continue at least until 2020, fact that is confirmed by the Europe 2020 Strategy in which sustainable development of the social economy sector is one of the main objectives.

Given that it is a recent member of the European Union, somehow Romania was taken by surprise by the funding directed towards social economy, the concept being almost unknown before 2007. Even though the practice of the social economy existed under other names, it was not given so much importance before this year. *"Romania is in an exploratory stage in which (a) the state of the sector and the directions of action are identified, (b) a series of specific intervention models for disadvantaged groups are experienced on a small scale"* (D.A., May 2012).

For the most part, the fields of actions are proposed, in the present context, by the financing priorities established by the European Social Fund. There is indeed freedom



of action and choice of actions course, but at a certain level, the development depends very much on the European Union's objectives.

The models mentioned by D.A. are, for the most part, models taken from more developed countries, in which the social economy has a long tradition. This application of practices from other socio-cultural contexts is not necessarily the best solution, but as long as they are tested to see how they manifest in the context of Romania and they are not imposed from the start as good, might be a cheaper solution than starting from scratch.

A position worth mentioning is that adopted, in the context of European funding, by mutual aid houses and cooperatives, which, although eligible for Union funding, do not show a keen interest in these funds." *What I find interesting is that neither the mutual aid houses nor the cooperatives are extremely open, interested in the financing lines currently existing in the social economy.*" (C.L., May 2012). This could be because of their low financial capacity and the responsibilities involved in accessing Community funds.

A solution to this problem, specific to small organizations, could be a guarantee from the government for possible loans that organizations could take to co-finance the projects they want to implement. An important component necessary for the development of the social economy in any state is the level of awareness of people and their attitude towards such activities. *"At the moment we do not have clear initiatives and the pro-activity in which people get involved and achieve social economy, we only have some debut initiatives carried out within some projects"* (C.L., May 2012).

Given that social economy specific initiative started from the awareness of needs by those concerned, it is directly deducible that, as long as there is no will from those directly involved, it is difficult to achieve anything concrete in this area. The projects funded by the European Union, like any project, have a limited lifespan, and those that will continue to operate after the funding is over, will be those that become sustainable, where people have understood the importance and have identified the necessary resources to continue the process.

### **3.3. Legislative framework**

Although Romania has a tradition in the cooperative sector, which suffered alterations during the communist period, and for the non-profit sector, a continuous development can be seen although the national legislative framework is not yet harmonized with the Community policy proposals issued by the European Parliament or the European Commission, nor does it allow comparisons with the other Member States which have distinctly regulated the concept of social enterprise, social inclusion enterprise or similar entities.

Romania has major shortcomings in terms of legislation when it comes to encouraging the social economy. The importance and, at the same time, the seriousness of this affirmation is confirmed by the fact that all the experts who took part in this study underlined the problem of the national legislative framework. *"Often, in Romania, solving a problem means a law that, most of the time, establishes a new institution (in a legal sense).*

*Obviously, such an approach is very rarely successful. The social economy should not be perceived as a checkbox by the appearance in the Official Gazette of a law” (I.S., May 2012).*

This statement denotes a clear dissatisfaction with the state, with the way it is run and, at the same time, expresses the desire for the social economy to be taken seriously by policymakers, and not treated superficially in order to move on to the next points on the political agenda.

After 1990, the associative sector in Romania experienced a sharp decline. Market liberalization has led to an acceleration of the development of the capitalist system in a hurry to regain distance from developed countries, during which time the non-profit sector has been neglected by so many individuals but especially by the state. *„Measures are needed to stop the decline of existing entities and stimulate the creation of new ones” (I.S., May 2012).* These measures are even more necessary as the whole world does not seem to be able to break away from the socio-financial crisis we are in, but to which we do not seem to find practical solutions.

Perhaps the most common solution for overcoming the crisis of the capitalist system is the social economy. Even if this is not openly acknowledged, the European Union recognizes the merits of this type of economy and seeks to develop it. Also, many specialists in this field consider that this would be the optimal solution for reconstructing the world economy, the social economy has entered the vocabulary of many specialists and countries in the 2000s.

A complete transition to the social economy is, of course, a utopia. The business environment has its merits and must be supported to the same extent as the social economy must be developed. Although they partially overlap, the two sectors are not mutually exclusive, and they have a real chance of coexisting. *”I think that Romania still has some problems related to the legislation in the social economy because, after all, this trend of social economy is also a response to the savage capitalism in which we speak of profit that goes to a person or a small group of people but interest in the weak, the uneducated, the non-risky is very reduced from a capitalist perspective” (C.L., May 2012).* This problem of the weak, uneducated, who do not risk, who do not have physical, mental, or material possibilities is not new, all states are always facing it.

However, the capitalism of recent years accentuated this imbalance, growing unemployment and increasingly thinning the middle class, with most of its representatives heading, unfortunately, to the lower class and only a few to the upper class. (Wilkinson and Pickett 2010).

Except for some legislative provisions, Romania faced a lack of mechanisms to support cooperatives, the same situation is encountered in the case of other types of social economy entities, fact that, as mentioned above, has significantly contributed to reducing the importance and scope of their activity. *” In Romania there were no significant interventions to support the cooperatives” (S.C., May 2012).*

The first step that Romania must take in supporting the social economy is, in the opinion of all those interviewed, to regulate the types of entities that can join this

concept: *"there are issues to be clarified at the legislative level and not only NGOs should be considered as social economy organizations"* (C.L., May 2012).

This problem of regulating the types of enterprises, of delimiting each type and establishing their specific functions is not specific to Romania, these ambiguities also exist in other European states and, even more so, at the level of the European Union, between different states.

The legislative proposal currently under debate, are also taking into account other forms of organization that should be included under the social economy umbrella but, in an abusive way, some are conditioning the classification of NGOs and other types of organizations as belonging to the social economy, by their partnership with public institutions or large corporations (Social Alternatives, 2012). This type of conditioning should not exist, moreover, a larger number of types of organizations should be included in the social economy because they already carry out activities in this respect, although not regulated by law." *As a general feature, except for NGOs, the other types indirectly address disadvantaged groups, without any sustained services and for the purpose of their social reintegration. However, by the nature of the activity and the focus of the work areas, they produce significant forms of indirect impact"* (S.C., May 2012).

Recently, the idea of recognizing a new entity, namely the social enterprise, is being tested. Although authorized sheltered workshops, NGOs carrying out economic activities or cooperatives are categorized by some authors as social enterprises, this term does not exist in our country's legislation or of many other states.

The establishment, initially at the legislative level, of such a type of economic organization, can be beneficial, but not before regulating very well the types of organization already existing in Romania, to clearly differentiate them and to establish a series of criteria according to of which organizations are categorized as belonging to the social economy, the classical one, or maybe somewhere in the middle. *"Romania lacks an adequate legislative framework to encourage the development of social economy activities"* (S.C., May 2012)

This is not a recent fact, the lack of state institution's involvement in helping those without opportunities is a constant in Romania, this fact practically determining the emergence of many associations and foundations trying to cover this gap.

The lack of support from the public institutions for organizations trying to support vulnerable groups became increasingly evident with the onset of the economic crisis and the increased number of unemployed, once many NGOs and foundations active in this segment disappeared.

### **3.4. Institutional framework**

Public institutions did not develop forms of support or facilities for the organizations included under the umbrella of the social economy because they did not have the legal support to do so, and, moreover, it seems to have appreciated that their activity not as important as that of commercial organizations. Some studies show that the involvement of public institutions in supporting this type of activity is arbitrary, often depending only on the desire of officials in those institutions to support or not the

efforts of NGOs, associations, foundations, cooperatives or mutualities (Cace, Arpinte and Scoican, 2010).

Although, at first glance, we might be tempted to believe that, with the regulation of the domain, there is a need for new state institutions meant to ensure that the social economy moves in the desired direction, the experts interviewed in this study do not agree, stressing that there is no need to create new public institutions to regulate the social economy. These answers were provided on a background of aggravating problems of bureaucracy, and excessive centralization.

The draft of the social economy law speaks of the establishment of a National Commission for Social Economy, a commission subordinated to the Ministry of Labor, Family and Social Protection, with territorial county commissions.

*"Institutions only create bureaucratic obstacles to the development of an area that, instead of being supported, is systematically slowed down [...] the officials are in no hurry to do anything until they find a way to make a profit from it"* (I.S., May 2012). The opinion that the state should not get too involved, because this would make it difficult for this sector to develop, is almost unanimous, the experts participating in this study believing that the state should not coordinate the development of this field, but only to regulate.

*"The state must not coordinate the field of social economy through institutions [...] they are driven by political interests"* (D.A., May 2012). This opinion seems justified given that the social economy is considered the third sector, alongside the public and private sectors (Lêvesque et al. 2001), and not an enlargement of the public sector, as the legislative proposal for the social economy allows to be understood. *"Public institutions show a low willingness to support structures that address vulnerable groups"* (S.C., May 2012). This low availability is due to the lack of a legislative framework that would allow them to be more widely involved in supporting these groups and providing social services.

At the moment, although there are institutions that have to provide social assistance services, they are non-performing due to poor legal regulations but also the poor training of their employees, complementary to an unsatisfactory remuneration level.

An optimal solution would be for the state to develop the legislative and fiscal framework, to establish the control institutions but to leave the development of the field in the hands of those involved, in a similar way the market economy in our country is regulated, where the state provides a framework for development and is involved only at the macro level.

### **3.5. Fiscal framework**

For the fiscal framework that regulates the social economy, important improvements are needed. Romania should adopt a more relaxed fiscal regime for the social economy, thus supporting its development. *"The state should provide tax facilities to social economy entities in general and especially to those who employ vulnerable and highly vulnerable people in relation to the labor market."* (S.C., May 2012).

Indeed, the employment of vulnerable people in the labor market practically supports the state because it no longer has to provide aid to these people. Moreover, the

integration of vulnerable groups into the labor market has long-term effects, contributing to increasing the homogeneity of incomes within the state and increasing the quality of life of those involved.

*"More than just an additional request for the state budget, these facilities must be related to the social, economic and fiscal benefits involved in a larger number of employees."* (S.C., May 2012). The employment of vulnerable people, such as beneficiaries of guaranteed minimum income or the reintegration into the labor market of former detainees can lead, both in the short, medium and long term, to a decrease in the number of "socially assisted" people and thus to an increase in the quality of life of the entire population. There are, therefore, fiscal arguments to support not only the business environment but also the social economy, as this can also be an important generator of jobs.

It is all the more important to support the social economy as the latter, more than the business environment, aims to include in the labor market people from vulnerable and socially marginalized groups who are now supported by the state and who will otherwise remain in the care of protection institutions.

### **3.6. European Funding**

European funding played a very important role in Romania in recent years. Available for different domains, the funding can be accessed by many types of organizations, companies, institutions, and even private persons. There are constant discussions on this subject, both in the political sphere, but also in the economic and non-profit ones.

The European Social Fund has made over 3.648 billion euros available to Romania for the 2007-2013 timeframe, funds divided between the Operational Program for the Development of Administrative Capacity (OP DAC), with an allocation of 208 million euros (to which 38 million euros are added from the national public contribution) and the Sectoral Operational Program Human Resources Development (SOP HRD), with an allocation of 3,476 million euros (with 58.88 million euros from the national public contribution).

Specifically, within the Key Area of Intervention 6.1 Development of the Social Economy, the social economy initially enjoyed a dedicated allocation of 420 million euros, almost 10% of the entire program budget (SOP HRD Implementation Framework Document, version 1 of February 2008<sup>1</sup>).

Subsequently, following the reallocation of funds to other measures to support social inclusion for vulnerable groups and the promotion of equal opportunities and, implicitly, by amending the Implementation Framework Document (version 4 of June 2010<sup>2</sup>), the budget allocated to the sector was reduced to EUR 285 million. So far, four calls for projects have been launched, with a total value of over 223 million euros, and as a result of this process, 60 projects have been selected, the first to start contributing to the development of the sector and increasing visibility. Within the Annual

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<sup>1</sup> [www.fseromania.ro/posdru/](http://www.fseromania.ro/posdru/) accessed on April 15, 2012 and June 10, 2020

<sup>2</sup> [www.fseromania.ro/posdru/](http://www.fseromania.ro/posdru/) accessed on April 15, 2012 and June 10, 2020

Implementation Report 2011 (approved on June 5, 2012) there are 144 structures of the social economy and 274 jobs established within the SOP HRD projects<sup>1</sup>.

The funds targeted for the development of the social economy are considered by the experts participating in this study in two different ways. ” *European funds are a great step in this direction, but a healthy social economy must be self-sustaining*” (S.C., May 2012). We can see here that the merit of the financial contribution of the European Union is fully recognized, but only as a starting point. It remains the responsibility of social economy entities set up with or without the help of the European Union, to become sustainable, to survive without continuous foreign aid. From this finding, some questions arise, that requires an answer in future scientific endeavors, namely:

- If the social economy really needs to be self-sustaining, is the need for support from external sources still justified?
- If we do not start from the idea of a community that undertakes something to help itself, if we do not talk about people who set up social economy entities with a more social than material purpose, can we still talk about the social economy, are non-reimbursable financing from external sources still justified?

We cannot answer these questions here but leave this matter open for following researchers to tackle these questions and find proper answers. Another question is whether external aid must continue to be provided, if social economy entities still need to be supported by the European Union. ” *The existence of European money will attract projects and organizations, but they will be empty shapes*” (I.S., May 2012). This scenario, although likely to satisfy many individuals and organizations, is not desirable if the goal is to build a solid social economy system that is able to take over many of the tasks of the current capitalist system, that is stable to external economic influences. A system built of organizations funded mainly from external sources is extremely vulnerable and dependent on the donor.

The continuation of the financial aid from the European Social Fund will have to be treated with a change of approach, given that the social economy projects from 2008 to 2012 have not yet generated a major impact for vulnerable groups, due both to the slow-moving Romanian authorities and the lack of training and experience of organizations and institutions eligible for these funds.

Following the idea of discontinuation of European aid for the development of social economy, now or in 2020, if the financial program of the European Social Fund for the period 2014-2020 includes funds for the development of the social economy, it will be especially important to cover the demand for specialists in the social economy area.

” *An important factor for the development of the field in Romania would be the training of specialists*” (C.L., May 2012). Access to as many funds as possible by higher education institutions is desirable in Romania, as anywhere in the world. The training of experts in the social economy may be all the more necessary as long as the universities have funds from the European Union, as Romania does not have a tradition in this field, future experts

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<sup>1</sup> [www.fseromania.ro/posdru/](http://www.fseromania.ro/posdru/) accessed on April 15, 2012 and June 10, 2020

having to study the models of other states to get out of the national paradigm influenced by imperfect legislation.

*"We woke up with a social economy in our arms, even if here were some forms of social economy and now we tend to see a limitation of the social economy in terms of legislation in Romania"* (C.L., May 2012). To successfully carry out the approach of training specialists in social economy, it is, therefore, necessary to have additional funds to the traditional ones, funds to finance study visits, or even internships in social economy organizations in countries where this domain is more developed than in our country.

### **3.7. The social economy in Romania in 2022**

Because the initial purpose of the Delphi research method was to foresee the development of certain fields, sectors of activity, technologies, etc., and because we had the opportunity to interview highly trained experts especially in sociology, but also in psychology or economics, all of them having carried out research, development, and promotion of the social economy, we asked their opinions on the possibilities of medium-term development of the social economy in our country.

Considering an interval of 10 years, in this case, the year 2022, we requested from each of them, an exercise of imagination, a short virtual leap into the future. The exercise of imagination, supported with more or fewer arguments, was a fruitful one, outlining several scenarios that Romania could experience in 10 years. For the most part, opinions were optimistic but nuanced, as they were not identical but often overlapped.

