



# Journal of Community Positive Practices

Year XV  
No. 1/2015

- **Andries J. du PLESSIS** - Evidence of the changing activities, goals and roles of HR Practitioners
- **Daniel ARPINTE** - Professionalization of Romanian public social work services: An impossible challenge?
- **Cosmin BRICIU** - The limits and the specific instruments of policy evaluation
- **Alexandra GHEONDEA-ELADI** - Health and autonomy: A Review for studying patient decisions
- **Flavius MIHALACHE, Adriana NEGUȚ** - The modernization of rural infrastructure under the measure 322 of the National Rural Development Programme 2007-2013
- **Monica ȘERBAN** - Migration policies from origin perspective in the case of Romania. Testing a definition
- **Raluca POPESCU** - The evolution of the financial support for family in Romania after the economic crisis
- **Andrei Răzvan VOINEA** - Vatra Luminoasă: Constructing a district, building a community (1933-1945)



## JOURNAL OF COMMUNITY POSITIVE PRACTICES

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

#### Director:

Ph.D. Sorin CACE - President,  
ASSOCIATION FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION CATALACTICA

#### Scientific Committee:

- PhD, Professor Cătălin ZAMFIR*, Corresponding Member of Romanian Academy  
*PhD, Professor Asher BEN-ARIEH*, Haruv Institute, Jerusalem, Israel  
*PhD, Professor Gary B. MELTON*, University of Colorado, Denver, USA  
*PhD, Professor John LUTZKER*, Georgia State University, Atlanta, USA  
*PhD, Professor Michael J. PALMIOTTO*, Wichita State University, Kansas, USA  
*PhD, Professor Jill KORBIN*, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, USA  
*Professor Keith HALEY*, Tiffin University, Ohio, USA  
*PhD, Professor Jimmy TAYLOR*, Ohio University, Zanesville, Ohio, USA  
*PhD, Professor Andrea WIGFIELD*, University of Leeds, Leeds, United Kingdom  
*PhD, Professor Elizabeth ECKERMANN*, Deakin University, Victoria, Australia  
*PhD, Professor Renwu TANG*, Dean of School of Management, Dean of Academy of Government at Beijing Normal University, Beijing, China  
*PhD, Professor Amitabh KUNDU*, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India  
*PhD, Professor Claude MARTIN*, Research Director CNRS, Université de Rennes, France  
*PhD, Professor Munyae M. MULINGE*, United States International University (USIU), Nairobi, Kenya  
*PhD, Professor Manuel Antonio GARRETON*, University of Chile, Santiago de Chile, Chile  
*PhD, Professor Renata FRANC*, Institute of Social Sciences "Ivo Pilar", Zagreb, Croatia  
*PhD, Professor Asun LLENA BERNE*, University of Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain  
*PhD, Professor Nawab Ali KHAN*, Sarrar bin Abduaziz University, Al Kharij, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia  
*PhD, Professor Nicolae SALI*, Free International University of Moldova, Chişinău, Moldova  
*PhD, Professor Mihaela TOMIŢĂ*, "Universitatea de Vest", Timisoara  
*PhD, Professor Valeriu IOAN-FRANC*, National Institute of Economic Research, Bucharest, Romania  
*PhD, Professor Corina CACE*, Academy of Economy Studies, Bucharest, Romania  
*PhD, Professor Mircea ALEXIU*, Western University, Timisoara, Romania  
*PhD, Professor Ştefan COJOCARU*, University "Alexandru Ioan Cuza", Iaşi, Romania

#### Editorial Board:

*PhD, Professor Victor NICOLĂESCU*  
*PhD Radu MIRCEA*  
Andreia-Nicoleta ANTON

*Acknowledgement for editing contribution to Anna CALLAHAN and Ben STRAUSS, Carleton College, Northfield, MN, USA*



**Bucharest, Romania**

CNCSIS: cod 045/2006

Editor-in-Chief: Valeriu IOAN-FRANC

Editor: Paula NEACŞU

Cover design: Nicolae LOGIN

Design and layout: Luminiţa LOGIN

Phone: 0040-21 318 24 38; Fax: 0040-21 318 24 32;

e-mail: [edexpert@zappmobile.ro](mailto:edexpert@zappmobile.ro)

License to the Ministry of Culture no. 1442/1992

#### Edited by:

ASSOCIATION FOR SOCIAL  
AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
AND PROMOTION CATALACTICA  
*Colentina Road, no. 26, block 64, B2  
ladder, apartment 97, sector 2,  
postal code 021181, Bucharest;  
Phone: 0040-21-240 73 03;  
Fax: 0040-21 240 73 03; e-mail:  
[www.catalactica.org.ro](http://www.catalactica.org.ro);  
[corsorin@mailbox.ro](mailto:corsorin@mailbox.ro)*

# CONTENT

EVIDENCE OF THE CHANGING ACTIVITIES, GOALS AND ROLES OF HR PRACTITIONERS.....	3
Andries J. du PLESSIS	
PROFESSIONALIZATION OF ROMANIAN PUBLIC SOCIAL WORK SERVICES: AN IMPOSSIBLE CHALLENGE?.....	17
Daniel ARPINTE	
THE LIMITS AND THE SPECIFIC INSTRUMENTS OF POLICY EVALUATION .....	26
Cosmin BRICIU	
HEALTH AND AUTONOMY: A REVIEW FOR STUDYING PATIENT DECISIONS.....	47
Alexandra GHEONDEA-ELADI	
THE MODERNIZATION OF RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE UNDER THE MEASURE 322 OF THE NATIONAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2007-2013 .....	57
Flavius MIHALACHE, Adriana NEGUȚ	
MIGRATION POLICIES FROM ORIGIN PERSPECTIVE IN THE CASE OF ROMANIA. TESTING A DEFINITION .....	72
Monica ȘERBAN	
THE EVOLUTION OF THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR FAMILY IN ROMANIA AFTER THE ECONOMIC CRISIS.....	93
Raluca POPESCU	
VATRA LUMINOASĂ: CONSTRUCTING A DISTRICT, BUILDING A COMMUNITY (1933 – 1945) .....	107
Andrei Răzvan VOINEA	

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR AUTHORS

Authors wishing to publish papers at JCPP are asked to send their manuscripts at office@jppc.ro. For publishing a paper, authors must follow the requirements and conditions set forth below.

**Who can publish:** Papers can be sent by researchers, academics and professionals with interests related to socio-economic sciences. The main criteria considered by the reviewers are originality, novelty, potential to spark debate and coherent exposure. Documents submitted for publication will be examined by editors before being placed into the process of review.

**Requirements for publishing:** The paper must be submitted in **English**, by e-mail, as attached **Word** file in a single document which will include all images and tables. Minimum requirements must be met on the following:

- **Size:** the paper should contain a maximum of 15 pages including biography. 4000-6000 words
- **Paper title:** should be concise and summarize the most appropriate contents of the paper
- **File format:** Microsoft Word
- **Text format:** Times New Roman 12, 1 line spacing, with diacritics if the text is in Romanian
- **Information about the author/ authors (a maximum of 250 words):** for each author it must be mentioned the academic title, current position, institution to which it belongs, contact details – telephone and e-mail. For the selected authors, all this information will be made public. The submission of a manuscript implies that the author certifies that the material is not copyrighted and is not currently under review for another publication. If the article has appeared or will appear in another publication, details of such publication must be disclosed to the editors at the time of submission.
- **Abstract:** will present shortly the purpose, field of application, research methods, results and conclusions of the paper. It should have a maximum of 250 words and will be written in English.
- **Key-words:** are designed to provide a rapid classification of the paper. The key-words must be written in English, separated by semicolon (;) and placed below the abstract.
- **Tables:** as simple as possible, with explanatory titles, numbered in the order they appear in the text. The source of the data must be mentioned below each table (Times New Roman 10, italic, aligned left).
- **Graphs:** should be made in Excel, in black and white and must be inserted and numbered in the order of appearance in the text. Each graph should have an explanatory title and the source of the data should be mentioned below the graph (Times New Roman 10, italic, aligned left).
- **Footnotes:** are inserted in the text and numbered with Arabic numbers. Their size should be reduced by bringing clarification on the text.
- **References:** should be cited as follows: the name of the author, year of the publication and page, all in parentheses (Ritzer and Goodman, 2003, p. 93) or if the name of the author is mentioned within a sentence it should be included as follows: . . . Ritzer and Goodman (2003, p. 93). At a first citation containing from three to five authors, all names are mentioned, afterwards, it is used [the first author] "et al.". If more than one paper by the same author, from the same year is cited, the letters a, b, c etc. should be included after the year of publication. The citation of a paper available online should be performed following the same rules as for a book or a magazine specifying the electronic address where it was consulted.
- **Bibliography:** the full list of the references cited in the text must be presented at the end of the paper, below annexes, in alphabetical order of the names of the authors and in a chronological order for a group of references by the same author. The order is the following: name of the author/ authors, year of appearance, title, publisher, city; for example:

Rea, A., Tripier, M. (2008). *Sociologie de l'immigration*. Paris: La Decouverte

Koh, H. K. (2010). A 2020 vision for healthy people. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 362(18), 1653–1656

The process of review: Papers are reviewed by two specialists. Depending on their recommendations, the editors decide whether to publish/ reject the paper or make suggestions for improvement to the author/ authors. The editors have the right to make minor editorial changes to submitted papers, including the correction of grammatical mistakes, punctuation and writing, as well as to modify the format of the paper, but no major changes will be performed without the approval of the author. If major changes are needed, the paper is returned to the author for him to make the necessary changes. Authors are informed by e-mail on the status of the papers sent in no more than 6 weeks from their receipt.

Papers accepted for publication are sent to authors for accept printing. Authors are asked to respond to the editorial board within 7 days. Authors submitting papers to the editorial board implicitly declare their publishing agreement in these conditions.



---

# EVIDENCE OF THE CHANGING ACTIVITIES, GOALS AND ROLES OF HR PRACTITIONERS

---

Andries J. du PLESSIS<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** *This research considers the role, activities and contribution of HR and managers in six closely related themes that should be addressed to maintain high workplace productivity in a complex business environment in which there are many competing interests. Previously a reward approach was simple with two main streams pay and benefits. In New Zealand HR practitioners have been exposed to global competition creating the need for their roles, goals and activities to be recognised in adding value in organisations to be successful. The outcomes of this research shed light on when is an employer an employer of choice, employee empowerment, employee engagement, rewards based on individual and the whole organisation's performance including the remuneration component that is a reward system classifiable into monetary- and in-kind payments.*

**Keywords:** *human resources; organisation; performance; benefits*

---

## Introduction

In the changing world economy Human Resource (HR) practitioners must be prepared to meet the considerable challenges and expectations posed by the continuing evolution of their activities, roles, and goals to confirm how their function is creating and adding value to the organisation. An organisation is formed in order to fulfill a specific mission or purpose. This mission or purpose cannot be achieved unless the organisation searches for and selects the best potential employee with the right skills, knowledge and aptitudes (KSAs) for each identified job or position. It is imperative, therefore, that an organisation would design and implement an appropriate reward system in order to attract the best suitable employees in order to achieve its desired goals and objectives (Nel, Werner, Du Plessis, Fazey, Erwee, Pillay, MacKinnon, Millet and Wordsworth, 2012).

---

<sup>1</sup> PhD, Senior Lecturer, Department of Management and Marketing, Unitec, New Zealand.  
E-mail: [aduplessis@unitec.ac.nz](mailto:aduplessis@unitec.ac.nz)

In the past, a reward (remuneration) approach was actually very simple: pay and benefits. Labour was a lot less mobile but by taking their skills offshore was really uncommon up to the stage that politicians realised what was happening especially in New Zealand. They began to refer to it as the brain drain from New Zealand. Jobs today are more of a balloon than a box; they shift as economies change and company structures morph. Individual efforts are far more valued and recognised with job security coming more from employability rather than paternal protection (Youngman 2011; Boxall 1995).

Designing and managing a reward system that includes benefits, services, and even empowerment with employee engagement as the next step is rather a complex task. It must not only ensure that the organisation is attractive to potential employees, that is the employer of choice, but it must also ensure that the employees, when placed, are as productive as possible with optimum levels of job satisfaction.

The global economic climate has become increasingly turbulent, businesses seek to keep ahead of the competition by working faster and smarter; by raising productivity levels per employee while, at the same time, increasing innovation and minimising costs (Chavan, 2009). Employment security is no longer guaranteed, and loyalty from employees is no longer a given. Companies have always faced many challenges, but at no other time have the business challenges become more pronounced, with rapid and volatile change, as in the 21st century (Du Plessis, 2009; Jørgensen, Owen, & Neus, 2009).

At the heart of the business are managers who must deliver required services to increasingly demanding customers, through employees having differing levels of understanding, personalities, backgrounds and abilities (Drucker, 2006). Managers face complex business environments in which there are many competing interests. Working out how to make the best use of the intellectual capital they have at their disposal in the form of existing productivity tools and employee knowledge to drive productivity can be a major challenge for many of them. This research considers the role, activities and contribution of HR that can be used to drive high workplace productivity in such an environment.

Organisations must be able to attract a sufficient number of job candidates who have the abilities and aptitudes needed to add value to the company. In other words they have to become an employer of choice to ensure that they have a pool of suitable applicants who can enter the selection process when they have vacancies. A company's workforce is the lifeblood of organisations and they represent one of its most potent and valuable resources according to Du Plessis & Frederick (2010).

HR practitioners in New Zealand have been exposed to global competition creating the need for their roles, goals and activities to be recognised in adding value in organisations to be successful. The emergence of globalisation, development in technology and telecommunications; the shift towards a knowledge-based workforce; labour legislation and intensifying competition for skilled labour create new competitive realities for organisations. Employers are now looking to the HR practitioner to go beyond the delivery of cost effective administrative services and provide expertise on

how to leverage human capital (Du Plessis, 2010). The roles and activities of both the employers and HR practitioners have changed over the years and this study endeavours to shed more light on these roles, activities and goals. In this paper six closely related themes are analysed and discussed: Employee engagement, rewards based individual performance, rewards based on organisational performance, an employer of choice, benefits and services, and employee participation and empowerment.

## **Problem statement**

From the research problem, taking into account the broader focus on key HR roles, goals and activities, one realises that there is a need to consider to what extent HR practitioners in NZ organisations contribute to the success and competitiveness of organisations in the current situation; but how prepared are they for the future in NZ?

## **Objectives of this study**

Over the past decades several studies were done in NZ among HR practitioners' roles, goals, and activities including their competencies, future capabilities, and challenges. The ultimate objective of this study is to determine the extent to which the current contribution of the roles they play, goals they set and achieve and activities of HR practitioners in New Zealand organisations match their current competencies as well as the previous studies' predictions by HR practitioners. By comparing this study of NZ organisations with previous studies add more value and it informs the reader of how changes have taken place over the past almost twenty years in NZ.

## **Methodology**

### ***Background***

A very comprehensive HRM questionnaire covering 358 items to identify HRM and management trends was jointly compiled in New Zealand and Australia in 1994: (IPMNZ, 1994). The same questionnaire was used with permission for a survey to identify the future competencies and roles of HR in those countries for the year 2000 by the Human Resource Institute of New Zealand. The same questionnaire was modified and refined and used again in 2000 by Burchell (2001) in association with the Human Resource Institute of New Zealand (HRINZ) to determine a future perspective on human resources in 2010 in New Zealand. The final section of the said questionnaire sought to obtain demographic information from respondents. The same questionnaire was used with permission after minor editorial modifications for an identical survey in South Africa in the last quarter of 2002. The topics covered in the questionnaire included human resource goals, roles and activities, and so forth. Due to the magnitude of the survey only a small section is analysed and reported upon in this paper.

The quantitative methodology adopted was an e-survey; a questionnaire containing structured closed questions. This involved the selection of a sample of people from the HR practitioner population in NZ to ascertain how factors differ, and to make

inferences about the population, or in other words generalising from sample to population. Reliability of this study was seen as high (15.4% responded) as previous leading HRM studies conducted in NZ were successful with a response rate of 41%, 11% and 34% respectively.

### ***Sample selection***

The study focused on HR practitioners in NZ organisations who are registered as members of the Human Resources Institute of New Zealand (HRINZ). HRINZ have 3600+ individual members who are involved in the management and development of HR in private and public sector organisations throughout NZ. The target population was limited to HRINZ members that had registered to participate in HR research requests that HRINZ provided links to; the total number of HRINZ members in this category was 635. A total of 119 members responded but 98 questionnaires were fully completed and usable resulting in a 15.4% response rate.

### ***Data collection***

The data was collected via the e-survey, which was a repeat of previous studies and therefore a very important longitudinal study. The invitation to participate went to 635 members of HRINZ.

### ***Questionnaire***

The questionnaire consisted of questions to adequately explore each of the HR themes researched in this study. All the questions in the questionnaire were closed questions. Only six closely related themes are covered in this paper but due to the size of the study and length limitation for this paper not all the information could be discussed. The Tables reflect the research questions used in this paper, and the rationale for using the six specific themes is discussed later.

## **Literature review**

### ***Background***

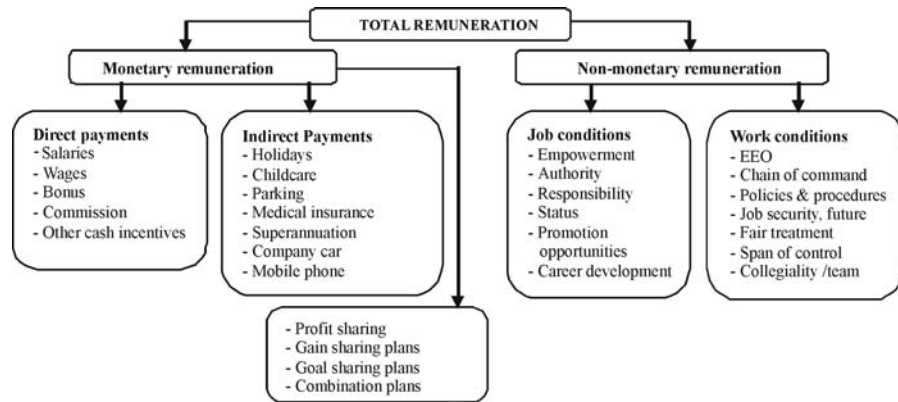
A reward system includes anything that an employee may value and desire and that the employer is able or willing to offer in exchange for employee contributions (Marsden, 2011:16). Du Plessis (as cited in Nel et al, 2012) explains that the reward system is composed of two components: the remuneration component and the non-remuneration component see Figure 1, below.

This paper confines itself to when are employers an employer of choice, employee empowerment, employee engagement, rewards based on individual and the whole organisation's performance including the remuneration component that is a reward system classifiable into (a) monetary payments and (b) in-kind payments. Organisations all have different remuneration policies which is what gives the organisations or companies their competitive advantage. This paper also shed light on employee participation and empowerment that could contribute for an organisation to be



regarded as an employer of choice. Therefore, remuneration management is a human resources management activity aligned with the organisational strategy that deals with every type of reward individuals receive in exchange for performing organisational tasks. It includes pay and benefits (total remuneration) or just pay (cash remuneration) (Nel et al, 2012).

**Figure 1: Total Remuneration Management System**



Source: A J du Plessis as cited in Nel et al (2012:267)

Monetary claims on benefits and services are wages or salaries paid to an employee in the form of money or a form that is quickly and easily transferable to money at the discretion of the employee. Whereas in-kind claims are claims on goods and services made available and paid for either totally or in some percentage by the employer (Nel et al, 2012). Many organisations, especially in the United States, have shifted from administering salaries to administering total remuneration. There are indeed new remuneration trends. There are several approaches to remuneration management in the modern age with all its pressures and changes, such as broadbanding, skills-competency-based pay, variable pay approaches and others (Wood et al, 2013).

The pay debate that is, the argument regarding the best way of rewarding people for their services, has always been important because relating employee compensation to company profits (and thus to its survival) is unavoidable. This pay debate is far from settled precisely because the relationship of productivity, profitability, and personal gain in firms is critical, intractable, and permanent. The benefits could be linked with empowerment of employees and the services they get from their employers. These services and benefits could be the reason why people regard certain organisations as an employer of choice (Du Plessis & Frederick, 2012).

Stone (2011) supports the fact that the objective of a remuneration package is to influence employee motivation in a positive manner so it leads to improved

organisational performance and strategy. If rewards are to be useful in stimulating desired behaviours, they must meet the demands of the employees whose behaviours they are intended to influence. People gain satisfaction from their work, but for various reasons. The degree of job satisfaction that employees enjoy has not only been difficult to identify and define, but also to measure with any degree of certainty.

There has to be a clear link between remuneration and performance (Rudman 2010). In other words, both employer and employee have to be satisfied in the exchange relationship. Marsden (2011) points out that organisations should have a more holistic view of the whole employment relationship and its value. High levels of employee engagement could enhance individual as well as organisational performance. Value-added remuneration is one in which components of the remuneration package (benefits, base pay, incentives and so on) create value for the organisation and its employees (Nel et al,2012).

Employee benefits may be defined as rewards that are allocated to employees for being members of the organisation and for their positions or job-levels within the organisation (Paine, 2008). These benefits will include some of the following: benefits for death, accident, sickness, retirement or unemployment. Factors influencing the growth of employee benefits are industrialisation, trade unions, wage controls, cost advantages, tax advantages, inflation, and legislation. Perquisites, or perks, are a special category of benefits and are available only to employees with some special status, such as upper-level managers.

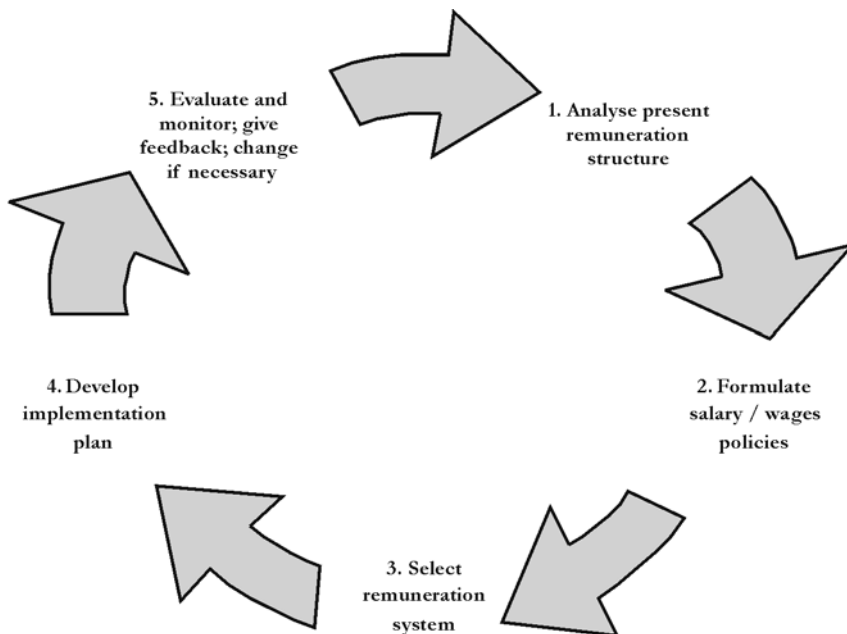
As employees acquire more skills, they become more flexible resources, developing a broader understanding of the work processes and of their contribution to the organisation. In terms of employee-related outcomes, skills-based pay results in higher pay rates, increasing satisfaction, higher skills growth, commitment, and capacity for self-management or problem solving. There is greater teamwork among individuals and better career opportunities (Wood et al, 2013). Other potential benefits include higher product quality, decreased labour costs, and increased productivity. A potential disadvantage of a skills-based pay plan is its effect on higher average pay rates. Since training is critical in skills-based pay programmes, higher costs are associated with training. Production losses and problems may result while the more experienced employees are being trained (Du Plessis, Paine, Botha, 2012).

On the other hand Du Plessis and Frederick (2012) argue that there is pay for competencies which are the sets of skills, knowledge, abilities, behavioural characteristics, and other attributes that predict superior performance. True competencies are those that add value and help predict success – these are the ones that should be rewarded, which involves identifying those competencies that are needed to support an organisation's strategy. Many organisations are discovering that they want to reward more than just the skills or knowledge necessary for a role. Employees are needed who are not only skilled, but also energetic, service-conscious, and problem solvers. The answer lies in the development of less obvious competencies – the ability to work in teams, to accomplish specific goals, to solve problems rapidly, and to understand the customer's perspectives and meet their needs in a way that really adds value. Nel et al (2012) postulate that certification of competence in skills necessary to

perform well in the job is required to get a pay rise. The actual selection of competencies depends on the nature of the business, and the nature of the job – competencies could include leadership, flexibility, initiative, and so on.

A reward strategy is a long-term plan designed by an organisation that aims to attract the best talent to it whilst ensuring that its present employees are operating at optimum levels of job satisfaction so that its strategic goals are achieved. Human capital gives a company its sustainable competitive advantage. In Nel et al (2012) Du Plessis has designed a model for organisations to follow should they find it necessary to design and implement a new remuneration system. Such a system has many advantages amongst others a satisfied workforce, be regarded as an employer of choice, employee engagement and so on. The first step requires a thorough analysis of the present remuneration structure, current remuneration policies, pay procedures, and salary problems. Thereafter, the remuneration system designer formulates new salary policies based on the business strategy of the organisation and incorporating the value chain.

*Figure 2: A model for designing and implementing a new remuneration system*



Source: A J du Plessis as cited in Nel et al (2012: 275)

The next step is to develop the implementation plan, working closely with remuneration experts, consulting with trade unions, and communicating with all

employees. Once the new system is in place, evaluation and monitoring should be carried out on an on-going basis; feedback should be given and if necessary more changes should be made. The nature of the business and its strategic plans will influence the design of the new remuneration system. The new system could be skills- or knowledge-based, competency-based, performance related, variable-based incorporating incentives, and broadbanding could be used as a pay base.

Companies should keep up with the global trends where employees have more skills and are in the position to demand better benefits or even engagement in decision making (Härtel & Fujimoto, 2010). Individual as well as organisational performance could be a good indicator for the necessity of a new system. The research results in this project shed more light on this aspect later in this paper. In many organisations, individuals have not changed as rapidly as the cultures in which they are expected to work. Many employees cling to the belief that they are entitled to ever increasing salaries, punctual and substantial raises, and luxurious benefits packages. But old habits can be broken, old behaviours changed, old expectations replaced with more attractive new ones. The knowledge of new cultures and compensation strategies must not be the sole property of the compensation professional. Line managers must have a clear understanding of pay strategies, and the rewards process must be made clear to both supervisors and employees. To be successful, reward strategies must add value to the organisation, but one must understand how they work, what values and behaviours they support, how they must be administered and communicated, and what their limitations are (Du Plessis, Paine, Botha, 2012).

## **Analysis of the results**

### ***Comparison of the profile of the respondents with previous studies in NZ***

A study was executed in 2000 by Burchell (2001) in association with HRINZ to determine a future perspective on HR in 2010 in NZ. Using five related themes a study was executed in 2008 by Paine (2008) and a repeat of the 2000 study was executed in 2010 by Nel and Du Plessis (Nel & Du Plessis, 2011). Some of the comparisons are depicted in Table 1, 2 and 3 below. Paine used themes not discussed in this paper therefore her comparisons are not reflected in the Tables below.

The profile of the respondents is important to add value to their opinions. In the current (being 2010) study in NZ, the most frequent title was HR Manager (46.7%), and the next most common title was HR non-management (16.7%). Those two titles accounted for 63.4% of the reported titles. There was a huge and unexpected increase in the consultants' category from 14% in 2000 to 21.7% in 2010. There was a sharp decline in the line managers with HR functions who responded in 2000 from 10% to only 1.7% in 2010. It can be deduced that more organisations make use of consultants than allowing their line managers to execute HR functions and activities, see Table 1, below.

**Table 1:** Profile of respondents by profession in New Zealand in 2000 and 2010

<b>Profession</b>	<b>NZ profile 2000</b>	<b>NZ profile 2010</b>
HR (officer to director)	72.0%	63.4%
Business (line managers to CEO)	10.0%	1.7%
Consultants	14.0%	21.7%
Academic (all tertiary institutions)	4.0%	8.2%
Other	0%	5%
TOTAL	100%	100%

In New Zealand most organisations (83%) have fewer than 10 employees. In this study, the participants are from different sized organisations (see Table 2 below); the following groupings were compiled for analysis: small organisations with fewer than 100 employees (0-99); medium 100 to 499 employees, large is 500 or more employees. It should be noted that New Zealand is predominantly a country of small businesses, with 93.3% of enterprises employing 19 or fewer people ("SMEs in NZ: Structure and Dynamics," 2006)

**Table 2:** Profile of respondents by organisation size in NZ in 2000 and 2010

<b>Number of employees in organisation</b>	<b>NZ profile 2000</b>	<b>NZ profile 2010</b>
Fewer than 10	1.0%	11.7%
10 – 49	4.0%	8.3%
50 – 99	9.0%	5.0%
100 – 499	40.0%	28.3%
500 or more	46.0%	46.7%
TOTAL	100%	100%

In Table 2 above, the profile of the respondent's organisation size employing 500 or more employees for 2000 is almost identical to the 2010 and the group 50 to 99 employees is close with only 4% less in 2010.

Table 3 below compares the six themes used in this paper as it was current in 2000 and predicted for 2010 and current in 2010 and predicted for 2020 by the respondents. None of the themes were closely predicted and none in reality are close as per the responses from the respondents.

**Table 3:** Six closely related themes - two categories:  
very important to critical for success

Closely related Themes	NZ 2000 actual	NZ predict for 2010	NZ 2010 actual	NZ predict for 2020
Employee engagement	27.3%	61.1%	68.4%	81.6%
Rewards – individual performance	11.0%	1.0%	30.0%	51.6%
Rewards – organisational performance	8.5%	14.5%	18.3%	41.6%
Reputation – employer of choice	32.4%	48.5%	38.4%	65.0%
Benefits and services	8.2%	8.2%	16.7%	43.3%
Employee participation and empowerment	3.0%	45%	35.0%	71.7%

### ***Employee engagement***

Employee engagement in the day-to-day activities of organisations seems to get momentum. The actual for 2000 was 27.3% and the respondents predicted that it will increase to 61.1% in 2010. The actual figure for 2010 was 68.4% and therefore it was actually more important as what the respondents predicted in 2000. Interestingly the figure increased with another 12.9% as predicted for the future (being 2020). It confirms the earlier statement that employee engagement gets momentum and it can be said that employers regard employee inputs more and more valuable for the success of their businesses. For 81.6% of the respondents, it is very important to critical for success in 2020. At the other end of the spectrum, only 13.2% of the respondents regarded it more important in 2020 than the actual figure of 2010 whereas in 2000 a huge increase of 33.8% was reported to 2010.

### ***Rewards based on individual performance***

The respondents were asked to state how important rewards is for individual performance now (being 2010) and for the future (being 2020). The 2000 respondents forecasted a decrease of 10% to 2010. They were totally off the mark because the actual figure for 2010 was 30% of the respondents that regarded individual performance currently (being 2010) and a further 21.6% on top of this figure regarded it important and critical for success in 2020. In comparison there is a 19% difference between 2000 and 2010 actual figures and a very close 21% between 2010 (actual) and 2020 predicted figure. Employees have changing needs and therefore a performance difference between individuals and organisations are required to respond to these differences. Many employees are now looking for more than just remuneration and organisations need to understand this quest in order to assist their staff to have a better balance.

### ***Rewards based on organisational performance***

Due to increasing diverse workforces in NZ, their opinion was related to the area of organisational performance. Between 2000 (actual) and 2010 (predicted) there was an

increase of only 6% compared to the actual in 2010 (18.3%) and the predicted percentage for 2020 (41.6%) resulting in a 23.3% increase in importance, according to the respondents. The respondents of 2000 predicted very closely the importance of organisational performance. There is less than 4% difference in what they predicted for 2010 and what the actual figure was for 2010. It can be deduced that employers and also HR practitioners do not really understand the importance of rewards based on organisational performance. Their prediction for 2020 is less than 50% of the respondents (only 41.6%) regard this as important or critical for success. It is really alarming and HR practitioners and managers should take note of this careless attitude towards success of the business or otherwise it is a matter of them discarding the importance of teamwork, loyalty, employee engagement and empowerment of employees in the workplace. Organisations' responses to employees' needs may range from providing rewards other than monetary such as work arrangements to addressing employees' growing desire to have more family-friendly working environments.

### ***Establishing a reputation as an employer of choice***

Respondents were asked to give a response whether their organisation is an employer of choice. There was a 10% lower figure given for the actual figure in 2010 as what was predicted (48.5%) for 2010. It seems that organisations would establish themselves as an employer of choice for the future (65%) as they experience the lack of skills attributes and knowledge among their employees if they are not the employer of choice. Employees only have to visit the organisation's website to determine if their organisation is offering the equivalent as other employers. It is always good if employees compare their rewards with similar organisations. Employees leaving an organisation now place their negative experiences or positive experience on the social media, Facebook and others, and employers / organisations are compared or measured by the public opinion of ex-employees or current employees. It is one thing to recognise the need to be the employer of choice, however it is quite another thing to have the rewards on the table for the employees and what they really experience working for an organisation.

### ***Benefits and services***

This question was designed to establish the extent to which organisations, in other words employers and managers provide benefits and services to their employees. Organisations in New Zealand are behind most organisations in the rest of the world providing medical assistance, retirement benefits and so on (Marsden, 2011; Nel et al, 2012). The research outcomes for this question confirm that in 2000 only 8% of the respondents regarded this as important and even the prediction to 2010 was a mere 8%. The actual figure for 2010 was double (16.7%) but they realise that employees will be more demanding in the future and predicted almost a three-fold increase to 43.3% to 2020. The increasing global nature of competition requires that organisations use all of their available resources to survive and to succeed (Sheehan, 2005). The emphasis on human resources and their value add in an organisation is of the utmost importance for success.

### ***Employee participation and empowerment***

This question was put to the respondents to determine what the involvement of their organisation's employees are in the decision making process and to what extent are they empowered and do they participate in the running of the business. In a study done by the SHL Workers and Good Management (Hopkins, 2012) it was found that 36% of managers regard their participation and involvement in the strategic direction of the organisation as part of their job. The study further revealed that it is not just monetary rewards but include responsibility, more control (empowerment) and more of a say in their work they are doing. Professional development, recognition for doing a good job is not everything and 67% of their respondents expect more money as rewards for being part of decision making and more responsibilities.

The respondents in our research project responded in 2000 with a mere 3% that acknowledged participation and empowerment and a huge increase to 45% was predicted for 2010. The actual figure for 2010 was 10% lower than predicted (35%) and for the future (2020) the figure is up by 36.7% to 71.7%. It can be deduced that HR practitioners and employers know that it is important for employees to participate but they just don't want to "share" control (empowerment) with their employees as yet.

### **Recommendations for hr practitioners and employers**

Concrete recommendations are proposed in this section, even though a very high level of employee participation and empowerment (71.7%) are evident in the results, the second highest prediction for any of the six themes, for 2020, used in this paper along with employee engagement (81.6%).

- They will have to be the change agents and leaders with the development and implementation of a new rewards system.
- Individual performance is important for the respondents therefore a definite reward system for individual performance should be developed and implemented.
- Employer of choice was rated at 65%. HR practitioners should assist employers to ensure that the needs of employees are met as far as possible and that feedback received from employees is taken seriously and something positive gets done about it.
- Employers and HR practitioners should use the talents of people from various backgrounds, experiences and cultures and engage them in decision making on certain levels and to successfully take part in aligning organisational strategies and performance with individual performance.

### **Conclusions**

Findings indicate that the engagement and empowerment of employees has gained great momentum in NZ. In 2000 the actual figure was 27.3% compared to the actual figure in 2010 of 68.4%. A further 13.2% was predicted to 2020 to a total of 81.6%.



Individual performance plays a significant role in the success of a business with a 19% increase since the 2000 study to the actual of 2010 while organisational performance increased with less than 10% in the actual responses for the two periods when the studies were executed. The employer of choice increased with only 6% for the same period while benefits and services doubled. Therefore it can be deduced that benefits and services for employees are critical for success. Employee participation and empowerment is up by the biggest margin of 32% and it confirms that employees want to be more involved in the day-to-day running of the organisation and that they would love to have more responsibilities even if there is no increase in pay but other rewards or benefits.

