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- Mălina VOICU, Mădălina MANOILĂ, Delia BĂDOI, Simona MIHAIU, Alexandra DELIU – Covid 19 in Romania: Assessing prevalence, mortality and fatality by age and gender in the first 32 weeks of the pandemic
- Elena V. LEBEDEVA – Local communities in the post-socialist cities: Beyond market and state (the experience of Minsk)
- Gabriel STOICIU – Romanian political campaigns in the age of social media
- Vidhya VINAYACHANDRAN – Workers' retention factors: a study on plant workers among small manufacturing firms
- Cristina TOMESCU, Alin CASAPU, Mihai PITEL – Rural development. The case of two communities
- Michael JOSEPH DAVIS – Locus of emotional intelligence among Oklahoma law enforcement officers
- Sebastian FITZEK – Alcohol consumption in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic
- Olga D. GARANINA – Russian society's responses to the social challenges of the pandemic
- Mariana STANCIU – The European path towards a new paradigm of energy production and consumption
- Ha Thi Hai DO, Nhung Thi Kim TRAN, Thuy Thi Le NGUYEN, Mai Thi Thu LE – Will tertiary lecturers' research motivations differ from publication types in developing countries? A case study of Vietnam



JOURNAL OF COMMUNITY POSITIVE PRACTICES

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

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CONTENT

COVID 19 IN ROMANIA: ASSESSING PREVALENCE, MORTALITY AND FATALITY BY AGE AND GENDER IN THE FIRST 32 WEEKS OF THE PANDEMIC	3
Mălina VOICU, Mădălina MANOILĂ, Delia BĂDOI, Simona MIHAIU, Alexandra DELIU	
LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN THE POST-SOCIALIST CITIES: BEYOND MARKET AND STATE (THE EXPERIENCE OF MINSK)	21
Elena V. LEBEDEVA	
ROMANIAN POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS IN THE AGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA.....	35
Gabriel STOICIU	
WORKERS' RETENTION FACTORS: A STUDY ON PLANT WORKERS AMONG SMALL MANUFACTURING FIRMS.....	47
Vidhya VINAYACHANDRAN	
RURAL DEVELOPMENT. THE CASE OF TWO COMMUNITIES.....	66
Cristina TOMESCU, Alin CASAPU, Mihai PITEL	
LOCUS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AMONG OKLAHOMA LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS	81
Michael Joseph DAVIS	
ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC	94
Sebastian FITZEK	
RUSSIAN SOCIETY'S RESPONSES TO THE SOCIAL CHALLENGES OF THE PANDEMIC	113
Olga D. GARANINA	
THE EUROPEAN PATH TOWARDS A NEW PARADIGM OF ENERGY PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION.....	130
Mariana STANCIU	
WILL TERTIARY LECTURERS' RESEARCH MOTIVATIONS DIFFER FROM PUBLICATION TYPES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES? A CASE STUDY OF VIETNAM.....	145
Ha Thi Hai DO, Nhung Thi Kim TRAN, Thuy Thi Le NGUYEN, Mai Thi Thu LE	

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COVID 19 IN ROMANIA: ASSESSING PREVALENCE, MORTALITY AND FATALITY BY AGE AND GENDER IN THE FIRST 32 WEEKS OF THE PANDEMIC

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Abstract: *Gender and age play an important role in shaping the risk of developing severe infection with COVID-19. The exposure to risks associated with COVID-19 differs by country, but the factors explaining the cross-national variations are not fully understood, while the analyses of incidence, mortality and fatality by gender and age cover a handful of countries, Romanian not included. This paper focuses on the unfolding of the COVID pandemic in Romania, looking at prevalence, mortality rate and case fatality rate by age and gender, over the first 32 weeks of the pandemic. Data retrieved from EUROSTAT and the weekly reports issued by the National Institute of Public Health (NIPH) reveals the uneven distribution of prevalence and fatality across gender and age groups. The results show that the infection was more spread among women between 40 and 59 years old, while men paid a higher death toll unevenly distributed across age groups.*

Keywords: *COVID-19 Pandemic; Prevalence; Mortality; Case Fatality Rate; Gender Disparities*

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Introduction

Gender seems to play an important role in shaping the risk of developing severe symptoms in case of COVID-19 with men being exposed to higher risks as compared to women (Ahrenfeldt et al., 2020). According to previous studies, the age-gender conjunction makes older men more vulnerable to the risks of death (Shah et al., 2020), but there is significant cross-country variation of the gender mortality ratio by age groups (Ng et al., 2020).

Knowing how the risk of getting infected and passing away varies across gender and age groups is crucial for designing effective policies against the pandemic, especially when it is about generalizing the experience of other countries (Demombynes, 2020). So far, the studies documented uneven exposure to risks associated with COVID 19 in different countries, but the factors explaining cross-national variations are not fully understood, while the analyses of incidence, mortality and fatality by gender and age group cover a limited number of countries, Romania not included. This paper focuses on the unfolding of the COVID pandemic in Romania, looking at the dynamic of prevalence, mortality rate and case fatality rate by age groups and gender over the first 32 weeks of the pandemic (30 March – 22 November 2020). Using data retrieved from EUROSTAT and the weekly reports issued by the National Institute of Public Health (NIPH), we present the distribution of risk of infection and death across gender and age groups.

The article consists of five parts. The first section presents the general pattern of risk exposure related to COVID 19 and the factors that may shape the unfolding of the pandemic in Romania from the demographic point of view. The second part introduces the data and the methods employed by the analysis, while the fourth discusses the results. The final section concludes on the results and provides recommendations for further research.

Theoretical framework

Prevalence, mortality, and Case Fatality Rate (CFR) are often employed to describe the impact of epidemics on populations and to document public policies addressing the health emergency. While prevalence points to the spreading of the virus, showing the share of those who got infected of the total population, mortality and CFR talk about the severity of the infection. The first one refers to the occurrence of deaths caused by the virus within a population, in a given period of time, and the second indicates the number of deaths in reference to the confirmed cases of infected individuals (WHO, 2020).

Although the three measures are connected, their likelihood of occurrence in the case of COVID 19 is not the same across age groups (Hoffmann and Wolf, 2020), genders (Ahrenfeldt et al., 2020) and countries (Kontis et al., 2020). The variations of the three indicators point out to the convergence of biological, economic, social and political factors, prevalence occurring at the intersection of biological vulnerability (some groups

have a higher probability to develop the disease when getting in touch with the virus), direct exposure to the virus (some professions being more exposed), individual behaviour (compliance to containment measures), the measures adopted to contain the spreading of the virus and the response of the healthcare system (Kontis et al., 2020).

Prevalence

The prevalence of COVID 19 varies greatly between men and women and by age group, with women and young people being more likely to get infected (Oosterhoff et al., 2020). There are no proven biological factors exposing women more than men to the risk of infection (Sobotka et al., 2020). Social factors are in play when it comes to the variation by gender: frontline workers, or those spending more time out with friends or people overseeing the rules regarding risk containment are particularly vulnerable. Moreover, gender, age and occupation intersect, leading to higher prevalence among several groups, Sobotka et al (2020) reporting the highest gender gap of infection rate among young women and old men, distribution varying by country.

Social and behavioral factors can influence gender based- differences in exposure to COVID-19 due to employment. A wide range of occupational risks are associated with gender-based differences in exposure to COVID-19. Stay-at-home policies along with social distancing and mandatory quarantine had an impact on the employment in frontline industries and led to economic uncertainty and alteration of home-arrangements for both men and women. These economic changes transferred the burden on women (Voicu and Bădoi, 2020), while previous analyses suggest that women are more likely to work in precarious and lower pay jobs than men (Farre et al., 2020; Collins et al., 2020) and have higher occupational exposure to COVID 19 than men (Sharma et al, 2020). The industries more severely affected by the pandemic are those with a large share of women, such as retail trade and sales (64.6%), food and accommodation services (54%) (ILO, 2020). The ‘essential’ labour supported by women during the pandemic meant, on one hand, working with atypical arrangements or for partial pay or unemployment which led to economic resilience (Reichelt et al., 2020).

Higher exposure to COVID 19 was observed for all high-risk and frontline jobs (Wenham et al., 2020), such as healthcare. A large proportion of workers in healthcare services are women (70% of the global health workforce and 76% in the European Union) (EIGE, 2019; Boniol et al., 2019). In Romania, about 90% of the total staff in healthcare are women (INSEE, 2018). The rate of infection among healthcare workers was 12.7% in April 2020 (Hâncean et al., 2020), the risk of contagion being higher in women (Vora et al., 2020).

Although women have higher risks of infection due to the “occupational disadvantage” (Sobotka et al., 2020), the gender ratio of infection is not evenly distributed across age groups. According to Sobotka et al (2020), among the population under 60 years old women have a higher infection rate, while among the elderly, men get infected more often. The peak of the distribution differs across countries, in Belgium, Norway, Spain or UK the highest gender ratio being reported among the age groups 20-29 and 30-39 (Sobotka et al., 2020), while in Italy the highest gender ratio is in favour of men of 60 to

80 years old. The study puts the cross-national variation on account of the differences in female employment rate over the life course and childcare commitments. Starting from the assumption that female employment and childcare obligations contribute to the differential exposure of women to the risk of infection, we can expect that the pattern of fertility (mother's age at first birth) moderate the gender ratio across life course. In Romania, the mother's age at first birth is lower as compared to the countries in Western Europe - 26.7 years, compared to 29.9, which is the EU mean (EUROSTAT, 2020), which makes women in their mid-twenties and early thirties less exposed to infection.

Mortality and Case Fatality Rate

Mortality rate refers to the occurrence of deaths within a population, in a given period of time.¹ In the case of infectious diseases, measurements such as infection fatality rate (IFR) and case fatality rate (CFR) are particularly relevant, but the accuracy of these indicators relies heavily on the proper estimation of the number of infected individuals. IFR is an estimation of the number of deaths in reference to all infected individuals, whereas CFR refers to the number of deaths in reference to the confirmed cases of infected individuals (WHO, 2020). IFR relies on predictions and scientifically grounded extrapolations of the *real number* of infected individuals, based on confirmed cases and general knowledge about a certain disease, whereas CFR is based not on estimates, but on the *official number* of infected individuals. In case of COVID 19, the IFR is difficult to assess as many people get infected without developing symptoms and the actual number of infections remains unknown (Collins et al., 2020). Therefore, we consider only CFR, as its computation relies on official statistics.

Mortality is shaped by various individual and societal factors such as age, health condition, gender, occupation, individual socio-economic status, level of economic development and social inequality. Changes in mortality, associated with the constant increase of life expectancy, are characteristic to both demographic transitions (Zaidi and Morgan, 2017). Education is associated with access to resources, better understanding of the environment and one's health. As education level increases, the mortality risk, especially at a young age, decreases (Hummer and Lariscy, 2011; Masters et al., 2012).

Age and health status as risk factors

COVID 19 proved to be particularly harmful for older adults over 65 years old and for those having some pre-existing health conditions, such as diabetes, coronary diseases, arterial hypertension, or obesity (Shah et al., 2020). The existing literature points to the association between population structure and COVID mortality, societies having a large share of elderly reporting high COVID mortality rate (Medford and Trias-Llimos, 2020). In Romania the share of the elderly in total population is quite high, as it is the prevalence of some pre-existing medical conditions. The population at risk of developing severe health conditions due to SARS-COV-2 because of age represents 18.5% of the total population in 2019 (Eurostat, 2020).

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/csels/dsepd/ss1978/lesson3/section3.html>

In Romania, 95.6% of people who lost their lives due to COVID 19 suffered from at least one medical condition (NIPH, 2020). The most common such comorbidities are cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, neurological pathologies, kidney disease, obesity, lung disease or neoplasm (Shah et al., 2020). An important share of Romanians has chronic conditions reported to general practitioner. In 2018 about 13296,5 of 100000 inhabitants were under GP supervision for at least one of the following: hypertensive disease, ischemic heart disease, diabetes mellitus, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, cerebrovascular diseases, ulcerative disease (NIPH, 2018).

According to NIPH (2020), in the age group 20-79 years, the prevalence of chronic conditions at high risk is quite high (hypertension, 45.1%, and diabetes, 12.4%), while ischemic heart disease and stroke are the main causes of death in Romania. The mortality rates caused by these two medical conditions are above the EU average. Comorbidities associated with death from SAR-COV-2 infection are also the most common pathologies encountered in Romania (hypertensive disease, ischemic heart disease and diabetes) (OECD & European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, 2019). In 2018 about 20% of patients with hypertension were not diagnosed, while the highest risk of developing severe complications was among men of about 50 years old. Diabetes is also more frequent in men (NIPH, 2018).

The burden of the pandemic on healthcare and healthcare services, limited the access to non-emergency/ general health services. By giving priority to the COVID-19 patients, other non-COVID health conditions were considered predictors of increased mortality, especially among men and women after 65 years (Shah et al., 2020), leading to a vicious circle, as those with pre-existing conditions could not get the full medical attention and become more vulnerable to the infection.

Gender as factors of risk for developing severe infection

The literature on COVID-19 pandemic points to sex differences in mortality rates (Betron et al., 2020; Li et al., 2020). The biology of sex is playing a crucial role for the risks of death due to COVID-19. Sex differences in COVID-19 mortality are shaped by biological risks along social factors as social environments, social class differences and gender norms. Biological and social factors are shaping men's health vulnerabilities leading to higher mortality rates among them (Mooney et al., 2020; Jin et al., 2020).

Men's health outcomes are generally poor compared to women (Betron et al., 2020), while high-risk behaviours such as lower compliance to containment rules (social distancing, wearing masks, hand washing) and less concern for preventive healthcare are more frequent among men (Griffith et al., 2020). Prior studies suggest that women are more likely to perform daily routines of hand and body hygiene and to access health preventive services (Sharma et al., 2020). Risk behaviours combined with lower rates of handwashing, alcohol abuses, and smoking are linked to higher risks for developing COVID-19 complications.

Social inequality as risk factor

Socioeconomic disparities involve inequalities of access to resources and services, leading to health inequalities and shaping mortality risk. COVID-19 mortality resembles

general mortality (Goldstein and Lee, 2020), not only by mirroring the existing (health) inequalities (Bambra et al., 2020), but also by widening the gap between individuals with different statuses and access to resources. By instance, working from home, although highly recommended for virus containment, is an option only for some jobs: ‘The lower people’s income, the less likely are they to be in jobs where working from home is possible’ (Marmot and Allen, 2020: 682). Therefore, the data about the socio-economic status of those infected would be extremely helpful to control the pandemic (Khalatbari-Soltani et al., 2020).

Life expectancy in poor countries and, respectively, in rich countries differs (Cutler et al., 2006). There are also cohort dependent variations of mortality trends (Link, 2008), as well as life course effects, including the conditions experienced in childhood/ socialization period (Masters et al., 2017). The events along the life course, ascribed or (freely) chosen, are relevant when discussing mortality. Not everyone has the same probability of developing severe infection due to COVID 19, and the risk profile differs depending on several aspects pertaining to the structure of daily life (environment exposure/working conditions, different types of habits – eating choices, smoking etc.). Socioeconomic inequalities are in part responsible for the cross-countries variation of mortality, too: ‘the growing gap between the rich and the poor affects the social organization of communities and that the resulting damage to the social fabric may have profound implications for the public's health’ (Kawachi et al., 1997: 1497).

Summing up, the risk of developing severe COVID-19 infection deals with age, gender, pre-existing health conditions and social inequality. These factors intersect and overlap leading to high risk for several groups, such in the case of men above 65 years old with several comorbidities.

Method

The paper draws on two types of data: death counts from all causes used to compute the excess number of deaths in 2020; and the number of COVID-19 cases and deaths based on which we calculated: prevalence, mortality, and fatality rates.

The number of excess deaths is the difference between the number of deaths recorded in a certain period of time and the number of deaths expected to occur during that time, based on the average mortality reported for the previous years. There are several ways to estimate the expected number of deaths and we compute it by averaging the number of deaths by age, sex, and week for the years 2015-2019. We use Eurostat data from the week 1 until week 35 of each year because of limited data availability for the year 2020. The data for 2020 are provisional and our computations are only estimates and, although the trend is expected to reflect reality, the actual number must be interpreted with caution.

The information about the COVID-19 cases and deaths are based on data extracted from reports published by the National Institute for Public Health (NIPH), which put together weekly summaries of the spread and severity of COVID-19 in Romania. The reports include only charts with the percentage of cases and deaths by age for men and women, so the actual figures were estimated using an application designed for such

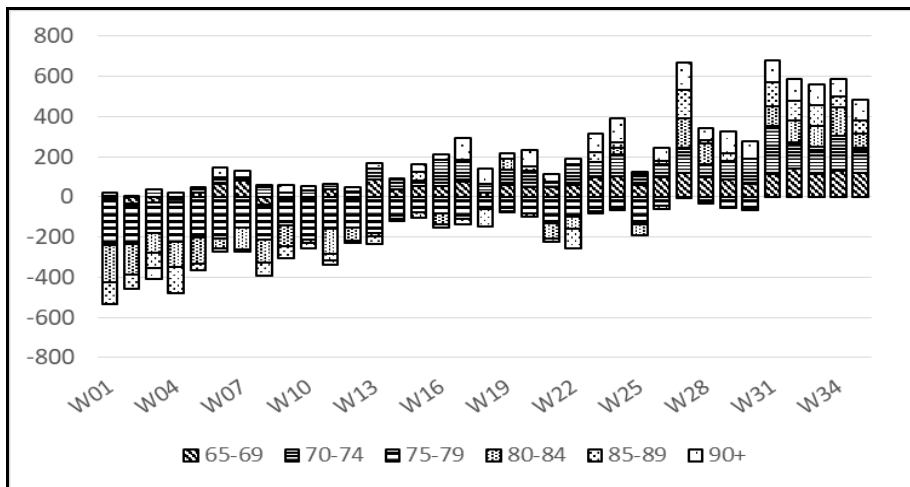
tasks: WebPlotDigitizer (Rohatgi, 2020). The resulting approximations had to be adjusted so that summing the percentages by sex and week the result should be as close as possible to 100 and summing the estimated number of cases and deaths based on the percentages, the total obtained should be close to the total by sex and week published in the reports.

For the denominator of the prevalence and mortality rates of COVID-19, we used the National Institute of Statistics estimate of resident population reported in January 2020. The rates are reported using the reference of 100 000 people. The CFR is expressed in percentages.

Results. Excess mortality

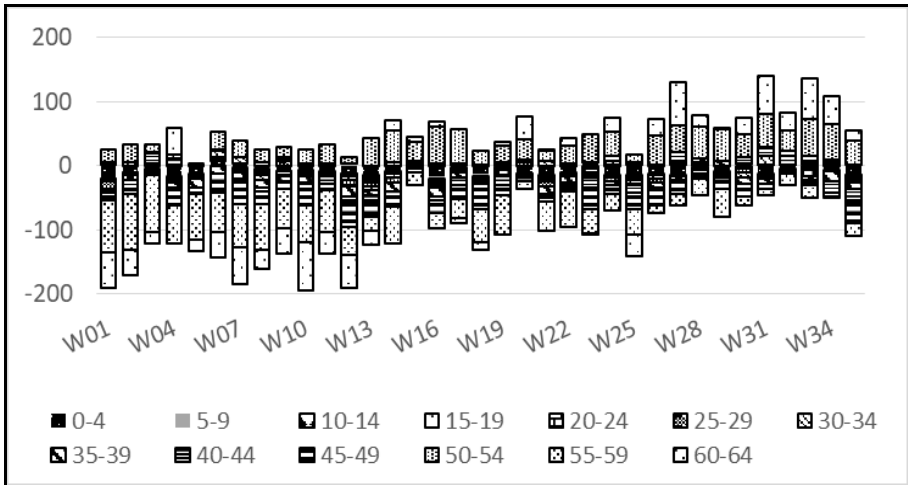
Comparing the first 35 weeks of 2020 (January – August) with the same period of 2015-2019 shows that fewer deaths were reported in the beginning of 2020 with irregular variation. At the beginning of 2020, for most age groups, there were less deaths than expected based on the average of the previous five years, and the trend changed at the end of March. Around week 14 more deaths than expected were registered for people aged 50+, the most affected age groups being 65 to 74. This second stage lasted until the end of June (approximately week 26) only to make room for a third more gloomy period when the value of excess deaths is almost offsetting the gains from the beginning of the year. Although the data series was discontinued at the end of August, most likely the excess deaths continued to increase. Throughout the entire period, people aged 65-74 seemed to have been most affected, while those aged 75 to 84 years were less affected, but the positive trend diminished towards the end of the period.

Figure 1a: Excess deaths by age in 2020 compared to the average of 2015-2019 (Week 1 - Week 35), ages 65+



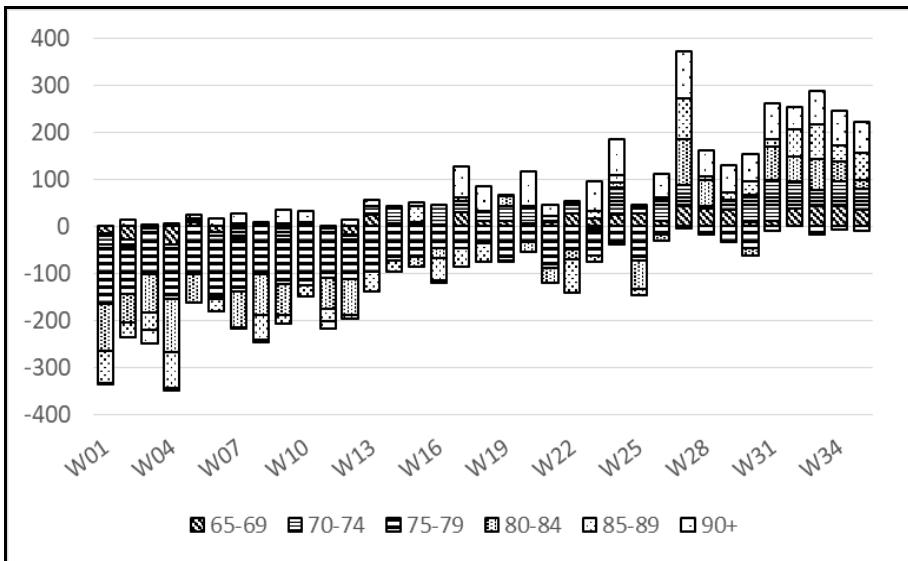
Data source: Eurostat

Figure 1b: Excess deaths by age in 2020 compared to the average of 2015-2019
(Week 1 - Week 35), ages 0-64



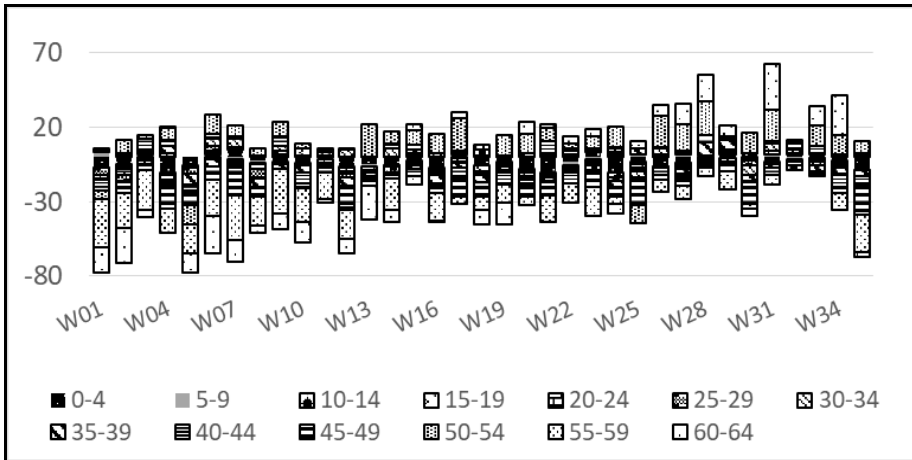
Data source: Eurostat

Figure 2a: Excess deaths by age in the case of women in 2020 compared to the average of 2015-2019
(Week 1 - Week 35), ages 65+



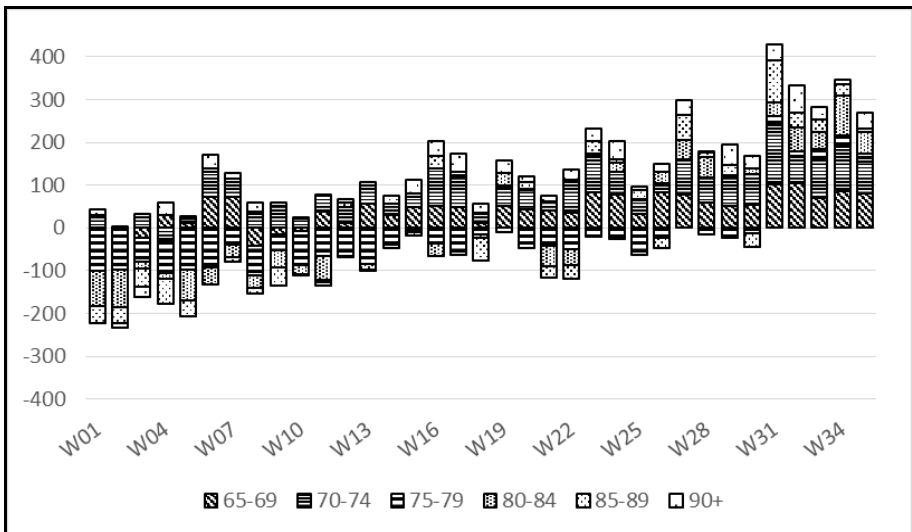
Data source: Eurostat

Figure 2b: Excess deaths by age in the case of women in 2020 compared to the average of 2015-2019 (Week 1 - Week 35), ages 0-64



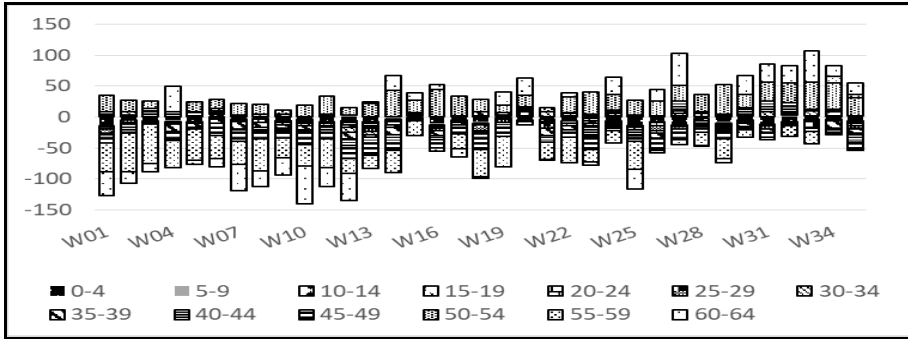
Data source: Eurostat

Figure 3a: Excess deaths by age in the case of men in 2020 compared to the average of 2015-2019 (Week 1 - Week 35), ages 65+



Data source: Eurostat

Figure 3b: Excess deaths by age in the case of men in 2020 compared to the average of 2015-2019 (Week 1 - Week 35), ages 0-64



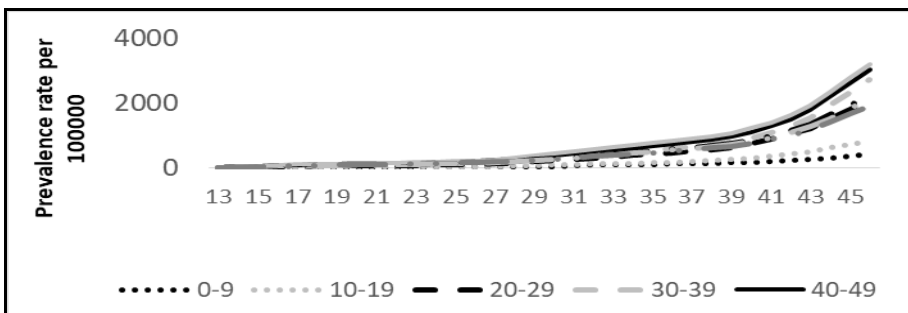
Data source: Eurostat

There are also notable differences between sexes. Excess deaths were recorded for men older than 70 but also for those in the age group 50-54, that are visible from the first week of the year. Men aged 55-64 seem to be at lower risk than women of similar age. Throughout the observed interval, the excess number of deaths in the case of men was higher than the excess in the case of women for age groups 65 to 74 years old.

Results: COVID-19 prevalence, mortality, and fatality

Age-specific prevalence rates, showing the spread of the disease in particular age groups, continuously increased over the observed period. From week 13 to week 30 the increase was rather slow, followed by a much steeper increase particularly for adults and people in old age. The speed accelerated further around week 38. Three patterns of increase in prevalence rates are distinguishable: low prevalence, with slow increase in the case of age groups 0-9 and 10-19 years old; sizable prevalence with high growth rate for the age groups 40-49 and 50-59 years old, with the evolution of the prevalence rate in the other age groups being situated between these categories but closer to the second.

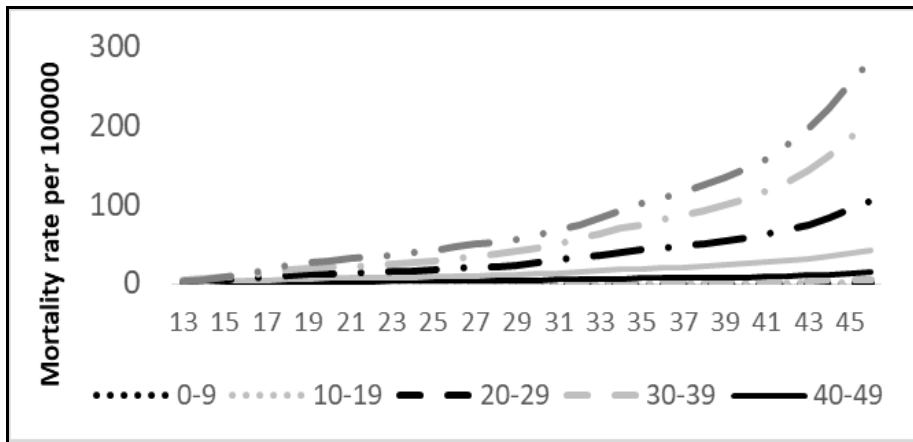
Figure 4: Age specific prevalence rate: week 13 - week 46/2020



Data source: authors' estimates based on NIPH reports; INS 2020 population estimates

There is substantial variation between age groups in terms of prevalence rate of COVID-19. People aged 40-49 and 50-59 seem to be most susceptible to get infected. The highest prevalence of about 3200 cases for 100000 occurs in the age group 50-59. The lowest prevalence, of about 450 cases for 100000 individuals, is registered for the youngest age groups. Most of the other age groups had this prevalence before week 30. People aged 40-59 reached this milestone earlier whereas those aged 20-29 slightly later. Before week 30 several age groups had remarkably similar prevalence: those over 60 years old and those aged 30 to 39. However, as time went by, the variation increased and the prevalence rate in these groups ranges from about 1900 cases/ 100000 (age group 80+) to approximately 2700 cases/100000 (age group 30-39).

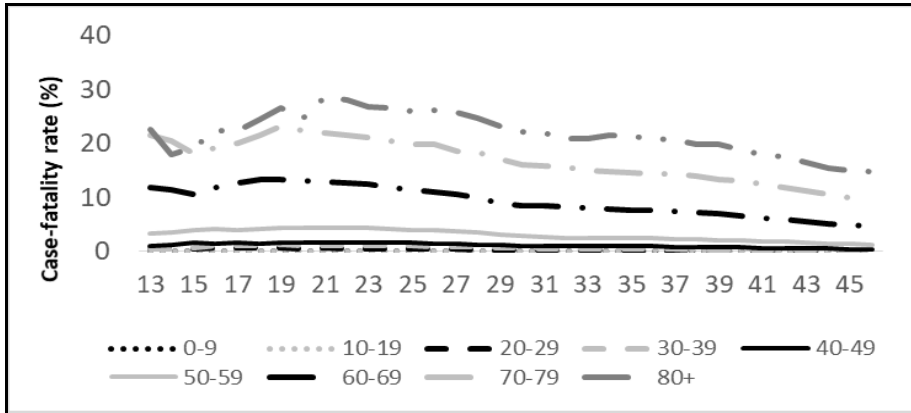
Figure 5: Age specific mortality rate: week 13 - week 46/2020



Data source: authors' estimates based on NIPH reports; INS 2020 population estimates

At first glance, the evolution of the mortality rate is like the pattern of prevalence rates in terms of ascending trend and the increase in growth rate around weeks 30 and 38. However, prevalence of COVID-19 and mortality have different trends in different age groups. While the age group 50-59 knows the highest prevalence, it is the age group of 80+ which has the highest mortality rate. The mortality rate is around 40 per 100000 individuals in the age group 50-59, whereas in the ranks of those aged 80+ it is close to 300 / 100000. For each 100000 individuals aged 80+, almost 300 have died in Romania because of COVID 19 in the first 32 weeks of the pandemic. The data shows that the higher the age, the higher the death rate. Nevertheless, for younger cohorts the values are consistently smaller than for older age groups. Mortality rate varies from 0 to 14 deaths/100000 individuals up to age 49, while individuals aged 50 and over have higher mortality rates.

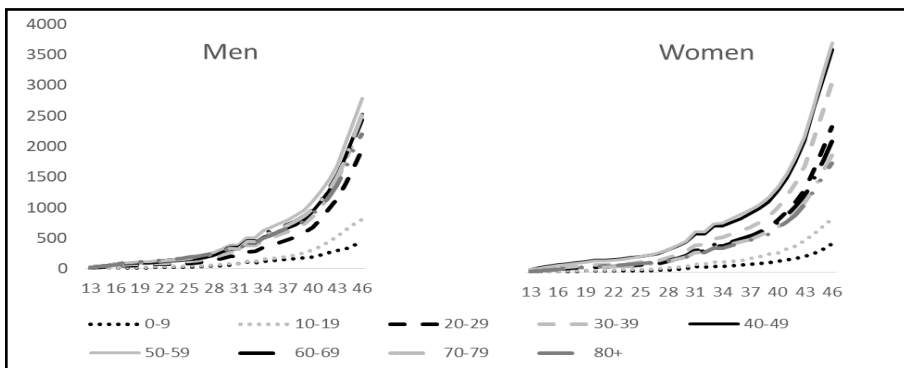
Figure 6: Age specific CFR: week 13 - week 46/2020



Data source: authors' estimates based on NIPH reports; INS 2020 population estimates

CFR provides a more accurate image of the magnitude of the pandemic, given the discrepancy between the dynamic of the prevalence and mortality. The mortality rate has an ascending trend given that it presents the number of deaths relative to the size of the population and the number of deaths has increased continuously since the beginning of the pandemic. The CFR has a different trend compared to the mortality rate, although for both the highest values are recorded for the higher ages. The CFR increased in the first weeks reaching a peak around week 20, decreasing afterwards. The number of deaths among those who got infected decreased at faster pace until week 30 when the decline slowed down and was even slightly reversed in the age group 80+ for around three weeks. The slightly more accentuated decrease after weeks 38 – 40, at least for older ages, suggests that the number of cases increased at a faster pace compared to the number of deaths.

Figure 7: Age specific prevalence rate (per 100000) by sex (week 13 - week 46/2020)

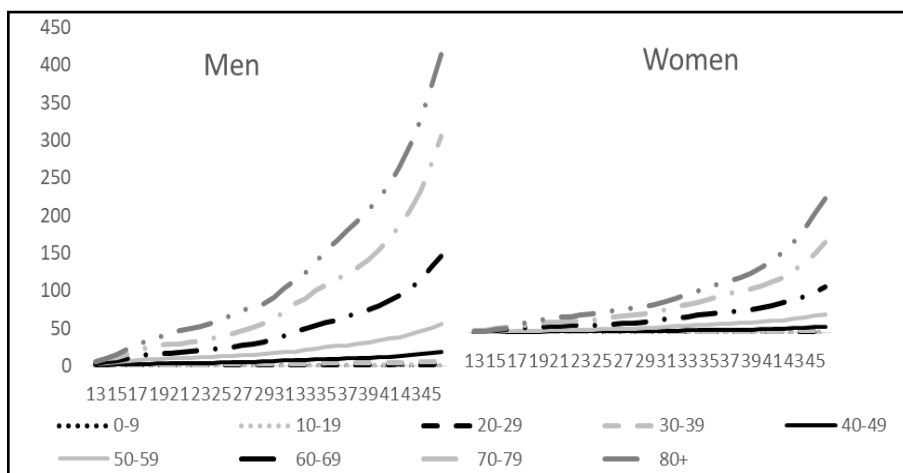


Data source: authors' estimates based on NIPH reports; INS 2020 population estimates

Age specific prevalence rates differ by sex, with the prevalence of women more like the trends described for general population. In terms of size, the prevalence is generally higher for women than for men but varies by age groups. The prevalence rate is higher for women between 10 and 59 years old, the largest difference being reported for the age group 40-49 with around 2100 cases/ 100000 women and approximately 1500 cases/ 100000 men. The prevalence rate is higher for men in the age groups 0-9 and over 60 years old, and the largest difference is reported for those in their 70s, with about 1490 cases/ 100000 men and 1100 cases/ 100000 women.

Apart from the age group 0-19, men and women display different trends in age specific prevalence. Women older than 20 can be divided in two groups. The first group consist of women and 20 to 29 and over 60 years, who have low prevalence and greater homogeneity of patterns. The second group includes women aged 40 to 59, with high prevalence and fast growth. Women in their 30s were more alike to the first group but as the pandemic evolved the prevalence rate grew faster and they resemble the second group. For men such groups are not visible. Most age groups over 20 years old follow a similar trend, except those aged 20-29 for whom the prevalence increased slowly and the age group 50-59 where the prevalence rate increases at times slightly faster. The prevalence rate is generally larger among women, mortality and case fatality rates are in general higher for men.