The possibility of the disappearance of the cooperative sector was discussed, but this was offset by a very strong sector of non-governmental organizations with a major role in the development of the social economy. In the same scenario, mutual aid organizations could retain their importance but only in small rural or urban areas, focusing on disadvantaged and low-income groups. Banks have begun to provide loans for the development of the social economy, loans directed mainly to non-governmental organizations.

If this trend continues, NGOs could indeed strengthen their market position and, through social economy activities, compete with small businesses, as the crisis in recent years put a very big question mark on the capabilities and the contemporary capitalist system.

The social economy can be an alternative, along with a change in the value system, a return to the social approach to the detriment of the economic approach, a twist to equal opportunities, to strengthening the middle class and to return to the humankind.

*"I think we will have nowhere to go because we need to return more to the social approach, and this will not only be in our country but globally. The social vision will have a sufficient importance"* (C.L., May 2012). Under these conditions, the social economy would develop with the changes in society. *"One can imagine social enterprises, vulnerable groups to ensure their daily living being involved in a social enterprise"* (C.L., May 2012).

Perhaps more important than European funds, than the laws adopted by Parliament or the efforts of a few people, the internalization by the general public of the role of all

entities in the social economy, plays a very important role in the development of this field in the medium and long term. The social economy can improve the social protection system in Romania by supporting disadvantaged groups, by integrating people with disabilities, former detainees, victims of domestic violence, etc. into the labor market.

Another important area in which the social economy can bring important benefits is health. There have long been social hospitals in western countries and, more recently, in Romania (eg St. Nectarius Hospital in Bucharest), which provide medical services to people with no health insurance, as well as those who have but do not have the opportunity to access the services of traditional public hospitals.

In the field of credit industry, it is well known that the social economy can play a particularly important role in supporting low-income people without the possibility of obtaining bank loans.

Like agricultural production cooperatives coming from the communist regime, but without the same state intrusion, in the form of agricultural associations, small farmers can get better yields from their own crops. With an impressive arable land, Romania could become a major agricultural player if arable land were not so fragmented and people would move from subsistence agriculture, for their own consumption, to a more efficient, mass agriculture, which would bring, in addition to daily living, an increase in the quality of life of people in rural areas.

These are just some of the areas in which the social economy can play a very important role provided that the population and policy makers have an adequate understanding of this role and that they need to build an appropriate legal and fiscal framework.

For 2020, within an optimistic scenario of social economy development, changes are expected in the state structure, changes such as increasing the number of employees in the social economy sector and increasing the contribution of the social economy to the country's Gross Domestic Product. The role of the social economy in producing well-being is expected to be better understood by the population, this awareness being essential for a solid and long-term development.

Overall, although at the moment the social economy sector in Romania is not developed and, in the opinion of some specialists, is in decline, the general opinion is that in 10 years it will be much better, being a mature sector, along with the public and the private.

#### **4. Limits of the research**

Science is constantly evolving in any field, and in the social sciences as well, scientific approaches are, most of the time, cut-outs of moments in reality, viewed through a certain type of scientific lens and interpreted by researchers according to an established set of rules and their own personal experiences. Social reality is constantly changing, the lens through which it can be seen is not unique and the rules that the researcher uses in interpreting what he observes in the corner of reality studied are as many as the number



of researchers. This work can be improved in a possible later approach, by involving a greater number of specialists in the social economy, from more diverse areas.

Because most of those whose opinions we obtained and interpreted here are theorists, we believe that diversification of experiences will be beneficial to a future study. Also, the geographical coverage was not uniform, being that the interviewed experts are only from Bucharest and Iasi, although working on national level projects, cannot provide a complete perspective of the social economy throughout the country.

## 5. Conclusions and recommendations

The social economy is, both as a practice, but especially as a theory, in an early stage of development worldwide and Romania is, unfortunately, far behind the developed countries in Europe and even on other continents regarding the practice of the social economy and its recognition by the state, by economic actors and, in general, by public opinion. As respects, the theoretical development, only the countries of Western Europe, such as France, Great Britain, Spain, Germany, and Italy have a more consolidated tradition and can be highlighted by significant contributions to this field.

Romania, from the academic and scientific development point of view, in the field of social economy, is at a very early stage, the vast majority of scientific papers on this field being published in recent years, under the umbrella of European-funded projects. The European Union places great emphasis on the development of the social economy in the Member States, as demonstrated by the growth targets adopted in the Europe 2020 Strategy (European Commission, 2010).

The question mark raised above capitalism by the socio-financial crisis of recent years makes the social economy gain this increased attention because this type of economy seems to be the most widely accepted and the best alternative to capitalism and there are hopes that it can be complementary to it.

For a solid and lasting development of the social economy, several steps are needed, this being a complex sector, which receives and transmits influences in a multitude of other spheres of society. Thus, we can outline the following findings and recommendations:

- Involvement of all responsible factors (relevant public institutions and relevant non-profit organizations) in designing an **appropriate legislative framework**, compatible with the specifics of existing actors in the local ecosystem and comparable to current guidelines in the European area, to support the growth of the social economy on the medium and long term is vital. In terms of participation in market exchanges, the social economy needs fiscal facilities to compensate the disadvantage compared to other players and to allow both the support of social activities (employment of vulnerable people, who are not always competitive in the labor market) and the creation of new jobs, as appropriate.
- The **training of social economy specialists** is essential, given both the growth potential of this sector and the lack or small number of people

prepared or willing to pioneer social *entrepreneurship*. The initiatives of some universities to introduce master programs in social economy domain represent a good start of an approach that should be continued. Another option is the exchange of experience, the uphold of support networks (formal or informal) or the mentoring provided by social leaders who have been remarkably successful in starting community initiatives or creating social businesses. Social economy incubators, with support services for new businesses until they mature in the market, using lessons learned from other states, could be another launching pad.

- The effervescence that characterizes the discussions about the social economy today is due to the existence of funding sources and their accessibility. In the long run, we do not know what will happen after the closure of operational programs. If the field is no longer a priority in economic and social cohesion policy, then it should be supported by public funding, a national social program, or local grants. To the extent that social business proves to achieve its objectives, then it could attract the attention of the corporate private sector and funding through social responsibility programs.
- Also, public and other sources of funding are beneficial but need to be supplemented by a **permanent public awareness campaign** so that they understand the importance of the field, the benefits, and disadvantages, but especially to start responding to the supply of goods and services generated by social economy entities. The importance of the sector must be made known at all levels, including by policymakers who encourage and put in a positive light any such initiative. The long-term development of the social economy depends decisively on the awareness and internalization of this concept by community leaders, by entrepreneurs, by every person who wants to change something for the better, not as a pretext for accessing public funds, but as a tool that can increase the quality of life of small communities, and also of the entire population in Romania and in any other state, by integrating vulnerable groups on the labor market and, in general, in society. The social economy must be understood more deeply and by ordinary people, who can find in the specific forms of organization of the social economy, solutions to the needs they face, which they can approach creatively, in the communities they come from or in the group to which they belong.
- We must not forget the cooperative sector, which is currently in decline, having lost members, alienated assets, and is no longer playing a major economic role. Companies that survived so far need to be supported because they have passed the test of transition to a market economy, but they can no longer compete for a long time with new business models that act quickly, even aggressively or unconventional. Mutual aid organizations for pensioners and mutual aid organizations for employees remain a haven of financial inclusion for vulnerable people, in the absence of an adequate supply of financial products for such consumers.

Of course, there are still questions for the future, which we must answer to help social economy actors perform, contribute through their work to increasing the well-being of vulnerable groups and creating added value in the community.

- How can we persuade people in the community to come up with ideas and develop business in and for the community?
- How can we overcome the dependence on external financial aid to create or develop an initiative?
- How can we ensure the sustainability of social economy initiatives?
- How can we demonstrate the need for grants as long as, in fact, the social economy must, at least in theory, start from within communities and not just through external influences?

Experience of recent years has shown that expectations of the impact of European funds for the social economy have not been sufficiently met, and that social enterprises at the heart of a healthy social economy are still to be expected.

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**Annex 1****List of respondents**

<b>Initials</b>	<b>Academic title</b>	<b>Representative positions</b>
C.L.	PhD of Psychology	Social programs coordinator; Expert in social economy projects
D.A.	PhD of Sociology	Principal researcher of a research institute within the Romanian Academy; Expert in social economy projects; Associate Professor
I.S.	PhD of Sociology	Principal researcher of a research institute within the Romanian Academy; Expert in social economy projects
S.C.	PhD of Economics PhD of Sociology	Principal researcher of a research institute within the Romanian Academy; Social programs coordinator; Expert in social economy projects; Public policies evaluator for the Ministry of Labor; Public policies evaluator for the Ministry of Finances; Associate Professor

### Interview plan

<p><b>Perspectives of the social economy in Romania</b> - Delphi Study, Round 1</p>
<p>In the first round, we are kindly asking you to answer the following 4 questions. For each question, please answer as detailed as possible (there is no space limit); the answers you give in this round are the basis on which the next rounds of research will be built.</p>
<p>Where do you think Romania is now in terms of the social economy?</p>
<p>What do you consider to be the steps to follow for the development of the social economy in Romania?</p>
<p>What do you think are the most important factors that contribute or will contribute to the evolution of the social economy sector in Romania?</p>
<p>How do you see the social economy sector in Romania in 2022? (You can provide more scenarios with details on possible causes for each scenario).</p>

**Annex 3****Questionnaire**

<b>Perspectives of the social economy in Romania - Delphi Study, Round 2</b>
<p>After analyzing the answers provided by you and the other participants in the first part of the study, we summarized a series of statements that we ask you to appreciate by giving them "grades" depending on your level of agreement / disagreement regarding each of them.</p> <p>1 - completely disagree; 2 - disagreement; 3 - some disagreement;            4 - indifferent;            5 - some agreement; 6 - agree; 7 - completely agree.</p> <p>(You can highlight your answer in any way - underline, change color, delete, etc.)</p>

**A. Where do you think Romania is now in terms of the social economy?**

Romania has experience in the Social Economy through mutuals and cooperatives.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Romania is in an exploratory stage in which a series of specific intervention models for disadvantaged groups are being experimented on a small scale.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
SE is now promoted in Romania exclusively due to the EU financial year through the European Social Fund.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Romania faces a decline of the forms of social economy (cooperative and mutual organizations), except for mutual aid organizations for pensioners.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The cooperative sector lost many members, assets and scope of economic activity from the Revolution until today.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Non-profit organizations, CARs and cooperatives have low potential to develop social economy activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
There is a lack of an adequate legislative framework for social economy activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Public institutions do not support structures that address vulnerable groups.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Romania lacks a strategy for the social economy sector.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Romania is in an exploratory stage in which the state of the sector and the directions of action are identified.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
There are no clear initiatives, only attempts in EU-funded projects.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Other suggestions: .....

### B. What do you consider to be the steps to follow for the development of the Social Economy in Romania?

A unitary and coherent legislative framework governing SE needs to be built.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Funding is needed for practical ES activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
There is a need for a change in the mentality of people at risk.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
There is a need for a change in the mentality of people with political decision-making power.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
There is a need for a change in the mentality of businesspeople.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It is necessary to support the existing cooperative sector.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
SE incubators need to be developed to provide support on all levels of new SE initiatives until they are stabilized.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Support mechanisms are needed for protected workshops.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Awareness of the need for ES is needed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Steps must be taken to halt the decline of existing SE entities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The establishment of new SE entities should be promoted.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Defining and legally recognizing the ES field is an important step.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Clear legislative provisions must be formulated for each type of SE entity.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Tax facilities are needed for SE entities in general.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Tax facilities are needed for SE entities that employ vulnerable people.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It is necessary to include SE entities in national and international networks in order to intensify the exchange of products, services and information between them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The state must create tools for coordination and control of the activity of SE entities, other than those existing for economic operators.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
There is a need to initiate communication channels between SE entities and banks.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ES can only be developed through well-thought-out local initiatives.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
For the development of SE entities, support from local authorities is needed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The inclusion of SE entities in national and international networks to intensify the exchange of products, services and information with the economic agents themselves is a necessary step.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It is necessary to train specialists in ES.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The development of SE must be coordinated by state institutions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Other suggestions: .....



**C. What do you think are the most important factors that contribute or will contribute to the evolution of the social economy sector in Romania?**

Involvement of Public Social Assistance Services in the development of SE.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The policy makers must be aware about the importance of the sector.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Concrete forms of support are needed for SE entities through the ESF 2014-2020, adapted to their capacities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The general public must be informed about all that ES means.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The organization of a critical mass of people informed about SE is essential for the development of the field.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Legislation needs to be optimized to allow for the easy establishment of SE entities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It is necessary to introduce at the legislative level a new type of organization - the Social Enterprise.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Expanding the ES area beyond the inclusion of vulnerable groups, to promote a new type of organization of economic activity.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It is necessary to inform people from public institutions on this topic.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Detaching SE entities from donors and funders is an important factor in their development.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Other suggestions: .....

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# THE OPINIONS OF ROMANIAN EXPERTS ON BREXIT: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

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Mihnea Daniel NĂSTASE<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** *After a number of postponements, Britain's ratification of the withdrawal agreement has finally initiated the transitional period, during which the negotiations between the United Kingdom and the European Union will be finalized. Brexit has and will continue to affect the structure and relationships between EU member states. With a history of positive perceptions towards the EU and its institutions, Romania continues to believe in the rhetoric launched by Brussels. However, the implications of Brexit with regards to Romania are plenty – commercial, economic, political and geostrategic. In order to understand how the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union affects Romania, this paper attempts to thematically analyse a series of interviews with Romanian experts and elites. The interviews discuss the historical and political context of Brexit, and how Brexit affects Romania and Romanian citizens' attitudes towards the Union. Recent statistics show that more than 400.000 Romanians reside in the UK and as such, one of the core matters raised in this paper concerns the status of Romanians in the UK post-Brexit.*

**Keywords:** *Brexit, Romania, Romanian Experts, Euroscepticism, European Union*

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In order to evaluate the perception on the subject of Brexit, its causes and effects on Romania and the attitudes of Romanian citizens towards the European Union, a thematic analysis was undertaken on a series of in-depth interviews with Romanian experts who have a leading role in their areas of activity and who can express a valid and well-informed point of view on the subject. This paper manages to bring together the perspectives of political elites, mass media, academics and sociologists, who are able to disseminate information, shape public opinion, and influence the political decision-making process in Romania. As a member state of the European Union and in the context of a potential contagion of the 'exit' phenomenon in Europe, analysing and understanding the attitudes of experts and elites that are able to forge either pro-EU or anti-EU discourses in Romania is of paramount importance for the future of both Romania and the European Union.

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## The Politics of Brexit

As a former empire and colonial power, the United Kingdom has always approached the European Union and, more specifically the EU's enlargement process, from a distinct and uncommon standpoint. Opposition to the European project has been a cornerstone of British foreign policy, observable since the UK's accession to the European Economic Community in 1971. Attitudes towards the European Union have been directly assessed by British citizens following the attempt of British prime-minister David Cameron to gain electoral advantage. With rising nationalistic sentiments in the UK, the populist movement – methodically steered by the UK Independence Party – succeeded in politically pressuring the Conservative Party and its leader to call for an EU membership referendum after the May 2015 general elections. The announcement fractured British society in supporters of 'leave' or 'remain' – forcing debates on various issues such as identity, sovereignty, economic costs versus benefits, and migration (Ashcroft, 2016; Harris, 2016; Riley-Smith, 2016). Further research has explored the entanglement of individual and regional motives (Abreu & Öner, 2019; Adam & Mertens, 2020) that have led to the United Kingdom's historic decision to withdraw from the European Union in what became widely known as the 2016 Brexit referendum.