The six themes show similar increases for roles, goals and activities for employers and HR practitioners in New Zealand. The most significant result is employee participation and engagement, and recommendations were made in the previous section. A new kind of HR practitioner as well as a business manager and employee can be expected in successful organisations in the future adding sustainable value.

A very useful remuneration system was developed for use by employers and HR practitioners (Figure 1). Similarly a model for designing and implementing a reward system (Figure 2) was developed depicting the steps to be followed for successful implementation of a remuneration system.

## Reference

- Boxall, P. (1995). *The challenge of human resource management: Direction and debates in New Zealand*. Auckland: Longman Paul.
- Burchell, N. (2001). *2000 to 2010: Future directions for HR in New Zealand*. Auckland: Unitec Institute of Technology.
- Chavan, M. (2009). The balanced scorecard: a new challenge. *Journal of Management Development*, 28(5), 393-406.
- Drucker, P. F. (2006). What executives should remember. *Harvard Business Review*, 84(2), 144-152.
- Du Plessis, A. J. (2009). An overview of the influence of globalisation and internationalisation on domestic Human Resource Management in New Zealand. *International Review of Business Research Papers* 5(2), March: 1-18.
- Du Plessis, A. J., Frederick, H. (2012). Effectiveness of e-recruiting: empirical evidence from the Rosebank business cluster in Auckland, New Zealand *Science Journal of Business Management*, 12 (3), 2276-6367
- Du Plessis, A. J., Paine, S. Botha, C. J. (2012). The Role of Human Resource Practitioners Maintaining Sustainability in Organisations: Some Empirical Evidence of Expectations, Challenges and Trends. *International Journal of Contemporary Business Studies*, 3 (4) April: 16-35
- Du Plessis, A. J., Frederick, H. (2010). Local Ontologies and Epistemologies of Leadership in the Rosebank Business Precinct of Auckland, New Zealand. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*, November, 2 (7): 10-22
- Du Plessis, A. J. (2010). International Human Resource Management: an overview of its effect on managers in global organisations. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*, August, 2 (4): 178-192.
- Härtel, C. E. J., & Fujimoto, Y. (2010). *Human resource management: Transforming theory into innovative practice*. 2 nd ed Australia: Pearson Education.
- Hopkins, L. 2012. Are your employees satisfied with their remuneration? *HRM on-line editor, e-magazine*

- Institute of Personnel Management New Zealand. (1997). Professionalism in personnel: The 1997 survey of the HR profession. *Human Resources*, 2(5).
- Institute of Personnel Management New Zealand. (1994). Human resources priorities for competitive advantage. 1994-2000. The IPM survey report. Auckland: New Zealand: Institute of Personnel Management New Zealand
- Jørgensen, H. H., Owen, L., & Neus, A. (2009). Stop improvising change management! *Strategy & Leadership*, 37(2), 38-44.
- Marsden, M. 2011. Employee retention: is remuneration as important as you think? *New Zealand's magazine for human resources professionals* 16 (1) April/May
- Paine, S. 2008. *The emerging role of HR practitioners' expectations, challenges and trends*. Unpublished Master dissertation, Unitec New Zealand
- Nel P. S., Werner A., Du Plessis A. J., Fazey M., Erwee R., Pillay S., McKinnon B., Millett B. and Wordsworth R. (2012), *Human Resource Management in Australia and New Zealand*. Melbourne, Australia: Oxford University Press
- Nel, P. S., du Plessis, A. J., (2011). Unpublished Report on Human Resources Priorities for New Zealand from 2010 to 2020 onwards. Unitec New Zealand
- Rudman, R. (2010). *Getting the right people. Effective recruitment and selection today*. New Zealand, CCH New Zealand Ltd.
- Stone, R. J. (2011). *Human resource management* (7th ed.). Australia: John Wiley & Sons.
- Wood, J., Zeffane, R., Fromholtz, M., Wiesner, R., Morrison, R & Seet, P. (2013) *Third Australasian edition. Organisational Behaviour: core concepts and applications*. John Wiley and Sons, Australia, Pty, Ltd.
- Youngman, P. (2011). Show me the money. *Human resources: New Zealand's magazine for human resources professionals* 16(1) April/May



---

# PROFESSIONALIZATION OF ROMANIAN PUBLIC SOCIAL WORK SERVICES: AN IMPOSSIBLE CHALLENGE?<sup>1</sup>

---

Daniel ARPINTE<sup>2</sup>

**Abstract:** *The article aims at analysing the state of the professionalization in social work system, identifying the main factors of the low share of specialists, particularly social workers, in public social work services. Successive surveys investigating the professionalization of social work in Romania show that the share of specialised social workers in total of staff in public social services is increasing very slow, while the gap between the total of graduates in social work and employed social workers in public and private social services providers is increasing. The article tries to explain the main reasons of the lack of professionals in public social services, particularly at primary level. Another objectives is to analyse the main strategic documents that aims to increase the share of the specialised professionals at community level and to contribute to the development of public services, particularly in rural area. The article ends with an analyse of the main weakness and risks of these strategic plans.*

**Keywords:** *social assistance services, social work professionalization, social inclusion, social workers*

---

## Introduction

The social work professionalization in Romania was one of the main challenge after the communism's fall, moment when the reborn of the social services system was supposed to be based on a high infusion with specialists delivered by the new created graduate domains. They would have to provide the social services with specialists for modern and efficient services and reborn the social work tradition interrupted by the communist regime.

---

<sup>1</sup> Acknowledgement: This paper is made and published under the aegis of the Research Institute for Quality of Life, Romanian Academy as a part of programme co-funded by the European Union within the Operational Sectorial Programme for Human Resources Development through the project for Pluri and interdisciplinary in doctoral and post-doctoral programmes Project Code: POSDRU/159/1. 5/S/141086

<sup>2</sup> Scientific researcher Institute for Quality of Life Research, Romanian Academy, Bucharest, ROMANIA. E-mail: arpinte@iccv.ro

Just in 1990, the social work education was re-established in a context that was seen as favourable for a fast recovery of the profession. The demand of the specialized social workers and other relevant key professionals related to the social services was seen as enormous. The oversized and overcrowded institutions for people with disabilities, the institutions for people with chronic diseases or institutionalized children (both orphans or abandoned by their families) have had to be replaced with adequate social services and adapted to the beneficiaries needs. Other specialized services for various vulnerable categories, particularly in the context of a painful social and economic transition reform, were needed. The primary services, inexistent during the communist period, were another sector with a significant potential for absorbing social work graduates. However, the main concern at that moment was the period needed for full professionalization of the sector, and the low capacity of the universities to provide specialized social workers.

Unfortunately, 25 years later, the social work system, despite of some structural changes, still remains low professionalized, a tendency that marked its evolution from its reborn, despite that the universities have provided throughout last over two decades more than 30. 000 graduates in social work. What factors are influencing the professionalization of social work system in Romania, why the system still show a strong resistance for professionalization and what can be done for improving the absorption of specialists, particularly in primary services developed at local level, are the main questions for which the article will try to answer.

## **The current state of professionalization in Romanian social work system**

Although the first generation of social workers has graduated more than two decades ago, and there are over 30. 000 graduates to the date, a recent report shows an alarming low level of professionalization in social services. Only about 4,600 social workers (both in public and non-governmental sectors) were identified by Romanian National College of Social workers from which about 4. 000 being registered as employed in public and non-governmental sector (Lazăr, 2015:16). The National Strategy on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction 2014-2020 shows that only 31% of the Public Services for Social Work<sup>1</sup> from rural localities and have a specialised social worker. The proportion increases for small cities (up to 10. 000 inhabitants) to 49%, and is 60% for cities between 10 – 19. 000 inhabitants, and 88% for cities between 20 – 50. 000 inhabitants. The National Strategy on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction 2014-2020 estimates that the deficit of specialised social workers in small and medium size cities is between 2. 300 and 3. 600. The same document estimates at national level that the deficit for in all type of services at 11. 000 social workers, while the total of graduates in social work is about 30. 000.

Although there is a slightly improvement of the occupation with social workers compared with the results of previous evaluations (Arpinte, 2002, Arpinte, 2006,

---

<sup>1</sup>Public Service for Social Work (Serviciul Public de Asistență Socială - SPAS) is organised in each locality accordingly to the Law of Social Work no 292/2011.

Cojocaru and Cojocaru, 2008), particularly in medium and big size cities, still the professionalization remains modest compared with the available human resources. The main concern is related to the discrepancies between rural and urban, and also between public and private sectors. Most of the social workers are employed in big cities, particularly those where are the universities with social work faculties or are employed by General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection with operates in each county, but which have limited responsibilities and resources to substitute the public social assistance providers from local level. The last evaluation of the distribution of the professionals at national level (Lazăr, 2015) confirm that the most of the social workers are employed in the General Directorates for Social work and Child Protection but also in NGO providing services for children, while at local level there is an important deficit of specialists, although there are sufficient graduates for a competitive selection.

The lack of professionalization should be analysed in a broader context. The social work as profession had a sinuous evolution, even in European countries with a long tradition being in a process of de-professionalisation and distancing from its fundamental values by excessive standardisation and bureaucratisation and marketization of social services (Rogowski, 2010, Bönker and Wollmann, 2000, Harris, 2003, Ferguson, 2004). Therefore, the social services providers are rather interested in following their development needs and gaining efficiency than providing adequate services for those vulnerable. Such tendency is observed in UK or Germany, but might become common for those countries that experienced long term cuts on expenditure for social programs as a consequence of economic crisis. In Romania, the budget for main social assistance benefits and the resources for financing the public social assistance providers have been significantly reduces in the last years. The additional personnel policies for public administration, based on freezing of hiring new people and staff cuts have contributed also to keeping a low professionalization of public social services providers.

Another key aspect is related to the specific context of former socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe. All those countries have faced an interruption of the social work tradition, even ruthless in Romania. If in Poland or Hungary some types of social services have been accepted (Hering and Waaldijk, 2003), even provided by the church, in Romania the social work education was totally abolished and the social services have been suppressed. The communist regime denied any social work need and have replaced the specialised services with care in institutions for the most disadvantaged groups (abandoned children, orphans, elderly people without support, disabled people or chronically ill people). Therefore, Romania, compared to the other former socialist countries, started the reconstruction of social work with significant lower opportunities. Also, the process of social work reconstruction in Romania after the communism fall was slower and more difficult that was initially expected. Although the tertiary education was rapidly developing and expanding, supplying the social services providers with sufficient social work graduates for a competitive selection in less than 10 years from re-establishing the social work education at university level, an evaluation from 2002 has revealed a surprising low share of social graduates in total of social services personnel. At that moment, less than 5% of rural localities had a social

worker, and in local social services from urban were only 249 social workers, with a polarised distribution by distance to the universities centres with social work faculties (Arpinte, 2002). Further evaluations (Cojocaru and Cojocaru, 2008, Lazăr, 2015, Ministry of Labour Family Social Protection and Elderly, 2014) has confirmed the tendency of low professionalization in public system and unequal distribution of the social worker, the most in need areas (rural localities, small and medium urban with a high proportion of disadvantaged people) have the fewest specialists in social services.

## **Obstacles to the professionalization of the Romanian social work services public sector**

he low level of the specialists in public social assistance services, mainly at local level, is reflected in a weak capacity of the social protection system to respond to the needs of the main socially vulnerable groups. In such circumstances, the social diagnose and prevention functions cannot be fulfilled, being obvious that will be reflected in growing and persistent social problems.

For instance, the children left home by parents working abroad was reported as critical only after mass media identified a few dramatic cases of such children. At short time, two evaluations, one conducted by Agency for Child Protection, the other by Soros Foundation (Toth et al., 2007) have identified a significant number of children left home, many of them exposed to various risks (Irimescu and Lupu, 2006, Toth et al., 2007, TOTH et al., 2008): emotional disorders, risk of school abandonment, lower educational results, or drug consumption.

Another example is provided by UNICEF evaluation (Stănculescu and Marin, 2012) which found that in 64 rural localities from Moldova region about 11% children out from total were at risk (without access to medical services, exposed to domestic violence, without identity papers, minors being parents, children left home by parents working abroad or children in risk to be abandoned by their families). These children are named by the report as invisible, due the fact that previously to the UNICEF project intervention they were not identified at risk by any social assistance providers, both public or non-governmental.

The income-earning people living in concentrated poverty areas are also identified as a category not reached by public social services (Briciu, 2014:14-15), being estimated that 17.7% adult population (18-64 years) being poor. Another critical category is the population living in marginalised areas, without access to basic utilities or social services, about 3,2% of urban households and 2.5% from rural belonging to such communities in 2012, accordingly to World Bank (Briciu, 2014:15). However, the same author shows the highest rates of poverty are registered for children, although the most and generous social benefits are targeted for families with children.

Such development of social problems might be exemplified for various vulnerable groups, and the main cause of lack of public institutions reaction is the precariousness of social assistance services from local level. Therefore, the support for those eligible for social assistance is provided mainly as a financial or in kind benefits, Romania having a higher proportion of the passive support compared to the other EU countries

(Popescu, 2014: 103-104). For the most of rural localities, the highest share of expenditures for social assistance is for guaranteed minimum income and benefits for disabled people (Mihalache, 2013:138).

Designed by the law (Law no 292 / 2011) as a first level for social diagnose and intervention, these primary services (Public Service for Social Work / Serviciul Public de Asistență Socială) are still underdeveloped, mainly in rural area. As consequence, the public sector became incapable to identify and react timely in case of rising risks for vulnerable categories. The lack of specialised intervention at this level has also an economic dimension, being estimated that the cost of prevention for 200 children is equal with the cost of care for one child in a specialised institution.

In this context the main question is why still there are more than 30. 000 social work graduates and only about 800 rural localities have a specialised social worker in their social assistance services department. A main reason resides in the confused identity of the profession and its role in tackling the social problems. The social worker is often confusedly perceived even by those entitled with responsibilities in organising and delivering social assistance services, as is the case of the local authorities. All mentioned above evaluation of the professionalization of social assistance services faced with the issue of confusing perception of the respondents from local authorities of what means "social worker". Rarely associated with a specialised employee, graduated of a social work faculty, is the "social worker" category were included all range of personnel that are involved in delivering social services, from the personal assistant for disabled people to the employee in charge with the administration of mean tested benefits, although, in most of the cases, they have no specialisation in social work. Therefore, the social worker is low valorised and is not seen as helpful for supporting those in needs, at local level being rather preferred more electorally rewarding tools on short term, as in kind benefits or any other facility that might bring from beneficiaries a positive return in future electoral confrontations. A functional social assistance service at local level means a long-term investment without the guarantee for any returns that might be translated in electoral capital for local authorities.

The lack of the resources is another key factor that impede the professionalization of social work area and social assistance services development. Data show (Ministry of Labour Family Social Protection and Elderly, 2014, Stănculescu and Marin, 2012) that there is strong correlation between the lack of the resources and low share of the professionals among the total of social services personal. In other words, the poorest localities, and therefore the most in need, have the lowest rates of social workers, with the exception of those regions that are in the proximity of the universities with social work faculties.

## **Strategic approaches for increasing professionalization in social work services**

One of the most important aspects of the low professionalization is the lack of specific action plans and this is reflected particularly in the low share of social workers in public services from local level. Even in the case of General Directorate of Social Assistance

and Child Protection, which have a high share of professionals in total of personnel, the achievements are rather results of the support from European Commission and other international donors to comply the EU accession condition, than of systematic and rigorously planned investments.

A milestone for the public social work sector was National Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Promotion Plan (2002) that aimed at providing equal access to social assistance services for all citizens. Some key initiatives have been developed, including a Law of social work and few other subsequent legislative provisions, some as the Law regarding the status of social worker. Although they were essential for a functional social work system, these key initiatives have been insufficiently exploited during the next years. Also, the strategic strands related to the professionalization and development of social work system were abandoned in incipient stages. Overall, the achievements of the initiatives relate to social work and developed under the National Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Promotion Plan have been abandoned after governance changing.

Later on, the main strategies from social inclusion area for the period 2014 – 2020 have included some objectives in area of professionalization, the most important ones in National Strategy on social inclusion and poverty reduction (2014-2020) and National Strategy for the Protection and Promotion of Child Rights 2014 – 2020.

National strategy for social inclusion and poverty reduction (2014-2020) has a few strands for development of social services, increasing capacity of social work at community level, development and reform of specialised social services and the development of services for vulnerable groups. Overall, the strategy emphasises the development of the primary services (Public Service for Social Work), the interdisciplinary approach and professionalization of the services by assuring at least one social work employee in each locality. A few other specific objectives are dedicated to the reform of the social work system at local and county level with some proposal for improving the collaboration between the main actors at these two levels.

National Strategy for the Protection and Promotion of Child Rights 2014 – 2020 is more focused on professionalization within one of its general objective "Improving access of children to quality services" and with two specific measures targeting the development of professional services. A specific objective, "Assuring a social work public service in each territorial- administrative unit" has assigned three actions (fulfilling all vacancies in social services for children, assuring specialised personnel, respectively at least one social worker, in each Public Services for Social Work, encouraging the association of two or more rural localities for developing a functional Public Services for Social Work where the scarcity of the resources does not allow to develop independent services). Although the strategy is focused on child protection, these specific measures are focused on structural needs of the social work system, with long-term positive impact. One of the most important aspects is that the strategy aims at developing the primary services, which have an essential role in prevention and early intervention. It became obviously that the most of the specialised services could not be effective without a well-developed primary social services network. UNICEF report shows that in 64 rural localities, about 11% children did not receive adequate social or



medical service for their needs (Stănculescu and Marin, 2012). In fact, they are named "invisible" since they are not identified as vulnerable by social services. These localities, without a functional and effective public social service, which should diagnose for vulnerable and prevent in early stages, are exposed to the risk for an uncontrolled development of various social problems. A representative example is the case of children left home by parents working abroad. Almost an unknown problem for authorities and representative of social services for children, these children came into attention after mass media revealed a few dramatic cases of some children in 2006. Afterwards, a survey at national level estimated about (Toth et al., 2007) 400.000 children left home, while the public authorities have identified about 82.000 in the same year. Both data are arguable but, however, they show significant amplitude of a social problem that could not be revealed in time at local level by primary social services.

Overall, both strategies propose ambitious aims that address essential needs and critical problems in public social work system related to the professionalization and increasing the share of professionals in public local services. One of the most important in both strategies is the specific objective related to assuring at least one professional in social work (specifically a social worker in Strategy for Child protection, and assuring at least one full-time employee in social work, without being clear about their specialisation in Strategy for social inclusion).

Another common aspect identified in related to the Public Service for Social Work, both strategies planning actions that would develop the primary level of public social system. Although some proposed actions are similar, there is a clear complementarity of their specific objectives. While Strategy for Child Protection is oriented to basic investments in development of primary services and assuring a minimal staff at this level, the Strategy for social inclusion goes beyond with a few additional actions both for the development of primary and specialised services, improving their collaboration and enhancing their capacity for addressing certain vulnerable groups.

Although the current strategies identify the key development aspects of the professionalization in social work and address the development of the public primary social service level, there are some critical aspects that might hinder the achievement of their objectives and targets.

One of the most important is related to the lack of capacity of the public institutions to implement strategic action plans on medium and long term. At least in the social inclusion field cannot be identified any example of a strategic action plan in public sector that have been successfully implemented. The previous strategies plans from social inclusion area, including the sectorial ones, failed in implementation phase, without any exception. The difficulty to follow a strategic direction can be explained by the lack of the resources specifically dedicated to the implementation of the plans, but also by instability of the decision makers positions which have to decide for the resources allocation.

An additional risk for Strategy for Child Protection and Strategy for Social Inclusion is the difficulty to set up the institutional arrangements and financial mechanism, and to

make the legislative changes necessary to achieve their results and objectives during the implementation period (2014 – 2020). As main strands are related to the local level, which are autonomously financed and administrated, will be difficult to enforce standards related to the staff, particularly for those poor localities, which are facing with budget constrains and difficulties to pay the salaries for current staff.

Another reason is related to needed changes in legislation, a process that might take a few years, considering that significant changes are needed in various laws. For instance, according to the Law of Social Work (Law 292/2011), if the social service providers, including local authorities in charge with the development of Public Service for Social Work, are not able to employ a social worker for "objectives reasons", then they may hire staff with any kind of professional background for fulfilling the social work activities. However, the law does not provide further details about what means "objectives reasons" and how long is valid the exception. Such legislative provision should be replaced with new ones in line with the specific strands related to the professionalization since is foreseen for 2020 that each Public Service for Social Work to have at least one social worker, the alternative for the localities without budgetary resources being the association with other localities for development of a social work public service. These changes need time to be operated and gradually implemented, without any guarantee that will be reached the expected results.

Another risk is the lack of provisions for encouraging the coordination for similar or complementary specific objectives. Although in both strategies are mentioned in charge institutions for implementation, the subsequent action and measures need detailed plans of the involved ministries. For instance, the Strategy for social inclusion provides only some indicative actions, which might be carried out but all actions and measures needs to be adequately developed and matched with similar or complementary actions from other strategies. Specific task groups should do this effort and to develop specific plans and project to be implemented, which needs a significant amount of time and staff to be dedicated, resources that are not easy to be identified by the ministries involved in the implementation.

## Conclusions

The lack of the professionalization of the public social work is one of the main factors that keep the sector underdeveloped and does not allow using its potential contribution for social inclusion. The sector remains surprisingly low professionalised although there are significant underused resources, as the available graduates in social work. The economic crises and the public personal policies (freezing the hiring of additional personnel, cutting salaries for current staff in public institutions) have negatively impacted the social work sector, one dominated by a modest staff cost policy and with a low professional prestige.

The recent strategies in social inclusion and the strategy for child protection bring a significant change in public social work system by emphasising the importance of specialists in public primary services. Although the achievement of the results in the field of professionalization and development of functional public services at community level does not require significant resources, there are some significant risks

that might hinder the implementation. The lack of strategic planning culture in public sector and the structural difficulties and risks in implementing medium and long-term action plans (lack of the dedicated financial and staff resources, absence of coordination between responsible ministries or difficulties in favourable changing of legislation) might hinder the achievement of the planned results. The opportunity of using European Social Fund that has an allocation of about 777 milion Euro (about 348 million for marginalised communities, including Roma and about 489 million for enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high-quality services, including health care and social services of general interest) might be the key for a successfully implementation of these two strategies.

## References

- Arpinte, D. (2002). Situatia personalului din sistemul public de asistență socială. *Jurnalul de Asistență Socială*, (2)
- Arpinte, D. (2006). Profesionalizarea serviciilor de asistență socială. *Revista Calitatea Vieții*, XVII, nr. 3–4, 2006, p 343–362
- Bönker, F. & Wollmann, H. (2000). The rise and fall of a social service regime: Marketisation of German social services in historical perspective. *Comparing public sector reform in Britain and Germany*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 327-350.
- Briciu, C. (2014). Poverty in Romania: dimensions of poverty and landmarks of poverty research. *Journal of Community Positive Practices*, XIV(3), 3-18
- Cojocaru, Ș. & Cojocaru, D. (2008). *Managementul de caz în protecția copilului: evaluarea serviciilor și practicilor din România*. Iasi: Polirom.
- FERGUSON, I. (2004). Neoliberalism, the third way and social work: the UK experience. *Social Work & Society*, 2: 1-9.
- Harris, J. (2003). *The social work business*. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Hering, S. & Waaldijk, B. (2003). International Information Center and Archives for the Women's Movement (IIAV). *History of Social Work in Europe (1900–1960)*. Springer.
- Irimescu, G. & Lupu, A. L. (2006). Singur acasa! Studiu efectuat în zona Iași asupra copiilor separați de unul sau de ambii părinți prin plecarea acestora la muncă în străinătate.
- Lazăr, F. (2015). The profile of social workers in Romania [Profilul asistenților sociali din România]. The Romanian National College of Social Workers / Colegiul Național al Asistenților Sociali din România.
- Mihalache, F. (2013). Coordinates of the budgets of revenues and expenditures of the rural localities. *Journal of Community Positive Practices*, XIV(1). 129-146
- Ministry Of Labour Family Social Protection And Elderly(2014). National Strategy on social inclusion and poverty reduction (2014-2020). Bucharest.
- Popescu, R. (2014). Family policies in Romania within the European framework. *Journal of Community Positive Practices*, XIV(3), 99-113
- Rogowski, S. (2010). *Social Work: The Rise and Fall of a Profession?*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Stănculescu, M. S. & Marin, M. (2012). Sprijinirea copiilor invizibili. Raport de evaluare a proiectului 2011. UNICEF.
- Toth, A., Munteanu, D. & Bleahu, A. (2008). Analiză la nivel național asupra fenomenului copiilor rămași acasă prin plecarea părinților la muncă în străinătate.
- Toth, G., Toth, A., Voicu, O. & Ștefănescu, M. (2007). *Efectele migrației: copiii rămași acasă*. București: Fundația Soros România (FSR).



---

# THE LIMITS AND THE SPECIFIC INSTRUMENTS OF POLICY EVALUATION<sup>1</sup>

---

Cosmin BRICIU<sup>2</sup>

**Abstract:** *This paper offers arguments that policy evaluation should be considered and researched as a distinctive field with its own challenges and limits. The paper puts forth some of the approaches that might be useful in policy evaluation endeavors. In order to achieve this task, the definition and some of the most important concepts of evaluation are reviewed first, using a variety of sources. The concluding discussion emphasizes some of the directions for research in the area of policy evaluation, singling out strategies as a useful policy tool for the use of policy evaluation attempts.*

**Keywords:** *policy evaluation, literature review, theory of intervention, policy cycle.*

---

## Policy evaluation– definitions and concepts

This paper deals with policy evaluation, regarded as a distinct and legitimate area of evaluation. The current literature on the subject, especially the academic one, concerned with evaluation theories, methods and techniques, seldom, if ever, makes this point. Usually, policy evaluation is either regarded as the less respectable relative of program evaluation, as there are too many variables in the process to allow control over them, or it is considered equivalent, explicitly or implicitly, with program evaluation from the point of view of the evaluators' tasks.

Policy evaluation is placed at the crossroad of several thematic areas: evaluation (most of the theoretical contributions in this area elaborate on program evaluation methods and techniques), policy/social policy analyses and social development. While scientific contributions authored by evaluators and evaluation theorists on the specific subject of policy evaluation are scarce, policy analyses texts are more generous in this respect,

---

<sup>1</sup> Acknowledgement: This paper is made and published under the aegis of the Research Institute for Quality of Life, Romanian Academy as a part of programme co-funded by the European Union within the Operational Sectorial Programme for Human Resources Development through the project for Pluri and interdisciplinary in doctoral and post-doctoral programmes Project Code: POSDRU/159/1. 5/S/141086

<sup>2</sup> Researcher, Research Institute for Quality of Life, Romanian Academy, Bucharest, ROMANIA. E-mail: cosminbriciu@gmail.com

marking evaluation as an intrinsic phase of the policy cycle. However, the latter also do not indicate, oftentimes, the specifics of policy analyses and are confined to re-stating the principles, the approaches and the methods of program evaluations; these sources recall the basic distinctions in the evaluation field such as formative versus summative, input, output and outcome, experimental, quasi-experimental and non-experimental and so on. Policy analyses texts tend to be more concerned with the environment and the user end of the evaluation process: they stress that evaluation is a policy process itself and display more poignantly the difficulties in performing rigorous analyses in the framework of the ever changing and complex policy-making arena. The social development textbooks and guides are closer to the approach taken here, of regarding policies and strategies as interventions that can be and should be measured and evaluated and offer practical advice but they miss some of the valuable points made by program evaluation literature, such as the emphasis placed by the latter on identifying the theory of the intervention prior to proceeding to its evaluation.

Some definitions are needed, not strictly for taxonomy purposes, but in an attempt to restrict the concepts used here. Throughout this paper, the meaning of policy is that of a large intervention, comprising legislative provisions, strategic documents, several programs, institutional set-ups and many other contextual arrangements. It is an intervention wider in scope than programs and projects, as the latter are usually defined (*e. g.* Măţăuan, 1999: 38).

Not all generally accepted definitions of policy point towards this meaning. For instance, Jenkins gives the following definition: “a set of interrelated decisions taken by a political actor or group of actors concerning the selection of goals and the means of achieving them within a specified situation where these decisions should, in principle, be within the power of those actors to achieve” (1978: 15). Other popular definitions might be: “a policy is a set of ideas or a plan of what to do in particular situations that has been agreed officially by a group of people, a business organization, a government or a political party” (Cambridge dictionaries online). In the widest sense of the concept, policy can mean anything from a mere change in the legislative provisions, for instance the level of taxes, without any other additional arrangements or actions, to the strategy of a certain governmental cycle.

Most of the times, the current definitions of evaluation refer to program evaluation. For instance, perhaps the most widely read and quoted evaluation textbook available today states that «evaluation research is the systematic application of social research procedures for assessing the conceptualization, design, implementation, and utility of social intervention programs (Rossi, Freeman & Lipsey, 1993: 5). Another definition states “program evaluation is the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programs for use by specific people to reduce uncertainties, improve effectiveness, and make decisions with regard to what those programs are doing and affecting”. (Patton, 1986: 14)

The perspective on “evaluation as a phase of the policy cycle” is closer to the approach here. However, even in the framework of this perspective, the process is oftentimes comprised of a monitoring component which pertains to the policy as a whole, and evaluations which pertain only to particular programs; the information generated by the

analysis is construed as a phase of the policy cycle. Wollman (2007: 393) offers a more comprehensive definition: “first, evaluation research, as an analytical tool, involves investigating a policy/program to obtain all information pertinent to the assessment of its performances, both process and result; second, evaluation as a phase of the policy cycle more generally refers to the reporting of such information back to the policy cycle” (Wollman 2007: 393). There are other definitions as well which make this distinction: “evaluation is the systematic assessment of the operation and /or outcome of a program or policy, compared to a set of explicit or implicit standards, as a means of contributing to the improvement of the program or policy” (Weiss, 1998: 4). The same author shows that “evaluation is a type of policy research, designed to help people make wise choices about future programming; evaluation does not aim to replace decision makers’ experience and judgment, but rather offers systematic evidence that informs experience and judgment” (Weiss, 1986: 83).

However, even when the definitions cover policy as well, in the practical sections where the evaluation operations are described, it becomes evident that the definitions, in fact, refer to programs, or that no specific difference is considered. The theoretic and methodological problems are expected to be more or less the same when dealing with policies, programs or projects as long as there is no specific guidance on how policies should be tackled by the evaluator.

For the purpose of this paper, Scriven's vision on evaluation is more helpful. For Scriven, evaluation is used in the judiciary process (as a central element of trials), in engineering, in medicine, in logic or in product evaluation, to name only a few instances where the evaluative dimension is a central component. As such, Scriven states that evaluation is a *transdiscipline* that “supplies essential tools for other disciplines, while retaining an autonomous structure and research effort on their own” (Donaldson, Scriven, 2009: 19). This view contrasts with the already mentioned definition of Rossi, Freeman and Lipsey's volume, claiming that evaluation is the application of social science methods to the solution of social problems. It's not just that “evaluation is an elastic word that stretches to cover judgments of many kinds” (Weiss, 1998: 3), it is the fact that these judgments are carried on with a fairly high level of similarity across the fields, at least in respect with the intention and scope of the endeavor.

The communalities are even stronger, as one might expect, between policies and programs. However, there are also specific features and they are the subject of interest of this paper. While authors brought up in the tradition of random test evaluation techniques are cautious to take on directly the problem of policy evaluations, in the social analyses field the problem is tackled: “the concept of policy evaluation thus refers broadly to the stage of the policy process at which is determined how a public policy has actually fared in action” (Howlett, Ramesh, 2003: 207); “policy evaluation assesses the effectiveness of a public policy in terms of its perceived intentions and results” (Gerston, 1997: 20).

Having summarily inventoried some of the definitions of evaluation and policy evaluation, is there something to say for the case of policy evaluation as a substantive domain of evaluation? We can observe macro-level analyses that are actually carried on and that involve a strong evaluative dimension, even though they are not labeled as

such. These analyses, not commonly referred to as evaluations, have some of the main characteristics as the latter: they are normative and ascertain that policies were right or wrong in their intent and application and they do indeed work with hypothetical theoretic models of causality (which they do not entirely demonstrate, however). Scientists as well as high-level officials assess performances of the social policies in their integrality on regular basis.

The paper builds on the idea that it is important to better ground, at the theoretical and methodological level, such macro-level analyses and others of the same kind, as we might be interested in taking decisions not just at the level of individual programs but strategic decisions concerning the future of our societies and their policies. In fact, it is a rare case when we can isolate a program from its context, since at least “big problems tend to have a lot of ‘solutions’ thrown at them, making it difficult to assess which, if any, of them are producing an effect. On the other hand, some programs may work only in conjunction with others, so a research strategy to try to determine the effects of such programs in isolation would be counter-productive.” (Hogwood, Gunn, 1984: 227)

In the context of these arguments, we will proceed with the analysis based on the definition that evaluation is “the periodic analysis of the relevance of a strategy, of a plan, of a program or project, of their efficiency and impact, of the intended and unintended effects, in relation with the established objectives. The evaluation can lead to adjustments precisely because it is focused on the analyses of the global efficiency” (Zamfir, Stoica, Stănculescu, 2007: 80)

## Challenges and specific endeavors for policy evaluation

As already stated, policy and program evaluation are quite similar in some respects. First and foremost, the intent and scope of the evaluator work is the same, namely to distinguish good interventions from bad ones. This is achieved by comparing the actual state of the policy/program with a desirable state, which is what evaluations in general do: “Evaluation tends to compare *what is* with *what should be*” (Weiss, 1998: 15). However, at this point a series of difficulties emerge:

- While at the level of programs, the “should be” part can be quite often extracted from the program goals and objectives or can be reconstructed through alternative strategies designed to isolate the so-called “theory of the program”, the “should be” component of the policies is less obvious;
- Overall, it is quite uncommon that a nuanced analyses of policies would conclude that they are good or bad overall, not totally unlike social programs but even more so; the evaluation of policies differentiates more among policy components, such as legislations, programs activities and so on.

### ***Understanding the theory of the policies and programs***

Having said that, a quick review of the discussions of the evaluator theorists on the “program theory” reveals that there are considerable difficulties in identifying this component at the level of programs as well.

Program theory comprises the “*what should be*” component at the level a particular program (and policy) and also shows “*how is this desirable goal supposed to be achieved*”. “Although the term *program theory* often seems to conjure up images of broad social science theories about social problems, theory-driven program evaluators use the term to refer to rather small and specific theories of social programs, treatments, or interventions” (Donaldson, 2009:130). The theory-driven evaluation is “a plausible and sensible model of how the program will work under certain conditions to solve identified problems” (Bickman, 1989: 5).

The model is not confined to presumed cause-effect relation but it also details all the characteristic of the particular setting where a program is implemented: “Theory-driven evaluation provides a feasible alternative to the traditional method-driven approaches that have come up short in (...) (reporting – author’s note) on which program components are the most effective, the mediating causal processes through which they work, and the characteristics of the participants, service providers, setting and the like that moderate relationships between a program and its outcomes” (Donaldson, 2009: 114).

The theory-driven evaluation is considered by many evaluation theorists to be superior to method-driven approaches for the very reason that it can determine the contextual use of the methods for particular programs in particular settings: “Evaluation-theory tells us when, where, and why some methods should be applied and others not, suggesting sequences in which methods could be applied and others not, ways different methods can be combined, types of questions answered better or less well by a particular method, and benefits to be expected from some methods as opposed to others” (Shadish, 1991:34).

Scriven (2009: 22-23) makes the distinction among levels of the program theory:

- the “*alleged program theory*” or the official version how a program operates or is believed to operate by the decision-makers, funders and all the stakeholders who support the program; Scriven emphasizes that it is not identical with the goals of the program (but the goals are an important component, one might add)
- the “*real logic of the program*”, the actual mechanism that allows the implementation of the program; it is familiar among the practitioners or might be reconstructed from their partial knowledge
- the “*optimal program theory*” or the account of how the program *should* operate, in order to achieve optimal effectiveness from available resources

Weiss makes a distinction between the *program theory* and *implementation theory*. The former, he submits, represents “the set of beliefs that underlie action” (Weiss, 1998: 55) (which are not supposed to be uniformly accepted or right; they are set a hypotheses



upon which people build their program plans); while the latter is “a theory about what is required to translate objectives into ongoing service delivery and program operation; (...) the assumption is that if the activities are conducted as planned, with sufficient quality, intensity, and fidelity to plan, the intended results will be forthcoming” (Weiss, 1998: 58).