Figure 8: Age specific mortality rate (per 100000) by sex (Week 13 - Week 46/2020)

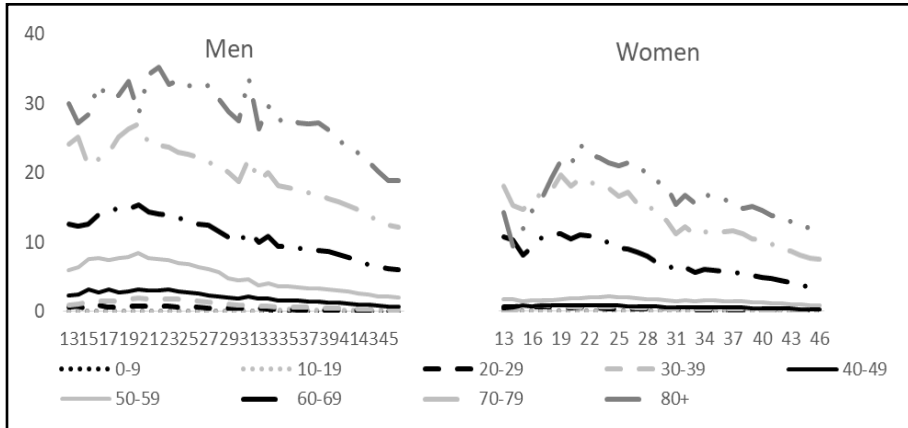


Data source: authors' estimates based on NIPH reports; INS 2020 population estimates

Age specific mortality rate is higher for men compared to women, and the difference increases with age. The highest mortality rate and the highest gender disparity is found in people over 80 years old, with a mortality rate of 213 deaths/100000 women and 415 deaths/100000 men. The age specific mortality rate increases more steeply for men than for women, indicating that the number of deaths among men increases faster than

among women, mainly in old age. The result is not surprising, as all-cause mortality is higher for men than for women across all ages.

Figure 9: Age specific CFR (%) by sex (week 13 - week 46/2020)



Data source: authors' estimates based on NIPH reports; INS 2020 population estimates

Age specific case fatality rate is higher for men than for women. The same peak in terms of deaths relative to cases by sex as we did in the CFR for the general population is visible around week 20. In contrast to the mortality rates, the decreasing trend occurs for men and women. For the same number of people who tested positive for COVID-19, fewer people die by the end of the interval compared to the middle of it (around week 20) regardless of sex. This outcome may occur because the number of cases is increasing at a faster pace compared to the number of deaths. Moreover, the difference between the CFR of men and women decreases from old to young ages. Regardless of gender, the overtime variation of the CFR was larger for people over 60 years old. The men in the age group 50-59 also experienced a larger variation across time compared to women of the same age, with a hump around week 20.

Conclusions and discussion

This paper looks at how the intersection of age and gender shapes the unfolding of the COVID 19 pandemic in Romania in its first 32 weeks, from 30 March to 22 November 2020. Using data retrieved from EUROSTAT and the National Public Health Institute we show that the intersection matters for prevalence, mortality, and fatality. The data point to age and sex related differences, in terms of prevalence, which is higher for women, age specific mortality rate and age specific CFR, that are higher among men. The results suggest an effect given by the intersection of age and gender; such is the case of age specific mortality rate. The infection is more spread among women,

particularly among those between 40 and 59 years old, while men pay a higher death toll that is not evenly distributed across age groups.

The higher prevalence among women of 40 to 59 years old is likely due to the occupational exposure of those working in frontline activities, such as health care, care work, education, frontline desks where women are the majority. The pattern in Romania resembles the one reported by Sobotka et al (2020) for Spain and Portugal, with high infection rate among women above 35 years old, as opposed to Norway and the UK, where the infection spreads more among women in their 20s. Further research should look at the pattern of family formation and mother's age at first birth, as possible explanations for the differences across countries.

Men overpass women when it comes to COVID-19 death toll in Romania in the first 32 weeks of the pandemic. The data on excess mortality points to higher growth of excess death among men belonging to the age group 65- 74. For women, the excess mortality is concentrated in the oldest age groups 80+, resembling general mortality, which grows with age. As it seems that the excess mortality in 2020 follows a different pattern for those of 65 to 74 years old, further research should look at how the pattern of mortality and fatality evolves by gender and age groups and to find out whether this deviation is related to biological reasons or is the outcome of the intersection between social and biological factors. Over time analysis and cross-national comparison can shed light on the causes of this pattern.

As information regarding the individuals infected with SARS-Cov-2 are limited, the influence of life course or socioeconomic inequalities on prevalence or fatality is hard to assess. Both socioeconomic inequalities and life course bear influence when it comes to the propensity of developing severe complications and further research should look closer to the impact of their intersection on the unfolding of the pandemic.

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Declaration of conflicting interests

We declare, on our responsibility, that there is no conflict of interest in the production and publication of this article.

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LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN THE POST-SOCIALIST CITIES: BEYOND MARKET AND STATE (THE EXPERIENCE OF MINSK)

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Abstract: *The development of local communities provides an opportunity for citizens to realize their right to the urban participation and self-government. The most effective mechanism for activating local communities is their involvement into urban common. Urban common practices allow citizens jointly feel responsibility for restoring their territories, formulate mutually beneficial solutions and reduce the possibility of conflicts. Data shows that at least one-third residents of Post-Socialist cities (on the example of Minsk) are still excluded from urban participation. Among all factors influencing the urban common practices, the most significant are the level of trust between the state and civil society, the knowledge about official ways of urban participation and the nature of neighborhood communication. Overcoming communication gaps between neighbors supported by educational work among local leaders could improve significantly the level of civil activity and urban participation at Post-Socialist cities.*

Keywords: *post-socialist city, urban participation, urban common, local government, local communities, neighborhood*

Introduction

Seeking greater engagement with citizens in local self-government and care for common resources is getting popular today not only in Western cities, but also in post-Socialist ones. Indeed, ordinary people as the end-users of urban resources can inspect in the best way (comparing with the city authorities) the effectiveness of the local problems solving. Giving local communities the real opportunity to participate in self-government in this case could not only to improve the quality of urban environment with less time and resources costs, but also provides an alternative to excessive municipal bureaucracy. However, local communities often appear to have limited influence on the administrative decisions relating to the quality of urban life, which

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ultimately leads to the distortion of the principles and purposes of the sustainable city development. In fact, citizens “become a buffer between the interests of the State and Market, not having sufficient power to influence either one or the other” (Dellenbaugh et al., 2015: 57). The particular combination of economic, political, cultural factors (especially at the post-Socialist cities) led to a decrease in the level of self-organization and internal communications effectiveness of local communities, their inability to articulate their own interests. At the same time, “the municipal authorities, speaking on behalf of the city, must understand that they are not acting on behalf of buildings, streets, courtyards, roads, etc., but on behalf of the community of residents (citizens) who have full power in the city” (Larichev, 2019:103).

The local self-government is the institution with long history, which enable the most effective tool for integrating local communities into the urban environment (Boydell, 2014; Buser et al., 2013; Chernysheva, 2020; Jacobsson, 2016; Purcell, 2001). In doing so, the traditional mechanism for local community’s activation are the various “place-making” practices. Joint activities aimed at improving the urban environment allow realizing common goals and objectives, formulate mutually beneficial solutions and reduce the likelihood of conflicts and disagreements (Kolba and Kolba, 2019; Pachenkov, 2020; Parker and Johansson, 2012; Tykanova and Khokhlova, 2020; Hamilton and Curran, 2013). By participating an accessible way in the development of the city areas, citizens feel their own importance, involvement in urban life, form a responsible attitude towards the city (learn not to wait for the initiative “from above”, but to act “here and now”) (Lydon and Garcia, 2015: 11). In such way, public spaces “grow” from the already existing habitable realm, not to destroying it, but focusing on the real people’s needs; turning into the forming tool for strong local community, assuming particular social and cultural meanings (Garcia, 2006). In the process of common solving emerging problems, neighboring communities are structured, resources and are founded, and local leaders are identified. Meanwhile the emerging group structures and inner relationships are quite stable and do not vanish with the end of improvement’s activities, allowing to maintain the high quality of the urban environment (Aksenov, 2011; Cabannes, 2004). In post-Socialist cities however, in the civil participation practices for the urban management serious challenges both organizational and sociocultural remain. Ongoing researches indicate a number of problems associated with local self-government, including communication ones. Among the reasons for the low activity of local communities in post-Socialist cities, ones mentioned the specifics of modernist architecture, which causes the atomization of society, impedes the consolidation of urban communities and limits the interests of citizens outside their own apartments (Lebedeva, 2020).

“Older cities whose urban landscape was formed well before the 20th century were rather an exception; however, their subsequent emerging residential areas, as well as the new towns that were founded during the Soviet time, became a vivid example of the application of the rational planning’ principles.” (Cheshkova, 2000: 16).

The habit-forming patter to leave the solving of every problem to the State as a powerful force that controls everyone is another important factor in the low civic activity. The role of the Soviet public space was to demonstrate the power of the state and “substitute the chaos of urban life with a logical organization of space and human

activities, one fitting the particular mould of ideological reasoning” (Engel, 2007: 289). Even though Soviet urban planning included a wide range of options for recreation and sports – for example, parks, skating rinks, other sports facilities – their existence was seen as part of the socialist lifestyle to show that the state takes care of its citizens, not as a space to encourage citizens’ voluntary local civic activism and self-governance so as to improve their neighborhood and exercise their city rights. On the contrary, the emergence of the pseudo-public spaces in Soviet cities was a manifestation of “the transparent desire of the government to control people’s lives and activities at all times and all places” (Engel, 2007: 289). That led to the substantially reduced ability of city dwellers to organize themselves locally within a Soviet public space. They voluntarily withdrew from deciding how to improve their living environment, leaving it to the city government. This legacy still exists, revealed by the fact that residents of post-Soviet urban areas have a very limited desire to improve the territory adjacent to their private living places (stairs, entrances, children’s playgrounds, courtyards) (Chernysheva and Sezneva, 2020).

The broad-scale changes that occurred throughout Eastern Europe after the collapse of socialism and communism caused a serious contradiction. On the one hand, the market transformations occurred have turned a significant part of the citizens into homeowners, on the other hand, these new homeowners did not have the necessary skills and experience in managing the collective ownership (especially common living spaces) and continued shifting the care for the common resources to the state.

According to a sociological poll conducted in 2021 in Minsk, the participation of residents in urban landscaping is not a mass practice – only 11.3% of respondents do this regularly and 35.8% note the occasional participation in urban environment upgrading (1-2 times a year). The most popular form of urban common practices is the traditional Soviet “subbotnik” (so called work day, announced and governed by the local authorities, aimed to centralized cleaning of the territory, planting trees and so on) – 45.8%. Creative practices are quite rare – only 8.3% have ever been involved in the installation of new elements of courtyard infrastructure (or repair of existing ones), only 2.2% of respondents organized the neighbourhood festivals. Moreover, the successful conduction in such communities of public discussions devoted to solving common issues are often become an extremely difficult thing (Aksenov, 2011; Gladarev, 2012; Tykanova and Khokhlova, 2020). Local attempts to organize neighborhood communities in accordance with the democratic principles of collective action are associated with certain risks. In this case, the most serious problems arise in the field of creation the local leadership institute. Increasingly the local leader is forced to act in an extremely critical environment (so called “caught in the crossfire”). On the one hand his activity has not escaping suspicion and repression from the local authorities, on the other – the local leader is continuously involved in conflict management, with reconciling opposing points of the vision of the other neighbors. So, it is obvious that one can indicate serious problems with the local leaders’ motivation (Heller, 1998).

Despite all of this, some trends indicate movement of post-Soviet cities toward the European democratic values – we can observe an active revival of neighborhood practices, strengthening urban solidarity, and attempts to form institutions of local self-government. Social effects that are caused by this contradiction require careful study, as

they are led to a greater understanding of the possible urban commoning practices in post-Soviet cities.

Exploring different strategies for citizen's self-organization, ways of cohesion strengthening will help to understand the potential points of growth in the neighborhood community's development, which is still weak institution of civil society but has a great potential in the issues of urban commoning practices. It is necessary among other things to understand the key factors that influence on the activity of local communities. Due to this, the main research question is: *does the participation of citizens in the upgrading of their yards has an impact on the urban self-government institutions development?* Is the regular participation in urban commoning practices in the post-Soviet cities able to "grow" into a comprehensive self-government arrangement, to become the basis for the democratization of the society?

Research Methodology and Objectives

The analysis of the activity of neighboring communities was carried out predominantly in the neo-Marxist critical theory frame (Attoh, 2011; Lefebvre, et al., 2010; Harvey, 2003; Harvey, 2011; Hardt and Negri, 2011; Purcell 2001). The key idea for the survey design construction is the concept of "the Right to the City". From the neo-Marxism point of view, the urban environment is the theatre of the struggles and conflicts, the field of social contradictions sharpening. Another key category of analysis is the "local community", which is considered in the ecological tradition, as a kind of collective subject having a relatively high degree of social unity and the particular habitat. In this sense community is "a group of households located in the same place and linked to each other by a functional interdependence that is closer than similar interdependence with other groups of people within the social field to which the community belongs» (Elias, 1974: ix). The key features of such communities are the locality (belonging to a certain territory) and the social density (the intensity of relationships within the community is higher than between individual members of the community and the external environment). A close definition of local community is the "neighborhood" – a community that arises in the process of the natural division of the city into segments (living yards) (Chernysheva, 2020). Urban care refers to "proactive actions" that support the urban environment in order to make it the best it can be (Zapata, 2020; Cahen et al., 2020). The study also used the "formal/informal" dichotomy in local government. Formal self-government is the participation of citizens in institutions and practices that are fixed by legislation. Informal initiatives – the spontaneous, fuzzy structured expressions of grass-roots activism beyond the formal mechanisms of self-government controlled by the state (Bollier and Helfrich, 2014; Dellenbaugh et al., 2015). Informal initiatives are a kind of civic participation, individual or collective actions that compensate for the "gaps" of the State (Holston, 2009). One more important concept is the urban commons (Bollier, 2014; Bollier and Helfrich, 2014; Hardin, 20029; Harvey, 2011; Borch and Kornberger 2015; Stavrides, 2016) as various practices of care of citizens (on a non-commercial basis and in the interests of the community) about objects and spaces that are in the mode of common ownership. Urban commoning practices include three elements: (1) a common resource, formally fixed or perceived by citizens as a common one; (2) social structure that forms and

reinforces the rules for handling this resource; (3) a community whose members are involved in the production and reproduction of this resource (Urban Commons: Moving Beyond State and Market, 2015). The concept of urban commons allows both to consider the process of active contestation of the ownership regime in which urban resources are located (Bollier, Helfrich 2014) and to observe the routine practices of production and reproduction these resources as common ones (Linebaugh, 2014).

Socio-demographic characteristics of study participants

The empirical basis of the article is the data of the questionnaire survey conducted in Minsk (Belarus) in December 2021 (total amount of respondents is 400). The survey was held on a quota-proportional sample (quotas by sex, age and level of education). The estimated value of the sampling error did not exceed 4.8%. Among the total number of respondents, 43% male and 57% female. 39.8% of all respondents have higher education, the other 60.2% – secondary specialized one. Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents by age. 63.5% of respondents at the time of the study were full-time employees, 6.3% were on social leave, 18.8% – non-working pensioners, 3.8% unemployed and 7.8% – students. The achieved characteristics of the sample fully correspond to the parameters of the general population of Minsk over 17 years old.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by age (in %)

Age intervals	%
17-19	5,0
20-25	8,8
26-35	21,8
36-45	20,0
46-60	21,5
61 and over	23,0

Source: own representation

Urban Commons in Post-Socialist Cities

According to the so-called “spatial paradigm”, the priority is given to the city’s physical aspect of spatial organization as its core (i.e., the city’s “means of production”) that creates particular types of social practices that in their own specific way exploit and regenerate the city’s physical “body”. The changes in the “production mode”, coupled with the ensuing transformation of the urban space, form new social practices and advance new forms of urban life. However, the reverse might also be true when “new” social activities transform “old” urban territories, and therefore it may be apt to compare this endless transformation process with the writing of the “spatial code” (Lefebvre, 2010). Though the city is often be considered as the product of institutional decisions and market mechanisms nevertheless some creative processes developed through everyday practices can explicitly or implicitly mobilize the transformative potential of its inhabitants. Henri Lefebvre describes the city as ‘a totality assembling

difference, characterized by formal simultaneity where all parts refer to the whole and vice versa'. Rather than identifying the city as an existing, accomplished spatial order, he sees it as a developing process. The 'right to the city' becomes the right to collectively produce it through creative cooperation. For example, citizen-led repair initiatives that collectively create urban commons, questioning the configuration of production, consumption, and discarding within neoliberal capitalism, have emerged in recent years. Through repair practices, commoning communities can reinvent, appropriate, and create urban commons. This openness of the commons allows commoners to shift roles unproblematically, alternating between the commons, state, and market (Zapata, 2020).

In the post-Socialist cities urban commons also plays an important role though originally, they occurred not the in the same forms as in capitalist ones. A good example of the post-Socialists urban common is community gardens as multilayered places which satisfy diverse needs of the urban residents, including home grown food, socializing, recreation, contact with the nature, and even supplementation for low pensions. They can also be seen as examples of heterotopias or alternative spaces during both examined periods. In the socialist period they were secluded, private, pseudo-rural places in a semi-authoritarian, communal, and (supposedly) urban and industrial society. In post-socialist Zagreb, characterized by an uncontrolled and unplanned spatial context reliant on neoliberal market-oriented principles, social insensitivity and exclusion, the new gardens are depicted as beacons of communal involvement, grassroots movements, and the ability of citizens to stand together and make their voices heard (Borčić, Cvitanović & Lukić, 2016).

A survey conducted in Minsk showed that citizens often use common resources (spend their free time outside the home - in the yard, on city streets, in parks) (Table 2).

Table 2: Spending free time outside the home (in %)

<i>How often do you spend your free time outside the home?</i>	<i>%</i>
Everyday	42,3
Several times a week	30,0
Several times a month	13,8
Prefer to spend free time inside the home	14,0

Source: own representation

In other words, urban commons spaces have been praised for their role in social capital building, neighborhood revitalization, urban sustainability, alleviation of poverty, health promotion, and for their environmental benefits. There is a correlation between financing for housing maintenance and improvement and the level of social stability – the underfunding of urban improvement affects in the negative way on the assessment of not only citizen's social well-being, but also of the whole State social policy. The habitants (as the direct "users" of a particular territory) meanwhile could be the most effective "controllers" of the territorial quality's problems solution. But in order to let such a monitoring mechanism works, citizens should be aware of their responsibility for the quality of the urban environment and be involved in urban common practices.

Local community as a subject of activity

As mentioned above the grass-root landscaping in Minsk is not popular – only 47.1% of respondents in some form take place in it. Potentially interested to do that is about a quarter of Minsk residents (28.4%). But approximately the same amount of people (28,1%) has no plans to spent time improving their own courtyard under current conditions. If nothing changes virtually every third citizen will remain outside the zone of activity, being excluded from the number of subjects involved in the urban development. The danger being that if the triad “State” – “Business” – “Society” is out of balance, the city may be further driven by the strongest actors (State and Business), while citizens being sidelined and fail to protect their own interests.

An important factor in the development of urban participation is the degree of horizontal solidarity – if citizens trust their neighbors, can they unite to resolve existing problems of living space, is it easy to find like-minded people and so on.

The survey data showed that the neighborhood interaction in Minsk is not fully a relationship of trust. Less than half of the respondents (47.3%) trust their neighbors, about the same number of people count on support from them if situation is difficult (47.5%). Yet the respondents define own willingness to help their neighbors more highly – 58.3%. We can note a particular communication gap – «I am ready to help others, but I am not sure that others will do the same to me», «Other citizens can unite for solving common problem, but not me and my neighbors». In addition, the difficulties in neighborhood solidarity approved by the fact that, according to respondents, it is easier to connect with “abstract” Minsk residents (outside the local community) than with the neighbors (Table 3).

Table 3: Key features of neighbor solidarity (in %)

<i>Do you agree with the following statements?</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Difficult to say</i>
I can find like-minded people in Minsk	64,3	25,5	10,3
Minsk residents can unite to solve common problems	63,3	17,8	19,0
I feel support from my neighbors while I come into troubles	47,5	30,5	22,0
Usually I trust my neighbors	47,3	29,8	23,0
I am ready to help my neighbors while they come into troubles	58,3	14,3	27,5

Source: own representation

The level of trust in the local community decreases with age. If among those who are from 17 to 25 years 58.2% feel support from their neighbors, then only 40.2% of respondents over 60 do the same. While 70.9% of young citizens are ready to help their neighbors in a difficult situation, only 48.9% of the older age groups are about to do this. 52.7% of young citizens trust their neighbors and only 41.3% of citizens over 60 (Table 4).

Table 4: Key features of neighbor solidarity depending age (in %)

Agreement with the statements:	17-25	26-35	36-45	46-60	60 +
I feel support from my neighbors while I come into troubles	58,2	51,7	46,3	45,3	40,2
Usually I trust my neighbors	52,7	55,2	50,0	39,5	41,3
I am ready to help my neighbors while they come into troubles	70,9	64,4	56,3	55,8	48,9

Source: own representation

It is obviously, that the involvement in local communities affects both the general perception of oneself as a citizen and the sense of responsibility for one's city. Only 53.8% of respondents, against the background of a low trust degree, feel pride being Minskians, even smaller (44.5%) feel own responsibility for an appropriate maintenance of urban environment. Despite this, a sufficiently large number of citizens (75%) – both young, middle-aged and elderly in equal proportion – want to be among the decision-makers if it concerns their living space (residential area or courtyard). The survey data revealed a correlation between the characteristics of neighborhood communication and the willingness to participate in urban common practices. The better connections between neighbors, the more intensive and comprehensive communication between them (including using Internet messengers), the more actively citizens are involved in various landscaping practices. So, among those who described their relations with their neighbors as bad, no one devotes time to regular landscaping (Table 5). Almost half of the citizens (45.5%) who have not allowed the communication link with neighbors do not plan to participate in the landscaping soon for comparison with only 26% citizens who have good relations with their neighbors.

Table 5: Relationship between relations with neighbors and participation in improvement (in %)

Participation in improvement	Relations with neighbors			
	Good	Rather good	Rather bad	Bad
Yes, regularly	14,9	3,3	0	0
Yes, 1-2 times a year	36,8	34,1	40,0	31,8
No, but I would like	21,3	36,3	40,0	22,7
No, and I do not plan	27,0	26,4	20,0	45,5

Source: own representation

The next part of the study was the consideration of the formal and informal the courtyard improvement actions ratio, as well as the limitations of grassroots improvement. The whole variety of improvement actions were roughly divided into 3 groups for ease of analysis. The first group – there are actions, that may be done without official control and permission from the authorities; the second one – the actions that should be sanctioned or certified by the authorities; finally, the third group contains the improvement actions that are impossible for citizen's independent execution in any case. The majority of Minsk citizens (75.6%) would like to plant flowers, lawn, trees in their 1 courtyard without an official permission; the lower number of respondents (62,0%) would like to take part in organization of neighbor's

festivals in their courtyard without an official permission (Table 6). About half of the Minsk citizens (54.0%) believe that they should be able to install playground equipment, benches or recreation areas without a permission and control from the local authorities. 29.3% of respondents suppose that citizens should have the right to creative self-determination by applying graffiti in the courtyard, or inviting graffiti artists for building decoration (Table 6).

Table 6: Key way of activity of local communities (in %)

	Without an official permission	With an official permission	Not available in any case	Difficult to say
Plant flowers, lawn, trees in the courtyard	76,5	6,8	2,5	14,2
Organize neighbor's festivals in the courtyard	62,0	14,8	4,0	19,2
Install playground equipment, benches, recreation areas in the courtyard	54,0	22,3	2,5	21,2
Apply graffiti or invite graffiti artists for building decoration	29,3	29,5	9,8	31,4

Source: own representation

By the way, the recent Nobel Prize in Economics was awarded to the American economist Elinor Ostrom for substantiating the significant effectiveness of the management solutions for communal resources through the active involvement of self-governing structures that offer community-based ways for accessing the shared resources, alternative to public and private ones (Dellenbaugh et al., 2015).

Local communities and urban governance

The participation of city people in the implementation of city-wide improvement projects is closely related to such a phenomenon as local self-government. Local self-government thus connotes a process of collective discussions, collaborative learning and collaborative actions by the local community and its leadership on the basis of their collective knowledge. In order to study the willingness of Minsk citizens to contribute in the in local self-government, there was a question about the most suitable form of participation in the yard improvement. According to the data achieved the most suitable form of the urban environment improvement for 50% of Minsk citizens is informal activity – to be engaged in landscaping together with the neighbors, without cooperation or coordination with the local authorities. The noticeably fewer number of citizens (33.0%) are ready to participate in the courtyard landscaping in coalition with local authorities. More than 53% of the Minsk citizens, in case of their yard improvement, would like to take part in the participatory budgeting – either on the principals of sharing economy, bypassing both state and business structures (34,0%) or

contacting to the private service companies. That's what's meant by the term of “urban commons” (Parker, Johansson, 2012) – situations where citizens seek to take the actual control of their nearby territories («moving beyond state and market») – beautify courtyard areas by planting flowers, install jointly new playground equipment, restore recreation zones etc. In the context of post-Socialist cities (like Minsk), this can be interpreted like a return to traditional “subbotniks”, but on the completely different ideological basis – the only possible declaration of independency, the absence of feeling of “being in touch” with the state.

Despite this, only 17% of respondents are ready either to initiate some official local self-government bodies or to take part in it. Such a low percent may be caused both by the generally low level of the “hierarchy of governance” credibility (due to the Covid-19 pandemic or the large-scale socio-political crisis in 2020), and insufficient awareness of the possibilities of official urban self-government. Only 19.3% of the respondents have the necessary knowledge about the local self-government procedures available. Sociocultural and communicative factors come to the fore while the age, level of income or education do not determine much the urban participation potential. Among those who are aware of the local self-government procedure available, 26.4% of respondents feel responsible for the beautification of Minsk, and among those who do not, only 9.3%. Citizens who are aware of the local self-government procedure available have the tendency to be proud of Minsk and more likely to find like-minded people there (Table 7).

Table 7: Local government and urban identity (in %)

<i>Are you aware of the local self-government procedure available?</i>	<i>I feel responsible for the beautification of Minsk</i>		<i>I am proud of Minsk and would like to impart this sense to my children</i>		<i>I can find like-minded people in Minsk</i>	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Yes	26,4	9,3	22,8	11,2	21,0	13,7
No	73,6	90,7	77,2	88,8	79,0	86,3

Source: own representation

Summing up the analysis of the urban common practices in the post-Socialist cities (on the example of Minsk), one can divide three different types of citizen’s activity patterns:

1. “Paternalists” – likely to seek the help in every problem concerning the ground maintenance from the local authorities. “Paternalists” usually represent urban participation as paying local taxes and utility bills. Basically, these are older citizens (from 46 years old and older), with a secondary education, living in the so-called “late-Soviet” panel buildings (1970-1990s), who are not in touch with neighbors. Among the total number of Minsk residents, there are about 50% of “paternalists”.
2. “Pro-market citizens” – ready to make maximum use of officially legislated participation in local self-government. They are usually community-involved persons, communicate in the local chats (or even administrate them), interact a lot with their neighbors both online and offline. More than any other “pro-market

citizens” feel themselves responsible for the urban maintaining, but also they want to possess the freedom of decision and sovereignty concerning their courtyard improvement’s budgeting, choosing the utility company for yourself. Under socio-demographic they represent the youngest (25-45 years old), the more economic successful and more educated social group. Among the whole respondents, they are only 20% of “pro-market citizens”.

3. “Community-based citizens” – in fact, they are also ready to take responsibility (including participation budgeting) for the courtyard improvement but unlike “pro-market” “community-based citizens” do not trust nor the state, nor business structures. In the matters of improvement, they prefer to rely on themselves or on their community power (sharing economy principles) instead of taking part in the formal local self-government procedures. “Community-based” citizens have not any socio-demographic features; they make up about 30% of the total number of Minsk residents.

Conclusions

Based on the analysis, a number of trends relevant for the post-Socialist urban common practices could be identified.

1. Deepening segregation between "rich" and "poor". Post-Socialist cities will be gradually divided into the modern (comfortable and expensive) residential areas for those who can afford this, and the “slums” for citizens with a lower standard of living who don’t have enough money for comfortable living space and who prefer to minimize contact with the urban environment. How critical this segregation will become depends on the position of the state, whether it will provide support to those who do not have sufficient financial resources or not.
2. The local communities and urban common practices will more often appear in the modern residential districts (due to their social homogeneity which provides more comfortable communication circumstances), while in the old areas (built in 1970-90's) vice versa, neighborhood communication will be reduced to a minimum so the urban participation will become virtually impossible.
3. The growth of popularity of so-called tactical urbanism activity – informal, spontaneous, non-systemic improvement, implemented by small groups of citizens, with improvised materials that will cause the diversity and fragmentation of urban design solutions.

The negative trends in the post-Socialist urban common practices are mainly associated with an increase in the social stratification and the inequality of access to a comfortable living space (a well-maintained courtyard will be synonymous with the high cost of housing). Based on the policy of repression associated with the local community’s activities executed by the Belarusian authorities, such a scenario in the future may give Minsk (as a vivid example of a post-socialist city) the features of a classic capitalist city with elite buildings and slums. A positive scenario, on the contrary, involves the support of local self-government, the local community’s revival and consolidation, the

active use of community management technologies in working with citizens with the establishing of feedback mechanisms between citizens and local authorities, including via "local chats". In other words, the development of post-Socialist cities has two opposite ways – either the State's fully responsibility for creating comfort urban environment conditions without civic participation, or the provision an opportunity for local community's development. Obviously, the second scenario carries much more benefits for all social subjects.

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ROMANIAN POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS IN THE AGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

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Abstract: *From public announcers and wall inscriptions to press and the audiovisual, any possible way of spreading the news became instantly an attractive opportunity for promoting people, products or ideas. Social Media made no exception – here, more than any other time or place, anything goes. Romania's political agenda has witnessed various challenges raised by NGOs since the early 2000's. This paper analyses few examples of Romanian political (and social) campaigns promoted and supported through Social Media. In present times, Social Media can prove to be the optimal instrument able to help us engage social actions and nurture communities of interest united by the aspiration of trying to change the world. Nevertheless, in times of great concerns, Social Media can prove to be as much damaging as it is useful.*

Keywords: *Social Media, political campaigns, civic engagement, activism, digital studies*

Introduction

The Social Media has become in the last decade the main resource for activities in the field of information and communication. Both audience and news professionals rely more and more on the insightfulness of the contributive content of Social Media. This new modus operandi encompasses the use and abuse of subjective perception of communication actors.

Nevertheless, on interpersonal level, the textual exchanges provided and promoted by virtual platforms remain limited and confusing in capturing the emotional landscape surrounding the communicational content. Misunderstandings and even unintended antagonisms arise frequently during phone or computer chats and they are poorly managed by emoticons or funny GIFs. The enormous gain of web 2.0 is the light-speed dissemination of news *en masse* and, consequently, the intensive feedback in a 'snowball effect' fashion. This feature allows a better response to crisis by the official authorities and more comprehensive awareness raising policies and programs aimed towards a constantly enlarging audience.

Marketing gurus and political strategists jumped instantly to these opportunities given by social media, hijacking this new way of freedom through appealing, persistent and perverted meanings into a money-making path. Youth slang seems to evolve more and

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more from a group-specific code to a universal advertisement induced babbling. At the same time, collective emotions tend to be more superficial - drifting from consistent aspirations to a better life. A cascade of basic but overwhelming affects caused by sensational events and overnight success 'stories' massively populating the Social Media is responsible for early depression among young people who are accusing increasingly stressful and frustrating daily life. They are experiencing emotions produced by an addictive vicious circle revolving around neophilia-driven consumerism and accumulation of waste composed by out-fashioned belongings - a 'gold-mine' for capitalist economic development.

1. Social Impact of Political Campaigns

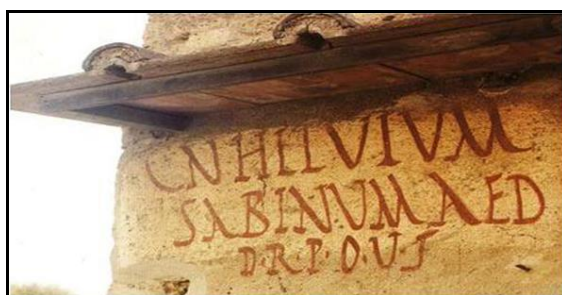
Besides its enormous commercial opportunities, Internet has proven its ability to transform the society making possible through its potential of generating social capital (Putnam, 2000) the establishment of virtual communities (Rheingold, 1993) and ultimately the development of cyberculture (Escobar et al., 1994). Social pressure leading to civic unrest is usually released either through individual anomic behavior or through collective public protest. These movements can re-shape political specter and, according to their intensity and amplitude, they can induce abruptly or gradually specific or fundamental changes.

It is the case of most recent social movements aimed at bad practices perpetrated by actors coming from the three most important bodies at the top of the society:

- some players from the 'big industry' recklessly damaging the environment
- representatives of the political elite causing precarisation through corrupted behavior
- certain religious leaders promoting intolerance and ignorance, thus recruiting fanatics.

Social actions are frequently ignited by political campaigns carried out by groups which may or may not be affiliated to partisan entities. When a suffrage event is approaching, these actions are ultimately assimilated to electoral campaigns. Such occurrences happened even 2000 years ago. An illustrative example is the inscription on a wall in Pompeii standing as a campaign poster.

Figure 1. *Cn(aeum) Helvium / Sabinum aed(ilem) / d(ignum) r(ei) p(ublicae) o(ro) v(os) f(aciatis) /*
(Please elect mayor Helvius Sabinus, worthy of public function - inscription in Pompeii)



Source: <http://en.antiquitatem.com/pompeii-electoral-graffiti-aedile-ivir> (accessed on 07.09.2022)

Besides the textual message, still or moving images are the elements that bring the ultimate impact to a political or social campaign. The groundbreaking invention of printing press by Guttenberg allowed the multiplication and dissemination of written content to an ever-growing number of people. However, it was lithographic technique discovered by Alois Senefelder that made possible the existence of the modern newspapers and magazines. With telegraphs at first and telephone later on, facilitating the circulation of news faster than any vehicle could ever grant, mass-media was on its way of becoming democracies' watchdog.

There are numerous examples of printed poster images promoted during a campaign which remained persistent afterwards in collective conscience. The vivid electoral system of United States embraced almost instantly the opportunity of passing a graphical embellished message to the voters. Consequently, John Quincy Adams became the first presidential candidate to widely use posters in 1824, according to the University of Virginia's Miller Center (Hogan, n.d.). A famous historical example of such images transformed in cultural stereotypes is the recruitment poster of Royal Navy and its variation promoted by US Army. These posters were published during WW I have as central characters the British admiral Lord Kitchener and the fictional character Uncle Sam. Their impact was so powerful and persistent making them recurring illustration for different campaigns (such as job recruiting) through the decades till present time.

Figure 2. Uncle Sam and Lord Kitchener Illustrations



Sources: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uncle_Sam, accessed on 07.09.2022;
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lord_Kitchener_Wants_You, accessed on 07.09.2022

Advertising campaigns have experienced important transformations with the expansion of mass media and multimedia. The widespread use of these technologies seems to cause a decrease in the impact of classic posters in favor of 'viral' video clips or funny "memes" used in online campaigns. However, both for financial reasons and due to important cultural considerations, we cannot yet imagine an advertising campaign (especially an election) that would not also include promotion through posters. This method of electoral advertisement still has a powerful impact, especially in the rural

environment of developing countries. Here, computerization and even audio-visual have limited penetration, these technologies presupposing the purchase of devices whose minimum prices often exceed the financial possibilities of the households located in these areas.

Both modern and contemporary history dedicate an important place to voting campaigns because elections - these peaceful changes of regime, marked sometimes the beginning of social transformation with international reverberations. Electoral campaigns usually have in mind the promotion of political organizations in two directions: the promotion of their representatives and the promotion of defining ideas for their doctrines. Starting from the basic principles of cognitive psychology which state that the personification of some ideas facilitates the reception of those ideas by the public, most electoral campaigns, even in the case of list voting, emphasize building and maintaining the popularity of the candidates.

The democratization of political life provided, first and foremost, the possibility for a nation to choose its leaders and not having some imposed ones, either by heredity or by a sovereign. Therefore, the politics, like any other area in Western societies, were gradually conquered by the logic of supply and demand. The promotion of politicians as candidates has acquired the same level of well strategized professionalization as seen in campaigns devoted to consumer products. The political competition, nowadays, encompasses logistical and financial efforts at least as important as the ones involved in the advertising competition between, for example, two large detergent manufacturers (the classic example of choice by comparison strategy) which stands under the motto: our product is a better than this unnamed brand.

From public announcers and wall inscriptions to press and the audiovisual, any possible way of spreading the news became instantly an attractive opportunity for promoting people, products or ideas. Social Media made no exception – here, more than any other time or place, anything goes. Through the Internet, spamming and guerilla marketing reached their apogee. Even the oddest products or the most peculiar popularity chaser can get an audience, although it goes without saying that the ‘lion’s share’ is taken by the largest corporations. For what it’s worth, an important novelty brought by Social Media, is the fulfilment of establishing for the first time a genuine active audience. The recipient, wherever in the world, has now the possibility to react almost instantly (Miller, 2011) through mobile devices like smartphones and tablet computers.

2. Social Media Platforms as Realms of Social Engagement

“Web 2.0 environment is characterized by a shift from static online content to dynamic co-creation. The recipients (readers, listeners) can participate and communicate either with each other (i.e. on the recipient level), with the producers (i.e. reversing the traditional one-way pattern of communication) or with other audiences (i.e. attaining the status of co-authors)”. (Chovanec and Dynel, 2015: 7). Unfortunately, this means consumer reports, false advertising and slander can go hand-in-hand in this virtual world. The mirage of cyberspace also raised concerns about privacy and media

addiction. Migration from consumer to user status does not represent just a funny coincidence with the narcotics' phenomenon. The need for social affiliation fuels the compulsion in both cases and the self-control seems to be permanently damaged. "...it is clear in 2021, that Social Media companies have outsized power to influence how we access information, communicate with those around us, and develop our views of the world." (Myers West, 2022: 5). These pressure points are used in some of the most creative ways by commercial and social agents.

Social campaigns occupied in late 20th century a very important place in developed countries' cultures. Discrimination, poverty, pollution, world peace and healthcare represent some of most important issues reflected in campaigns since the 1960's, remaining, unfortunately, just as much relevant in present days as they used to be. Environmental concerns raised decade by decade as the mass dissemination of news about horrible polluting accidents and worrisome scientific data. "Most campaigns involve at least one of four goals: to inform, raise awareness, and shape public understanding about the science, problems, and politics of climate change; to change consumer and citizen behavior; to network and connect concerned publics; to visibly mobilize consumers or citizens to put pressure on decision-makers." (Segeberg, 2017). These levels of involvement characterized at least 3 types of roles which an individual can adopt nowadays while confronted with a matter of public concern: slacktivism (a passive online support), e-activism (a regular online and offline support) and hacktivism (a fanatic of the cause committing radical, damaging actions online and/or offline). All three roles encompass the essence of networking democracy (Loader and Mercea, 2011). From this point of view, NGO-s (Pezzullo and Cox, 2006) share a common methodology with political parties and religious cults: they shape core values, recruit followers, and obstinately promote their main ideas.

