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THE HYPOTHESIS OF “DIMINISHED MAN” UNDERSTANDING HUMAN EXPERIENCE. THE SOCIO-ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACH OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE¹

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Abstract: *Human distinguishes himself from other beings by its nucleic duality. He is also body and soul, “faulty breather” and “gifted being”. As such, he is threatened by his own identity concomitantly by a spiritual falling (a top-down dynamism) and a spiritual raising (a bottom-up dynamism). This type of analysis involves revisiting the issue of man’s identity itself and consequently requests a new theoretical system. Noological Sociology gives us the adequate categories for such a purpose. The present paper focuses on these issues and proposes a comprehensive paradigm for the upward becoming of human being within the postmodern society. This paradigm gives intelligence also for a new approach of Socio-Bioethics.*

Key words: *noology, latent identity, spiritual latency, noological equation*

¹ This paper includes parts from some other analysis we carried out with some other occasions having been published in Romanian as parts of special chapters in our books: *Noopolitics. The Theory of Asynchronous Phenomena* (2006); and: *Noology. On the Spiritual Order of the World* (2001); (the last one being translated also in English in 2013. See: <https://www.amazon.com/>: Kindle eBook. On the concept of diminished man see Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*. “Tocqueville argued, but the same mores and opinions that ensured equality also promoted mediocrity. Those who possessed true virtue and talent were left with limited choices” (see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexis_de_Tocqueville#cite_note-twsC11r44-3). I used the Tocqueville’s concept starting with my books on History of Sociological Theories and insistently in my book edited in 2001, *Noology*, and in the book edited in 2005 and in 2006, *Noopolitics*, already mentioned. Tocqueville considers that the “omnipotence of majority rule is a chief factor in stifling thinking”: “The majority has enclosed thought within a formidable fence”, Tocqueville says. “I am neither of the revolutionary party nor of the conservative.... Liberty is my foremost passion... But one also finds in the human heart a depraved taste for equality, which impels the weak to want to bring the strong down to their level, and which reduces men to preferring equality in servitude to inequality in freedom” (see: Volume One, Part I, Chapter 3), apud https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexis_de_Tocqueville#cite_note-twsC11r44-3). The emerging democratic order and fading the aristocratic order brings along with more equality and liberty a *tragic diminishing of spiritual powers in modern man* and his interactions with the others. The phrase as such makes the title of a book edited in 2008 by Ch. Schwartz, *The Diminished Man: A CPA Uncovers Charity Fraud and Murder While Diminishing Himself*, 2008. The term was conceived by Tocqueville and I coined it based on Tocqueville’s ideas in my book edited in 2001 and reproduced in 2005 in *Noopolitics* (edition aforementioned).

1. Noological perspective on latent identity: the spiritual latencies

Man, unlike other creatures, is destined to “pass” from the biological order into the spiritual one. T. Brăileanu called this second “passage” of man, “spiritual birth”. If in the biological order the individual gains access to the laws of biological finality, in the spiritual order he gains access to the “laws of liberty” (“and his liberty is a liberty against the biological laws, just as the biological finality represents in its various stages, an emancipation, liberation from the mechanical laws of the inorganic matter and thus a preparation for the acquisition of spiritual liberty”) (Brăileanu, 318-319).¹ It is obvious therefore that man can be spiritually fulfilled, and on this axis, he can also differentiate himself from other fellowmen (on the axis of spiritual fulfillment). Man can be economically wealthy but poor in spirit. Between the two there is no necessary relation, because so many people are spiritually fulfilled, but materialistically poor, and the rich ones can be utterly unfulfilled spiritually, incapable not only of ameliorating the world on the basis of the richness they have accumulated, but on the contrary, by making, so many times, out of their status and deeds, a source of evil, an example that degrades the world and spiritually weakens it, lessens its spiritual powers. Selfish, abandoned to debauchery, demagogical, they lose any possibility of affirmation in the vertical relations with God and with the uplifting gifts, and this serious spiritual amputation entails a serious deprivation of the actual world. The fallen world, having diminished spiritual powers, cannot preserve its unity, quickly disintegrating into fragments of world, real *underworlds*. Richness (wealthy) fulfills the world only if it is entwined with spiritual power (that matches material wealthy), otherwise it does not. The noological sociology pays a close attention to the species of powers in the world and warns us against the error of betting only on some of them, on the economic power, or on the political one etc. The *spiritual powers* consist of spiritual/ soul latencies (*latent gifts*) that are actualized under the form of *vocation, of character, of creativity, of power to love* unconditionally, even your own enemies, to culminate, as we will show later on, with *holiness and genius*. Let us retain, on the other hand, that only the spiritual power makes out of man a thorough member of his world. All other human inclinations, if they lose their spiritual dimension, fragment the world; transform it into cellular space, a bizarre jailhouse. Man has the power to crush evil through love and creativity. For two hundred years, the European world has entered an age of interminable revolutions, an age of discord, as Toynbee would say, when a group raises against another with destructive intentions, and afterwards the first becomes like the one it had just swept away or even worse. Evil is responded with evil, violence with violence. The modern world had decayed with each cycle of changing of the