In order to understand the theory of the programs /policies, the first step is to identify the objectives. However, the difficulties in identifying the objectives are considerable: “any emphasis on examining the extent to which policy objectives are accomplished by a program must contend with the reality that policies often do not state their objectives precisely enough to permit rigorous analyses of whether they are being achieved” (Howlett, Ramesh, 2003: 213).

Considering the widely acknowledged difficulties in extracting the program theory, various researchers have elaborated a series of guidance notes on how to conduct research. These guidelines are even more useful when implemented in order to understand the theory of policies, which are sometimes more elusive than the programs. In respect with the identification of goals, the researcher might:

- Draw up the statement of goals himself, after reading the program documentation, talking to practitioners and observing the program in action
- Set up a collaborative effort in formulating goals, sit down with practitioners and discuss and refine alternatives
- Conduct an exploratory open ended study instead of a formal evaluation with the question of goals left aside
- The researcher might ask members of the target group (Hogwood, Gunn, 1984: 223)

In order to understand the theory of the program beyond its alleged or real objectives, and grasp a meaning of the logic of intervention behind the actions, similar and other complementary strategies should be put to work (Leeuw, F. L., 1991: 22-23):

- Search in policy documents for statements that deal with the problem or the problems in review; apply methods of content analyses
- Specify stakeholders who can be defined as policy makers; describe their role
- Search for reasons why it is believed necessary to solve a certain problem and why it is believed to solve it by way of policy
- Make an overview of the statements of stakeholders concerning the goals of the policy; reformulate these statements in terms of “if-then propositions”
- Bring these propositions together in a system of propositions and search for missing links and inconsistencies
- Go into detail with respect to missing links, apply “argumentation analyses” and interview stakeholders again in respect with these missing links: argumentation analyses should focus on warrants; a warrant is the “because” part of an argument

- Reformulate these warrants in terms of “if then” and add them to the system, to be characterized as a policy theory
- Apply triple-theory assessment: the policy theory is evaluated from three perspectives: first, the epistemological one (one wants to find out to what extent the policy theory is in line with results from scientific research); second, the theory is assessed from the perspective of policy feasibility; and third, the theory is assessed from the perspective of the manipulability of the main variables included

Despite all these operations, it might prove difficult to pin down the theory behind certain policies, especially after their implementation and especially the one that Scriven called alleged theory. It is difficult enough to establish basic objectives for future strategies, without the haziness added by the passage of time. In order to be implemented, policies require the consent of several high-level officials (the decision-makers within the sector in question, the finance decision-makers and so on). They might be the result of a favorable convergence of efforts from various directions and with slightly different purposes and “theories”.

However, when the strategies /policies are not just an inventory of desirable actions and they are really conceived envisaging a different future for the societies, they resemble programs in respect with the fact that they propose a change of some “strategic variables” (Zamfir, 2007: 37) that would trigger social development. Although the mechanic of the hypothetic causality that they project on the foreseeable future is more complex to be described than in the case of programs, consistent policies and programs should be formulated on the basis of a theory of change. However, this theory of change is admittedly more fragmented than in the case of programs, as it might envision various types of new developments, not always closely interrelated with each other.

Another challenge might be the fact that the interested parties are rarely interested in inquiring about the value of large interventions during long periods of time: “the decision-makers are under the pressure of the budgetary cycles and they want fast answers to the questions which, most of the times, do not adress long periods of time” (Cace, 2002: 25)

### ***The problem of causality***

As already mentioned, the problem of causality is central in evaluation, and it determines the preference of many evaluation practitioners for random selection design programs. “The intervention is only one of many influences on the target problem, because unforeseen changes may arise, because the program may interact with a number of other programs, and because it may be difficult to separate out the effects of a “new” program from the long-term effects of programs which it replaces.” (Hogwood, Gunn, 1984: 20)

The highest technical standard in the evaluation field, which is to have randomized trials to test the impact of programs, becomes useless in the case of policy evaluation, since policies makers cannot afford to implement policies addressing only parts of the

eligible population. However, as already mentioned, causal relationships are envisioned in policies as well, although frequently in a looser and more difficult to assess manner.

***The roles of key stakeholder consultation and participation of the beneficiaries are critical***

The increasing sense of importance of the involvement of stakeholders and beneficiaries in the evaluation process has determined the design of approaches centered on this distinctive methodological feature, such as “inclusive evaluation” (Mertens, 1999) or “empowerment evaluation” (Fetterman, 2000). The premise of these perspectives is that knowledge itself is not neutral but reflects the existing social inequalities and power imbalances. The judgmental character of evaluation makes it prone to reinforce the existing establishment unless it is carefully designed to prevent this risk. These approaches use methods such as self-evaluation, self-reflection of the beneficiaries and encourage program participants to take ownership of the evaluation process and findings. They can employ a variety of methods and techniques although “they can be misinterpreted as being qualitative methods” (Bleahu, 2004: 17).

The supporters of these methods stress the importance of reflection on the values that are promoted: “evaluators must negotiate whose questions will be addressed and whose interests will be served by their work (Greene, 1994: 531).

At the level of policies, the range of stakeholders and types of beneficiaries is even higher than in the case of program evaluation, which makes the process difficult but not less needed.

***Policy evaluations are subject to contestation and the conflict of different views and perspectives is sharp***

Despite efforts to secure the participation of all stakeholders and participants to the process, policy evaluation is considered by some theorists to be a political process itself; hence, opposing views on such diverse issues as the nature of the social problem, the required intervention and the expectations towards the evaluation endeavor are foreseeable.

Another reason for debate is that evaluations ascertain cause-effect relations to policies, as already mentioned: they also discern intentionality behind policies and discuss and theories behind actions. However, for all the above reasons, they are more liable to be contested and they are contested on regular basis by other researchers.

***It is recommendable that some form of evaluation is performed before the policy design and implementation phases***

There are two potential uses of evaluation in the inception phase of policies and programs. First, a monitoring and evaluation system should be built in policies and programs in order to support tracking the progress and ensure accountability. This has become common practice across many governments and non-governmental organizations throughout the world. Generally, the standard to elaborate monitoring

systems goes undisputed at the program and at the policy level. However, pre-planned evaluations are controversial. At the level of programs, there are pros and cons regarding the establishment of pre-planned evaluation systems. For instance, they might influence the behavior of the participants and “the pre-planned method may frequently take on some of the characteristics of any longitudinal study and on balance would incur larger costs than a one shot post-planned evaluation” (Strasser, Deniston, 1978: 195). Second, a pre-evaluation of the expected effects should be attempted: “front-end analyses refer to evaluations undertaken before an intervention is introduced or a program adopted” (Greene, 1994: 13). The high level of resources involved in the implementation of a policy should determine the generalization of the practice of pre-evaluating what are the expected results. Usually, at the government level, some sort of pre-evaluation is carried on, at least a review of the exiting evidence on relevant programs and services or some sort of statistical modeling of the expected effects. When the monitoring systems are under-developed, an initial evaluability research can be conducted (Annex Table 1) to find if regular collection, reporting and analyses on performance-based management and evaluation (M&E) systems can be insured. Bochel and Duncan (Annex Table 1) propose a quite generous list of evaluation options available for future interventions: basic research, policy analyses, prototypes, micro-simulation, program evaluation (impact or summative evaluation), random assignment, matched designs, cohort designs, statistical controls, prospective evaluation, laboratory experimentation and gaming (depending on the timing of the future – close future, future or expansive future).

There is another way to consider the logical and chronological relation between interventions and evaluation. According to some theories, social problems are acknowledged and tackled only when the stakeholders or society have already identified available and feasible solutions. Up to that point, problems are “latent” (Cătălin Zamfir, 1977). This theory suggests that a rough pre-evaluation of efficiency based on loose concepts and arguments is performed from the very moment when a certain condition is defined as a social problem.

There is one final argument to be made about the necessity of an initial evaluation and it concerns the utility of research: “the failure of evaluation research to feed significantly and successfully into the policy process may be explained via a stunningly obvious point about the timing of research vis-à-vis policy – namely, that in order to inform policy, the research must come before the policy” (Pawson, 2009: 8).

### ***Policy learning***

The process of policy evaluations is a good illustration of an idea that has gained gradual acceptance in the area of program evaluation area as well, with the early rationalist models, oriented toward hard facts finding, leaving room for more recent models emphasizing that policy evaluation is continuous and less than perfect policy learning. Early approaches took an optimistic hue, and policy evaluation was believed to represent “the objective systematic, empirical examination of the effects ongoing policies and public programs have on their targets in terms of the goals they are ment to achieve” (Howlett, Ramesh, 2003: 219). However, with the maturation of the field, and with

growing numbers of evaluation finding nil or modest effects for the program analyzed, this initial ambition was questioned. Some theorists now claim that “perhaps the greatest benefit of policy evaluation is not the direct results it generates, but the educational process it can engender” (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1984).

The shift from the positivist scientific paradigm to more pragmatic evaluation postures is usually illustrated in the evaluation literature by the positions expressed by two major theorists, Donald Campbell and Lee J. Cronbach. Campbell (1969) was envisioning an experimental society, with policy decisions emerging from continual social experimentations that test solutions for improvement of the social conditions. This is a quite similar vision to that of scientific knowledge in general: in this case, the programs are hypothesis and the evaluations provide the test. In Cronbach’s vision (1982), evaluation is more art than science and every evaluation should be tailored to meet the needs of decision-makers and other stakeholders. Thus, where scientific studies strive to meet research standards, evaluations should be dedicated to providing maximally useful information for decision makers given the political circumstances, program constraints, and available resources.

However, the concept that programs and policies provide input for the adjustment of interventions has also been contested and considered a simplified model of the actual process. Rist suggests that evaluation findings serve more as conceptual inputs rather than instrumental ones. In the first place, it is rarely the case that an evaluation explicitly indicates what solutions should be adopted: “Evaluation rarely points in an unequivocal policy direction” (Bochel, Duncan, 2007: 177). In the second place, it is even less common that the decision-makers adopt the recommended solutions. Both arguments are stronger in the case of policies, since even when some options are found undesirable by a pre-evaluation, the remaining policy options are too numerous for the experts to point a single recommended course of action. “The instrumental use suggests direct linkage and application of the evaluation findings and recommendations to decision making. Conceptual use suggests an indirect application whereby the policy maker begins to think differently about the problem or condition, frames the possible policy approaches in a new manner, and perhaps anticipates a different set of outcomes.” (Rist, 1995: xiv). The findings of evaluation feed in the policy process as bits and pieces of knowledge, filtered by factors such as limited receptivity of the decision-makers, limited flexibility of the institutional set-up, the different nature of the interests of the research and decision-making side, and the limited usefulness of the evaluation findings for decision making processes. “Studies indicate that evaluation research is used conceptually much more often than it is instrumentally” (Albaek, 1990: 9) (...) in unsystematic and diffuse ways, social science findings, including data, concepts and theories, reach decision makers” (Albaek, 1990: 8).

Given this filtered relation between evaluation and research, the ambitions of the evaluators to influence the policy-making process should remain modest: “decision making in the policy arena can be broadly characterized as occurring at two levels. The first level involves the establishing of the broad parameter of governmental action, e. g. providing national health insurance, restructuring national immigration laws etc. At this level and in these instances, policy research input is likely to be quite small, if not nil (...) Once the issue is on the agenda of key actors or organizations within the policy

establishment, there are possibilities for the introduction and utilization of policy research and utilization” (Rist, 1995: xviii).

Nevertheless, instrumental criteria should be maintained as a standard for evaluations, although the actual use of evaluation is often merely conceptual: “the emphasis in assessing the strengths and weaknesses of policy evaluation is not and should not be on methods. Methodological techniques, regardless of how elegant or comprehensive, are not the yardstick by which the field is to be judged. Rather, the judgment should be made on the degree to which evaluation has demonstrated the consequences of present and past policy initiatives, clarified present policy choices, informed decision makers as to the costs and benefits of different options, and re-framed the debates on pressing national problems” (Rist, 1995: xiv)

There is also a considerable risk in placing too strong an emphasis on the inherent political character of evaluation, whether the acknowledgment of the strive of evaluations to serve as instruments for decision-making deters evaluators from seeking valid conclusions based on program performances. In such cases, oftentimes, “the policy-research relationship is financially circular, with one arm of government providing the funds for another to supply the evidence base” (Pawson, 2009: 3). These type of “politically oriented studies” are labeled as “pseudo-evaluations” by theorists (Stufflebeam, 2001: 91)

Forss, Rebien and Carlsson (2002) have identified five types of utility of the evaluations: as a learning process; as a means to develop professional networks; for strengthening mutual communication and understanding; as a means to consolidate the project; as a means for moral boosting (Forss, Rebien and Carlsson, apud Neguț, Nicolăescu, Preoteasa, Căce, 2011: 61)

### ***Policy evaluation is continuous: the culture of evaluation***

Using the classical distinction between formative and summative programs, policy evaluation is formative by its nature, aiming to inform the ongoing policy process. The multi-layered, continuous and changing nature of the policy implementation most of the times calls for process-oriented evaluations instead of results-based assessments. This is yet another methodological consequence of the non-experimental feature of the policy implementation process than the already noted difficulty in controlling the outcomes via randomly assigned control groups. Performing a process-oriented evaluation means assessing the policy “with the premise that it is important to learn how a program actually works, and what are its weak and strong points. This type of evaluation is useful especially in the case of the programs carried on for lengthy periods of time, which have changed during their implementation” (Preoteasa, 2004: 53).

The formative character of policy evaluation matches the ongoing nature of policy implementation and perpetual re-emergence in the society of most social problems. Another term used to describe this approach is “constructive evaluation” (e.g.: Palumbo, Hallet, 1993). “There are two very distinct approaches to thinking about policy practice. One is teleological, outcome-focused: the activity is about “making policy”, and the focus of attention is on the problem being addressed and how the

measures proposed would contribute to its solution. The alternative approach might be termed “relational” or process focused: policy activity is a continuing but variable flow of attention among a large and diverse ray of participants, who have overlapping agendas, different interpretations of the problem, and varying levels of concern about its resolution.” (Hoppe, Noordegraaf, 2010: 228)

A central role for evaluation is to create a culture of evaluation across policy fields: “while evaluation aims to establish whether a policy works, it has a broader, more sustained purpose that can be beneficial even if the results of the evaluation itself are inconclusive. It requires policy makers to be specific about the objectives of policy, to express them in ways amenable to measurement and, ideally, to assign objectives different priorities” (Walker, Duncan, 2007: 172).

## Specific tasks for the policy evaluation endeavor

Why should one be concerned with the larger picture, *i.e.* policies and their monitoring and evaluation? It may be useful to recall two fundamental arguments:

- The most important social problems are usually tackled by policies, such as strategies, with their corresponding implementation plans, social services, programs and all the encompassing legislative and institutional set-up; for instance, it is not evident that when assembling two programs with certified efficiency in a single policy action, their positive effects will be preserved. It is arguable that such concerns should become more prominent, as “the evaluation literature has become too obsessed with the finer details of methodological improvement at the expense of recalling the purposes of evaluation, and the political context of evaluation” (Hogwood, Gunn, 1984: 228).
- There is also a practical argument to be made, *i. e.* programs are tangled in such a complex way in the web of policies that evaluations can rarely isolate the activities that comprise a program, in order to see it as a black-box with inputs on one side and outputs at the other: “a particular program may be only one of the many tasks to be carried out within a department and may not be allocated a separate section within it. This may be true even at the level of the individual, say, social worker, who will typically be expected to implement a wide range of specific policies. It may be often be difficult to draw boundaries round a set of activities and outputs that constitute of problem”. In some cases, it might make more sense to evaluate a policy overall (Hogwood, Gunn, 1984: 221)

The view here is that “interventions are complex systems thrust amidst complex systems” (Pawson, 2009: 168).

### ***Build and capitalize on the cumulative character of evaluation***

In the area of program evaluation, there is an ongoing debate about the need to strengthen the cumulative character of findings of various evaluations. However, these discussions revolve around the methods to build through meta-analysis techniques some kind of generalizable learning from evaluations concluding on positive returns of

several similar programs in different settings. “Meta-analysis is the systematic summary of the results from a number of evaluations of the same kind of program.” (Weiss, 1998: 48)

A so-called protocol, consisting of a set of procedures, is applied to several evaluations, in order to ensure procedural uniformity. The procedures consist of formulating the review question, identifying and collecting the evidence, appraising the quality of the evidence, extracting and processing the data (presenting the raw evidence on a grid gathering the same points of information from all primary inquiries), synthesizing the data and disseminating the findings (Pawson, 2009: p. 41).

“Once a number of quantitative studies have been done, evaluating the same kind of program, it is possible to combine their results to get better and more generalizable estimate of program effects. The single program (and program evaluation) is the prisoner of its setting. Evaluation results hold for the special place, time, staff, participants, and external conditions that were on the scene when the study was done. Pooling results of many evaluations shows the nature of outcomes of many similar programs across a range of settings” (Weiss, 1998: 236).

However, some theorists consider that this kind of inductive approach does not work in fact: “The bad news is that the recipe does not really work (...) At every stage of the meta-analyses review simplifications are made. Hypotheses are abridged, studies are dropped, program details are filtered out, contextual information is eliminated, selected findings are utilized, averages are taken (Pawson, 2009: 43).

Even if the only legitimate conclusion reached by a meta-evaluation – less concerned with uniformity – is that certain programs work in certain settings, this is still valuable insight for policy makers. A similar cumulative knowledge might be built around various component themes of a larger evaluation issue, such as poverty and tackling programs, *i. e.* cash transfers, social services, labour market activation and so on. Some of the problems might be common across fields, as would be the case of stigma, for example, while others might be specific for the sector and type of program in question.

The evaluation process is not limited to drawing lessons to be learned but has to verify their utility in the given context. “The process of drawing a lesson involves four analytically distinct stages. The first is searching experience for programs that, in another place or time, appear to have brought satisfaction. Second, it is necessary to abstract a cause-and-effect model from what is observed. The third stage is to create a lesson, that is, a new program for action based on what has been learned elsewhere. Finally, a prospective evaluation is needed to estimate the consequences of adopting a lesson.” (Rose, 1993: 27)

### ***Evaluation as part of policy planning***

There are obvious links between the desire to ensure that policy is “evidence based” and the need to see what it has achieved, with a natural feedback cycle to subsequent policy improvement (Hill, 2009: 279)



The policy analyses and planning process involves several classic stages that are in their essence evaluative processes, comprising at least the following (they are not necessarily subsequent):

- A needs assessment as a result of the diagnosis of the social situation and social problems
- An evaluation of the intervention needs: some intervention needs can be directly derived from the situation analysis: if there are large numbers of homeless people, an outreach emergency system has to be put in place and some kind of development program has to be figured out, such as the Housing First programs; if there are large numbers of unemployed, activation services are needed; this is the phase when a meta-analysis of the existing evaluation of the existing services is most useful
- An analyses of the available response at the policy level
- The evaluation of the discrepancy between intervention needs – available response at the policy level
- An analyses of the available resources
- An initial mapping of the alternative solutions and the pre-evaluation of the effects

The difficulty of drafting solutions in the context of scarce resources available in the initial stages is visible in the fact that strategies almost invariably demand more resources than available at the moment. A possible solution for the scarcity of the resources and multitude of efforts required would be the use of “strategic variables”, *i.e.* components of the system with two characteristics: (a) a change in their level produces desirable changes within the overall system; (b) they can be changed through direct action (Zamfir, 2007: 37)

The line traditionally drawn between external and internal evaluations is limited from the perspective of the monitoring and evaluation process as a permanent component of the policy cycle. Rist (1995: xix) elaborates on questions that the evaluation has to answer in the stages of the policy formulation, policy implementation and policy accountability.

When the policy is drafted, the diagnosis is the first activity and the first set of information needs regards the understanding of the policy issue. The second set of information needs concerns the previous policies implemented and the knowledge on their effects. Rist emphasizes there is little systematic policy evaluation regarding the intended and unintended consequences of the various policy instruments, which “leaves the policy makers essentially to guess as to the trade-offs between the choice of one tool and another”.

At the level of policy implementation, the social problem needs re-examination due to its dynamism. There is a need to understand how the policy is internalized at the different layers of the government system (regional, local) and the institutional capacity

to undertake the required effort. A final cluster of information at this level refers to the expertise and qualification of those responsible, the interest of management in careful implementation, the controls in place regarding the allocation of resources, the organizational structure, decision paths to respond to competing demands, disambiguation strategies on the role of the institutions and interactive or feed-back loops.

The evaluator takes on the accountability issue only when the program has reached the maturity so that the effects might be visible (common understating of the evaluation is limited to the analyses undertaken in this stage); the issues of efficiency and impact become central. Accountability, according with the same author, also refers to the quality of the management supervision, leadership of the organization with a clearly articulated vision and goals understood by staff, the attention to processes and procedures that would strengthen the capacity of the organization to implement effectively the policy objective, the use of data-based decision making and the alignment between the leadership and the staff.

### ***Comparing similar contexts /societies***

While comparison between a treatment and a control group are almost invariably impossible at the level of policies, this does not mean that the comparative approach is left outside the scope of policy evaluation.

Comparison is implicit in the process of findings lessons for the learning, for instance. Although the comparison cannot benefit from a counterfactual analysis, sometimes the similarities among communities or societies entail analytic endeavors, which are relevant up to a point. For instance, one might compare the profile of social policies within a group of countries belonging to a common geo-political area, such as the former communist central-eastern countries. Another example: we see frequent comparative analyses of the level of public funding of public services in different countries. While the differences among the compared entities are in general too large to account for (and they cannot be usually controlled with statistical procedures, unless an international survey is used), it is nonetheless fruitful to make such analyses.

As far as the outcomes of the policy are concerned, there are three types of evaluations typically carried on in order to assess effectiveness, efficiency and impact. In addition, an evaluation may also analyze the relevance of the policy. “A policy is described as relevant if the objectives are adapted to the nature and temporal and socio-spatial distribution of the problem that the policy is intended to resolve” (Knoepfel, Larrue, Varone, Hill, 2007: 234).

### ***Before and after studies and reflexive controls***

In program evaluation, the analyses that use the same group of beneficiaries as a pre-treatment control group and post-treatment experimental group are called reflexive controls. “Reflexive controls is the evaluation strategy assessing changes on outcome measures that occur between the time before targets participate in a program and some point afterward” (Rossi, Freeman, Lipsey, 1999: 343).

By their nature, policies cover the whole target population of a certain geographical area, at least with some of the services and programs that they deliver. The surveys carried on regularly (usually the surveys of the national statistical institutes) might entail reflexive controls analyses of the new policies, usually with some add-ons such as supplementary questions and adjustments of the sample in order to include a representative number of individuals from the target group.

The main methodological limitation is that changes in the outcome variables might have been provoked by other external factors. The eventuality that other variables affected the target group is called the history threat.

### ***Building M&E systems***

Establishing M&E systems is the practical way to ensure that some kind of cumulative knowledge is built at the level of sector policies. The development literature is less concerned with the conceptual difficulties of measuring the progress and assessing the results of policies and more inclined to offer practical advices and tools in order to establish such M&E systems. Ideally, policies should have a permanent M&E system set up to measure their performances, with evaluation being a distinctive component.

“A system is defined as a group of interacting, interrelated, or interdependent elements forming a complex whole and “systems thinking” is about gaining insight into the whole by understanding the linkages and interactions between the elements that comprise the whole system. Applying such a systems approach to M&E systems building, it requires: (i) Identifying the components of the system (understanding that they are interrelated) as a means to describe the system; and (ii) Ensuring that each component is functional to ensure that the system is functional.” (Görgens, Kusek, 2009: 7)

Several authors emphasize the strategic and instrumental role of the monitoring systems for policy planning, beyond their function as outcome measurement instruments:

- Monitoring has the important role of validating (confirming, recognizing outcomes) objectives and resolving differences and ambiguities, especially in face of opposition to change and reform” (Mosse, 2002: 43)
- The monitoring system may be less a means manage the ultimate end of impacts or transactions— either “quantitative” or “qualitative”. Rather, the monitoring system must play a major part in establishing the framework of discussions and negotiate the common meanings and resolutions which in turn allow the reinterpretation of positions and the derivation of reassurances about the negotiation and processing of benefit and loss (Rew and Brustinow, 2002: 187).

## **The evaluation of strategies**

Anyone who has ever participated in elaborating strategies, as the author of this paper has had the privilege to do on several occasions, might have remarked that it is not a habit among policy-makers to examine the results of the strategies. Strategies are usually

equipped with monitoring systems comprising indicators of progress and, in the fortunate cases, monitoring reports are issued on a regular basis. At the end of a cycle, a strategy is dropped and another one is formulated.

Another widespread strategy is to choose a set of outcome indicators, such as “the poverty rate” or the “employment rate” as the main monitoring tool. However, as acknowledged here, usually there can be no compelling evidence that the implementation of the strategy contributed to attainment of the goal

The strategies are regarded often times as an instrument for the betterment of inter-institutional collaboration, and less as an accurate expression of a projected policy. This view has some rationales: (i) the strategy is formulated in the continuous flux of policy process and as such it is a collection of ongoing programs and activities and new directions of action; (ii) the centers of decision are located in several areas of the policy arena and the views of the initiators of the strategy might not converge with the perspectives of the decision-makers from these alternative decision-making centers.

However, it may be beneficial that they are assessed both in respect of the implementation and also the attained results.

## Discussion

The paper argues that policy evaluation should be regarded as a distinctive area of the evaluation field. It looks into some of the most respected recent literature on evaluation and social policy and invites reflection regarding the concepts from the theory of program evaluation that could be useful in policy evaluation and what would be the limits and opportunities for the use of such concept. Concepts such as the theory of intervention, pre-evaluation, policy learning, meta-analyses or reflexive controls show a good promise of becoming applicable in the area of policy evaluation as well.

Some potentially useful approaches for the evaluation of policies are proposed: capitalizing on cumulative knowledge, the comparative analyses and reflexive controls. An alternative strategy would be to identify the “strategic variables” of a policy and assess the changes in its dynamic and the correlated variables that were foreseen to change as an effect of the variation of the former.

Although policy evaluation is a complex enterprise and the level of certainty of its findings is considerably lower than in program evaluation, it is a fertile ground for further inquiry. There are many directions of research where the existing knowledge is insufficient. For instance, what should the rules be for meta-analyses of evaluations of *different programs* addressing interrelated problems, which are implemented jointly in a wider frame of a policy? What are the limits and opportunities for prospective evaluations of policies with no real ownership?

Further analyses of the author will be dedicated to the integration of the concepts discussed here into an integrative model and to testing the usefulness of this model for the assessment of policies, such as those planned through strategy formulation.

## Bibliography

- Albaek, E. (1990). Policy Evaluation: Design and Utilization. *Knowledge in Society*, 2 (4), Winter: 6-19
- Bickman, L. (1987). The Functions of Program Theory, in L. Bickman (ed.), *Using Program Theory in Evaluation*, New Directions for Program Evaluation, no. 33. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass
- Bleahu, A. (2004). Oamenii vorbind despre ei. Participare și evaluare socială - studiu de caz. *Jurnalul Practicilor Pozitive Comunitare*, V(3-4), 17-28
- Bochel, H., Duncan, S. (2007). *Making Policy in Theory and Practice*. University of Bristol: The Policy Press
- Cace, C. (2002). Evaluarea programelor sociale. *Jurnalul Practicilor Pozitive Comunitare*, III(3-4), 14-32
- Palumbo, D.J., Hallet, M. A. (1993). Conflict Versus Consensus Models in Policy Evaluation and Implementation. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 16 (1), January-March, 38-52
- Campbell, D. (1969). Reforms as experiments. *American Psychologist* 24 (April), 409-429
- Clarke, A., Dawson, R. (1999). *Evaluation research. An introduction to Principles, Methods and Practice*. Sage Publications
- Colebatch, H., Hoppe, R., Noordegraaf, M. (2010). *Working for Policy*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press
- Cronbach, L.J. and Associates (1982). *Designing Evaluations of Educational and Social Programs*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass
- Donaldson, S.I, Scriven, M.,(Eds.) (2009). *Evaluating Social Programs and Problems. Visions for the New Millenium*. New York, London: Psychology Press
- Fetterman, D.M. (2000). *Foundations of empowerment evaluation*. Thousand Oakes, CA: Sage
- Gerston, L.N. (1997). *Public Policy Making: Process and Principles*. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe
- Greene J.G. (1994). Qualitative program evaluation: practice and promise, in N. K Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (eds.). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 530-534
- Hill, M. (2009). *The Public Policy Process*, Fifth Edition. Person Education Limited
- Howlett, M., Ramesh, M. (2003) *Studying public policy. Policy cycles and Policy Subsystems*, 2<sup>nd</sup>ed. Oxford University Press
- Hogwood, B. W., Gunn, L. A. (1984). *Policy Analyses for the Real World*. Oxford University Press
- Jenkins, W.I. (1978). *Policy Analysis: A Political and Organizational Perspective*. New York: St. Martin's Press
- Knoepfel, P., Larrue, C., Varone, F., Hill, M. (2007) *Public Policy Analyses*, University of Bristol: The Policy Press,
- Leeuw, F. L. (1991). Policy Theories. Knowledge Utilization and Evaluation, *Knowledge and Policy*, 4 (3), Fall:19-37, 73-91
- Mățăuan, G. (1999). *Evaluarea programelor sociale*. București: FIMAN.
- Mertens, D.M. (1999) Inclusive Evaluation: Implications of transformative theory for evaluation. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 20 (1): 1-14
- Mosse, D., Farrington, J., Rew, A. (2002). *Development as Process. Concepts and methods for working with complexity*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., Routledge, London and New York: Taylor & Francis Group,
- Neguț, A., Nicolăescu, V., Preoteasa A. M., Cace, C. (2011). *Monitorizare și evaluare în economia socială*. București: Editura Expert
- Parsons, W. (1995). *Public Policy. An introduction to the Theory and Practice of Policy Analyses*. Edward Elgar Publishing Limited
- Preoteasa, A. M. (2004). *Evaluarea programelor de dezvoltare comunitară*, Jurnalul Practicilor Pozitive Comunitare, III(3-4), 52-57
- Pressman, J.L., Wildavsky, A.B. (1984). *Implementation: How Great Expectations in Washington are Dashed in Oakland*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Berkeley: University of California Press
- Patton M.Q. (1986). *Utilization-Focused Evaluation*, 2nd ed., Newbury Park, CA: Sage
- Palumbo, D.J., Hallet, M.A. (1993). Conflict Versus Consensus Models in Policy Evaluation and Implementation. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 16 (1), January-March:38-52
- Rew, A., Brustinow, A. (2002). The resolution and validation of policy reform: illustrations from Indian forestry and Russian land privatization, in Mosse, D., Farrington, J., Rew, A. (ed.), *Development as*

- Process. Concepts and methods for working with complexity*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. . London and New York:Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group
- Rist, R.C. (1995). *Policy evaluation*, The International Library of Comparative Public Policy. England:Edward Elgar Publishing Limited
- Rose, R. (1993). *Lesson-drawing in Public Policy. A guide to learning across time and space*. New Jersey:Clatham House Publishers, Inc. Clatham,
- Rossi, P.H., Freeman, H. E. (1993). *Evaluation: A Systematic Approach*, 6th ed, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage
- Shadish, W.R, Cook, T. D. and Leviton, L. C. (1991). *Foundations of Program Evaluation: Theories of Practice*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage
- Strasser, S., Deniston, O. L. (1978). *Pre-And Post-Planned Evaluation: Which Is Preferable?*. Pergamon Press
- Stufflebeam, D. L. (2001). *Evaluation Models*, New Directions for Evaluation, no. 89. San Francisco:Jossey-Bass
- Weiss, C.H. (1986). The Many Meanings of Research Utilization, M. Bulner et al (eds), *Social Science and Social Policy*. London: Allen and Unwin, 31-40
- Weiss, C.H. (1998). *Evaluation*. Prentice-Hall, UK
- Walker, R., Duncan, S. (2007). Policy Evaluation in *Making Policy in Theory and Practice*. University of Bristol: The Policy Press, 169-190
- Wollmann, H. (2007). Policy Evaluation and Evaluation Research, in Fischer, F., Miller, G. J., Sidney, M. S., *Handbook of Public Policy Analyses. Theory, Politics and Methods*. CRC Press, Taylor & Francis Group, 393-402
- Zamfir, C. (1977). *Strategii ale dezvoltării sociale*, București: EdituraPolitică
- Görgens, M., Kusek, J. Z. (2009). *Making Monitoring and Evaluation System Work. A Capacity Development Kit*, The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development /The World Bank, available at <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/2702>
- Zamfir, C., Stoica, L., Stănculescu, M. S. (2007). *Dezvoltare socială. Capacitatea instituțiilor. Ghid de evaluare*. Bucuresti:Institutul de Cercetare a Calității Vieții, Academia Română, Seria Dezvoltare Socială

## Annexes

**Table 1.** Types of evaluation

Type of evaluations	When to use	What is shows	Why it is useful
A: Formative Evaluation “Evaluability” Assessment Needs Assessment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. During the development of a new program</li> <li>2. When an existing program is being modified or is being used in a new setting or with a new population</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Whether the proposed program elements are likely to be needed, understood, and accepted by the target population</li> <li>4. The extent to which an evaluation is possible, given the goals and objectives of the evaluation and the program</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. It allows modifications to be made to the plan before full implementation begins</li> <li>6. Increases the likelihood that the program will succeed</li> </ol>
B: Process Evaluation Routine Monitoring	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. As soon as program implementation begins</li> <li>8. During operation of an existing program</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. How well the program is working</li> <li>10. The extent to which the program is being implemented as designed</li> <li>11. Whether the program is accessible and acceptable to its target population</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. Provides early warning of any problems that may occur</li> <li>13. Allows programs to monitor how well their program plans and activities are working</li> </ol>
C: Outcome Evaluation Objectives-Based Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After the program has made contact with at least one person or group in the target population</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The degree to which the program is having an effect on the target population’s behavior</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tells whether the program is being effective in meeting its objectives</li> </ul>
D: Economic Evaluation Cost Analysis, Cost-Benefit Analysis, Cost-Effectiveness Evaluation, Cost-Utility Analysis	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14. At the planning stage, using cost estimates/projections</li> <li>15. During operation of a program, using actual costs</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The resources that are being used in a program and their costs (direct and indirect) compared to outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides program managers and funders with a way to assess effects relative to costs</li> </ul>
E: Impact Evaluation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>16. During the operation of an existing program at appropriate intervals</li> <li>17. At the end of a program</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The degree to which the program meets its ultimate goal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides evidence for use in policy, funding, and future programming decisions</li> </ul>

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2006, apud Görgens, Kusek, 2009

**Table 2.** Evaluation types and the time perspective

<b>Time perspective</b>	<b>Evaluation question</b>	<b>Illustrative evaluation method</b>	<b>Counterpart formative evaluation question</b>	<b>Illustrative evaluation approaches</b>
Extensive past	What worked?	Meta-analyses Systematic review	How did it work?	Systematic review
Past	Did the policy work?	Retrospective evaluation	How did it work? /not work?	Retrospective interviews Participative judgment (connoisseurship studies) Retrospective case study
Present	Is the policy working?	Monitoring Interrupted time series Natural experiments	How is it working? /not working?	Process studies Implementation evaluation Ethnography
Present to future	Is there a problem?	Basic research Policy analyses	What is the problem?	Basic research Rapid reconnaissance
Close future	Can we make this policy work?	Prototypes Micro-simulation	How can we make this policy work?	Theory of change Participative research Action research
Future	Will this policy work?	Program evaluation (impact or summative evaluation) Random assignment Matched designs Cohort designs Statistical controls	How will it work? /not work?	Retrospective Laboratory evaluation
Expansive future	What policy would work?	Prospective evaluation Micro-simulation Laboratory experimentation Gaming	How would it work?	Laboratory evaluation Delphi consultation Gaming

Source: Bochel and Sue Duncan, 2001: 175





---

# HEALTH AND AUTONOMY: A REVIEW FOR STUDYING PATIENT DECISIONS

---

Alexandra GHEONDEA-ELADI<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** *The purpose of this paper is to synthesize the meaning of two important concepts in the literature on sociology of health: health and autonomy. The review presented here has been performed as part of a research on patient's decision-making and it is meant to reveal differences in definitions which are likely to change the underpinning perspectives of patient decisions.*

**Keywords:** *sociology of health, decision-making, patient decisions, autonomy, health diagnosis*

---

In researching various topics in the sociology of health, there are several important terms which require thorough differentiation and analysis before the commencement of any study. For example what makes something a treatment cannot be answered without first looking at what *health, disease* and *illness* are. On the other hand, *autonomy* does not have a clear-cut definition in various philosophical perspectives. Each different conception of autonomy is likely to bring new insights and explanatory power to research which takes it into consideration, as opposed to the institutional definition of autonomy as the capacity to give consent in an informed manner. Therefore, this part will first present and critically analyse various definitions of health, disease and illness. The concept of diagnosis will then be presented. The third part will describe several perspectives on autonomy. The concluding part of this paper synthesizes the theories presented above with respect to patient decisions.