3. Twenty Years of Online Social and Political Activism in Romania

Romania's political agenda has witnessed various challenges raised by NGO-s since the early 2000's. A vivid environmentally-oriented campaign called „Salvati Rosia Montana” (Save Rosia Montana – an ancient village in Transylvania) marked the first social movement to employ Internet platforms as an awareness raising instrument. Its main goal was opposing the inauguration at Rosia Montana of the largest European gold mine using cyanides as extraction methods. Protests against central and local authorities began in front of the local City Hall in 2000-2001, condemning the authorities' abuse towards the Rosia Montana community as they were trying to create the legal and administrative framework for the gold mining industry in the area, which would have impacted “740 households and 140 apartments and meant destroying invaluable historical and archeological heritage” (<http://www.streetdelivery.ro/bucuresti/societate-civila-ecologie/salvati-rosia-montana-247.html>). The revolted locals organized themselves in Alburnus Maior association. Though at first spontaneous, the protests attracted attention from several student communities in large university centers. As in most cases of contemporary social movements “micro-mobilization context acted as launching pad” (Stoiciu, 2019)

Figure 3. Protest in Bucharest, 2003. From the „Salvați Roșia Montană” archive



Source: <https://www.scena9.ro/article/18-ani-de-salvat-rosia-montana>, accessed 07.09.2022

Students from Cluj, Bucharest, Iasi and Timisoara came up with the imagery, the slogans and the informative materials which were initially distributed throughout the streets of Romania’s major cities, and next online.

Figure 4. The Logo „Salvați Roșia Montană” in 2004 and the first poster of “Fan Fest” Festival



Source: <https://www.dor.ro/istoric-salvati-rosia-montana/> (accessed 07.09.2022)

One event that maintained the spirit of this protest among young people was “Fan Fest” (Hay Fest), an annual musical festival resembling those in hippie times. As one of the organizers stated: “we meant from the very start to be not only a musical event, but to focus a lot on workshops and group gatherings where we could discuss and debate. And now I find it unbelievable that we managed, overnight, to put up posters in over 40 cities. We would send them by bus, by train...” (Roxana Pencea) <https://www.scena9.ro/article/18-ani-de-salvat-rosia-montana>. But later, Social Media brought an essential contribution to this movement. As I have stated on a different occasion (Stoiciu, 2019), virtual space can be a good incubator for spontaneous cybersolidarities to transform into ready to act in real life communities. A good perspective on this take

comes from Stephanie Roth, “Salvati Rosia Montana” supporter: “In the beginning we didn’t have Facebook, or Twitter, or YouTube. Social networks immensely aided the shift in the campaign’s dynamic and they came at the right time. One of the main problems was that the extraction mining company had so many media contracts, nobody wrote anymore about the “Salvati Rosia Montana” campaign. Social networks have lifted the ban. (<https://www.scena9.ro/article/18-ani-de-salvat-rosia-montana>).

In 2013, acting as an organization hub for some of the amplest protests of this movement was the Social Media Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/SalvatiRosiaMontana/>), which remains active even now because the Romanian government only suspended the contracts with the private mining company, a definitive annulment still requiring political support. “Engaging people with climate change by using Social Media as a medium not only requires the understanding of how Social Media communication can drive engagement and behavior change, but also requires the understanding of the needs and situations of the users so that more targeted strategies can be selected to drive such change.” (Fernandez et al., 2017: 13)

Charles Tilly defines social movements as a series of demonstrations and campaigns through which ordinary people address collective demands to those in charge. Tilly believes that social movements are characterized by three important elements: campaigns (addressing the claim), repertoire (petitions, demonstrations, pamphlets, etc.) and specific values (unity, commitment, etc.)

In 2015, another protest campaign, “Coruptia ucide” (Corruption kills), was backed using the same platform, Facebook, (<https://www.facebook.com/coruptia.ucide/>). The movement was triggered by the tragic fire that killed 64 people and injured 146 at Colectiv Club on the night of October 30th, 2015. Initial official investigations pointed out that the club’s license was issued negligently or dishonestly. This led to a furious uprising where thousands of Bucharest citizens initiated ample protests on the following days. These protests of unprecedented amplitude and promptitude in post “University Square 1990” Romania generated such a social pressure on the political scene that it led to the resignation of the prime minister.

In February 2017, a part of the active textual members on the “Coruptia Ucide” platform initiated a new movement to protest the government’s intent of decriminalizing some acts of corruption usually committed by serving politicians. The movement got the name #REZIST. The Facebook page associated with the protest group was active for almost two years.

4. Nicușor Dan’s candidacy for mayor - an exclusive product of Social Media

Political careers are relying their existence and evolution on popularity and favorability. In a democratic society, the vote holds the power to build or destroy the destiny of individuals or groups who strive to emerge as leaders. The sensitive relationship between politicians and the voters is nurtured by confidence and mutual respect. Press and audiovisual made possible for people without political pedigree to ascend to most important positions in State. Internet, with both its phases (web 1.0 and web 2.0),

offered new tribunes for political campaigns. Personal websites, blogs and Social Media pages are platforms where stories can be told and political biographies can be constructed (Barassi, 2018).

Perhaps the most prominent Romanian political career built with the help of Social Media is the one of Nicusor Dan, the mayor of Bucharest since 2020. A political activist since early 2000, N. D. founds in 2006 the NGO “Uniunea Salvați Bucureștiul” (USB) - Save Bucharest Union. Its aim was to publicly defend historical buildings of Bucharest threatened to be demolished by real estate developers encouraged by a benevolent indifference of local admiration. USB engaged several judiciary battles with some success till 2015 when the NGO changed its status to political party and competed in June 2016 to local elections - Nicusor Dan being candidate for mayor office but eventually losing the elections. Being encouraged by a good result, USB transformed into USB - “Uniunea Salvați Romania” (Save Romania Union) and participated to legislative elections in December 2016 where it gained about 9%. As a result, Nicusor Dan became a member of Romanian Parliament. In 2017, Nicusor Dan decided to quit USB and become independent. He remained very active on civic agenda regarding the administration of Bucharest and received the support of National Liberal Party for his independent candidacy to 2020 mayor office elections, which he eventually won, thus becoming Bucharest’s mayor in office.

Figure 5. 2016 Bucharest local elections - Campaign Ad for Nicusor Dan



Source: https://www.stiripesurse.ro/se-anuleaza-alegerile-nicu-or-dan-aranca-bomba-in-romania-ccr-i-dna-joac-rolul-decisiv_1137576.html, accessed 07.09.2022

This particular example of cultivating the political potential of an independent activist and his agenda reveals how important it is to “develop a complex personal narrative that is simultaneously shaped by processes of identification and distancing to political groups, as well as by processes of meaning construction of their own biographical experiences” (Barassi, 2018: 148).

5. Challenging Electoral Campaigns Through Social Media

An important electoral upset caused by a public turmoil ignited from intense Social Media campaign was the second tour of 2014 Presidential elections. The front-runner, Victor Ponta, who, at the time, was Romania's Prime Minister, was accused by representatives of Romanian diaspora of not allowing the organization of enough polling stations in Western European and North American cities. The accusations were rejected by the politician. Amplified through mainstream media and Internet platforms, this collective indignation snow-balled into a mobilization of indigenous relatives of Romanian emigrants in support to the second tour for Klaus Iohannis, the competitor of Victor Ponta who, as a result, lost this political battle.

Another interesting case is the overnight ascension of AUR party. Established 6 months before 2020's spring worldwide lock-downs caused by COVID-19 pandemic, Alliance for Unity of Romanians (AUR) party rode the wave of discontent and distrust against Romanian authorities. The emergency coping sanitary policies and restriction measures very poorly communicated by the Government have gradually induced a reaction of rejection from an important part of the population. Unlawful public acquisition of masks and other medical supplies made the most debated news among Romanians living inside or abroad. AUR party managed to absorb an important chunk of this public agenda and took 9 % on 2020 legislative elections.

6. Pandemic Social Campaign in Romania

To say that COVID-19 caught a whole world by surprise would be a clear understatement. Even the most advanced societies couldn't figure out the optimal way to react against the 'little bug' that spread rapidly worldwide due to fast long-distance transportation. The state of mind that amplified the impact of pandemic in 2020 was a general confusion on how to individually react to the discovery of a positive COVID-19 diagnosis at a close one. Rumors and misinformation expanded by the social media's lack of qualified critical analysis amplified the confusion and panic. Many people hesitated between acknowledging their symptoms and lying themselves and others. A plethora of absurd self-treatments populated the net and, evidently, conspiracy theories ensued and flourished.

Romanian virtual communities were not spared by these informational abominations. On the contrary, the mask and lock-down became almost instantly symbols of tyrannical tendencies of the globalist elites. Therefore, it recorded an enormous number of 'unforeseen' deaths (especially among unproblematic young people) due to postponement of medical consultation and reckless behavior of vulnerable individuals while frequenting public spaces. Both the content and the dissemination of public warnings made by the national authorities manifested a gross incoherence and incompetence.

In opposition with 2020's amateurish discourse and strategy of preventative measures against COVID spread, one year later, the public campaign concerning vaccination was

conducted with impeccable communication skills. For the first time the national authorities prioritized the Social Media platforms over the audiovisual. RO-Vaccinare online platform and Facebook page gained rapidly a large number of followers and became very popular through prolific and surprisingly creative advertisement (<https://www.facebook.com/ROVaccinare/posts/140070688006682/>). However, it cannot be ignored that a very substantial amount of money was allocated to this campaign from the national and European Union budget, making possible the involvement of top advertisement professionals.

Unfortunately, this campaign was not accompanied with the same organizational level. Residents from rural and small-town areas had a scarce access to vaccines- a fact that made Romania a dunce regarding the vaccination rate among European countries

Figure 6. Ad for COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign



Source: ROVaccinare Facebook page, accessed 07.09.2022

Conclusion

During late 1990's, sharing ideas through online forums and exchanging messages on MIRC or chat websites was a tremendous opportunity for people around the globe to interact and socialize. However, at the eve of 21st century, the implementation of messenger applications (textual initially, then audiovisual) and Hi5 or Myspace arrival, 'social networking services' made Internet the most powerful invention ever created by human beings. A crucial life-altering event occurs the first time someone sees his/her thoughts and work "shared by someone else on Facebook, retweeted, or in some other way extended to friends of friends, acquaintances, and, most importantly of all, to people you would otherwise not have encountered" (Signorelli, 2021: 5)

An unmanageable yet obstacle with online campaigning is the difficulty of disseminating the content to those who are not already associated somehow with the

inner circle of the authors. In this case a hybrid approach seems more appropriate as face-to-face contact makes the case for more trustful relationships.

Internet represents nowadays the single most important medium through which young people conceive and support civic engagement be that: online petition, Social Media dedicated page or a communication nexus starting point for in situ public protest movement. At the same time, cyberspace has often been a shelter for various groups menaced by political oppression or just by public shaming. Religious, ethnic, or sexual minorities have found on the web a realm of relief but also a battle camp. Social Media can offer an inexpensive and effective method of disseminating information (Banaji and Buckingham, 2013) and of contacting other individuals interested in taking part to civic engagement actions which can be in a variety of ways that do not always adhere to traditional perceptions of parliamentary politics (Uldam and Vestergaard, 2015). The most powerful examples are: Arab Spring, Occupy Wall Street movement, Indignados, and more recently Gilets Jaunes.

Therefore, Social Media can prove to be the optimal instrument at our disposition in present times able to help us engage social actions and nurture communities of interest united by the aspiration of trying to change the world. Nevertheless, in times of great concerns, Social Media can prove to be as much damaging as it is useful.

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WORKERS' RETENTION FACTORS: A STUDY ON PLANT WORKERS AMONG SMALL MANUFACTURING FIRMS

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Abstract: *Human assets play a very important in the survival of small firms. There are prominent studies from developed and developing countries exploring the human resource practices among small firms. From the perspective of Resource Based View, human resources are regarded as potential assets that are indispensable for sustainability of all firms. Studies concentrating on human resource practices from small and large firms' perspectives are abundant. Still there are fewer studies which view the importance and factors for fostering workers retention from the purview of plant workers of small firms in developing countries. The objective of the study is to explore workers retention factors among plant workers and whether it differs significantly sector wise. The study confirms that human resource retention factors are important for retaining plant workers among small manufacturing firms. The findings also proves that there is significant differences in workers' retention factors with respect to demographic characteristics of workers. The study underlines that small manufacturing firms are relatively less conscious to retain workers in the plant thus leading to their instability.*

Keywords: *Sustainability; Human Assets; Human Resources; Resource based view; Plant workers*

Introduction

Small manufacturing firms play a prominent role in the case of many developing nations. They are regarded as the most income generation avenues for these countries. The manufacturing competencies of Indian economy lies among small firms. These firms should focus on developing their capabilities in the form of innovation, technological expertise, infrastructure, as well as workers competence. The popularity of Indian small manufacturing firms has crossed even national borders, by providing quality products and services. Presently Industry 4.0 methodologies are practiced among firms in many developed and developing countries and this made small manufacturing firms to think ahead (Dutta et al., 2020). But implementing such methodologies require skilled employees. But their sustenance depends on efficient

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retention strategies. The International Labor Organization strongly recommends the importance of strategies to retain those employees thereby increasing the competencies of the firms. While focusing on the developed economy, 99 per cent of European economies are small and medium enterprises which contribute enormously to wealth creation. The participants of OECD countries especially Australia, Canada, Japan, Korea and United States, where their respective Government prioritize growth of small and medium enterprises through well-defined policies and procedures, that is same in the case in Asian countries. When moving to East Asian countries like India, characterized by an agrarian economy, their entry into manufacturing sector resulted in a stagnant growth over the last two decades. This is because Indian Industries are dominated by Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises sharing their role in manufacturing and service markets. Out of the manufacturing sector, the MSMEs contribution is only 7 per cent and out of service sector the MSMEs contributed 30.5 per cent to India's GDP.

The success of every small firm lies in the tangible and intangible resources they possess. Each resource is distinct in terms of abilities they possess. Among them, human resources play a very important role. Because they are responsible for converting other resources into competent one. But small manufacturing firms are witnessed by frequent employee turnover (Park et al., 2019) thus resulted in lesser organizational performance. Humans without creative mind have nothing to contribute towards industrial development. Human capital is the aggregate of knowledge, skill, and experience inherent as well as acquired by the individual worker. A developing country is characterized not by increasing stocks of human capital, but by a declining trend in human capital stock. Evidence from empirical research proved that experience is an important constituent of human capital. The competitiveness of manufacturing sector is driven by skilled and active workforce. These assets need to be given significant importance so that their value will be appreciated and thus forms a source of competitive advantage. The sustenance of these values can be assured among small firms only by providing with best HR practices. (Gerhart & Feng, 2021).

The employment in the manufacturing sector especially Micro, Small and Medium enterprises is witnessed by increased use of migrant labours, limited skill development or training and poor working conditions. While the other resources such as machinery, building and materials shows the sign of depreciation, human resources are the only resource which appreciates through development and training (Teece, 2014). Studies on retention factors are conducted majorly in large growth-oriented firms. This is because small firms are unable to afford equal pay and compensation to workers as compared to large firms. The survival of small firms is at risk as a result of lack of skilled labour. This is due to the fact that strategies for retaining workers are less adopted in such firms. Therefore, it is important to understand the different types of retention strategies employed by small firms and to what extent it is deployed in developing countries.

The HR practices among small firms are informal and this resulted in focusing human resource retention factors in this study. The present study focuses on plant workers among small manufacturing firms concentrated in rural areas of South India, where the role of human resources is significant. Studies conducted in developed countries examines human resource practices with the performance of small firms, where there

seems a positive relationship between these variables. (Sheehan, 2013). Talent retention is considered as one of the important factors for global success. Small firms are very poor in deploying practices necessary for retaining talented and skilled workers, thus necessitates to further understand the situation from developing country perspective. (Abdullah Al Mamun & Nazmul Hasan, 2017). Small manufacturing firms failed to deploy best practices which are crucial to retain skilled workers. Several authors have listed a combination of factors necessary for retaining employees among small firms. It includes sound working environment, compensation, career advancement, promotion opportunities, coworker support, training, and development etc. (Khalid & Nawab, 2018).

Importance of the Study

The role played by plant workers in small manufacturing firms is critical. They are considered as most valuable for the performance of the organization. It is the responsibility of small firms to enhance their skills which will contribute to the productive efficiency of the entire team. In order to attract best talent, it is necessary to focus attention on developing strategies to retain them. A stable workforce is very crucial to sustain their performance. No equipment or technology works without the golden hands of workers.

Today, with the introduction of smart manufacturing and industrial systems, the plant should be modernized to adapt to modernized way of manufacturing and processes. According to the theory of RBV, human resources are regarded as the pillar to enable firms to remain competitive. Human resource practices are considered as unique resources which cannot be copied by other firms (Lado, & Wilson, 1994). From the perspectives of RBV, the retention initiatives can be enforced in the core areas of career advancement, tasks specific and incentive based. But in developing countries like India, due to lack of formalized HR system, small firms lack competent human resources. Humans without creative mind have nothing to contribute towards industrial development. Moving from traditionally focused man-made products, now the industries are focused towards machine building capacity, where the men should possess the knowledge on how to operate such automated systems.

The entrepreneurs in the small firms of many emerging countries do not focus on the economic and social progress of workers and they are employed in poor and unhealthy working environment. This in turn affects their competitiveness. The workers in small and medium enterprises are the heart and soul for improving the productivity of the sector. Even though a firm is abundant with respect to its material resources, their effective deployment requires the golden hands of workers, who convert the materials into productive outputs.

India is blessed with immense knowledgeable and skilled workers. (Voca & Havolli, 2019). As per the report of economic times, MSME employ close to 40 percent of India's workforce. Globalization has resulted in both employment generation and destruction. In order to meet the uncertain future environment, the industrial sector should be well equipped with human capital, as they form the core of any business activity. Even though MSME is placed second largest in employment next to

agriculture, it is not characterized by increasing trend in human capital; but exhibited a declining trend in human capital stock among small and medium enterprises. Researchers pointed that India is placed highest next to Philippines with respect to turnover rates of skilled workforce.

Literature Review

Concentration on worker's retention practices is vital for improving the productivity of the workers as well as the organization as a whole. Basically, in small manufacturing firms there is a tendency of frequent turnover of workers as it may hamper the quality of services offered by the firms. There is no formal HR department in many of the micro and small firms. Factors selected for workers' retention were identified from developed and developing countries perspectives. The term workers retention practices were most popular among skilled workers. The workers of public sector and private sector were not exposed to creative thinking. The retention practices like compensation, financial incentives, training, and promotional opportunities are less entertained among lower-level workers. Three Rs are vital for the survival of employees in the organization. It can be 'reward', 'respect' and 'recognition' which is regarded as critical factors for the employees of small firms. There are no such consistent practices of retention like performance management, motivational strategies, overtime incentives, career advancement opportunities to make the employees productive and efficient. Studies are deficient in terms of performance appraisal systems in terms of lower-level workers.

Sustainability is a broad term that are addressed from different perspectives. Investment in Human resource retention factors can be regarded as one of the important sustainability initiatives among various organizations. Resource Based View can be considered as one among the popular theory that addresses the issues of competitiveness and sustainability. Investment in HR practices will cherish the long-term profitability of firms.

Studies applying RBV in HRM related disciplines are in abundance (Wright et al., 1994; Wright et al., 2001). There are studies from both developed and developing countries that views human resource as an important resource and their skill set should be enhanced to foster unique set of capabilities. Whereas studies focusing on human resource practices as unique set of resources are scarce. The studies which are basically conducted under this purview focuses more on established firms and also focused on employees performing white collar jobs. But the present study views retention factors of workers of small firms as distinct resources which are vital for generating workers' competitiveness. Each factor of workers retention is treated as distinct resource which forms the basis of Resource Based View. Studies done by authors (Abdullah Al Mamun & Nazmul Hasan, 2017; Long et al., 2014; Kemelgor & Meek, 2008; Wagar & Rondeau, 2006) on various strategies for retaining workers include a few variables. Workers Retention Factors are crucial for enhancing job satisfaction among employees (Spector, 2021). The authors claims that A worker is satisfied only if they are provided with better compensation, favorable work environment, better career advancement opportunities and promotional measures. Additionally other variables such as Personality training, technology training, employee counselling, participation in decision

making, on the job training, off the job training, suggestion Scheme, performance appraisal, grievance procedure, updating the technology, achievement goals, protective equipment, pollution control measures, rest time, flexible working hours, medical facility, canteen facility, housing facility, leave facility, recreation facility, first aid, coolers, toilets in adequate areas, effectiveness of emergency situations, inspection of work surroundings, fair and adequate pay, bonus, retirement benefits, educational loans and loans for purchase of goods were also explored with special reference to small firms. Studies empirically proved that financial incentives are important constituent of employee retention. Career plans should also be encouraged to employees at all levels.

The workers employed in small firms are not provided with adequate pay and compensation in accordance with the skills and education they possess. They are not allowed to open with their creative ideas which is vital for improving the manufacturing competencies of the organization. Workers should be encouraged in participative decision making which makes them to feel a significant part of the organization. As technology advances every human force are considered as unique. Studies discussed that employee voice is a significant part of organizational effectiveness. This is similar in small manufacturing firms. Workers should be encouraged to express their work related, innovative ideas and concerns they feel to be shared and to be justified. (Soumyaja & Kuriakose, 2020) . This is not the case of manufacturing firms, but the case of service organizations as well. The workers should feel they are physically and mentally safe within the organization (Psychological safety) thus enhancing job satisfaction among workers. Knowledge advancement can be made possible by investment in both internal and external training programmes which improves the thought management process of workers. As the workers employed in small firms are basically having low levels of education, this need to be taken into consideration (Soumyaja & Sowmya, 2020) . Studies coined that, as there are less specialized workers in small firms, they are paid less. Along with these findings, job rotation, team efforts, training and development are less focused in such firms. Those firms that has effective HR practices exhibited successful performance than others. This is empirically justified in the case of IT sectors (Sawant Dessai, n.d.). Many small firms in the manufacturing sectors does not have a formal HR policy. Otherwise, to make it clearer, there are no standardized HR practices that commonly accepted to be followed. The studies on strategies for retaining workers are basically conducted among senior executive officers of developed countries (Wagar & Rondeau, 2006). As workers are basically responsible for generating new and innovative ideas, they are considered as knowledge generator within an enterprise. Better Human Resource Practices enhances their knowledge reservoirs. Therefore, retention factors also help in knowledge management among small manufacturing firms. Authors conducted studies to test the role of HR practices among knowledge-oriented firms and they found to be significantly influencing firm performance. (Singh & Vohra, 2009), Still there are limited studies that enhances these retention practices in small organizations.

Problem Statement

Increased turnover rates may be due to decreased satisfaction among workers. The reason for increased turnover rates among workers can be different. It can be due to lack of compensation, lack of motivation, unhealthy working atmosphere, lack of proper welfare and training facilities. Multinational Organizations are equipped with sufficient resources required for retaining employees. But small organizations do not sufficiently employ retention practices. In order to withstand in a competitive era, small manufacturing firms should focus on retaining their workers, which is an important strategy for creating competitive advantage. This study is undertaken to know if there is any significant difference with respect to worker retention factors among small manufacturing firms with special reference to plant workers. The study identified 30 variables from extensive literature and intends to explore those specific variables relevant to plant workers among small firms in Kerala. After exploring the relevant factors specific to plant workers, how these factors are considered important with respect to small firms has necessitated the generation of second objective. It is evident from studies of both developed and developing countries that workers are discriminated based on their demographic characteristics. Evidence from studies claims that demographic features like age, income, education, experience, does have a significant negative impact on job satisfaction. This motivated to study the differences in workers' retention factors with respect to demographic characteristics among small firms. Studies said that Workers' age is a significant predictor of dedication and satisfaction. As Younger workers have more employment avenues, their persistent stay in the organization is a challenge (Hayes, 2015; Lambert et al., 2012), specifically for small firms. Therefore, it is necessary to identify whether retention practices are focused on small firms to retain younger talents. At the same time viewing retention practices from the point of view of unique resources are rarely mentioned in the literature and this strongly motivates to mention the present work with RBV. The present study considers the plant workers since they are the most valuable workforce and are prone to greater risk to industry hazards. This motivated to formulate the following hypotheses as follows:

Proposed Hypotheses

H1: There is significant difference in the workers retention factors among small manufacturing firms.

H2: There is significant difference in workers' retention factors with respect to demographic characteristics (age and experience) among small manufacturing firms.

Resources and Methods

The data were collected directly from the plant workers through interview schedules who are employed in the plant of manufacturing small firms in Ernakulam, Kerala. As per the State Report of Ministry of MSME 2018-19, Ernakulam District is considered as commercial capital of Kerala and highest revenue yielding district. The small manufacturing firms are characterized by those firms that are enacted by the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development Act in 2006 (Sawant Dessai,

n.d.). As per the Act, the medium manufacturing or production enterprises are those, which have an investment in plant and machinery between Rupees 50 and 100 million. The micro enterprises are limited to spend an investment within 2.5 million rupees and the small enterprises come with the investment limits between 2.5 and 50 million rupees. The samples were selected from food, engineering, and plastic sectors of Kerala where the role of workers in the plant are found significant. The total population of plant workers as per plant register maintained by these firms' is 1158. By applying Yamen's formula, the sample size was derived as 297. The Questionnaire were distributed among 297 samples and the only usable ones were only 215. The variables for human resource retention factors were identified from various studies. (Singh & Vohra, 2009). Small manufacturing firms should realize that their competitiveness depends on talented and knowledgeable employees. Kerala's small firms has been characterized by increased labour turnover because of tempting offers from other companies and countries. Therefore, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises has to find out best possible way to retain their present workers. This include Personality training, technology training, employee counselling, participation in decision making, on the job training, off the job training, suggestion scheme, performance appraisal, grievance procedure, updating the technology, achievement of personal goals, protective equipment, pollution control measures, rest time, flexible working hours, medical facility, canteen facility, housing facility, leave facility, recreation facility, first aid, coolers, toilets in adequate areas, effectiveness of emergency situations, inspection of work surroundings, fair and adequate pay, bonus, retirement benefits, educational loans and loans for purchase of goods. A total of 30 variables were used for the study which were taken from established works (Abdullah Al Mamun & Nazmul Hasan, 2017). The present study explores the factors of workers retention specific to plant workers and also identifies whether these factors are significant for small manufacturing firms.

Results and Discussions

The highest number of plant workers are employed in micro and medium sectors. Above 70% of the workers are male in small manufacturing firms. There are a smaller number of female workers employed in these firms. In the case of micro sectors larger group of workers in the plant belong to the age group of 40-50. But this is not the case of small and medium sectors. The small sectors open the plant as training platform for those who have come out after their education. In small sectors, larger number of workers in the plant belongs to the age group of 20-30. Majority of them are employed as trainees on a temporary basis. But under medium sectors middle aged group (30-40 years) constitutes higher number than the rest of the groups. In the case of experience, medium sectors are rich with experienced hands than small and micro. In relation to employment status, larger proportion of permanent workers are employed in medium sectors. It is clear that majority of the workers among micro sectors are non-keralite. These workers are from Orissa, Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu as well as Bihar. The constitutions of non-keralite workers are relatively low in small as well as medium sectors.

The study identified large set of variables (30 variables) which contribute towards worker retention factors. To reduce these variables, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted. This statistical tool is used in order to reduce huge set of variables into a reduced size, which simplifies the variables required which suits the scope of the study. The factors obtained through this statistical technique are useful for machine operators in the plant of Micro, Small and Medium enterprises in the district of Ernakulam.

For performing exploratory factor analysis, Keyser Meyer Oklin measure of sampling adequacy should be greater than 0.5, where the present study's KMO value is about 0.8, which is adequate. Also, Bartlett's test of sphericity also generated significant value of less than 0.05. Factors generated should have an eigen value greater than 1 which provides greater information with respect to variables as a common criterion. Rotated component matrix was used to interpret the factors which have a highest loading to least loaded among the work environment factors. By conducting exploratory factor analysis, four factor component matrix was generated. A questionnaire with 30 items was distributed to the respondents and by conducting factor analysis nine items were eliminated because of low factor loading less than 0.4. A rotated component matrix table was generated which determines the important factors of work environment of plant workers among MSME.

It is very important to determine the sampling adequacy before extracting the data. This provides information with respect to the suitability of data. It is also useful for determining the strength of correlation among different items. The KMO test of sampling adequacy determines the sampling adequacy of whether the samples are adequate or not. A value close to 0.5 is considered to be a satisfactory level to proceed.

Table 1. KS test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.792
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3778.787
	Df	561
	Sig.	P<0.05

Source: Primary data

From Table 1, KMO sampling adequacy is 0.792 which is acceptable to conduct a satisfactory factor analysis. Bartlett's test of sphericity determines the strength of relationship among variables. Also, Bartlett's test of sphericity is less than 0.05, signifies the strength of relationship between the variables, hence it is concluded that factor analysis is appropriate. Bartlett's test of sphericity generates chi-square value that should be significant. This test is suitable for determining the structuring of data.

Four components were extracted which determines underlying correlations among the variables selected for the study. The higher the value of loadings, the more the factor is contributing to the variable.

Table 2. Factor Extraction Table

Variables extracted	1	2	3	4
Inspection of work surroundings	0.820			
Coolers, toilets in adequate areas	0.809			
Measures to control accidents	0.809			
Effectiveness of emergency situations	0.775			
Protective equipment	0.716			
Pollution control measures	0.555			
Suggestion schemes		0.793		
Performance appraisal		0.705		
On the job training		0.704		
Promotional policies		0.652		
Participation in decision making		0.643		
Encouraging higher education			0.702	
Technology training			0.701	
Challenge in work			0.453	
Feeling of competence through job rotation			0.762	
Discipline			0.429	
Loans for purchase of goods				0.820
Educational loans				0.789
Bonus				0.713
Adequate and fair compensation				0.646
Retirement benefits				0.439

Source: Primary data

The first and foremost factor is the physical settings of the plant, where the workers spend their maximum time. A better physical setting provides a peaceful atmosphere for the workers and their commitment to work is improved as a result. Through the same, the productivity is improved by reduced turnover and absenteeism in the plant. The second factor extracted is in relation to development of human capacities which includes training in relation to enhancement of skill, operation, and other basic amenities available in the plant. It also includes recognition in the form of suggestions and promotions provided to foreman and low-level workers. The third factor is in relation to career enhancement which encourages the workers to take up more challenging and responsible positions. Career enhancement brings about motivation to take over more responsible positions by procuring better opportunistic skills. It includes discipline, challenging work, opportunity for higher education, employee counselling as well as making aware about new technologies. The fourth factor generated is in relation to fair pay and compensation with reference to adequate salary/wages, bonus, retirement benefits, providing educational loans as well as loans for purchase of goods.

Table 3. Measurement of Reliability and Validity

Factors	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE
Physical settings	0.828	0.799	0.823
Human capability building	0.779	0.875	0.793
Career Enhancement	0.649	0.733	0.617
Fair Pay and Compensation	0.647	0.740	0.623

Source: Primary data

From table 3, the reliability of the factors extracted is found to be satisfactory, as it is greater than 0.6 (Hair, 2009). For determining validity Confirmatory Factor Analysis was used. The validity of the constructs is assessed with the help of convergent validity. As the Average variance extracted is greater than 0.5 and Composite Reliability is greater than 0.7, the validity of the constructs is proved to be satisfactory.

H1a: There is significant difference with respect to physical work settings among small manufacturing firms

Table 4. Mean Comparison

	Type	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	p – value
Physical Work Settings	micro	1.9835	78	0.92036	<.001
	small	3.2663	59	1.07543	
	medium	3.6410	78	1.15892	
	Total	2.9369	215	1.28196	

Source: Primary data

Table 5. Post Hoc test

	Type of sectors	Comparison among sectors	Mean Difference
Physical Work Settings	Micro	small	-1.28283*
		medium	-1.65751*
	Small	micro	1.28283*
		medium	-0.37468
	Medium	micro	1.65751*
		small	0.37468

Source: Primary data

From table 5 there is significant difference in physical work setting among Micro, Small and Medium enterprises. Statistically significant difference exists among groups of micro and small ($p < 0.05$) and micro and medium sectors ($p < 0.05$). Here H1a is partially supported. However, there is no statistical difference exist among small and medium sectors. Mean difference with respect to physical work settings is higher for medium sectors. Medium sectors prefer safer workplace settings than small and micro sectors. The sharing of responsibilities among all the workers especially in the micro sectors is the reason for less concentration on safety aspects of the workplace. Small sectors also provide less focus to the safety and hygiene with respect to physical workplace. The workers are less educated with respect to the consequences in future as a result of poor safety and hygiene with respect to workplace in small sectors.

H1b: There is significant difference with respect to human capacity building among small manufacturing firms

Table 6. Mean Comparison

	Type of sectors	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	p - value
Human capacity building	micro	1.8769	78	0.78375	<.001
	small	2.5627	59	0.99132	
	medium	3.0923	78	0.93957	
	Total	2.5060	215	1.03703	

Source: Primary data

Table 7. Post Hoc Test

	Type of sectors	Comparison among sectors	Mean Difference (I-J)
Human Capacity Building	Micro	small	-.515*
		medium	-.811*
	Small	micro	.515*
		medium	-.297*
	Medium	micro	.811*
		small	.297*

Source: Primary data

From Table 7, there is significant difference with respect to human capacity building with respect to micro, small and medium sectors. Here H1b is supported. Human capacity building is highly significant for medium sectors, at 0.05 significance level. Also, from table 4.H3, human capacity building should be greatly focused for micro sectors, as the workers are not consistent with respect to survival among micro sectors.

H1c: There is significant difference with respect to career enhancement among small manufacturing firms

Table 8. Mean Comparison

	Type of sectors	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	p - value
Career Enhancement	Micro	2.0495	78	0.72032	<.001
	Small	2.5278	59	0.82076	
	Medium	2.9872	78	0.82891	
	Total	2.5209	215	0.88134	

Source: Primary data

Table 9. Post Hoc Test

Career Enhancement	Type of sectors	Comparison among sectors	Mean Difference (I-J)
	Micro	small	-47839*
		medium	-.93773*
	Small	micro	.47839*
		medium	-.45933*
	Medium	micro	.93773*
small		.45933*	

Source: Primary data

From table 9, there is statistically significant difference exist among groups of micro, small and medium sectors ($p < 0.05$) with reference to career enhancement. Here H1c is fully supported. It is clear that medium sectors show greater mean difference as compared to micro and small sectors. Plant workers need to be given training on operations in relations to machineries for their optimum utilization. Since medium sectors provide training to plant workers with the help of professional group of machinery suppliers either from national or international level, the production of wastage with respect to faulty materials or products is relatively low.

Since micro sectors are equipped with conventional production equipment, career enhancement facilities are relatively low. But the workers in the micro and small sectors especially those employed under engineering units are competent with respect to any technical work they undergo as a result of bulk of experiences than those come out with technical qualifications. Competency of micro and small sectors are improved through job rotations. This is applicable for medium sectors also. Introduction of punching system in few among the medium sectors motivated the habit of discipline among the workers.

H1d: There is significant difference with respect to fair pay and compensation among small manufacturing firms

Table 10. Mean Comparison

Fair Pay and Compensation	Type of sectors	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	p - value
	micro	2.8359	78	0.61644	
	small	2.8237	59	0.67781	
	medium	3.2333	78	0.72033	
	Total	2.9767	215	0.69687	

Source: Primary data

Table 11. Post Hoc Test

Fair Pay and Compensation	Type of sectors	Comparison among sectors	Mean Difference (I-J)
	micro	small	0.01217
		medium	-.39744*
	small	micro	-0.01217
		medium	-.40960*
	medium	micro	.39744*
small		.40960*	

Source: Primary data

From Table 11, statistically significant difference exists among groups of micro and medium ($p < 0.05$) as well as small and medium sectors ($p < 0.05$). Here H1d is partially supported. Thus, medium sectors give greater importance to workers through providing them with pay without fail, bonus, educational loans etc. The workers belonging to micro sectors have complaints with respect to making defaults in paying salaries as a result of delayed payments from public sector undertakings. The workers under small sectors are also less satisfied with respect to lower percentage of bonus which is given occasionally.

H2: There is significant difference in workers retention factors with respect to demographic characteristics among small manufacturing firms

Prior studies identify a strong relationship with retention factors and demographic profile of employees. In the case of service organizations, this is proved as having a strong relationship with job satisfaction. Younger age groups are less satisfied in their job as compared to older ones. In the case of organizations focusing on academics, academicians above 51 years of age have more chances to quit. Those workers who have more than 10 years of experience have greater prospects of enthusiasm in their work, than those having lesser experience. Older groups are proved to have greater tolerance as they are having less expectations and more dedication towards their job (Kabungaidze et al., 2013). But this may vary from organization to organization.

H2a: There is significant difference in workers retention factors with respect to age among small manufacturing firms.

Age is an important factor in absorbing the diversified nature of jobs. Presently the business environment is dynamic in nature. The organization itself needs to adopt the changes with respect to methods, processes, technologies which are vital for firm's survival. Therefore, in order to be equipped with such opportunities, the workers should possess qualities in terms of willingness to learn and work hard in order to employ them in the current business context. Therefore, age determines the receptiveness of workers to such changes and circumstances.

Table 12. Mean, Standard deviation and F value for Age

Variable	Age	N	Mean	Standard deviation	F	p value
Compensation	20- 30	65	3.60	1.14	5.165	0.002
	30- 40	68	4.57	1.94		
	40- 50	59	4.61	1.76		
	Above 50	23	4.91	2.86		
Physical work settings	20- 30	65	18.17	8.54	4.618	0.004
	30- 40	68	23.53	8.34		
	40- 50	59	21.53	8.89		
	Above 50	23	21.13	6.28		
Human capacity building	20- 30	65	19.20	7.86	7.500	<0.001
	30- 40	68	24.79	8.31		
	40- 50	59	22.12	7.40		
	Above 50	23	25.91	6.16		

Variable	Age	N	Mean	Standard deviation	F	p value
Career enhancement	20- 30	65	11.02	4.76	3.041	0.030
	30- 40	68	12.46	4.19		
	40- 50	59	13.02	4.62		
	Above 50	23	13.74	4.55		

Source: Primary data

From table 12, it is clear that there is significant difference in workers retention factors with respect to age as $p < 0.05$. In this case H2a is fully supported. The workers belonging to the age group of 20 and 30 are not satisfied with respect to compensation, physical work settings, human capacity building and career enhancement. The younger age groups are more vigilant to the surroundings they are exposed to. They also claimed that settings in relation to fixtures, cranes and placement of other equipment and machines are not systematic and orderly. There are less provisions of exhausts or ventilations in micro units. In connection to human capacity building, as all the manufacturing processes are carried through conventional technologies, not many initiatives for human capacity building is entertained. The same is applicable for career enhancement opportunities.