The foundations of European integration, or disintegration, involve multiple spectrums, having socio-economic, socio-cultural, political, institutional and territorial facets (Eppler & Scheller, 2013). The study of European disintegration (Vollaard, 2018) discusses the context-specific mechanism that interconnects macro-dynamics and micro-components with the EU decision-making machinery (Hedstrom & Swedberg, 1998; Mason et al., 2013).

The European Union has reached a crossroads. Ruptures and divisions between the EU27 have resulted from zero-sum games that have caused difficulties in dealing with considerable crises that have had a direct impact on the lives of British citizens, such as the economic and financial crisis, an identity crisis and economic convergence crisis, the refugee crisis, a security threat crisis, near-exits by other member states, the expansion of the Russian sphere of influence into the Western Balkans, as well as an EU institutional and decision-making transparency crisis. As a new form of European disintegration, Brexit is characterized by the mainstreaming of Euroscepticism and anti-EU sentiments (Brack, 2018). Following deadlocks in negotiations between the EU27 and the UK towards arriving at an agreement, the UK finally ratified its decision to withdraw from the EU on January 31st, 2020, allowing for the final stage of Brexit negotiations to be finished by the end of the transitional period.

## Romania and Brexit

This paper attempts to analyse the perception of Romanian experts towards Brexit. As such, it is important to take note of the official position that Romanian authorities have had towards the United Kingdom's withdrawal and the negotiations ensuing from this decision.

Former prime-minister Viorica Dăncilă has declared that, internally, Romania began preparing for Brexit starting with March 2017, when a cross-ministerial mechanism was created to oversee negotiations (Gov.ro, 2019). George Ciamba, former minister of European affairs, iterated that Romania would not suffer direct economic consequences post-Brexit, in terms of GDP, according to the current trade balance (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2019). However, Romanian authorities have encouraged the option of a 'soft' Brexit, with negotiations between the UK and the EU27 reaching a withdrawal agreement (Romania2019.eu, 2019; Presidency.ro, 2019). According to the permanent representative of Romania to the European Union, Luminita Odobescu, a 'hard' Brexit would severely affect Romania's most important objective, securing the rights and liberties of Romanians living in the UK post-Brexit (Petrescu, 2019).

Following the UK's withdrawal from the European Union, the president of Romania, Klaus Iohannis, reiterated that Romania's core objective during the Brexit negotiations has been maintaining the rights and freedoms of Romanians living in the UK and that this matter is properly reflected in the withdrawal agreement (Presidency.ro, 2020). The president also discussed the necessity to further Romania's strategic partnership with the UK and the need to establish a close relationship between the EU27 and the UK post-Brexit (Presidency.ro, 2020).

## Methodology

Twelve Romanian experts and elites, both practitioners and theorists, from the economic, political, diplomatic, academic, sociological, and mass media spheres, have been chosen to participate in a series of interviews in order to convey opinions on the matter of Brexit that are well-balanced, diverse and representative. Rich et al.'s 18 point approach to conducting "elite interviews" (2018: 324-325) was utilized in order to construct the interactional framework with interviewees, while respecting the approaches of research interviews (Suchman & Jordan, 1990; Abell and Myers, 2008), and addressing convergent and discriminant validity (Beamer, 2002). Although conducting 'elite interviews', this paper attempts not to overuse the term "elite" and has preferred to refer to respondents generally as experts. Many academics have had problems with agreeing on a general definition for elites (Harvey, 2011). As such, when referring to experts and elites further in this paper, these are defined as individuals that have key positions in their social frameworks, with extensive knowledge in their fields of activity and who are able to exert influence (Parry, 1998; Smith, 2006). The decision to limit the sample size was taken upon reaching the saturation of information on the subject.

As a measure of anonymity for the interviewees, which have not, however, disclosed classified information, only a general title and initials will be made public throughout this paper. The participating interviewee from the field of economy is F.G., a member on the board of the National Bank of Romania. The political elites interviewed are two former members of the European Parliament from the 2014-2019 legislature, A.C. and E.P.; L.O., permanent representative of Romania to the European Union; former minister of European affairs G.C., who had an active role in Brexit negotiations and in the first Romanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union; and S.T., former

ambassador of Romania to the Kingdom of Belgium, currently a director in the Romanian ministry of foreign affairs. With regards to candidates from the academic field of activity, two professors F.A. and M.P. – political scientist and sociologist – were chosen as respondents. Another sociologist, M.K., was asked to offer a perspective on Brexit and its impact on Romania. The media personalities interviewed were a journalist and talk show producer, A.U.; a journalist that reports on European affairs, S.I.; and B.C., a journalist and political analyst.

The interviews were conducted between May 5th and July 20th 2019. The research interviews were semi-structured, with an ‘elite/expert’ interview approach, and had a duration that ranged from 14 to 56 minutes. Literature suggests that interviews carried face-to-face are more efficient and often offer more information than telephone interviews (Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004). Thus, it was decided to utilize a face-to-face scenario to conduct the interviews. A recording device was used in the interviews in order to provide a verbatim transcript, while being able to effectively follow-up on questions and important aspects (Richards, 1996) – maximizing the allocated interview time. The transcripts have been thematically analysed, with data being categorized into four different topics of interest for a more methodical and in-depth analysis, while maintaining a holistic approach with distinct arguments that lead to understanding Romania’s position and perspective in the context of Brexit.

The following list of questions was used as a guide to conduct the interviews:

- Q1. What are the core issues that have caused the UK’s decision to withdraw from the European Union?
- Q2. Could you describe the most important actors and vectors that triggered the electoral decision for Brexit?
- Q3. What are the problems that Romania will face as an effect of Brexit?
- Q4. Will Brexit have economic and commercial consequences for Romania?
- Q5. When negotiating with the UK, what key objectives should Romania focus on?
- Q6. Will the status of Romanian workers in the UK be affected by Brexit?
- Q7. Will Brexit cause a shift in the attitudes of Romanian citizens towards the European Union?

## **Analysis and Interpretation of Results**

### **Opinions of Romanian experts concerning the causes of Brexit**

Brexit must be analysed as a complex phenomenon with causes that stem from historical, political, cultural and geostrategic perspectives. In this context, the Romanian interviewed experts discuss the elements that have influenced British voters’ opinions and triggered one of the most significant events in the history of the European Union.

Romanian experts largely believe that Brexit primarily had socio-economic roots. The guarantee for the free movement of labor through the European Single Market led to a popular perception in the UK that “immigrants” – who were in fact citizens of the European Union – had been relocating extensively to the United Kingdom, and as a result had occupied jobs at a smaller wage, thereby creating unemployment for British citizens.

F.G. has an interesting point on the matter of socio-economic issues in the UK:

Socio-economic issues [caused Brexit], more precisely that [issue] of employment, the problem regarding the UK’s structure of production that has shifted from the segment of relatively high complexity manufacturing to the area of preponderantly financial services. (F.G., Member on the board of the National Bank of Romania)

The dynamic of the UK economy has changed from its industrial and manufacturing origins to one based on financial institutions – concentrated in ‘hubs’ such as the City of London or Liverpool (professor and sociologist, M.P.). This adjustment created significant economic discrepancies for the lower and middle classes, making citizens believe that the costs of membership to the European Union had started outweighing the benefits (journalist and talk show producer, A.U.). This argument is also reinforced by former minister of European affairs (G.C.):

Brexit marks the beginning of a political phenomenon of anti-globalization. [...] Brexit was won in the cities that had smaller incomes per capita and that were affected deeply by deindustrialization. Brexit was not popular in London or wealthier zones. It has clearly also marked a line of British social division. (Former minister of European affairs, G.C.)

A matter that was openly agreed upon by interviewees was that of national identity and sovereignty as causes for Brexit. On one hand, this matter touches upon Britain’s historical context, as a former empire and colonial power (former members of the European Parliament, A.C. & E.P.). Citizens assumed that the freedom of movement in the EU was causing its society to neglect its own culture and traditions. On the other hand, citizens from the UK believed that their country was not as present in the decision-making process at the level of EU institutions as it should have been, with France and Germany having more leverage (member on the board of the National Bank of Romania, F.G.). An example that has been used multiple times to illustrate this point, mostly by experts that resided abroad, in Brussels, is that of how the EU’s budget is established – also referring to the UKIP’s backtracked slogan: “Let’s give our NHS the £350 million the EU takes every week” (McCann & Morgan, 2016).

Several experts have also named political agents and decision-making as causes of Brexit. Although actors and vectors will be discussed in a subsequent chapter, a professor and political scientist (F.A.) offers an interesting view regarding the political context that led to the referendum on June 23, 2016:

The process started as a follow-up of a political miscalculation by prime-minister Cameron. [...] The unpopularity of the government, the fact that the UK’s

government had a very weak communication, led to co-actions in the context of a campaign based on lies, on falsehoods, the result of which, from a game, a political calculation, political marketing, has had important geopolitical consequences. (Professor and political scientist, F.A.)

The European Union has been used by the political elite in the UK as a convenient scapegoat for the lack of internal implementation of policies. Interviewees believed that the lack of efficient communication by the UK's government was speculated by the Eurosceptic, populist political movement in the UK. A journalist and political analyst (B.C.) refers to data mining, data analysis, digital profiling and targeting services that aided in this effort:

[...] a commercial society that influenced the vote, such as Cambridge Analytica. [...] Well, perhaps the difference of four percent was influenced by Cambridge Analytica. (Journalist and political analyst, B.C.)

A former ambassador of Romania to the Kingdom of Belgium (S.T.) has a very interesting approach towards the causes of Brexit, having a three point explanation from a macro to micro perspective. Firstly, the respondent discusses the UK's historical conduit, post-World War II, towards Europe and the coalitions that led to its accession in the 1970's – where the UK primarily aimed at achieving commercial advantages, while only secondarily aiming for direct economic incentives. Secondly, in the interviewee's opinion, the UK assumed that in the future, the European Union would become more political and less commercial as a construct. Finally, as a third point, S.T. referred to specific elements that relate to internal politics and the reality present in today's British society.

Professor and sociologist, M.P. concluded that the core reasons the UK has withdrawn from the EU are geographic and historical:

It had to do with a red line that generally characterizes a people throughout centuries of national attitudes and national pride, of identity and legitimacy. They did legitimate themselves through this matter, that 'we are different than the Europeans', this is what encapsulates the situation. (Professor and sociologist, M.P.)

All in all, the topic concerning the causes of Brexit is seen by Romanian experts as multi-faceted. Interviewees discussed at length socio-economic factors – also caused by globalization and deindustrialization – and the lack of efficient communication by authorities, all while discussing identity and sovereignty as causes that have historically spanned across centuries.

### **The UK's withdrawal from the EU: vectors and important actors**

When discussing the actors and vectors that led to Brexit, the interviewed Romanian experts discuss both broad themes such as globalization and common values, as well as specific political actors and media. This theme brings together both internal, national factors, but also external players that have had an interest in creating divisions within the European Union through the UK's withdrawal.

“Anti-globalization” is a factor that constantly emerges from interviews. Although this is a theme that has been mentioned earlier, in the previous chapter, in this case globalization is mentioned in the context of discontent citizens that are rejecting a model of globalization because the economic “trickle-down” could not be implemented down to the last worker (member in the board of the National Bank of Romania, F.G.). Interviewees talk about the problems of globalization internalized by UK citizens who became the primary actors in and of themselves with regards to the referendum on Brexit.

Here we talk about Brexit, [where people] felt excluded by perspectives of globalization. Thus, there was an association between the EU, globalization and poverty, and practically this is the central conclusion that created the switch for amassing the majority for the Brexit vote – representing traditional voters of the Labour party. (Former ambassador of Romania to the Kingdom of Belgium, S.T.)

Professor and political scientist, F.A. brings about an interesting point of view regarding the common values of UK citizens with citizens from former colonies as opposed to common values with other citizens from the European Union:

From a cultural standpoint, Englishmen feel closer culturally to Indians, than to Poles and Romanians for example, because they were part of an empire, and they connect more with imperial history than with the membership to the European Union. (Professor and political scientist, F.A.)

A factor that has been generally expressed through the interviews regards the internal political actors in the UK, more precisely Cameron and the Conservative Party. Respondent consensus exists with regards to the fact that the facilitator of the referendum was David Cameron, the prime-minister who called and organized the referendum.

He [David Cameron] was the one that dotted the “i” and crossed the “t”, [...] he kept his word and organized this referendum for the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union. (Former member of the European Parliament, A.C.)

On one hand it was the decision of the Government from the time to organize this referendum and call a discussion concerning the role of UK in the EU, while on the other hand [the actors responsible for Brexit] are those who campaigned against, for “leave”. (Permanent Representative of Romania to the European Union, L.O.)

The Conservative Party and its leader were surely an actor, who – as I said before – tried to resolve a political and electoral issue by triggering a game, with the thought that he will manage to emerge victorious from it. (Professor and political scientist, F.A.)

Besides the significant role that prime-minister Cameron and the Conservative Party played in the organization of the referendum, another party has also been central to the implementation of Brexit, namely the UK Independence Party (UKIP). The populist movement was able to use misleading and deceptive slogans and disseminated false information in order to bring traction to the “leave” campaign. UKIP, according to



interviewees, was at the forefront of the battle for the UK to sever its ties with the European Union.

The flag-bearers [for the Brexit vote] have always been Farage and the UKIP movement. (Former member of the European Parliament, E.P.)

Without a doubt [another significant factor] were the Eurosceptics –by definition, those in the Independence Party, UKIP and its leader, Nigel Farage, with their campaign that was full of lies – also being supported by the North American conservative Right. (Professor and political scientist, F.A.)

The support received from North America, discussed in the previous quote, refers to a company that proved essential in data mining, profiling and targeting British citizens with precise information that would persuade the voter in favor of the “leave” option.

I believe the practical reason behind the UK’s withdrawal from the European Union is based on the game designed by Cambridge Analytica, the British commercial company that managed to utilize social-media and target messages depending on the client they had. They had Nigel Farage as client for Brexit, just as they had Donald Trump, in the United States, and so they had two historical successes. (Journalist and political analyst, B.C.)

Romanian experts did not assume that only ‘new media’ influenced the final Brexit vote. Rather, that many owners of traditional media outlets also supported the “leave” campaign (permanent Representative of Romania to the European Union, L.O.), choosing to represent a series of threats that ultimately were proved false, such as the expected “invasion” of the UK by Bulgarians and Romanians (Journalist and talk show producer, A.U.).

The interviews also concerned external vectors that had an impact on Brexit. According to a few of the interviewees, international players would much prefer dealing with a weakened and divided European Union:

I am convinced that countries such as the Russian Federation had a direct interest in seeing a Brexit occur. (Former member of the European Parliament, A.C.)

Let us not forget that even the United States are discretely interested in a weaker European Union, in order to undermine the economic power of the Common European formula. It is a win just as significant for the protagonists of the greater, international game from Asia, while Russia has, without a doubt, an interest for the European Union to not be cohesive and efficient. As such, each individually, through their connections and means, at separate moments, contributed to what already existed within the borders of the United Kingdom, to the amplification of a sentiment that it would be much better to have a British flag without stars around it. (Journalist and talk show producer, A.U.)

All in all, Romanian experts presented a perception that Brexit, as an event, was influenced by both internal and external actors. Internally, political figures were clearly identified – both as parties and as individuals – while traditional and social media vectors were discussed more generally. In terms of external factors, a few major players

on the international stage were framed as having direct interests in Brexit occurring – not as a direct implication for the United Kingdom, but rather for the European Union.