## What is health?

The notion of health is rarely defined in health research, especially when it comes to subjective health (Stefanescu & Stefanescu 2012), public health policy (Stanciu & Jawad

---

<sup>1</sup> Ph. D. Scientific Researcher III, Institute for Research on Quality of Life, Romanian Academy, Bucharest. ROMANIA. E-mail: alexandra@iccv. ro

This paper is made and published under the aegis of the Research Institute for Quality of Life, Romanian Academy co-funded by the European Union within the Operational Sectorial Programme for Human Resources Development through the "Pluri and interdisciplinary in doctoral and post-doctoral programmes" Project , POSDRU/159/1.5/S/141086. Parts of this paper have been presented at the Research Institute for Quality of Life (RIQL) Anniversary Conference 2015, *Quality of Life: A Challenge for Social Policy*, Bucharest, April 25 2015 and at the RIQL Seminar, Bucharest, March 27, 2015

2013) or the standard of social justice and equity (Eliassen 2013). Still, the term has evolved throughout time together with the scientific evolution of thought and humanity's perception of the good life (Turner 2000). Its definition is intertwined heavily with notions of illness and disease. Between the times of the "doctrine of specific aetiology as disease" (Dubos [1959]1961: 90, cited by Sills, 1968: 331), to the conception of disease with multiple causes, from illness as "imbalance between the person and his external environment", to illness caused by sins in Christianity (p. 322) many patients have suffered of have been cured as a consequence of these philosophical perspectives. In another perspective, health is a standard to which a person can aspire and more importantly, one that is rarely met. Sills (1968) uses the term "asymptotic concept" of health to denote the tendency to express health as an endeavour and journey upon which individuals need to embark on throughout their life. This belief is based on the belief that the individual should preserve an equilibrium between his physiological, mental and metaphysical components and the environment. Modern environmental conceptions of health empirically establish connections between the health of societies and the state of their environment (Mete & Liu 2008), but not in the sense of asymptotic health. On the other hand, there is another conception of health that Sills (1968) points out to, called the "elastic concept" of health. It is based on the assumption that disruptions in the ideal healthy state that individuals are born into are a natural evolution of the body. As a consequence, preventive and preparatory measures should be taken from the very beginning of ones life, such as "restricting the water intake of children" (Sills, 1968: 333) in order to prepare and allow them to be adapted for the worst. The third conception of health proposed by Sills (1968) is called the "open-ended concept" of health and it is based on "positive mental health" (p. 333). Open-ended health touches areas thought to be out of the medical domain, such as nonconformity and moral norms (Freidson, [1961]1962, cited by Sills, 1968) and weakened religious values entering the area of mental health (Brewster Smith, 1961, cited by Sills, 1968).

In modern medicine, however, the multiple causes of disease are acknowledged. However, some causes remain to be disputed in light of scientific evidence, such as mental or psychological patterns that may favour the development of physical dis-ease. At the same time, cures are directed towards symptoms, rather than "the person" (Pott 1992). This critique of modern medicine bares with it the dichotomy between the cure of separate parts of the body, as performed in each specializations of modern medicine and the holistic perspective over the body and illness. However, there is another possible interpretation of this critique, which opposes treating the cause of illness as opposed to treating only the symptoms which are effects of illness.

In 1984, the World Health Organization adopted a new policy on health which introduced the notion of *healthy life* as opposed to prolonged, but unhealthy life. The slogan of the proposed policy was "Adding life to years" (Asvall 1992: ix). The goal of this policy was that "[b]y the year 2000, people should have the basic opportunity to develop and use their health potential to live, socially and economically fulfilling lives" (Asvall 1992). Health at this point is no longer an un-attainable goal, but a "resource for everyday life -- not the objective of living" (p. xii). In this context, individuals should change their perspectives over their health and maximize their health potential,

however great or small it may be. Pott (1992) criticizes the view that chronically ill people should first of all accept their illness, as a concept based on increasing productivity of the least productive group in a society: the chronically ill. She reminds about the fact that people with chronic illnesses first of all need to be recognized as such, as "suffering human beings" (p. xiv). The utilitarian perspective of illness tries to see the "full part of the glass" and to neglect the essence of chronic illness which is premature death. Accepting that chronic illness implies a premature death would also mean accepting that a person's life potential has not been fulfilled. But, by accepting illness and aiming to produce as much as possible during the period of life affected by illness, it will be possible to fulfil the goal of utilitarian maximization.

Unlike the individualistic notions of health, the institutional definitions provide a different set of problems. The World Federation for Mental Health describes health of groups, communities, societies (nations), species and of ecological systems (Sills 1968). They are usually criticized for disregarding individual survival and health to the benefit of the group, society or of "life in general" (Sills 1968; Kukla 2015). However, there is a difference between the definitions of health derived from social justice studies and the institutional ones. Kukla (2015) divides definitions of health into three categories: scientific, social-justice and institutional. The scientific definitions regard health as a physical deviation from the "normal" functioning of the body, while social-justice ones are normative in essence and regard the way in which healthy life should be conducted (Kukla 2015). On the other hand, the institutional definition that Kukla provides herself is very similar to the laws that have led to the death of Socrates: "A condition or state counts as a *health condition* if and only if, given our resources and situation, it *would be best for our collective wellbeing* if it were medicalized - that is, if health professionals and institutions played a substantial role in understanding, identifying, managing and /or mitigating it. In turn, *health is* a relative absence of health conditions (and concomitantly a relative lack of dependence upon the institutions of medicine)" (p. 524) Has Socrates condition been medicalized by having him drink the hemlock?

## The diagnosis

The decision of medicalizing or not a certain health condition, to use Kukla's terms requires naming the set of symptoms that require a doctor's attention or finding a cure. In 1964 and in 1971, the psychologist Schachter (1964; 1971, cited by Mumford, 1983b) wrote: "Given a new, strange or ambiguous bodily state, pressure will act on the individual to decide exactly what it is that he feels and to decide how he will label these feelings". It is the spectrum of personal beliefs about health, illness and disease, as well as the beliefs about what is considered as acceptable symptoms in a certain situation that help the person decide upon a label for the feelings of unease (Gillespie, 1999; Mumford, 1983a). Kleinman (1980, cited by Gillespie, 1999) proposed the notion of 'explanatory model' to refer to "a cognitive framework, drawing on a person's belief system, in which an individual makes sense of their illness experience, or health problem. An [explanatory model] may relate to cause, onset, patho-physiology, course and treatment, and it constitutes the subjective interpretation of an illness episode" (Gillespie, 1999: 107). Lay person's ability to decide upon a label for the feelings of unease has been compared with that of health professionals and doctors. The

traditional view is that doctors are much more proficient in finding the appropriate label for a series of symptoms (Mumford, 1983d). Other researchers have argued that doctor's ability to do so is not necessarily different than that of lay people (Gillespie, 1999).

Provided that the bodily feelings described by Schachter are not recognized or considered as something to be expected, the pressure to decide and label them may lead a person to search for possible answers, either from family, peers or from a recognized professional, such as doctor, therapist, shaman or healer, (Mumford, 1983c). Lay-referral systems, as defined by Friedman cited by Gillespie (1999:109) are social networks consulted by a person prior to seeking medical help. Lay referral systems have been shown to influence the decision to seek professional care (Gillespie, 1999; Mumford, 1983b). Clearly, many other factors influence the decision to seek medical help, such as education, income, social class, physical proximity to a clinic, costs of treatment, in terms of money, time and even effort (Mumford, 1983:52), the social acceptance of the symptoms, their persistence in time and their interference with daily activities and many others (Mechanic, 1968, cited by Gillespie, 1999).

The main point of this discussion is that the pressure to label feelings of unease or even different types of pain is part of the doctors' tasks, called *diagnosis*. In ancient and current medicine, naming the problem and its cause made reference to a system of beliefs, each one specific to places and times (Mumford, 1983c). For example, in Chinese medicine, disease is explained as an imbalance between the two energies of Yin and Yang which is determined by the untroubled flow of energy within the main energetic points of the body (Mumford, 1983c). But in medical dictionaries a diagnostic is “the determination of the nature of a disease” (Mumford, 1983d). However, as Stedman (1976, cited by Mumford, 1983d: 64) shows, there are many types of diagnoses:

1. “clinical diagnosis is a determination based on a combination of physical signs, such as heart rate, temperature, respiration, and symptoms the patient describes or demonstrates, such as pain, swelling or nausea. In diagnosis by exclusion, the doctor goes over the array of diseases to which the symptoms could point and then rules out all but the one that seems consistent with all symptoms.
2. differential diagnosis is the weighing of alternatives to decide which one of two or more diseases best fits the similar signs and symptoms that the patient seems to suffer.
3. laboratory diagnosis is based on chemical, microscopic, bacteriological, or other instrumented study of secretions, discharges, blood or tissue
4. physical diagnosis is a diagnosis made by means of physical sounds, sights, and smells. The doctor feels for an enlarged liver or gland, listens to the heartbeat, takes a pulse, or taps a knee to see whether there is normal knee-jerk reflex.
5. pathological diagnosis is the examination of tissue obtained through biopsy or at a post-mortem examination”

Still, Mumford (1983d:64) points out that a diagnostic “may only be a medical label for an as yet little-understood cluster of symptoms that have been described as occurring together”. Such a label is likely to disperse anxiety both for the doctor as well as for the patient. The responses that patients give to the receipt of a diagnosis may be very different from one person to another. They have been categorized as: denial, mastery and dependency (Mumford, 1983). These reactions are described with respect to acute as well as chronic diseases. Some diseases have acute and chronic phases, which purport different handling by both the doctor as well as the patient.

## What is autonomy?

According to Dworkin (1988) *autonomy* is different from liberty in two ways: autonomy requires information or knowledge in order to be different from liberty, while freedom needs a “preference about desires, values and wishes” to be different from autonomy, as well as a preference for the way in which the desires, values, wishes have been acquired. Dworkin (1988:105) defines liberty as: “the ability of a person to do what he wishes and to have significant options that are not closed or made less eligible by the actions of other agents or the workings of social institutions”, in line with both the view of Thomas Hobbes and John Stuart Mill and that of Jean Jacques Rousseau and T.H. Green about freedom. To emphasize the two differences between autonomy and liberty he describes two cases, the first from John Locke and the second, from the story of Odysseus. The first case is that of a prisoner who is locked into a cell which has multiple doors. The guards go through the drill of locking all doors, but one of the doors is damaged and cannot be locked. Not knowing about this, the prisoner remains confined and does not try to escape. In this case, Dworkin (1988) suggests, the freedom of the prisoner is not affected, but his autonomy is. The second case presented is that of Odysseus, when he orders his men to chain him and ignore all his further orders in order to prevent him from steering his ship towards the sirens and into the rocks, at the sound of their enchanted song. In this case, Odysseus decides to limit his freedom in order to preserve his autonomy, given that the song of the sirens is likely to create a false or externally driven preference in his mind. In this case, Odysseus has a preference about his preferences, as Dworkin (1988) suggests and he also has a preference about the cause of his preferences.

In light of these arguments, Dworkin (1988b) suggests that autonomy encompasses both a reflexive behaviour about ones own beliefs, as well as the ability to change these should they not reflect what he calls a second-order preference: “Autonomy is a second-order capacity to reflect critically upon one's first-order preferences and desires, and the ability either to identify with these or to change them in light of higher-order preferences and values”. He goes on to argue that “[b]y exercising such a capacity we define our nature, give meaning and coherence to our lives, and take responsibility for the kind of person we are” (p. 108). In light of this perspective, Dworkin (1988) points out that the content of the choice for autonomy is not given: “Someone who wishes to be the kind of person who does whatever the doctor orders is as autonomous as the person who wants to evaluate those orders for himself” (p. 108-109). He acknowledges himself that this view is not shared by most authors, such as R. P. Wolff. While I agree with his definition of autonomy and the differentiation that he makes between this

concept and that of liberty, I find it difficult to see how responsibility for one's actions is directly implied from the concept of autonomy. I would argue that responsibility for one's actions is a distinct concept which is not at all trivially connected to either autonomy or freedom, in a world in which knowledge is imperfect. The consequences of an action come may be based on the laws of nature, from the psychological costs of an action and from the sanctions of others who are affected by the individual's actions in a negative way. When laws of nature give the consequences of one's actions, responsibility is clearly implied by autonomous action. When psychological costs of one's actions appear, the individual cannot be accounted for any impact upon the others. Hence responsibility is shared. If direct reactions of others constitute costs of one's actions, then responsibility is shared, since it depends upon the ability of others to know about the autonomous actions, to identify the actor responsible for this action and for coordinating their effort regarding the sanction, etc. However, if responsibility means accepting the causal relation between one's actions and any consequence, however small, unlikely or new, and irrespective of the other's implication then, autonomy indeed, always implies responsibility.

In the bioethics literature, autonomy is defined as self-determination, which basically means “the interest of ordinary persons in making significant decisions about their lives for themselves, according to their own values or conception of a good life, and in being left free by other persons, at least within limits, to act on those decisions.” (Broke 2001: 232). In Broke's vision, choosing to follow no treatment at all is part of the alternatives of an autonomous person: “It is important to recognize that sometimes patients may make treatment choices in the exercise of their self-determination that are bad, foolish or irrational and do not best serve their well-being even as determined by their own values. The importance of self-determination implies that even bad choices of competent patients must be respected” (p. 232). Young (2001) points out that in medicine autonomy and self-determination is put into practice through *informed consent*. Still, this implies that the patient is *competent* and is able to *understand* the information that is relevant for her decision.

Not all health-care professionals agree with self-determination in the form discussed until now. The main argument behind this idea is that the experience of a health-care worker should add more value to the medical decision, but this simply disregards the fact that for the patient more life is not always better than less life and on the other hand, that decisions differ upon their framing, in terms of the probability for “extending life” or for “resulting death”. Young (2001) emphasizes the fact that “the practitioner must alert the patient to the values underlying the framing of the information provided” (p. 444), however impractical this may be.

Nevertheless, the lack of influence or coercion is almost impossible to measure sociologically. As long as autonomy has no predetermined content, as Dworkin (1988) suggests, it may be impossible to measure. In other words, if an autonomous action cannot be identified with a certain choice (for example, not to listen to the doctor in treatment choices), then what would make an indication of an autonomous action? There are however, two general ways to measure autonomy: directly and indirectly. The direct measurement would require the use of a measurable definition of autonomy. Faden, Beauchamp and King (1986) suggest that autonomy should be a characteristic

of an action, not of a person. In this way, Faden et al. (1986: 235) defines “autonomous actions” by three aspects:

- “intentionality
- understanding
- non-control from influences” (p. 238)

Intentionality and understanding can be evaluated empirically, but the absence of exterior influences is hardly a concept that can be evaluated. Influences can generally be categorised based on several criteria:

- from the point of view of the sources of the influence: doctors, family, friends, internet, social norms, religious beliefs, etc.
- from the point of view of the awareness / lack of awareness of the influence
- from the point of view of the way in which the sources exercises their influence: by coercion, by manipulating information, by rewarding certain behaviours, etc.
- from the locus of the influence: internal (chemical for example) or external to the decision-maker.

On the other hand, a person may clearly accept a well documented opinion issued by a different person, in a logical manner. Is any change of opinion resulting from a logical inference presented to the decision-maker by a different person, an influence? I think that in a strict sense, this is an influence, indeed, but by the manner in which it has been exercised, it does not endanger the autonomy of the decision-maker. Should an opinion formed based on a logical inference presented to the decision-maker be an influence, does this mean that the decision-maker should not learn a way to solve his/her health problem? At this point Faden et al. (1986) point out that a certain source of influence should not exercise control over the individual. In other words, the source of an influence should not condition the action of the decision-maker by other means than those of logical action. And more importantly, the source of influence may be either external or internal (like mental illness or some form of addiction as Mackenzie (2015) points out). In order for logical action to take place, understanding of all logical connections resulting from the relevant information should take place. This is why Faden et al. (1986) propose that while intentionality is a dichotomous variable, understanding and controlling influences are continuous variables. Thus, the degree of understanding and the degree of control of a decision-maker's actions lead to the degree of autonomy of the action, conditional upon it being intentional.

To use Faden et al.'s (1986) framework, the main question is not what are the main characteristics of a patient that lead to an autonomous action, but *under which conditions are patient's actions autonomous?* Ensuring that the conditions of autonomy are met (i. e. that actions are intentional and that the decision-maker possesses the capacity to understand relevant information and that no individual or source of influence controls the decision-maker's choices), does not automatically lead to an autonomous choice. In my opinion, if autonomy is not valued by the decision-maker, creating the conditions

for autonomy will not lead to an autonomous decision. A person that has been under the influence of others for a long time and values such influence will not know how to behave and what to do under conditions in which autonomy is encouraged. It is the case of slaves that have been suddenly released and do not know what to do with their newly acquired freedom and autonomy, or of former totalitarian regimes who require accommodation and learning in order to become autonomous. In a similar line of thought, Mackenzie (2015) argues that when some health-behaviour needs to be changed and some aid is required (support, additional motivation, etc.), such aid can be viewed as influence from other people, and autonomy would thus be endangered. But, in light of Dworkin's (1988) excerpt from *Odysseus*, it is only the freedom of an addicted person that is limited, in order to preserve autonomy, provided that the restriction of freedom has been a previous choice of the decision-maker.

## Implications for decision-making

This paper has departed from various definitions of health, diagnosis and autonomy in order to understand how different conceptions of these terms could shift decision-making perspectives in the area of patient decisions. Health evolved from single to multiple-cause perspective, as well as from an unattainable goal to an aspect of life that will decrease in time, with certainty and to a resource for increasing productivity. It also oscillates between an individualistic utilitarian perspectives, to a socially and institutionally defined concept. On the other hand, ensuring health requires naming the problem in a process of diagnosis, itself a socially defined process. Diagnosis and finding a cure are based on an explanatory model of the disease or illness which differ with each culture and in time. However, patients' choice of a treatment assumes that she is autonomous and free to do so. As it has been shown in the third part of this paper, autonomy can be empirically measured with difficulty. Still, the framework proposed by Faden, Beauchamp and King show great potential for application in patient decision-studies, as opposed to considering only the institutionally defined informed consent.

In Rational Choice Theory (for a review, see Gheondea-Eladi 2013) the individual is assumed to decide. This implies that she is autonomous. However, in rational choice and in single-criterion decisions, in general, bad decisions are thought to exist. Usually the accuracy of the decision (with respect to a known 'correct' solution) had been thought to be one in which the individual ends up dying or in great suffering as a direct result of her choices. But, from the point of view of multiple-criteria decisions, it is possible to have several solutions to the same problem or to be in an impossibility to formulate a solution (Keeney & Raiffa 1976; Roy 1996; Lootsma 1992). Multiple-criteria decision-making also requires the autonomy of the individual. The attainment of good-health is usually the goal of most patient decisions, despite the World Health Organization's conception of health as a resource for life. This means that even if decisions are placed in a single- or multiple-criteria decision-making framework, the alternatives of action depend primarily upon the definition of health. As has been seen in the first section the definitions of health can be based on pshysio-pathology or on institutional and societal values, all framed by the explanatory model in which the individual places herself. When the definition of health as the goal of patient-decisions



is socially defined, the autonomy of the decision-maker may be placed under debate. Consequently, the evaluation of patient decisions in terms of improving health and maintaining autonomy depends greatly on the framing of the decision. The person or the institution generating that framing therefore holds an influence over the individual. To conclude, when considering studies on patient decisions, the way in which autonomy and the improvement of health enter the decision-making process should be critically and reflectively evaluated. In essence, rational choice theory and multiple-criteria decision analysis depend on the clear formulation of health as a goal and of autonomy as a second-order preference.

## Bibliography

- Asvall, J. E. (1992). Foreword. In *Health Promotion on Chronic Illness*. WHO Regional Publication.
- Dean, Angela and Daniel Voss. (1999). *Design and Analysis of Experiments*. New York: Springer.
- Dworkin, G. (1988). Autonomy and Informed Consent. *The Theory and Practice of Autonomy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 100–120.
- Eliassen, H. A. (2013). The Usefulness of Health Disparity: Stumbling Blocks in the Path to Social Equity. *Jurnalul Practicilor Pozitive Comunitare*, 13(1), 3–25.
- Gheondea-Eladi, A. (2013). Teoria Raționalității în Sociologie: Un Argument Metodologic. *Revista Română de Sociologie*, 20(3-4), 337–347.
- Gillespie, Rosemary. (1999). “The Lay-Professional Encounter”, in *Society and Health. An Introduction to Social Science for Health Professionals*, edited by Graham Moon and Rosemary Gillespie. London: Routledge, 111–25
- Keeney, R. & Raiffa, H. (1976). *Decisions with Multiple Objectives: Preferences and Value Tradeoffs*, New York: Wiley.
- Kukla, R. (2015). Medicalization, “Normal Function”, and the Definition of Health. In *The Routledge Companion to Bioethics*. Routledge, 515–530. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4324/9780203804971>.
- Lootsma, F. A. (1992). The French and the American School in Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis. A. Goicoechea, L. Duckstein, & S. Zionts, eds. *Multiple Criteria Decision Making: Proceedings of the Ninth International Conference: Theory and Applications in Business, Industry, and Government*. New York: Springer-Verlag, 253–267.
- Mackenzie, C. (2015). Autonomy. In J. Arras, R. Kukla, & E. Fenton, eds. *The Routledge Companion to Bioethics*. Routledge, 277–290. Available at: <http://www.tandfebooks.com/doi/view/10.4324/9780203804971>.
- Mete, C. & Liu, S. H. (2008). The Implications of Poor Health Status o Employment in Romania. C. Mete, ed. *Economic Implications of Chronic Illness and Disability in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*. Washington, DC: World Bank, 119–136.
- Mete, C. & Liu, S. H. (2008). The Implications of Poor Health Status o Employment in Romania. In C. Mete, ed. *Economic Implications of Chronic Illness and Disability in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*. Washington, DC: World Bank, 119–136.
- Mumford, E. (1983d). “Naming the Problem.” 64–80 in *Medical Sociology. Patients Providers and Policies*. New York: Random House Inc.
- Munford, Emily. (1983a). “The Persistence of Beliefs about Diseases and Cures.” 20–31 in *Medical Sociology. Patients Providers and Policies*. New York: Random House Inc.
- Munford, Emily. (1983b). “Evaluating Symptoms: Seeking Treatment.” 46–63 in *Medical Sociology. Patients Providers and Policies1*. New York: Random House Inc.
- Munford, Emily. (1983c). “Views of Illness.” 8–19 in *Medical Sociology. Patients Providers and Policies*. New York: Random House Inc.
- Negro, F. & Alberti, A. (2011). The global health burden of hepatitis C virus infection. *Liver International*, 31, 1–3. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1478-3231.2011.02537.x>.

- Pott, E. (1992). Introduction. In A. Kaplun, ed. *Health Promotion on Chronic Illness*. WHO Regional Publications.
- Pott, E. (1992). Introduction. In A. Kaplun, ed. *Health Promotion on Chronic Illness*. WHO Regional Publications.
- Roy, B. (1996). *Multicriteria Methodology for Decision Aiding, Nonconvex Optimization and Its Applications*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Shadish, William R., Thomas D. Cook, and Donald T. Campbell. (2002). "Purposive Sampling and Generalized Causal Inference." 374–416 in *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Generalized Causal Inference*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.
- Sills, D. L. (1968). Health. *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, 330–336.
- Sills, D. L. (1968). Health. *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, 330–336.
- Stanciu, M. & Jawad, A. -D. (2013). Public Health Services in Romania in Terms of European Policies. *Journal of Community Positive Practices*, 13(1), 26–44.
- Stefanescu, M. L. & Stefanescu, S. (2012). Subjective Evaluation of the Health State in Romania During 2006-2010. *Jurnalul Practicilor Pozitive Comunitare*, 2012(4), 838–852.
- Thomas, D. L. (2000). Hepatitis C Epidemiology. In C. M. Hagedorn & C. M. Rice, eds. *The Hepatitis C Viruses*. Berlin: Springer, 25–41.
- Turner, B. S. (2000). The history of the changing concepts of health and illness: outline of a general model of illness categories. In *Handbook of social studies in health and medicine*. London: SAGE Publications, Inc., 9–23.
- Turner, B. S. (2000). The history of the changing concepts of health and illness: outline of a general model of illness categories. In *Handbook of social studies in health and medicine*. London: SAGE Publications, Inc., 9–23.
- World Health Organization, Hepatitis C. Available at: <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/hepatitis/whocdscsrlyo2003/en/index5.html> [Accessed March 28, 2015].
- Young, R. (2001). Informed consent and patient autonomy. In H. Kuhse & P. Singer, eds. *A companion to bioethics*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 441–451.



---

# THE MODERNIZATION OF RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE UNDER THE MEASURE 322 OF THE NATIONAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2007-2013<sup>1</sup>

---

Flavius MIHALACHE<sup>2</sup>  
Adriana NEGUȚ<sup>3</sup>

**Abstract:** *In the context in which rural areas represent 92% of the EU territory and gather over 50% of the EU population, and many rural areas face significant challenges such as migration and aging, reduced access to services, poor infrastructure or reduced employment opportunities, the concerns for rural development and improved quality of life in these areas have increased. Rural development is one of the strategic objectives of the European Union, which is pointed out by the consistent financial allocations: over a third of the total available funds at EU level between 2007 and 2013, and an estimated 38% for 2014-2020. The main institutional mechanism to support the development of rural areas in Romania was represented by the implementation of the National Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 (NRDP) financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. In the absence of other major government initiatives for rural development, the absorption of EU funds has been the main funding opportunity after 2007, for the initiatives of modernizing the Romanian rural areas. Based on a mix of secondary data analysis and the analysis of official documents provided by The Agency for Financing Rural Investment, the article aims to examine how the public investments program was carried out under the measure 322 of the NRDP, to identify its strong and weak points and its impact on rural infrastructure.*

**Keywords:** *rural development, local development, NRDP, measure 322*

---

---

<sup>1</sup> This paper is made and published under the aegis of the Research Institute for Quality of Life, Romanian Academy as a part of a programme co-funded by the European Union within the Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development through the project for Pluri and interdisciplinary in doctoral and post-doctoral programmes. Project Code: POSDRU/159/1. 5/S/141086.

<sup>2</sup> Researcher, *Research Institute for Quality of Life*, Romanian Academy, Bucharest, Romania. E-mail: fmihalache@iccv.ro

<sup>3</sup> Researcher, *Research Institute for Quality of Life*, Romanian Academy, Bucharest, Romania. E-mail: adriana.negut@iccv.ro

## 1. Theoretical Framework

The European rural area is defined by diversity, both in terms of economic and social coordinates, and of development needs (Patarchanova, 2012). We can talk about three major levels of differentiation of the rural environment in the EU. We have as a first level of analysis the differences recorded between the old EU member states and those that joined after 2004. The group of countries that have recently become members of the community has an increased dependence of the rural areas on the agricultural activities, as well as accentuated deficits of socio-economic development. A second level of analysis refers to the differences recorded between countries that belong to the same group. An example in this respect is represented by the different coordinates recorded by the rural areas in the former communist states of Central and Eastern Europe. The last level of differentiation, of the coordinates of the rural areas, refers to the regional criterion. In Romania's situation, this aspect is emphasized through the differences in development levels, recorded between the types of rural localities from different regions of the country, and through the discrepancies recorded between the profile of the peri-urban settlements and that of the less developed villages, which are economically and territorially isolated.

The concept of *rural development* is inextricably linked to the process of increasing the quality of life in rural areas and of reducing the development gaps between different types of localities and population (Brauer and Dymitrow, 2014; Buțiu and Pascaru, 2012; Preotesi, 2009). In this way, it is centered on the idea of action, in order to solve social and economic problems specific to the communities and it is often used in relation to the concepts of *local development* and *community development*. While the local development process includes the changes made in a locality, either with local actors, or by the local authorities without the involvement of the citizens, community development is the bottom-up component of local development, characterized by the participation of local actors (Petrescu, 2015). Therefore, the development of a community through economic growth projects or investments in the infrastructure, but without the participation of its members, does not represent community development (Precupețu, 2006). The prospect of community development includes the approaches centered on the formation or increase of social capital, which started in Romania in the second half of the 90s through the work of the Romanian Social Development Fund, and subsequently extended to other projects developed by the Romanian Government and the World Bank, or even the corporate social responsibility initiatives of private companies (Voicu, 2008).

The classical definitions of local development were focused on wealth creation, through creating workplaces and income growth, but elements of reducing social inequalities or environmental protection were introduced later on, local development also pursuing the fulfillment of the sustainability criteria (Vásquez-Barquero, 2009). Although economic development theories have been focusing on resources for a long time, local development is based on two main components - resources and capacity – which need to be combined. Resource mobilization really represents a central objective of local development, but a reduced capacity at community level can hinder the development process, while a stronger capacity can compensate for the insufficient resources and can

transform the existing ones into development opportunities (Green Leig & Blakely, 2013).

Local development can be achieved either by making decisions at central level, and by promoting measures of economic growth (top-down), or by adopting development policies from the bottom up, starting at the local level. As a result of the reduced effectiveness of the top-down approach, focused on improving the attractiveness and accessibility of the area for potential investors by creating infrastructure, granting incentives or subsidies, the interest in bottom-up local development has intensified. This is based on local initiatives and on fully harnessing the potential of each area, on the coordination of the actions of public and private actors, which increases measures' effectiveness (Petrescu, 2015; Vásquez-Barquero, 2009). An important element of the bottom-up perspective is represented by the *community capacity building*, a term which started being used extensively in the 1990s, as concerns for sustainable development increased, and was later associated in the reports of the European Commission with the priority of *community economic development*, within the programs financed through structural funds. In this context, capacity building has been regarded as the first of the three ways in which communities were encouraged to engage in the local development process, and has been described as including both individuals and local organizations; the other two ways were represented by the use of available resources in line with the community needs and the reduction of isolation, regardless of the degree of deprivation or the economic opportunities from the communities, by encouraging associations between them (European Commission, 1996).

At the same time EU documents use the term *community-led local development* to designate a specific instrument for action, on the local level, based on mobilizing communities and local organizations to achieve the goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. *Community-led local development* encourages communities to develop bottom-up approaches, taking into consideration local needs and potential, and promoting cooperation. One of the key components of *community-led local development* are the local action groups which consist of representatives of public and private entities at the local level, such as entrepreneurs, local authorities, rural associations, groups of citizens, voluntary organizations. Such an approach has been supported in previous programming periods through the LEADER program; more than 2300 local action groups with a total funding of 5.5 billion euros are currently operating on the EU level (European Commission, 2014).

Consequently, the success of rural development initiatives depends on the combination of two categories of factors: public policies and programs, meant to support the local development, and local initiatives, through which these are implemented at local level. Public policies in this area aim to provide a formal action framework, and to guide the public support on specific targets for intervention, while involving the local factors (authorities, entrepreneurs, associations, action groups) is the key element in implementing initiatives meant to bring a solution to local problems. The local actors are responsible for managing and implementing programs, which result from the regulations stipulated by the public policies in rural development (Margarian, 2013). Thus, the Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union theoretically categorizes rural development as an endogenous product which focuses on communities and their

specific needs (Margarian, 2013). However, recent studies show that the artificiality of the Common Agricultural Policy measures in the new EU member states comes exactly from their poor adaptability to local characteristics (Șerban and Juravle, 2012). Therefore, in countries like Romania, where the mechanisms involved in the implementation of institutional programs are not fully developed, and where local actors have not gained enough experience in implementing this type of programs, bottlenecks and flaws in the allocation and the implementation and control mechanisms often occur (Wegener et al, 2011).

Rural development and the policies in this field represent an area of action, in which national strategies and decisions combine with the provisions of the community framework, which aims to support, through financial allocations, the objectives set at national level. The rural development strategy of the European Union, implemented through the intervention measures and the financial support of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is, thus, the general assembly under which are articulated the national policies in this field. This way, the CAP represents, in the area of rural development, a set of measures which guide and complement the national policies on this matter, without being able to replace them.

The European policies in this field include both direct payments to support the agricultural sector (through the combined measures in the first Pillar of the CAP), as well as direct measures of supporting the other economic sectors, and of increasing quality of life in rural areas (Pillar II). In the 2007 - 2013 programming period, over a third of the total available funds at EU budget level was directed towards agriculture and rural development, whilst the 2014-2020 programming requires that this share reaches 38% of the total EU expenditure (312 billion euros representing 29% of the total, will be directed towards supporting the agricultural sector and 95.6 billion euros, that is 9%, will be destined for the implementation of rural development policies). The funds share for Pillar II has undergone a significant growth after the year 2000, when the rural development objectives were placed at the forefront of the community space policy. It is not insignificant that this stage of redefinition of the role of rural development in the CAP overlaps the three recent waves of enlargement of the Union (2004, 2007 and 2013). This reorientation of community policy can also be seen as a response to the expansion towards the former communist countries, which, in some cases, register major development deficits of rural areas.

In the context of recent developments, the main institutional mechanism to support the development of rural areas in Romania was represented by the implementation of the National Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 (NRDP), as part of the European Common Agricultural Policy. Therefore, in the absence of other major government programs focused on the development of the villages, the absorption of European funds represented a major lever, which, after 2007, was used for the funding of the initiatives to modernize the economy and rural infrastructure. Whether we refer to the development of economic activities (Mihăilescu, 2014) or the improvement of the rural infrastructure and the population's quality of life (Marin, 2014), the role of NRDP in the transformation of the rural areas is significant. Even if, in the implementation of the European programs addressed to support rural areas, there have been some problems related to the lack of experience of the local authorities in attracting funding, or to the

excessively bureaucratic provisions which accompanied the selection and the implementation processes, their importance in supporting the agriculture and the modernization of rural areas cannot be questioned, as confirmed by the results of previous studies (Marin, 2014; Mikulcak et al, 2013; Șerban and Juravle, 2012).

In allocating government funds to modernize villages, the role of the political affiliation of the mayors can be questioned. In other words, the most important element, based on which the public funds are distributed to local authorities, is the political one (Marin, 2014). This relationship, specific for the entire period after 1990, creates and maintains, on one hand, the mechanisms to support the mayors who belong to the ruling parties, and on the other hand, it is a way of strengthening the electoral fiefdoms.

In the attempt to access European funds, destined for the modernization of rural areas, an important role is held by consulting firms, specialized in writing this kind of financing applications. The problem in this situation is the fee charged by these companies, especially for the projects that are not selected for funding, because, for the ones that are financed, this type of costs are considered eligible expenditure (Marin, 2014). A real problem in conducting the preliminary stages of writing financing applications is the drafting of feasibility studies and local development strategies, which involve the allocation of money from local budgets. Given that most Romanian villages face significant financial constraints, caused by the limited revenues collected from local budgets, they have come across important standstills in the preparation of funding applications (Dărășteanu, 2010).

Previous studies (Dărășteanu, 2010; Marin, 2014) show that, in the case of the less developed localities, with their own limited budgetary resources, the incidence of funded projects under the measure 322 of the NRDP is the highest. Therefore, 45% of the villages situated in the first quartile won this type of projects in 2009-2012, based on the coordinates of local budgets, whilst for other types of rural localities the percentage is around 30% (Marin, 2014). This situation is explained by the official scoring grid, which was used to evaluate funding applications, and on which supplementary points were awarded for funding requests from less developed villages. Therefore, the logic behind this decision was to favor poor communities, for which it would have been impossible to achieve large investments in local infrastructure, based solely on their own budgets.