H2c: There is significant difference in workers retention factors with respect to experience among small manufacturing firms

Experience enhances the ability of workers. Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises are considered as a provider of immense experience and flexibility in creating new and improved ideas. It is the pillar for accumulating job relevant knowledge. Experienced hands are considered as asset for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.

Table 13. Mean, Standard deviation and F value for Experience

Variable	Experience	N	Mean	Standard deviation	F	p value
Compensation	Below 5 yrs	3	7.00	0.00	8.591	<0.001
	5-10 yrs	45	3.67	1.02		
	10-15 yrs	66	4.06	1.60		
	15-20 yrs	61	4.33	2.00		
	20-25 yrs	33	4.82	2.23		
	Above 25 yrs	7	7.57	1.27		
Physical work settings	Below 5 yrs	3	15.00	0.00	5.892	<0.001
	5-10 yrs	45	18.47	9.76		
	10-15 yrs	66	18.52	7.55		
	15-20 yrs	61	23.30	8.41		
	20-25 yrs	33	25.85	6.56		
	Above 25 yrs	7	23.57	6.90		
Human capacity building	Below 5 yrs	3	26.00	0.00	5.456	<0.001
	5-10 yrs	45	18.24	7.82		
	10-15 yrs	66	21.58	7.97		

Variable	Experience	N	Mean	Standard deviation	F	p value
	15-20 yrs	61	25.26	8.23		
	20-25 yrs	33	23.52	6.55		
	Above 25 yrs	7	27.86	3.24		
Career enhancement	Below 5 yrs	3	13.00	0.00	4.243	0.001
	5-10 yrs	45	10.82	4.88		
	10-15 yrs	66	11.58	3.40		
	15-20 yrs	61	12.77	4.90		
	20-25 yrs	33	13.79	4.99		
	Above 25 yrs	7	17.57	3.21		

Source: Primary data

In table 13, we can see that there is significant difference in workers retention factors with experience. Here H2c is fully supported. In terms of compensation the workers having greater experience are paid with better compensation. In terms of physical work settings, the workers with less working experience are not satisfied with this aspect. With reference to human capacity building the workers above the experience of 25 years are imparted with operational skills from outside experts from within the country and outside. In relation to career enhancement the workers who have the experience of 20-25 years are exposed to career enhancement opportunities.

Discussions

Retaining workers in the plant is very crucial for the growth of Micro, Small and Medium enterprises. Retaining workers in the form of providing them with better physical settings, capability of development of human capacities, career enhancement, welfare facilities as well as better compensation enables the MSME to reduce their turnover rates. More focus towards development of HR related policies and practices enables micro and small sectors to be competent and ensures them to have a steady growth. It is the responsibility of the entrepreneurs to safeguard the interest of workers by taking into consideration their health and safety aspects coupled with improvement in their skill and capacity. The workers responsiveness to work is determined by the attitude and support of entrepreneurs. The results of analysis with respect to retention factors identified that there is more scope for development of workers in the medium sectors. Focus on workers retention factors depends on the nature and size of business. Micro sectors do not have sufficient funds to invest in the development and promotion of workers. Also, micro and small sectors do not have enough funds to create safety awareness programmes, which hampers awareness among these workers on importance of workplace. But in the case of small sectors, especially plastic processing units where the main focus of operations are manufacturing of packaging materials, less investment with respect to machineries are required. But there are small engineering units in the category of manufacturing of kitchen equipment, heavy electrical equipment, scientific measurement equipment which require sophisticated machineries that demands skilled operators/workers to perform the job. This is same in the case of medium sectors. But medium sectors identify opportunities with respect to machineries which is highly cost effective, which generates different product varieties from the same technology. Hence,

same technology training is crucial for medium sectors. As a result of such cost-effective techniques, medium sectors can focus to generate better outcomes, which enables to invest for better advancement of workers. With respect to human capacity building, as technology updates are not taking place in micro and small sectors no investment in training is made. In small firms, career enhancement opportunities are imparted in the form of encouragement to pursue higher education is commonly seen. But discussing on specific context, micro and small sectors are less conscious, and this can be the basic reason for younger talents not attracted towards small firms. In relation to compensation packages, micro and small sectors are not consistent in providing bonus and incentives as a result of inconsistency in profit earning capacity. These findings have some implications while looking into the demographic aspects especially in terms of age and experience. Even though retention initiatives are less focused on micro and small sectors, it is surprising that workers with more than 15 years of experience and who belongs to older age group continue to work in such units. This is only because of their loyalty to the master.

Conclusions

The objective of the study was primarily to derive on important factors relating to retention of plant workers. As contrary to previous studies, the present study explores and signifies the relevance of career advancement factors, human capacity building, and physical work settings rather than compensation and incentives. The study also underlines that small manufacturing firms are less conscious in extending these support programmes, especially in micro and small sectors. For medium sectors, still there is a scope to provide outreach training programmes where the workers can collaborate with foreign consultants and improves their knowledge capital. Welfare funds should be kept side especially by micro and small sectors which could be used for the welfare of workers. There are micro and small units which are working as ancillary units of State Government. They complain about delay in receiving payments from public sector undertakings.

Recommendations

The findings of this research emphasize on the responsibility of managers among small manufacturing firms to focus on the measures for retaining workers through various career enhancement programmes. Government establishments should make timely payment for the orders received from small firms. Well written policies and procedures relating to HR should be framed by top management which takes care of the management-based functions of HR. Younger talents should be given better pay and promotional measures so that they feel secured within the firm. At the same time participative decision making can also be encouraged which improves the commitment and dedication among plant workers.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors confirm that there is no conflict of interest to declare for this publication.

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RURAL DEVELOPMENT. THE CASE OF TWO COMMUNITIES

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Abstract: *The article was elaborated within the MarginalRural project, a grant of the Romanian Academy, carried out between 2019 and 2022. The purpose of the grant was to collect data from several rural and small urban communities and analyze the demographic data but also data regarding infrastructure, health and education services, sources of income, local employers and more. The analysis included different perspectives, respectively an institutional one (through the opinions of representatives of public institutions), an entrepreneurial one (through the reflected opinion in interviews with local entrepreneurs) and that of vulnerable groups (through the opinions of interviewed disadvantaged people). The objective of the project was to analyze the phenomenon of rural development/underdevelopment and reveal the factors that influence development or marginalization.*

Key words: *rural community, development, social inclusion, education, employment, social services.*

Introduction

Approaches to the phenomenon of development give greater importance to both the stock of social capital and human capital, but also to infrastructure as predictors of social development. The model for measuring local/ community development such as that proposed by Dumitru Sandu, for example, identifies two types of structural factors of community development: human capital and community-level infrastructure. The conclusions of the author's analysis (D. Sandu, 2011) show that life chances are strongly differentiated in Romania depending on where you live, and the gaps are structured on four main dimensions: residential environment, residential concentration, access to services and infrastructure, occupation field/sector. These dimensions are proposed to the analysis in our study too, together with the fields of education, health, consumption,

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social relations, they form the framework for the analysis of development equality / inequality social issues manifested at the regional and local level. The residence, the positioning in relation to the city/ county centre, on the one hand, the size of the locality, as well as the degree and type of occupation, represent the main elements which configures different local development profiles.

Mihalache Flavius (2020) also proposes an approach to the rural environment, rather as a sum of various social and economic contexts, "outlined *from the point of view of regional specificities and the different economic orbit of rural UATs around important towns (...)* The generic term of rural environment is not based on common characteristics of different areas but represents an accumulation of rather varied local coordinates" (Mihalache, 2020, p.70). The author identifies the existence of some major profiles of rural localities, located in different stages of socio-economic development. The use of small areas of agricultural land, the use of traditional methods and the involvement of household members in agriculture activities are characteristics of the Romanian countryside (Mihalache, 2020, p.71).

The World Bank proposes a local human development index (LHDI), built on six indicators. This index is used to position and differentiate small villages and towns in Romania, from the perspective of local human development, on a 5-step scale. Comprehensive development requires "stocks on all five dimensions of community capital (education, housing, employment and mobility experience), in a national context" (Teşliuc, Grigoras, Stanculescu, 2016, p. 159)

To measure local/community development, as we showed previously, Sandu D. (1999, 2011) constructed the local social development index to show the current configuration of social development gaps in Romania. The local social development index is calculated by aggregating seven primary indicators. The relevant and available indicators for the community capital of localities are (Sandu, 2011, p. 5) human capital (education stock at community level), vital capital (average age of personnel over 14 years and life expectancy at birth), material capital (number of cars per 1000 inhabitants, average area per dwelling, gas consumption per capita) and category of size and residency of the locality. The conclusions of Sandu's analysis show that life chances are strongly differentiated in Romania depending on where you live, and the disparities are structured along four axes: urban-rural living, residential concentration, access to services and infrastructure and employment sector, a fifth axis with limited relevance in urban space refers to relational capital, associated with cultural diversity. These axes, together with four domains: education, health, consumption, social relations constitute the framework of social development inequality manifested at the regional level.

Sandu shows that the biggest axis of differentiation is that between urban and rural. The rural continues to have a much higher infant mortality than the urban, a lower life expectancy than the urban. The quality of housing is systematically better in urban areas than in rural areas for all the counties of the country. A second axis concerns the chances of accessibility. Sandu shows that social development is higher in the communes close to the city and in communities with access to European roads, compared to those that only have access to communal or county roads. The shuttle also represents a relevant factor. Increased commuting bring income within the community and plays a role of development. The third axis refers to the predominant agricultural

occupation of the population. In rural communities, the activities of cultivating cereals in particular, associated with low incomes. Communities where animal husbandry is a developed sector tend to be more socially developed. The fourth axis is given by the size of the locality as a number of inhabitants. In communes with a small number of farmers, mortality rates by age group tend to be higher. The fifth dimension is given by relational capital. Regarding the education stock, the average number of school years completed by the population of a locality is a relevant indicator for both urban and rural areas. (Sandu, 2011, p. 18-20).

Another direction of analysis is represented by studies on the impact of structural factors of development and how they are regulated by the operation of some local social mechanisms. In Romania, authors such as Catalin Zamfir (2007), Voicu M (2004), Voicu B. (2005), Tesliuc, Grigoras, Stanculescu (2016), Preotesi (2013) have designed analysis models of the social development of the community to the people from the Romanian area. In the following, we will present two rural communities in Romania, at which we look at from the perspective of the indicators described above.

Vlad Tepes commune, Calarasi county

Socio-demographic data. Vlad Tepes commune is in the north-eastern part of the Baragan plain, on the Bucharest-Calarasi national road, approximately 30 km from Calarasi Municipality, and consists of the villages of Vlad Tepes and Mihai Viteazul. The population of the commune is of 2078 people, in 1142 households. The ethnic structure of the commune does not officially include Roma, although there is a significant number in the village of Vlad Tepes, but they are undeclared in the census and in many cases Romanized. Population it is in an accentuated aging, the number of children born in the last 3 years being only 7 babies, and the number of deaths 134. Of the 2078 inhabitants of the commune, more than half, 1263, are pensioners. The total number of children in the locality (0-18 years) (2021) is 276, of which 51 are enrolled in kindergarten and 168 are enrolled in general school (2019/2021).

Infrastructure. The distance from Calarasi Municipality is 30 km on DN3, the commune has no access to the railway. A percentage of 90% of the households are connected to water, but there are older local problems related to the potability of the water, the one from the network has a sulphurous component and the one from the well has nitrites and nitrates and, dangerous substances for infants, representing a significant danger for them. Approximately one third of the commune's households are already connected to the sewerage, through a connection project. There is no gas connection to the commune, but there is a '*submitted project for gas connection*'. (Authority representative)

The waste collection system is carried out based on a contract through the town hall, with weekly collection and selective collection. School is active in recycling actions of various types of waste (collect including batteries for recycling), they ran a project in this sense in the locality through the school, a project that also generated an online platform, which is a favourable point for the community. This has an important role in educating children regarding recycling and shows the importance of the involvement of the main formal local leaders in local development. *There is a contract through the town hall,*

weekly, for all the residents, not only at school, and the garbage is collected selectively, we received from the town hall specially for each type of waste a container. We at school are more ecological, we like it. We also collect batteries. It's an older project of my soul and I 'm trying to change something, but it's hard. At least with the children the change is possible, and maybe through them we can change with the adults. (School representative). Garbage is collected and deposited on a platform near the village of Mihai Viteazul, the problem is the proximity to the village, in the summer the smell becomes unbearable, say the interviewees: *The garbage platform is not even a kilometer from our village, but it belongs to Ciocanesti, who owns the land here close to us, but it is a large sewage treatment plant, made at the county level.* (Retired judge).

Transport. Local transport is provided by local minibuses. *They come from 5 am, until 7 pm, because there are minibuses that run between Calarasi and Bucuresti and then there is a continuous flow on this part of transport.* (Entrepreneur). Public transport is characterized by the locals as being quite good, with enough bus stops, the DN3 passes through the commune, and Calarasi is 30 km from Vlad Tepes. The railway is 25 km away from the commune, at Lehliu Station. The situation of the sidewalks is problematic in the commune. The asphalt was broken up to introduce sewage and running water, and then there were no funds to restore them. *It's a disaster. DN3 is asphalted and on the otherwise we are in a disaster with the road. They paved the roads and finally received approval for sewage and running water and broke their roads to put in the sewage and running water pipe and let them have leftovers, because there was no more money for reasphalting.* (Local leader)

Housing In Vlad Tepes commune, a large part of the inhabitants is Roma, but not declared as having this ethnicity, compared to the village of Mihai Viteazul where Romanians predominate, according to the respondents' statements, but there is an aging population. The condition of the houses is altered for the elderly population in case they do not benefit from the help of relatives. With the employment of local people at the Makita company, the packaging sector, but also other companies from Calarasi, Bucharest or Ilfov county, the houses became more beautiful, they were renewed, say the interviewees. Also, 50 homes of some social cases were rehabilitated through a project carried out by the town hall. The proximity to urban centres, where the inhabitants of the commune could find a job, but also the appearance in the commune of an important employer, Makita company, clearly represents a local development factor.

Agricultural activity. The area of arable land of the commune is of 6,303 ha, and the number of agricultural economic units is 22. *The land is no longer worked individually with the horse, the plow is gone because the people have grown old. Now 85 % of the land is leased by agricultural associations.* It is estimated that at least 15 % of the population is self-employed in agriculture. Many of the households have solar panels for vegetable cultivation and pigs and poultry for their own consumption. Very few families have large animals: cows (37) and horses. There are only a few shepherds with sheep (400) and goats. There is a decrease in the number of animals, those who have jobs during day, have no way to take care of animals.

Animals are very rare in the whole area of the village, not only in Vlad Tepes. Very few people have cows anymore, so cows have become a rarity in a village, because the old people who took care of them have kind of gone and the young people ...some don't want to work, others have work in the city and

even then, they don't have time to take care of animals, and there are very few who have animals. Cows, horses are very rare. Now they started to be rare the pigs. Every household has a few birds and a piglet there. (Entrepreneur)

The use of animal products is done in the locality. *There are still some shepherds who have animals, but they exploit them from the gate, from home.* (Local authority). *It is an area with 15 agricultural farms. I am one of them. This also leads to a better life. There are people employed on these farms. They are modernized, i.e., with new equipment. We are very well. Renting land let to earn money. There are very few self - supporting households. There are many vegetable gardens.* (Local authority) (...) *Our land is basically leased, we have several leasers who do this, considering that the population is older No, they don't have animals anymore.* (Local authority)

Occupation. One of the main employers in the community is Makita company and agricultural farms. It is estimated that with this company entering the commune, starting from 2015, the standard of living in the community increased and this was seen in the modernization of houses and the introduction of bathrooms in the homes. The total number of employees in the locality is approximately 250 people. The number of people who went to work abroad, according to the city hall data, is of approximately 200 people. A number of 80 shuttle workers are also estimated. 60 % of the commune residents are already pensioners (1263), a quarter of the commune's workforce are salaried, and the rest of the active workforce are day laborers. Those without education use a combination of daily work, child allowances, pensions of extended family members and social aid. *Starting in 2015 this village was saved by the Makita company near Branesti, where they gathered everyone from there and gave them a place to work and from that moment on, his standard of living increased to about two or three times, because they all have a job. (...) When I came here in 2006, they asked me to give them work because they were dying of hunger, most of them were unemployed, but since 2015, let me say, the standard of living increased about two or three times, maybe even better. They all started to build houses, to modernize their bathrooms, toilets, that is, the village has changed radically since 2015* (Retired)

Health services. In the locality, there is a permanent centre, six doctors and six assistants from other localities who change every four hours, therefore medical services are accessible, including in case of emergency. Health problems of the locality are specific to the aging population. The co-payment and the waiting list for a check-up with a specialist, outside the locality, are mentioned as barriers in accessing some specialist medical services. *A very large percentage of the patients is the elderly population and here all kinds of affections intervene. As for the young population up to 60, there are not very big health problems.* (Representative of health services) *Sick in all ways, but untreated, unsearched, everyone is very bad here. Anyway, there is a queue at the pharmacy, it's the most crowded place, I think.* (Representative school) *People in the country even if they allow it, they don't give money to go to the control because they schedule you in seven months, I mean the referral, the analyses as well, that they are for a few days a month, at the doctors you have to have something to give on the side and I will stay until, in the phase either they take the rescue or something happens, they usually do not go to the doctors. But we have an advantage in this regard, we are the third locality in the county in which we have non - stop emergency medicine, that is, we have doctors on call. Nonstop is a doctor and a nurse.* (School representative)

The local family doctor has attracted a home-care company for immobilized patients in the community. There is a contract with a medical analysis company from Calarasi that collect samples and bring the results to the community. *We also have a homecare company organized by me, which addresses mainly for disabled people, those with sequelae of cerebral stroke, immobilized patients, collection of medical tests at home is ensured for them. They have everything, there is no obstacle for them. Networks provide them with national programs, the pharmacy offers them medication.* (Representative of health services)

Education. The school in Vlad Tepes is modernized: the furniture is new, the equipment is of the latest generation, computers, video projectors, etc. Through several projects with European funds, the school and kindergarten were renewed. In contrast, the school and kindergarten in the village of Mihai Viteazul were abandoned. Even if it was modernized it cannot be used because of the mold in the walls, the lack of involvement of the local authorities in the maintenance led to a degradation of the initial investment. The Pro-community project was successfully carried out between 2014 and 2020, approx. 54 adults between 40 and 60 years of age were enrolled in the program.

Financial shortages are considered an obstacle for the children of the commune to access a university. *Only those who have the opportunity can keep their children studying, only those who have a commercial or agricultural company or a job, because it is quite difficult to you have a child in college/university. I didn't really see him return in this commune after graduating from school (college).* (Entrepreneur)

Once they finish their studies, the young people do not return to the community, but look for employment in Calarasi, Bucharest or other cities. The phenomenon of urban migration after finishing studies is widespread. *Some of the children went to vocational school, others to high school and others stopped at secondary school. In principle, they did not return to the commune after finishing high school, they went to college and got a job either in Bucharest or in Calarasi. They never came back. There are few who have returned. Or they leave abroad at work. Those who qualified in certain trades left for better, better paid jobs.* (Social worker)

The involvement of the school management in programs/projects, fundraising, other ways of uplifting the school and the community is to be appreciated.

We didn't have anything inside, until we got the furniture and so on. They all came with a bit of luck, I guess we're a bit lucky. Through that project we bought video projectors in all new classes, of laptops for computer science, all new, I have 30 intelligent, interactive boards, as well, and after, through a friend who has an NGO, we made a partnership with them and made an association and let them publicize that we are a school in which we care a lot about the environment and offer recyclable materials for free, we offer batteries, we offer everything and we want it too, we don't want money except anything that can help a school instead. My colleagues donated materials made by them personally, various, we have colleagues who are good at computers and do various things, after which the association developed, and we started giving certificates of volunteering and various documents by which they would prove that they had participated. (School representative)

Vulnerable groups and benefits/social services addressed in the community.

The number of people receiving Guaranteed Minimum Income in 2021 in the community is of 26, and the total number of people receiving heat aid in (2021) is 76.

Vulnerable groups in the commune are identified as elderly, children (especially those of Roma ethnicity) and people with disabilities, according to the statements of residents.

There is the elderly who have small pensions and they still have grandchildren next to them who do not want to work and take their mother 's and father 's pension, I tell you, this is the reality. There are those who work as much as possible and have social assistance and still go to work during the day, day laborers, so to speak, but there are also some who have no income and they don't want anything to work.

Children because they are victims at some point of irresponsible parents, because you can no longer put parents in vulnerable groups because they could, so there are chances to take an attitude, to rise from the comfort zone in which they are... but children are sure victims because they have no chance with some parents. (Entrepreneur)

Roma ethnic groups. These are the worst conditions, but also these young people from the age of 14 who finish 7th grade, 8th grade, how are they hanging around here and finally they have children, and they are not well (Local doctor)

Children living in poverty are vulnerable, say the authorities, because they are victims of uneducated parents, some addicted to alcohol. The elderly can also be victims of domestic violence. Another vulnerable group is that of young people that have a very low educational stock, therefore they lack the opportunity to get employed, but they also lack the confidence that they can overcome their situation, following a second chance gender education program. The after-school program that was run in the community was considered very effective for the children because they had a meal provided.

How could these people be helped... Well, financial help if they receive it, they should receive it directly, not through their parents, possibly with educational resources. But the discussion keeps coming back to the education part. (Entrepreneur). Mobile home unit for homeless people would be good. They benefit from services provided by caregivers at home. We employ 4 people who do this. For children it is a little more difficult here. We had the "after school" project, the children served meals there. But we didn't manage to continue this project, we hit the financial side. We employ 11 personal assistants for people with disabilities and about 50 allowances, people with severe disabilities accompanied. (Public authority representative)

They need guidance from this to manage in society, those from vulnerable groups, some of them are cut off from the real world. They have no idea when they need something, they do not know where to go. They start to question each other and give each other erroneous information. These offices at the county capital level should also exist at the locality level. In that locality, someone at a certain time, or a platform, should come to the town hall to guide the people, to enlighten them: what they must do, where to go, what documents they need. (Representative of public authority) (...)

A centre for the elderly, but also for children, would be good, but it is very difficult because of the finances needed and we should have a place for this activity. (Public authority representative) (...) Counselling centres at least for a period, not to be daily functional. Regional centres, not necessarily in Vlad Tepes. I had also proposed that it be done regionally, I don't know three or four localities... I was

referring primarily to schools, but even localities have many social and family problems. (Representative of public authority)

Locality development opportunities. Investments in agriculture and job creation are seen as the main ways of local development by the interviewed locals. *Agriculture, I don't see anything else there, because it is in an area where there are no tourist attractions, for example we are facing this problem because a lot of people ask, " what else can we see in this area ". And it can't be done anymore, I do not know of any other tourist attraction here. So, we focus on this side with the lavender culture visit on everything that means visit.* (Entrepreneur) (...) Funds from PNRR are expected as a saving solution for some of the local problems: infrastructure, school dropout. *And now I also submitted the PNRR, I submitted the project on abandonment and fortunately I entered the first stage, I was selected to the school, so we are fine. I waited to submit the financing application on Monday and three years if I receive financing it will be a success,* (Representative of public authority) (...) Investments in jobs are also seen as the main engine for raising the standard of living. *Garment factory, for example, factories with something to exist. It would be profitable for those who would invest because labour in the country is cheap.* (Public authority representative)

Because there are also meadow areas here to make not a big factory but a small one to make for canning vegetables, for example, they would ask him and say if we do it's more convenient to give them our products to run to... But even the times do not help us anymore, because Baraganul is no longer what it once was (Retired) (...) *Apart from agriculture, it is possible that in other parts of the garment factory, in shoes, they could qualify them for the workplace, they would someone could do something like that, but I don't see anything else here in the area.* (Public authority representative)

In the case of Vlad Tepes commune, the residential environment, the positioning in relation to the big cities / county seat, on the one hand, the size of the locality, as well as the degree of and the type of occupation represented the main elements that shaped local development. As Sandu also shows, social development is higher in communities with access to main important roads, and commuting has increased and brings income within the community, being a growth factor. In the case of those with a very low educational level, it is mainly the case of the Roma population, who represent a vulnerable group - their potential labour force supply is, in many cases, considered inadequate, in itself, by employers, not only relative to certain positions that demand special skills and knowledge, but ethnic stereotypes, fuelled by particular experiences of certain interactions, also contribute to such a situation deficiencies of some ethnic Roma with the labour market.

Comana commune, Brasov County

Comana is a commune in Brasov county, Transylvania, consisting of the villages of Comana de Jos (residence), Comana de Sus, Crihalma and Ticusu Nou.

Socio-demographic data. According to official data, the population of Comana commune amounted to 3,076 inhabitants in 2021, an increase compared to the census data of 2002, when 2,635 inhabitants were registered. Most of the inhabitants are

Romanians (75.38%), with a minority of Roma (18.6%).¹ From the analysis of the demographic indicators, it can be noted that there is no population replacement rate, the number of deaths exceeds the number of births, in 2021 a number of 31 deaths were recorded and only 9 births. The total number of pensioners is of 328 peoples, approximately 10% of the commune. Population growth was achieved through immigration to the commune.

Comana commune infrastructure. The commune is crossed by DN1S, which connects DN13, E60 (Hoghiz) and DN1, E68 (Sercaia). DJ 104 K connects Comana de Jos with Bunesti, and DJ 104 N unites Comana de Jos with Comana de Sus. Bus stations are located in all four villages of the commune. For access to rail transport, Comana residents use Sercaia and Rupea railway stations. The road infrastructure of the commune is quite developed, as all the interviewees mentioned. 80 % of the roads are paved, the quality of the roads is good, there are connections with the main towns, Fagaras and Rupea. The only aspect that could be improved is the public transport schedule *"there is only one company that connects Rupea-Comana-Fagaras, in the morning it goes to Fagaras, and at 3 it returns"* (Representative of local public institution). Like public transport and the roads that connect the commune, pedestrian transport is also appreciated by the locals. Thus, it is mentioned that there are enough sidewalks, there is public lighting, even in a larger proportion, *"the public lighting has been done for two years, absolutely the whole commune is lit, we have economical LED bulbs"* (Local public authority representative). The connection to the water network is over 80%, the commune being in the process of establishing a public water management service. *"we have water purification and filtration station, it is a modern station that, now, we are in the moment of receiving and testing it, and DSP Brasov periodically comes to and take water samples, the water is good, I had no problems. We also have a general meter that can tell us how many cubic meters per day we consume"* (Local public authority representative).

The gas network is working in two of the four villages, in Comana de Jos commune (residence) and in Crihalma (covering approx. 40% of the commune), the commune 's strategy being the expansion of the network the other two villages, Comana de Sus, respectively Tihusu Nou through the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR). The number of families connected in Comana de Jos is *"somewhere around 100 and in Crihalma about 80, now with the facilities made by the operators, several families have been connected in free mode"* (Representative of local public authorities). In the case of those who do not have the possibility to heat with gas, they use solid fuel, mainly wood.

To garbage collection chapter, there is a management delegation contract concluded for a period of 5 years with an operator from Brasov that sanitizes the commune, *"the contract being made with the one that generates the garbage, not with the City Hall"* (Authority representative). For the collection of waste, there is a platform in the commune, where the population deposits the residues, later, they are picked up by the operator. The issue of pollution in the community was discussed. This first source of pollution seems to be the cement factory from Hoghiz, owned by the ROMCIM company, because the commune is transited by large machines that pollute through the noxes emitted and on

¹ <http://www.comuna-comana.ro/cadru-demografic/>

the other hand, it is about the location of the factory, in the immediate vicinity of the commune. This also generates cement dust, which is brought by the wind into the commune. More than that, there is a section within the factory where garbage is burned. Currently, cement dust pollution has decreased thanks to the installed filters: *"there were problems with the cement factory, when there were no special filters, when we had another row of cement on the tiles of the houses because of the dust which rose from the chimneys, the furnaces from there and came to us"* (Representative of local public institution). **The housing situation** is, in general, good, according to the declarations of the authorities, there are only to a small extent buildings in an advanced state of deterioration, there are buildings where citizens who have a precarious financial situation live, *"but most of the buildings are in good condition, that is, they allow good living"* (Representative of local public authorities).

Agricultural activity and the use of animal products. The total land area of the commune is 3478.12 ha, composed of arable land (2735.23 ha), and meadows (742.89 ha). The main common activities are agriculture and animal husbandry. Elderly people without power, they assigned, leased or gave the land for free in use to the youngest who develop agriculture and animal husbandry at an average level, *"as much as the geographical position allows"*, being located at the foot of the central group of the Persani Mountains. From the statements of the authorities, for 30 % of the households in the locality, agriculture is a source of income, and for 60% of them the household provides them with products for the strictly necessary *"they have two, three, four cows or some 20 sheep, I'm not talking about chickens or ducks, but not an economic gain, and the rest have other occupations, not all of them work in agriculture"* (Local public authority representative). The use of animal products is done by milk processors in the area who have opened collection points in the villages belonging to the commune, authorized by the Veterinary Sanitary Directorate. Thus, people take milk to these centers, where, subsequently, they receive the price according to the quantity brought. Regarding meat, *"everyone does as he can on the free market; there are also the big operators who, in the first summer, come and collect the lambs. We have several animal breeders in the community who have made a name for themselves by raising Angus cattle that are only for meat"* (Representative of local public authorities).

Occupation. The activities carried out in the commune are mainly agricultural and services. The number of employees in the locality is 64 people and commuters 44 people, according to official data. The opportunities to work outside the commune are represented by the economic operators who come and take the workers to integrate them in the factories they manage, the opportunities to work in the locality are from agriculture and animal husbandry to forestry work or logging. In the locality there are forest and basalt exploitations, and the reactivation of the basalt quarry in the Comanii valley and the construction of the Fagaras hydroelectric power plant, whose reservoir would extend to Hoghiz. However, commuting represents a source of work that is more and more common among the locals, whether it is done through the means of transport of economic operators, or by using their own cars. In the commune, a small part is represented by employees, because there are many people who have not graduated eight classes and that can be hardly become employed. Currently, within Crihalma Secondary School the "Second Chance" program for adult training *"An industrial platform was found in Codlea that allows the employment of unqualified people"* (representative of a local public institution).

The lack of continuity of work and, implicitly, of income amplifies the phenomenon of community impoverishment, *"there are many who benefit from social assistance, many who earn income for short periods, working on daily, or receiving benefits only for a short period of time"* (Representative of local public institution). Some of the villagers work as day labourers or amplify the phenomenon of migration abroad for a job, mainly seasonally. Regarding migration abroad for gainful purposes, the answer was unanimously affirmative, a sign that this is becoming increasingly attractive to the population. The pandemic stopped the phenomenon of migration, but the locals are optimistic that once the restrictions are lifted, they will be able to return to the economic activity that ensures them and their families a decent living; *"there is the seasonal issue that we all know, once, twice a year, more difficult in the last two years due to the pandemic situation"* (Local public institution representative). Qualified labor force is represented by the people who work at state institutions, at the town hall, at schools *"where all staff are qualified, in number of 33"* (Representative of educational institutions), but also professions such as the electrician or engineer. They carried out their activities at the factories in the area, such as the cement factory in Hoghiz, Rupea or Feldioara.

Social problems in the locality. The biggest social problem identified by the interviewees refers to economic aspects. Thus, regarding the quality of life, the inhabitants of Comana position themselves in the lower quintiles of income, because of the lack of investors in the area, a fact that comes along with reduced revenues to the local budget and stopped and reduced work on the formal market. Another problem identified is the situation of school dropouts and absence of parents gone for work in the past, it led to an increase in the school dropout rate, both among Romanians and among the population of Roma ethnicity, say the authorities". The children are left with their grandparents who, in a short time, can no longer control them, I think it is a general problem in the Romanian villages, says a representative of the authorities. In our village, there are families with departed parents, raised by grandparents and other relatives, as well as the Roma, there are financial problems that we are trying to support and we keep them close to the community, to the church (Representative of a local public institution). The number of children who dropped out of general school in 2021 was 23. School dropout is, therefore, a problem, as the interviewees unanimously expressed, but a mean of stimulating school completion would be economic operators in the metropolitan area of Brasov which impose eight classes for employment.

People with disabilities. Comana commune supports the 62 people with physical disabilities who live in the locality. Among the facilities listed by the authorities as offered to people with disabilities are access to the town hall, to the school and at the medical office. There are no social service providers in the locality to ensure support programs for people with disabilities. According to the social worker in the community, disabled people enjoy legislation that protects and promotes their rights, such as Law 416/2001 on the guaranteed minimum income, Law 277/2010 on the allowance for maintaining the family, as well as guidance through law 448/2006 on the protection and promotion of the rights of disabled persons.

Health services. The state of health of the population in the commune is perceived as generally good by the representatives of the interviewed authorities. According to the data obtained from the local public authority, the percentage of people from the locality

registered with the family doctor is 90%, being only one case of TB on record in the year 2021. In the commune, there is only one medical practice where a family doctor works, who offers his patients on - call services three times a week, a practice that has the necessary equipment, according to local declarations, there is also a dental practice and a pharmacy.

Education. There are two secondary schools and four kindergartens in the commune. The total number of children enrolled in kindergarten and general school in 2021 it is 470, and the number of children who dropped out of general school in 2021 it is 23, the total number of children enrolled in high school is 35. The main endowment within the school is the multidisciplinary synthetic field, where students can play sports such as football, volleyball or handball. After graduating from secondary school, 75% of students choose to continue their studies, either at a high school (60%) or at a vocational school (approx. 15%), the most requested being Fagaras because it is the most accessible in terms of transport. Regarding the continuation of university studies, approximately 50% of high school graduates from the commune choose to attend a college. According to the representatives of the educational institutions, some of the young people will remain in the village after finishing school, and others choose to leave, but *"the possibilities to continue the activity in the village after finishing the faculty are very limited due to the possibilities offered by the community"* (Local public institution representative). Perhaps the most important aspect related to education in the Comana commune is given by the "Second chance" program, within the Crihalma school, a program intended for adults who have not succeeded to complete their primary or secondary education. *"We are now fighting for the reduction of abandonment, for better promotability, we have also tried through various projects to stimulate them, so we attract them. Since October, the "Second Chance" program has been taking place, it is for the training of adults, i.e. those who did not complete four or eight classes at that time. They now have the chance to register to complete their studies because the factories in Coldea, Brasov, Feldioara required a minimum of eight classes, many of them could not get a job and even then, with the help of the Inspectorate, we implemented this project for the training of adults which is carried out until in July"* (Representative of an educational institution). Also, in the locality, there is a school of arts and crafts within the premises of the primary school.

Vulnerable groups. In the perception of the authorities, the vulnerable groups are represented by young families without jobs, by people between ages because they can no longer find a job and old people alone, who no longer have their children around. There are 117 people whose files regarding the Guaranteed Minimum Income (VMG) were approved (out of 117 applications) in 2021, as well as 493 people who benefit from the Guaranteed Minimum Income in 2021. Out of a total of 306 files of heat aids in 2021, all were approved, being a total of 768 beneficiaries of heat aid in 2021. The number of children from single - parent families is 32 in 2021. to take care of relatives for migration abroad for gainful purposes, but we do not have official data on this number.

Opportunities / barriers to local development. The potential for development in the perception of the authors is given by attracting investors with the aim of processing the raw material from animal husbandry, such as milk and meat, this would constitute an opportunity for development and could leads to the creation of jobs for the community, both skilled and unskilled. Tourism presents potential in the area,

considering the forest from Comana de Sus, where accommodation places, forest trails and roads can be built for those who are passionate about cycling (walking countries by bicycle for recreational purposes). The presence of natural reserves, such as Pestera Comana, the geological reserve at Piatra Cioplita or karst landscapes make Comana commune an area with tourist potential to be considered. Despite the developed infrastructure around Comana commune, attracting investors is difficult, a fact that brings the lack of more jobs in the locality, or funds to the local budget. A brake on local development is represented by the limited financial possibilities of some young people after completing their secondary school studies to go on to high school: *"lack of money; they finish the eighth grade, maybe they would continue their studies, if they had financial support or guidance from the family"* (Representative of a local public institution), but also the problem of school dropouts in the commune.

In the case of the Comada commune, we are dealing with an aging population, and a high percent of active population with low level of education, the high share in the economy of income sources of a poorly efficient agriculture, carried out in small individual farms and low share of employees in the working - age population, high rate of migration of young people with a high educational level to the cities; lack of occupational alternatives for those remaining in the respective localities; requiring the local social services. The route of internal migration is to towns with good high schools. In addition to the poor quality of education, another problem identified from the data collected is that of the inadequacy of school training to the requirements of the local market. One local strategy seems to be enrolment of the adults in the second chance school to finish 8 classes in order to get a job afterwards.

Among the social problems mentioned most often by the locals, the problem of jobs comes first and the local context that generates a very low degree of attractiveness for potential investors, the local offer of jobs being a very precarious one. The problem of jobs also has a qualitative dimension aimed at matching the supply of labour to the demand for labour. Employers complain that "the good workforce is over", they have either retired or left the locality/ country, and the school does not prepare young people in the fields in which they need knowledge of employees. Although there are many people without employment, a part of them are not willing to work, or consider that the offered salaries are too low. If, in the case of young people, it can be, in some cases, about the help of parents, as far as some of the unemployed are concerned, it is about a mix of social benefits, in which informal incomes from day/occasional work and their/the family's incomes from subsistence agriculture are added - whether it is self-consumption, or the valorisation of products through sale.