### **Negotiating the UK's withdrawal: how Brexit affects Romania and its citizens**

In the discussions regarding the UK's withdrawal negotiations, as well as how they will affect Romania, specialists addressed various topics that concern Romanian citizens residing in the UK, as well as commerce and the economy. Furthermore, respondents discussed at large how Romanian authorities managed the Brexit negotiations.

A central subject for interviewees, regarding Brexit negotiations, regarded the rights of citizens living abroad in the UK. A serious concern was voiced by former members of the European Parliament (A.C. & E.P.), who based on internal debates and information, disclosed that the EU27 and the European institutions were adamant against the policy of “cherry picking” work force that the UK attempted initially. Moreover, with a firm stance, both stated that if the UK wanted to remain in the Common Market, it needed to respect the fundamental conditions regarding the freedom of goods, services, capital, while emphasizing labour (A.C. & E.P.).

Member on the board of the National Bank of Romania, F.G. offered an explanation for the reason such a numerous work force from Romania decided to live abroad:

We are the ones that accounted for the socio-economic costs of integrating in the European Union, of globalization, by closing down the more inefficient production facilities and hence reducing the employment opportunities for the work force, which created waves of migration towards the more developed countries in the West, including England (member on the board of the National Bank of Romania, F.G)

The most important subject in this theme revolved around the Romanian work force and students in the United Kingdom. Interviewees raised points on this matter even before being specifically asked about the labour market. It is uncertain if this topic has developed so significantly due to the media or because of its political significance. The permanent representative of Romania to the EU (L.O.) explains that the community in the UK is extremely important and that it is an extremely important political subject for Romania. All of the respondents agreed that the most important objective for Romania in the Brexit negotiations is that of maintaining the rights and liberties of those citizens that have been already integrated in the British society post-Brexit.

In terms of the balance of trade, commerce and economy, experts do not voice as much concern as they do regarding the labour force.

In the financial world, England is not a massive presence on the Romanian market. Not [an important presence] in the banking sector, while on the capital market only some entities are present, but not very significant. Thus, the important objective is that of the labour market. It is important [for Brexit] not to affect the status of workers that are activating there. (Member on the board of the National Bank of Romania, F.G.)

For Romania, it is not an extraordinary propagation since the trade balance is quite modest with the UK. There are countries outside of the European Union, such as Turkey, with whom we have a trade balance that is five times larger. Even more so when looking at Germany. On the other hand, a certain cycle can exist for some of the affected states that have a large trade balance with the UK, such as Germany or the Netherlands. These, in turn, are principal commercial partners for Romania. Thus, a zone of contagion can occur. (Former minister of European affairs, G.C.)

Interviewed experts also discuss the matter of EU cohesion funds in the Brexit context. The UK, as the second largest net contributor to the budget of the European Union is withdrawing, while Romania remains the second largest beneficiary of cohesion funds. With the UK leaving, France and Germany become the largest contributors and they may seek to redirect funds from the EU budget to matters that affect them directly, such as Northern Africa, the Middle East, the migration crisis and security (former member of the European Parliament, A.C.).

When referring to how Romania has dealt with Brexit negotiations, opinions diverge. On one hand, interviewees believe that Romania failed to obtain as much as it could from the negotiations and that what was achieved regarding the rights and liberties of Romanian workers in the UK is a result of all EU member states having the same interest, with the UK expecting reciprocity from the EU27. The majority of the Romanian experts believed that Brexit negotiations are only truly held between France, Germany and the UK – and that Romania only validates these negotiations as part of the EU27.

Unfortunately we are not able to capitalize on what could have been benefits for Romania. There are many first moment advantages that we were not able to capitalize on, from the relocation of companies, to the resettlement of institutions in Romania – we can remember, for example, our application for the European Medicine Agency – to filling out positions in the administrative structure of the Council, the European Commission, positions vacated by the English public workers. [...] Our only win was that of a single place of a member of the European Parliament, that we obtained with some anxiety through the redistribution of places in the Parliament from Brussels as a result of British MPs leaving. (Journalist and talk show producer, A.U.)

Romania does not negotiate, Romania only votes for the decisions of the important powers, it is naive [to believe otherwise]. [...] The big powers negotiate, Germany, France, while we, the small member states - except Poland and Hungary that have a different trajectory, vote depending on their decisions. (Professor and sociologist, M.P.)

Realistically, negotiations only take place according to France and Germany, with regards to the United Kingdom (Professor and political scientist, F.A.)

An interviewed expert has an even more discouraged opinion concerning Romanian diplomacy overall, not just when discussing Brexit:

Realistically, Romania does not have a good relationship with anyone at this moment. It does not have channels of dialogue. It does not have a powerful diplomacy. It does not have an informal diplomacy. At this moment in time, Romania has failed. Thank God that we are within the European borders and not outside. However, Romania, from a political and diplomatic standpoint, is a failed state. (Journalist and political analyst, B.C.)

On the other hand, as expected, those that were actively involved in the act of government or in the Brexit negotiations directly have a different opinion, explaining that the most important objectives that Romania had in these negotiations have been met.

The Brexit negotiation, in the end our objectives were achieved. Our central objective was maintaining the rights of European citizens, and through the accord negotiated by Barnier, this matter has been respected. (Former minister of European affairs, G.C.)

From our point of view, at this time, we consider that the initial objectives assigned by Romania have been reflected very well in the withdrawal agreement. (Permanent representative of Romania to the European Union, L.O.)

The only perspective that discussed the possibility of a hard Brexit and what it would mean for Romanian citizens is that of professor and political scientist, F.A. Although perhaps not the most popular opinion, F.A. discusses that a hard Brexit, without an agreement, would be an advantage and opportunity for Romania since some of the citizens from the UK would be forced to relocate to Romania:

If a hard Brexit would occur, it could prove an advantage on the medium term, since some of the population would return to Romania. Action which could fuel the country's economic dynamic. (Professor and political scientist, F.A.)

All in all, interviewed experts have found three important points where Brexit negotiations affect Romania: the rights and freedoms of Romanian citizens in the UK, commercial and economic effects, and the maximization of benefits from negotiations. It appears the most important objective, that of Romanians in the UK, has been successfully negotiated – perhaps, according to experts, because of a common interest by the EU27 and the desire for reciprocity by the UK. Economically speaking, Brexit will not have a direct impact on the Romanian economy. Indirectly, however, a domino effect could cause pressure on trade balances with Germany or the Netherlands, which in turn could affect the Romanian economy. Finally, there was an interesting contradiction among respondent opinions when discussing the negotiations. Those involved in the negotiations were content with the outcome, while others felt a cost of opportunity and that not enough was done by the Romanian side in bilateral discussions with the UK, in the attempt to relocate companies post-Brexit and when negotiating with the European institutions.

## **Brexit and the attitudes of Romanian citizens towards the European Union**

When discussing the influence of Brexit on the attitudes of Romanian citizens towards the EU, the interviewed experts generally refer to the reasons why Romanians are very unlikely to become Eurosceptic – starting from historical matters and ranging to pragmatic and cost versus benefit analyses. When prodded further regarding attitudes towards the European Union, numerous reasons for the possibility of accentuated Euroscepticism are brought up, focusing predominantly on internal factors.

All interviewees agree on the fact that Brexit, as an event, will not stimulate negative attitudes for Romanians towards the European Union.

I do not believe [that Brexit] will diminish the optimism of Romanians towards the Union because Romania has always seen in the EU, with regards to politico-economic matters, in NATO, concerning military or national security issues, model clubs which one needs to join in order to modernize and develop. As such, when England, which is a great economic power, decided to develop outside of the club, it was its own option. [Brexit] takes place because its [the UK's] status as a 'big', developed country with huge economic potential gives it this option. We, as a competitor, a smaller runner, cannot perform in a globalized world without rules. We cannot swim or navigate on an ocean of globalization with our small boat, Romania. (Member on the board of the National Bank of Romania, F.G.)

I do not think that there is someone in Romania who would blame the European Union [for Brexit], it would make no sense, since it was not the European Union that decided for the UK to leave, but the UK that chose to withdraw from the European Union. (Former minister of European affairs, G.C.)

Even if Brexit does not impact perceptions strongly in a direct manner, the outcome of negotiations between the European institutions, the EU's member states and the United Kingdom could have a significant consequence in terms of perception. Former member of the European Parliament (E.P.) brings this issue up:

I do not believe that the UK's withdrawal from the EU has an influence on the perception of Romanians towards the European Union. However, the moment that the result of the negotiations will not be a desired outcome [by citizens], then things could change. If we, as the EU27 are not able to protect the rights of our citizens in the UK, then yes, I believe that the EU will lose face and its image will be affected not only in Romania, but also in all other 27 states. (Former member of the European Parliament, E.P.)

Attitudes against the European Union are not a desired political outcome in Romania. Sociologist M.K. explains that Romania is perhaps the only country in the European Union that does not have a political movement, a party with a Eurosceptic manifesto. Furthermore, the central political parties and media trusts in Romania have not launched campaigns against the European Union at all (Professor and political scientist, F.A.).

Although Romanians have a positive attitude towards the European Union, and according to the interviewed experts they will continue to be Euro-enthusiasts, the channels of information from the EU or its institutions are not direct to the Romanian citizens. Rather, Romanian elites act as a catalyst for stimulating European debates and for disseminating the appropriate information. Interviewees have mentioned that “elites explain” (member on the board of the National Bank of Romania, F.G.), and that “national authorities are the transmission belt” (journalist reporting on European Affairs, S.I.) for information, events and decisions that are taken at the EU level. This point is perhaps best encompassed in a comment made by former ambassador of Romania to the Kingdom of Belgium (S.T.):

For us [Romanians], Brussels is abstract, people cannot know what decisions are taken there. The message is still spread by means of the internal elites, not directly from Brussels. (Former ambassador of Romania to the Kingdom of Belgium, S.T.)

Another point that has been discussed extensively refers to a correlation between pro-EU attitudes and economic benefits for Romanian citizens. Romanian experts believe that euro-enthusiastic or eurosceptic attitudes have a direct correlation with a cost versus benefit analysis that is internalized in the Romanian collective perception.

A part of the Eurosceptic movement, which is fortunately still weak and I believe it will remain weak for a long time, has not gained momentum due to the non-existent conviction that we are not benefiting as a result of our membership to the European common family. (Journalist and talk show producer, A.U.)

As long as Romanians can find well-paid employment in the European Union, their sentiments towards the European Union will remain positive. (Professor and sociologist, M.P.)

There is another view however, saying that joining the EU has not had a major economic impact for those living in the country. S.I. explains that:

Romanians have felt the freedom of movement much stronger than citizens from other member states. The fact that one can work abroad was another benefit that Romanians could feel. [...] Perhaps these are the economic benefits, the fact that they [Romanians] were able to work abroad for better wages. It was not necessarily economic benefits in their own country, because unfortunately the matter regarding the absorption of European funds could not be experienced so strongly by the citizens in order to relate economic benefits directly to a pro-European attitude. (Journalist reporting on European Affairs, S.I.)

With a diaspora amounting to more than four million citizens, and tens of thousands of individuals in all of the better performing economies of the EU (journalist and political analyst, B.C.), indeed it seems that in order for economic benefits to be internalized collectively, they do not need to even be implemented in Romania. Clearly, out of the four freedoms guaranteed by the European Single Market, the freedom of labour is by far the most essential for Romanians.

Respondents followed-up with a series of issues that could lead to Euroscepticism, after asserting that Brexit would not play a part in such a shift. In this case the danger of

fueling negative attitudes towards the EU lies with Romanian authorities primarily, but also with regards to a certain perceived double standard in the EU's decision-making processes.

There are decisions that have an impact on citizens' or our [Romanians'] attitudes towards, not necessarily the European Union in and of itself, but rather regarding the way in which certain decisions are taken – an example being the impact caused by our non-accession to the Schengen Area. (Permanent Representative of Romania to the European Union, L.O.)

Romania is profoundly integrated in the European Union, but not at the top, where, unfortunately, the current political sphere [in Romania] is not able to communicate with the European political elite. Matters are fundamentally different from the period of Adrian Năstase, when the European elite would dialogue with the Năstase government. Now, only the base of the pyramid communicates with the European Union. (Journalist and political analyst, B.C.)

If elements pertaining to European skepticism appear in Romania, they are not caused by this [Brexit]. They [Eurosceptic attitudes] can be generated by other matters, from the phenomenon of discrimination, from differences in terms of treatment, which is why social cohesion is just as important as economic cohesion and why maintaining the fundamental freedoms of the European Union, as they are, is crucial for us. It is not possible to choose the freedom of goods or services against the freedom of movement for citizens or the freedom of labour. (Former minister of European affairs, G.C.)

A possible explanation regarding the current positive attitudes towards the EU, come from how Romanians' perceive their own identity. This is a matter that has been discussed in previous chapters, specifically when referring to it as a cause for Brexit itself. When discussing about the Romanian identity however, certain experts think that Romanians are drawn much more to their European identity than their Romanian identity. (Professor and sociologist, M.P.) M.K. goes even further in describing this phenomenon:

The Romanian discards his national identity with ease when departing to work in Italy, Spain or the United Kingdom. (Sociologist, M.K.)

All in all, the Romanian experts interviewed have fallen in agreement over the fact that Brexit, as an event, will not affect the attitudes of Romanian citizens towards the European Union. A strong case is made regarding the benefits – mostly economic – for citizens as a result of Romania's membership to the European Union. In the opinions of the interviewees, the benefits heavily outweigh the costs. However, even if Brexit is not likely to have an impact on Romanian attitudes, there are other factors that could cause Euroscepticism. On one hand these are internal, that are specific to the political elites and authorities, while on the other hand they are external – relating to certain decisions, based on double standards or discrimination, taken at the EU level regarding Romania.

## Conclusions

The interviews conducted with the twelve representatives from the political elite, the economic sector, academic sector and mass media offer a broad view concerning the causes and effects of Brexit as a phenomenon. A thematic analysis was used in order to categorize and efficiently structure the information collected in the interviews into four chapters, offering a holistic perception from Romania regarding the causes of Brexit, the consequences of Brexit for the EU and how Brexit will affect Romania and its citizens.

Brexit is an anti-globalization phenomenon, validated by the resentment of individuals affected by deindustrialization. This sentiment does not find its roots in civil society, but rather it is present even today through a Trump-Johnson duo that, having an isolationist approach, promote a new formula of globalization with rules and regulations.

The central causes of Brexit are socio-economic and historical in nature, oddly being the same elements that construct the pro-European narrative in Romania. A conclusion can be drawn, thus, that the cost-versus-benefit analysis of the membership to the EU weighs heavily on the perception of the EU that collective attitudes in a country have towards other member states. The larger economies in the EU managed to thrive on the continuous enlargement of the European community, through the guarantees of European Single Market - the free movement of goods, services and capital in the European Union. However, it is the free movement of labour – the freedom most valued by Romanian citizens – that created the necessary rhetoric that UKIP used to spearhead their „leave” campaign – wanting a Europe „a la carte”, attempting to cherry pick both the desired labour force and the policies and freedoms that allowed the UK to capitalize massively in the newly constructed zero-sum structure of the European Union (A.C.).

In terms of the negotiation of Brexit, Romania has managed to secure its most important objective, the rights and liberties of the over 400.000 Romanian citizens that are residing in the United Kingdom. Although further steps could have been taken in order to secure additional advantages, the Romanian authorities preferred to rely on the direction received from France and Germany, the EU27 and the European institutions. Romanian experts saw Brexit as a regional, isolated event, which will not affect the attitudes of Romanian citizens towards the European Union. With Romanian elites still acting as catalysts and disseminators of messages and information from the European Union, Romanians perceive Brussels and the EU as an abstract entity (S.T.). This matter is also central to this paper, as the interviewed experts and elites that activate in various fields of activity are those who internalise the information and discourses that stem from Brussels and propagate their analyses towards the Romanian public sphere. As such, according to experts, Eurosceptic attitudes in Romania could only be caused by “fake news” circulated by experts and mass media, by Romanian authorities inefficiently implementing European policies, or by double standards present in the decision-making mechanism at the EU level.