The vast majority of rural municipalities submitted requests for funding development projects of localities, which made the allocated funds insufficient in relation to the registered requests. Moreover, as previous studies reveal (Mikulcak et al, 2013) one of the most often mentioned issues by local authorities representatives, regarding the implementation of the NRDP 2007-2013 measures, referred to the insufficient amounts allocated through specific program measures, which resulted in the impossibility to fund a large part of the applications. We expect the situation to continue in the NRDP 2014-2020, given the fact that the planned funds for rural infrastructure development have not increased.

## 2. The modernization of villages through the European funds. The implementation of measure 322 of the NRDP 2007-2013

### 2.1. General information

This study aims to analyze the way the public investment program was carried out, under the measure 322 of the National Rural Development Programme 2007-2013, and to outline its strengths and its impact on rural infrastructure, emphasizing, at the same time, the problematic issues. The method of analysis used is represented by a mix of secondary analysis and the analysis of official documents made available by the Rural Investment Funding Agency (successor of the Payments Agency for Rural Development and Fisheries - the institution authorized to implement NRDP 2007-2013).

Through the measure 322 of the NRDP 2007-2013 over 800 projects for rural infrastructure development have been financed, with a total amount of 1.7 billion euros. The vast majority of villages have submitted projects under this measure, but only a quarter of the applications could benefit from financial support. In the conditions of a fierce competition in accessing grants, the differences between the success and the failure of the application was influenced by a number of objective factors, related to the way the applications were prepared, the coherence in the preparation of the administrative support document, or the suitability of the proposed targets to the specifications of the scoring grids. However, more than a few voices have raised the issue of the facilitation, or where appropriate, the blocking of the endeavors for preparing the applications, based on criteria of political influence. Even if this link is difficult to illustrate empirically, some of the representatives of local authorities who prepared applications based on the 322 measure of the NRDP used political criteria in explaining failure. Going beyond this kind of discussions, inherent in any competitive situation, the large number of submitted applications and the fact that the amounts allocated initially to the measure 322 have been supplemented several times, show that the interest in this line of funding was very high. Basically, local authorities have linked their hopes of financing local development projects to accessing grants, which caused the success or failure in accessing the amounts available through the NRDP to create a fault line between the villages which carry out large investments to modernize their local infrastructure, and those who cannot afford such financial efforts. The exceptions to this rule are quite few, and are represented by the small group of rich villages located in the expansion areas of the urban centers, which can afford financing the modernization of the infrastructure through their own revenues recorded at local budgets level (Mihalache, 2013).

The measure 322 was organized into five sub-measures (a, b, c, d and e), following specific objectives. Sub-measure "a", "b" and "c" followed the implementation of projects integrated by the modernization of rural infrastructure and the preservation of the particularities of the villages. Basically, the largest part of the amounts available under the measure 322 was allocated in 2008 and 2009 through these three sub-



measures. A total of 645 projects carried out at village level or by intercommunity development associations were supported financially with 1.579 billion euros. The specifics of these development initiatives aimed, primarily, to achieve ample investments with multiple objectives, circumscribed to the development needs at village level. Rehabilitation and modernization works of road infrastructure were financed, as well as works of establishment or extension of water and sewerage networks. At the same time, these sub-measures aimed the modernization of social infrastructure in villages (construction and renovation of kindergartens, after-school facilities, nursing homes etc.) and implementation of landscaping works. Sub-measure "d" was implemented in 2011 and pursued the restoration and modernization of road infrastructure, affected by floods in 2010. By this sub-measure, projects were funded in 143 villages, focusing exclusively on rebuilding access roads and bridges destroyed or affected by the floods. The total of the public amounts spent in this regard was 155.9 million euros. Finally, sub-measure "e", which started in early 2014, aims to support investments in broad-band infrastructure in rural areas.

**Table 1.** Characteristics of measure 322

	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Launched sessions of project submission</b>	<b>Total Budget (mil. Euro)</b>	<b>Beneficiaries</b>	<b>Number of selected projects</b>
Sub-measures A, B and C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The improvement of basic physical infrastructure in rural areas</li> <li>- The improvement of the access to basic public services for rural population</li> <li>- The increase of the number of renovated villages</li> <li>- The increase of the number of protected heritage sites from the rural areas</li> </ul>	2008-2009	1579.2	Local authorities, associations of inter-Community development and NGOs	645
Sub-measure D	Investments regarding works of restoration and modernization of road infrastructure damaged by floods in 2010	2011	155.9	Local authorities	143
Sub-measure E	Investments regarding the broad-band infrastructure in rural areas	2014	19,2	SMEs	51 selected, program underway

Source: Own processing of data provided by the Rural Investment Financing Agency ([www.afir.ro](http://www.afir.ro))

## ***2.2. The implementation of measure 322. General information and impact for the rural world***

Considering the nature and common development targets, one relevant to this study addresses the need to not apply differentiated treatment to sub measures a, b and c. The distinctions that can be made between them are limited and do not provide relevant information, in the context of the present analysis. Beyond this general issue, it should be mentioned that the measure 322 was one of the financing lines of the European funding programs in which the available amounts were allocated in record time (basically, the 1.5 billion euros originally allocated were spent in just two years, after six sessions of submitting projects). Subsequently, in 2011 and 2014, the allocated amounts were increased, which led to launching the sub-measures d and e.

The launching of measure 322 represented a huge opportunity for local authorities from rural areas in terms of ensuring funding for large infrastructure investment projects. Basically, in the absence of other major government programs, this funding line was the main source of support for the investment in the modernization of villages. This meant that, in 2008 and 2009, the vast majority of the villages prepared and submitted applications for funding. The selection for funding of less than a quarter of the submitted projects has generated significant gaps between the villages with approved projects approved for funding, and those which did not receive this form of support.

Initially, through the sub-measures *a*, *b* and *c*, a total of 645 development projects were selected, out of which, the 29 which obtained the most generous budgets, between 4 and 6 million euros, were implemented by inter-community development associations. These forms of organization are association structures between several neighboring administrative units, in order to carry out micro-regional projects funded through the National Rural Development Programme, the Sectoral Operational Programme Environment and the Regional Operational Programme. In most cases, these structures are created ad hoc to ensure financing opportunities to which independent administrative units do not have access to. That was the case with many of these structures, which have developed projects based on measure 322, their establishment and functioning being driven by the emergence of funding opportunities. Although in the beginning of its activity, and without enough operational experience, this form of association is one of the ways to facilitate the integrated development of rural micro-regions. However, over 95% of the projects selected for funding had as beneficiaries villages and local councils, and aimed at achieving investments which were limited to the administrative boundaries of the units of this type, which leads us to believe that the reluctance of local authorities, combined with the lack of experience in running large micro-regional projects, were factors which favored the predominance of applications at village level at the expense of the intercommunity ones, in 2008 and 2009. The creation, in recent years, of the Local Action Groups financed through the axis IV of the National Rural Development Programme 2007-2013, which emphasizes the involvement at regional level of the authorities, the NGOs and the entrepreneurs from rural areas in elaborating and implementing development programs, is an exercise of intercommunity cooperation, which also promotes the growth of associations for intercommunity development in rural areas.

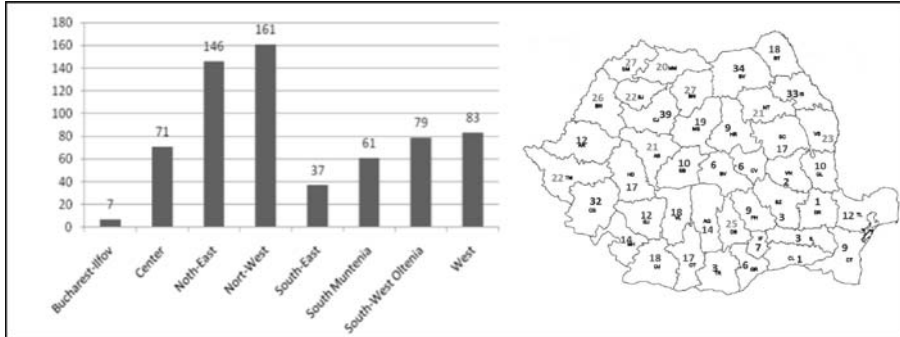
After these clarifications on the status of beneficiaries of the interventions under the measure 322, below we intend to illustrate some characteristics of how the amounts available were distributed through the sub-measures *a*, *b* and *c*. In 2008, 289 projects were selected for funding, and the following year 67 more, at the amounts originally scheduled were exhausted (Table 2). The insufficient available sums in relation to the registered demand has led to the appearance of waiting lists, through which a series of projects considered eligible and with a high rating were supposed to receive funding in the event that the initial financial allocation for these sub-measures were supplemented. This did not happen, causing strong criticism from the representatives of local authorities who were in this situation.

**Table 2.** The distribution of projects selected for funding by year and development regions

	Bucharest-Ilfov	Center	North-East	North-West	South-East	South Muntenia	Sud-West Oltenia	West	TOTAL
2008	2	24	76	64	15	21	62	25	289
2009	5	47	70	97	22	40	17	58	356
Total	7	71	146	161	37	61	79	83	645

Source: Own processing of data provided by the Rural Investment Financing Agency ([www.afir.ro](http://www.afir.ro))

**Figure 1.** The distribution of the projects by regions and counties



Source: Own processing of data provided by the Rural Investment Financing Agency ([www.afir.ro](http://www.afir.ro))

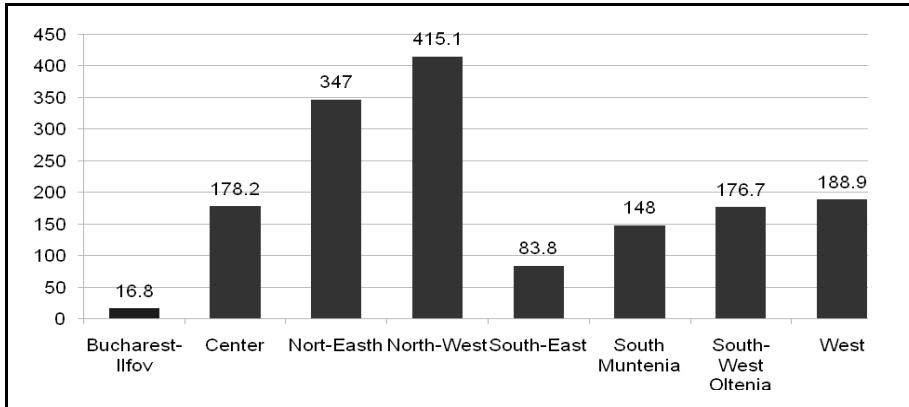
The data available in regional profile (Figure 1) shows a concentration of winning projects in the development regions North-East and North-West, where almost 48% of the grant beneficiaries were registered. The South East, South Muntenia and South West Oltenia regions quantified, on the other hand, a smaller number of projects selected for funding, even if the development deficits of many villages in these areas required the implementation of a higher number of projects. The situation of the counties presents itself even more unbalanced: the number of projects selected for funding reached maximum values in Cluj, Suceava, Iași and Caraș-Severin (in each of these counties, over

30 projects were selected for funding) and the minimum values in a series of counties from the South and South-East of the country (where a maximum of 3 applications were approved). Analyzing the chart regarding the distribution of projects by county, the first element that stands out is the fact that in areas with poor rural localities, such as Teleorman, Giurgiu, Călărași, Ialomița, Buzău, Brăila, Vrancea only 20 financing applications were approved collectively, which means approximately half of those financed in Cluj county, for example, where 39 projects of this type were carried out. It should also be noted that, in the counties of residence of the regional bodies involved in the implementation of the NRDP (Regional Centers for Rural Investment Financing), the number of approved projects is higher compared to most of the other counties which are part of the developing regions. The most eloquent examples are the counties of Dâmbovița, Alba and Iași.

The same unbalanced distribution can also be found in relation to the total allocated amounts of money, taking into account the territorial criterion. Most approved projects for financing in 2008 and 2009 stipulated budgets set in the range of 2-2.5 million euros, most beneficiaries choosing to apply for amounts close to the maximum available values. This led to registering a strong proportionality between the number of winning projects at regional or county level, and the amounts channeled to the beneficiaries of the selected projects. The winning projects from North-East and North-West developing regions have attracted almost half of the budget of measure 322, available through financing lines a, b and c, which means 762 million euros. The situation described becomes even more relevant by analyzing the amounts allocated in the county profile. Therefore, the total amount of selected projects in Cluj exceeded 100 million euros, in Iași it amounted to 83 million, in Suceava 79 million, and in Caraș-Severin there were approved investment projects of 71 million. At the opposite end of spectrum we can find the counties where a small number of applications for funding were approved, and where the total amount invested was below the threshold of 10 million (this is the case of Brăila, Buzău, Călărași, Ialomița, Teleorman and Vrancea). Basically, starting from these financial considerations, we can conclude that the sums' distribution, especially towards villages from certain districts, has contributed substantially to the improvement of their infrastructure and development, emphasizing already-existing development gaps. The issue raised from this point of view is not linked to the unequal distribution of sums in territorial profile, but to the fact that poor rural areas, without any possibility to finance infrastructure development programs from their own resources, have not benefited almost at all of these forms of public support.

In the discussions regarding the distribution of projects, several dimensions are included. First of all, we have as an explanatory variable the interest and the capacity of local authorities to develop successful applications, in full compliance with the provisions stipulated in the guidelines for applicants. On the other hand, we can talk about specific factors, such as the socio-economic coordinates of localities, or the provisions of the scoring grids, on the basis of which the assessment was made, through which have emerged barriers which many representatives of local authorities could not overcome. Based on the provisions reflected in the scoring grids, local authorities, in most cases with consulting firms, have tried to establish investment objectives as close as possible to the elements pointed out in the official scale.

**Figure 2.** The total amounts assigned under measure 322 (sub-measures a, b and c) by development regions



Source: Own processing of data provided by the Rural Investment Financing Agency ([www.afir.ro](http://www.afir.ro))

This resulted in many of the applications being elaborated, based on a quite similar model, following several stages. The first one, the preparatory phase, implied the completion of some feasibility studies aiming at the villages' development goals. Consequently, a market of feasibility studies and local development strategies emerged, which represented a very beneficial opportunity for private companies, active in the field. Subsequently, in writing the applications, the candidates have sought to prove the need of running multiple targets investments (water and sewage networks, modernization of road transport routes, upgrading or construction of community centers and after-school facilities or nursing homes). All this process has led to a huge bureaucratic load, which most villages were unable to manage. Despite the involvement of consulting firms, the efforts to prepare the necessary support documents for the applications have caused an additional burden to the villages' administrative staff, which generated a series of significant delays in carrying out other specific activities. This context, where the steps for accessing non-reimbursable funding involved new procedures, as the administrative conditions regarding the implementation of the National Programme for Rural Development were in 2008-2009, resulted in the projects selected for funding coming from villages which knew best how to exploit the information, in a period of uncertainty and lack of experience of this type. Basically, the winning projects are largely the result of the collaboration between local authorities and companies specialized in writing projects, under the patronage of formal or informal networks.

In order to circumscribe the discussion related to the success of the applications submitted under the measure 322 on objective factors, we can consider that the elements that made the difference between the selected and rejected projects, based on the scoring grid, were:

- the poverty level calculated for the applying villages (the assignment of the scores was done based on a grid which was an appendix of the Guidelines for Applicants, and which was rather contested by local authorities' representatives);
- establishing, through the financing application, some complex investment objectives, integrated in the development strategies at regional level (to prove this, the applicant must attach to the financing application a letter from the County Council, certifying the classification of the investment project in the county or regional development strategy);
- the investment in water networks in the areas affected by drought, or with insufficient storage for the population (in these cases, the corresponding scores were granted only to the extent that the feasibility studies, conducted at the village level, demonstrated through statistical data the existence of a significant lack of water in the locality);
- the investment in road infrastructure, providing a land transport link between villages and main transport routes (national roads, county roads and railways). In this case, the maximum score was granted only to the extent that the need to conduct these investments was justified by feasibility studies;
- the investment projects in social infrastructure and in the preservation of local specificity, run by municipalities in partnership with NGOs or religious institutions.

In the second half of 2009, the 1.58 billion euros scheduled to be distributed under the measure 322 have been exhausted. Thus, from an administrative point of view, contracting the entire programmed budget in a very short period can be considered a success, but the amounts we are talking about, although substantial, have not been able to cover, even partially, the registered applications. A new chance for accessing non reimbursable funds appeared in the summer of 2011 when the Payments Agency for Rural Development and Fisheries (PARDF) launched a new line of funding under the measure 322. Consequently, through sub-measure d, 155.9 million euros were made available to municipalities, in order to finance some projects for the restoration and modernization of the road infrastructure affected by the floods in 2010. Unlike previous sub-measures, sub-measure d was made exclusively for certain villages, from specific regions, which has narrowed quite strongly the number of possible beneficiaries. Furthermore, the scoring grid presented a clearer elaboration. Out of the 100 points, 60 were granted on the basis of the calculation between the affected path length ratio and its total length. The rest of the points were awarded for the importance of the road for the village and connection to other routes, the poverty rate of the village and the integration of the investment objective in the county and the regional development strategies. At the same time, priority was given to localities that had not previously benefited from other forms of public support of this type. Under this line of financing, 143 entities (villages and intercommunity development associations) have benefited from financial aid, the average budget of a project being 1.1 million euros. Also, as a complement to the framework of intervention under the measure 322, in early 2014 the fifth sub-measure (sub-measure e) was launched, having a budget of 19.2 million euros and aiming to increase the penetration rate of broadband internet in rural

areas, providing for each of the selected projects public financial support of up to 200 thousand euros. The projects approved under this line are ongoing and it is too early to analyze both the way they are conducted, as well as their impact on rural population directly concerned.

### **3. Discussions and limits of measure 322**

In the context of the budgetary coordinates of most Romanian villages, characterized by a low income share, the only way to finance infrastructure modernization projects is inextricably linked to European funds, and to the redistribution of public funds from the county budgets or the national budget. For the last years, however, the funds allocated by the County Councils and various Ministries for rural infrastructure modernization objectives, were limited, and accessing them was conditioned by a number of factors of economic context or political affiliation. Therefore, the amounts available through the National Rural Development Programme, the Sectoral Operational Programme - Environment and the Regional Operational Programme represented the only open path to local authorities in poor or medium developed villages for modernization work targeting the public and social infrastructure. Measure 322 of the NRDP stood out in the European financing lines, through the opportunities offered to this type of support investments in rural areas. The 1.56 billion euros made available under sub-measures a, b and c, to which 155.9 million euros were allocated under sub-measure d, were a real breath of fresh air for rural areas pressured by the lack of funding aimed at the establishment, extension or modernization of utility networks, road networks or the construction and renovation of social, educational or medical units.

Beyond any reference as to how the implementation of measure 322 was conducted, it must be made clear that the investments carried within it contributed substantially, along side other funding lines in the NRDP, to the generation of substantial changes for the realities of the Romanian village. To the almost 25% of the villages which managed to benefit from non-reimbursable funding under measure 322, are added the localities that have developed projects in other operational programs, which nowadays allowed the general situation of the villages, at least in statistical terms, to undergo significant improvements in terms of infrastructure and living conditions of the population, compared to the situation recorded before 2007. Statistical data provided by the INS fully prove this evolution (Table 3). It is to be expected that the data for the years 2014 and 2015 to further contribute to the continuation of this trend, given that many of the ongoing investments are close to completion.

What we can emphasize regarding the non-compliant aspects in the development of the investments program under measure 322, is connected to the discussion of four important elements: the lack of training of the local authorities in accessing the funds, the repeated changes of the scoring grids and the relativity of some of the quantified criteria, the concentration of the winning projects in certain areas of the country, and the procedural and bureaucratic conditions which have slowed down the progress of the projects. The lack of experience of the local authorities was evident in 2008, when at the distribution of the largest part of the total sum available, only a small part of the

mayors really knew the conditions of the program. Basically, the local representatives who were fastest at organizing them selves, and who have established contacts with specialized consultancy firms, were those who were successful in attracting funds. Most likely, the experience of the first sessions for submitting projects was a trial period both for the bodies involved in the implementation and management, as well as for the beneficiaries. The scoring grids, and especially their changes between the sessions for submitting the projects, were one of the main sources of frustration for the applicants. Adjustments arising in 2008 and 2009, through which the importance of evaluation criteria was amended, received criticism both from the representatives of local administration, as well as the NGO sector or the firms involved in writing projects. Basically, by modifying the scoring grids in the short periods between the sessions for submitting proposals, the rules of the game during the competition were changed, which led to delays and blockages for many villages in the process of application. However, the concentration of the winning projects in some areas, in the detriment of others, at least as poor and dependent of public financing, was another problematic element, which left a negative imprint on the evaluation stages of the submitted projects. Finally, the bureaucracy and the burdened procedural provisions represented discouraging and disruptive elements in the preparation of the applications and the implementation of the projects. Among the difficulties of this type, the need for feasibility studies and the existence of local development strategies, and the approvals obtained from various authorities, represented compulsory tasks which the applicants had to solve through their own efforts, in the attempt to increase the chances of accessing the available funds.

**Table 3.** The evolution of the main indicators on rural infrastructure between 2007 and 2013

	<b>Localities that have water networks</b>	<b>The length of the water network (km)</b>	<b>Localities that have sewerage</b>	<b>Localities that have a natural gas network</b>
2006	1752	24868	400	579
2013	2050	43685	672	657
Evolution (%)	17,00%	76,00%	68,00%	14,00%

Source: Own processing of data provided by National Statistics Institute- Tempo Online

The drawn conclusions, from how the measure 322 of the NRDP 2007-2013 was implemented, refer to, on the one hand, the important role held by this line of funding in the modernization of villages and increasing the population's quality of life, and on the other hand, they challenge the imperfections arising in the selection processes, the contracting and implementation of projects. It is to be expected that in the 2014-2020 financial programming, both the representatives of the local authorities, the inter-community development agencies and local action groups, as well as the specialists



from the bodies involved in the implementation and monitoring of rural development programs, take into account the experience gained during the previous period, in order to optimize the future sessions of projects submissions.

## References

- Brauer, R. & Dymitrow, M. (2014). Quality of Life in Rural Areas: A topic for the Rural Development Policy? In: D. Szymańska and S. Środa-Murawska (eds.), *Bulletin of Geography. Socio-economic Series* (25). Toruń: Nicolaus Copernicus University Press: 25-54.
- Bușiu, C. A. & Pascaru, M. (2012). Applied Sociology and Human Resources Development Strategies a Project in Apuseni Mountains (Romania). *Journal of Community Positive Practices*, XII(1):51-71.
- Dărășteanu, C. (2010). Analiza regională a modului de accesarea a fondurilor europene de către autoritățile locale din România, in Toth A., Dărășteanu C., and Tarnovschi D. (coord.). *Autoritățile locale față în față cu fondurile europene*. Fundația Soros România.
- European Commission. (2014). *Community-led local development. Cohesion Policy 2012-2020*. Retrieved September 23, 2014 from [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/community\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/community_en.pdf)
- European Commission. (1996). *Social and economic inclusion through regional development. The Community economic development priority in European Structural Funds programmes in Great Britain*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.
- Green Leig, N. & Blakely, E. J. (2013). *Planning local economic development. Theory and practice* (5th edition). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications Inc.,
- Margarian, A. (2013). A Constructive Critique of the Endogenous Development Approach in the European Support of Rural Areas. *Growth and Change*, vol. 44 (1): 1-29.
- Marin, M. (2014). The Role of Fiscal Capacity in Absorbtion of European Funds. *Calitatea Vieții*, XXV (4):324-336.
- Mihalache, F. (2013). Coordinates of the Budgets of Revenues and Expenditures of the Rural Localities. *Journal of Community Positive Practices*, XIII (1): 129-146.
- Mihăilescu, A. (2013). Costul vieții în rural. *Calitatea Vieții*, XXIV (3): 295-310.
- Mikulcak, F.; Newing, J.; Milcu, A.; Hartel, T. & Fischer, J. (2013). Integrating rural development and biodiversity conservation in Central Romania. *Environmental Conservation*, 40 (2): 129 – 137.
- Patarchanova, E. (2012). Socio-Economic Patterns and Trends in Rural Development in EU. *Journal of Settlements and Spatian Planning*, vol. 3 (2): 151-155.
- Payments Agency for Rural Development and Fisheries. (2009). *Ghidul solicitantului pentru accesarea Măsurii 332 "Renovarea, dezvoltarea satelor, îmbunătățirea serviciilor de bază pentru economia și populația rurală și punerea în valoare a moștenirii rurale"*. Versiunea 9 iunie 2009. [www.pndr.ro](http://www.pndr.ro)
- Petrescu, C. (2015). Dezvoltare locală. in I. Mărginean & M. Vasile. *Dicționar de calitatea vieții* București: Editura Academiei Române, 89-92.
- Precupețu, I. (2006). *Strategii de dezvoltare comunitară*. Iași: Expert Projects
- Preotesi, M. (2009). Mecanisme și factori ai subdezvoltării comunităților. O analiză în mediul rural românesc. *Sociologie Românească*, vol. XI (4): 75-89.
- Șerban, A. & Juravle, A. (2012). Ruralul românesc în contextul strategiilor europene de dezvoltare. *Revista Română de Sociologie*, (3-4): 265-281.
- Vasquez-Barquero, A. (2009). *Desarrollo local, una estrategia para tiempos de crisis*, Universitas Forum, 1 (2), Retrieved September 18, 2014 from <http://www.universitasforum.org/index.php/ojs/article/view/20/74>
- Voicu, B. (2008). Riscurile politicilor de dezvoltare bazate pe formarea capitalului social. *Sociologie Românească*, VI (1): 11-25.
- Wegener, S, Labra, K, Petrick, M, Marquardt, D, Theesfeld, I & Buchenrieder, G. (2011). Administrating the Common Agricultural Policy in Bulgaria and Romania: obstacles to accountability and administrative capacity. *International Review of Administrative Science*, 77 (3):583-603.



---

# MIGRATION POLICIES FROM ORIGIN PERSPECTIVE IN THE CASE OF ROMANIA. TESTING A DEFINITION<sup>1</sup>

---

Monica ȘERBAN<sup>2</sup>

**Abstract:** *Recently, the effort of investigating migration policies and the role they play in international migration development has consistently increased. The most consistent part of this interest is related to immigration and associated policies to manage it. Just few studies approach the issues from the origin side perspective. This paper addresses the gap by discussing how migration policies from the origin perspective may be defined and operationalized and trying to test one such a definition/operationalization schema on the case of Romania. With a consistent out migration, a democratic country, EU member, Romanian case is assessed here as a proper research site for this type of investigation. The paper is based on a policy on paper approach to migration policies. Relevant pieces of legislation are identified and codified according to a systems of codes designed to register the changes in time. The time span of the analysis is 1990-2013. All changes in legislation during 1990-2013, according to dimensions and sub-dimensions of the operationalization schema are analyzed (using graphic means) in order to observe to internal consistency and connections with international migration developments. On the specific case of Romania, the paper points to one consistent connection of sub-dimensions for emigration and return migration related interventions, but a poor internal consistence in the case of diaspora related interventions. The same weak connection seems to relate diaspora related interventions (when treated together) to the other two dimensions: emigration and return migration related interventions.*

**Keywords:** *migration policies, emigration policies, diaspora policies, returning policies, defining, operationalizing, codifying, Romania*

---

---

<sup>1</sup> This paper is done and published under the aegis of the Research Institute for Quality of Life, Romanian Academy as a part of programme co-funded by the European Union within the Operational Sectoral Programme for Human Resources Development through the project for Pluri and interdisciplinary in doctoral and post-doctoral programmes Project Code: POSDRU/159/1.5/S/141086

<sup>2</sup> Senior Researcher, The Research Institute for the Quality of Life, Romanian Academy, Bucharest, ROMANIA. E-mail: monas@iccv.ro

## Introduction

In recent years, the interest in evaluating and comparing the effects of migration policies has been experiencing an accentuated increase. Defining and operationalizing definitions to be applied to a great number of countries, on large time-scale, defines a consistent current trend in this direction (see APSA, 2013, for an extensive presentation of research projects in the field). Migration policies are "transformed", using complex systems of codes, into quantitative variables to be used to compare, evaluate and to set apart effects. Preferred way to look at policies to achieve this end is *policy on paper* approach. Laws, rules, regulations are considered an appropriated proxy for government interventions in international migration (Czaika & de Haas, 2013). The effort required to codify is always consistent, but the results seem to shed new light on some of the strongest tenets related to migration policies (e.g. the persistent idea of limited or no-effects of the current immigration policies seems to be provoked when modelling their effects as one of the possible determinants of migration flows - for a discussion on this, see Czaika & de Haas, 2011).

This type of endeavour is not only conducive to particular analyses, but also produces databases that can be further enriched with new indicators, extended to a larger number of countries or to a longer time span (e.g. IMPOL database; DEMIG databases). The beneficiary of the rigour of this new approach seems to be, as in general in the case of migration studies, the destination related interventions (immigration policy/integration policy). Except for few of the identified works (i.e. DEMIG project, and partially Gamlen's work), the majority of them is not covering the origin state interventions in international migration (emigration/diaspora/return migration policies). Yet there is no doubt about the interest of origin to manage migration and there is convincing evidence that origin's interventions are changing the characteristics of the (out or in) flows (Weiner, 1985; Heisler, 1985; Massey, 1999 etc.). From this point of view, one may discuss about a need associated with systematically investigating the role origin state plays in international migration. This paper addresses the gap by testing one previously elaborated definition and its subsequent operationalization of the migration policies from the origin country perspective (Șerban, 2014) on Romanian case. With an estimated population of about 20 million inhabitants at the end of 2012 (INS, 2013) and a non-negligible part of it living abroad, Romania is one of the main source of intra-European migration. A former communist country, experiencing a long transition to market economy and democracy, now one of the EU member states, Romania seems to be one of the proper sites to investigate the way authorities built a system of managing migration. Our aim here is not to analyze, explain or compare Romanian migration policies in the last 24 years, but to test the definition, especially its capacity to coherently describe<sup>1</sup> the Romanian authorities' interventions in international migration. Starting from the three dimensions assigned to the migration policy from an origin country perspective: emigration, diaspora and return migration related interventions, to reach this purpose, we have identified the laws, rules and regulations associated with

---

<sup>1</sup> We are aware in the difference between coherence induced by the definition and coherence of migration policy. The two are related, but not the same.

migration during the period 1990 - 2013. The identified measures was codified in a simple way, our only interest here being to put in evidence changes in legislation. Our underlying assumption is that, if reflecting the same reality, the measures can be consistently explained in relation to the development of international migration and a certain consistency would be noticed across the three dimension's evolution. Consequently, plotting the changes in legislation against the time period, the preferred method to present the results, we are interested to see how consistent is the observed picture and how can it be explained by relation to the development of the international migration in Romania.

The paper is structured in six distinctive parts. Succeeding the introduction, the second one is presenting the working definition of migration policies from an origin country perspective and its subsequent operationalization. The arguments related to the Romanian case as one appropriate for elaborating this exercise are presented in part three. Section four documents identifying and codifying legislation processes, their difficulties and limitations, while the fifth part figures out the results of the analysis. The discussions section concludes the paper, showing that, at least in the case of Romania, the association of diaspora and emigration and return policies is highly problematic and particular care should be paid to each dimension when analysing migration policies at origin.

## Defining migration policies at origin

If there is considerable debate about how to define/operationalize/coding migration policies of the destination states (or immigration/integration policies) (e.g. APSA, 2013; de Haas et al., 2014), not the same one may say about the origin ones. Following here exclusively the perspective of origin and trying to promote a *global* approach to the interventions from origin, we have adopted the subsequent definition: *migration policies from origin state perspective refer laws, rules and regulations adopted by the origin states in order to influence the volume, trajectories, destinations/origin, and composition of the out-flows and return flows; to modify one of the own migrants' statuses or to support the own migrants while abroad* (Șerban, 2014: 73).

Compared to some previous definitions (de Haas & Vezzoli, 2011), the one we are working with is extending the scope of migration policies by also incorporating diaspora related interventions or, compared to some others (Weinar, 2014), it is extending the range of intended effects (migration policies includes measures aiming to influence *not only* the volume, trajectories, destinations/origins and composition of the flows, *but also* the migrants' statuses while abroad or to provide them support). The definition is based on the idea of systematically capturing measures explicitly including the intentionality to modify conditions related to migration/migrants, but excluding measures directed towards managing the effects of migration.

Based on this definition, there were identified three major dimensions of migration policy at origin: *emigration related interventions; diaspora related interventions* and *return migration interventions*. Each of them is conceived to include two or more sub-dimensions (Figure 1).

## Romania a proper case for studying migration policies at origin?

The exercise of testing the definition (and its subsequent operationalization) may be done on one or another case. As we are concerned with testing, the relevance of the case in itself may influence the relevance of the results. The option for Romania here is not a free one, as working with legislation (as previously stated, we have opted for a *policy on paper* approach to migration policies), the language/s spoken by researcher plays the role of a major constraint. We consider then appropriate to discuss the main characteristics of the Romanian case as a way to facilitate the interpretation of relevance of the results.

Romania is today a source country for consistent international migration. Several decades ago, as a communist country, it was rather characterised by the toughness of the communist authorities in controlling the international circulation of people, reflected in low number of external migrants. The first years after the fall of the communism were times of recuperating the delayed international mobility. After one consistent wave of "enthusiastic" discovery of the international space, constraint by international barriers imposed by destinations, the out migration decreased and remained at a relatively low level for several years. The worsening of economic conditions during the "transition" to market economy severely affected large segments of population (Briciu, 2014). Beginning with the mid-'90s of the last century, migration driven by economic reasons gained prominence. The departures headed mainly toward European countries (especially Italy and Spain). 2002, the year when visa restrictions for Schengen Space entry were lifted for Romanians, consistently increased the pace of emigration (Sandu, 2010). This ascending trend was persistent during the first decade of the new millennium. The access to the EU further facilitated the international mobility within the EU space, in spite of restrictions related to labour market access enforced by the majority of would-be destinations. Origin data survey suggest a slowdown of the departures starting with 2009 (Vasile, 2014: 60), but in 2011, Romania was already the most important origin country for intra-EU migration (Vasilieva, 2012). In 2013, the number of Romanians living abroad was estimated at about 3,430,000 individuals, most of them concentrated in EU countries (86%), with 7 countries having Romanian communities of more than 100,000 individuals (Italy, Spain, Germany, Hungary, UK, Israel and USA). By far the most attractive destinations for Romanians are Italy and Spain, each of them hosting more than 1,800,000 Romanians<sup>1</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> Own calculation using WB migration databases: Global Bilateral Migration Database 1960 - 2000 (<http://databank.worldbank.org/data/views/variableselection/selectvariables.aspx?source=global-bilateral-migration>), Bilateral Migration Matrix 2013 (<http://econ.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTDECPROSPECTS/0,,contentMDK:22803131~pagePK:64165401~piPK:64165026~theSitePK:476883,00.html>)

**Figure 1. Dimensions of migration policy from origin country perspective<sup>1</sup> (I)**

<b>A. Emigration</b> related interventions	<b>B. Diaspora</b> related interventions	<b>C. Return migration</b> related interventions
<p><b>I. Exit restrictions:</b></p> <p><b>I.1. Direct exit restrictions:</b> requirements for exit visas or government permission; exit restrictions for women; exit restriction for persons of the age of national compulsory service; exist conditions related to the type and costs of travelling abroad</p> <p><b>I.2. Indirect exit restrictions:</b> passport used as a mean of restricting or enabling the movement: allowing the passport to be obtained by mail or in person; while abroad or only in the origin country</p> <p><b>II. Extending the channels for international migration:</b> public structures on the departure market</p> <p><b>III. Securing international migration:</b> bilateral agreements; regulation of the private operators on the departure market; international portability of social security rights;</p>	<p><b>I. Diaspora building policies:</b></p> <p><b>I. 1. Cultivating diaspora:</b> celebrating national holidays, honouring expatriates with awards; convening diaspora congresses; proclaiming affinity with and responsibility for diaspora; issuing special IDs/visas; national language and history education; public media dedicated (newspapers, TV channels)</p> <p><b>I. 2. Recognizing diaspora:</b> expanded consular units; maintaining a diaspora program, bureaucratic unit, or dedicated ministry</p> <p><b>II. Diaspora integration</b></p> <p><b>II. 1. Extending rights:</b> permitting dual nationality, dual citizenship or external voting rights; special legislative representation; consulting expatriate councils or advisory bodies; intervening in labour relations/public structure dedicated to this aim; supplementing health; welfare and education services support; upholding property rights</p> <p><b>II. 2. Extracting obligations:</b> taxing expatriates; customs/import incentives; special economic zones; investment services, tax; incentives, matching fund; programs, diaspora bonds &amp; financial products; facilitating remittances; fellowships; skilled expatriate networks</p>	<p><b>I. Encouraging voluntary return:</b> return migration policies</p> <p><b>II. Accepting forced return:</b> re-admission agreements</p>

<sup>1</sup> The table here is reproduced from Șerban, 2014: 76. The operationalization schema is based on previous work of de Haas & Vezzoli, 2014, Weinar, 2014 especially for A and C dimensions and Gamlen, 2006, 2008 for B dimension.