Conclusions

The study aimed to analyse the local socio-economic contexts and explain the factors and mechanisms of (under)development at the local level. The first factors detected in the analysis refer to the socio-economic impact of some deindustrialization phenomena in the nearby (so that active workforce was not able to find a job anymore) and the significant presence of activities in subsistence agriculture. The second type of factors refers to the ways in which the population responds to social changes - accessing social benefits, returning to subsistence agriculture, or emigrating outside the locality or

outside the countries to find a job. In the rural environment where neither the environmental conditions nor the local economic characteristics offer favourable premises for a successful agricultural activity, and the work in one's own household fails to ensure the needs of daily family life, in the absence of an adequate offer of jobs at the local level, the alternatives are more likely to be daily labour and access to social benefits, as in the case of Comana commune. The prevalence of such situations is specific to poor communities, which present characteristics of poor development such as: lack of sufficient jobs locally and in adjacent areas and lack of attractiveness for investors

In the case of Vlad Tepes commune, the residential environment, the positioning in relation to the cities / county seat, on the one hand, the size of the locality, as well as the degree of and the type of occupation represented the main elements that shaped local development. As Sandu also shows, social development is higher in communities with access to important roads, and commuting has increased and brings income within the community, being a growth factor. In the case of those with a very low educational level, it is mainly the case of the Roma population, who represent a vulnerable group - their potential labour force supply is, in many cases, considered inadequate, in itself, by employers, not only relative to certain positions that demand special skills and knowledge, but ethnic stereotypes, fuelled by particular experiences of certain interactions, also contribute to such a situation deficiencies of some ethnic Roma with the labour market.

Administrative capacity is also one of the important factors that can shape different development trajectories in localities with similar characteristics and development opportunities. During the development of the data collection approach, we encountered very different situations, in a local context, rather similar - LPAs that accessed many projects such as the example of the Vlad Tepes commune, others that failed to access. Mayors who expect development to occur exclusively through the interventions of external courts, but also active mayors.

The data analysis reveals, despite the diversity of the configuration of factors that configure a diverse typology of local (under)development, a common conclusion. This spiral of underdevelopment can only be stopped by increasing the stock of human capital, which is the strategic variable of any local development model.

As a WB report also shows, policy to improve employment opportunity in rural areas should highlight the growth of human capital. The diversity of rural conditions, combined with large geographic areas and low population densities in rural areas needs each place to have an almost independent approach and the challenge is to design a limited set of programs that can be combined in several ways to address rural development needs in different places. (WB, 2000)

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Declaration of conflict of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

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LOCUS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AMONG OKLAHOMA LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

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Abstract: *Emotional intelligence has community positive value for the profession of policing, and knowledge about which police officers within an agency have the highest levels of emotional intelligence is of significant management value within law enforcement agencies. The focus of this study was to determine whether differences in emotional intelligence (EI) levels among binary categories of small-agency Oklahoma law enforcement officers were statistically significant. Three research questions guided the study, involving statistical comparison of actual EI scores across varying levels of career longevity and promotion within the law enforcement profession by the study participants. The Assessing Emotions Scale (AES) was used to scale the EI levels of the 86 participants. A self-report survey was used to classify participant longevity or promotion. The application of inferential statistics to the data, in the form of multiple t-tests, revealed statistically significant differences in average EI levels, with the higher mean distribution of EI levels present among those with more than 10 years of longevity, a history of rank promotion, and a history of promotion to supervisory status. The study provides analysis and implications for law enforcement leadership and future research.*

Keywords: *Policing, Emotional Intelligence, Law Enforcement*

Introduction

Policing can be a gratifying profession, but the daily social interactions and job-related duties required of law enforcement officers are highly demanding can be emotionally taxing, mentally draining, and stressful (El Sayed et al., 2019; Williams et al., 2010). The modern law enforcement officer is called upon in various moments to exhibit the disparate attributes of a counselor, legal analyst, soldier, detective, teacher, sharpshooter, events coordinator, and many other roles (Duxbury et al., 2015). The ever-expanding workload and competency expectations for law enforcement officers have been termed “role-overload,” and the phenomenon contributes to feelings of inadequacy and burnout (Duxbury & Halinski, 2018, p. 2).

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Within the bureaucracy of police agencies, law enforcement officers often face pressure from other officers, police leadership, other public officials, and from the public – and many of these pressures may be in conflict (Ricciardelli, 2018). Additionally, because being a law enforcement officer requires the assumption of a particular lifestyle and highly affects one’s mental state, these emotional pressures can affect personal lives and relationships in life in addition to one’s career, with police having higher rates of depression and suicide than the rate among the general public (Larned, 2010; Burke, 1993; Hall et al., 2010). Prior research has shown that there is a correlation between high levels of emotional intelligence and leadership ability, not just within law enforcement but across a vast array of professions (Golnaz, 2012).

This study grows the body of existing knowledge about the link between emotional intelligence and career success in law enforcement leadership by focusing on the workplace environment of small police agencies in Oklahoma. The research questions for this study each focus on measuring the differences in mean emotional intelligence level between binary categories of small-agency Oklahoma law enforcement officers:

1. How do police officers in supervisory positions differ from police officers in non-supervisory positions in terms of their level of emotional intelligence among police officers in small Oklahoma agencies?
2. How do police officers who have received a promotion in rank differ from police officers who have not received a promotion in rank in terms of their level of emotional intelligence among police officers in small Oklahoma agencies?
3. How do police officers with 10 or more years of experience differ from police officers without 10 or more years of experience in terms of their level of emotional intelligence among police officers in small Oklahoma agencies?

This study identifies whether there are different distributions of emotional intelligence among small-agency Oklahoma law enforcement officers when comparing average EI levels across categories of rank promotion, supervisor or non-supervisory status, and career longevity.

1. Background

The profession of law enforcement is plagued with high levels of employee turnover (Brunetto et al., 2012). As public servants, police officers are often in the lens of media and public scrutiny while performing a demanding and challenging slate of responsibilities (Saunders, 2019). Executives within law enforcement agencies are constantly grasping for solutions to improve the recruitment of new officers who will have lower turnover, better leadership qualities, better performance, and fewer instances of misconduct. There is significant potential that a focus on emotional intelligence could be helpful in assisting law enforcement agency recruitment across each of these factors, especially considering that similar success in utilizing emotional intelligence within the search for new employees has shown promise in other employment sectors.

A survey of 139 police chiefs and other law enforcement leaders showed a statistically significant relationship between high levels of emotional intelligence and a self-perception of being an effective leader (Campbell, 2013). Law enforcement officers with high levels of emotional intelligence are more likely to achieve satisfactory levels of work-life balance compared to law enforcement officers with low emotional intelligence (Kumarasamy et al., 2016). Law enforcement officers who have high levels of emotional intelligence have been shown to score higher peer-awarded scores on job performance even after controlling for mental ability and other personality traits (Al Ali et al., 2012). One meta-analysis has shown that jobs with a high level of emotional labor on a daily basis are precisely the careers that benefit the most from having employees with emotional intelligence (Joseph & Newman, 2010). The high amount of emotional labor demanded of law enforcement officers may mean “certain aspects of police officer official duties could not be performed successfully without essential components of emotional intelligence” (Joseph & Newman, 2010, p. 2).

For law enforcement officers in agency leadership roles, emotional intelligence has been shown to be beneficial because the process of leading the police bureaucracy is inherently a social task in which understanding the emotions of others and the deployment of emotional expression can be used to understand and influence others (Drodge & Murphy, 2002). Because modern realities demand police understanding of cultural diversity, complex interpersonal interactions, and the ability to intuitively understand other people's emotional states, the importance of emotional intelligence in the leadership of law enforcement is crucial to success (Pūraitė & Prokofjeva, 2019).

Other benefits of EI include a reduction in turnover within organizations, improved work product, lower stress levels, improved health outcomes, higher employee and customer satisfaction, higher ethical standards, and fewer instances of employee misconduct (Brunetto et al., 2012; Kumarasamy et al., 2016; Bar-On, 1997; Singh, 2011; Klumper et al., 2013). Among law enforcement in particular, emotional intelligence has been shown to reduce police burnout, improve career performance, heighten the quality of victim and witness interviewing, and enable law enforcement officers to better navigate complex intercultural and interpersonal interactions (Mayer et al., 2004; Pūraitė & Prokofjeva, 2019).

By identifying where EI is highest and lowest among small-agency Oklahoma law enforcement officers and whether the variation is statistically significant, agencies can begin to be more proactive in utilizing and deploying their more emotionally intelligent personnel and take steps to more accurately target remedies toward the lower EI personnel. Greater understanding of precisely where the highest levels of EI exist within law enforcement organizations, such as the information produced by this study, may assist the criminal justice profession in resource allocation, training, and deployment decisions.

2. Instrument and Methodology

This study involved 86 law enforcement officers in Oklahoma law enforcement agencies with fewer than 100 sworn full-time officers across all ranks. These agencies are not a representative cross-section of American, or even Oklahoma-based law enforcement, as they do not include federal law enforcement, state troopers or highway patrol, or tribal law enforcement.

This research provides information about the differences in emotional intelligence levels among small-agency Oklahoma law enforcement officers based on grouping participants by different levels of promotion and longevity within the profession. The procedure utilized in this research is the to administer a metric of emotional intelligence, the Assessing Emotions Scale (AES), and statistically analyze the difference in mean emotional intelligence score between law enforcement officers who have been promoted to a supervisory position or not, promoted to a non-supervisory position or not, and officers who have 10 years of longevity within the career field of law enforcement or not. The statistical analysis was done by performing multiple t-tests to determine if differences in mean EI levels between these groups are reliable.

The AES instrument used in this study is a 33 question self-report inventory utilizing a one through five Likert scale for each inquiry, with three of the inquiries being reverse coded. This instrument permits participants to be ranked on their emotional intelligence quotient utilizing an overall scoring scale that ranges from 33 (lowest) to 165 (highest). The instrument takes between five and 10 minutes to complete, thereby permitting widespread use without exhausting or discouraging participants (Schutte et al., 2009). The AES instrument has been found to be a reliable survey with an internal consistency measure of .90 using Cronbach's alpha and two-week retest reliability of .78 (Schutte et al., 1998).

Importantly, the AES instrument has been shown to have both convergent and discriminant validity. The instrument's developer found that scores on the AES were substantially related to attention to emotions and clarity of emotional expression (Schutte et al., 2009; Schutte et al., 1998). Further confirmation of convergent validity was found by Brackett and Mayer (2003), who confirmed that AES scores were correlated with scores on the well-established EQ-i emotional intelligence measurement instrument ($r = .43$) as well as the MSCEIT (Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test) instrument ($r = .18$).

Each participant was employed within an agency with fewer than 100 full-time law enforcement officers and exclusively with an Oklahoma patrol jurisdiction. Among survey participants, 41.9% had accumulated at least 10 years of experience as a full-time law enforcement officer ($N = 36$), and 58.1% had not accumulated at least 10 years of experience as a full-time law enforcement officer ($N = 50$); 64% had experienced at least one promotion in rank at some point in their career ($N = 55$) and 36% had not experienced at least one promotion in rank at some point in their career ($N = 31$); 38.4% had been promoted to supervisory positions over other full-time law enforcement officers ($N = 33$), and 61.6% had not been promoted to supervisory positions over other full-time law enforcement officers ($N = 53$).

3. Research Findings

Because this research involves measuring the difference between the means of three sets of two independent groups, three separate t-tests were conducted to see if the mean Assessing Emotions Scale (AES) score of the survey participants was reliably different. The three sets of two groups are:

1. Full-time law enforcement officers in Oklahoma who have experienced promotion to supervisory positions and those who have not.
2. Full-time law enforcement officers in Oklahoma who have experienced promotion, whether supervisory or not, and those who have not.
3. Full-time law enforcement officers in Oklahoma who have served 10 or more years as a law enforcement officer, and those who have not.

The AES utilizes a five-option Likert scale arranged as follows: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = somewhat agree, and 5 = strongly agree. The study additionally included three binary inquiries related to law enforcement officer promotion, supervisory status, and longevity. The score on this scale, from survey participants within each group, was assembled into separate data sets based on the binary participant category: supervisor status or not; promoted or not; and 10 years of experience or not.

The data were checked for unequal variance by using an F test. The F test was utilized because the data from the groups are unequal sample sizes and independent samples. For this reason, it is first necessary to determine whether the two independent samples have equal variance, or at least sufficiently equivalent variance, to ensure that a standard t-test for differences in means would produce valid results. Because the F tests did not show statistically significant differences in variance, a standard (as opposed to modified) t-test was applied to each of the groups.

Research question one asked whether police officers in supervisory positions differ from police officers in non-supervisory positions in terms of their level of emotional intelligence. Based on a two-tailed F test, the difference between the standard deviation of the group populations is not statistically significant, with a p-value of 0.204 ($p(x \leq F) = 0.1019$). The F statistic for this test was 0.65, which is within the 95% region of acceptance (between 0.518: 1.84). This acceptable variance similarity means a standard t-test, as opposed to a modified version such as Welch's t-test, was valid as applied to this set of data. A t-test was applied to determine if the two groups are reliably different. Among participants who had not been promoted to supervisory positions, the average AES score was 119; and among participants who had been promoted to supervisory positions, the average AES score was 127.7, indicating higher average emotional intelligence. The test indicated that the groups, supervisory law enforcement officers and non-supervisory law enforcement officers, produced reliably different results on the AES and that this difference was statistically significant ($t [84] = 2.72, p < .05$).

Research question two asked whether police officers who have received a promotion in rank differ from police officers who have not received a promotion in rank in terms of their level of emotional intelligence. Based on a two-tailed F test, the difference between the standard deviation of the group populations is not statistically significant, with a p-value of 0.123 ($p(x \leq F) = 0.061$). The F statistic for this test was 0.62, which is within the 95% region of acceptance (between 0.54: 1.95). This acceptable variance similarity means a standard t-test, as opposed to a modified version such as Welch's t-test, was valid as applied to this set of data. A t-test was applied to determine if the two groups are reliably different. Among participants who had not received a promotion, the average AES score was 118; and among participants who had received a promotion, the average AES score was 124.7, indicating higher average emotional intelligence. The test indicated that the two groups produced reliably different results on the AES and that this difference was statistically significant ($t [84] = 1.99, p < .05$).

Research question three asked whether police officers with 10 or more years of experience differ from police officers without 10 or more years of experience in terms of their level of emotional intelligence. Based on a two-tailed F test, the difference between the standard deviation of the group populations is not statistically significant, with a p-value of 0.831 ($p(x \leq F) = 0.584$). The F statistic for this test was 1.06, which is within the 95% region of acceptance (between 0.53: 1.83). This acceptable variance similarity means a standard t-test, as opposed to a modified version such as Welch's t-test, was valid as applied to this set of data. A t-test was applied to determine if the two groups are reliably different. Among participants who did not have 10 or more years of experience, the average AES score was 118.3; and among participants who did have 10 or more years of experience, the average AES score was 127.9, indicating higher average emotional intelligence. The test indicated that the two groups produced reliably different results on the AES and that this difference was statistically significant ($t [84] = 3.07, p < .05$).

In terms of the raw emotional intelligence scores produced in the data collection for this research, the 86 participants as a combined cohort scored an average of 122.3 on the AES instrument. When survey data were combined to create new groups: one comprising those who had both more than 10 years of experience and promotion to a supervisory status, and a second comprising those who had neither 10 years of experience and no promotion to supervisory status, a test of the difference between the two groups was possible. Among the 86 survey participants, 27.9% had supervisory status and more than 10 years of experience ($N = 24$), and 48.8% had neither supervisory status or 10 years of experience ($N = 42$). A t-test was applied to determine if the two groups are reliably different. Among participants who had supervisory status and 10 or more years of experience, the average AES score was 130.0; and among participants who did not have supervisory status or have 10 or more years of experience, the average AES score was 118.0. The test indicated that the two groups produced reliably different results on the AES and that this difference was highly statistically significant, at a greater level than any of the primary research question results ($t [84] = 3.35, p < .05$).

4. Discussion

After ensuring acceptable equivalence in variance between the independent samples, the t-tests produced results that were statistically significant in each statistical analysis. In regard to the first research question, there is a reliable difference between emotional intelligence levels when comparing supervisory small-agency Oklahoma law enforcement officers to non-supervisory officers. In regard to the second research question, there is a reliable difference between emotional intelligence levels when comparing small-agency Oklahoma law enforcement officers who have received a promotion to those who have not. Finally, in regard to the third research question, there is a reliable difference between emotional intelligence levels when comparing small-agency Oklahoma law enforcement officers with 10 years or more of longevity within the profession to those who do not have such longevity. When comparing the differences between two combination groups, those with supervisory experience and more than 10 years of experience to those with neither, a highly statistically significant result in differences between the mean score of those groups was found. When groups are combined, such as those who have both longevity and promotion compared to those with neither, the difference in mean emotional intelligence scores is even more significant than when the groups are compared separately.

The application of a t-test to the data collected for the first research question resulted in a rejection of the null hypothesis, finding a statistically significant difference in mean emotional intelligence between participants who had not been promoted to supervisory positions versus those who had been promoted to supervisory positions, with the latter distribution possessing the higher level of EI on average. This result confirms the alternative hypothesis that small-agency Oklahoma law enforcement officers in supervisory positions possess higher mean emotional intelligence than their counterparts. This result has two major practical implications for the field of law enforcement: the rational consideration of the utility and deployment of supervisory personnel and an understanding of potential career risks and benefits as disparately applied to supervisory and non-supervisory categories of personnel.

Since the alternative hypothesis is verified, and supervisory personnel have been shown to have higher emotional intelligence on average compared to their non-supervisory counterparts, it is valuable for law enforcement agencies to know the importance of utilizing their supervisory officers in ways that acknowledge and utilize their higher EI skill-set to benefit the community and police force. A multitude of such benefits include increased cross-cultural communication ability, enhanced ability to de-escalate emotionally intense situations, and a better ability to effectively interview witnesses and victims (Imai & Gelfand, 2010; Boland & Ross, 2010; Risan et al., 2017).

Because research has shown that higher EI individuals are more likely to utilize mediation tactics in their interpersonal interactions in order to promote agreeable behaviors (Boland & Ross, 2010), the value of emotional intelligence to law enforcement officers can be of great value in de-escalating emotionally charged or angry situations. The findings of this study, which tend to show that higher EI levels are found among supervisory law enforcement officers, may indicate the importance of assigning supervisors to employment spaces where emotional escalation is more likely

to happen so that they are present or nearby to utilize these emotionally mediating abilities in the field (Oliva et al., 2010).

The importance of gaining information from witnesses and victims is a crucial factor in the conduction of investigations pursued by law enforcement, meaning the witness and victim interviewing phase of preliminary and formal investigations into criminal conduct should ideally be conducted by individuals with an enhanced ability to establish communicative rapport (Risan et al., 2016; Oostinga et al., 2018). Prior research has shown that higher EI individuals have this enhanced capability to establish rapport and maintain rapport with witnesses and victims, causing the secondary advantages of gathering more relevant information for the investigation and building confidence in victims (Risan et al., 2017). This greater capacity in interpersonal communication implies that, based on the data from the present study, law enforcement agencies may generate a number of investigative efficacy benefits by ensuring supervisory level involvement in witness and victim interviewing where possible.

The application of a t-test to the data collected for the second research question resulted in a rejection of the null hypothesis, finding a statistically significant difference in mean emotional intelligence between participants who had not been promoted in rank versus those who had been promoted in rank, with the latter distribution possessing the higher level of EI on average. This result confirms the alternative hypothesis that small-agency Oklahoma law enforcement officers who have experienced promotion in rank possess higher mean emotional intelligence than their counterparts. This result has two major practical implications for the field of law enforcement: the rational consideration of the utility and deployment of higher-ranking personnel and an understanding of potential career risks and benefits as disparately applied to higher ranking and lower-ranking categories of personnel.

Due to increased concern about officer-involved shootings in recent years, law enforcement agencies have been exploring ways to ensure that police officers are sufficiently trained on the use of force and to ensure they are broadly capable of managing emotional reactions to escalating situations (Engel et al., 2020; Rosenbaum & Lawrence, 2017). Lower EI individuals, including police, have been shown to exhibit more frequent aggressive behaviors (Garcia-Sancho et al., 2017; Lemerise & Arsenio, 2000). Based on the results of the present study, training on these topics may best be targeted toward law enforcement officers who are more junior in the ranks or who have been passed over for promotion. Because of the workplace stressors that are uniquely prevalent in careers such as law enforcement, such as frequent shifting and conflicting expectations, increased scrutiny and oversight, and constantly changing technology, the lower or most junior ranks of law enforcement may be at higher risk of this stress-causing burnout and fatigue, as a result of their moderately lower EI as a cohort (Elkin & Rosch, 1990; Burke & Cooper, 2006; Cooper et al., 2001). If agency supervisors and leadership remain careful about monitoring and measuring these self-reported stress levels among non-promoted officers, they may see improvement in both performance and morale. Due to possessing modestly lower levels of EI, this cohort would likely not have the same success in utilizing their own coping mechanisms or the same level of resiliency under pressure as their promoted peers within the agency (Yamani et al., 2014).

The application of a t-test to the data collected for the third research question resulted in a rejection of the null hypothesis, finding a statistically significant difference in mean emotional intelligence between participants who did not have 10 or more years of experience versus those who had 10 or more years of experience, with the latter distribution possessing the higher level of EI on average. This result confirms the alternative hypothesis that small-agency Oklahoma law enforcement officers with more experience in the profession possess higher mean emotional intelligence than their counterparts who do not have at least this level of experience. Additionally, this was the research question where the difference in emotional intelligence between the two groups was most significant, meaning that the amount of experience overshadows supervisory status and promotion in rank as the area where levels of emotional intelligence are most starkly different. The primary practical implication is to acknowledge and utilize this information for the improvement of law enforcement outcomes in small Oklahoma law enforcement agencies. Performance, morale, and a number of other important factors can be improved, according to this data, if law enforcement agencies implement measures to retain law enforcement employees and field more experienced professionals on a more frequent basis.

To some extent, it was predictable that individuals with more experience in law enforcement would have higher levels of emotional intelligence because prior research has indicated that higher levels of EI are correlated with reduced turnover in police organizations (Brunetto et al., 2012). Reduction of turnover is a paramount concern because high attrition rates within law enforcement agencies cause lower morale even among law enforcement officers who are not new to the force, and has a net effect of increasing the likelihood of reduced longevity among police leadership and senior management, including chiefs (Li & Brown, 2019).

It has been widely known that longevity in the law enforcement profession has a number of benefits outside of emotional intelligence. For example, police officers with more years of experience are involved in fewer instances of verbal and physical altercations, even after controlling for other potential causes (Paoline & Terrill, 2007; Donovan, 2007). The present research shows that law enforcement officers with more years of experience possess higher levels of emotional intelligence. The possession of higher average EI among those with longer career longevity aligns with prior findings that indicate the ability to manage one's emotions correlates with less deviant behavior on the job, fewer conflicts in the performance of their duties, and fewer instances of workplace counseling for misbehavior (Kluemper et al., 2013). The present research also aligns with findings that indicate a greater likelihood of ethical competence among higher EI individuals and greater workplace satisfaction in stressful environments among higher EI individuals (Dangmei & Singh, 2017; Mikolajczak et al., 2007).

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ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract: *In this study I aimed to conduct a qualitative research on the influence of alcohol on domestic violence using hybrid questionnaires (online and F2F) on three distinct groups of alcohol consumers in Bucharest (medium, high and low). I used the online scientific platform "SurveyMonkey" for the questionnaire application and data collection. The Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test, AUDIT-C model was used to assess alcohol consumption in the 2 months (October, November 2021) according to three key consumption indicators: frequency of alcohol consumption, alcohol level, average amount consumed per drink and frequency of excessive alcohol consumption. Change in consumption was recorded analogously to AUDIT-C variables (frequency of alcohol consumption, amount of alcohol consumption and excessive alcohol consumption), whereby consumption indicators are related to the degree of change. So, is there a link between degree of consumption, frequency and domestic violence? The results, together with a range of psychiatric, psychoanalytic and psychological theories, provide a variety of explanations for the violent behavior perpetuated in family relationships, denouncing their impact and harmful effects on personality upbringing, psychological profiling, and especially on the belonging and role of the dysfunctional family.*

Keywords: *domestic violence, alcohol consumption, Covid-19, AUDIT-C, quality of life, victims*

1. The relationship between alcohol consumption and domestic violence, methodological aspects

Severe poverty and excessive alcohol consumption are some of the most important factors that can lead to domestic violence anywhere in the world. While social and economic data on the level of poverty are analysed in numerous studies, the frequency of alcohol consumption in relation to domestic violence in Romania has received less attention. According to standard definitions, "*alcoholism is a progressive pathology, determined*

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by the attraction to alcoholic beverages, with the formation of a dysfunctional state and abstinence syndrome when consumption is interrupted, and in cases of long-term consumption it can lead to the development of somatoneurological and psychological disorders" (Cotelea and Lesnic, 2020: 78). Overall, alcoholism is a difficult topic to study in relation to domestic violence as the interrelationship of specific sub-indicators such as frequency of consumption, level of alcohol consumption in relation to differences in gender, age, education, income, health, environment and area (rural, urban) has not been sufficiently developed. Assembling these sub-indicators into a single picture provides a generous map of the causality and effects of heavy drinking in family life. Stress is another factor in the negative determinants of quality of life leading to increased alcohol consumption and its implicit effect on domestic violence (Charles et al., 2021). Restrictions in daily life have been introduced to limit the spread of SARS-CoV-2 (colloquially known as coronavirus). Negative effects of travel restrictions, distancing, bans for those affected by Covid-19 have had direct effects globally. Since the application of the restrictions in Romania, many Romanians have felt the negative effects on their professional or financial situation and many of them, especially those in the HORECA industry, have lost their jobs.

In this study, I aimed to conduct a qualitative research on the influence of alcohol on domestic violence in two stages: (i) an analysis of secondary data in different relevant European and national databases; (ii) a hybrid application of online questionnaires on three distinct groups of drinkers in Bucharest (medium, high and low), more precisely on 52 respondents (41 men and 11 women between 20 and 70 years old), who agreed to take part in the research. For the questionnaire application and data collection I used the online scientific platform "SurveyMonkey". The alcohol use disorder identification test, AUDIT-C model was used to assess alcohol consumption in the 2 months (October, November 2021) according to three key indicators of consumption: frequency of alcohol consumption, alcohol level, average amount consumed per drink and frequency of excessive alcohol consumption. Change in consumption was recorded analogously to the AUDIT-C variables (frequency of alcohol consumption, quantity of alcohol consumption and binge drinking), whereby consumption indicators are related to the degree of change. The retrieved results combined with a range of psychiatric, psychoanalytic and psychological theories provide a variety of explanations for the violent behaviour perpetuated in family relationships, denouncing their impact and harmful effects on personality education, psychological profile, but especially on the membership and role of the dysfunctional family. As a result, in the present exploratory research I focused strictly on the urban environment of Bucharest, in the hope that, in the near future, the same method could be extended to a national level.

2. European and national data on alcohol consumption in the context of the pandemic

Alcohol consumption during the pandemic period has been a challenge for health and the economy. The effect of the multiple crises generated by the Covid-19 pandemic highlighted major vulnerabilities in the Romanian health sector through an acute lack of medical personnel, insufficient investment in hospital modernization, poor hygiene,

incomplete digitization of the bureaucratic apparatus, corruption and mismanagement. In the given situation, alcoholism and drug use are relatively similar subjects, which require a causal approach and less from an effects' perspective, which explains why both phenomena are not well controlled in Romania. From the perspective of vulnerable groups, at the end of 2020 alcohol and drug use among young people increased by almost 9% (Copăceanu, 2021: 85). In one of the recent global studies on alcohol and drugs with more than 750,000 participants, it was found that in the case of alcohol almost 90% of sexual assaults were recorded, and in the case of illegal drug use only 14% involving men and only 7% women (Winstock, 2019).

The Covid-19 pandemic has provided several changes in daily and public life for most Romanians. The effects of the pandemic itself and the measures to limit the pandemic event were felt by a large part of the population not only in the economic and political sphere, but especially in the psychological and mental health sphere. Since the beginning of the pandemic, a crumbling economy became predictable in all European countries, and early surveys showed an increase in uncertainty among the population and fears of economic losses (Betsch, 2020). From the perspective of alcohol consumption, in a European comparison, the economic consequences in Romania do not seem to be so serious (Eurostat, 2021), but from the perspective of the effects of excessive alcohol consumption, things seem to be different (Eurostat, EU alcohol consumption in 2021).

The European "COVID-19 and Alcohol Survey" (www.Covid-19-and-alcohol.eu) gathered information on alcohol consumption among adults (15 years and older) before and during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, using the online survey tool "LimeSurvey", between 24 April and 22 July 2020. The survey was originally designed in English and German and was subsequently translated into 19 other languages. Target groups were reached through various channels (e.g. social media advertising, circulars, press releases), with underrepresented groups in terms of gender and age being recruited through paid social media ads. To this end, the distribution of the sample by age and sex was compared with the corresponding distribution in the general population during the survey, thus identifying under-represented groups. Targeted advertising via social media was used to increase the proportion of people aged over 40. A detailed description of the recruitment measures can be found in an appropriate literature (Kilian et al., 2020). More information about the study design can be found in the study protocol (Kilian et al., 2020) and other study materials (including the full questionnaires). On the sub-indicator "daily alcohol consumption", Romania in 2021 is somewhere in the middle of the European average ranking of 3.8 (according to the Eurostat chart for 2021), but on the sub-indicator "alcohol consumption per month" Romania outperforms Germany with a score of 27.1, a relatively good picture at first glance and which would not suggest that Romania outperforms negatively on this score. Teenagers are the age group with the highest risk of deteriorating quality of life and alcohol dependence, especially those aged 15-16. Looking at the big picture, the alcohol indicator would not be a major problem for Romania. However, a realistic picture of the alcoholism category is a determinant factor that favours stress, affects physical health, mental health, and is also a cause that generates domestic violence.

From a psychosocial perspective, the relationship between stress and alcohol is closely linked to the generation of behavioral deviance, justifying why a state needs to produce public health policies that discourage excessive alcohol consumption. In these circumstances, the physical distancing proposals introduced at the beginning of the pandemic have also addressed the issue of reducing alcohol consumption through the following two targets:

- 1) reduced availability of alcoholic beverages and opportunities to drink due to increased mortality rates (no visits to bars and restaurants; restrictions on partying, especially in public places);
- 2) financial constraints due to decreased wages, reduced hours or unemployment. (Kilian, C., Manthey, C., Schomerus, G., Kraus, L., Rehm, J., & Schulte, B. 2020).

Analyzing the authors' two measures (Kilian et al., 2020), these proposals would also decrease the accessibility and therefore the excessive consumption of alcoholic beverages. The actual effect is influenced by factors such as pre-crisis drinking habits of alcoholics, the experience of stress during the crisis and, not least, changes in alcohol availability and accessibility.

3. Alcohol consumption and domestic violence

In the assertion of my research I consider that after severe poverty, excessive alcohol consumption is the second most important cause that can lead to the manifestation of domestic violence, especially in families where such drinking habits become a habit. Excessive alcohol consumption in family life also has intergenerational consequences. There are studies in this regard in the field of behavioral psychology which explain why violence is passed down through generations and why children who have been victims of psychological or physical abuse become, in turn, in the image of their parents (Ehrenschaft and Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2022). There are also studies that argue that most of these parents were alcoholics, and in the vast majority of cases, their children inherited addiction and violent behavior (Berckmoes et al., 2017; Caldeira and Woodin, 2012). Popa and Ciobanu (2013: 109) show why “*the child exposed to violence is predisposed to appropriate violence as a way of solving the problems he faces, because he has no other coping strategies?*”. The child is by definition the most vulnerable member of the family and can be exposed to negative influences and become a victim in any situation. The parent is the first role model in a child's life. According to Melanie Klein's (1987) psychoanalytic research, if a child becomes even a witness to violent scenes, his or her psyche can be scarred for life. The principle “violence begets violence” often works as a principle and almost as a law when positive examples are lacking in the child's developmental environment. The tendency to copy the deviant behavior of parents is ultimately a quick, direct form of perpetuating aggression, through what Ostrowsky (2010) explains as a mechanism resulting from a child's inability to protect their self-esteem. From a cognitive perspective and depending on the developmental periods, children develop intellectual maturity, but when they are young, they are not sufficiently prepared to use their discernment as a form of conscience or selection between right and wrong. Reactions of a defensive nature often flood through irrational manifestations triggered by mental blocks triggered by an inability to express negative emotions or by a lack of

self-control. According to Eysenk (1964), the avalanche of these uncontrolled manifestations does not denote intelligence quotient, but means a reduced ability to establish a rational ratio between losses and gains in planning a criminal act. This is why a number of psychiatric, psychoanalytic and psychological theories provide a variety of explanations for the violent behaviour perpetuated in the relationship between parent and child, denouncing their impact and effects on the upbringing of the personality, on the psychological profile, but above all on the membership and role of the dysfunctional family. Human instinctual nature is exposed to violence and “*includes direct or indirect personal experience, including through the media, through substance abuse - drugs, alcohol, at the level of collective behaviour and in the way of regional and national values*” (Zamfir, 2010: 7). From these correlations, it is obvious why alcohol and drug use vitiate relationships between adults and children, maintaining a form of perpetuating violent behaviour later on (Friedman, 1998). These arguments are only a small part of the scientific literature and are universally valid, regardless of social background, and are generally equally well noted in any cross-sectional or longitudinal approach.

Data on the effects of alcohol excess and its impact on family relationships during the Covid-19 pandemic on mental and physical health in the general population are poorly represented in current statistical data. However, the few data that do exist show the presence of a central risk factor for negative health and social consequences related to alcohol consumption, accounting for 2.4% of all deaths in Romania in 2016. Romania is a country with a high rate of alcohol-related mortality, yet there has been a significant decrease in the last 4 years “with an absolute value (-2.4 L), being the third country in terms of decrease in alcohol-related mortality” (WHO, 2018).

The World Health Organization's predictions of total alcohol consumption per capita for Romania for the period 2020-2025 indicate a significant increase of about 15% (WHO, 2018). Romania is thus among the countries with high levels of alcohol consumption per capita, recording a significant increase in alcohol consumption, even if there have been some positive changes in the last years of the pandemic. Due to such reasons, for Romania alcoholism remains an important indicator for public health and for determining health risks and domestic violence. Alcohol consumption remains a key public health vulnerability, with more than a third of adults in Romania admitting to binge drinking consistently at least once a month (OECD, 2018). In the top of these figures, Romania ranks second in the European Union, with a rate of around 35% of episodic binge drinking, a figure well above the European average of only 20% (OECD, 2018). The same "European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies 2018" highlights some notable differences in this indicator by gender, showing higher alcohol consumption among men than women. According to the WHO report, "in Romania, in 2016, alcohol consumption in the population aged 15 years and over was 12.6 liters per capita per year" (WHO, 2018). Men consumed 26.6 liters per year and women 9 liters per year. Of the total population aged 15 years and above, about 70% had consumed alcohol in the past 12 months, and of these 80% were male and 54.5% female. Of those who had never consumed alcohol in their lifetime there was again a difference: 6.5% among men and 19% among women. According to the same study, compared to 2010, when the level of alcohol consumption was 15 liters per capita, in 2016 it gradually decreased to around 12.6 liters per capita. Unfortunately, these are the

latest official figures that the World Health Organization makes available to the public and in which I note that Romania has exceeded the European averages of consumption for the period 2010-2016 by more than 3 percent. Last but not least, the report states that 14% of deaths in Romania are caused by excessive alcohol consumption, another figure more than double the European average. The data provided by the World Health Organization was confirmed by surveys conducted in 21 European countries: Albania, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine and the United Kingdom (Kilian et al., 2020).

Further concern about excessive alcohol consumption among Romanian teenagers aged 15-16, representing 1.3% of the Romanian population, is also raised in the data. In 2015, according to WHO data for 2016, they are alcohol dependent, namely 2% males and 0.6% females (of the total population). In the same report, regarding beer consumption, we find that more than half of the country's population, about 56% of Romanians prefer beer, 28% wine and 16% spicy drinks. Cumulating all these data, half of Romanian alcohol consumers fall into the risk category through exposure at least once to binge drinking, and on this aspect, Romania has reached the negative top of Europe with a risk score of 67.2% among men and 31.2% among women (WHO 2018).

The only positive aspect appears in the medium- and long-term evolution recorded between 2000 and 2018, which shows a notable decrease in alcohol consumption, namely from 17.4 l (pure alcohol consumed) in 2000 to 12 l (pure alcohol consumed) in 2018.

Over the last few decades, the subject of domestic violence has come to the forefront of sociological and criminological research in Romania, and is particularly present in public debates. Against the backdrop of these concerns, a growing number of researchers together with representatives of the feminist movement have notably helped to reassess anti-violence policies and to formulate a clearer vision on child protection (Ake and Arnold, 2017; Larance et al., 2022). Numerous results reflected by surveys have highlighted the fact that domestic violence and domestic abuse are relatively widespread in all European countries, and especially in poor EU countries such as Romania, as well as the vulnerabilities created in this regard by weak state intervention in private life (Rada, 2014; Hamilton et al., 2013; Healy et al., 2022). In the social dramas of violence, the victims are mainly children and women (Belmonte and Negri, 2021). Domestic violence experts believe that doubling alcohol excise taxes can reduce alcohol-related mortality by an average of 35%, road traffic deaths by 11%, sexually transmitted diseases by 6%, domestic violence by 2%, and crime by 1.4% (Babor et al., 2010). With the focus on deepening forms of violence, the public debate has expanded to the topic of violence in parenting, adding the issue of violence against children in public institutions such as schools and kindergartens. In this regard, the Romanian political framework has acted through various projects, such as the law prohibiting violence in education, as well as domestic violence.

In psychology, but especially in the area of educational psychoanalysis, specialists have paid increasing attention to the social environment of children's formation and development, highlighting the key role of early socialization processes in the primary family (Stacey, 2021; Tutt, 2022). The impact of a toxic and violent environment shows why future adults

become sure victims of failure in life, and, unfortunately, they are transformed in the image of their parents. With very few exceptions, incarcerated offenders are the victims of such cases. (Huesmann et al., 2002). The extent and consequences of alcohol abuse are the cause of abusive parental behavior, which explains why the phenomenon of domestic violence remains high in most European countries. Regardless of education, the link between alcohol consumption and domestic violence is clearly in the cause-effect relationship and has become a taboo subject, even for affluent families.

Concealed as it may be, this phenomenon is not sufficiently highlighted in the public space, as evidence, concrete data on this indicator is poorly researched in recent years with the outbreak of the pandemic. A notable number of children are today extremely affected, as are many women, as violence in family life is a form of terror directed at people lacking defense mechanisms (Barros et al., 2020). The relationship between couples - alcohol consumption and the number of divorces is also based on the same inference, and there is a direct link here that affects the very act of family formation. Family violence can be passed on from generation to generation, as shown in a classic American study (Courtis, 1963). One problem, particularly affecting empirical research, is the unclear definition of the term domestic violence. In many cases a distinction is made between physical, psychological and sexual violence, yet it is difficult to establish a clear definition of psychological violence.