With an insecure common foreign policy, economic zero-sum games present at the core of the Union, and many other crises that create divisions between member states, the European Union finds itself at a crossroads and must find a future direction that involves the common interests of the whole EU27, so that smaller, less integrated member states can continue obtaining economic, internal or external, benefits in order for attitudes to remain Euro-enthusiastic and prevent additional exits from occurring.

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# WOMEN'S POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT IN URBAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT: A STUDY ON CUMILLA CITY CORPORATION

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**Abstract:** *Empowerment or involvement of women in leading procedure through gender complex specific policies are the precondition for attaining supportable progress in any emerging state, for instance Bangladesh. Constitutional requirements of Bangladesh can be seen as the landmark on the way to guaranteeing women's entrance and amplified involvement in political authority arrangement at City Corporation layer to consolidate the local government also for the supportable progress of Bangladesh. It implies direct partaking of the people in instituting the local body and management of the matters of such organizations as well. However, constitutionally we are succeeding the local government structure in all tiers, on the other hand, not performing it appropriately in the true sense. Comilla is one of the ancient towns of the sub-continent. In the year of 1864, it was stated municipality and in 2003, Comilla Sadar Dhakin Pourashava was acknowledged. Through put an end to these two pourashavas and containing their regions, the announcement of the Comilla City Corporation happened on 10 July 2011. It was the historical event for Comilla City. In 5th January 2012, the first ever election was held of Comilla City Corporation. The second election was held successfully, on 30 March 2017. The current study was carried out on Comilla City Corporations twenty-seven wards of nine ward councilors of the reserved seat. All of them were elected from three wards by direct vote and participation of voters both men and women. The representatives were elected for five years. The key aim of this research is to carefully measure the contemporary situation of empowerment of women councilor of the ward from reserved seats.*

**Key words:** *women, empowerment, politics, local government, City Corporation, Bangladesh.*

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## Introduction

The inclusive development of a state hang on highest deployment of her citizens, both male and female. In Bangladesh, women consist almost half of the entire population. However, the position of women is at a much below level than that of male in every realm of life. Women are recognized with familial life whilst politics is observed as a male directed public function that is basically masculine purely (Hossain, 2015). Empowerment as a recurrently used catch phrase takes diverse practices. It is, generally expressing, a societal issue that supports individuals or clusters to be efficient or more enabled to take greater charge of their everyday lives (Zaman, 2012). Women ward councilors represented in reserved seats in urban local government institutions are playing a significant role in diverse segments, particularly in women related matters (Taskin, 2015). The Constitution of Bangladesh commenced clauses to protect the rights women and keep provisions ensuring women's equal rights. Article number 19, 27, 28, 29 and 65 of the Constitution take care of women's equal rights and their involvements in the in all aspects of the national life. Clause 3 of Article 65 of the Constitution contends with the provision of reserved seats in the Parliament (GoB, 2016). However, the scenario of women's representation is still very below level in Bangladesh, particularly in Cumilla City Corporation. The reason of under representation is assigned to many issues like lack of education, financial inability, family liabilities, religion, stereotypes in society, electoral mechanism, party belief, psychological obstacles (lack of assertive power, low level of self-esteem) etc. (Rahman, 2015). Women's equivalent involvement in political life plays a significant role in the general procedure of the improvement of state. It is not simply a demand for appropriate justice or representing democracy but can also be observed as an essential requirement for women's interests to be taken into consideration.

Here, in this research, women's involvement is not simply about representation in local government institutions, however, is concerned with their empowerment of women through their participation. This study seeks to identify the role of female ward councilors of reserved seats as per the present structure and functions of urban local government institution and obstacles encountered by female ward councilors of reserved seat in performing duties and responsibilities.

## Objectives of the Study

- To assess the role of female ward councilors of reserved seats as per the present structure and functions of urban local government institutions (e.g. city corporations).
- To identify obstacles encountered by female ward councilors of reserved seat in performing duties and responsibilities.
- To suggest some possible recommendations to overcome the difficulties in performing duties and responsibilities.

## Rationality of the Study

In Bangladesh, women live in a societal arrangement where the socialization procedure plays a persuasive role in force them into a lower and inferior position in society. This socialization procedure initiated almost with the born of a child. This socialization procedure links girls with the household and boys with a larger atmosphere. This outcome in an uncomplimentary view of female with regard to politics (Siddika & Rahman, 2008). Women's political involvement has turned to be an attention of all global institutions' advocacy activities. Vital inputs have been generated by these institutions to develop women's political involvement universally. At the local level, women's political involvement is presently an extensively discussed issue universally (Sarker, 2018). An UN study viewed that the level of progress of a state as revealed by its demographic and social issues confined the involvement of women in politics. In those states where women's illiteracy is tremendously noteworthy along with below living standards and high rates of fertility, the possibility of women's participation is considerably less (UN, 1992). Without the lively involvement of women and the inclusion of women's evaluation at every layers of decision-making, the purposes of equality, progress and peace cannot be accomplished (Siddika & Rahman, 2008).

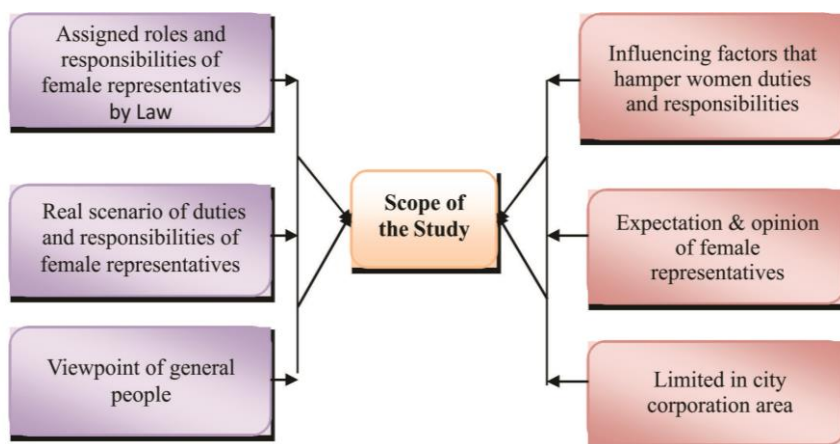
The validity of democratic governance hang on the equal involvement of both male and female in decision-making procedure and public administration (Sun, 2004). It is claimed that female can play their active role in the promotion procedure essentially. Women's impact to the advancement of the community and nation-building hang essentially on their involvement in both family matters and national level decision-making procedure (Chowdhury, 2002). Good urban local government institutions require consideration to a quantity of significant points, for instance, responsibility, transparency, accountability, responsiveness, rule of law, democratic involvement, decentralization, management, proficiency, encouragement, and leadership of female representatives (Zaman, 2007). However, the matter is that the elected women ward councilors (reserved seats) of Cumilla City Corporation do not receive the actual political authority in their actual life. Generally, the male councilor thinks that they (women ward councilor of reserved seat) are only play an ornamental role in politics. They cannot participate or provide opinion in any significant committee lively. In the standing committee meeting they can play a role of an observer only. They cannot communicate to any monetary functions. Therefore, this study is significant to find out the real condition of women in footings of their duties, tasks, and authority. The findings of the study can also helpful for the public policy maker to take appropriate steps to recover the negative situation.

## Scope of the Study

This study provides the scope for a close observation of the role and responsibilities of female elected representatives in decision-making processes at the city corporation level. It has made an attempt to comprehend the influencing factors that hampers women representatives to complete their duties and responsibilities. This study has not simply assessed the issues that affect women's participation, but it has also validated the

level of participation of women representatives in local government institutions in Bangladesh. Scope of the study is shown in following figure.

*Figure 1. Scope of the study*



This study is practically confined within the matter of women's involvement in the local governments. Geographically, it is confined to City Corporation, but the inferences can analytically be discussed to other LGIs in the state as the factors, situations and impacts affecting the assessments and practices of the samples utilized may have a similar impact to other individuals and areas.

## Methodology

Cumilla City Corporation is selected as a study area. It is a newly developed City Corporation. In this study total 100 people were selected from this area through simple random sampling method. Respondents list are below:

**Table 1. Category and Number of Respondents**

Category of sample	Total number
Elected women representatives	5 out of 9
Service providers & male councilors	2+3=5
General citizen	90
Total	100

Several techniques were utilized for data collection in this study. The crucial data collection techniques used in this study were interview and focused group discussion. The secondary sources of data were in the form of published documents. The study utilized several sources to assemble secondary data, for instance, from diverse relevant publications, dissertations, books, journal articles, reports, websites etc. and other pertinent documents were taken into consideration. Secondary sources were very significant to relate the relationship between dependent and independent variables.

## **Limitation of the Study**

Owing to time and resource obstacles, it was hard to accomplish a research on entire population and elected men and women representatives at the urban level, for instance, city corporation in general. Therefore, a small cluster of respondents was selected from the entire population by random sampling. To overcome the problems of the study, case studies and in-depth interviews, observations have been taken into account. Therefore, it has been actually perplexing to address the entire methodology within very limited time for collection of data. Conversely, women ward councilors from the reserved seat were not well communicated and unable to disclose adequate information about the matter situated within their particular workstation.

## **Literature Review**

To accomplish this study following books, several journals and research reports were studied.

Hasan (2007) in his study, “Women in Bangladesh Local Government: A Study of Gram Sarker” realized that, in the face of Constitutional undertakings, female in Bangladesh were not considered equivalently. A patriarchal societal arrangement, purdah (veil), marriage and religious obstacles located them in an unbalanced and unfortunate position. Women persisted prevented from decision-making and efficient political involvement. Their potentialities and inputs were frequently unnoticed and ignored because of male control and other socio-cultural obstacles that performed against female’s active involvement in political procedure.

Panday (2008) conducted a study, “Representation without Participation: Quotas for Women in Bangladesh” on women’s involvement in decision-making procedure at the national, along with the Union Parishad level. He found diverse issues that obstructed women’s political involvement in the political procedure: educational insufficiency; lack of financial resources; deficient movement; structural inadequacies; culture backwardness; religion and patriarchal difficulties. He observed that there was a latest deterioration of the number of females fighting quota seats. He anticipated that this may possibly be due to previous female candidates faced embittered experiences. From his research, it is apparent that the reservation of quota for the political involvement of female in the local government institutions does not confirm their vigorous involvement in the decision-making.

Moin (2011) in her study "Empowerment of Women and their Participation in Local Government Politics" found that, in a male-controlled political extent, the patriarchal societal scheme, reasonable provision from family, monetary capability, 'purdah' was contemplated as significant obstacles for women's political involvement in Bangladesh. She found that female did not gain an equal serving of projects and that their capabilities were not appreciated by their male complements. She specified that, being minor representation in the LGIs, they were not capable to effect decision-making or to acquire control over any assets. To Moin (2011), elected female generally fails to accomplish their election promises, which generate a undesirable impression amongst the voters.

Panday (2013) in his study "Women's Political Participation in Bangladesh: Institutional Reforms, Actors and Outcomes" found that socio-cultural difficulty, organizational insufficiencies, and attitudinal complications hampered women's political involvement. This study also perceived that the political parties were not preemptive in respect to females' involvement in politics. The depiction of the Union Parishad Act, 1997 had delivered a greater opportunity for females to contribute in politics, particularly in UP elections and UP decision-making. Their number of representations has been confirmed but their actual involvement has not yet been confirmed.

Panday (2016) in his study "Women's Empowerment in South Asia: NGO Intervention and Agency Building In Bangladesh" found that systems amongst females, entrance to have information, capacity-development training, amplified understanding and expertise and approaches of possession acted an effective role to create females confident and conscious about contributing in development accomplishments, in addition to helped them to increase their influences in the decision-generating of Union Parishads (UP). According to Panday (2016), the UPs were currently apt more gender-receptive in their actions.

Chowdhry & Aktaruzzaman (2016) in their study "Citizen participation in urban local government: a case study of Kanaighat Paurashava in Bangladesh" desired to recognize the particular issues that function as drivers for citizen involvement in Bangladesh by a case study of Kanaighat Paurashava (municipality) which is an urban local government institution. It recognized some variables which highly distress citizen's involvement. These are including the activities of the elected representatives, remarkably their inclination and consciousness; the facility of information to common citizens; citizens' capability; and accessible resources. Findings also offered that a comprehensive approach was essential to comprehend and transform representatives' outlooks towards citizens and confirm involvement.

Muhammed (2017) in "Women's Political Participation in Local Government in Ethiopia: The Case of Two Districts in Amhara Regional State", observed that some women in councils head standing committees as male had the a greater representation in all of the standing committees. Female were lagging behind in choosing to the leading points. The study also identified that, frequently, local administrators did not rely on the capability of women. According to Muhammed (2017), the persisting patriarchal opinions and gender preference in society were the key reasons of averting better women's involvement.



Sarker (2018) in his article “Participation of Female Vice-Chair in decision-making process at Upazila Parishad, Bangladesh” assessed women’s involvement in decision-making procedure concerning project choice, execution and arrangement in UZP meetings comprising (s) committee meetings to evaluate the level of females’ participation. The contemporary condition of women’s decision-making has been examined with their distribution of assessments, views and suggestions in UZP decision-making and with the acceptance of such suggestions. The research outcomes exposed that, in UZPs, elected female delegates have commenced to affect the decision-making procedure. It specified that area for female has been shaped to some degree notwithstanding some organizational insufficiencies and socio-cultural obstructions. This research also exposed that the influence of guidelines, regulations and training has reflective effect on women’s involvement.

Ullah (2018) in his study “Local Government in Bangladesh: Women’s Participation and Empowerment” tried to critically assess the magnitude of women’s political involvement and in the local level institution like Union Parishad in Bangladesh. The paper was basically enablement grounded on the assessment of secondary tools. The research findings recommended that the actual picture is not so good after passing the two decades of such an admirable footstep. Owing to societal, political, and cultural obstacles, elected female members in local government organizations cannot play their influencing role.

**Table 2. Summary of Literature Review on Women’s Political Participation**

Name of Authors	Major Findings
Hasan (2007)	Male domination and male-controlled societal norms impede women’s leadership.
Panday (2008)	Quota does not endorse active involvement in decision-making.
Moin (2011)	Male representatives are not conscious of their roles and obligations.
Panday (2013)	Act of 1997 carries prospects for women to insert politics although little influence for them.
Panday (2016)	Despite male supremacy, women are fostering their voices.
Chowdhry & Aktaruzzaman (2016)	An all-inclusive method was desired to comprehend and modification representatives’ outlooks regarding citizens and confirm involvement.
Muhammed (2017)	Less trust in the capability of women.
Sarker (2018)	Elected female representatives have commenced to impact the decision-making procedure and rules, laws and training has deep impact on women’s involvement.
Ullah (2018)	Owing to social, political and cultural obstacles, elected women members in local government organizations cannot play an active role.

The foregoing discussions on pertinent literature provide a broad focus about women's contemporary status, their empowerment and participation in the political extent in the ground of national (LGIs) and global levels. However, in this study key focus will be provided on role of women ward councilors in reserved seats as in accordance with the contemporary structure and activities of urban local government organizations (e.g. Cumilla city corporations) and difficulties faced by female ward councilors of reserved seat in functioning duties and responsibilities.