**Figure 2.** Dimensions of migration policies from an origin country perspective (II)

<b>A. Emigration</b> related interventions	<b>B. Diaspora</b> related interventions	<b>C. Return migration</b> related interventions
<p><b>I. Exit restrictions:</b></p> <p><b>I.1. Direct exit restrictions:</b> requirements for exit visas or government permission; exit restrictions for women; exit restriction for persons of the age of national compulsory service; exist conditions related to the type and costs of travelling abroad</p> <p><b>I.2. Indirect exit restrictions:</b> passport used as a mean of restricting or enabling the movement: allowing the passport to be obtained by mail or in person; while abroad or only in the origin country</p> <p><b>II. Extending the channels for international migration:</b> public structures on the departure market</p> <p><b>III. Securing international migration:</b></p> <p><b>III.1.</b> Securing migration through <i>bilateral agreements</i>;</p> <p><b>III.2.</b> Securing migration through <i>control and regulation of the private operators on the departure market</i>;</p> <p><b>III.3.</b> Securing migration through <i>international portability of social security rights</i>;</p>	<p><b>I. Diaspora building policies:</b></p> <p><b>I.1. Cultivating diaspora:</b> supporting celebrating national holidays; honouring expatriates with awards; convening diaspora congresses; proclaiming affinity with and responsibility for diaspora; issuing special IDs/visas; national language and history education; public media dedicated (newspapers, TV channels)</p> <p><b>I.2. Recognizing diaspora:</b> expanded consular units; maintaining a diaspora program, bureaucratic unit, or dedicated ministry</p> <p><b>II. Diaspora integration</b></p> <p><b>II.1. Extending rights:</b> citizenship rights; voting rights and special representatives; upholding property rights</p> <p><b>II.2. Extracting obligations:</b> taxing expatriates; customs/import incentives; special economic zones; investment services, tax; incentives, matching fund; programs, diaspora bonds &amp; financial products; facilitating remittances; fellowships; skilled expatriate networks</p>	<p><b>I. Encouraging voluntary return:</b> return migration policies</p> <p><b>II. Accepting forced return:</b> re-admission agreements</p>

Taking into account the consistent raise in international migration, Romania is one of the sites where one would expect to observe, if origin states are to be interested in managing migration, migration policies emergence, in their multiple dimensions. For this country, migration is a relatively recent phenomenon creating premises for implementation, during our period of interest (1990-2013), of emigration component of policies. In the same time, the interval 1990-2013 is long enough to allow for the set up of consistent Romanian communities abroad, justifying then possible diasporic interventions. The selected time span is also long enough to allow for return waves and possible return related interventions.

The advantage of Romanian case does not consist only in being the source country of a consistent migration. Romania is also a former communist country, one characterised by a high degree of international closure during the last decade of Ceaușescu's rule. In terms of international migration, this is translated in a kind of *zero starting point* of legislation regulating international circulation of people. At the beginning of 1990, the overwhelming majority of Romanian citizens were not passport bearer. The practice of international mobility is basically a post-communist achievement. Almost all the measures regulating not only international migration, but also international circulation, were implemented during the years of interest for us here.

If for Romania, we discuss about consistent international migration and a zero starting point regarding the legislation, we also talk about a democratic country and a member of the EU. It is probable that both characteristics influence the potential of the case to be a proper site for studying migration policies at origin. Aspiring to become a democratic country, Romania incorporated in its post-communist Constitution (1991) the principle of freedom of movement as stated by the 13th article of the Declaration of Human Rights. Translated into migration legislation, this is probably conducive to a relatively restricted capacity of the Romanian authorities to influence the voluntary, non-contractual migration through emigration related interventions. The second characteristic, being an EU member, restricts one more the freedom of Romanian authorities to interfere in migration, especially in its emigration dimension: the principle of free circulation is one of the fundamental principles at the base of the supranational structure. Trying to limit the freedom of movement of its own citizens would be then, in the case of Romania, against the principles agreed upon when becoming a member state. Moreover, the most important destinations of Romanian migration are European countries, EU's members, which accepted, as Romania did, the free circulation of European citizens as a basic tenet. Not lastly, the quality of EU member and especially the lift of all restrictions related to the access of Romanian citizens to the labour market of all other EU member states (starting with January 2014) transformed international migration of Romanians in other EU's countries in an international mobility, almost free of restrictions. Apparently the incentives to interfere in international migration once again diminished.

The above arguments seem to suggest low incentives for Romanian authorities to involve in international migration (especially in the case of emigration dimension) after



2007 and especially after 2014<sup>1</sup>. Yet, the case stays interesting in our opinion, especially because it offers the chance of investigating, from its very beginning, the process of creating a system to manage international migration.

The case is further complicated by the uses Romanian authorities assign to "diaspora"<sup>2</sup>. Traditionally, Romania, as other states of the Eastern and Central Europe, has paid great attention to its ethnics living abroad. The interest of the Bucharest authorities in this direction can be detected as early as the establishment of the Romanian national state. Recognizing and supporting (especially in cultural terms) the "persons of Romanian origin and those belonging to the Romanian cultural and linguistic vein" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013) complicate the diasporic policies in the Romanian case. The so-called "Romanians abroad", addressed by Romanian diasporic policy, is a large category, including a highly diverse population of Romanian ethnics that lived at a certain moment in the past within the borders of Romania and their descendants (e. g. Romanian ethnics living in the Republic of Moldova or Ukraine), persons identifying themselves as Romanians (even if nor they neither their ancestors has ever lived on one Romanian territory), persons living abroad because they emigrated or the descendants of Romanians that once emigrated abroad and the current migrants (*ibid.*). The diversity in conditions of Romanians living abroad and recognized as part of diaspora makes this dimension of migration policies particularly complex in the case of Romania, adding a new value of "testing" the definition in its case.

## Way of working

The objective of this paper is to test the *internal consistency* one definition/operationalization of migration policies at origin on the specific case of Romania. *Policy on paper* is here the privileged way of approximating migration policies. We have considered only internal legislation for this analysis (including bilateral agreements, but excluding international treaties/conventions ratified by Romania). The option is not justifiable in theoretical terms, and it reflects more the limited resources available for this research. As the international regulation in the field of international migration (especially in terms of emigration/diaspora/return) is not consistent (Castles, 2007), nevertheless we guess the results of our analysis would not substantially change by adding international regulations. Yet this is a point to be developed during further analyses.

*Internal consistency* refers here the coherence of the dimensions, the connectedness of their evolution in time and, in particular, the connectedness with development of international migration originated in Romania. The time span chosen for our analyses is

---

<sup>1</sup> 2014 is not part of the time span we are interested in, but it probably represent a land mark for Romanian international migration

<sup>2</sup> The term privileged by Romanian authorities is not "diaspora", but "Romanians abroad" (This term is the official translation into English proposed by the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In Romanian, the collocation "Românii de pretutindeni" has more the sense of "Romanians from everywhere/living everywhere"). The connotation of the term has changed during the time, including more and more categories of population.

1990-2013, a large enough period to allow eliminate the effect of accidental overlaps in the migration policy dimension developments and to connect the policy changes with the phenomenon in itself.

In order to achieve the stated objective, the first undertaken step was to *identify* laws, rules and regulations related to every of the sub-dimensions assigned to the three main dimensions of the migration policies at origin (emigration, diaspora and return migration) and to relate them to time. This way, the synchronism or delays in enacting one or another stream of legislation (emigration/diaspora and return) and the connectedness with migration may be investigated.

The second step was to *codify* changes in legislation, viewed here as bearing the significance of "concern" or "interest" of authorities in migration. The system of codes is a very simple one: it assigns to every change (irrespectively of its content) code 1. In one year, there can be multiple changes in one, two or all of the three dimensions.

Finally, the third step, was to put together the quantitative variables quantifying the changes at the level of sub-dimensions and dimensions during the specified time span (1990-2013) and plotting them against each other and/or together.

As the first two of these steps implies decisions which affect the results, we have decided to document them in detail.

### ***Identifying relevant Romanian legislation***

Most of the policy analyses (irrespectively if from origin or destination country perspective), using exclusively or in combination *policy on paper* approach, pays little attention to make transparent their strategies of *identifying* relevant legislation. This step seems to be regarded by researchers as being, if not an unimportant, at least a somehow "obviously how to do" task. Clearly, the process of identifying relevant legislation is dependent on the way legislation in general is made available to the public in every country. This may act as a disincentive to expose the particular strategies as they are country specific, justifying in a way this option for non-transparency. In our opinion, presenting the strategy of identifying legislation is not only relevant for the interpretation of results (as the step is influencing them), but it also can provide ideas to improve country specific strategies.

In our case, the main source of information was the legislative database<sup>1</sup> available on the website of the Chamber of Deputies (one of the two chambers of Romanian Parliament). The database allow schecking the status of one particular legislative act, the way it has been changed during time by some other normative acts and also allows tracing the entire legislative process of enacting it. It does not necessarily make available the text of the laws, rules or regulations, but it allows the identification of a tree-like structure related to changes in legislation. The instrument is highly valuable as far as the first act of an entire family of subsequent measures is identified. Yet, even though the database offers the facility of key-word search, when using relevant terms as

---

<sup>1</sup> Available at [http://www.cdep.ro/pls/legis/legis\\_pck.frame](http://www.cdep.ro/pls/legis/legis_pck.frame)

"migration", "emigration", "diaspora" etc., the function is not conducive to consistent and very helpful result. Search on the term "migration" ("migrație" in Romanian) shows just one result, *Law 147 from 2000, to ratify the agreement between the Romanian Government and UNHCR*. The alphabetic index provided by the database offers only three entries related to migration: the term used is "migrations" (plural form of the noun designating the event of migration; "migrări", in Romanian), making reference to "illegal migration and traffic of the persons, combating, international regulations", "migrations" and "migrations, international relations". Identifying legislation this way is conducive to marginal results. Repeated on other databases (e. g. Legalis), key-terms search does not provide highly improved outcomes. The main reason for this points not necessarily to poorly built databases, but to the diversity of terms put at use when about migration in Romanian legislation. The searching strategies based on key-terms are probably effective in the case of countries with well established tradition of migration, with the consequence of a stable and largely accepted glossary related to migration. In the case of Romania, a plethora of terms is used in relation with international migration, processes associated with it, and individuals involved in the processes. Illustrative from this point of view is the series of strategies regarding immigration that Romanian Government initiated in 2004. In 2004, the emigration was the main process associated with international migration in Romania and, as today, the level of immigration was at a low level (Șerban&Lăzărescu, 2014, Mircea, 2008). In Romanian public space, term "migration" was overwhelmingly used to denote emigration. Named "National strategy regarding migration", the first document of the series (2004) was just creating confusion: it was dealing, in fact, with immigration in Romania. Only three years later, a new adopted strategy was using a more precise term in order to reflect the content and aim of the document (the 2007 strategy is named "National Strategy Regarding Immigration") The vocabulary related to international migration was mainly developed during the years of interest for us here, the process is reflected in the different terms legal texts use, and it definitely complicates the identification of laws, rules and regulations of interest for us using key-term search facilities. This is probably inducing one limitation related to our analysis: it is possible to have not identified exhaustively the set of laws, rules and regulations related to international migration according to the specified dimensions of analysis.

Because of the limitations related to key-terms search, the main complementary strategy used to identify relevant pieces of legislation was to check it with the institutions (especially the websites) involved in managing international migration (in the case of Romania: Government, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and their subordinate institutions.) This second strategy is conducive to more consistent results, but the continuous changes in the institutional arrangements and institution functions in Romania negatively affect its chances of success. One of the most important difficulties consists in a certain "movement" of responsibilities related to international migration between institutions. The second difficulty is the establishment, re-organizing and simply dissolution of some institutions during the time span taken into account here. Both processes of moving one function between the institutions over time or creating/re-organizing/abolishing them affect in a negative way the attempt to identify the legislation associated with international migration.

The third strategy was reading about interventions of Romanian authorities in international migration (different institutions reports, newspapers, website dedicated to Romanians living abroad etc.) and coming back to legislative databases in the search of mentioned regulations.

All the laws, rules and regulations identified were registered in a database, according to the year of their enactment. Different sources of information were used to check and re-check the information kept in the database.

During the *identifying* phase, the first decisions affecting the pool of regulatory measures to be codified were to be taken. We were aware of two strategies available. One strategy would be a *minimalist* one, with the decision about keeping or not one legal act in the database taken only on the basis of an explicit formulation in the text of the law related to international migration/migrants. Yet there are measures that, even not aiming migration, affect it. One specific example in the case of Romania is the succession of measures modifying the access to passport, as a fundamental instrument to exercise the right to mobility. When raising the level of punishment (through passport retaining) associated with violating the rules regarding the period of stay abroad or with begging abroad, Romanian authorities do not specifically (or openly) aim to regulate migration. Yet by their consequences this kind of measures affects migration. Confronted with this dilemma, our solution was to withdraw the minimalist strategy and to adopt the opposite one: considering for analysis all the rules and regulations modifying or having relation with a first piece of legislation identified as aiming or having consequences on migration. The consequence of this *maximal* approach might be an over-inclusion of "lines" of legislation related to migration in the initial pool of regulatory measures to be codified.

Maximal approach does not mean a mechanical registration of pieces of legislation related to one identified as relevant for the purpose of the paper. When keeping or not a piece of legislation in the database was not a clear decision, the legislative process of enacting it and the text of the law has become the new instances to reach a conclusion. In these cases we have applied the maximal strategy. Just to illustrate the process, we reproduce here the example of some regulations related to voluntary return. Some specifications related to return migration appear in the legislation as far as the early 1990s. In 1991, a Committee for Migration Related Issues (*Comitetul Român pentru Probleme de Migrări*, in Romanian) was set up. The Committee has specific functions related to Romanian citizens returning from abroad. It has been, then, registered in the database. The legal decision putting it into practice was modified 6 times since 1991, but as the Committee had, when set up, a large array of functions (including some related to immigration), only part of these changes can be considered as having a potential influence on return migration. We have kept only two of changes in the database (those modifying the way the structure was functioning), but we have excluded the other four which specifically refer the immigration related functions of the Committee.

Having behind this way of working, the first step in our strategy of identifying legislation is suspicious of two biasing, contradictory tendencies: one of sub-inclusion

(non-identified pieces of legislation) and one of over-inclusion (pieces of legislation modifying a measure identified as definitely affecting migration).

### ***Codifying the relevant Romanian legislation***

The second step of the analysis was to codify the identified legislation. The system of codes used here is very simple: it assigns 1 for every change in the legislation regarding a certain domain of migration policy as designated by the previous operationalization schema, classified according to year of enactment. If no change in legislation appears, then the variable takes the value 0 for the specific year.

The codifying phase generated a consistent re-evaluation of the operationalization schema putting into evidence some of its drawbacks. First, it proved necessarily to split the third sub-dimension of *emigration related interventions*, into three different segments: bilateral agreements, the interventions in order to control and regulate the activity of private operators on departure market, and measures/agreements on social security rights portability. This way, the dimension seems to better reflect changes in legislation. *Return related interventions* dimension seems to easily fit to the Romanian legislation, but the greatest difficulties were generated by the *diaspora dimension*. In its case, the operationalization is mainly based on Gamlen's work (2006, 2008). The detailed Gamlen's schema proved to be very helpful in identifying legislation, but it seems more suited to a "yes/no" system of codes, pointing out the presence or absence of one mentioned measure as contributing to building or integrating diaspora. This seems to be well fit in the case of a cross-sectional analysis, but in longitudinal perspective, it does not have the capacity to capture the slow process of change and to catch up (sometimes) small modifications in legislation (e.g. in the case of Romania, modifications in the responsible institutions managing the diaspora policies. This is not equivalent with a substantive modification of the diaspora policy, but it might have important consequences on the way diaspora policy is elaborated/implemented and it is reflecting a change in the way authorities are conceiving the involvement with diaspora). Another problem generated by the way we have operationalized diaspora related interventions is that some of the concrete actions it describes do not seem very appropriate for a *policy on paper* approach (i. e. celebrating national holidays may be organized without formalization into legal texts). We then decided to review the second dimension (diaspora related interventions) of the operationalization of migration policies from the origin perspective. The changes consisted in collapsing smaller categories of measures into larger ones, in order to catch up with small, non-substantive changes (see our previous example) that we think, in the phase of the analysis, it is better to be kept under scrutiny. This modification is also making the codification of this second dimension more compatible with the codifications of the other two (emigration related interventions and return migration related interventions). As we were interested in our analysis to identify and codify the changes and compare them within the tree dimensions, in the case of sub-dimension B.I.1. and B.I.2. (cultivating and recognizing diaspora), we have pooled together the measures and present the result for the whole sub-dimension. In the case of sub-dimension B.II.1 - extending rights to diaspora - the Romanian legislation poses an interesting problem that also induces some adjustments to the initial operationalization schema: "intervening in labour relations/public

structure dedicated to this aim" are a type of measure that Romanian authorities adopted as early as 2004 (a structure incorporated into the Ministry of Labour, having its employees working in the embassies and trying to help the Romanian workers to get their rights respected). Even though the structure is *de facto* exercising its functions abroad, on migrant population, it is doubtful that we can talk about extending rights in this case, but, in our opinion, more about protecting a population by assuring the proper conditions to exercise the some rights. Treating it as an indicator of relation with diaspora would be correct if one look at the place where the function is exercised, but not if looking at its content. Taking into account these considerations, we have decided to codify the measures related to the intervening in labour relations and the public structures dedicated to this aim into category of emigration related interventions, as part of the efforts to securing migration and exclude it from diaspora dimension. The same logic applies in excluding supplementing health; welfare and education services support as measures related to extending rights sub-dimension.

The sub-dimension B.II.1. (extracting obligations from diaspora) is missing from our database, as we were unable to identify legal measures related to it.

Figure 2 synthetically presents the operationalization schema after introducing all the above mentioned changes.

Besides the changes related to the operationalization schema, there are some aspects of codifying worth to be mentioned as they have, in our opinion, a consistent influence on the results. First is the *zero starting point* of "departure" in the case of Romanian migration policies. Having a zero point in the closeness of an absolute zero is an advantage if one is interested in the way the system of interventions in migration is built in origin countries. In comparative analyses, it inflates the results, at least in the case of codification system we are using here. In the specific case of Romania, the number of changes identified is probably showing a more intense activity of Romanian authorities related to international migration than they would present if asked about. This is mainly due to the fact that Romania was, as specified before, a communist isolated country from the point of view of international circulation of persons. Then, once the communist regime fell down, the authorities were forced "to catch up with time" and to rapidly adapt Romanian legislation to the realities of the end of XX century. Part of the changes in the laws, rules and regulations were not linked to migration in itself, but to the fact that Romania lacked any modern regulations related to the mobility of people (consequently to migration). In our system of codification, as these measures are related to migration, under the maximal approach adopted in the identifying phase, they inherently inflate the number of changes assigned to migration policy.

The second problem is related to the meaning of changes. Having a long period for analysis is an advantage in order to observe changes. The disadvantage is registering and counting as changes in policy not only the measures changing the policy but also measures reversing the changes. Not having a "sign" associated with changes (as, for example, extending or restraining the intervention in migration) has the same effect of artificially emphasizing the extent of policy. This is the case of several types of interventions of Romanian authorities (e.g. the set up of a public structure to mediate the departures abroad and its dissolutions five years later). The graphs used to present

the results should then be regarded as only having the function of testing the consistency of the definition by comparing changes in the three dimensions and not to provide an analysis of migration policies. Probably other types of codifications are more appropriate for an interpretation on Romanian authorities' intervention in international migration (from the point of view of an origin country).

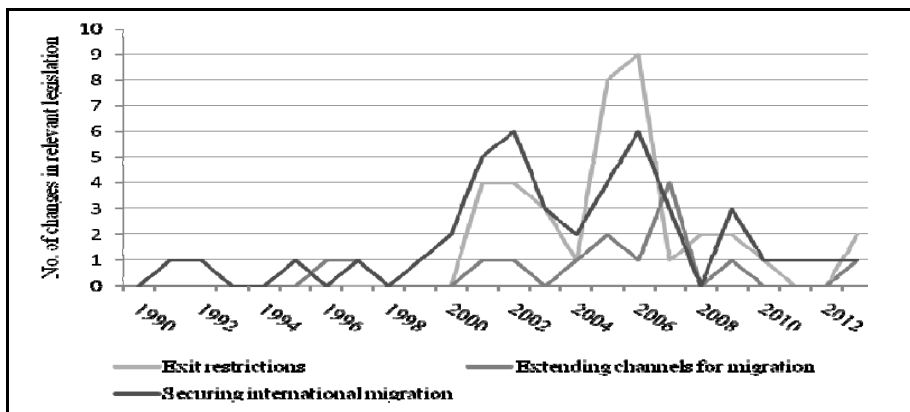
## The three dimension of migration policy at origin

Starting from the legislation identified, then coded, the next step was to plot all the identified changes, for every of the sub-dimension and dimension, and all together, against the time scale in order to observe if they vary (or not) together. Our assumption is that the internal coherence of the definition/operationalization should be reflected in the way these policies have developed and that they can be systematically link to evolutions of/related to the migration in Romania.

Figures 3 to 9 present the results, showing how every of sub-dimension of the three dimensions (emigration related interventions; diaspora related interventions and return migration interventions) were built in time.

In the case of *emigration related interventions* (Figure 3), the most intense activity appears to be concentrated during two periods of time: 2000-2002 and 2005-2006. It seems the effort of Romanian authorities was mainly directed to control migration through exist (via passport restrictions and special condition at the exit of the country) and to secure international migration. Less visible is the activity of extending channels for migration during 1990 - 2013. It increases especially during the second period previously identified. Even though not perfectly, the three sub-dimensions seem to vary together, suggesting a certain internal consistency of dimension.

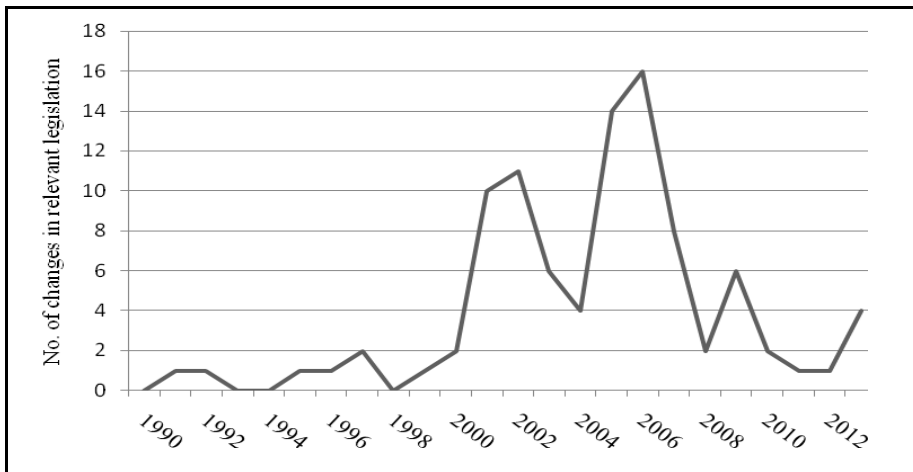
**Figure 3.** Emigration related interventions - sub-dimensions (Romania)



Source: Own compiled database on Romanian migration policies

Figure 4 reproduces the changes if pooling together the three sub-dimensions. Now three periods of increased activity in relation to international migration becomes evident: the first one has a maximum around 2001-2002, a second around 2005-2006, and a third is linked to 2009. The graph reveals a pattern that can be meaningfully related to the development of migration, when related to the most important steps of the process of Romania's accession to the EU. 2002 and 2007 are clear marks of the accession process: 2002 is the year of removal of visa entry condition for Romanian citizens travelling to Schengen Space, 2007 is the year of Romania accession as a full member to the EU. Both moments seemed to require some preparatory measures on the Romanian side, especially associated with controlling and securing migration. During all this time, Romanian migration, mainly voluntary and economic included a large unregulated segment, increased. The 2009 growth in activity of regulating migration is more related, in our opinion, to late adjustments to the status of full member of the EU. The small increase detected in 2013 is far from the intensity of the previous periods. The changes are too recent by reference to the moment of writing this paper to understand if there are some adjusting minor modifications or 2013 is related to a new intensified set of interventions of Romanian authorities related to international migration.

**Figure 4.** *Emigration related interventions (Romania)*



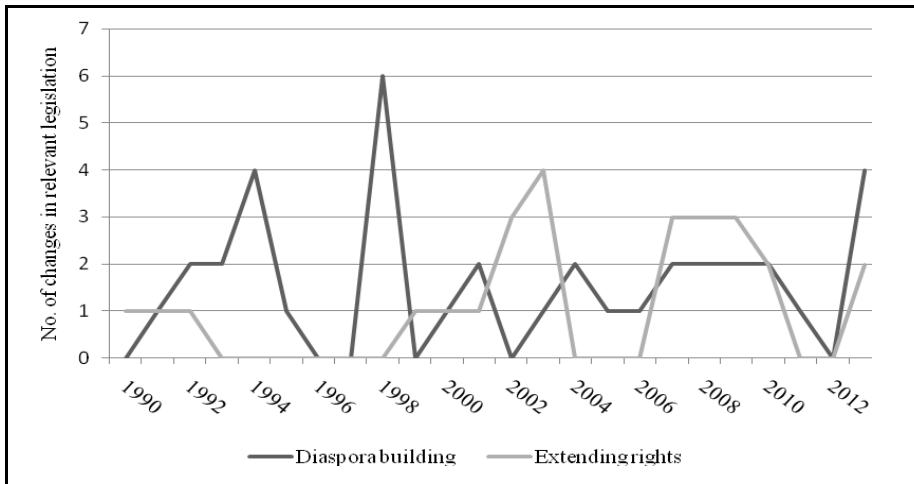
Source: Own compiled database on Romanian migration policies

Figure 5 and Figure 6 deals with *diaspora related interventions* during the same period. The resulting pictures are consistently more confusing than the previous ones, without suggesting clear patterns of authorities' involvement in managing the relation with diaspora. Except for 2006-2011, when a very fragile synchronism may be invoked, the



evolution of the two sub-dimensions diaspora building and extending rights to diaspora seem to evolve independently for the rest of the period 1990-2013.

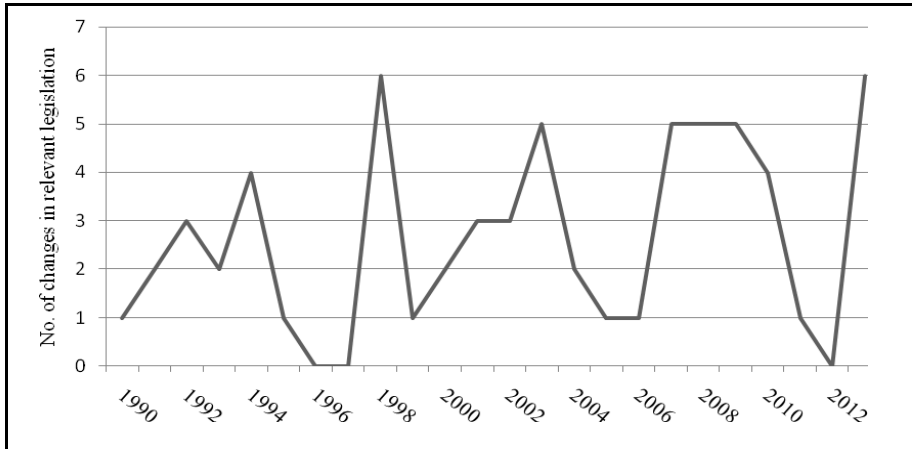
**Figure 5.** *Diaspora related interventions - sub-dimensions (Romania)*



Source: Own compiled database on Romanian migration policies

More important for our purposes here, the way diaspora related interventions evolved during 1990-2013 (see *Figure 6*) seems unrelated to the general development of migration in Romania. 2002 is the significant threshold in the increase of Romanian migration, but the ethnic communities abroad require time to come into reality. By consequence, if related to migration produced diaspora, the measures should have a certain delay in rapport with phenomenon development. Yet, in the case of Romania, some remedial measures (related to communities abroad produced by the migration before and during the communist time) may be invoked. Looking at the content and particularly to the aim of the measures is in this case informative. In an extensive proportion, the interventions are linked to what Brubaker (2000) calls accidental diaspora or to populations that cannot even be classified in the category of "accidental diaspora", but traditionally are considered by Romanian authorities as belonging to Romanian diaspora. From this point of view, illustrative is the fact that Romanians living abroad as result of post-1990 migration are explicitly included as part of Romanian diaspora starting with 2008 (Government Ordinance 10/2008). If one is considering only the five year period from 2008 to 2013 as time reference (graph not shown here), the picture of rather independent evolution of the two sub-dimensions do not considerably changes.

**Figure 6.** *Diaspora related interventions*  
(Romania)



Source: Own compiled database on Romanian migration policies

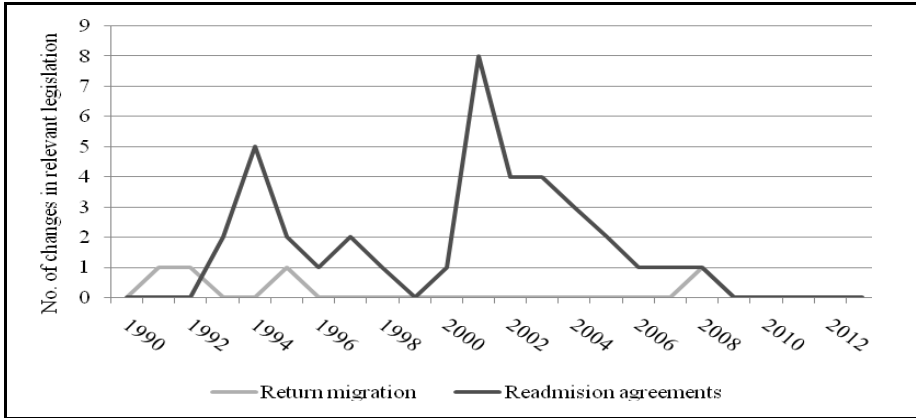
In relation to *return migration*, in the particular case of Romania, the dimension evolution is mainly driven by re-admission agreements (see *Figure 7*)<sup>1</sup>. Only one measure, in 2008, explicitly approached the issue providing a plan to support voluntary return migration. The measure appears to be related to a certain perceived need of labour on Romanian internal market, during a short period of sustained economic growth (Șerban&Toth, 2007).

The evolution of re-admission agreements seem, as in the case of emigration related interventions, consistently connected to the process of accession to the EU. The intensified efforts to sign re-admission agreements appear to be related (to precede) important dates in the accession calendar of Romania: the enacting of the Treaty of Association of Romania and the submission of official request for accession (1995) and the opening of accession negotiations between Romania and EU (1999)<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> We choose not to present in a separate figure the evolution of the dimension C - return migration related interventions. Being the reduced number of measures related to voluntary return, Figure 7 approximates well the patterns for this third dimension.

<sup>2</sup> The information about the calendar of Romania's accession to the EU are provided by Ministry of External Affairs, at [http://www.mae.ro/sites/default/files/file/mae\\_old/upload/pdf/cronologia\\_relatiilor\\_rom%C3%A2nia\\_ue.pdf](http://www.mae.ro/sites/default/files/file/mae_old/upload/pdf/cronologia_relatiilor_rom%C3%A2nia_ue.pdf)

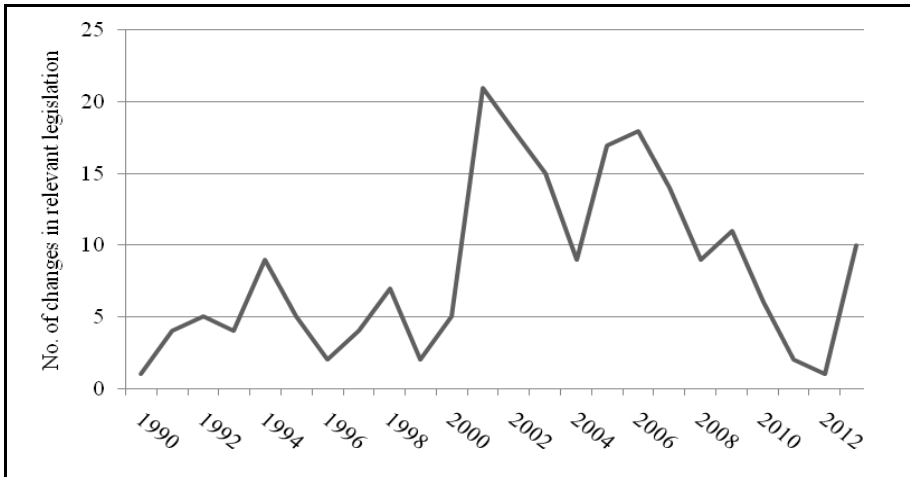
**Figure 7.** Return migration related interventions - sub-dimensions (Romania)



Source: Own compiled database on Romanian migration policies

Putting together all dimensions, without questioning their belonging together, the picture looks, for Romania, in the case of the last 24 years, pretty coherent (see *Figure 8*).

**Figure 8.** Migration policies form origin country perspective (Romania)

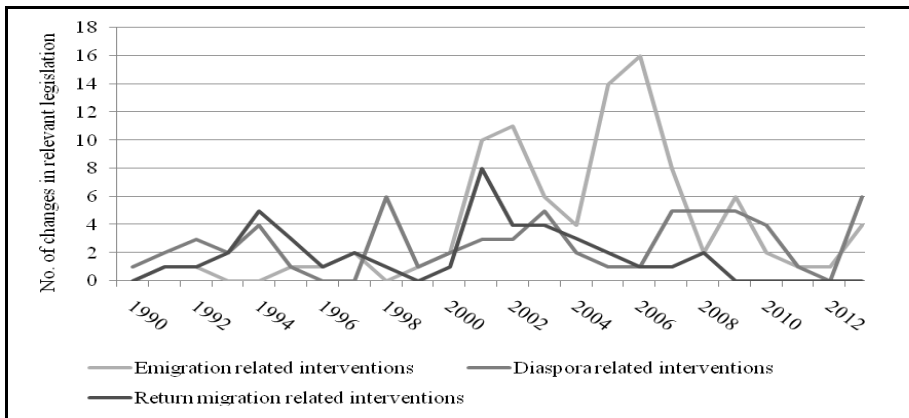


Source: Own compiled database on Romanian migration policies

Emigration related interventions (being their consistent number) and re-admission agreements dictate the trends. Because of the large share of emigration and return migration related changes in the total number of changes in legislation and because of

their accentuated concentration in time, the whole picture may be easily connected with process of Romanian accession to the EU or with adjustments to the new status of the country as an EU member. Building just the last graph, one would be tempted to interpret it as being a coherent expression of migration policies in Romania for the last 24 years. Yet, if the results are shown in separate dimension (as *Figure 9* does), it becomes obvious that diaspora related interventions are unconnected to the patterns of development shown by the other two dimensions.

**Figure 9.** *Three dimension model of migration policies from origin perspective (Romania)*



Source: Own compiled database on Romanian migration policies

## Discussions

The paper approaches one of the gaps in the field of migration studies: origin state intervention in international migration. Guided by similar work on destination state intervention, and inspired by some recent work in the field (DEMIG project, CARIM EAST project, Gamlen's work), the article tries to apply one previous elaborated definition and operationalization of migration policies from the perspective of origin state (Șerban, 2014) on the particular case of Romania. The attempt to consider origin interventions globally, as including emigration, diaspora and return migration related interventions gives specificity of this work.