¹ See Brăileanu, T., *Teoria comunității omenești (The Theory of Human Community)*. 318-319

elites and this happened because *the new elites* did not prove to be better or more creative. It is their duty to make the world a better place; it is their duty to be more creative in order to find that novelty capable of forcing evil to work itself in the service of good, for its total annihilation reveals to be a human impossibility. Human being has ever and ever been requested to solve the same spiritual equation being that he is surrounded by great challenges which bear in just their core all the table of *human temptations* from those of debauchery and laziness to some more sophisticated others but as well rendered sterile as vainglory and haughtiness. The same unknown factor, designated by variable X_j , induces reactions, α_j , rooted in the spiritual latencies (latent spiritual powers), α . The spiritual/soul latencies can be actualized in all their expressions by the experiencing power of love (including love for God, that is, the faith), and by the strength of character, the professional calling (vocation) and the force of creation.

At the end of such a mobilization (an actualizing process) it emerges the experiential and *edifying solution*. Finally, the man will find the solution Y to the same simple equation: $Y = \alpha + \alpha_j X_j$, so simple and nevertheless in such an erroneous way solved usually. In *Patericon* we are spoken the story of an anchorite who used to fast for 40 days and not to sleep for 40 nights and one day Satan came at the door of his room and said: „you fast for 40 days and don't sleep for 40 nights but I am more powerful than you because I am able not to eat and sleep at all. There is a face alone where you are more powerful than me: you are able to humble, I have not capability to humble myself at all". Behold, therefore, the divine power given to humans in order to be successful in everything and, above all, in redeeming themselves; it is the power of humbleness, of love, and of mercy, that is, the power of forgiveness. The kenotic attitude, that is, the power to lower your ego by humbleness, is the key to any sort of challenges, from the one of knowledge to the one of the human initiative towards the world, within the world and over the world. Such an attitude signifies therefore an emptying of the ego to enhance it for the great and true inner spiritual experience (entwined of course with many worldly things): the awakening love, the strength of the character, the professional calling and the creative response.

This diminishing of the ego, this giving up of the set of self-proud prerogatives of the ego in order to win instead of them the power of sharing the alterity, that is, in order to experience it for knowing it and to take part at its sufferance and to the inquiry of the solutions that makes it a better world, here it is the essence of the *kenotic attitude*. After the great victorious battle against ottoman army, from *Razboieni*, the St Voivode Stephan the Great, the polish chronicler Douglosz says, ordered to all the people to fast for 40 days. „And the Voivode did not make himself proud of that victory, polish chronicler comments, although everybody knew that to him is owed it".