4. A qualitative investigation of the relationship between alcohol consumption and domestic violence during the pandemic period

In the primary qualitative research, the main objective of the study was to identify the determinants that involve and generate physical and psychological violence in the family, according to the degree and frequency of alcohol consumption, using psychometric characteristics and properties by applying an AUDIT-C questionnaire. The method applied is specific in identifying the underlying psychosocial causes through which the variety of alcohol use disorders can be observed and explained. The questionnaire was administered in Bucharest to 52 respondents (41 men and 11 women aged between 20 and 70 years, average age 41 years), in all 6 distinct points (i.e. in the 6 districts of Bucharest). The participants are daily alcohol consumers and were selected following filter questions through which I identified the alcohol consumer profile. They identified themselves as having a daily need, generally in the evening, to consume alcoholic beverages, summing up different degrees of alcohol, brands and types of spirits. Out of 52 respondents, 6 respondents have higher education, 12 secondary education and 34 primary education. The selected subjects are regular outdoor drinkers (present at only one terrace per sector near residential blocks) and ten were chosen from each sector, with only those who agreed to take part in the research. Of the 60 respondents who made up the initial target audience for the research, only 52 participated and completed the online questionnaires by the end. The completion of the questionnaire was hybrid: online (18 respondents) of and face-to-face (34) for those who gave the reason that they did not want to complete the questionnaire online or did not have the necessary IT structure to do so. The face-to-face completion was carried

out by myself as the operator during the two months on-site using a web-connected tablet. The following two research questions were imposed on this objective:

- a. Is there a causal relationship between the intensity, frequency of alcohol consumption and the presence or involvement of respondents in domestic violence?
- b. what are the proportions of the two roles: abuser and victim from the perspective of gender differences in the Bucharest environment?

The research was carried out in Bucharest, in all 6 sectors (10 respondents per sector, but not with the intention of comparing alcohol consumption behavior by sector, but only to cover, equally, the area of Bucharest). The research took place for 2 months during the 1st of October and the 30th of November 2021. For this purpose, we used 3 target groups composed of women and men of different ages, who spent their time together, daily, in the evening between 7pm and 10pm, around bar terraces in the 6 sectors for alcohol consumption. The 3 groups (A, B and C) were divided according to the rate of alcohol consumption, from low consumption, medium consumption to high risk consumption. Differences between the three groups were determined by identifying the relationship between subjects and alcohol consumption (degree plus frequency). The three rates of alcohol consumption were established (see in the data analysis) according to 2 criteria: daily, weekly and monthly alcohol consumption, then the high degree of alcoholic beverages (beer, wine and other spirits). After correlating the acquired data, the direct relationship between frequency of consumption, degree of alcohol consumption and presence/involvement of respondents in domestic violence was determined, strictly during the research period. The accuracy of the responses regarding the role of abuser or victim may be questionable, however, as observed from the analysis of the acquired data, there is relevant data regarding this topic on gender differences, and the results provide a consistent addition of information regarding the main research question. The study was exploratory in nature. The results captured some of the psychosocial causes, providing new arguments for changing policies to combat domestic violence, demonstrating why the rate of alcohol consumption plays a key role in the presence of domestic violence.

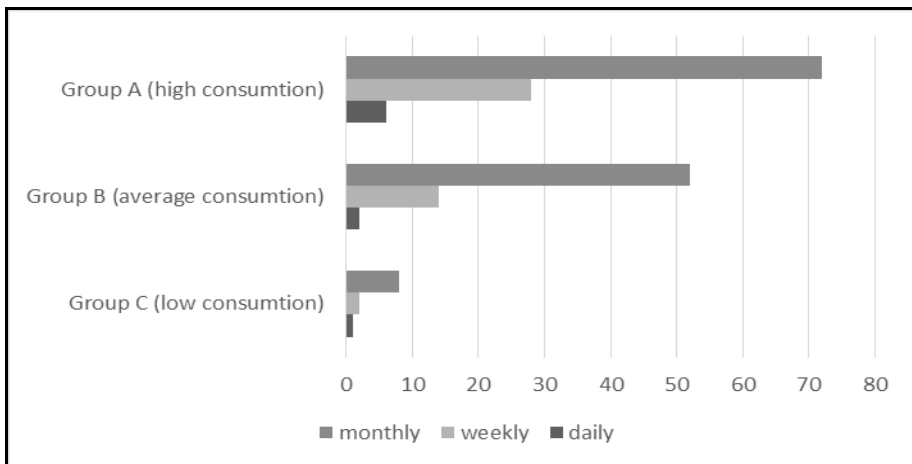
The Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT-C), short form (Bush et al., 1998), was used to assess alcohol use in the past 12 months in terms of three key indicators of consumption: frequency of alcohol consumption, average amount consumed on a drinking occasion (hereafter referred to as quantity), and frequency of heavy drinking (defined by 6 or more standard drinks depending on the alcoholic beverage consumed). Change in consumption was recorded analogously to the AUDIT-C variables (frequency of drinking, quantity of drinking and binge drinking), whereby for each consumption indicator the degree of change (for frequency of drinking and binge drinking: significantly less/less frequent/more frequent/more frequent; for quantity: significantly less/less/more/more frequent/more frequent) or no change (questionnaire constructed following the Kilian model, 2020) could be indicated. For this purpose, I applied an AUDIT (October 2021 - November 2022) which is a questionnaire administered on the SurveyMonkey platform (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/>). Using the consumer categories proposed by Rosón (2008), we identified three subtypes of the 52 respondents (41 men and 11 women between 20 and 70 years old): low risk drinkers (16 people,

respectively 11 men and 5 women), medium risk drinkers (14 people, respectively 10 men and 4 women), high risk drinkers with physical-psychological problems or those with major alcohol dependence (22 people, respectively 20 men and 2 women). In principle, the first three questions of this test form the AUDIT-C (Bush et al., 1998) and where high numbers were recorded it means that there is major risk drinking. In the three groups I applied the same 11-question questionnaire to three types of alcoholic beverages: beer (consumption per unit: 0.5 liters), wine (consumption per unit: 0.5 liters) and beer (spirits, consumption per unit: 0.5 liters).

5. Analysis of results

For reliability and validation analyses of the results I used software version AUDIT20 of SPSS and FACTOR 9.2. Content validity was ensured by analysis of mean scores on the three groups with significantly different alcohol consumption, i.e., high, moderate and low consumption group. Comparison of the results of the three target groups over the two-month period showed some notable differences. Thus, the daily alcohol consumption of the research respondents was lower than the weekly and especially the monthly totals. The explanation for this is that the high alcohol consumption group consumed alcohol constantly during the week and in large or medium quantities (e.g. an average of 4 bottles of beer in a single evening per individual, while at weekends this consumption increased to almost double). The medium group consumed alcohol in an average proportion of 2 to 3 days (1 bottle, at most 2 bottles per evening), while the low group consumed no more than one bottle of beer and consumed this amount during the entire week.

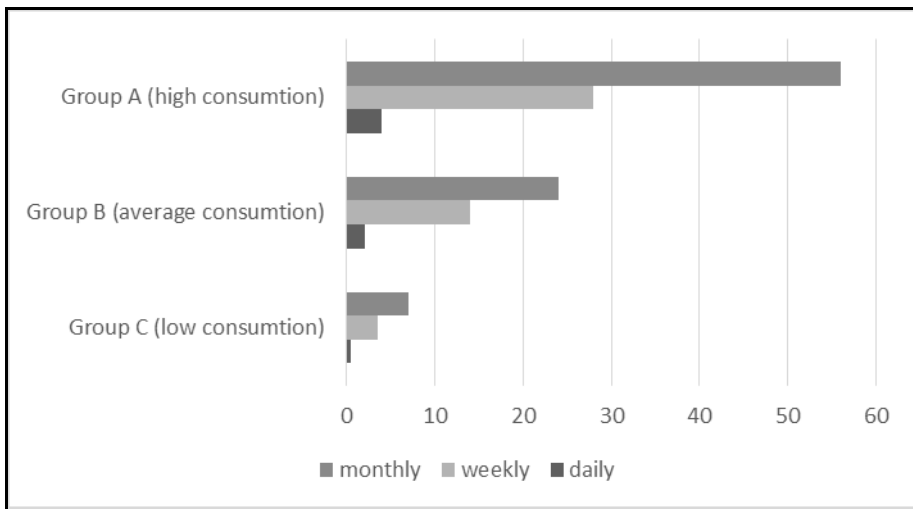
Figure 1. Frequency of beer consumption per unit per 0.5 litres over the 2 months (October-November 2022)



Source: personal research conducted on SurveyMonkey, Oct.-Nov. 2021

The average of 0.5 litres per day is the daily frequency applied to group A (high consumption), which means a consumption of approximately 3 litres of beer per day, and out of this group (20 men and 2 women), 13 respondents (all men aged 15 to 63) claimed that they generally consume very little water, i.e. less than 0.5 litres of water per day. A worrying aspect is that those in group A consume very little water on a daily basis, which is an essential fluid for the body's health, preferring to drink beer, with an alcohol content of around 3 to 5%. The representation of women in this group of 22 respondents is very low (2 persons) while men are in the majority (20 persons).

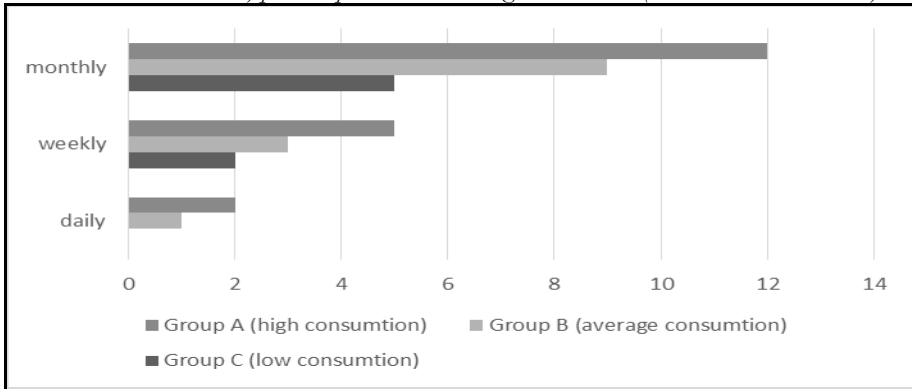
Figure 2. Frequency of wine consumption per unit at 0.5 litres during the 2 months (October-November 2021)



Source: personal research conducted on SurveyMonkey, Oct.-Nov. 2021

Average consumption of 4 units of wine (0.5 litres) per day means a frequency of 2 litres per person in group A (high consumption), usually in the evening. Again, there is a gender difference, as the two women in group A do not drink more than one litre of wine a day, and the frequency of consumption is not 7 days out of 7, but rather more like 5 days out of 7. In conclusion, on a weekly basis, group A consumes an average of 14 litres of white and red wine, with between 8 and 11% alcohol, while the average group B consumes about 7 litres per week and group C consumes about 3.5 litres. Another point to note is that the average rate of consumption of wine over beer is more frequent on weekends than weekdays, so wine over beer is a more preferred drink on the two days at the end of the week.

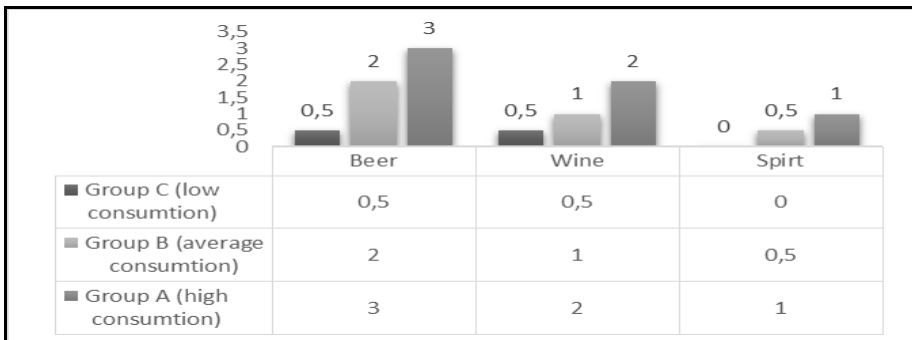
Figure 3. Frequency of consumption of spirits (vodka, palinka, brandy and in general beverages with more than 30 % alcohol) per unit per 0.5 litres during the 2 months (October-November 2021)



Source: personal research conducted on SurveyMonkey, Oct.-Nov. 2021

Average consumption of 2 units of spirits (0.5 litres) per day means a frequency of 1 litre per person in group A (high consumption) which usually occurs in the evening. Again, a gender difference should be noted, as the two women in group A do not consume more than 0.5 litres of spirits per day, and the frequency of consumption is also not 7 days out of 7, occurring at a rate of consumption on 5 days out of 7. In conclusion, on a weekly basis, group A consumes an average of 7 litres of spirits, with between 30 and 70% alcohol, while the average group B consumes about 3 litres per week and group C about 2 litres. Another point to note is that the frequency of drinking spirits compared to beer is the same as that of wine, being more frequent at weekends. In the following figure, I produced a comparative graph for the comparative frequency of consumption of alcoholic beverages per day (beer, wine and spirits, 0.5 litres) in all three groups to observe their evolution and preference.

Figure 4. Frequency of comparative consumption of alcoholic beverages per day (beer, wine and spirits, 0.5 liters)



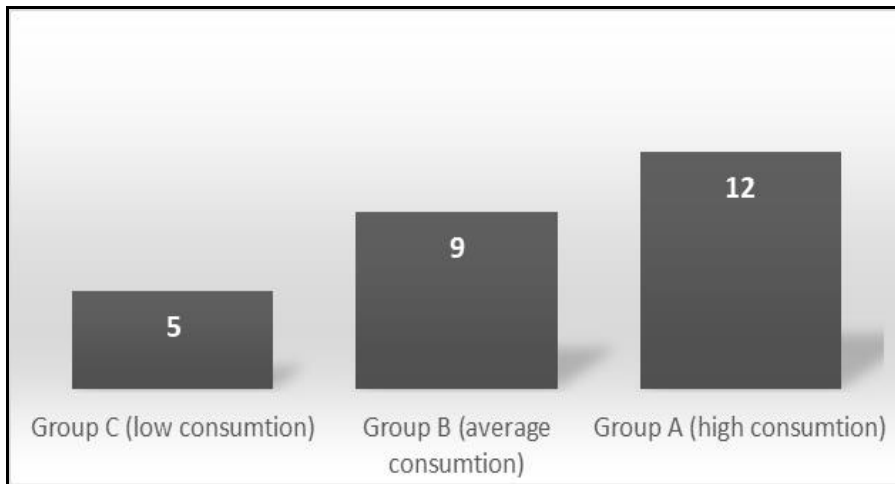
Source: personal research conducted on SurveyMonkey, Oct.-Nov. 2021

It is worth noting in Fig.6 that in group C (low consumption) spirits are missing, but not completely. Of group C (16 people, i.e. 11 men and 5 women), only 2 of the 5 women consumed spirits on different occasions (once or a maximum of 3 times per month) while in men 11 out of 16 consumed spirits on different occasions (on average twice or 4 times per month).

Comparing these graphs suggests that, in general, respondents who took part in these online questionnaires prefer beer in first place, wine in second place and spirits in third place. Another notable observation extracted from this first part of the analysis shows the major differences in alcohol consumption between the three groups.

In the second part of the research I applied another set of 6 closed and open-ended questions regarding their witnessing or involvement in an act of domestic violence.

Figure 5. Rate of presence or involvement of respondents by group (A, B, C) in acts of domestic violence between October and November 2021



Source: personal research conducted on SurveyMonkey, Oct.-Nov. 2021

In group C (low alcohol consumption), the frequency was less than 1 case at the daily rate, but at the weekly frequency there was a threshold of 2 cases and only 5 cases over the two months where they were at least witnesses or direct actors in their family. It is worth noting the differences between group C and group A (high alcohol consumption) in this indicator, especially in the difference on the vector of the two months which amounts to 12 cases compared to 5, more than double. Here the direct correlation between the frequency of alcohol consumption and the increased rate of violence becomes clear. In both groups, women were witnesses and in some cases victims. In group A of 20 men, 5 out of 12 respondents who witnessed domestic violence admitted to being abusers, and of the remaining 7, 4 reported being witnesses

and 3 reported being victims. For group A, the data for this sensitive and optional question came in answers completed by only 18 respondents and therefore I could not know the big picture. For group B (average alcohol consumption) there is an average frequency of one case per day, but all respondents stated that they were in the position of witness or victim, not abuser.

6. Discussions and Solutions

On a monthly basis, the overall picture for the three respondent groups clearly shows an increase in the frequency of cases of domestic violence:

- Group A (high alcohol consumption), 12 cases
- Group B (average alcohol consumption), 9 cases
- Group C (low alcohol consumption), 5 cases

This leads to an interesting finding that confirms the following hypothesis: the more frequent the alcohol consumption, the greater the chance of being a witness, victim or perpetrator. Another significant finding in terms of gender difference shows that no women played the role of perpetrator, while among men there were only 5 cases (all in group A) who admitted to playing the role of perpetrator.

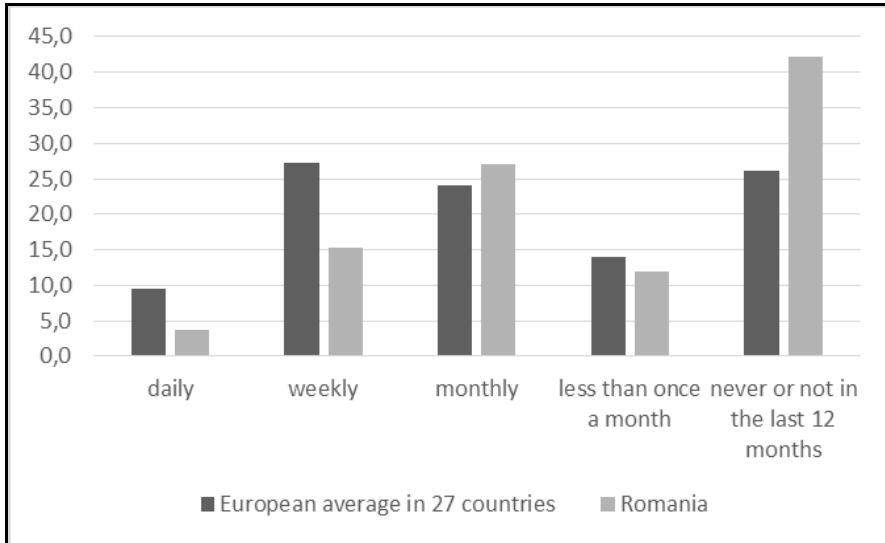
In order to also highlight the difference in daily alcohol consumption between the three groups, I have divided by the three types of drinks previously analyzed:

- Group A (high alcohol consumption) - beer (3 l/day), wine, (1/day), spirits (3 l/day);
- Group B (average alcohol consumption) - beer (1 l/day), wine (1 l/day), spirits (0.5 l/day);
- Group C (low alcohol consumption) - beer (0.5 l/day), wine, (0.25 l/day), spirits (0 l/day).

Group C is an exception for spirits, and occasional consumption at various events or celebrations is not taken into consideration. Linking the two representations: 1. frequency of alcohol consumption and 2. rate of domestic violence, it is obvious why increased alcohol consumption increases the chance of being a witness, victim or abuser within family life.

Returning to data at European level, the evolution of alcohol consumption since the beginning of the pandemic in different European countries shows a relative reduction in consumption, particularly among younger people, as well as among people with no subjective experience of stress who have been exposed to small amounts of alcohol. The main difference between Romania and the other EU countries (27 countries in 2020, 2021) was the average-decreasing trend in consumption.

Figure 6. Frequency of alcohol consumption between Romania and the European average in 2020



Source: Eurostat, *Alcohol consumption at EU level (update 27 October 2021)*, link accessed 27.03.2022: <https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/setupDownloads.do>

According to the graph in Figure 6, the results indicate a relative decrease in consumption for Romania compared to other European countries. Similar to the primary research on the three groups, the level of education, income, subjective stress, as well as restrictions in everyday life directly influenced consumption and indirectly influenced the rate of increase in domestic violence. The graphical results confirm a relative decrease in alcohol consumption in Romania during the pandemic compared to the European average. At the gender level, women in Europe reduced their consumption less than men, with a slight increase in consumption among women in Germany. This gender difference remained significant even after adjusting for various stressors, although there was no increase in the duration of family or household work as activities mainly supported by women. According to a US study it was shown that during the SARS-COV-2 pandemic, alcohol consumption would have increased more among people who had at least one child in the household (Rodriguez al., 2020). The relative decline could also be explained by the effect of financial cuts on alcohol consumption, which may have discouraged, to some extent, the costs attributed to this topic.

Data on the overall effect on alcohol consumption per capita remains a difficult task. While individuals at low risk of drinking tend to drink less during the pandemic, individuals with alcohol dependence tend to drink the same, and sometimes more. As much of the high alcohol consumption can be attributed to a minority of dependent drinkers, an increase in widespread per capita consumption in Romania would not be ruled out, data which are confirmed in earlier WHO reports from 2011 (WHO, 2020b).

I recall here the international targets of reducing global per capita consumption by about 10% by 2025, which has been set in comparison with 2010. This target will be difficult to achieve in the context of current development (Probst et al., 2020).

Conclusions

Answering the two research questions, in the case of alcohol-dependent people in urban Bucharest, but also in general, any increase means an additional risk for health, but also for generating cases of domestic violence, especially among women and children. During the 2 months of research, 24 cases were recorded in group A (high consumption group), compared to 8 cases in group B (medium consumption group) and only 3 cases in group C (low consumption group). These results support the interconnection of the three relationships between frequency, level of alcohol consumption and domestic violence. Following the research question there are two conclusions: 1. the higher the alcohol consumption, the higher the rate of involvement in domestic violence; 2. the higher the alcohol level, the higher the rate of involvement in domestic violence. On the other hand, it is obvious from the results that men who drink alcohol are more likely to become perpetrators, while women in the same situation are more likely to become victims. Gender differences on this issue are therefore notable and cannot be ignored. As a limitation of the research, the figures on the role of abuser among female alcohol users are not categorical due to the limited number of subjects, probably also because women were numerically less present in the three groups. However, from the data obtained, of the two categories of respondents, no male was in the role of victim, only witness or abuser.

On the other hand, the pandemic period did not play a significant role in changing drinking behaviour, generally keeping the same values with small insignificant variations. The main systemic problem is that Romania has an extremely limited number of qualified human resources in the area of care and treatment of alcohol addicts, an insufficient hospital infrastructure to reserve enough places, medication and minimum hygiene conditions. Covid-19 figures in the country are similar to global figures, overburdening the health system. Alcoholics fall under the care of nurses and psychologists who continue to be under-represented in Romania. Alcohol withdrawal in hospitals was and is difficult to manage, and many of these hospitals have been transformed into Covid-19 treatment hospitals. This creates a number of health hazards and inequalities which have also impacted on vulnerable groups with high or risky alcohol consumption. Therefore, in line with the solutions proposed by Mann and Batra (2016), the implementation of screening in Romania to determine the rate and trend of alcohol consumption in general health care could directly contribute to the identification of 'heavy drinkers' and the provision of care in line with the guidelines and targets proposed by the World Health Organization.

The limitations of the research lie in the following contexts: a. the sample drawn is not representative of the entire Romanian population, the respondents being surveyed through online tools with respondents only from the city of Bucharest, although there is here a suitable correlation between global data, European data and local research; b. the conclusions regarding the three research groups were considered as weights of a

phenomenon specific to the urban environment, while the rural environment may be represented by other specific figures, trends and situations. However, the total value of the change indicator formed depends on existing patterns of alcohol consumption, and the increase in one indicator (e.g. quantity of alcohol) does not necessarily have to be compensated by the decrease in another indicator (e.g. heavy drinking). Therefore, the change indicator should be interpreted in such a way that, as the deviation from zero increases, a corresponding change in consumption is expected. Hence, I believe that further research is needed to quantify more accurately changes in consumption behaviour. Since the beginning of the pandemic, alcohol consumption in Romania seems to be somewhat lower among low and medium drinkers, but somewhat higher among high drinkers. I believe that in order to prevent negative consequences on the subject under investigation, especially among young people, the authorities should discourage the availability of alcohol through reasonable taxation and routine screening for alcohol consumption in general health care should be extended.

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Declaration of conflicting interests

I declare, on my own responsibility, that there is no conflict of interest in the production and publication of this article.

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RUSSIAN SOCIETY'S RESPONSES TO THE SOCIAL CHALLENGES OF THE PANDEMIC

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Abstract: *The purpose of the article is to determine the national characteristics of overcoming the social consequences of the pandemic in the Russian society. The planetary spread of the COVID-19 virus, which takes place regardless of state national borders, has highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of world integration on a global scale and, at the same time, has shown the reserves of a national solution to economic, political and cultural problems in a pandemic situation. The author proposes the author's solution to the problem of Russia's place in the world civilizational process, determines the specifics of the country's civilizational development, which determines decision-making in the management of social processes, using civilizational approach, historical and comparative methods. The result of the study is the substantiation of the position on the crisis of the globalization project, the signs of which are the inability of the world community to ensure intercultural interaction and consolidate in solving the problem of the pandemic, as well as the refusal to recognize Russian achievements in the fight against the virus. It was concluded that only national-state localization and tough government decisions can have positive consequences in an extreme situation. The practical value of the results of scientific research lies in the possibility of using the conclusions that we justified to assess the social situation and develop specific political and economic measures to overcome the negative social consequences of the pandemic in Russian society, to organize tolerant intercultural communication in the world community.*

Keywords: *pandemic, globalization, civilization, civilizational crisis, Russian society, standard of living, economic policy, sanctions*

Introduction

The pandemic has tested the entire world, every nation, showing how helpless humanity is in the face of infecting every human being with a deadly virus. Nature challenged the society again, demanding to give an adequate consolidated response. The planetary nature of the pandemic introduces it into the circle of global problems of mankind, the solution of which requires international consolidation. The crisis that has engulfed all economies as a result of quarantine measures has redefined globalization as an objective social process. On the one hand, the planetary nature and speed of the

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spread of the pandemic have confirmed perceptions of the transnational ties of the world community. On the other hand, it has become clear that it is too early to abandon the national specificity of the solution of the global problem, that only national-state localization and tough state decisions can have positive consequences in an extreme situation.

An analysis of local experience in solving social problems caused by the pandemic, using the example of Russian society, makes it possible to evaluate the effectiveness of the system of national government measures to support the population. Being in line with globalization processes, strictly observing international agreements, Russia is experiencing a powerful negative impact from the European world, which forms the “image of the enemy”, expanding the set of sanctions that limit the growth of domestic resources. These processes have a negative impact on the economic and psychological state of Russians, affirming in the public mind the fear of the loss of material well-being, the mood of pessimism and uncertainty about the future. A way out of this situation is possible with the strengthening of the system of value markers of Russian society, in which health, medicine, social support, the unity of the people and state power are the priorities.

1. Literature Review

Can the world community offer the same solutions for all countries to overcome both the spread of COVID-19 and its social consequences, or can these tasks be solved only on a local national scale? Scientists are looking for an answer to this question, referring to the analysis of the current state of social processes in the context of the pandemic. Sociologists from different countries presented the results of research on the impact of the pandemic on residents of different countries at the online conference of the 16th Research Committee of the European Sociological Association, held February 17–19, 2021. Issues related to the impact of the pandemic on various social groups were discussed, as well as restrictions on the access of some social groups to medical services, as a result of which it was concluded that social inequality is growing, largely due to a reduction in state participation in healthcare (Vershina and Lyadova, 2021).

Scientists call the coronavirus a factor in world politics, noting that the planetary nature of the Covid has forced all countries to change their political and economic priorities, exploring the space for the spread of the pandemic (Voloshin, 2020; Gromyko, 2020). Analysts have concluded that the modern pandemic is fundamentally different from all previous large-scale epidemics in that it occurs in the context of multidimensional globalization and requires unprecedented epidemiological measures for all countries and peoples (Chumakov, 2020). The pandemic has changed the face of globalization processes, as humanity organizes the world order in a new way, criticizing the unipolar world, unable to stop the pandemic, plunging humanity into a state of depression (Bodrunov, 2020; Granin, 2021; Simonyan, 2018). The provisions on stopping globalization, which impedes the civilizational development of local civilizations, are widely discussed, on the specifics of the Russian civilizational code, since Western countries do not respond to Russia's call for unification, for mutual assistance, and

ignore its experience in combating COVID-19 (Apollonov and Tarba, 2017; Danilov, 2020; Mezhuiev, 2018; Farrell and Newman, 2020).

The pandemic is seen as a social threat that has economic, political and social consequences, significantly changing the daily practices of people (Velikaya et al., 2021). Enough attention in the scientific literature is paid to the analysis of the impact of the pandemic on various aspects of social life, the problem of psychological instability of people in the context of the spread of Covid is especially actively considered (Daly et al., 2020). Between January 2020 and January 2021, a study conducted by doctors in 204 countries identified 246 million cases of major depressive disorder and 374 million cases of anxiety disorder across social groups (Santomauro et al., 2021).

Finnish researchers, analyzing the impact of Covid on young people, concluded that this social group is particularly vulnerable, which is due to increasing social isolation in the context of distance learning (Ranta et al., 2020). Russian scientists, analyzing the social consequences of the pandemic in Russian society, pay attention to the strengthening of social stratification, the growth of social tension caused by the instability of the economic situation in the country (HSE Analytical Bulletin, 2020; Social consequences, 2020). Studies of the Russian middle class have shown that its representatives share common ideas with other groups of the population about social inequalities in modern Russian society, considering them to be too deep and illegitimate (Mareeva, 2021; Latova, 2021). Large-scale sociological studies, which made it possible to obtain data on the economic and psychological state of Russians and to make a forecast on priority measures to overcome the negative consequences of the pandemic, were carried out in Russia (Lezhnina, 2021; Sociology of the pandemic, 2021; Pandemic in numbers, 2020; Coronavirus: fears and measures, 2020).

Theoretical and empirical studies of the pandemic and its social consequences are united by the desire to understand how the pandemic has changed the world as a whole, how it has affected social processes and social groups in a particular country. Russian researchers focus on the aggravation of contradictions between social groups due to economic inequality.

2. Statement of Objectives

The analyzed scientific works fix the need to solve the problems of the pandemic on a global scale, if there is an interest of all countries in international cooperation. However, the analysis of international cooperation speaks of the crisis of the globalization project, a sign of which is the inability of the world community to consolidate in solving the problem of the pandemic, as well as the refusal to recognize Russian achievements in the fight against the virus and its social consequences.

In these conditions, it is especially relevant, firstly, to understand the weakness of the claims of globalization in the context of the pandemic, and secondly, to study the local capabilities and achievements of the nation state in solving the problems of social development during the pandemic period.

The purpose of the article is to determine the national characteristics of overcoming the social consequences of the pandemic crisis in Russian society.

Research objectives:

- to justify the crisis of the globalization project in the context of the expansion of the planetary epidemic;
- to determine the specifics of Russia in the world civilizational process;
- to identify the social consequences of the pandemic in Russian society;
- to reveal ways to overcome the negative social consequences of the pandemic in Russian society.

3. Materials and Methods

The study is based on a civilizational approach, which involves considering modern Russian society in the political, economic and socio-psychological contexts of world development. This approach made it possible to draw a conclusion about the civilizational crisis in Russia, largely due to the desire of the political leadership to reform the country according to Western models, without considering the civilizational specifics of Russia. Consideration of the interconnection and interdependence of political, economic and spiritual processes also helped determine the place of the state in solving the social problems caused by the pandemic.

The historical method was used to substantiate the specifics of Russia in the world civilizational process, which made it possible to show the originality of the country's political and economic development in modern period.

To compare the approaches of different states to solving the problems caused by the pandemic, a comparative method was used, with the help of which the conclusion about the crisis of the globalization project due to the disintegration of the world community, as well as the conclusion about the advantages of Russian measures to overcome the pandemic were substantiated.

Secondary analysis of sociological data obtained in 2020 by a working group of the Federal Scientific Research Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences led by M.K. Gorshkov, as well as the results of a study by the Levada Center, which made it possible to obtain empirical confirmation of the conclusions about the economic situation of Russians and draw up a picture of the socio-psychological atmosphere of Russian society, to identify the moods of Russians at the present stage of development of society, was carried out.

4. Results

4.1. The crisis of the globalization project as a consequence of the pandemic

The entry of the world community into the new millennium is marked by the emergence of a new global problem, the content of which fits into the matrix of human interaction with nature, since its essence is a disease of the body, that is, the inferiority of the natural hypostasis of man. The pandemic has become a test for the whole world, for every state, showing the helplessness of humanity in the face of the threat of infection of any person with a deadly virus. Nature has once again challenged society, demanding an adequate consolidated response. The spread of the epidemic, taking place regardless of state national borders, highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of world integration on a global scale and, at the same time, showed the reserves of the national solution to economic, political and cultural problems in a pandemic situation. Today, globalization is building a new complex interdependence in the “man-nature-society-culture” system, bringing to the fore the actual conceptual and value markers of the existence of mankind, which are health, medicine, social support, the unity of the people and state power as priorities.

Global processes are planetary in nature, they affect the interests of all people living on the planet, therefore, in reality, they should be some kind of objective force that unites all countries into a common political, economic and cultural space that lives according to common laws. Researchers emphasize that globalization plays a special role in understanding the planetary nature of pandemic threats and identifying ways to reduce the risks arising from this (Chumakov, 2020). Strengthening transnational ties could contribute to the speedy resolution of the political and economic problems caused by the pandemic. However, the global world is developing non-linearly, as evidenced by such facts as the ever-increasing division of the world according to cultural and civilizational criteria, the aggravation of social and cultural inequality, when poverty, hunger, marginality, illiteracy coexist with wealth and luxury. The destructive intention of globalization is becoming more and more obvious, manifested in the leveling of the national characteristics of peoples, undermining the authority of national state power, and in the erosion of local ethnic values. Philosophers, political scientists, sociologists, concerned about the growth of this trend, note that modern social and cultural trends block the growth of national diversity (Granin, 2021; Mezhuev, 2018; Shchipkov, 2018). The consequence of globalization is objectively denationalization, a gradual but steady reduction in the sovereignty and role of nation-states, in this process small and poorly developed ethnic groups dissolve into larger ones. As a result, a global social system that ignores national identity is being formed.

Modernity testifies that the project of globalization, being implemented, increasingly appears as a tendency towards the unification of political structures, economy and culture, there is a rejection of the dialogue between different civilizational types, cultures, the imposition of the Western image of political, economic and cultural development. The idea of equality collapsed, the world community turned out to be

divided into opposite groups, in which some command and appropriate the wealth and resources produced, while others act as a labor force (Simonyan, 2018: 19-29; Stiglitz, 2003: 24). The pandemic, which in a short period of time became a global problem, clearly showed the unpreparedness of the world community not only for unconditional integration, but also for the implementation of the idea of mutual assistance. The economic, technological and cultural processes that ensure the formation of transnational global connections are slightly slowed down in the world community during the rapid spread of the virus and the need to introduce strict quarantine measures to combat it. The crisis that engulfed the economies of all countries as a result of the quarantine measures taken, the lockdown of almost all enterprises and firms, the radical restructuring of management and the organization of personnel work as a result of the transition to a remote mode made it possible to re-evaluate globalization as an objective social process, the deployment of which does not always have positive effects. On the one hand, the planetary nature and speed of the spread of the pandemic confirmed the idea of transnational ties of the world community. On the other hand, it became clear that it is too early to abandon the national specifics of solving a global problem (not just the problem of a pandemic), that only national-state localization and tough government decisions can have positive consequences in an extreme situation. This conclusion is based on a paradoxical trend that reveals the negative aspects of globalization for countries striving to develop in line with integration: the patterns of civilizational development characteristic of some societies cannot be repeated or, if they are repeated without considering national specifics, they are distorted in the real practice of other societies. The policy of restrictions in the field of international cooperation, pursued by all states during the pandemic, has proved that only national reserves can stabilize the situation in the country and contribute to the survival of the state. Russia can serve as an example of such a conclusion.

4.2. Russia's place in the civilizational process

The Russian state has always sought to find its rightful place in the civilizational space, trying to develop in line with globalization trends. This desire often led to an uncritical perception of Western models of the organization of society, alien to the mentality and values of the Russian people, the weakening of national identity. At present, when the world community is rethinking the problems of the nation-state in the context of measures that can stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus on the planet, strengthen national-state identity, and increase the role of the state in solving global problems, it is important to understand the prospects for Russia in a changing world, to identify the factors influencing its integration into the world community and helping the country to solve the problems caused by the pandemic.

The realities of Russian social life are traditionally considered in the context of cultural interactions (“Russia - West”, “Russia - East”), which today largely determine the external and internal situation in the country. However, the problem of Russia's place in the world civilizational space and the specifics of its development is concretized in the West-East dilemma in line with the civilizational approach. At present, the discussion about the civilizational path and the corresponding image of Russia continues (Granin,

2021; Apollonov and Tarba, 2017). The openness of this topic for discussion is primarily due to the geopolitical position of the country in the global space. The formation of the Russian state, located at the junction of Eastern and Western civilizations, was initially under the strong political and economic influence of heterogeneous forces seeking to subjugate vast territories and the people living there, to seize natural resources. Russian sociality, strongly influenced by Eastern and Western traditions, developed later than most Asian and European civilizations, synthesizing the achievements of heterogeneous cultures. Russia accepted and reworked the patterns of other cultures, but never engaged in complete and absolute copying of alien patterns, trying to adapt to external challenges, being at the crossroads of civilization, functioning as a kind of state organization, economic life, culture. The country has always been peaceful, not trying to dictate its decisions to other countries. The country does not claim to be a world leader, maintaining and strengthening partnerships with the world community. At present, the Russians are preoccupied with solving the most difficult internal problems, mobilizing internal reserves to defeat the spread of the pandemic.