## Representation of Women in the City Corporations in Bangladesh

Although Bangladesh constitution delivers proper parity of male and female. Our constitution Article 28(2) stated that "*Women shall have equal rights with men in all spheres of state and public life*". In Article 29(3) indicated that "*Steps shall endeavor to ensure equality of opportunity and participation of women in all spare of national life*" (GoB, 2016).

However, women are differentiated for lots of reasons for example, male councilors of the general seat allotted certain unwritten directions. Women's representation in reserved seats lack the responsiveness of their obligations and responsibilities. In the reserved seats of women, councilors were elected from three wards, through passing many hindrances. Yet, if elected can organize certain work for the wellbeing of the individuals, she cannot do developmental effort that approach. In this circumstance, it is not the law, although the elected male councilors of the general seat seem to be the foremost difficulty (Bangladesh top gender equal, 2018).

There is an extensive consent that women's augmented participation in politics is essential for both the democratic progress of the country, along with women's advancement in Bangladesh. However, the election result of City Corporation is entirely different from national level election. When, there is no female elected representative in City Corporation without reserved seats.

**Table 3. Women representation scenario in city corporation elections**

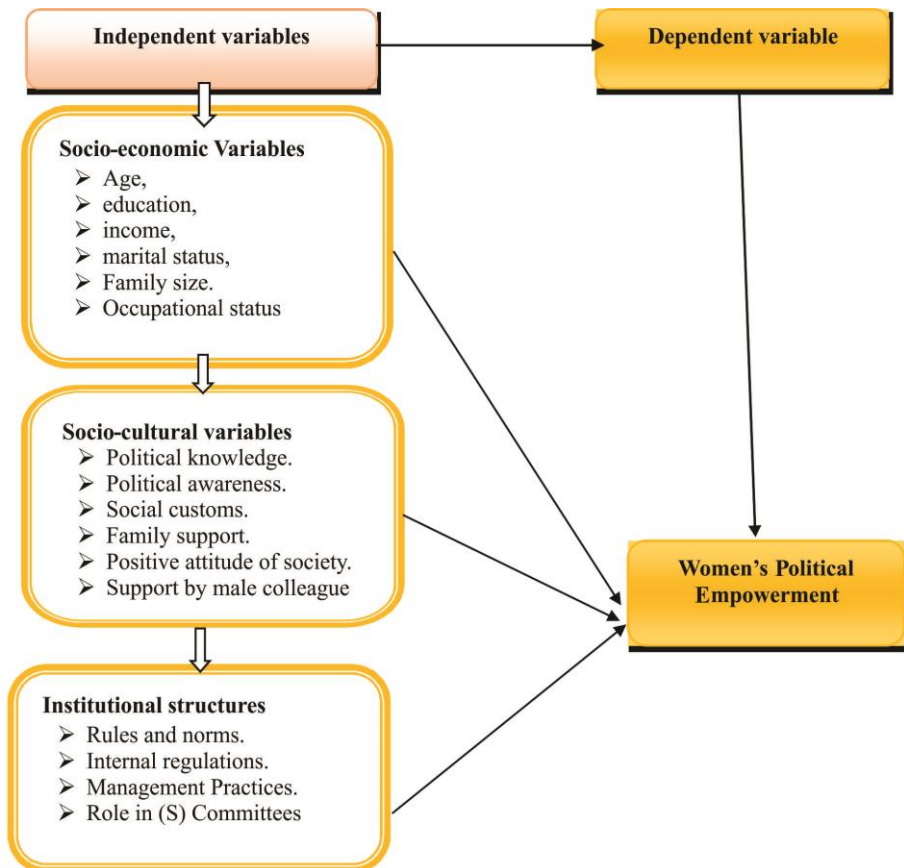
Year	Name of city corporation	Male councilors	Reserved seats of women
2017	Cumilla	27	09
2015	Dhaka north	54	18
2015	Dhaka south	57	19
2017	Gazipur	57	19
2017	Chittagong	41	14
2017	Khulna	31	10

*Source: Election commission report, 2019*

## Analytical Framework

Dependent and independent variables have been widely drawn from the prevailing literature. The dependent variable is women political empowerment at City Corporation. Independent variables are broadly classified as Socio-economic, socio-cultural, and institutional structure. Socio-economic variables include age; educational attainment; income; marital status, family size of women. Institutional structure includes rules, regulation, customs, and norms. The variables that are identified as key determinants of women empowerment at City Corporation are Socio-economic, institutional structures and resources. Here within the framework, an effort has been drawn to point out the casual links between these variables.

*Figure 2. Analytical Framework of the Study*



## Discussion and Analysis

### *Responses about reasons/factors that inspired you to participate in Local government City Corporation election:*

Women are the half of the total population of the country. Holistic development is impossible without women participation in political, economic, and social system. Government has taken various measures for women political participation. From the above table, it is represented that three female councilors participated in city corporation election by the inspiration of family member. Two opined that they inspired by the people of locality. Two councilors were inspired by political party and only one councilor called he got inspiration by the rural development program and training of BARD.

**Table 4. Responses regarding participation**

<b>1. Self-inspiration</b>	<b>2</b>
2. Inspired by family members	3
<b>3. Inspired by the people of the locality</b>	<b>2</b>
4. Inspired by the political party	2
<b>5. Inspired by rural development program of BARD</b>	<b>1</b>

### *Responses about institutional roles & responsibilities of a women councilor in City Corporation*

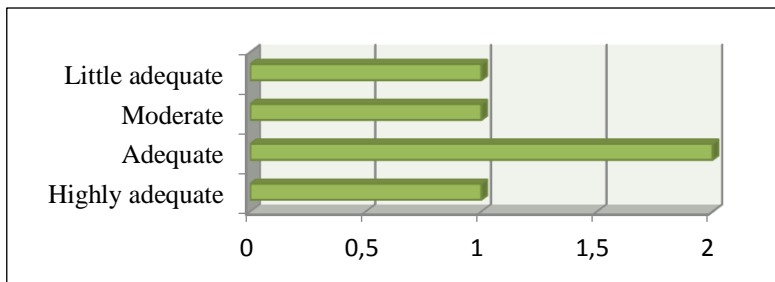
According to female councilors their main roles and responsibilities are following:

- Development of Public health.
- Residential Project Development.
- Community Development.
- Slum improvement.
- Water and sanitation.
- Educational & cultural development.
- Social Welfare.
- Attend the city corporation meeting.
- Monitoring the city corporation projects of respective area.

***Female councilor’s response about the level of adequacy of institutional rules and regulations***

Women elected representatives are deemed as a strong agent for realizing the actual problem of urban women. They work following institutional rules of City Corporation. Two respondents opined that institutional rules are adequate for performing their duties. One respondent called it is highly adequate. Another person called it is moderate. Finally, a single person responded institutional rules is little adequate for performing duties and responsibilities. Because, people’ expectation is high than city corporation manual and they cannot fulfill new demands of citizens.

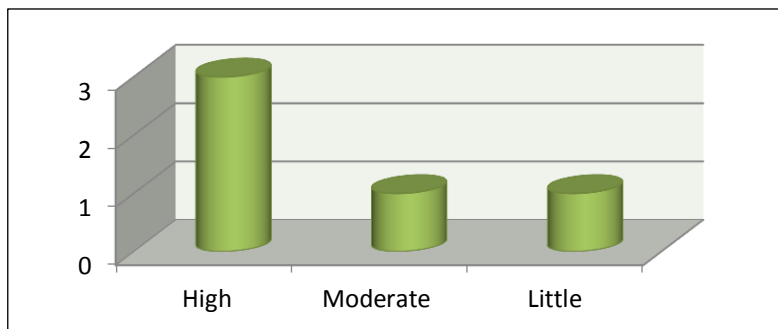
***Figure 3. Responses regarding institutional rules and regulation***



***Female councilor’s response about structural problems in performing your duties & responsibilities***

Our society is male dominated society. In every sectors male enjoy better opportunities than female. In city corporation female face much structural problems. Three respondents opined that structural problem is high. There is no clear indication/instruction of their duties and responsibilities. As a result, they cannot work properly due to male dominance. One respondent called it is moderate. Finally, a single respondent called institutional problem is very little. He called institutional rules does not hinder in doing work.

***Figure 4. Responses regarding structural problems***



***Female councilor's response about the barriers of their family in performing duties & responsibilities***

This study was conducted on five female councilors of Cumilla City Corporation out of nine. Everybody called that their family always help them. They do not face any family related barrier in performing their duties and responsibilities. Specially husband's elected representatives strongly support them.

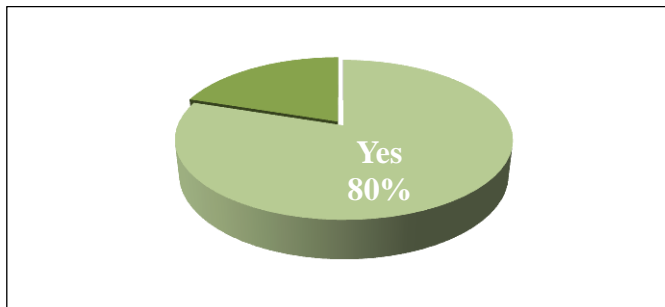
***Female councilor's response about social obstacles in performing duties & responsibilities***

Man lives in a society. Society is the working ground of female councilors. Society' demand and problem always influence them in doing work. From this study, it is observed that female councilors do not face any societal problems. Social people always help them in performing their duties.

***Female councilor's response about the political problem to participate in City Corporation election***

Women elected representative faced some problems before and during election. Political problem is one of them. Four respondents called that they did not face any political problems before and during election. But politics and political persons helped them before and during election. Finally a single councilor called that he faced some political problem during election.

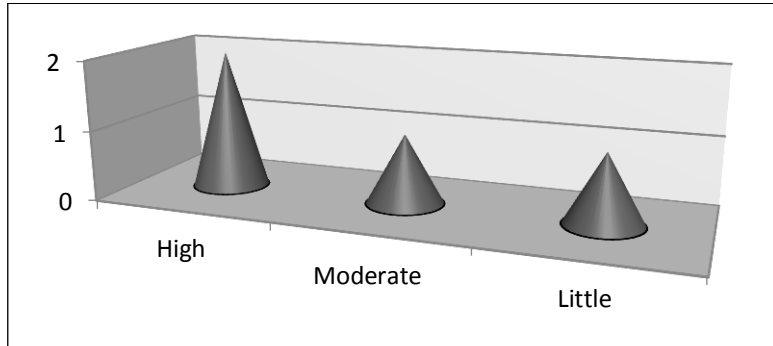
***Figure 5. Responses regarding political problem.***



***Female councilor's response about political obstacles in performing duties***

Women councilors perform various activities in his constituency. Sometimes, they face some political problem. Two female councilors called that they face high level political problem. Specially, competitor of other party and ruling party create various problem in their working system. One person called he faces political problem moderately. Finally, a single female called that he faces little political problem in her locality. Everybody helped her in performing her duties and responsibilities.

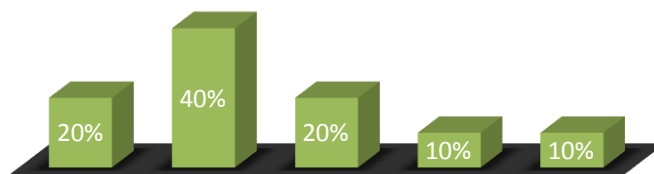
**Figure 6. Responses regarding political obstacles in performing duties**



***Female councilor’s response about male colleague’s dominance in the decision-making of City Corporation***

As people’s representative, female councilor has to perform their work with their male colleagues. By this chance they always try to dominate them in decision making of City Corporation. 20% female word Councilor said that they are highly dominated by their male colleague. 40% women representatives accused that they are highly and 20% are moderately dominated in various sectors especially in terms of decision-making process. Other 10% councilor said that they are slightly dominated and rest of 10% informed that most of the times they are free from male dominance Because of their working experience.

**Figure 7. Responses regarding dominance in decision-making.**



***Female councilor’s response about the financial obstacles of women councilor***

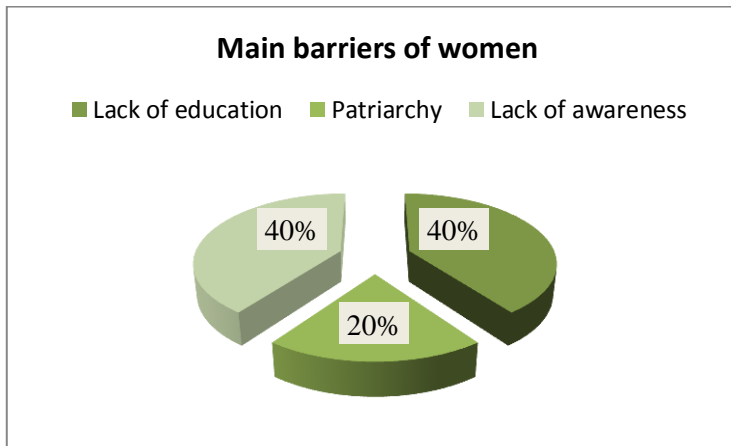
As people representatives, mayor and male Councilors’ get various types of budget for improving their certain area but female councilors do not get such budget. They have to depend on Mayor and male councilor. In fact, female

councilors are elected from three wards, from all the ward's people demanded many privileges but they cannot provide any opportunity to the people like male councilor. In the meanwhile, their birth certificate providing power has been lost.

**Main barriers for non-participation of women representatives in local government.**

Though central level politics of Bangladesh are explored by women such as leader of ruling party, chairperson of opposition party, speaker of National parliament etc. all are women. But in local politics they are not explored themselves. Cumilla City Corporation has 27 wards but there is no elected women in general seat without reserved seat. They have deducted various reason behind this, 40% respondents said that lack of awareness about women right is major reason.40% respondents think that lack of education is main reason and 20% respondents opined that patriarchal society is responsible for non-participant of women in local government.

*Figure 8. Responses regarding main barriers of representation.*



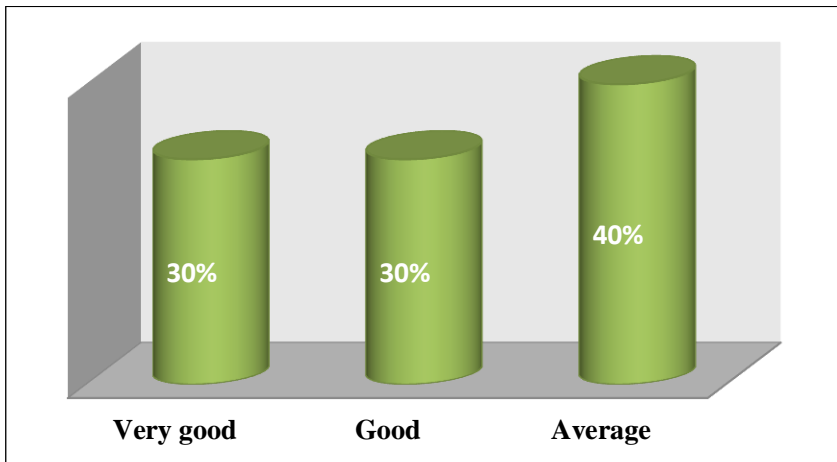
**Level of promise is fulfilled by elected representatives**

Female Reserved seat in city Corporation is not like parliament reserved seat, because here female councilors have to participate in direct election and compete with another female candidate. Finally, they are elected by general people. Before election they promised to voter/general citizens. They admitted that they are not fully fulfilling their election manifestos. No one tell us that, they fulfill their manifesto perfectly.30% female councilor informed that they



could execute their manifesto in very good way by others support. A percent of 30% fulfill in a good way and other the biggest ratio 40% respondents said that they can fulfill their manifesto on an average.