Referring to the creator of literature, the novelist Mikhail Diaconescu assimilates the writing of a novel to the *kenotic* act: “as *kenotic act*, the writing of a novel equals with a state of reverence and humbleness towards certain values. The writing itself can really be a state of humbleness towards the men that have given some brilliance and moral altitude to some events.” And further on: “The auctorial *kenosis* is a paradoxical reality. The author humbles himself in the act of elaborating the oeuvre. The oeuvre thus gains in authenticity. The authenticity sustains the durability and the greatness of the oeuvre.” The author is not a creator of „*worlds*” (artistically), as his vanity might whisper to him, but the servant of the worlds imagined *by his talent, which comes not from himself*, but which is a *given power, a gift*, as the common sense says. But for the revival of the evoked world and the characters depicted by the literary imagination to be successful, the creative act must be a *kenotic act*.

The idea of the cleansing of the soul from all the developments that derive from the super-abundance of the ego, as in the expression of vanity, was examined by the great psychoanalyst C. G. Jung, in a late work of his, which was reedited only in English nine times, *The Undiscovered Self*. What we designate by this borrowed term, *kenotic attitude*, Jung placed in the class of phenomena of “psychological illumination”, noticing the factors that oppose this *noological act*, generally, the factors of resistance to this psychological illumination. These resistances, most often belonging to the unconsciousness, appear to be founded on fear, “on the panicked fear facing the discoveries that could be made on the realm of the unconsciousness” (Jung, 2006, 49). Freud confessed to him that he was forced to “make a dogma out of the sexual theory because it was the only wall in the way of a possible *outburst of a real flood of occultism*. In these words Freud disclosed his own hidden conviction that the unconsciousness hosts energies that could be liable to occult interpretations. These *archaic relics* or archetypal forms have a numinous quality that, sometimes, provokes fear. They are ineradicable for they represent the last fundament of the mind itself. They cannot be intellectually mastered, and when someone destroyed one of their manifestations, they reappear in an altered form” (Jung, 2006, 49).¹ Something should be mentioned. When Jung speaks of the suppression or repression of some manifestations of the unconsciousness, he indicates *noological states*, reducible ultimately to archetypes, but also states that have to do with instinct, with the somatic part, not with the pneumatic one of the unconsciousness and this could generate some ambiguities, even confusions. *Actually, the repression of sexuality, for example, is not the same thing with the repression of religiosity,*

¹ Jung, C. G., (2006). *The Undiscovered Self: The Problem of the Individual in Modern Society*. New American Library, 49 See also: Jung, C. G., (1934–1954). *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. (1981 2nd ed. Collected Works Vol.9 Part 1), Princeton, N.J.: Bollingen. And: Jung, C. G., & Jaffe A. (1962). *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. London: Collins. This is Jung's autobiography, recorded and edited by Aniela Jaffe

although the altered outbursts appear in both cases, the same with the fear of the unconscious. This shows how great a difference is between pietism, for instance, generally the pharisaic moral forms, as the ones exhibited in the case of the hypocritical indignant attitudes towards sexuality, and the attitude truly Christian towards the degraded forms of sexuality. Apparently the two attitudes are alike for both reject the excesses and sexual deviations of all types. But how huge a difference is between them! As for us, we support our hypotheses on those forms of repression of the spiritual being of man, which takes on the form of the excess of psychologizing, which is not at all differentiated in the orthodox psychoanalyses, starting with Freud's.

Moreover, the Jungian concept of individuality itself seems to be overthrown by this ambiguity especially in the above quoted study. But we retain from Jung the other sense of repression, the repression of the spiritual energies, through phenomena such as, for instance, atheism and secularization. The two types of repression generate two types of anxieties. These associate to themselves two directions of affirmation of the human individuality, and not just one. One is excessively psychologizing, the other, on the contrary, is somewhat de-psychologizing, that is, highly and intensely spiritualizing.

Unfortunately for the European man, modernity develops almost exclusively the psychologizing forms of individualization so that modern individualism was either hedonistic and atheist or rationalist and ideologizing, which generated the two forms of idolatry of the modern man: consumerism and ideologies, that is, the worship of objects and the *false religiosity* triumphant through the ideologies of all types, culminating with the Marxist one.