The tension of the situation inside the country is due to the fact that in the last hundred years in Russia there has been a protracted civilizational crisis, which from time to time reaches a bifurcation point that violates the state of stable civilizational development. The basic factor of this process, as already noted, is the geopolitical position of the country, the search for national identification in the course of choosing a perspective among the western, eastern or Eurasian vectors of development. The radical transformation of the identification national complex was accompanied over the past hundred years by the destruction of the state and its formation on the basis of a complete rejection of the values and ideals of the previous format. This social situation is typical of 1917, when Russia was divided into at least two warring camps, and then the same happened in the 1990s, during the period of a radical breakdown of Soviet traditions, when Western-oriented politicians and economists came to power, denying those established in society in the previous period of the value of public property, cooperation, solidarity. The collapse of state enterprises and the expansion of private entrepreneurship have devalued the values of collectivism and non-covetousness, which are key to the Russian mentality. At the same time, the majority of the population found themselves in a long-term loss, losing their savings, and with them their hopes for improving their well-being. Restoring the economy required significant efforts, as a result of which the country has managed to solve many internal problems in the last decade. Orientation to the West, proclaimed in the 1990s as a programmatic development of the country for the near future, led to the fact that Russia, trying to develop in line with globalization, asserting Western patterns of economic, political and cultural existence, sought to actively fit into the global political and economic space, despite the problems within the country, caused by a rough breaking of the established stereotypes of the life of the majority of people. The perception of the Western model of civilizational development was based on fairly good foreign and domestic resources, among which a vast territory (a significant geopolitical factor in the development of Russia), defense power (strong military potential) and a high level of education of the population (intellectual potential) can be named. The country was able to go through the difficulties of the post-perestroika period and to declare itself as a power capable, as before, of influencing the course of world history by activating these resources.

The anti-Russian sanctions imposed by the United States and the EU countries, which have been putting pressure on the Russian economy for more than six years, could not stop its movement forward even during the coronavirus period. Suffice it to say that Russia, thanks to prompt and effective measures to combat the pandemic, was one of the first to begin lifting restrictions on people's daily lives caused by the spread of the disease. According to the latest data from the World Health Organization (WHO), only a few countries provide the main quantitative increase in COVID-19 cases (the third wave of the pandemic): The United States (more than 44 million), India (more than 34 million), Brazil (more than 21 million). This is more than half of all infections in the world. The question arises: how did the United States, which claim to be the world leader and impose its way of life on the whole world, find itself among those countries that cannot boast of great authority in the international arena of fighting the pandemic? Today, during the political and economic instability, Russia does not abandon its obligations and remains a reliable partner. It was Russia that turned out to be the leader in creating a vaccine against COVID-19, and the Russian government found ways to provide medical assistance to states, providing those who expressed their consent with the opportunity to purchase a new vaccine inexpensively, as well as the necessary documents for its domestic production in the difficult conditions of the growing global crisis, due to quarantine measures limiting the spread of the pandemic.

It would seem that the desire for cooperation in the fight against the pandemic on a global scale should contribute to Russia's integration into the civilizational pool of developed states. However, the modern West constantly demonstrates its critical attitude towards our country. Foreign analysts see any action of the Russian government as a danger, a threat, turning Russia into an enemy. Information aggression of the West imposes the image of Russia as a semi-barbarian country, realizing its "imperial" ambitions in relation to neighboring states, citizens of foreign states. A strange position was taken by the WHO, which did not certify the Sputnik V vaccine developed in Russia, which passed the necessary tests and proved its effectiveness for the prevention of coronavirus infection. The European Commission said that the EU does not need a Russian vaccine, in addition, in 2020 there was a threat that administrative measures would be taken against countries (in particular, against Hungary and Turkey) that purchase the Sputnik-V vaccine. However, the European Commission intended to take similar measures against those countries that will purchase the anti-Covid vaccine from China, which is also a leader in this medical field. Currently, 60 countries have already purchased the Russian vaccine, despite the threats from the European Commission.

According to analysts, Russia is considering options for turning towards the East, thus changing the strategic model of development, without receiving a response to its desire to follow the Western path of development (Granin, 2021: 4). However, Russia does not yet have its own civilizational model and long-term development strategy. At present, the civilizational crisis in Russia, the content of which is the choice of a historical perspective (orientation to Western or Eastern models of development), is accompanied by deep internal problems, exacerbated by the deployment of the pandemic.

4.3. Characteristics of the socio-economic and moral-psychological situation of Russian society during the pandemic

At the cost of enormous efforts, Russia is gradually managing to return to the ranks of world powers, which the world community has to reckon with due to their significant influence on political, economic and cultural processes. Comparison of economic growth rates of different countries can serve as evidence of this. According to the International Monetary Fund, Russia occupies a worthy sixth place in the top 10 in the ranking of countries in the world in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2021. By 2024, the task was set to enter the top five leading countries of the world (Danilov, 2021).

Despite the results achieved in development, the country, unlike the North American states, does not seek to dictate its decisions to other countries. It does not claim to be a world leader, maintaining and strengthening partnerships with the world community. Russia is currently preoccupied with solving the most difficult internal problems, mobilizing internal reserves to defeat the spread of the pandemic.

These problems are connected, first of all, with the negative assessments of the current socio-economic situation in the country by Russians. The development of Russian society as a whole is characterized by a rather tangible decline in the economy (however, this is a global trend due to the pandemic). At the end of 2019, the World Bank predicted the growth of Russia's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2020 by 1%. However, the reality turned out to be more complicated. According to today's estimates, in 2020, the country's GDP decreased by almost 4.1% as a result of lower world oil prices and a large-scale economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Analysts note that the current situation may "reverse the process of poverty reduction that has been observed in Russia since 2015" (Virus against the poor, 2021).

The financial problems that Russians had to solve during the pandemic were largely due to the fact that before the onset of the crisis, the majority of the population did not have a financial safety cushion. According to the results of a study by the analytical center of the National Financial Research Agency (NAFI), "by the beginning of the pandemic, 45% of Russians had no savings, 29% had savings, but they were not enough" (Pandemic in numbers, 2020). According to opinion polls, the morale of Russians during the pandemic and the announcement of quarantine measures began to deteriorate. In the initial period of the epidemic in the country, 64% of Russians were confident that the situation would soon improve. And by the middle of summer, optimism gradually decreased. By July, only 44% of Russians expected the situation to improve. "At the same time, every fifth Russian expected complications in the situation (20%), while almost the same proportion spoke of no changes in the near future (23%). Anxiety and uncertainty - these moods are typical not only for those who have already noted the difficulties and deterioration in living conditions, but also for those who have not directly encountered negative changes. Today, 75% of Russians are concerned about the risk of rising prices and a significant rise in the cost of living, almost every second is concerned about the risk of inaccessibility of medicine, more than a third are worried about the depreciation of their savings" (Pandemic in numbers..., 2020).

Sociological data obtained by researchers of the Federal Research Sociological Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences (FRSC RAS) under the guidance of Academician M.K. Gorshkov in autumn 2020 (a survey of the population of the Russian Federation was carried out in 112 settlements of 22 constituent entities of the Russian Federation using a representative all-Russian regionalized quota sample (2000 respondents), indicate that the economic losses from the 2020 crisis for Russians were more significant than from the economic downturn of 2016. The level of losses was assessed as catastrophic by “a quarter of fellow citizens in 2020 and only 9% in 2018. Another 57% and 46% (respectively) rated it as significant but not catastrophic. The prospects for the development of the country were drawn to people in gloomy colors during the pandemic: in 2020, half of Russians talked about the fact that the country is facing difficult times, in 2020, while two years before the corresponding indicator was 33%” (Lezhnina, 2021: 52).

In other words, people have no confidence in the future. There are many reasons for this, including international economic and, in part, political isolation of Russia, as well as not always consistent domestic policy of the state, including the regular increase in prices for housing and communal services, increasing the retirement age, etc. Sociologists, noting that Russians are already accustomed to crises, argue that the problem lies elsewhere. “The main difference between today’s situation and all defaults and collapses is its uncertainty. It is not clear when and how all this will end” (Windows with a view on COVID, 2020).

According to sociological data, after the spring quarantine, 72% of Russian companies were not able to fully recover. 39 per cent may not be able to withstand new restrictive measures if they are introduced. Ordinary citizens do not own these data, but consider the situation in the economy quite difficult. 78% believe that coronavirus effects will cause damage. Only 5% said that the economy could benefit from the pandemic. In some areas, it is the education system that is most disturbing. 70% predict big problems and only 5% predict possible improvements. 51% and 27% respectively said so about health protection (the efforts made in the fight against coronavirus did not go unnoticed). 52% are concerned that relations between people and authorities may now deteriorate, 40% fear the same, talking about relationships between people (Windows with a view to COVID, 2020).

These data are confirmed by other indicators, including the decline in the standard of living of people both in individual social strata and in the regions. In the regional context, the standard of living is characterized by a huge gap between Moscow, St. Petersburg and the Moscow Region, on the one hand, and other regions of Russia, on the other. In this sense, Russia can be called a country of contrasts. It is no secret that in the North and Eastern Siberia there are “endangered” cities (for example, Norilsk or Vorkuta). There is a high population decline and a sharp drop in living standards.

As for the gap between social classes in terms of living standards, it demonstrates colossal economic inequality. The poor and very poor in Russia are over 56%. The difference in income between the richest 7 million and the 20 million people below the poverty line is on average 20-100 times or more, which is much higher than similar indicators in European countries (Reznik, 2019: 66). Sociological data show that the

vast majority of Russians believe that the state should reduce income differences between different income groups, but politicians do not care about this and government actions in this regard are unsuccessful (Mareeva, 2021: 41).

Thus, the standard of living in certain regions of Russia and the lower social classes, which include the poor and groups below the poverty line, continues to fall. However, the situation in the economic sphere is currently better than in 2009 or 2014. The government managed to stop the devaluation of the ruble, increased social benefits, and provided targeted assistance to inclusive groups of the population. This gives hope that the elimination of the social consequences caused by the spread of the disease in Russian society will be faster than the recovery from the recession of 2014–2015. As for the deterioration in the moral state of society, this phenomenon, in our opinion, does not have a clear direct connection with the corona crisis events and, most likely, is assessed by Russians as a kind of negative trend in the previous development of the domestic society.

4.4. Adequacy of government measures to the challenges of the pandemic

Despite the political, financial, social and other problems (aggravated not only by the pandemic, but also by international sanctions) that accompanied 2020 and passed into 2021, the social situation in the country is generally stable and, as analysts note, positive trends, such as for example, how the rapid development of digitalization in all spheres of social life, the emergence of a new level of consumption, the official constitution of distance work and education, are gradually manifesting themselves. It is obvious that a quick response to the situation and the adoption of adequate tax and social support measures can reduce the impact of the negative consequences of the crisis caused by the pandemic on the financial situation of people. In terms of the number of adopted reforms aimed at improving the fiscal and social policy, 2020 in Russia has become unique. In January, unprecedented measures were taken to support families with children. In March-June, in order to overcome the economic consequences of the epidemic, the government prepared a number of bills aimed at supporting businesses, employment and incomes of vulnerable groups of the population, subsequently approved by the State Duma and the Federation Council. At the G20 summit, Russian President V.V. Putin said that “*Russia has taken unprecedented support measures against the background of the pandemic*”. In his opinion, the main task in the current situation is to preserve the life and health of people (Kazantseva, 2020).

At the same time, despite a fairly effective social policy during the pandemic, the standard of living of most Russians remains at a low level. The constant reproduction of difficulties in solving economic problems, primarily related to achieving the necessary standard of living for a person, allows us to conclude that the pro-Western model of socio-economic development that is being implemented in modern Russia is not adequate to the civilizational choice of the majority of Russians. This is evidenced by the conflict of values that impedes the achievement of the national unity of society.

The conflict of values manifests itself in society as a sharp discrepancy in the evaluative positions of people belonging to different social groups and having their own ideas

about the level and quality of a decent (according to their ideas) life. It is clear that overcoming the political and economic problems caused by the global economic crisis amid the pandemic is possible only on the basis of significant moral efforts to unite society, on the basis of strengthening national identity. In this context, the values of pragmatism and utilitarianism, characteristic of representatives of the ruling minority and reflecting pro-Western orientations towards the free market, individualism, and entrepreneurship, became unsuitable for solving this problem. The Western model of the country's development, having exacerbated the value conflicts, once again showed its insufficiency in relation to Russia.

The system of measures taken by the state during the pandemic and strict control over their observance convinced the majority of the population of the advantages of centralized administrative power, historically traditional for the Russian political system. Strengthening of national identity involves political will and state activity, is achieved as a dialogue between the elite and society. The role of the elite is extremely important, especially in times of crisis. The current Russian situation is complicated by the fact that at present there can be no talk of a dialogue between the elite and society. The elite formed in Russia in the post-perestroika period has experienced a sharp division: over the past two decades, the country has lost a significant share of its scientific and simply qualified potential. An insignificant part of society, representing mainly power structures, bureaucratic officials and business, has always been oriented towards the West, considering the host country (Russia) as a place of accumulation of initial capital. Naturally, these segments of the population could not and did not want to strengthen national identity and protect national interests. This situation is currently changing radically: at the legislative level, the “nationalization” of the elites is being carried out (it is forbidden for civil servants to have dual citizenship, foreign bank accounts, etc.).

According to opinion polls, the majority of the population supports the leadership's line of strengthening the state in the international arena and the gradual increase in the well-being of its citizens. As a result, the most important task of Russia's internal development is to find ways of national harmony, convergence of the value preferences of different segments of the population. At present, it is too early to say that the national idea that unites Russians has been formulated.

Summing up, we emphasize that only a strong state based on the unity of the people and state power, whose activities are focused on social trust, providing conditions for human development, can solve the problems caused by the deployment of the pandemic. In a critical situation that sometimes requires tough decisions, it is important to rethink the system of interaction between the authorities and society, optimize the management structure and strengthen trust in the authorities in order to stabilize the situation and implement effective measures proposed by the government of the country.

5. Discussion

Research similar to our research addresses the global nature of the pandemic and how the international community can integrate to address this problem. The authors of one such study are addressing the question of whether the pandemic that has engulfed the

planet is related to globalization, and if so, then how. Characterizing globalization as a strategic direction in the development of mankind, the authors argue that the coronavirus infection is primarily of a biological nature and cannot be considered as a moderator of social processes (Chumakov, 2020), that the coronavirus infection cannot prevent globalization (Farrell and Newman, 2020). Other researchers successfully and effectively substantiate the negative aspects of globalization, emphasizing its supranational nature, leading to the dominance of some nation-states over others (Simonyan, 2018) and increased risks within the nation-state, concluded that the pandemic leads to the death of globalization (Voloshin, 2020; Danilov, 2021). In our study, the proposition about the crisis of the globalization project is substantiated, since only national-state localization and tough government decisions can have positive consequences in an extreme situation.

The civilizational specificity of Russia is discussed within the framework of the East-West dilemma. Russia is considered either as a Western European power with the appropriate characteristics and values (Granin, 2021), or as an Eastern-type state closely associated with the codes and traditions of Eastern culture (Apollonov and Tarba, 2017; Shchipkov, 2018). The third solution to the problem is connected with the statement about a special civilizational image of the Russian state, which does not coincide with either the first or the second, forming a special world, quite comparable with the first two, but peculiar and unique, due to the long historical context of the formation of Russian statehood and religion (Mezhuev, 2018; Reznik, 2019). Unlike existing approaches, the author considers Russia's place in the civilizational process in the context of solving the problems of the pandemic. Since the pandemic has highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of globalization processes, the author shows the insufficiency of the pro-Western model of civilizational development adopted by modern Russia, which does not correspond to the value, mental attitudes of Russians, and, therefore, hinders the effective solution of social problems caused by the pandemic.

An extensive resource of sociological research, the subject of which is the analysis of the social problems of Russian society caused by the expansion of the pandemic, unites the conclusion about the growth of social stratification, psychological tension, and the instability of the financial situation of people. Sociologists show which groups of the population are most difficult to experience remote work, wage cuts, dismissal (Latova, 2021; Lezhnina, 2021; Mareeva, 2021; Pandemic in numbers, 2020; Windows with a view of COVID, 2020). The systematic secondary analysis of sociological data presented by the author made it possible to create a basis for empirical substantiation of the specifics of the social situation in Russian society, which is a necessary component of making adequate decisions to overcome the pandemic crisis. Despite the political, financial, social and other problems (aggravated not only by the pandemic, but also by international sanctions) that accompanied 2020 and passed into 2021, the social situation in the country is generally stable, positive trends are gradually emerging, such as, for example, the rapid development of digitalization in all spheres of social life, the emergence of a new level of consumption, the official constitution of distance work and education.

Scientific intelligence, which confirms that there are differences in understanding the social consequences of the pandemic in different countries and on different continents, which is manifested in the focus of researchers on people's mental health, has practical value (Daly et al., 2020; Santomauro et al., 2021), in our study, financial and material problems are brought to the fore, the solution of which depends on the state.

6. Conclusion

The study found that the crisis that engulfed the economies of all countries as a result of the quarantine measures taken, the lockdown of almost all enterprises and firms, the radical restructuring of management and the organization of personnel work as a result of the transition to a remote mode, made it possible to re-evaluate globalization as an objective social process, the deployment of which does not always have positive consequences. Modernity testifies that the project of globalization, being implemented, increasingly appears as a trend towards the unification of political structures, economy and culture, there is a rejection of the dialogue between different civilizational types, cultures, the imposition of the Western image of political, economic and cultural development. The pandemic, which in a short period became a global problem, clearly showed the unpreparedness of the world community not only for unconditional integration, but also for the implementation of the idea of mutual assistance. The current situation convinces that it is too early for the world community to abandon the national specifics of solving a global problem (not just the problem of the pandemic), that only national-state localization and tough government decisions can have positive consequences in an extreme situation.

The national specificity of Russia, its place in the world civilizational process is determined by the peculiarity of the geopolitical position in the world space. Russia accepted and processed the patterns of other cultures, being at the civilizational crossroads between the West and the East, functioning as a kind of state organization, economic life, culture, trying to adapt to external challenges. The country has always been peaceful, not trying to dictate its decisions to other countries. It does not claim to be a world leader, maintaining and strengthening partnerships with the world community. The tension of the situation inside the country is due to the fact that in the last hundred years in Russia there has been a protracted civilizational crisis, the content of which is the choice of a historical perspective that corresponds to the cultural values of the people. The desire for cooperation in the fight against the pandemic on a global scale should have contributed to the integration of Russia into the civilizational pool of developed states, should have strengthened the orientation towards the establishment of a pro-Western model of development. However, the modern West constantly demonstrates its critical attitude towards our country. Foreign analysts see any action of the Russian government as a danger, a threat, turning Russia into an enemy. Russia does not yet have its own civilizational model and long-term development strategy. At present, the civilizational crisis in Russia is accompanied by deep internal problems exacerbated by the spread of the pandemic.

Russia's internal problems reflect the difficult socio-economic situation in the country, which Russians assess as negative. The financial problems that Russians had to solve

during the pandemic were largely due to the fact that before the onset of the crisis, the majority of the population did not have a financial safety cushion. The gap between social classes in terms of living standards demonstrates colossal economic inequality, the standard of living of certain regions of Russia and the lower social strata, which include the poor and groups below the poverty line, continues to fall. According to opinion polls, the morale of Russians during the pandemic and the announcement of quarantine measures began to deteriorate, people have no confidence in the future. The main difference of today's situation is its protracted uncertainty. However, despite the political, financial, social and other problems (aggravated not only by the pandemic, but also by international sanctions) that accompanied 2020 and passed into 2021, the social situation in the country is generally stable, positive trends are gradually emerging. As for the deterioration of the moral state of society, this phenomenon, in our opinion, does not have a clear direct connection with the social consequences of the spread of the pandemic and, most likely, is assessed by Russians as a kind of negative trend due to the civilizational crisis, the previous development of domestic society.

It is obvious that a quick response to the situation and the adoption of adequate tax and social support measures can reduce the impact of the negative consequences of the crisis caused by the pandemic on the financial situation of people. In terms of the number of adopted reforms aimed at improving the fiscal and social policy, 2020 in Russia has become unique. The government managed to stop the devaluation of the ruble, increased social payments, and provided targeted assistance to inclusive groups of the population. The system of measures taken by the state during the pandemic and strict control over their observance convinced the majority of the population of the advantages of centralized administrative power, historically traditional for the Russian political system. Strengthening of national identity involves political will and state activity, is achieved as a dialogue between the elite and society. As a result, the most important task of Russia's internal development is to find ways of national harmony, convergence of the value preferences of different segments of the population. At present, it is too early to say that the national idea that unites Russians has been formulated.

The practical value of scientific research lies in the possibility of using the findings to assess the social situation and to develop specific political and economic measures to overcome the negative social consequences of the pandemic in Russian society.

The scientific value of our study lies in the fact that it lays the foundation for numerous scientific discussions about the opportunities, problems and prospects for the development of local civilizations in the context of total globalization and national reserves to overcome the negative social consequences of extreme historical situations, an example of which is the pandemic in our time.

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THE EUROPEAN PATH TOWARDS A NEW PARADIGM OF ENERGY PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION

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Abstract: *The European Union has decided to follow a new path in terms of energy production and consumption, migrating as quickly as possible to the production of green energy. This decision came about as an inevitable consequence of climate change and global environmental issues. This article reveals some consequences of the multiple crises (economic, political, monetary, trust in state institutions etc.) and especially of the energy crisis triggered around this decision, in the European Union including Romania, starting from the hesitations of the factors determined to apply the tough but necessary measures for changing the paradigm in the field of energy sectors (this also on the background of the war from Ukraine). The article also discusses Romania's particular situation from an energy perspective. On the one hand, we are talking about a rate of dependence on imports much lower than the average European rate, and on the other hand, we are talking about a population that for many decades has achieved the lowest energy consumption per inhabitant in Europe (and as a result of the massive dislocation of the national industrial branches. Would it therefore be appropriate for the Romanian population to be imposed an additional austerity regime at this time? The article cites some relevant international and Romanian publications in the field, using international statistics documents (from Eurostat, EC, WB etc.) as well as national data (INS, BNR etc.).*

Keywords: *multiple crisis, price, politics, national interest, consumption models*

1. The problem of rising prices and the economic truth about their level

In the modern era (12th - 20th centuries), many Western countries, and also some Asian countries, succeeded somehow to steal the start of the global economic development competition, imposing their own terms in the international transactions, concluded especially with the developing countries ready to export their raw materials

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or energy. Many developing countries supposed to export their strategic natural resources or agricultural products, were politically or militarily subordinated, or were states treated as colonial regimes. Often, such policies were the result of secret agreements between powerful states, in order to fix the lowest possible purchase prices. As a result, the prices of many traded natural resources were massively distorted by the imposition of the economic interests of various companies, and therefore most prices had little in common with the economic truth regarding their strategic importance. Thus, countries possessing strategic natural resources (electricity, oil, natural gas, coal, but also a number of raw materials, such as grain or other strategic food products), have been forced to sell at ridiculous prices for centuries.

The price of oil

Over time, the price of oil has known several ways of formation, depending on the economic and historical context, but especially depending on the power relations on the market. Until the formation of OPEC in 1960, the market was dominated by the big Western oil companies which, although they were constantly in competition, also resorted to secret understandings and agreements to control production and price. After its formation, OPEC gained control over the market. If during the 1960s the Organization managed to prevent the reduction of prices, during the oil shocks it managed to impose its will in the formation of the sale price of oil. An essential landmark in the formation of the oil price is the introduction of oil futures transactions at the New York Stock Exchange in 1983. The introduction of oil on the stock exchange meant the transformation of price formation mechanisms, becoming impersonal, open and competitive. (Câmpean, 2011)

This is how it became possible that, for over two centuries, the prices of many energy resources assimilated by numerous Western economies were predominantly very low, and the economic progress in Western states determined the manifestation of consumerism.

In reports of this type or similar, Romania was found, more than once, which, for example, with various motivations, as early as the 19th century, had acquired a reputation as the granary of Europe - being forced to annually sell cereals in large quantities, but at incredibly low prices, to the West, at the same time, for protectionist reasons, limiting its imports.

Romanian trade in the interwar period

The economic policy carried out by the state regarding foreign trade, in the period 1929 - 1933, when the Romanian economy was strongly affected by the global economic crisis of overproduction, consisted, on the one hand, in forcing the export (cereals, oil, wood, etc.) for to obtain the necessary foreign exchange for imports and the import compression, on the other hand, to protect domestic industry and reduce the volume of foreign exchange payments. (INS, 2018).

At least a century before the 1940s, when the war has shown the true relations between the states of the world, in the West, the international traffic of goods had become dominated by natural resources and cheap goods, coming from the countries of the third world. The appearance in the history of world trade of commodity exchanges has somewhat corrected this situation, by introducing into the price structure, some information regarding the limits of resource deposits, or the ephemeral nature of certain offers.

Thus, for centuries, Western consumers have had abundant resources and goods at their disposal, at particularly affordable prices. The behavior of economic agents made possible an industrial age that was extremely competitive but also aggressive towards the environment, which facilitated the modern way of consumption, which proved inclined to excesses, waste and economic irrationality.

As time goes by, however, some countries that store raw materials or energy, although poorly developed economically, or perhaps precisely because of that, have begun to exercise their right to development, political autonomy, and well-being. As a result, cheap goods started not being so cheap anymore, became more and more rare, and the competition for cheap natural resources intensified. Such poorly developed states in the modern period of the West, which at that stage still managed to accumulate economic and knowledge resources, but also a higher level of demographic consistency (India, China, Brazil, etc.), currently, and - they consolidated their position on world markets, claiming their own right to pollute the planet. Many such speeches by such states have produced deep emotion in the Western world.

On the other hand, the bill of environmental conditions has begun to reflect alarming climate change even in the Western space. At present, the reality of climate change, attested by some specialists, is, however, strongly disputed by others, and things are stagnant in an area of dispute. But the truth is that, although obvious, the stakes of openly acknowledging the realities of global warming are enormous from the perspective of today's high-profit industries. One thing is certain, namely, the world can no longer continue to develop according to the models of the past and a series of radical changes must take place.

In the year 2021, when the pressure of climate change seemed to have calmed down somewhat (as an effect of the decrease in economic activities from the pandemic) EC decision-makers, without much public debate, launched a new challenge. In July 2021, the European Commission made public an extremely ambitious legislative project to abandon fossil fuels, under the explanation of the need to stop the ongoing process of carbonization of the atmosphere. At the time of the introduction of this initiative, Europe's natural gas production had already been in decline for several years, actually increasing the continent's dependence on imports. And Russia - a highly unpredictable energy supplier - has been in a position for several years to consolidate its status as the EU's main energy supplier, with the completion of the Nord Stream 2 project, in which Gazprom and its EU partners have invested combined, around \$11 billion (Bloomberg (1), 2022).

One might think, given the above, that the world has finally reached a critical point in its reflection on the fate of the planet. However, such a moment of maturing reflection had the misfortune of coinciding with the deepening of the energy crisis through the war in Ukraine.

However, evaluating, even partially, the true economic and social effects of this multiple crisis, in the Western world but not only, we will discover that the decision to abandon the consumption of conventional fuels now (if it was taken in good faith) was, to say the least, ill-timed, because it already bankrupted an enormous number of businesses, and produced despair for large masses of the population, at least in the poorer states of the south-east of the EU, including Romania.

2. Western concern over the costs of the energy crisis. The need for market regulation but ignoring the ethics of applied politics

In order to reduce the devastating economic and social impact of the crisis of rising energy prices, European states have allocated a total of about 500 billion euro (1.7% of EU.27 GDP) (Bloomberg, 2022). The 27 EU member states have already spent around 314 billion euro for the economic support of companies, the largest amount being allocated by Germany - over 100 billion euro (other sources talk about 200 billion in October 2022 – 5.6% of GDP) - the equivalent of 2.8% of own GDP. Britain has allocated 178 billion euro for this purpose - this country currently having an industrial sector that competes closely with that of Germany.

Romania allocated only 6.9 billion euro, i.e. the equivalent of 2.88% of GDP, which places it in sixth place in the EU.27 in this chapter, after Croatia (4.1% of GDP), Greece (3, 7% of GDP), Italy (3.3% of GDP), Latvia (3.2% of GDP) and Spain (2.9% of GDP). Among the first ten European states that have had initiatives in this regard are also Italy with 59.2% of GDP, France with 53.6% of GDP, Spain with 35.5% of GDP, Poland with 10.6% of GDP, Austria with 8.9% of GDP, Denmark with 6.8% of GDP, the Netherlands with 6.2% of GDP (Tagliapietra, Zachmann, Sgaravatti, 2022, Bruegel, 2022).

We observe the enormous gaps that intervene in terms of protecting economies against the energy crisis, both through the weights in the GDP of the compensations, and through the different sizes of the GDP of each state. However, the European states with higher decision-making authority at the top of the EU (Germany, France) at one point insisted on imposing a total stop on the import of natural gas from Russia and egalitarianism regarding the waiver to the use of conventional fuels in all European states.

This, although practically, Germany, Poland, etc. they would by no means conform to the observance of such rigors. At the level of public discourse, there was a plea for restrictions imposed on imports from Russia in order to reduce its financial resources, but on the other hand, the large European importers of Russian gas were having problems because they did not have much possibility to pay for their gas in rubles.

Romania, at the beginning, unconditionally accepted the renunciation of the use of conventional fuels, imposed by the leadership of the EU.27 (it is not known whether the Romanian politicians did this understanding the planetary urgency of greening, or out of simple obedience). A few months later, however, seeing that one is the public discourse of the great powers, and another is the applied economic practices, Romania returned (like other states) on this decision. But the recovery was not fast enough to prevent many Romanian businesses from going bankrupt due to the unstoppable rise in prices.

3. Energy dependence of the EU27 on imports

EU.27 is a net importer of energy. In 2020, 58% of the energy available in the EU was produced outside EU member states. In 2020, the EU had an energy dependency rate of 57.5%. The situation varied greatly from one state to another: Estonia had a dependency rate of 10.5%, Germany 63.7%, Greece 81.4%, and Malta over 97%.

The decline in primary energy production in the EU in recent decades has led to increased imports of primary energy and energy products. This growth slowed in 2020 due to the drop in demand during the COVID-19 pandemic. Oil ranked first as an import level, with 18,675 PJ in 2020, still remaining 14% lower than a decade ago and 13% lower than 2019. The amount of natural gas imported doubled between 1990-2020, reaching 13,786 PJ. Natural gas is the second imported energy product. Current imports are 8.6% lower than in 2019, when record import levels were recorded. (Eurostat, 2022, Complete energy balances).

Table 1. Dependence of EU states on energy imports in 2020 (%)

Country	Energy import dependence	Country	Energy import dependence
Average EU.27	57.5	Latvia	45.4
Belgium	78.0	Lithuania	74.9
Bulgaria	37.8	Luxembourg	92.4
Czech Republic	38.8	Hungary	56.6
Denmark	44.8	Malta	97.5
Germany	63.7	Netherlands	68.0
Estonia	10.5	Austria	58.3
Ireland	71.3	Poland	42.7
Greece	81.4	Portugal	65.2
Spain	67.8	Romania	28.2
France	44.4	Slovenia	45.8
Croatia	53.5	Slovakia	56.3
Italy	73.4	Finland	42.0
Cyprus	93.0	Sweden	33.5

Source: European Council, Council of the European Union, 2022, Infografice - Consiliul (europa.eu)

The gross energy available in the EU in 2020 was 57,767 PJ, which is 8.1% lower than in 2019. This was the lowest figure recorded in the period 1990-2020.

Even under these conditions, in Luxembourg and Finland, the gross energy available in 2020 was over 240 TJ per inhabitant, while in Romania, ranked last among the EU27 countries, it was below 70 TJ per inhabitant. The EU average in 2020 was 129 TJ per inhabitant. However, according to the latest European documents, austerity policies will be non-discriminatory at the level of all EU states. 27.

In the period of 1990 - 2020, the EU average of gross available electricity per inhabitant fell by 13.5%. And currently there are large differences between the available gross average energy of different European states. The highest increase in available gross energy per inhabitant in the period of 1990 - 2020 was recorded in Malta (+152.9 %). This was followed by Portugal (+20%) and Austria (+9.2%). The sharpest decreases of this indicator were recorded in Estonia (-48.4%), Germany (-39.8 %) (Eurostat, 2022).

Faced with this situation, the European Commission nevertheless proposes an emergency intervention on the European energy markets, in order to face the recent price increases, through measures to reduce energy demand, in order to reduce the cost of electricity for consumers, as well as measures to redistribution of surplus revenues from the energy sector to final consumers. One of the proposals is the obligation of EU member states to reduce electricity consumption by at least 5% during peak hours (CE.2022, HotNews.ro, 2022).

4. Romania within the European energy production and consumption models. Austerity policies in the EU.27 energy consumption – all countries will give up at least 5% during peak hours

Primary energy production in the EU.27 amounted to 24,027 petajoules (PJ) in 2020, 7.1% lower than in 2019. The downward trend in fossil fuel production continued (-16.5%), as and that of natural gas (-21.2 %), or oil and oil products (-5.2 %). In 2020, there was also a significant decrease in primary energy production from nuclear power plants (-10.7%) (Eurostat, 2022).

The production of renewable energies had a positive trend (except for 2011), having the highest share (40.8 %), next to the production of primary energy in the EU in 2020, followed by atomic energy (30.5 %), solid fossil fuels (14.6%), natural gas (7.2%), oil and oil products (3.7%) and non-renewable waste (2.4%).

In the decade 2010-2020, the trend in primary energy production in the EU27 was generally downward for solid fossil fuels, oil, natural gas and nuclear power. In this decade, natural gas production recorded the largest decline (-62.4%), followed by solid fossil fuels and oil and petroleum products (down 43.0% and 35.1%, respectively).

The main indicators of energy consumption derive from the volume and quality of primary energy production, energy imports and exports, available gross energy, and final energy consumption. In European states, both oil and natural gas consumption were down in 2020, by 12.6% and 2.4%, respectively. In the contribution of renewable energy sources to the overall energy mix, renewable energies surpassed solid fossil fuels

in 2018, 2019 and 2020. Consumption of solid fossil fuels decreased by 18.4% in 2020, reaching the lowest value since 1990.

Final energy consumption in the EU in 2020 amounted to 37 086 PJ, 5.6% less than in 2019. Since 1994 when consumption started to increase, European countries have reached the highest value of energy consumption - 41,445 Mtoe in 2006. Then, by 2020, European final energy consumption has fallen from its peak by 10.5%.

Between 1990 and 2020, the amount and share of solid fossil fuels in final energy consumption decreased significantly (from 9.6% in 1990 to 3.6% in 2000, 2.8% in 2010 and 2.1% in 2020). Renewable energy sources have increased their share in total consumption, rising from 4.3% in 1990 to 5.3% in 2000 and 8.8% in 2010, finally reaching 11.8% in 2020. Natural gas remained fairly stable during this period, ranging from 18.8% (in 1990) to 22.6% (in 2005), its share in the total amounting to 21.9% in 2020.

Oil and oil products accounted for the largest share (35.0%) in the structure of final energy consumption in 2020, followed by electricity (23.2%) and natural gas (21.9%). Solid fossil fuels contributed only 2.1% to the final energy consumption.

The total energy consumption of the transport sector in the EU amounted to 10 549 PJ in 2020. Energy consumption for transport increased steadily from 1990 to 2007. With the onset of the global financial and economic crisis in 2008, energy consumption from transport European decreased by 1.4%. From 2014, the increase in transport energy consumption continued until 2019, although the level of 2007 was not reached. The largest decrease in transport energy consumption was recorded in 2020, -12.8% compared to 2019, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 2. Energy consumption model of the EU.27 economies by energy use sectors in 2020

Sector	Transport	Households	Industry	Services	Agriculture	Others
Share in consumption	28.4%	28.0%	26.1%	13.7%	3.2%	28.4%

Source: Eurostat, 2022, Final energy consumption by sector, EU, 1990-2020

The final use of energy in the EU.27 in 2020 reveals three dominant categories: transport (28.4%), households (28.0%) and industry (26.1%).

The energy consumption model of Romanian households, like the European one, is dominated by four household needs: the thermal conditioning of the home (62.5%), followed by the provision of hot water (13.8%), the lighting of the rooms (13.9%), cooked (9.8%). We note the extremely high level of similarity of the Romanians' energy consumption model (table 3), compared to the European average, specifying that, perhaps, Romanians attach more importance to cooking food in their own homes than other Europeans.

Table 3. Model of energy consumption of households in Romania, compared to the model of the European average in 2020

Utility/share in consumption	Home heating	Hot water	Hot water	Cooking	Air conditioning	Others
Average EU.27	62.8%	15.1%	14.5%	6.1%	0.4%	1.0%
Romania	62.2%	13.8%	13.9%	9.8%	0.3%	...

Source: Eurostat, 2022, *Energy consumption in households, Energy_consumption_in_households_by_type_of_use*

The final energy consumption in the residential sector in Romania compared to the average of EU27 countries, based on the type of fuel used, in 2020, is dominated by renewable energy (38.2%), natural gas (34.3%) and electricity (14.6%).

Table 4. Model of final energy consumption of the residential sector in Romania compared to the EU.27 average, based on the type of fuel used

Categories of fuels used/ Share in consumption	Natural gas	Electricity	Renewable energies	Oil and petroleum products	Derived thermal energy	Solid fuels
Average EU.27	31.7%	24.8%	20.3%	12.3%	8.2%	2.7%
Romania	34.3%	14.6%	38.2%	3.4%	8.9%	0.6%

Sources: Eurostat, 2022, *Final energy consumption in the residential sector by fuel*, EU, 2020, Eurostat, 2020, Table 1: *Share of fuels in the final energy consumption in the residential sector, 2020*

In the EU27 countries, unlike Romania, electricity is in second place in terms of importance, and renewable energy is in third place.

5. Effects of the COVID 19 crisis on energy consumption

Starting from 2020, the 27 EU states have imposed some restrictive measures to limit the spread of COVID-19, by closing factories, schools and restaurants and limiting the movement of the urban and rural population. These measures have determined some changes in the consumption behavior of the population in the energy field. The representations of the changes in energy consumption show that if in 2020, except for Estonia, in all EU states there were decreases in energy consumption, in 2021, a number of 10 states still continued to consume below the level of 2019, the rest of the states more or less exceeding that level. Among the latter, Romania also entered, which exceeded the consumption achieved in 2019 at a level below 1%.

6. National energy policies, production, and consumption in the last decade

Traditionally, Romania registers the third lowest dependence rate in the European Union, in relation to energy imports. Romania has natural gas and oil reserves and a relatively well-developed electricity generation sector. However, starting from 2019, Romania became a net importer of electricity, mainly due to the trend of renouncing domestic coal production. Until coal was phased out, the composition of agents used for electricity generation was among the most balanced in the EU.

However, except for the wind and solar exploitation technology, the Romanian energy system is quite old and because of this it achieves one of the lowest yields. Therefore, it requires a general re-evaluation and an extensive reconditioning process. Currently, although officially there would be an installed capacity of 22 GW, the average power delivered by the system is about 7 GW. In the year 2020 it became clear that a demand of about 8 GW could be met only with the contribution of some imports.