The aim is not to describe Romanian authorities' intervention in international migration, but to test how this definition/operationalization works against the reality. To achieve it, the pieces of legislation were identified, and then codified as to measure changes. We worked under the assumption that, even being the inherent heterogeneity of the migration policies, one would expect to find some coherence in the way every of the three dimensions assigned to migration policies at origin (emigration, diaspora and return migration related interventions) was built in time and, if our definition is a valid

one, some coherence should be observed also at the aggregated level integrating the three dimensions in a new construct.

The effort to identify and especially to code the legislation claimed some adjustments to the initial operationalization schema. Some type of measures (e. g. intervening in labour relations/public structure dedicated to this) aiming to protect migrants while in their countries of destination, are difficult to be classified as emigration or diaspora related interventions because of their complex nature: their effects are to take place on the territory of another state, addressing diaspora members. Yet, as function they do not confer new rights, but attempt to protect migrants. In the case of this paper we have decided to assign them to emigration dimension, giving priority to the aim, not to the implementation.

Irrespective of the system of codes used, the envisaged aim of interventions proved to be a major variable affecting the validity of decision to keep or not a piece of legislation in the pool of measures of interest and even assigning it to a certain dimension. Establishing the aim of one measure is a difficult process, even when using multiple sources of information, letting room for subjectivity of the researcher to manifest.

Analysing the changes in different laws, rules and regulations related to international migration in Romania seems to suggest that the consistency of what we have called here migration policies at origin is weak. At least in the case of Romania, diaspora policies seem to be unrelated and following a different logic than the emigration and return migration policies. One then may conclude the global approach is unfit with the segmented interventions of the origin states in international migration. It is disputable how much of this segmented picture is the result of the specificities of Romania, especially from the point of view of diaspora definition authorities are using. Yet we do not consider the results as conclusive to exclude one dimension of the definition/operationalization. Our conclusion is that a dimension driven analysis is rather needed and, according to the aim of one specific work (e. g. identifying the effects of migration policies on migration development), one, two or all dimensions should be considered. In any case, considering just one of the dimensions may produce a spurious image on the intervention of origin states in international migration.

## References

- APSA (2013). *Migration and Citizenship*. Newsletter vol. 1, no. 2
- Briciu, C. (2014). Poverty in Romania: dimensions of poverty and landmarks of poverty research, *Journal of Community Positive Practices*, XIV(3), 3-18
- Brubaker, R. (2000). *Accidental diasporas and external 'homelands' in Central and Eastern Europe: past and present*. IAS: Political Science Series. Vienna, Austria: Institute for Advanced Studies.
- Castles, Stephen (2007). The factors that make and unmake migration policies. În A. Portes și J. DeWind (eds.). *Rethinking migration: new theoretical and empirical perspectives*. Bergham Books: New York, 29-61
- Czaika, M. & H. de Haas (2011). The effectiveness of immigration policies. A conceptual review of empirical literature. IMI Working Papers. Oxford, UK: International Migration Institute.

- Czaika, M. & H. de Haas (2013). Measuring migration policies: some conceptual and methodological reflections. *Migration and Citizenship: Newsletter of American Political Science Association Organized Section on Migration and Citizenship* 1(2): 40-47.
- de Haas, H. & S. Vezzoli. (2011). Leaving matters: the nature, evolution and effects of emigration policies, IMI Working Papers. Oxford, UK: International Migration Institute.
- de Haas, H. K. Natter & S. Vezzoli (2014). Compiling and coding migration policies. IMI Working Papers. Oxford, UK: International Migration Institute.
- Gamlen, A. (2006). *Diaspora Engagement Policies: What are They, and What Kinds of States Use Them?*, Working Paper 32, University of Oxford: Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS).
- Gamlen, A. (2008) The emigration state and the modern geopolitical imagination. *Political Geography* 840–56.
- Heisler, B. S. (1985). Sending Countries and the Politics of Emigration and Destination. *International Migration Review* 19(3): 469-484.
- Massey, D. S. (1999). International migration at the dawn of the twenty-first century: the role of the state. *Population and development review*, 25(2): 303-322.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Policies Department for the Relation with Romanian Abroad (2013). *The strategy for the relation with the Romanians from abroad*. 2013-2016.
- Mircea, R. (2008). The concept of immigrant's integration - a multidisciplinary approach, *Journal of Community Positive Practices*, VIII(1-2),17-44
- National Institute of Statistics (2013). *Statistical Yearbook 2003*. Bucharest: National Institute of Statistics.
- Sandu, D. (2010). *Lumile sociale ale migrației românești în străinătate*. Iași: Polirom
- Șerban M. & Lăzărescu, D. (2014). Romania. In A. Triandafyllidou& R. Gropas (eds.) *European Migration: A sourcebook*. Second Edition, (p. 301-312). Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Șerban, M. & A. Toth (2007). *Piața forței de muncă în România și imigrația*. București: Fundația pentru o Societate Deschisă
- Șerban, M. (2014). Defining migration policies from an origin country perspective. *Journal of Community Positive Practices*, IV(3), 65-78
- Vasile, V. (ed.), C. Boboc, S. Pisciă, R. E. Cramarencu (2014). *Estimarea impactului liberei circulații a lucrătorilor români pe teritoriul UE, începând cu 01. 01. 2014; realități și tendințe din perspectivă economică, ocupațională și socială, la nivel național și European*. București: Institutul European din România
- Vasilieva, K., 2012. *Population and Social Conditions*. Eurostat. *Statistics in Focus* 31/2012. Available online at: [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY\\_OFFPUB/KS-SF-12-031/EN/KS-SF-12-031-EN.PDF](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-SF-12-031/EN/KS-SF-12-031-EN.PDF) [accessed: 14 April 2013].
- Weinar, A. (2014). *Emigration Policies in Contemporary Europe*. International Migration Institute/Migration Policy Centre. CARIM-East Research Report.
- Weiner, M. (1985). On international migration and international relations. *Population and Development Review*, 11(3), 441-455.

---

# THE EVOLUTION OF THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR FAMILY IN ROMANIA AFTER THE ECONOMIC CRISIS<sup>1</sup>

---

Raluca POPESCU<sup>2</sup>

**Abstract:** *The assessment of the policies and programs to support the living standards of families and children is difficult to complete, considering the variety of programs, benefits in cash or in goods and services. This paper aims to analyze the configuration of the family support system and its evolution in the recent years. The analysis covers the financial transfers, due to insufficient data about the system of services and the lack of comparability between them. The research target is to look at the state's support for the widespread family, not for particular categories or specific situations in which family could live. After a general evaluation of the financial effort, I take a closer view on four specific instruments of support: the state allowance for children, the family allowance and the paid parental leave together with incentive for work. The analysis reveals a minimal family protection; all indicators examined showing the same pattern: low level of transfers in a decreasing trend for most aspects.*

**Keywords:** *family policies, financial benefits, family allowances, leave entitlements*

---

## Family policy model in Romania

In spite of the constant attempt of harmonizing social policies, EU states still differ very much on the family support. As a consequence of the lack of consensus over the objectives and instruments of family policy, no generally accepted operational definition of family or of family policy has been formulated at the EU level. Nevertheless, the trends identified in previous research do raise certain policy issues that states are addressing in accordance with their approaches.

---

<sup>1</sup> This paper is made and published under the aegis of the Research Institute for Quality of Life, Romanian Academy as a part of a programme co-funded by the European Union within the Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development through the project for Pluri and interdisciplinary in doctoral and post-doctoral programmes, project Code: POSDRU/159/1.5/S/141086.

<sup>2</sup> PhD, Scientific Researcher, The Research Institute for Quality of Life; Senior Lecturer at Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, University of Bucharest, Bucharest, Romania. E-mail: raluca.popescu@sas.unibuc.ro

All the EU member states have developed support measures for families and children, even if only a few have an explicit family policy. All countries supply a series of cash benefits, tax-free allowances and benefits in kind. Yet the comparative analysis of family support indicates that the common points are related rather to general principles than to specific policy objectives, revealing big differences among states, especially in policies implementation. The choices of a certain support measures or others relay on different social and familial values (Popescu R, 2003; 2014).

Under the pressure of the transition to a capitalist market, socialist countries have adopted different solutions as punctual responses to the social problems that emerged, so that they should be considered “hybrid arrangements”, with a variety of temporary solutions, not a stable category (Kovacs, 2002; Tomka, 2006). After joining the EU, under the pressures to harmonize policies, social options have become closer to old models (Wisniewski, 2005). Therefore, even if at the beginning Romania was placed in the same category with the rest of former socialist countries, the recent developments led to heterogeneous clusters. Romania is considered to have a non-interventionist model, based especially on the recent austerity policy (Stănescu I., 2014), with high social inequality along with Italy, Spain, Portugal, Latvia, Lithuania and Bulgaria (Knogler and Lankes, 2012).

For 25 years Romania has had a sinuous poverty path corresponding to the dynamic of the economy (Zamfir, 1995; Zamfir, 2001). The state social intervention was rather modest, reactive, and focused on compensating the economical cost, without any clear strategic vision. The competition for budget resources was in general won by the economic sector and lost by the social one.

The public interest on social aspects diminished drastically during the recent economic crises, being replaced by fiscal austerity and cut down of the public expenditures. Once again, like at the beginning of the transition period, poverty was rather ignored by decision-makers (Briciu C., 2014). The evolution of family policy in Romania is much linked to the evolution of public interest in poverty and social inclusion in general, because family protection was viewed more in terms of passive support for the vulnerable and poor.

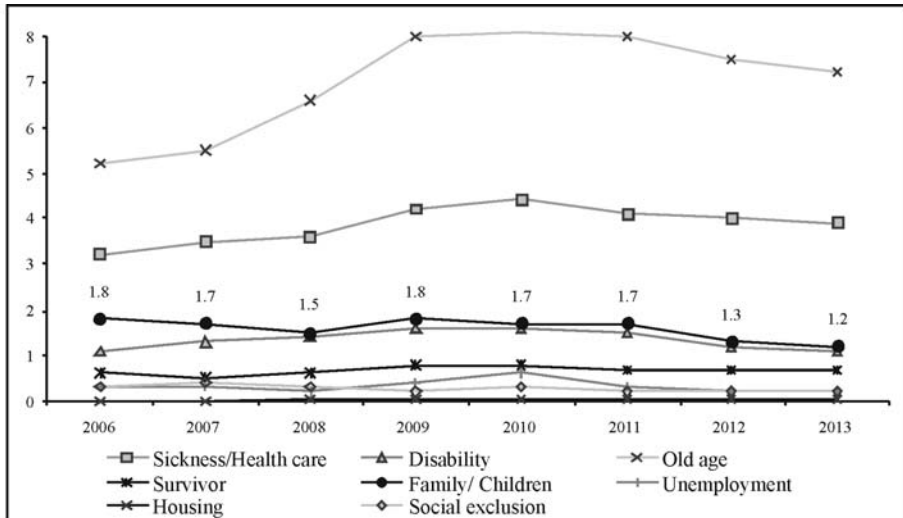
Family policy was driven by a conservative regulatory framework, a lack of financial effort and a scarcity of childcare services. Romania, as some of the former socialist countries, has moved toward a “familialisation” regime (Saxonberg & Sirovatka, 2006) from a double point of view: on one hand the state reinforced through legislative and policy measures the traditional family values and, on the other hand, the state left most duties to the family unit, adding the burden of greater responsibility (Popescu R., 2014).

## **Types of benefits**

The current system of family benefits in Romania is quite comprehensive, including a wide range of cash benefits and services, with direct forms of support for children and indirect forms for family support. However, the complex configuration of the system has an insufficient level of development and coverage of benefits and services. The level of the allowances and the quality of services provided make it strongly deficient.



**Chart 1.** Expenditures with social protection as share of GDP



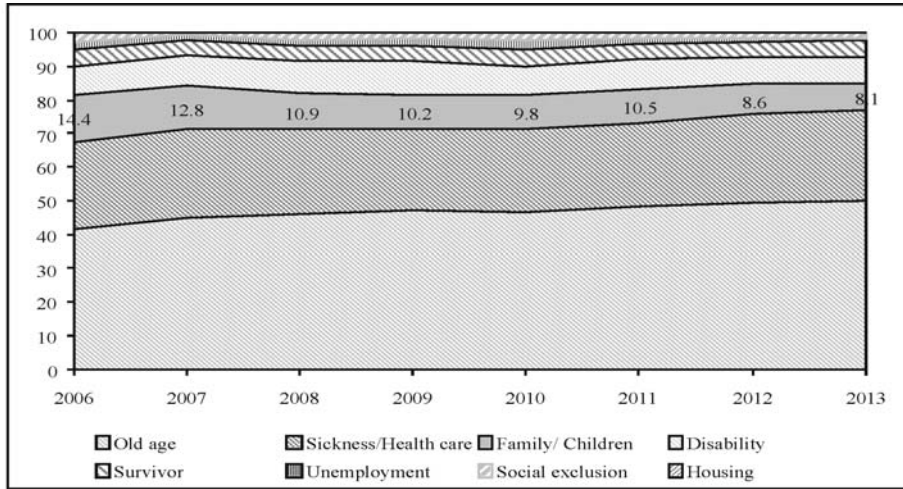
Source: National Institute of Statistics, Tempo database

The evolution of the financial effort for social protection had a sinuous pattern in the last years. For all social domains the peak was recorded in 2009/2010, after that setting up a descendent trend. The pace of decline was very different though. For health care and old age the decrease was only 7-10%, but for unemployment was 50%. The expenditures with family and children decreased with 33%, registering the highest erosion after the unemployment costs.

The family and children expenditures represents 8% of the total social costs, being on a downward trend compared to previous years when they rate over 10%. The decline is a result of the higher budget effort for old age and survivors pensions and health care. The financial efforts for family, social exclusion and unemployment were severely reduced.

This configuration stands for the distinct political option of the state to protect old age and retired persons in the foreground. As I will show further, the low family support is a stable decision, a limited effort being displayed no matter what indicator is chosen for analysis, no matter what domain or period of time we compare with.

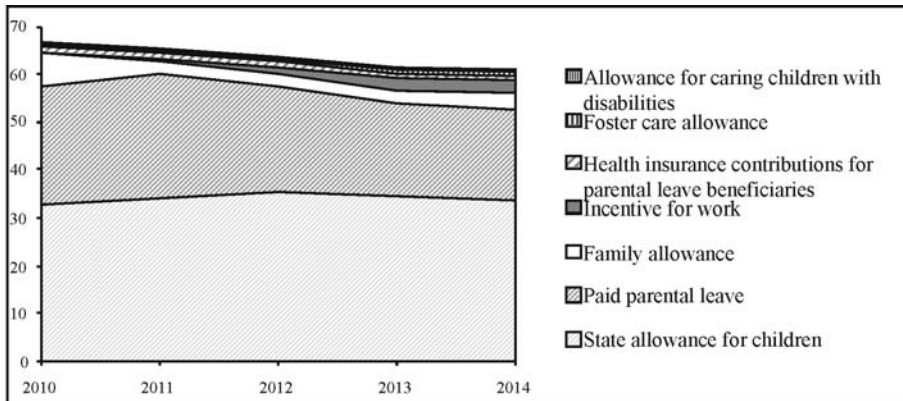
**Chart 2.** *Types of social expenditures as share of the total expenditure of social benefits*



Source: National Institute of Statistics, Tempo database

Even in the total of social work expenditures, the family costs declined from 67% to 61% in the last 5 years. The financial family support gathers several benefits, among that the state allowance for children and the paid parental leave are clearly the most important instruments. I will analyze further the most important instruments, my focus being on investigating state support for the widespread family, not for particular categories as foster families or families with children with disabilities.

**Chart 3.** *Share of family benefits in the total expenditures with social work*

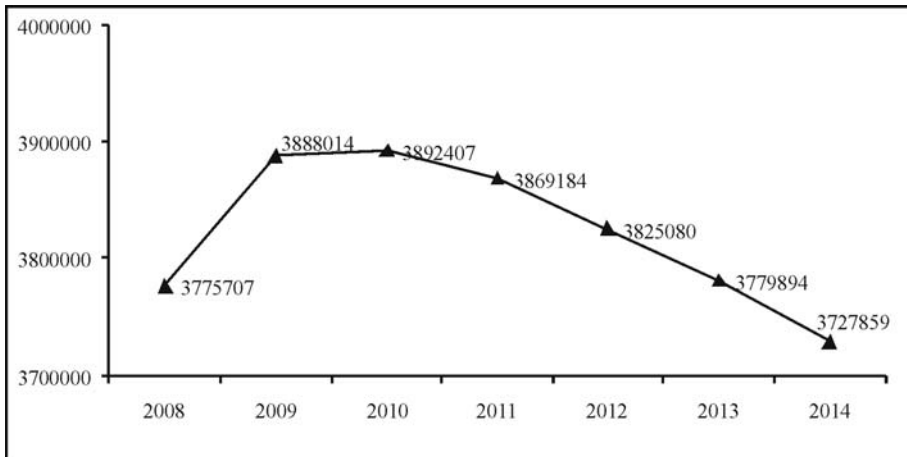


Source: author calculation based on Ministry of Labor statistical reports data

## The state allowance for children

As the family policy instrument par excellence, it represents by far the most substantial cash benefit. The state allowance for children is universal, granted for all children, and is paid considering the age limit (18 years or until the child graduates secondary level of education) and the child's need, outlining the category of children with special needs (children disabilities).

*Chart 4. The number of beneficiaries of the state allowance for children*



Source: Ministry of Labor, Statistical reports

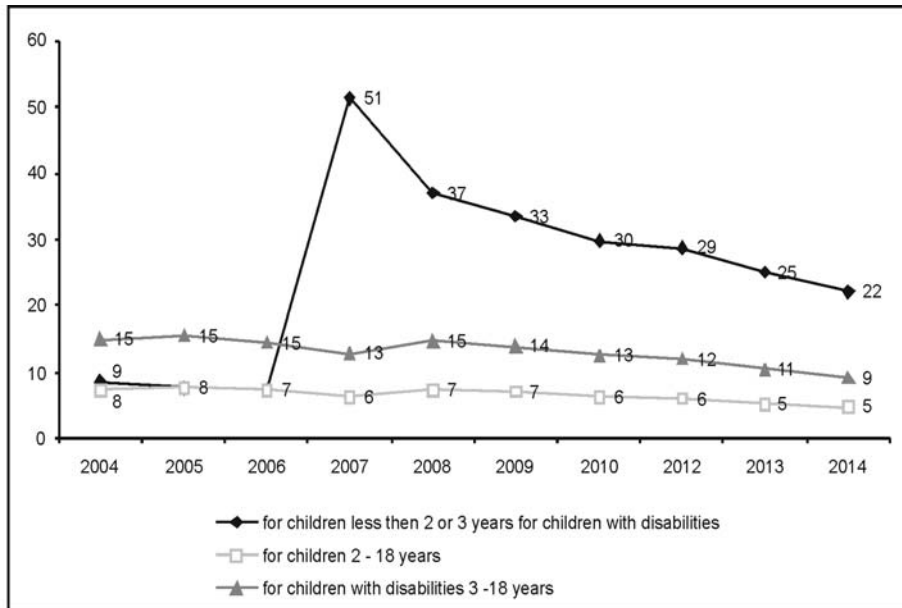
The decrease of over 100.000 children in the number of beneficiaries is a result of the decreasing population of children and low fertility rate in Romania in the last decades. Even in this circumstance, the benefit has the largest number of recipients in the state protection system, being the only universal instrument in family policy.

**Table 1.** State allowance for children – quantum per month

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2012	2013	2014
<b>children less than 2</b> (or 3 for children with disabilities)	24	24	24	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
<b>children 2 - 18</b>	21	24	24	25	32 40	42	42	42	42	42
<b>children with disabilities 3 -18</b>	42	48	48	50	64 80	84	84	84	84	84

Source: Ministry of Labor, Statistical reports

**Chart 5.** *The value of the state allowance as share of the minimum wage per economy*



Source: author calculation based on Ministry of Labor statistical reports data

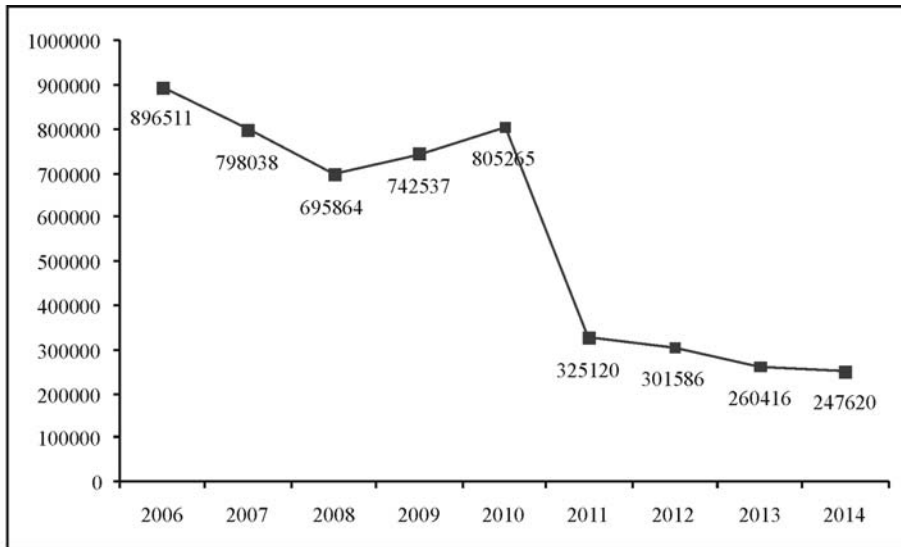
The value of the state allowance has fluctuated between 5% of minimum wage in 2014 (for children of 2-18 years) to 51% of minimum wage in 2007 (for children under 2). The modification of quantum for children less than 2 years in 2007 was one of the most important rises in the financial effort of the family policy. However, since then the value of the benefit was reduced continuously, being now less than a quarter of the minimum wage.

Even if it is not designed for this, the benefit turns out to be an essential instrument for poor families and the constant degradation of its value make it inefficient in supporting them. The normative method for the poverty measure used by the Research Institute for Quality of Life demonstrates that in the urban area, the incomes brought by two minimum wages and two state allowance for children placed a family of four members below half of the decent minimum living threshold in 2011-2013 (Mihăilescu A., 2014). In the rural area the situation is even worse: a family of two adults and two children with one or two minimum wages and the state allowance fall below the subsistence threshold (Mihăilescu A., 2014). According to Eurostat data, almost a half (48.5% in 2013) of the Romanian children are poor or socially excluded, a value almost double compared to the EU27 level, with only 27.7% of the children in the same situation.

## Family allowance

“The complementary family allowance” and “The single parent family allowance” were instituted in 2004 and granted by means testing, so the income threshold and the quantum varied every year. In 2010 they were unified in the same allowance – “The allowance for family support”, but the base principles remained the same: the quantum varies depending of two categories of income (the income threshold is the same for both types of family) and four categories defined by the number of children.

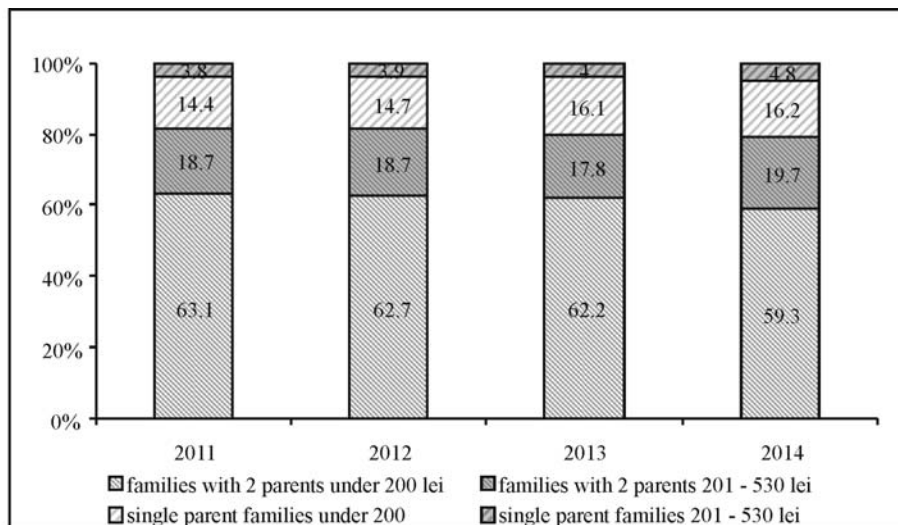
**Chart 6.** *The number of beneficiaries of family allowance*



Source: Ministry of Labor, Statistical reports

The number of beneficiaries has declined constantly, the highest decrease was recorded in 2011, as a result of the legislative change of merging the two allowances and introducing higher entitlement threshold.

The number of the beneficiaries has declined despite the fact that the poverty rate among families with children has remained constant at high levels. The simple presence of children in a household and any additional child significantly increases the poverty risk for it. The poverty rate for the households with two adults and three or more dependent children is over 60% and the risk of poverty and social exclusion for single-parent families is also around 60% (Briciu C., 2014).

**Chart 7.** *The share of beneficiaries of family allowance by type of family and area of residence*

Source: Ministry of Labor, Statistical reports

Around 80% of the allowance beneficiaries are families with two parents. Most of the recipients (around 60% each year) are families with two parents and very low income, under 200 lei. At least 75% of the beneficiary children each year came from rural area. For example, in 2014, there were 473. 223 children in the families receiving the allowance and 388. 854 (82%) of them were residents in rural area.

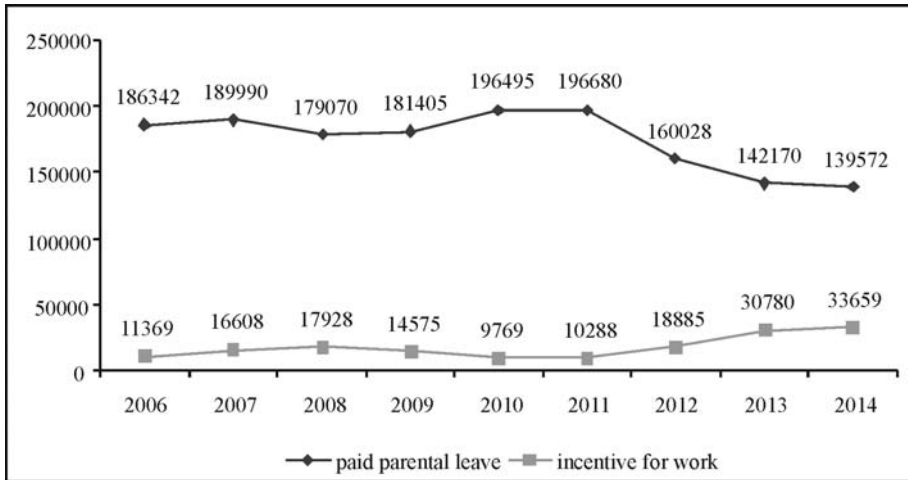
## Leave entitlements

Parental leave and monthly allowance for children is the second important instrument in family policy. The indemnity is given to insured persons and can be performed on demand, by mother or father, until de age of 2 (or 3 for children with disabilities). The minimum working/insured period has varied across the years from 6 months to 9, 10 months, at present time being 12 consecutive months. The quantum represents 85% of the parent's previous income, but the range limits are different depending on the lengths of the leave: if the parent chose 1 year of leave, the value should be minimum 600 lei and maximum 34000 lei; if the parent chose 2 years of leave, the value should still be minimum 600 lei, but the maximum is only 1200 lei. Before 2012 a lot of income standards were applied: 75% of the previous income of the parent (but with a maximum of 4000 lei), a flat rate of 600 lei and 85% of the average wage per economy and so on.

Parents returning to work before the child age of 2/3 years receive a 500 lei incentive for the re-insertion on the labor force. The same amount will be received by those who have not contributed to the social security fund before birth, but have found a job in

the period of leave, in order to encourage the employment and fertility in the employed population. In the past, this incentive was 100 lei, but starting with 2011, the quantum raised fifth times.

**Chart 8.** *The number of beneficiaries of the leave entitlements*



Source: Ministry of Labor, Statistical reports

The decrease in the number of paid leave beneficiaries is a result of fertility decline and particularly of re-insertion on the labor market. The evolution of the two support instruments is in opposition: when paid leave recipients are increasing (for example 2008-2011 periods), the incentive receivers are decreasing. The 5 times increase of the quantum of the incentive in 2011 (from 100 lei to 500 lei) results in a 20% decrease of the paid leave beneficiaries and 80% raise of the incentive recipients next year. In 2014, the number of incentive receivers became almost 3.5 times higher than in 2011, before the increase. Hence, the measures succeed to achieve their objective: encouraging parents to return to work.

Parents can choose from one of the two options depicted in Table 2. The majority choose the second, almost two third of them taking paid leave for 2 years, even if the maximum threshold is smaller. But considering their previous income, the choice is rational: more than half of them take the minimum amount of 600 lei, compared with only 7% of parents choosing the first option. Additionally, the parents choosing the second option do not start working before the 2 year leave. On the contrary, the parents choosing the first option with shorter leave (only 1 year) also go back to work earlier, and represent almost 90% of the incentive receivers.

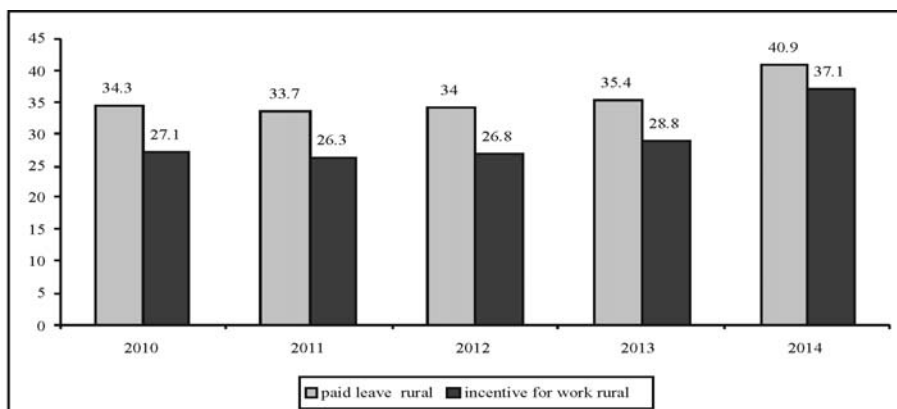
**Table 2.** The number of recipients of paid leave and incentive for work, the two options

		2013	2014
<b>Total</b>	minimum value of 600 lei	75509	71113
	85% of income	65805	67092
	incentive for work	30506	33641
<b>Option 1</b> 1 year leave paid min 600 lei max 3400 lei	Total	9781	9493
	minimum value of 600 lei	1102	694
	85% of income	8591	8707
	incentive for work	27865	29592
<b>Option 2</b> 2 years leave paid min 600 lei max 1200 lei	Total	126614	125810
	minimum value of 600 lei	71615	68449
	85% of income	54106	55692
	incentive for work	2641	4049

Source: Ministry of Labor, Statistical reports

The configuration of the two choices indicates two distinct categories of parents:

- The workers with high income, staying at home and caring for the child for less than one year: over 75% of them received incentive for starting work earlier than 1 year. These parents are less frequent; they represent only 7% of the whole beneficiary parents.
- The workers with low income, probably the majority of them having the minimum threshold or less, who stay home and care for the child for the entire extent of the 2 years of leave: 53% of them are paid with the minimum amount and only 3% of them received incentive for starting the work earlier than 1 year. These parents represent the vast majority, over 90% of the recipients.

**Chart 9.** Leave entitlements in rural area

Source: Ministry of Labor, Statistical reports



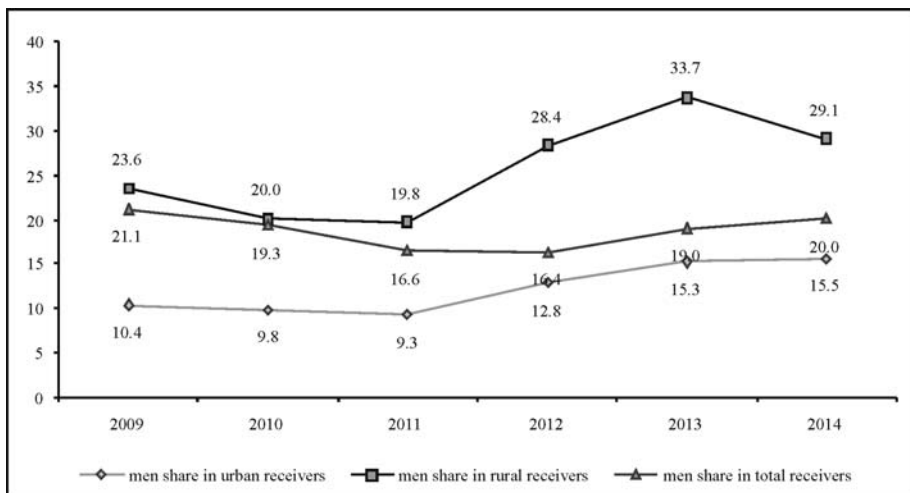
These arrangements indicate a poor situation of the labor force of the young parents and a modest standard of living for the family of the newborns in Romania, especially in rural areas.

Even if every year 45% of the newborn children come from rural area, only around 35% of the paid leave recipients and less than 30% of the incentive-for-work recipients are parents from rural area. However, a growing share of the rural recipients (40% of the paid leave and 35% of the incentive receivers) could be identified in 2014, but there is no clear trend of a better employment in rural area for young parents yet.

It is remarkable that men are quite frequent among paid leave beneficiaries, especially in rural area. Romania has the highest rate of men taking leave entitlements from the European Union and this could be interpreted as a sign of a better work life balance and equality. Considering the whole picture of gender equality in Romania, this explanation becomes hard to believe. Men are involved in parental leave rather as a strategy of adaptation to the lack of resources (Popescu R., 2014).

First, the share of men in paid parental leave or receiving incentive for work comes to be over 33% in rural area in 2013, with a slightly decrease in 2014, but still reaching almost 30%. In addition, since the latest legislative changes in 2012, men taking parental leave are increasing.

**Chart 10.** *The shares of men in leave entitlements receivers (paid leave and incentive for work), by area of residence*



Source: author calculation based on Ministry of Labor statistical reports data

Second, the so called “daddy’s month” is taken by only 0.5% in 2013 and 2.8% in 2014 of the fathers entitled to. This measure aims to a better involvement of fathers in

childcare, a better gender equality in the family and a better work life balance for both parents. Considering the fact that less than 3% of fathers choose to take this opportunity and prefer to lose this one month paid leave (it can't be switched between parents), we can assume that these are parents with a better social status that do not want to lose 15% of their income.

With these two sets of data in mind, even if there is not sufficient evidence to support it, my hypothesis is that men in parental leave are the only employed person in the household and have most probably low incomes. The majority of them choose most likely the second option of 2 years leave and minimum of 600 lei payment. They can have temporary informal jobs in that period, the housewife being the one that actually takes care of the child. This result is a rational solution of the family, especially for rural area, where the employment opportunities are smaller.

## Conclusions

The evolution of family policy in Romania is strongly associated with the evolution of public interest in social aspects in general, because family protection was viewed more in terms of passive support for the vulnerable and the poor. The interest in family support diminished drastically during the recent economic crises, being replaced by fiscal austerity and cut down from public expenditures; similar to the beginning of the transition period, social aspects and especially family difficulties were rather ignored by decision-makers.

The low family support following the economic crisis turns out to be a constant decision, a limited effort being displayed no matter what data, no matter what domain or period of time we choose to compare with. The configuration of financial family benefits in Romania stands for a distinctive political decision to place family behind other social protection domains like old age and healthcare. This choice emerged not only from the total amount paid (that is expected to be higher for this two social protection aspects), but from the downward trend compared to previous years, expenditures with family and children registering the highest erosion after the unemployment costs. Under the pressure triggered by the economic crisis, major cuts were made on the family benefits because they are not considered as critical and imperative. This situation is quite contradictory with the declarative pro-family policy, evident from many other features, from the protection of family set by the constitutional law to stipulation of family unit, not individuals, as the base of the social protection system.

The financial family support gathers several benefits, among that the state allowance for children and the paid parental leave are clearly the most important instruments. The state allowance for children is the only universal instrument in the family protection system and by having the largest number of recipients (around 3.5-4 millions of children) and the largest share in the social work expenditures (over a third) represents by far the most substantial instrument of the family policy. The value of the state allowance reached a peak of over a half of the minimum wage for children under 2 in 2007; however, since then, the value of the benefit has reduced continuously, being now less than a quarter of the minimum wage.