*Figure 9. Responses regarding promise fulfillment.*

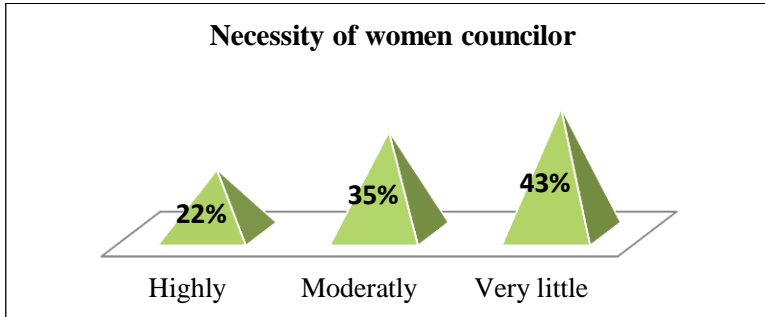


### *Opinion of respondents about the necessity of women councilor in city corporation*

Respondents expressed various types of reactions about the necessity of women councilor in city Corporation. 22% respondents said that female councilor is highly needed because female citizens can access easily to the female councilors. 35% respondents said that female councilor needed because when both male and female councilors work combinedly it will be helpful to the local people. But 43% respondents think that there is no necessity of female councilor because:

- They have no power to do anything.
- They do not get enough finance to serve the people.
- There election area is too big than male councilor, that's why it is not possible by them to control those areas.
- They have no capability for doing work.
- They have no experience and training.

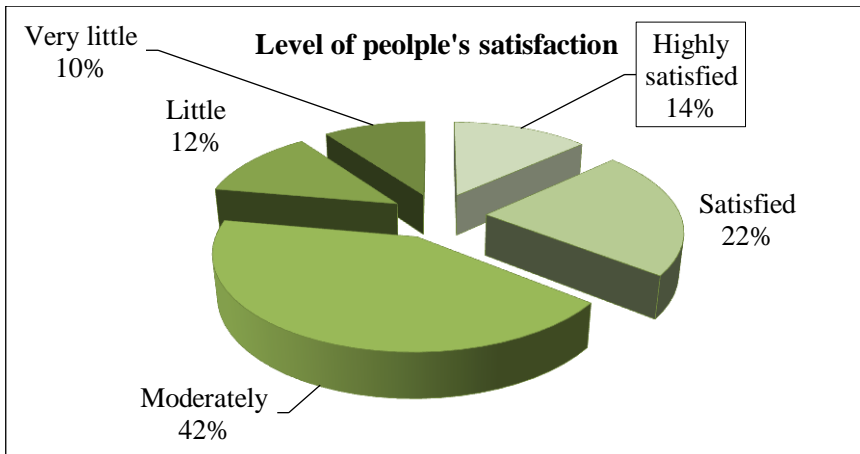
*Figure 10. Responses regarding necessity of women councilor.*



***Level of satisfaction about the roles/activities of women representatives***

There is a variation in the level of people satisfaction about roles/activities of women representatives. Above figure shows that only 13% citizens are highly satisfied because they get enough service. 22% citizens are satisfied where 42% respondents informed that they are moderately satisfied by female councilor's activities because they can easily meet female councilor than male councilor. 12% respondents said that they are somehow satisfied and 10% said that this is no need of female councilors.

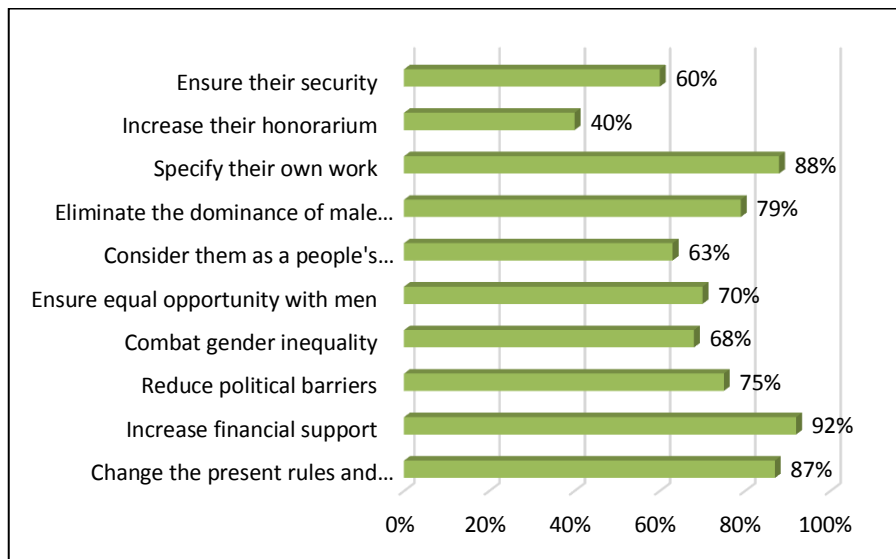
*Figure 11. Responses regarding satisfaction about the roles/activities of women representatives.*



## Recommendations and final observations

The study summarizes a number of propositions like change the present rules and regulation (87%), increase financial support of female councilors than male councilors (92%) because they are elected from three wards, where male councilors elected from only one ward. Reduce political barriers (75%), combat gender inequality (68%), ensure equality of women's councilors like male councilors (70%) because they do not get equal opportunity (sometimes they are ignored as a female), consider as a people representatives (63%), eliminate the dominance of male councilors (79%), both in decision making and other related sectors (88%), representatives wanted to specify their own activities in order to performing their duties properly and reduce clash with male councilor (46%), representatives demanded to increase their honorarium because they are the councilor of three words not one ward. Finally, 55% of the councilors demanded that their security system must be ensured.

*Figure 12. Summary of recommendations*



Women's equal involvement in political life plays an essential role in the overall procedure of the development of women. It is not simply a requirement for simple fairness or democracy although can also be perceived as an essential situation for women's benefits to be taken into consideration (Khan & Ara, 2006). Without the lively involvement of women and the integration of women's viewpoint at all points of decision-making, the aims of parity, progress and harmony cannot be attained. The government inspires females to connect in politics as it considers that females become authorized, if they are capable to contribute in decision making similarly with males.

The respondents expressed ways of empowerment can be the best option for changing the scenario of lack of political empowerment of women including ensure security, increase honorarium, specify their work, eliminate dominance, recognition or consideration as peoples representative, ensure equal opportunity, combat gender inequality, reduce party political barrier, increase financial support and finally changes in existing rules and regulation.

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# THE ROMANIAN POPULATION'S ACCESS TO EDUCATION DURING 1990-2010

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**Abstract:** *In the present article, we will analyze the thematic QAFE, which means the Romanian population's access to the desired forms of education during 1990-2010. The data used in the current study represent the answers of the Romanians to the question QAFE present in 13 representative samples at national level (the database DQLR-RIQL). Concretely, we will use categorical data of ordinal type. We intend to create a classification of the years from the period 1990-2010, from the point of view of the QAFE problematics. In this way, in a first approach we have used the partial relation " $\leq_s$ " of stochastic order which applies to ordinal categorical variables. We have extended the analysis on the thematic QAFE by proposing the indicator PSA of "progress" in order to create a hierarchy of the years from the period 1990-2010 with regard to Romanians' perception on the aforementioned aspect. The present study shows a permanent change of Romanians' opinions regarding their access to the current forms of education. Among other causes, this aspect is generated by the lack of coherence in the promotion in the educational system from Romania of educational policies that are stable and efficient in the long term.*

**Key words:** *access to education; classification; stochastic order relation; progress indicator.*

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## Introduction

For a harmonious development on the long term of a nation we must take into account several priorities. In this context, we remark among others: the adaptation to the new demands of the current time and the development of the educational system, the efficiency of the public health system and the extension of researches in the medical field, the development of the communications system and the creation of an infrastructure which is adequate to the third milenium, the knowledge and constructive approach of the social system.

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In this presentation we will make a first analysis of the *QAFE* thematic based on the effective access of the Romanian population to different forms of education. The current research takes under consideration the direct answers of the Romanians during 1990-2010 to the question *QAFE*: “How do you estimate the access to the educational forms desired by yourself and by your close ones?”. The respondents have to choose between five possible answer variants: “very low” (code R1), “low” (code R2), “so and so” (in 2003, 2006, 2010 it was chosen the form “satisfactory”, code R3), “high” (code R4); “very high” (code R5).

Within several future articles we intend to approach the following aspects:

- A hierarchization of the years 1990-2010 regarding the answers to the question *QAFE* as were received by the population.
- Based on the Romanians opinions, the elaboration of a prognosis model for the evolution of the real degree of accessibility of the population to the current forms of education.
- Which are the major differences between the rural and urban areas regarding the degree of accessibility to the current forms of education.
- The opinion of families with children regarding the degree of accessibility of their children to the current forms of desired education.
- The influence of the population’s poverty level in the concrete selection procedure by the young people of different forms of vocational development.
- The Romanians’ opinions regarding the current educational system and its comparison to other national systems from Romania (the health system, the pensions system).
- Suggesting new approaches in the educational system. Social policies which need to be promoted for the improvement of the population’s access to different forms of education.

In this presentation, we will be treating partially only the first previously signaled theme, the other themes will be the subject of future papers.

## Data presentation

The current study uses the answers of the population from Romania to the question *QAFE*, question that was mentioned in the previous section. The statistical analysis is based on 13 samples that are nationally representative. The samples have been designed at different steps of the period 1990-2010 at the Research Institute for Quality of Life-Romanian Academy (the data bases DQLR-RIQL). In *Table 1*, there are mentioned the years in which data was collected and also the volumes of the respective samples.

**Table 1. The volumes of the samples from the period 1990-2010 and the percentages of the situations “not the case” (NC).**

<b>Year</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>
Size	2033	1502	1516	1491	1500	1509	1510
Percent NC	22.53	27.50	16.75	14.08	7.00	4.71	6.42
<b>Year</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2010</b>	
Size	1218	1136	1195	1018	1133	1161	
Percent NC	9.61	8.63	5.36	8.25	4.06	0.69	

Source: Analysis of the database DQLR-RIQL, period 1990-2010.

The number of the situations “not the case”(NC) is sometimes incredibly high (27.5% in the year 1991), although the concrete formulation of question *QAFE* allowed the respondent to give a clear answer in the situation in which he did not have a family or children. The results of the statistical analysis regarding the *QAFE* problematics will certainly be more unfavorable if we will interpret the presence of the NC answer option as a negative impact on the possibility of respondents to have access to education. The incidence of NC situations is reduced drastically in the year 2010 when the number of NC cases represent only 0.7% from the total answers.

In the statistical models which will be promoted in the following we will neglect the options NC of the respondents. *Table 2* presents an overview regarding the yearly frequencies of the effective codes R1-R5 of answers to the question *QAFE*.

**Table 2. Frequencies of the scores R1-R5 to the question QAFE (total sample)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>R1</b>	<b>R2</b>	<b>R3</b>	<b>R4</b>	<b>R5</b>	<b>Total</b>
1990	153	389	610	371	52	1575
1991	97	314	455	189	34	1089
1992	91	285	486	358	42	1262
1993	111	321	395	412	42	1281
1994	41	315	538	462	39	1395
1995	80	316	547	465	30	1438
1996	127	367	534	352	33	1413
1997	99	280	403	291	28	1101
1998	56	259	383	317	23	1038
1999	79	390	442	200	20	1131
2003	54	204	332	309	35	934
2006	84	245	413	306	39	1087
2010	60	271	477	308	37	1153

Source: Analysis of the databases DQLR-RIQL, period 1990-2010.



It is difficult that only by the visualisation of the sequence of numeric values from *Table 2* we will have a correct image on the years in which the Romanian population is more satisfied by the access to education. Moreover, by the direct and comparative evaluation of the values from *Table 2* we cannot easily identify the eventual steps of continuity of opinions of the population in the problematics *QAFE*, steps that will comprise at least four consecutive years.

In a first analysis of data from *Table 2*, we observe that regarding the access to education the frequencies of answers “very low” (code R1) are always at least two or three times higher than the frequencies of the opinions “very high”(the answer code R5). This aspect shows a non-negligible dose of pessimism of the population in the estimation of individuals’ access to education.

Moreover, from all the possibilities R1-R5 to answer the question *QAFE* predominates in *Table 2*, several times significantly, the answer code R3. The code R3 expresses a relatively uncertain opinion (“so and so”). Although sensibly different, the case of the year 1993 does not contradict the affirmation.

Taking into account the situation presented earlier it is advisable to do a data analysis for *Table 2* by neglecting systematically the answer code R3 (“so and so”). This fact will determine an important information loss, extremely useful data to obtain a high accuracy in order to separate the years of the period 1990-2010.

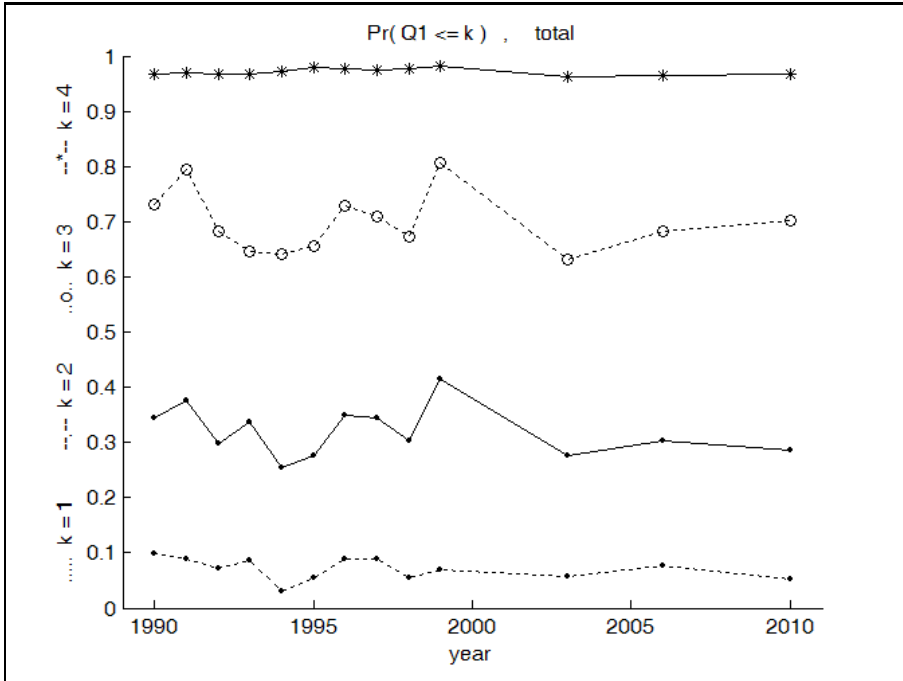
We suggest another approach of the situation “so and so”. Concretely, the interpretation of the population’s answers as realisations of a categorial ordinal type variable will solve the negative aspects signaled earlier (Agresti, 2010; Azen, 2011; Cliff and Keats, 2003). So, in the estimation of the *QAFE* problematics the answers with the code R2 (“low”) are more critical than the opinions R3 (“so and so”). Similarly, a “high” access to education (code R4) is obviously preferable to the variant “so and so” (code R3). With such an interpretation approach of the answers of the individuals to question *QAFE* we are no longer forced to renounce at the opinions of the persons who have opted for the variant R3 of answer.

In *Figure 3*, there are visualised yearly the distributions of the answers R1-R5 from *Table 2*. We remark the different behaviour of the years 1992-1994 or 1999 and the phase 2003-2010 of “relative stability” of the population’s opinions. The direct interpretation of *Figure 3* shows a frequent change in time of the Romanians’ opinions regarding the thematics *QAFE*.