Electricity production in Romania before 2020. Nuclear power plants and large hydropower plants, about 98% of coal mining and 73% of natural gas-based units are still owned by the Romanian state. In October 2021, through the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, Romania committed to phase out coal production by 2032.

Officially, the national energy system still uses 13 coal units serving 7 coal-fired power plants with a gross installed capacity of 2895 MW. Basically, there are two large coal mining companies that manage both the power plants and the mines: Oltenia Energy Complex (OEC) which manages 4 power plants and 10 lignite-based mines, normally delivers about 90% of the electricity based on coal of the country. Another large coal processing company is the Hunedoara Energy Complex (HEC). According to data from 2019, none of the coal-fired power plants in Romania complied with the regulations regarding CO₂ emissions. Gradually, however, some renovations of certain thermal power plants were carried out and some capacities became functional again. For example, during the years 2020 and 2021, the Oltenia Energy Complex was modernized and thus, the thermal power plants in Craiova, Işalniţa, Turceni and Rovinari started operating again. (Bankwatch, 2022).

The Romanian production of wind electricity has increased, thanks to the high wind potential and supporting policies to produce renewable energy. Romania's wind energy potential is considered to be the largest in South-Eastern Europe, being estimated at approximately 14,000 MW, capable of generating around 23 TWh per year.

Between the years 2008-2013, the main investments were made in wind farms, which in 2020 had an installed capacity of 3023 MW, and in photovoltaic panels with an installed capacity of 1391 MW. The development of electricity production from renewable sources was strongly slowed down in 2013, by changing the subsidy scheme that reduced the number of green certificates granted. However, this has led to increased general interest in solar installations. According to the National Energy Strategy, Romania's solar potential can generate around 1.2 TWh of electricity per year, which

represents about 2.5% of the current national consumption (experts say that such an estimate would be minimal).

Currently, the energy intensity of Romania's economy is twice as high as the European average, which indicates massive system regeneration needs.

The relatively low energy performance of buildings in Romania causes a relatively high energy consumption in the field. The household sector together with the tertiary sector (offices, commercial premises, non-residential buildings) accounts for about 46% of the national energy consumption.

The big reductions in energy consumption in Romania in the last three decades did not occur through the modernization of energy exploitation, but through the closure of large industrial consumers.

For at least three decades, Romania has had, and still has, its own and particularly consistent reasons for initiating a large-scale reform in the national energy sector. Although on several occasions, some reform strategies were formulated, they remained far from being implemented, given the high stakes and interests, in proportion to the profits in the system. The past has shown, however, that the privatizations carried out in the system have not been able to bring other major changes than the closing of some production capacities and the increase in the price of energy.

The current fundamental European discourse, regarding the need to introduce a paradigm shift both in the way of production and consumption of energy in Europe, is particularly present in the public consciousness in Romania, although, on the other hand, the population vehemently disputes the inadequate way of managing the energy crisis by the current political decision-makers.

The energy crisis in Romania, as in other EU states, was less accentuated by the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, and more by the chronic deficit of reforming policies in the system, and the absence of investments in resource and energy production.

System indicators show that, in the last 15 years, domestic energy production has decreased as a result of the progressive decline in exploitation technology, against the background of a variation in consumption that did not exceed 8,000 tep (tons of equivalent oil).

As a result, since 2019, Romania is a net importer of electricity (INS, 2022).

The resource exploitation system has progressively deteriorated over the last decade, even though such a relatively low level of consumption. That is why Romania had to import energy, as a rule, at the highest prices on the free market.

Romania's primary energy production decreased by 18.1% from 2007 to 2020, reaching 22.35 million toes (1 toe = the amount of conventional fuel with a calorific value of 10,000 Kcal/Kg). Production of electricity decreased by 9 percent, to about 55.93 billion kWh (INS, 2022).

Final energy consumption also decreased by 4.6% (4 times slower than production), this due to the decrease in industry consumption and not due to the increase in energy

efficiency (INS, 2022, Energy Statistics). So, even with the lowest consumption in Europe, Romania consumes much more than it produces, as a result it has to import even though it has domestic resources. For example, electricity consumption is 6 times higher than domestic production. Officially, Romania currently has production capacities for electricity with a power of over 18.3 million kW, although the National Energy Authority (ANRE) estimates that several million of this amount would still not be available.

The only fossil fuel electricity generation capacity built after 1990 is that of OMV Petrom with 860 MW (860,000 kW) in Brazi, completed in 2012. Electricity imports increased six times from 2007 to 2020, to 7.6 billion kWh. Under the pressure of rising prices, gas imports also decreased by 16.3% in 7 months 2022 / 7 months 2021 but remained higher than in 2019.

Some investments have also been made in wind farms, which now have a capacity of 3,015 MW (3.01 million kW), partially subsidized in the years 2010–2015.

And so, while the oil and gas reserves in operation are being depleted, the putting into operation of new reserves (as in the case of the Black Sea gas) is continually postponed, amid various pressures from business interests outside the country.

The great reduction of Romanian production of fossil fuels. Coal production was reduced by over 62% from 2007 to 2020 reaching 2.6 million toe.

After the rise in gas prices, Romania returned to coal mining, and production of coal increased by almost 11% in 2021 compared to 2020 and by more than 22% in Semester 1 of 2022 compared to 2021 (INS, 2022). But in semester 2 of 2022, Romania is again supposed to renounce to the fossil fuels and to prospect the potential of producing green energy.

Renewable energy - After the annual multiplication of renewable energy production from 2011 – 2015, when wind electricity production increased by almost 23 to exceed 6.94 billion kWh, it increased by another 17% in 2022 (INS data, 2022). Romania's potential is immense on the Romanian continental platform of the Black Sea, where a capacity of 94 million kW (more than 5 times greater than that currently installed) is not exploited.

7. Conclusions. Social-economic effects of the energy crisis

a) Romanian inflation – an anticipatory reflex towards energy crisis in the global context. Trying to fight inflation only through financial instruments doesn't stand much chance. The increase in ROBOR by the National Bank of Romania, beyond 8%, far exceeded the monetary policy rate, which will continuously worsen the economic situation of the population with bank loans. As a result, the issue of *personal bankruptcy* and the *loss of ownership of some assets* contracted through bank loans by the population will soon reach the public discourse.

Anti-crisis measures in the EU concept 27

On September 30, 2022, ministers from the 27 EU member states approved measures to limit the impact of rising energy prices and agreed on the imposition of taxes on the exceptional profits of energy companies, a possible ceiling on the price of natural gas at the level of the entire Union. The measures are temporary and extraordinary in nature and apply from 1 December 2022 to 31 December 2023. The reduction in energy consumption applies until 31 March 2023 and the mandatory market revenue capping measures apply until 30 June 2023. Among the measures adopted, we mention:

Reducing the demand for electricity. The EC agreed on a global objective of a 10% reduction in gross electricity consumption - this being voluntary. Another objective was the mandatory 5% reduction in electricity consumption during peak hours. Member States are called upon to establish peak times and related measures to meet both objectives between 1 December 2022 and 31 March 2023.

Capping market revenues for infra marginal producers.

The EC has set the market revenue cap for electricity producers, including intermediaries, using so-called inframarginal technologies to produce electricity, such as renewables, nuclear and lignite, at EUR 180/MWh.

Solidarity tax for the fossil fuel sector. The EC established the establishment of a mandatory temporary solidarity tax applicable depending on the profit of companies active in the energy sector (crude oil, natural gas, coal, refining). The solidarity tax will be applied in addition to the usual taxes and duties applicable in the Member States, for enterprises with an annual taxable profit higher than 20% compared to the average taxable profits starting from the year 2018 in the financial year starting in 2022 and/or in 2023. The proceeds from this tax will serve to financially support households and businesses.

(HotNews.ro, 2022)

According to NIS data (2022), the annual inflation rate rose to 15.3% in August 2022, 2.6% in 2020 and 5.1% in 2021 (NIS, 2022). The current inflation in Romania has three main sources:

- Monetary inflation, generated by the issue of currency decided by the Government of Romania, in order to be able to manage the additional expenses assumed by the combined crises.
- System inflation - generated as a result of the deficit structure of the national economy at the level of economic branches.
- import inflation, constituted internally by the importation of inflationary consequences from the global level, but also by the deficit of the foreign trade balance.

b. Prices list. The highest price increases were recorded for natural gas, potatoes, and oil. August 2022 prices compared to July 2022 increased by 0.6% for consumer goods and services. The prices of food goods - as a chapter of the Romanian consumption model - increased the most - by 18.22%, those of non-food goods by 15.98%, and services by 8.26%. At the level of August 2022, the highest price increases by product category were recorded for: natural gas 70%, potatoes 54%, oil 46%, electricity 36%, flour 34%, plane tickets 33.9%, sugar 30.9%, butter 29.5%, vegetables 27.7%, bread 25%. Fuels have registered an increase of almost 32%, and thermal energy has become more expensive by 23%, in the last 12 months.

The social risk created by high energy prices in the EU is expected to be long-term, even if Romania registers the least dependence on Russian energy.

The most consistent influence in terms of economic setback for Romania may come from the decrease in the pace of economic activity in the Euro zone, because that is where Romania's main trading partners are currently located.

c. Top of new insolvencies in Romania - sem. I 2022: construction (710), retail trade (467) wholesale trade and distribution (407) (Coface, 2022).

In the first semester of 2022, 3,510 new insolvencies were opened, 16% more than in 2021 (first semester). New insolvencies opened in the first half of 2022 exceeded the pre-Covid-19 pandemic level by 6%. Financial difficulties have driven insolvencies/1,000 active companies to nearly 20, twice the regional average (Central and South-Eastern Europe). After trade, the sectors with new open insolvencies are: transport (328), other services (305), hotels and restaurants (292), textile factories, clothing and footwear factories (162), manufacture of wood and wood products (132), agriculture (128), food and beverage industry (108), metallurgical industry (85) (Mailat (2), 2022).

Other probable economic consequences: the emergence of economic-financial blockages due to difficulties in repaying commercial and financial debts in the context of rising interest rates; the deceleration of investment due to rising interest rates; decrease in consumption and fiscal uncertainties.

d. Foreseeable social consequences

- The massive deterioration of the current employment situation through the bankruptcy of enterprises
- The dramatic reduction in the standard of living by the closure of hospitals, schools, and other institutions, but above all by the unbridled increase in prices
- The explosion of the phenomenon of poverty
- The risk of a large part of the population becoming homeless as a result of non-payment of maintenance expenses or bank loans on time (rates doubled from 2021 to 2022)

- The risk of increasing emigration among the younger generations and the working population

Currently, Romania ranks 28th in a ranking of the 34 most attractive countries in Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA) for private companies (MEA Entrepreneurial & Private Business Heat to turn again to more green energy by map, PwC). The ranking considers 37 parameters from various fields: macroeconomics, fiscal and regulatory framework, public health, technology, infrastructure, business environment, education/skills/talents (AICI-LINK).

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WILL TERTIARY LECTURERS’ RESEARCH MOTIVATIONS DIFFER FROM PUBLICATION TYPES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES? A CASE STUDY OF VIETNAM

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Abstract: *This research is based on expectancy theory to investigate “internal attraction” and “external attraction” and integrate “belief” into the research framework that motivates lecturers to publish their research. Findings of regression analysis from a sample of 475 lecturers in business and economics have revealed that lecturers are motivated by both “internal attraction” and “external attraction”; however, the impact of “internal attraction” is stronger than that of “external attraction” on international publication but weaker on national publication. Belief is found not to influence motivation for national research publications, but negatively influences motivation for international research publications. The research results also reveal that the motivation for international research publications of professors and associate professors is higher than the motivation of other lecturers, irrespective of age and gender. Based on the research results, proper implications for policies to foster motivation for international and national research publications have been suggested for developing countries with constant changes in science and education.*

Keywords: *Motivation, Tertiary lecturers, Publication*

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1. Introduction

Universities worldwide are often ranked based on criteria related to the quality of training and the academic activities of lecturers and students (Hu & Gill, 2000). Research activities have become increasingly important as competition among universities becomes more rigorous. Academic activities and publication productivity were used to measure the success of the universities. Motivating lecturers to put more effort into their research is becoming increasingly important at universities. The development of China's higher education system and significant policies on university governance since the 1980s have been discussed (Mai et al., 2019). How a lecturer is rewarded (e.g., finance, promotion and prestige, respect) is highly related to their research efforts (Chen et al., 2006). Most studies on lecturers' research motivations have focused on the influences of internal and external factors on motivation (Bailey, 1999; Chen et al., 2006; Tien, 2010); while others have investigated the transformation between external motivation and internal motivation (Ryan, 2014) while many others have found an association between other factors related to research contexts (Howson et al., 2018; BlackMore, 2011).

In recent years, in the context of Vietnamese universities, there have been changes in lecturers' work, including teaching, scientific research, training, and other tasks. Research hours refer to the number of hours lecturers spend on research activities to conduct research, especially to publish their research results. Based on universities' objectives, development strategy, specificity of subjects or fields of study, and their specific conditions, rectors or presidents determine the standard hours of teaching and conducting research for lecturers in a school year. Some universities have gained full autonomy, while others have partial autonomy or are in the process of gaining full autonomy. Therefore, they can autonomously set specific policies based on the requirements of the Ministry of Education and Training to achieve their objectives. In recent years, both national and international publications have increased significantly. In 2011, nearly 1600 research publications were published in ISI-indexed journals. By 2020, this number had increased by nearly eight times, with nearly 12500 research articles. The number of articles published in ISI-indexed journals in 2020 is larger than the sum of articles published in ISI-indexed journals in 2017, 2016, and 2015, and also larger than the sum of articles published in ISI-indexed journals of Vietnam in the five previous years from 2011 to 2015. The growth rate of articles published in ISI-indexed journals was 114% compared to 2015, 129% compared with 2018, 143% compared with 2019, and 144.7% compared with 2020. Among the articles published in ISI-indexed international journals, research articles in natural science accounted for 94.2%. Research articles on social science account for only 5.8%; however, their growth rate is still high. In 2016, 247 articles in the business and economics were published in Scopus and ISI-indexed journals, and this number rose by nearly 10 times in 2020, reaching 2340 articles.

This significant increase was due to a transformation in the university mechanism. This increase could be due to changes in the mechanisms of universities, especially in the training regulations and requirements related to doctoral training in 2017. Besides the core requirements related to the responsibilities of lecturers in research, many more

supporting activities of universities have been suggested to promote international publications rather than national publications. However, the above statistics still reveal very low productivity, especially in the business and economics fields, compared to other universities in the region. In general, in the world, a scientist, on average, tends to publish 2-3 articles/years while in Vietnam, one only publishes 0.2-0.3 articles/year (2019). This finding is evident in the business and economics fields, in which the number of international research publications is still limited when compared to other fields, such as natural science or technology.

Expectancy theory provides a theoretical foundation for building a general concept, as well as a mathematical equation that can measure motivation. The relevance of expectancy theory has been evidenced in previous (Tien, 2000; House & Wahba, 1972) but there are still some limitations and confusing results regarding the components of this theory. Some conclusions in the previous model were not affected when the number of outcomes changed (i.e., the number of rewards). Moreover, the research findings are not consistent regarding expectations (belief in effort). Some research (Mitchell & Albright, 1972; Chen, 2006) has shown that belief in effort does not make a better model of predicting motivation than a few others have empirically tested and found contrasting results (Chiang & Jang, 2008). Changes in the context can change lecturers' perceptions of the valence of rewards, perception of the instrumentality of receiving rewards, and especially belief in their own effort. This belief has been highlighted as very important and can greatly influence motivation to work, especially when the work is challenging (Bailey 1999). Therefore, in developing countries, there have been many changes in science and education in terms of policies related to scientific research activities, especially research publications in national journals and international publications, and this belief will change. Thus, this research direction aims to test the relationship between belief and motivation for publication and test differences in the impacts of factors on motivation for international publication and national publication of lecturers.

2. Literature review and research framework

Motivation for publication

Theories about people's motivation have been understood from the perspectives of behaviour and psychology. Researchers and psychologists have proposed different definitions of this concept. Motivation is defined as an internal state which drives a person to behave to achieve their objectives (James, 2011), which is a reason for a behaviour. Lockwood (2005) refers to motivation as the sum of the external or internal forces that urge an individual to act. From the perspective of a process, the research motivations of lecturers can be considered as a process in which lecturers are stimulated, directed, made efforts, and persist with their research activities (Mitchell, 1997).

Academic research conducted by lecturers, which contributes new knowledge about rules or phenomena, is considered the scientific research of lecturers (Creswell, 1986;

Lertputtarak, 2008). Lertputtarak (2008) defines the scientific research activities of lecturers as any academic activity that lecturers do when conducting research, such as defining the research problem, searching for information, collecting data, analyzing data, and writing reports. In developing countries, the education system is rapidly integrating internationally and many changes in mechanisms or policies related to university education policies have been introduced. Publishing research results in international journals is on the rise and is motivated more rigorously than publishing in national journals. Therefore, this research focuses on investigating the factors that influence motivation for international and national publications. International publication is the process of publishing scientific articles in prestigious international journals, whereas national publication is the process of publishing scientific articles in national journals within the country. In this study, motivation for publication is referred to as a process in which lecturers are stimulated, directed, make efforts, and persist in their publication Mitchell (1997).

Expectancy theory and hypothesis development

Several theories have been applied to explain lecturers' research activities. Significant studies, such as Chen et al. (2006) and Tien (2000), used expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964) as a foundation. While other theories explain internal and external motivational factors, expectancy theory provides a more detailed description of these factors. This theory is explained briefly in equation (1) as follow: The model of predicting motivation for conducting a behavior:

$$M_i = f_i \left[\sum_{j=1}^n (E_{ij} A_j) \right] \quad (i=n+1 \dots m) \quad (1)$$

M_i is the motivation for conducting the behavior i

E_{ij} is the expectation. Expectation is defined by Victor Vroom (1964, 20) as a “temporary belief related to a certain action i will lead to a certain outcome j ,” related to a person's perception that effort is positively associated with outcomes, if a person makes more effort, will their work outcomes increase or not?

A_j is the outcome “attraction” j for any individual, which is illustrated in Equation (2) by Vroom (1964) as follows:

$$A_j = f_j \left[\sum_{k=1}^n (V_k I_{jk}) \right] \quad (j=1 \dots n) \quad (2)$$

Vroom (1964, 20) defines “attraction as a monotonic function that increases as the sum of all valences of the outcome V_k and an individual's perception of instrumentality to achieve those outcomes I_{jk} ”.

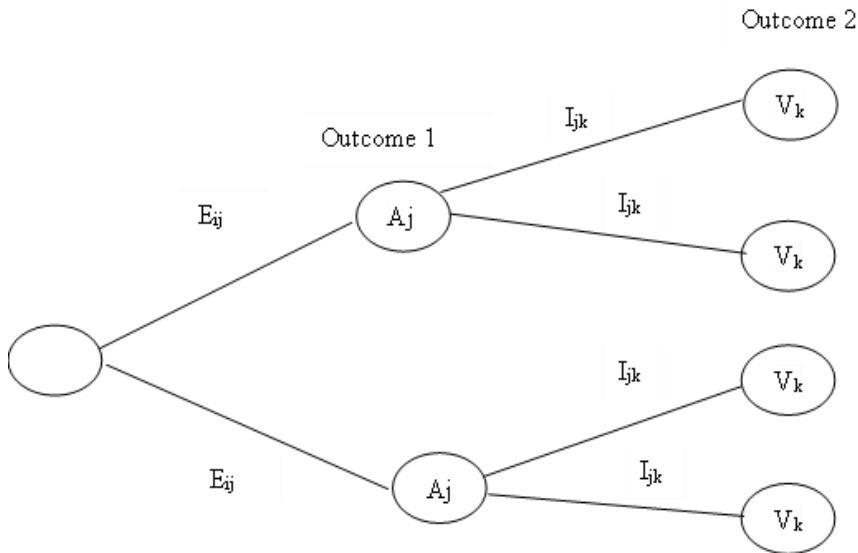
V_k is “valence”. Vroom (1964, 17) refers to “valence” as “the pleasure and importance or a valence that an individual associates with a reward k ”. A reward has a low valence or no valence if the individual does not want to receive that reward and vice versa.

I_{jk} is "instrumentality". This is the relationship between performing the work j and the reward k . Vroom (1964, 22) states that "instrumentality illustrates an individual's perception about the possibility that their work outcomes will bring them a worthy reward".

k is the k^{th} reward, and k ranges from 1 to n , indicating that rewards are unlimited, which has been empirically tested in some previous studies. k includes both the external and internal rewards. Landy and Becker (1990) proposed that the key to improving expectancy theory could lie in the number of outcomes or rewards.

From the perspective of this theory, lecturers will have motivation for publish their research if firstly, they believe that their effort will lead to better performance, and secondly, they perceive the "alternatives" of their research outcomes (A_j). This "Attraction" is achieved because they perceive that if they get a reward from the organization (I_{jk}) from their scientific research results which reflects relevance of themselves (V_k). Therefore, Mitchell and Albright (1972) and Chen et al. (2006) multiplied reward valence (V_k) by the instrumentality of receiving the reward (I_{jk}) of each reward to produce the attraction of the outcome j (A_j). Therefore, the model of motivation for conducting a behavior (1) and the model of attraction (2) were integrated by Galbraith and Cummings (1967) (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Research model of Galbraith and Cummings (1967)

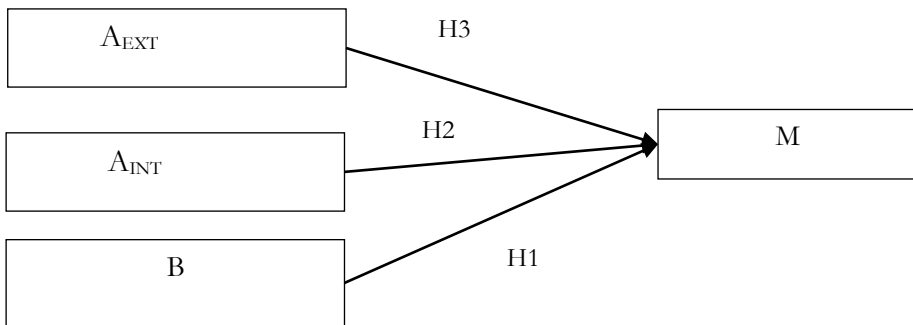


Belief is the main factor in exchange relationships and is characterized by uncertainty and vulnerability (McKnight et al., 2002). Previous research has revealed that beliefs have a significant impact on intention and behavior (Winch and Joyce, 2006). However,

in the process of publishing research results, especially in international publications, belief plays a very important role because limited knowledge and uncertainty in international research contexts may lead to greater perceived risks. Lack of trust is also considered one of the main obstacles to behavior (Jarvenpaa et al., 2000; international publication Monsuwe et al., 2004). If a belief is not formed, behavior is not conducted (Bart et al., 2005; Winch and Joyce, 2006). Therefore, lecturers' beliefs in their success in publication will be the basis for motivating their publication activities.

Therefore, in this research, the authors integrated “attraction” (A) and “belief” (B) to investigate their impacts on motivation for publication (M). External attractions (A_{EXT}) refer to the situation when the “attraction” of research publication is due to external rewards while internal attractions (A_{INT}) refer to attraction of research publication due to internal rewards. The research framework is proposed (Figure 2) with three independent factors: “belief” (B), “external attraction” (A_{EXT}), “internal attraction” (A_{INT}) and the dependent factor of “motivation for publication” (M).

Figure 2. The proposed research framework



In publishing their research, belief refers to the expectation that lecturers have of their own ability to accomplish their work. The expectation that their own efforts will help them fulfill their work will motivate them to conduct the behavior (Vroom, 1964). This belief was highlighted by Bailey (1999) as having a very important and strong influence on the motivation to fulfill work, especially challenging ones. Therefore, H1 is posited as follows.

H1: *Belief is positively associated with lecturers' motivation for publication*

From the perspective of Vroom's expectancy theory (1964), “external and “internal attractions” are positively associated with lecturers' research motivations. In addition, based on a literature review, “internal attraction” has a stronger impact on motivation for publication than “external attraction” (Tien, 2000; Chen et al., 2006). Therefore, H2, H3, and H4 are posited as follows:

H2: *“Attraction of internal factors” are positively associated with motivation for publication.*

H3: *“Attraction of external factors” are positively associated with motivation for publication*

H4: “Attraction of internal factors” have a stronger impact on motivation for publication than “Attraction of external factors”

In developing countries, science and education have experienced changes in the mechanisms and policies related to publication activities. For example, international research publications have been scarce in previous years. However, recently, this has improved and become increasingly popular. However, research publications in national journals still accounted for a higher percentage of publications. Therefore, “internal attraction”, “external attraction, and “belief” will have different impacts on motivations for international and national publication. To investigate these differences, this study aims to test the hypotheses with these two types of research publications.

3. Research methods

Research sample and data collection

Using a convenient sampling method, this study collected data from tertiary lecturers. The survey questionnaires were distributed directly to lecturers at universities in the business and economics fields. A total of 475 responses were valid for further statistical analysis. 69.7% Of the respondents, 69.7% were female and 30.3% were male. 33.9% Of the lecturers, 33.9% were under 34 years of age, 61.1% were between 35-55 years of age, and 5.1% were above 55. Only 9.7% were professors and associate professors.

Measurement scale

The measurement items for rewards from research activities included nine external and eight internal rewards. The items are measured on a 5-Likert scale from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree). The multiplication between scores of reward valence (V_k) and the possibility of receiving rewards (I_k) forms the relevant valence of “external attraction” (A_{EXT}) and “internal attraction” (A_{INT}); therefore, the valence of A_{EXT} and A_{INT} will be from 1 to $5 \times 5 = 25$ and is coded corresponding to the rewards specified in Table 1.

“Belief” is measured from four items proposed by Chiang & Jang (2008). These items are related to *reinforced efforts, improved performance, increased productivity, increased quality, and improved publication effectiveness.*

The measurement scale of “motivation for publication” (M) Wright (2004) was used to ask respondents to indicate their own perception of *the level of participation, guidelines, work intensity, and persistence at work.*

The survey questionnaires were developed based on the measurement items specified in the framework. Eleven lecturers were interviewed to test the concepts and validity of the measurement items. Demographic questions about sex, age, and professorial titles were also asked. Subsequently, a pilot test was conducted with a small sample to ensure the validity of the survey questions, and the questions were finalized. The final measurement items used to collect the data are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Measurement items

Constructs	Measurement items	Sources
External attraction (A_{EXT}): equals to multiplication of reward valence and the possibility of receiving external reward		
A_{EXT1}	Increase in salary	Chen et al. (2006)
A_{EXT2}	Bonus	Tien (2000); Chiang & Jang (2008)
A_{EXT3}	Achieve a higher professional title	Adopted from Chen et al. (2006) and Tien (2000)
A_{EXT4}	Achieve a professorial title	
A_{EXT5}	Promotion to management positions	Chen et al. (2006)
A_{EXT6}	Increased academic prestige in the field	Chen et al. (2006)
A_{EXT7}	Reduced heavy teaching load	Chen et al. (2006)
A_{EXT8}	Maintaining work positions in the university	Chen et al. (2006)
A_{EXT9}	Pursuing a better job in another organization	Chen et al. (2006)
Internal attraction (A_{INT}): equals to multiplication of reward valence and possibility of receiving internal rewards		
A_{INT1}	is respected by colleagues and students	Chen et al. (2006)
A_{INT2}	Satisfies the need to contribute to development	Chen et al. (2006)
A_{INT3}	Satisfies the need of curiosity	Chen et al. (2006)
A_{INT4}	Satisfying the need to cooperate with others	Chen et al. (2006)
A_{INT5}	Satisfying the need to develop myself	Chen et al. (2006)
A_{INT6}	Pleasure gained from doing research	Tien (2000)
A_{INT7}	Feeling of overcoming challenges	Chiang & Jang (2008)
A_{INT8}	Good perception of myself	Chiang & Jang (2008)
Belief (B)		
B1	Publication productivity will improve relatively if I make effort.	Chiang & Jang (2008)
B2	I believe I will have a higher quality publication research if I were more hard-working.	
B3	I will be recognized as an effective lecturer if I am hardworking.	
B4	I will not have a better publication even when I try my best.	
Motivation for publication (M)		
M1	I tried my best even when I encounter some challenges in publishing research results.	Wright (2004)
M2	I always try my best any time regardless of staying up late or getting up early to thinking about publishing research results.	
M3	I find it hard to focus to do research and publish research results.	
M4	I tried to do my best to publish research results.	
M5	I feel I am not as hardworking as other colleagues in publication	

Research analysis

To test the proposed hypotheses, we conducted multiple linear regression analysis with motivation for publication as the dependent variable. “External attraction” (A_{EXT}), “internal attraction” (A_{INT}), and belief (B) were the three independent variables. In Model 1, control variables including age and sex professional titles were included. In Model 2, besides the control variables, “external attraction” (A_{EXT}), “internal attraction” (A_{INT}) were included. In Model 3, the full model, belief (B), was added. Multiple linear regressions were separately analyzed for international publications and national publications.

Before testing the hypotheses, the reliability of the measurement scales was tested with Cronbach’s alpha, and an EFA was conducted with all measurement items of the independent and dependent variables. The research results were used for linear regression analysis to test the research hypotheses.

4. Research results

Reliability and validity of the measurement scales

To test the measurement scales of “Research motivations” (M), “external attraction” (A_{EXT}), “internal attraction” (A_{INT}) and “belief” (B), an EFA was conducted to test the reliability with Cronbach’s Alpha. Cronbach’s alpha for M was 0.771, that for A_{EXT} was 0,811; that for B was 0.874, and that for A_{INT} was 0.910. Measurement items whose reliability did not meet the threshold were removed, including A_{EXT}9, B4, M3, and M5. The reliability of other measurement items is acceptable, with the alpha value being higher than 0.6, and the corrected item-total correlation is higher than 0.3 (Hair et al., 1998).

After A_{EXT}6, A_{EXT}7, and A_{EXT}8 were removed due to low factor loading, the final EFA results showed the discriminant and convergent validity of the measurement scales. The KMO was proper ($0.5 \leq KMO = 0.892 \leq 1$). Bartlett’s test of correlation with other variables was significant (Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05), indicating that the variables were closely related. EFA was conducted for three independent variables (A_{EXT}, A_{INT}, and B). The results in Table 2A (international publication) and Table 2B (national publication) all formed three factors, explaining 66.028% of factors influencing international publication) and 67.042% of factors influencing national publication; the total variance explained met the threshold of being higher than 50% (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). The remaining items had factor loadings greater than 0.5.

Table 2A. Finalized rotated component matrix (International publication)

Component	Factor		
	F1	F2	F3
A _{EXT} 1		0.853	
A _{EXT} 2		0.783	
A _{EXT} 3		0.566	
A _{EXT} 4		0.604	

Component	Factor		
	F1	F2	F3
Λ_{EXT5}		0.570	
Λ_{INT1}	0.528		
Λ_{INT2}	0.796		
Λ_{INT3}	0.751		
Λ_{INT4}	0.743		
Λ_{INT5}	0.784		
Λ_{INT6}	0.838		
Λ_{INT7}	0.791		
Λ_{INT8}	0.702		
B1			0.774
B2			0.914
B3			0.808

Source: Author's calculation

Table 2B. Finalized rotated component matrix (National publication)

Component	Factor		
	F1	F2	F3
Λ_{EXT1}		0.823	
Λ_{EXT2}		0.793	
Λ_{EXT3}		0.668	
Λ_{EXT4}		0.634	
Λ_{EXT5}		0.605	
Λ_{INT1}	0.626		
Λ_{INT2}	0.685		
Λ_{INT3}	0.761		
Λ_{INT4}	0.775		
Λ_{INT5}	0.766		
Λ_{INT6}	0.826		
Λ_{INT7}	0.774		
Λ_{INT8}	0.731		
B1			0.782
B2			0.903
B3			0.768

Source: Author's calculation

Pearson correlation matrix

Table 3 shows the Pearson correlation matrix for the variables. At the 1% significance level, the results indicate that Λ_{EXT} , Λ_{INT} , and B are all positively associated with motivation for international publication (M) ($r = 0.258, 0.485, \text{ and } 0.383$, respectively) and national publication ($r = 0.106, 0.326, \text{ and } 0.225$, respectively). The Pearson correlation matrix indicates the relationship between M and other independent variables (Sig. < 0,000).

Table 3. Pearson correlation matrix

	A _{EXT}		A _{INT}		B		M	
	International publication	National publication	International publication	National publication	International publication	National publication	International publication	National publication
A _{EXT}	1	1						
A _{INT}	0.329**	0.187**	1	1				
B	0.324**	0.234**	0.536**	0.415*	1	1		
M	0.258**	0.106**	0.485**	0.326*	0.383**	0.225**	1	1

Note: Dependent variable: M; ** sig. < 0,05

Source: Author's calculation

Regression analysis results

The regression analysis results show that collinearity does not exist because all VIF are less than 10. The hypothesis testing results are summarized in Tables 4 and 5.

Table 4. Regression analysis results

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	International publication β	National publication β	International publication β	National publication β	International publication β	National publication β
Age	0.016	-0.013	0.014	-0.004	0.017	-0.016
Gender	-0.013	0.031	-0.013	0.039	-0.010	0.034
Professorial title	0.023**	0.091	0.025**	0.093	0.028**	0.093
A _{EXT}			0.083**	0.216**	0.113**	0.412**
A _{INT}			0.345***	0.139**	0.445***	0.145***
B					0.075**	-0.154***
R ²	0.008	0.008	0.247	0.228	0.264	0.248
Adjusted R ²	0.005	0.004	0.236	0.214	0.259	0.244
Durbin-Watson	1.759	1.762	1.904	1.858	1.907	1.862
Sig. F	0.049	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

Note: dependent variable: M; *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Source: Author's calculation

Table 5. Summary of research findings

Hypotheses	Types of publication	Hypothesis testing results
H1: B ---->M	international publication	Not supported (B is negatively associated with M)
	national publication	Supported
H2: A _{INT} ----> M	international publication	Supported
	national publication	Supported
H3: A _{EXT} ----> M	international publication	Supported

Hypotheses	Types of publication	Hypothesis testing results
H4: A_{INT} has a stronger impact than A_{EXT} on motivation for research publication	national publication	Supported
	international publication	Supported
	national publication	Not supported (A_{INT} has a weaker impact than A_{EXT} on motivation for national research publication)

Three regression models were analyzed (Model 1, Model 2, and Model 3) regarding international publications and national publications, with research motivations (M) as the dependent variable. All three regression models in international and national publications were statistically significant. Durbin-Watson ranges from 1.5 to 2.5, indicating that these models do not have collinearity.

The results of the research analysis supported H1 with a national publication ($\beta = 0.075$ and p -value < 0.05). Regarding international publications, H1 was rejected, but B was negatively associated with M ($\beta = -0.154$ and p -value < 0.01).

The regression results in both Model 2 and Model 3 reveal a significant role for A_{EXT} ($\beta = 0.113$; p -value < 0.05) and A_{INT} ($\beta = 0.445$; p -value < 0.01) for international publication and A_{EXT} ($\beta = 0.412$; p -value < 0.05) and A_{INT} ($\beta = 0.145$; p -value < 0.01) for national publication. Therefore, both A_{EXT} and A_{INT} were positively associated with M, supporting H2 and H3. However, the regression results show that with international publications, A_{INT} has a stronger impact on M than A_{EXT} . On the other hand, for national publications, A_{EXT} has a stronger impact on M than A_{INT} . This result supports H4 regarding international publication but does not support international publication.

Research results also show that age and gender do not influence motivation for publication. Professorial titles have a positive influence on motivation for international research publications ($\beta = 0.028$ and p -value < 0.01) but do not influence motivation for national research publications ($\beta = 0.093$ and p -value > 0.1).

5. Discussion of research results

Discussion

Regarding international publication, “internal attraction” has a stronger positive impact on “motivation for international research publication,” which corroborates the findings of Tien (2000) and Chen et al. (2006). Meanwhile, “external attraction” has a weaker impact, which indicates that external rewards such as bonus, professorial title for international publication are not strong and attractive enough or there are still other hindrances that prevent lecturers from getting access to external rewards.

On the other hand, regarding national publication, “external attraction” has a stronger positive impact on “motivation for national research publication” while “internal attraction” internal attraction’ has a weaker impact, which is not in line with the research findings of Tien (2000) and Chen et al. (2006). This indicates that the nature of

the current process of national publication does not satisfy internal valence, such as pleasure, enjoyment, challenge, or significant value. The current performance of national publications aims only to meet the fundamental requirements of lecturers' research hours.

Especially, this research has indicated the difference in the relationship between "belief" and motivations for international publication. The performance of international publications in countries where there are still challenges such as limited research competence, qualification, information, or knowledge about international journals. These difficulties have posed huge challenges to the persistence of the process of conducting international publications, even when lecturers believe that they can succeed in international publications. This shows that this unsustainable belief and uncertainty of success lead to a loss of motivation for international research publications. Regarding national publications, most of these challenges are not too big; lecturers can easily get access to information about national journals; therefore, they have a sustainable belief, and they are certain about their success; therefore, this belief will motivate them to conduct national publications.

Lecturers' motivation for international publication increases when they achieve professorial titles. Changes in personal career path objectives have also been studied in previous research (Englebrecht et al., 1994; Read et al., 1998). Lecturers' research motivations tend to increase when preparing for advancement in their professorial title in their career path (Chen et al., 2006; Tien, 2000). The results of this study differ from those of previous studies in terms of the research approach. Tien (2000) applied expectancy theory and measured research productivity in the periods before and after they achieved professorial titles. These changes could be due to the fact that, in developing countries, science and education are not fully developed and in the transformation process research, which may lead to differences in the research capability of lecturers. The lecturers were recruited at the beginning of the research period. When they achieve professorial titles or doctoral titles, their research capability has increased, and they can motivate their future motivations for publication.

Practical implications

Based on the results of this research, managers need to gradually handle challenges such as qualifications, research competence, information, and knowledge of prestigious journals in the world. These challenges will not intervene in the persistence of lecturers in the process of publishing research results in international journals, because this will form a sustainable belief in success in international publications. Universities can organize training courses on research methods, sessions of sharing experience of international publications, and create an international research network and cooperation.

Tertiary institutions can combine methods to reinforce lecturers' motivation for international research publication by stimulating internal attraction, especially for professors and associate professors. In addition, managers need to provide more external attraction and gradually handle obstacles so that lecturers can access rewards

such as finance, promotion, or administrative procedures. To reinforce international publications, managers must focus on policies and regulations regarding the research requirements of lecturers at tertiary institutes.

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Ethical Compliance

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

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