2. Theory of spiritual latencies and the theory of "latent powers": Watchman Nee

The primary problem of noological sociology does not reduce to the issue of institutions or of the social structures, but claims a deeper layer of social order equating with the spiritual latencies and their frames of actualization, i.e. the founding spiritual performances (manifestations). In Philocalic tradition (patristic writings) the spiritual latencies are assimilated to the „uncreated energies”, as St Gregory Palamas called them. Man comes to know these “latent energies” (that God planted in man) only by their actualization through the spiritual experiences (inner spiritual experiences¹) (Batailles, 1988).

¹ On the concept of *inner experience* that I used alternatively with *inner spiritual experience* to translate the Romanian word “*trairi*”, see also Georges Batailles, *Inner experience*, 1988, New York Press and also *Describing Inner Experience?* By [Russell Hurlburt](#) and [Eric Schwitzgebel](#) MIT Press 2012 or Gyani Baile & Dolly Baile, *Inner Experiences*, 2009, Midland. Our own definition of the word *trăiri* that I translated in English, as mentioned, by *inner experiences*, designates the phenomenon of

The notion of spiritual latencies seems to be related not only to the St Gregory Palamas theology of the *uncreated energies* but also to the notion of “latent power of Soul” proposed by the Chinese-American theologian, Watchman Nee, in 1928 through his main work, “The Spiritual Man”. Watchman’s outlook on man can be rooted in St Paul anthropological interpretation of the triadic categorially system: Spirit, Psyche, and Body. Watchman lays the foundation of his anthropological approach on the triad: *Spirit, Body* and *Living Soul*. The unity between divine Spirit and dust-made Body is Living Soul. Such triadic unity is what Watchman used to call “spiritual man”, that is, a man created by the spiritual insufflation from God upon the dust out of which God made the human body. As Watchman witnesses himself, he took this interpretation from Andrew Murray, wherefrom he quoted quite the triadic pattern: “In the history of man's creation we read, ‘The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground - ‘thus was his body made - ‘and breathed into his nostrils the breath’ or spirit ‘of life’: thus his spirit came from God; ‘and man became a living soul.’ The spirit quickening the body made man a living soul, a living person with the consciousness of himself. The soul was the meeting-place, the point of union between body and spirit. Through the body, man, the living soul, stood related to the external world of sense; could influence it, or be influenced by it. Through the spirit he stood related to the spiritual world and the Spirit of God, whence he had his origin; could be the recipient and the minister of its life and power. Standing thus midway between two worlds, belonging to both, the soul had the power of determining itself, of choosing or refusing the objects by which it was surrounded, and to which it stood related. In the constitution of these three parts of man's nature, the spirit, as linking him with the Divine, was the highest; the body, connecting him with the sensible and animal, the lowest; intermediate stood the soul, partaker of the nature of the others, the bond that united them and through which they could act on each other. Its work, as the central power, was to maintain them in their due relation; to keep the body, as the lowest, in subjection to the spirit; itself to receive through the spirit, as the higher, from the Divine Spirit what was waiting (sic) it for its perfection: and so to pass down, even to the body, that by which it might be partaker of the Spirit's perfection and become a spiritual body. (Andrew Murray, *The Spirit of Christ*, Fort Washington, PA, Christian Literature Crusade, 1964. Note C: *The Place of the Indwelling*, p 227-228)”¹ (Watchman, 1928). The notion of the “spiritual body” is a pivotal one in St Paul’s Epistles. The triadic pattern is common to all patristic writings and so it is the idea of the divine uncreated energies permanently actualized through the

the actualization of spiritual (soul) latencies induced by creative manifestations or, generally, by exceptional individual or collective experiences.