The image from *Figure 3* does not lead us to a clear classification of the years of the period 1990-2010 by the favourable or unfavourable appreciation by the population of the possibility of the individual to beneficiate from education.

Taking into account all the signaled aspects, in order to increase the accuracy of the data interpretation from *Table 2* we will propose in the following sections several statistical models specific to categorial ordinal type variables. As references we mention in this context the following papers: Agresti, 2010; Azen, 2011; Cliff and Keats, 2003; Szekli, 1995; Sutradhar, 2014 or Stefanescu, 2015.

**Figure 3. The distributions of the population's answers to the question QAFE (period 1990-2010).**



Source: Analysis of the database *DQLR-RIQL*, period 1990-2010

### Stochastic order

Normally, in order to compare the years of the period 1990-2010 we will use a domination relation (Zheng 2007). We will evidenciate the relations between any two years by considering as a separation criterion the probabilities of the scores R1-R5 for answering question *QAFE*. In such a context, we choose the partial classic relation “ $<_{os}$ ” of stochastic order between the distributions of two categorial ordinal type variables (Szekli, 1995). We mention the fact that in the case of random ordinal variables we can construct several stochastic dominance relations for measuring inequalities between variables (Le Breton and Peluso, 2009; Zheng, 2007).

By using the stochastic order relation “ $<_{os}$ ” we will compare the *QAFE* distributions from *Figure 3* attached to the 13 years selected from the period 1990-2010. In *Table 4*, there are listed the 21 stochastic dominance relations “ $<_{os}$ ” which have been pointed out between the 13 years analysed. We mention the fact that in the comparisons between the probabilities that define the *QAFE* distributions, the error eos that is admitted in order to establish the stochastic order is null (eos= 0).

**Table 4. The relation “ $<_{os}$ ” present between the years of the period 1990-2010 (eos = 0).**

$y_{1990} <_{os} y_{1992}$ ; $y_{1990} <_{os} y_{2006}$ ; $y_{1991} <_{os} y_{1992}$ ; $y_{1991} <_{os} y_{1993}$ ; $y_{1991} <_{os} y_{2006}$ ; $y_{1991} <_{os} y_{2010}$ ; $y_{1995} <_{os} y_{1994}$ ; $y_{1996} <_{os} y_{1992}$ ; $y_{1996} <_{os} y_{1993}$ ; $y_{1996} <_{os} y_{1994}$ ; $y_{1996} <_{os} y_{2006}$ ; $y_{1996} <_{os} y_{2010}$ ; $y_{1997} <_{os} y_{1992}$ ; $y_{1997} <_{os} y_{1993}$ ; $y_{1997} <_{os} y_{1994}$ ; $y_{1997} <_{os} y_{2006}$ ; $y_{1997} <_{os} y_{2010}$ ; $y_{1999} <_{os} y_{1994}$ ; $y_{1999} <_{os} y_{1995}$ ; $y_{1999} <_{os} y_{1998}$ ; $y_{1999} <_{os} y_{2010}$ ;
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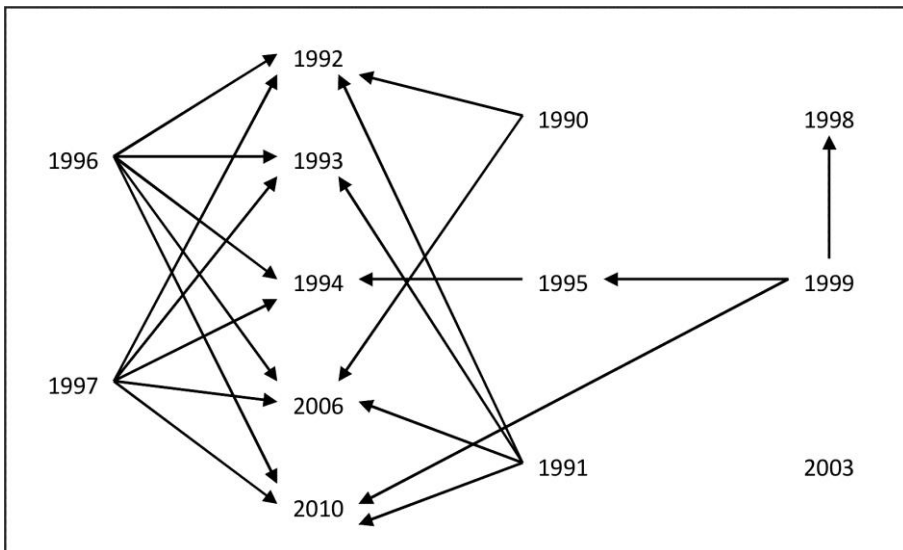
Source: Analysis of the database DQLR-RIQL, period 1990-2010

In this case, for most pairs  $(y_1, y_2)$  of two years  $y_1$  and  $y_2$ , none of the dominance relations is validated  $y_1 <_{os} y_2$ ,  $y_1 >_{os} y_2$  or  $y_1 = y_2$ . Concretely, 67.5% of all pairs  $(y_1, y_2)$  have the years  $y_1$  and  $y_2$  incompatible from the point of view of the stochastic order relation “ $<_{os}$ ” based on the QAFE criterion.

In Figure 5 are visualized the dominance relations “ $<_{os}$ ” which have already been mentioned in Table 4. The relation  $y_1 <_{os} y_2$  is graphically represented in Figure 5 by  $y_1 \rightarrow y_2$ .

Comparing with Table 4, Figure 5 gives us a more clear panoramic view on the population’s access to education in the period 1990-2010.

**Figure 5. The relations between the years of the period 1990-2010 based on the stochastic order “ $<_{os}$ ” (eos = 0).**



Source: Analysis of the database DQLR-RIQL, period 1990-2010

By interpreting the graphical image from *Figure 5*, we remark the following aspects:

- Compared with the other years, in the phases 1992-1994 and 2006-2010, the population is relatively more content with the access to education;
- Between the group of years 1992-1994 or between the years 2006 and 2010 there is no relation of dominance, fact that can signify the lack of a clear direction in the evolution of opinions of Romanians regarding the efficiency of the *QAFE* thematic (*Figure 5*);
- The year 2003 is an atypical year and it is impossible to be compared from the point of view of the order relation “ $<_{os}$ ” with any of the other years of the period 1990-2010;
- The absence from *Figure 5* of a chain that would comprise at least four consecutive years denotes a lack of “continuity” of the population's opinions in the *QAFE* problematics.

This aspect can be due to the promotion during 1990-2010 of several contradictory educational decisions which turn out to be inefficient in the long run. Such decisions have afterwards been annulled by the next government that has taken power.

## Progress index

The stochastic order relation  $y1 <_{os} y2$  can be used to confirm the presence of a “progress” tendency from year  $y1$  to year  $y2$  in relation with a certain criterion. Concretely, the existence within the *QAFE* thematic of the inequality  $y1 <_{os} y2$  signifies that the population is more “content” in the year  $y2$  compared with year  $y1$  if we are talking about the *QAFE* problematics which characterizes the distributions of the categorial ordinal variables  $y1$  and  $y2$ .

The stochastic order relation “ $<_{os}$ ” which is applied to a pair of distributions presents the disadvantage that we cannot establish all the time a dominance relation between the two distributions composing the pair. We mention the case of the years 1990 and 1999 (*Figure 5*). We mention the presence in *Figure 5* of a large number of pairs of years which are not comparable “ $<_{os}$ ” (67.5%). Also in *Figure 5* we remark the year 2003 which cannot be compared with any other year when we use the relation “ $<_{os}$ ”. Nevertheless, if we interpret the raw data from *Table 2* for the years 1999 and 2003 or the graphical image from *Figure 3* of the distributions of those two years, we deduce that in the year 2003 Romanians are more content by the access they have to education. We mention the fact that by the relation “ $y1 <_{os} y2$ ” it is not stated the size of the gap of “progress” between the years  $y2$  and  $y1$ .

Under these conditions we need to define an indicator PRO of “progress” that solves all the problems previously mentioned. The PRO index must mandatorily verify a set of 10 conditions (Stefanescu 2015). Moreover, the PRO coefficient must be compatible with the relation of stochastic order “ $<_{os}$ ”. Concretely, if  $y1 \leq_{os} y2$  then we necessarily have  $PRO(y1) \leq PRO(y2)$ . We mention the fact that the PSA index which was proposed by Stefanescu in 2015 is of type PRO.

We remind several important properties of the PSA coefficient (Stefanescu 2015). The PSA indicator varies in the interval  $[0, 1]$ . The smallest value of the PSA index ( $PSA = 0$ ) is obtained if the entire population has selected the variant of answer R1 (“very low”) to the question *QAFE*. We have the maximum value of the PSA coefficient ( $PSA = 1$ ) when the total population estimates as being “very high”( code R5) the access to the desired forms of education. In *Table 6*, there are listed the values of the index PSA of “progress” in the case of the *QAFE* problematics.

**Table 6. The values at the QAFE problematics for index PSA for the period 1990-2010**

<b>Year</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>
PSA	0.4650	0.4427	0.4950	0.4908	0.5256	0.5085	0.4641
<b>Year</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2010</b>	
PSA	0.4703	0.4981	0.4319	0.5179	0.4933	0.4980	

*Source: Analysis of the database DQLR-RIQL, period 1990-2010*

The PSA values listed in *Table 6* are relatively very small, below the threshold of 0.53. We mention that an efficient solution to the problematics of population access to the current forms of education supposes PSA values that are above the threshold of 0.7.

By ordering decreasingly the values of the PSA index we create a hierarchization of the analyzed years from the period 1990-2010 (*Table 7*).

**Table 7. Hierarchization of the years of the period 1990-2010 regarding the decreasing ordering of PSA values for the QAFE thematic.**

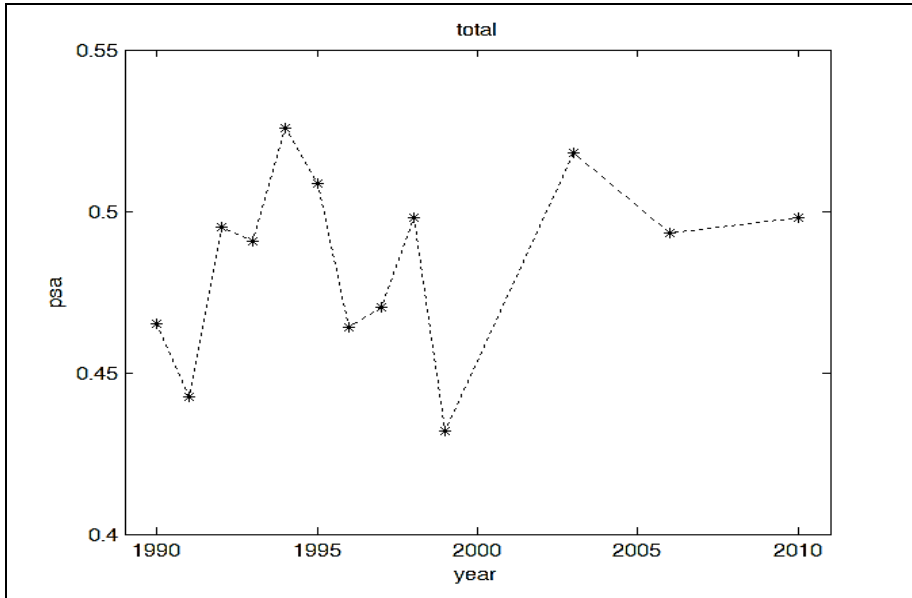
<b>Rank</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
Year	1994	2003	1995	1998	2010	1992	2006
<b>Rank</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	
Year	1993	1997	1990	1996	1991	1999	

*Source: Analysis of the database DQLR-RIQL, period 1990-2010*

Although atypical in *Figure 5*, the year 2003 proves to be an “optimistic” year from the point of view of the approach of the *QAFE* problematics. Therefore, the year 2003 occupies the second position in the classification from *Table 7* based on the PSA indicator.

The population’s opinion regarding the access of individuals to forms of education is most favourable in the year 1994. Romanians have in the year 1999 the worst opinion on the *QAFE* problematics (*Table 7*).

**Figure 8. Fluctuation in time of the PSA index of “progress”**



Source: Analysis of the database DQLR-RQL, period 1990-2010

The values of the PSA index of “progress” vary in the period 1990-2010 between 0.432 and 0.526 (Table 6). A clearer image of the fluctuation in time of the PSA coefficient is presented in Figure 8.

The variation of the PSA indicator is relatively consistent and does not suppose a tendency (Figure 8). Moreover, we cannot identify in Figure 8 a step that would comprise at least four consecutive years in which we will keep an increasing tendency of the PSA values.

The aspects mentioned in the graphics from Figure 8 denote a lack of “continuity” in the population’s opinions regarding the *QAFE* thematics. This could be due to the absence of a long-term vision of possible negative effects generated by the promoted educational policies. We also remark frequent modifications and sometimes contradictions of the ministerial decisions adopted in the period 1990-2010.

Nevertheless, in the steps 1991-1994 and 1999-2003 we remark tendencies of improving the Romanians’ perception in the *QAFE* problematics (Figure 8).

## Conclusions

In order to bring some clarifications regarding the population’s access to forms of desired education we have preferred a direct analysis of Romanians’ answers to the

question *QAFE*: "How do you estimate the access to the forms of education desired by yourself and by your close ones?". The *QAFE* problematics is present in 13 nationally representative samples from the period 1990-2010 (the database DCV-ICCV).

For the statistical analysis of the *QAFE* thematics from the period 1990-2010 was applied a unitary work methodology based on the classical stochastic relation " $\leq_{os}$ " for ordering the distributions of ordinal type categorical variables. In the same time it has been proposed the PSA indicator of "progress" which is compatible with the stochastic order relation " $\leq_{os}$ ".

*Figure 5* shows the relations between the years of the period 1990-2010 by using the inequality relation " $\leq_{os}$ ". Therefore we obtain a structural characterization of the period 1990-2010 from the point of view of Romanians' access to their desired forms of education (*Figure 5*).

*Table 6* presents the evolution of longitudinal values of the PSA index of "progress" with relation to the *QAFE* problematics. All these values are relatively small and they do not surpass the threshold of 0.53. This fact attests to a partial and inefficient solution in the long term of the *QAFE* problem.

A hierarchization of the years from the studied period is given in *Table 7*. In the year 1994, the Romanians' opinions are most favourable to the *QAFE* thematics. At a difference of only five years, in the year 1999 Romanians are discontent in the highest degree by the access to forms of education.

*Figure 8* presents the longitudinal fluctuations of the values of the PSA coefficient which shows the level of satisfaction of the respondents to the question *QAFE*. We remark a relatively consistent fluctuation of the PSA index in the interval [0.432, 0.526]. At the same time, we do not identify in *Figure 8* a general increasing or decreasing tendency of the PSA values. Moreover, we cannot select from the period 1990-2010 a single step that comprises at least four consecutive years and in which we can observe clearly a certain evolutionary tendency of the population's opinions (*Figure 8*). This fact proves the lack of "continuity" of the population's opinions regarding the *QAFE* thematics.

In conclusion, a significant part of the population is disappointed by the possibility to effectively benefit from the educational forms desired. The permanent change, from year to year, of the opinions of the questioned individuals in the *QAFE* problematics is generated by the absence of a unitary vision at government level, on the long term, for the promotion of certain types of educational policies.

The partial results already obtained but not included in the present paper show for the *QAFE* problematics large differences between rural and urban areas, the paramount importance that have the individual poverty level, the discrimination of families with a lot of children, the strong link between the efficiency of the present educational system and the punctual aspect of *QAFE*. The policy proposals destined to improve the current situation will have to keep in mind the mentioned aspects.

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