The allowance for family support is a benefit targeting poor families, typically from rural area. The benefit is means tested and over 75% each year are families with very low income (under 200 lei) and at least 75% of the beneficiary children each year come from rural area. The number of beneficiaries has declined constantly following the economic crisis, even if the poverty rate for families with dependant children has remained at high levels.

Parental leave and monthly allowance for children is the second important instrument in family policy. The configuration of choices between one or two years leave and incentives for work reveal two distinct categories of parents: 1) the workers with high income, staying at home and caring for the child less then one year, who are less frequent, representing less than 10% of the whole beneficiary parents and 2) the workers with low income, probably the majority of them having the minimum threshold or less, who stay at home and take care of the child for the full length of 2 years of leave, who represent the vast majority of parents, over 90% of the recipients. These arrangements indicate a poor situation of the labor force of the young parents and a modest standard of living for the family of the newborns in Romania, especially in rural areas. Only approximately one third of the paid leave recipients and less then 30% of the incentive-for-work recipients are parents from rural area. Men are quite frequent among paid leave beneficiaries, especially in rural area, but as a strategy of adaptation to the lack of resources rather than a symbol of gender equality. They are probably the only employed person in the household and have low incomes. Parental leave beneficiaries' profile needs to be closer examined in order to consider this hypothesis.

All indicators studied show the same pattern: low level of transfers in a decreasing trend. The number of beneficiaries is declining; the relative value of the benefits is diminishing. The analysis of the four main financial instruments of the family policy (state allowance for children, the family allowance, the paid parental leave and the incentive for work) reveals a minimal family protection, a scarce effort following the economic crisis, with little hope to redress.

## Bibliography

- Briciu, C. (2014). Poverty in Romania: dimensions of poverty and landmarks of poverty research. *Journal of Community Positive Practices*, XIV(3), 3-18
- Knogler, M. și Lankes, F. (2012). Social Models in the Enlarged European Union: Policy Dimensions and Country Classification. *Comparative Economic Studies*, 54, 149–172
- Mihăilescu, A. (2014). Minimum standard of living, a constant of research and social policy work option. *Journal of Community Positive Practices*, XIV(1), 131-140
- Popescu, R., (2014). Family policies in Romania within the European framework. *Journal of Community Positive Practices*, XIV(3), 99-113
- Popescu R. (2003). Changing Family and Family Policies CEE countries. B. Voicu & H. Rusu (ed.) *Globalization, Integration, and Social Development in Central and Eastern Europe*. Sibiu: Psihomedica, 215 – 229
- Saxonberg, S. & Sirovátka, T. (2006). Failing Family Policy in Post-Communist Central Europe. *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis*, 8 (2), 185-202

- Stănescu, I. (2014). Romania: a non-interventionist family support policy?. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 19 (5), 19-24
- Tomka, B. (2006). East Central Europe and the European social policy model: A long-term view. *East European Quarterly* 40(2), 135–159.
- Wisniewski, J. (2005). Convergence toward the European social model? Impact of EU accession on polish social policy. *Review of European and Russian Affairs* 1(1), 1–25.
- Zamfir, C., (2001). *Situația sărăciei în România. Politici propuse*. București: Creative ID UNDP
- Zamfir, C. & Zamfir E. (ed.), (1995). *Politici sociale. România în context European*. București: Editura Alternative
- Ministry of Labor, *Statistical reports of the activity in social work area (Raportare statistice privind activitatea în domeniul asistenței sociale)* 2008-2014, <http://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/index.php/ro/2014-domenii/familie/politici-familiale-incluziune-si-asistenta-sociala/725>
- National Institute of Statistics, *Tempo-Online database*, <http://statistici.insse.ro/shop/?lang=en>
- Eurostat database*, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/income-and-living-conditions/data/database>

---

# VATRA LUMINOASĂ: CONSTRUCTING A DISTRICT, BUILDING A COMMUNITY (1933 – 1945)<sup>1</sup>

---

Andrei Răzvan VOINEA<sup>2</sup>

**Abstract:** *This article investigates the construction of the working class district “Vatra Luminoasă” in Bucharest between 1933 and 1945 using two complementary methods of analysis. On the one hand, the research in the haze of archives and magazines from the forties redeems the chronological chain of events that led to the construction of the dwellings and the institutional structures involved in this act. On the other hand, the social aspects of the everyday life in the district can’t be researched only by the references to the files in the archive, but by adopting a different perspective which consists of oral interviews with the old lodgers of the neighborhood. The four interviews that I will refer, conducted starting 2012 on the streets of the district, on phone or in separate meetings with the lodgers recompose a social life framed by the constructed environment and determined by the urban and architectural composition. The article shows the process in which the lodgers appropriated their dwellings and their district and how the architect’s and urban planners’ plans determined the life in the district.*

**Keywords:** *social housing; allotments; Casa Autonomă a Construcțiilor; Vatra Luminoasă; oral history; urban planning; everyday life.*

---

---

<sup>1</sup> This paper is made and published under the aegis of the Research Institute for Quality of Life, Romanian Academy as a part of programme co-funded by the European Union within the Operational Sectorial Programme for Human Resources Development through the project for Pluri and interdisciplinary in doctoral and post-doctoral programmes Project Code: POSDRU/159/1.5/S/141086

<sup>2</sup> Ph. D Candidate at the University of Architecture and Planning “Ion Mincu”, Bucharest. He holds a B. A. in History (Major) and English (Minor) and two M. A., offered by the University of Bucharest (British Cultural Studies M. A Program) and Central European University (Budapest). E-mail: voinea\_andrei\_razvan@yahoo.com

## Oral history and the quest for “silent agents”

In this outstanding “Social History of Housing (1815 – 1985)”, historian John Burnett argued that “any discussion of housing has two main aspects – quantitative and qualitative. People need shelter, but they also need shelter which is adapted to geography, climate and place of work, and which provides certain standards of construction, space, hygiene and comfort in which the business of home-making can go effectively. Houses are physical structures; homes are social, economic and cultural institutions” (Burnet, 1986:3). Constructing a district from scratch following precise urban and architectural plans constitutes the basis for building a community; however, this does not implicitly imply a successful initiative. While this process of constructing *a house* asks for a separate method of investigation, the analysis of the community that moves into a new district requires an approach that concentrates on *home*, hence the need to address the issues of social aspects and everyday life using a different method: oral history.

Starting from the theories regarding the oral history developed by authors such as Alessandro Portelli (1997), Linda Shopes (2002) and Paul Thompson (1988), the following investigation in the everyday life of the neighborhood lies on the method of oral history as a complementary method for the reconstruction of the life in the district “Vatra Luminoasă”. The necessity of adopting this method is determined by twofold causes. On the one hand, a historic inquiry implies a thorough investigation in the archives, which in this particular case cover only the beginning of the construction of the district and mostly consist in technical details of the construction (materials, institutions involved etc.). On the other hand, the interviews with the lodgers who lived or had lived in the district bring new perspectives in the research, directing the inquiry into the field of everyday life. Why is the oral history relevant in such a case and which are the risks for adopting this method?

Referring to interviews, Linda Shopes concluded that “contextualized thoughtfully, they can help a reader understand personal experience as something deeply social” (Shopes, 2002: 5), and that oral history has the importance of turning “blind” characters in agents of history, considering that they may open new views of history through their own story. Hence, historian's task becomes to reconstruct the narrative, weaving oral history with archive information. Indeed, many testimonies are ways of checking this archive information, but it is not only the meaning of the interviews. Changing the historical scale from social to biography, testimonies acquire creative sense, talking not only about facts and events, but also about their reporting in the interviewees' biography. Regarding the risks of this method, Shopes underlines that testimonies tend to exaggerate the influence, individual dynamism and diminish the importance of the political and cultural authorities' measures. (Shopes, 2002: 6). It is not the case for the Vatra Luminoasă district, as the respondents did not claim the initiative of building the dwellings in any way, but eventually the effort of their parents or grandparents for their purchase. However, many interviews contain false leads and carry erroneous information and interviewees tend to collect more events and give them a common sense while suppressing the time element. I have chosen elderly persons for the interviews, considering that they are able to provide details on some new

neighborhoods where residents can not know than indirect sources. Moreover, they guided us to other old lodgers of this district, and most of them have accepted dialogue, surprised by the situation initiative to become witness to history who did not take part directly.

I have asked particular question regarding to the moment when the lodgers moved in the neighborhood, who were the constructors of the house (architect or institution), details regarding the house and the atmosphere in the street, their opinion regarding the fact that the dwellings are considered protected by the Municipality. Other directions of the queries refer to mapping the elements that characterized the district and the living beyond the architectural particularities and, more important I tried to locate and understand how the lodgers are aware that historical structures (the state) or historical processes of modernization influence the development of their own destinies. The article represents an a mutual validation of the methods, as this tension between oral history and thick analysis of the documents from archives creates the framework for the better understanding of this historical process.

As for two of the main concepts mentioned throughout the article “district” and “community”, I will mainly refer to them as they were defined by Nițulescu (2004). Among the various definitions of the district, I will refer in this article to the one which characterizes the district as a “section of the city, designed as two-dimensional spaces, in which the observer mentally marches which can be recognized as having a common and identifiable characteristic. Always (recognized from within), these districts are used for external references, whenever visible from the outside. By this way, city structuring appears to be different from one individual to another, depending on expansion and distances considered”. (Nițulescu, 2004:74) The reason for choosing this definition for the Vatra Luminoasă district lies in the advantage that this district had in comparison with others of a kind in terms of planning, construction and simultaneous movement of the lodgers in the new dwellings. Secondly, I will refer to the notion of community as introduced and defined by Nițulescu (2004:60) “The social life in the city evolved within the framework of human communities. The term “community” becomes, by its frequent usage as an adjective a means of describing a set of values, a social existence and the behavior of the individuals settled in the urban environment. However, equally, the community acts as a mediator between the state and the civil society and, becomes a means of describing processes and phenomena with the aim of legitimizing them in the domain of the political decision. From this perspective, the community emerges as an agent of social change”. Following the same line of inquiry, the human community in the city takes the shape of the *vicinity* (“vecinătatea urbană”), as a fundamental element of the urban life. . .” (Nițulescu, 2004:61) Building a neighborhood from scratch places the question of transforming the built environment in a living district with various functions, therefore inventing the *vicinity*. To be more specific, Nițulescu underlines the different aspects of this concept, such as a “relation of proximity between two or more elements in a specific frame” or “a social relation constituted between the individuals who live or work close by” (Nițulescu, 2004:61).

## How it all began: the founding the *Autonomous Company for Housing* in 1930

The reform of social housing was reactivated at the beginning of the thirties when based on a new law passed by the Parliament in May 1930, the authorities founded a new structure within the Ministry of Labor, *Autonomous Company for Housing*, which aimed to facilitate the population with low incomes (especially the persons insured at the Central Company for Social Insurance) and secondly the civil servants the acquisition of own home. Why was necessary such an intervention from the state on the real estate market?

Founding this state company represented another strategy of the housing policies implemented by the modern Romanian state, following the creation of the Communal Company for Low-Cost Housing (1910) and the land reform at the end of the First World War. Because of the constant growth of the population and the precarious condition of living at the periphery of the city (where most of the newcomers settled), the social reformers (physicians, urban planners, architects, politicians) decided to make a decisive step in order at least to secure a decent house for the increasing number of bureaucrats who couldn't afford its acquisition. Therefore, the questions posed by Constantinescu and Dan "what happens with the ones that need a dwelling and from various reasons don't have the necessary resources to afford one" (Constantinescu, D., 2005:87) represents the point of departure in analyzing the strategy of the state in order to secure this need.

The funds to build the first 300 houses were secured through a loan of five million dollars from the "Estero Italian Imprese" Bank. The construction of these new social housing were intended, firstly to civil servants employed on day, civilians, soldiers or priests, and for those operating in the institutions whose budgets are subject to parliamentary approval. From this initial Fund, the Company built a group of only 70 individual dwellings in Cotroceni District (1930-1933), ("Parcul Independenței") and other buildings designed for other institutions such as the National Bank, C. E. C. (The Central Economy Company), The Industrial Loan and The Urban and Rural Land Loan. According to the Law from 1930, the Company already hired architects to design two types of houses: Type A - popular housing for workers, with an area of 36 sqm (including three rooms, kitchen food pantry, cellar, attic, storage) and type B apartment - economical housing, with an area of 56 sqm and five rooms and annexes. Both types encompass rooms with a height of 3.10m downstairs and 2.90m at the upper floor and a basement of 2.40m height, situated at a height of 60cm from the level of the sidewalk. According to the description, the main entrance was decorated with cement mosaic, the toilets were decorated with small colored cement tiles, sinks feature imported tiles, kitchens had fir planks or cement mosaic tile, they had been provided with stoves, indoor plumbing and were connected to the existing electricity and sewage systems.



An extensive material on these new constructions that were supposed to be erected published in the journal “Society of Tomorrow” in the fall of 1930, also underlined the high quality of the finishes and interior design. In addition, this type of economic houses promised more innovation and quality on the inside: reinforced concrete slab outside, roof tiles outside the building, noticeably thicker exterior walls outside living rooms, and some richer profiles ornamentation, balconies, eaves nails inside, plastering trowel with stone dust, scale reinforced concrete interior mosaics, wooden staircase to the attic. Among social categories that were included on the list of possible beneficiaries were pensioners, invalids, war widows and those demobilized from the Army. Since 1933 (at which time the Company is administrated by the Central Company for Social Insurance) the efforts focused on raising a neighborhood in east side of Bucharest, in Vatra Luminoasă district.

### **A district from scratch: Constructing the dwellings in Vatra Luminoasă (1933 – 1939 – 1945)**

The types described above were built by the *Autonomous Company for Housing* both as individual buildings throughout the country and in Independenței Allotment, following the Garden City example. Designed with a strong influence of the Neoromanian style, the dwellings couldn't resolve the housing demand from Bucharest, especially considering the constant growth of the population (which tripled from 1912 to 1940 from 300. 000 inhabitants to almost 1million). Hence, the need to design large districts at the periphery of the city determined the directors of the Company to start yearly campaigns for building the dwellings in Vatra Luminoasă. In addition, the style used the two architects I. Hanciu and N. Aprihăneanu departed from the Neoromanian and embraced the simplicity of International modern style. The Company constructed in 1933/1934 campaign 66 dwellings, in 1934/1935, 8 dwellings, 1935/1936, 18 dwellings, in 1936/1937, 36 dwellings, in 1937/1938, 66 dwellings.

Although Vatra Luminoasă district represented a new project, its main criticism continued to refer to the fact that actually the prices of the dwellings weren't as affordable as the legislator considered and linked to restrict access to credit for actual construction, as evidence of the social and professional status and new owners (workers and craftsmen from state industry and municipalities, private officials) while workers and craftsmen with no secure incomewere the last priority. Preferred are those who either work experience or those who already have substantial material possessions, evidenced by the advance of the beneficiaries required to submit. “Realitatea Ilustrată”, from November 1938 presented aspects of the inauguration in the presence of district authorities, among which Michael Ralea (Minister of Labour), General Dombrowschi (Mayor of Bucharest), G. G. Mironescu (Royal Adviser) underlying the fact that the dwellings are the “property of workers who have obtained favorable condition and low rates.”

After these first eight years with no more than 200 dwellings constructed, the Parliament considered the time for a change and passed another law on March 30, 1939, which allowed wider access to loans. In the head note of the law, the initiators review the Company's activity between 1930-1939, concluding that “the institution did

not meet the purpose for which it was created, either because of limited financial resources they have at hand, either because of the trend of [...] transforming of this institution in a banking institution that focused more on lending instead on constructing, as the legislature had intended.” This decisive moment coincided with a change in the architecture. Whereas the two architects designed up to that point only individual dwellings (coupled two by two under the same roof, joined by common walls), from 1939, they begin the construction of row dwellings with a garden in front of the house and a small backcourt at the back of the house. This project represented the first project in Bucharest with dwellings displayed at a row (on most of the streets, the architects “united” more than ten dwellings under the same roof).

The most important archival documents related to the design of this area show details of the building campaign 1940 – 1941. According to the archives<sup>1</sup>, in July 1940 the members of the C.T.S. (Higher Technical Council), Duiliu Marcu and Richard Bordenachego to the construction site of the 92 dwellings that were supposed to be constructed in 1940/1941 campaign. In addition to the dwellings, the architects designed the construction of a community center (which wasn’t constructed) and two commercial centers. Regarding the materials that were used more than seventy years ago, the documents keep precise data: “simple concrete foundations, masonry in elevation composed of pressed brick with mortar caustic lime and cement, the framing made of fir, the roof made of sheet metal and normal ditches and tubes, interior coating with caustic lime and cement, normal fir woodwork, wooden floor, mosaic, plain concrete, the stairs and the bathroom scale with steel concrete with an addition of mosaic, terracotta stoves”. This details, although apparently not relevant will be present in the narration of the respondents of the interviews with direct reference regarding their quality.

As for the dwellings themselves, the architects designed two types: type I (68 dwellings) and type III (24 dwellings). They were constructed by the “Agenco” company who won the auction where important companies have participated, such as those of Emil Prager, Company “Edilitatea”, “Romanian Building”. The report signed by C. T. S. (Higher Technical Council) concludes that “in terms of the architecture of the facades, there is first an obvious disparity between the styles of type I and III [...]. This inconvenience will be removed by unifying style facades respective dwellings groups and simplifying the facade elements to the project, which, in particular side and rear facades are unsatisfactory.” But this wasn’t the same critique that the members of C. T. S. referred at in their examination. Among the most important critiques, the C. T. S. members mention the necessity to build a school, a church and a kindergarten, but also the fact that the allotment plan was not initially submitted for approval, the auction was held before approving C.T.S., the paucity of green spaces, and other mistakes urban planning mistakes. Architect Duiliu Marcu criticized a couple of details regarding both the architectural and urban aspects of the project, among which the fact that designing the backcourts would lead to water drain and unwanted infiltration (a fact which will be lately confirmed by one of the lodgers). Due to these problems, the project was one step close of not being approved. Another obstacle is totally unexpected: reinforced

---

<sup>1</sup> File 46/1940, Consiliul Tehnic Superior, A. N. I. C (Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale)

concrete floors mandatory for any construction is procured increasingly difficult due Army's Procurement Ministry approval, and the price increases enormously. However, the draft plans of the allotments and the drawn plans turn by the end of year 1940 into bricks and concrete. The confirmation comes directly from architects who publish an article in "Architectura" Magazine (1942) where they present their own work from the previous years and the plan for the following, as the last dwellings were erected in 1945.

The construction of the 600 dwellings meant that more than 2000 people started a new life in this new modern district of Bucharest. Who were the lodgers that moved in this district, which were their professions and how did they cope with the new reality? The following chapter investigates the social life of the district from some of the oldest lodgers of the neighborhood who either still live in their initial homes or moved in the district later on. Due to expansion the city limits, the district is considered quite close to the center, and the villas were transformed in housing for civil servants and industrial workers in genuine luxury villas.

## Everyday life in the district: meeting the lodgers

Oral testimonies<sup>1</sup> from Auza Buzescu Street underline the fact that the buildings were built in 1945 - 1947 "following the English model" for the Gas company workers, but the name of the architect remains unknown. According to Mr. A. B, the importance of the uniformity should determine the authorities to preserve it and not authorize the interventions that break the uniformity, although this means paying more taxes. The second lodger of the neighborhood<sup>2</sup>, on the street Rușchița assures that the dwellings were built for workers at Malaxa factories during the war. She mentions the fact that they were not nationalized, but that in 1968 when she moved to the neighborhood the rumors told that the whole area was supposed to be systematized in order to build the an Olympic village. And a first distinction appears linked to age differences that accelerates the different options: the oldest inhabitants of the area have not changed much housing instead youngest, recently moved to the neighborhood amend, especially those on the corners.

A number of interesting details were offered on Calinului Street from an old lodger of the district<sup>3</sup>. The names of the architect or engineer were forgotten, though their signature lies on the building plans which the respondent had checked lately. The district is considered quiet, with little traffic and no noise means of transport. Actually, the traffic increased only after the construction of ten-storey block after the 1977 earthquake, considered a special quality block by apartment size and quality. Name of the park on which the block was constructed was long forgotten. The only main disadvantage of the district is caused by weak soundproofing: noise from neighboring apartments easily pass through walls, whether for basement, ground floor or upper chamber (which many lodgers transformed into a bedroom). He also confirmed that

---

<sup>1</sup> Interview on the field, June 2013, Mr. A. B, ~50years old

<sup>2</sup> Interview on the field, June 2013, woman, ~70 years old

<sup>3</sup> Interview on the field, June 2013, man, retired, moved in the district in the sixties

they were not nationalized, but referring to the new lodgers who moved in the district after 1989 the characterization is rather negative.

The most important interview conducted in May 2015 underlines the most relevant details about this district. The respondent, Mr. D.A.<sup>1</sup> lived in the district from 1945 (aged 4) until 1993 and his memory helped reconstructing the everyday life in the district. The summer of 1945 meant a new step in the life of the Mr. D. A. family, who moved in the Vatra Luminoasă district. The family was composed of Dan Alexander (officer by profession), married to I and son 4 years, A. It was the first summer after the Second World War, but from a social perspective is the summer when the last dwellings are finished and sold to the families who had applied for a dwelling. Initially, the family paid the monthly rate to the *Autonomous Company for Housing*, until the monetary reform from 1947, when the amount to pay was recalculated. The Company was dissolved in 1949 (following suspicions of misappropriation of money / materials) and the family faced a new recalculation. The last monthly rate was paid in 1964.

The streets finished during the summer of 1945 represented the last piece of the district. They carried letter names as all the streets were indexed, with letters from A to P, while the dwellings were indexed with a number from 1 to 600, indifferent of the street index. Some number plates in the neighborhood still remember the old index, but gradually gave way to the classical count, with even and uneven numbers on each side of the street.

Taking possession of the house represents actually taking the first steps into the house. The model chosen by the House Construction in 1940, the row dwellings, maximized the usage of the field space, hence the option for row houses, the first of its kind in a Bucharest dominated by houses surrounded by gardens. The house had a facade of 6m and a height of 19m and consisted of three stories (underground, ground floor, upper floor and attic). Each of the row dwellings were design on a plot of almost 200 sqm, while the useful area was 94.27 sqm. The underground floor was accessible by going downstairs. At this level, the architects designed a hallway, a dining room, a kitchen, as well as a closet and a bathroom, while the hallway terminates with door to the backyard. This design meant that at the groundfloor there was only one room, while the staircase/lobby was never heated. Upstairs, the storey consisted of two bedrooms (with the dimensions of 3m X 3.5m) and one bathroom, whereas the attic at the upper level was reached after climbing 17 steps. The attic was not very high, while the roof was manufactured with tiles or sometimes with sheet metal. Normally, the house had electricity from its inauguration, mostly because the law at that time obliged the companies that constructed dwellings to also equip them with all the facilities of modern life (water, electricity etc.). However, the lighting in the house was installed only after a couple of months, meanwhile the family use gas lamp lights.

We noticed from the documents in the archive the most important materials, but they way in which the lodgers play with it represent the confirmation of the quality of them: the foundations of concrete offered stability (and there was no problem with the house during the earthquake from 1977), while the bricks and the carpentry offered flexibility

---

<sup>1</sup> Aged 72, retired, interview on phone and face to face meeting in June 2015

and a domestic sense of the building. The roof of tiles offered protection against rain, but during summers, the heat in the attic became unbearable. As regard to the walls, one of the critiques mentioned in 1940 by arh. Duiliu Marcu referred to the fact that, because of the thickness, the noise could easily pass from one neighbor to the other, fact confirmed by D.A.

Regarding this quality of life, equipping the dwellings with all the necessary instruments for a modern life represented the cornerstone of the reform. As Voicu argues “qualitative dwelling does not mean only access to utilities and a roof over the head. Contemporary standards of comfort talk about the quality of accessing the utilities and refer at the quality of the delivered utilities”. (Voicu, 2005: 51). Moreover, “the access to hot water and heat, current drinking water, access to electricity, natural gas, sewerage, sanitation services, proximity to suppliers of educational healthcare, commercial and social services etc., all these together tend to form a coherent whole which gives a measure of quality of living through access to public utilities” (Voicu, 2005: 51). Almost all this indicators were taken into consideration by the architects and engineers when designing both the dwellings and the district.

The main courtyard represented the connection with the district. The authorities did not interfere with the choice for a particular type of vegetation that was supposed to be planted, leaving the liberty to the lodgers to choose. Almost all the lodgers planted trees both in the front and in the back yards. In the small back garden, most of the families bred chicken or small pigs. Again, the critique from 1940 warned about the danger that the heavy rains or snows would lead to the flooding of the back court, as the water had no possibility to flow outside the court. Regarding the front yard, while for decades this was used to grow flowers or small vegetable, the development of the auto industry led to changing the yard either into a garage or into a concrete place for the car. However, the apples and the grapes were mainly cultivated both for the fruit, but also for the shadow. D. A’s dwelling was located on M Street, later renamed Dr. Russell, no. 11 (with its initial index number 355). The fence (1m high), identical with all the other’s was made of wood and painted black, with a guard for protection against rain.

The initiative of changing the name of the streets from letters to name belonged to the lodgers, actually from Ion Olteanu, a P.C.R. member since its foundation who considered that the streets should be carry the names of renown fighters for freedom such as NicolaeCristea, LeonteFilipescu, Max Wexler, or Dr. Russel, poet Th. Necula, dr. Calin Constantin Otto or even Spartacus. Other street was named Lupeni to remind workers manifestation of 1929. The streets were paved with river stones (while the asphalt was used much later, after 1990), and the street landscape was dominated by actually had wooden telegraph poles and the phone slowly began to emerge in urban comfort. Telephone numbers were given one digit gradually (because the increase of the subscribers). Besides the phone, the family owned a Philips radio which could capture foreign Radio posts, unlike the normal Matador 2 radios. The cars were missing from the streets at the beginning. The only type, Podeba, passed only on a couple of times on certain streets, otherwise, only after the eighties, Dacia began to appear on the landscape. Introduction of trolleybus onVatra LuminoasăStreet in the fifties (with one end at the Asylum for Blind and the other at the University) was something spectacular

for the lodgers, especially because of the fact that the pavement with river rocks was very quickly destroyed and had to be replaced.

Daily street life was animated by various agents, who have gradually disappeared along with their jobs. The most vocal were the tinkers (“spoitorii de tingii”) (who came very often and cleaned the copper pots) and the merchandisers who sold fresh fruits and vegetables. Besides them, the milkmen supplied the families with milk and other milk products, while the iceman provided ice in ice coolers (who lasted approx. 3 days). The economic life was animated by these agents who resisted up until the sixties – seventies, when the industry and the stores replaced them. The housewives used to wash the clothes in the bathtubs, in the lack of a washing machine. However, the families provided their supplies not only from these merchandisers, but also from the Obor market (which represented also the longest journey outside the district), while the daily journeys meant the way to school situated at the intersection between Mihai Bravu Boulevard and MaiorCoravu Street. The notable exception was the winter of 1954 which was dominated by heavy snow that blocked Bucharest for one month. The suppliers couldn’t carry their goods in the district and the Army had to cover the supply of bread, wood and others at the local store.

Neighbors bring the district to life, while Mr. D.A.’s memory brings the neighbors as central agents in the everyday life of the district. According to his memories, on his street (Dr. Russel) at no. 1 lived a worker from “August 23” Factories (former Malaxa factories), at no. 3 the family of professor of mathematics Șerbănescu, married to an Italian, family who emigrated secretly in 1956 in Italy, and at no. 5 the family of the tailor Stoica, while at no. 7 the tailor Florescu. Interestingly enough, small crafts could be carried into the house, sometimes in the basement or in the attic of the large houses. At no. 9, the Ms. Vasilescu was married with an high rank official, while no 11 was the house of the respondent, Mr. D.A. (who father was an officer and her mother a housewife). His neighbor from no. 13 was a waiter, Nicolae Popa, a member of the Communist Party from the days when the Party was declared illegal. At no 15, family Paraschiv (the father later became the Chief of Penitentiary System in Socialist Romania) adjoined the family of Jean Constantinescu, one of the waiters who arrested Marshall Antonescu in august 1944 and brought him to a house in Vatra Luminoasă who belonged to Minister Bodnăraș. The street terminated with the family of waited Faciu, at no. 19. On the opposite side, the family of a mechanic lived at no. 14, while, at no. 16, Mr. Aurel Georgescu still lives at the same house from the forties. At no. 18 and 20 two families of “simple” people lived, while at no. 22 a tailor and the shoemaker Iordache (at no. 24) completed the row. Probably one of the most interesting lodgers was the retired typographer Blumenfeld who had a collection of over 4.000 books, from which one could buy valuable books. The line of houses ended at numbers 28 (“simple people”), and in the end, at no. 30 family Andrița family still lives in the same house.

How did these people cope with the district? All the children from the district went to elementary school at the intersection with Mihai Bravu Bulevard and Maior Coravu street, a school designed by Horia Creangă in the later thirties and beginning of the forties. Classes were separated by gender to new education reform in 1957, when mixed classed were introduced. From this perspective, I agree with Nițulescu who argues that “in the vicinities formed, mainly, from young couples with small children, mothers and

children are more important as partners in the vicinity relations than men. There are situations in which, inside a certain space, the proximity of the lodgers is less decisive for establishing vicinity relations than the occupation of the social status. Whereas in the traditional community, the members of the neighboring families are social neighbors...the city dweller can define its own vicinity, to choose the neighbors” (Nițulescu, 2004:66).

A crucial element in district planning, the social spaces, missed from the everyday routes of the lodgers, with the sole exception of two parks, which in the seventies were used for the construction of two blocks of flats. It is actually Duiliu Marcu's critique. How does that influence the relation among the lodgers? The lack of social spaces (community center, cinema, theatre, church etc.), except a few pubs (which were closed at the end of forties) and the parks strengthened the visits between the neighbors were characterized by visits between neighbors, mostly because of the relations between the pupils-neighbors who studied at the same school. Parks were about the only venues. The smallest park (Călin Ottoi), was set up, according to D.A.'s testimonies, on the pit used for the caustic lime, used at the construction of the dwellings. The other public park was commonly known as *Tovilie*, abbreviation from *Tovarășul* (Comrad) Ilie Moscovici (former socialist Party member), whose statue was erected in that place. The blocks of flats constructed on the *MaiorCoravu* street (which limit the southern part of the district) were completed in 1949, apparently for the workers from the *Malaxa* Factories. An important issue of the district was the poor pressure of the water, being difficult to take a bath / shower during the day. Water scarcity has worsened yearly and this represented one of the reasons why D.A. sold the place in 1993. Only in 1994, the authorities introduced gas on these streets before this year; the families used the gas cylinder for the gas cooker. The borders of the district were very clear: *Vatra Luminoasă*, *Tony Bulandra* and *Maior Coravu* Streets flanked the district, while the relationships with the district nearby (*Iancului* Allotments, built under similar conditions in late thirties and forties) were scarce and determined only by the visits to other pupils after school.

Opposite the *Maior Coravu* street, in the fifties the socialist authorities constructed an important stadium, a skating ring and a park with a Summer Theatre (August 23<sup>rd</sup>) which covered partially the lack of social spaces in the district and the participation at the football or hockey events was frequent among the lodgers. Other important bench marks of the district were the Asylum for Blind (many of the lodgers used to go and visit the blind persons and tried to help them), the two stores (whose clocks had never functioned) and who changed their business on regular basis and the residential section built after Soviet model right near the dwellings. The bench marks were analyzed by Nițulescu who states that they represent a “different type of reference points, with the particularity that, in this case, the observer does not enter in the interior, they are outsourced. Normally, the bench marks appoint physical objects: buildings, stores, towers (Nițulescu, 2004: 22). In *Vatra Luminoasă's* case, they mark mostly the borders of the district.

## Conclusions

Comparing the two types of sources (the archives vs. the oral testimonies), the lines of inquiries indicate two major conclusions of the article. Firstly, the critique formulated by the members of the C.T.S. back in 1940 proved to be to a large extent correct, confirmed by the lodgers: the thinness of the walls, the drainage of water in the backyards, the lack of social centers represent problems that prove inconsistencies in the design proposed by architects Hanciu and Aprihăneanu. The answer to these problems stands in individual solutions proposed by each lodger. On the contrary, the choice for those particular materials proved to be correct, as almost all of the lodgers admit the quality of the dwellings. This composition of the narrative of reconstruction the life in the district based on both type of sources also show that the method of confronting them brings the expected results.

The questions asked to each of the lodgers brought similar types of responses: none of the interviewees know the name of the architect and only one knew the name of the institution that built them. Regarding the protection of the district, the lodgers have rather common attitudes, namely a general necessity to protect them, but few of the respondents gave convincing arguments for this position: most of them referred to the fact that the new buyers of the dwellings don't respect their neighbors and choose to change dramatically the faade.

In respect to the everyday life, the testimonies of the last respondent contributed significantly to the reconstruction of the structures that characterize the district. The lines that compose the regular range of activities signify the importance of school as well as the presence of the silent agents such as merchandisers which structure the life of the lodgers. Composing from memory the place of each neighbor on the street underlines the importance of the colleagues from school in knowing the district. However, is the oral history enough to reconstruct even more the life in the district and other relevant facts for a larger social history inquiry? Judging from the valuable piece of information provided by the older lodgers, we can opt for that method. However, as the old lodgers are less and less present in the district, the possibility to reconstruct the everyday life from the traces left behind by them in their own archives can actually be more valuable than the few testimonies that can be still extracted from the remaining old lodgers.

A valid point is offered by Nişulescu who argues that the space of a district is "considered to be limited with a certain compass and borders of certain specific behavior specific to the community who lives in the district. At the same time, the social relations are reconsidered through the perspective of the degree of interaction between the lodgers, through the forms of sociability, through the norms of controlling the social connections and through the subjective perception of the community." (Nişulescu, 2004:22). Can we follow this line of inquiry in respect to Vatra Luminoasă district? Although the theoretic frame can be considered correct, the analysis of the oral sources indicates a rather low degree of social relations in the district for the timeframe studied. The forms of sociability indicated by the social relations between lodgers are rather driven by conjuncture (such as the meetings between the families due to the relationships between the pupils studying at the same school) rather than by shared



values. However, the research focused on the early years of the construction, rather to a thorough investigation of the present. Nevertheless, the question of how linked the lodgers of a new district were at a certain point and how this progressed in time remains a strong instrument of analyzing the everyday life in a specific district.

## References

- Aprihăneanu, N. (1942). Casa Construcțiilor. Program șirealizări, *Arhitectura*, 13-17
- Burnett, John (1986). *A Social History of Housing (1815 – 1985)*. London and New York: Routledge
- Nitulescu, Dana C. (2004). *Vecinătățile de locuire urbană. Sociologie Românească (NewSeries)*, 2 (1), 60-78.
- Constantinescu, M., Dan, M. (2005). Locuințele sociale în România – o analiză de ansamblu. *Calitatea Vieții, XVI(1-2)*, 65-85.
- Portelli, Alessandro (1997). *The Battle of Valle Ginlia – Oral history and the art of dialogue*. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press
- Shopes, Linda (2002). What is Oral History? (from “Making Sense of Evidence” series on *History Matters: The U. S. Survey on the Web*, located at <http://historymatters.gmu.edu>)
- Thompson, Paul (1988). *The Voice of the Past. Oral History*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press
- Voicu, Bogdan. (2005). Despre precaritatea locuirii urbane, în România. *Calitatea Vieții, XVI(1-2)*, 51-63
- \*\*\*Construcții noi în Vatra Luminoasă, *Realitatea Ilustrată*, Noiembrie 1938
- \*\*\*Lămuriri pentru doritorii de a-și construit locuințe prin Casa Autonomă a Construcțiilor, *Societatea de Măine*, 15 Noiembrie 1930

### Interviews:

- Interview in Vatra Luminoasă district, June 2013, Mr. A. B, ~50years old
- Interview in Vatra Luminoasă district, June 2013, woman, ~70 years old
- Interview in Vatra Luminoasă district, June 2013, man, retired, moved in the district in the sixties
- Interview with D. A., aged 72, retired, interview on phone and face to face meeting in June 2015



JCPP

Year XV • No. 1/2015

EDITURA  
*Expert*

ISSN 1582-8344