¹ See: Andrew Murray, *The Spirit of Christ*, Fort Washington, PA, Christian Literature Crusade, 1964. Note C: *The Place of the Indwelling*, p 227-228. Quoted apud Watchman Nee, *The Spiritual Man* (1928), retrieved from <http://www.worldinvisible.com/library/nee/5f00.0634/5f00.0634.02.htm>

Holy Spirit's works. In our interpretation man is not really a spiritual being unless he actualizes the spiritual latencies or what St Gregory Palamas called "uncreated energy" *through his uplifting, creative and/or ethically positive acts*. This is the pivotal idea of theoretical system of *Noology*. That is why, the spiritual latencies could not be used but in accordance to the divine design and order of things otherwise they are unavailable and unworkable, totally unreachable. Watchman Nee, on its turn, propose another interpretation to what he called "latent powers of the Soul", drawing attention upon the fact that when Adam fell, the powers of his soul fell also although they have been preserved as "buried powers" in his body which transformed it in flesh. His idea is that man bears in him a "buried Adamic power". The American theologian shared with Murray idea of the "latent power of soul" due to the consequences of Adam's fall. "I wish to draw your attention, said Watchman, not to the study of psychology but to the fact that all these miraculous phenomena are obtained through the release of the *latent power of man's soul*, that ability which was hidden in man after the fall. Why is this called "latent" power? Because in Adam's fall God had not withdrawn from him that "supernatural" power which he once possessed. Instead, this power fell with him and became imprisoned in his body. The power was there; only it could not be expressed. Hence the term latent power"¹ (Watchman, 1928). Up to this point the two theories share both and together with the entire patristic literature the idea that there are powers in man which are not from him but are planted in him by God. Moreover, the two theories share also the idea that "God had not withdrawn these powers from man after the fall". We make nevertheless some radical distinctions: 1) In Watchman's view, "the powers of the soul *were in man before his fall but became latent in him afterwards*": italic added. ("As soon as man fell, God imprisoned man's psychic powers in his flesh. His many powers became confined and hidden in the flesh as a latent force-present but inactive"²); in our view, the spiritual latencies *are* latent and active, don't *become* latent; *they have always been latent*, they bear on them that latent character as they are "uncreated energies". 2) Spiritual latencies could be activated only if the man's acts respect the laws of divine order of the world and exclusively in and through man's dialogue with God. Therefore, even if we take into account the threshold of Adam fall, we have to notice that God left in man not "*buried powers*" but *spiritual latencies*, that is, *virtual abilities called gifts and charismas* and other types of *potential capabilities* (culminating with those of *holiness*, of *genius*, of *prophecy* and *heroism*). All these powers are latent and they become real but by

¹ A Chinese theologian, Watchman Nee, by his Christian baptismal name, wrote a book with such a title, *The Spiritual Man*, inquiring the Christian anthropological meanings in order to reconstruct the definition of man in the light of the Holy Scripture. See: Shu-tsu (Watchman Nee), "*Watchman Nee: A Seer of the Divine Revelation in the Present Age.*" *Anaheim: Living Stream Ministry* (1991) and the book already cited: *The Spiritual Man* (1928).

²<http://www.worldinvisible.com/library/nee/5f00.0634/5f00.0634.02.htm>, Chapter II

actualizing them exclusively through the uplifting, creative and ethically positive manifestations. Consequently, the man has to cooperate permanently with the Holy Spirit by actualizing those virtualities through the uplifting acts. Otherwise these spiritual latencies remain merely latent. 3) In Watchman's view, "when man fell, his original ability and miraculous strength, all fell into Satan's hand" (Watchman, 1928, chapter II). Here it lays our radical difference from Watchman's theory, that is, the irreducible distinction between the two concepts: *spiritual latencies*, as I formulated it, and "*latent soul power*", which is Watchman's concept. In our opinion, Satan has not control at all over the spiritual latencies, although in Watchman's view, "Satan desires to control man's latent soul power. He is well aware that there is this power in man's soul which is capable of doing many things. He therefore wishes to bring it under his control instead of God's. Satan wants to use it for his own purpose (...). Upon learning the story of the fall in the garden, we can perceive what the purpose of Satan was. He aimed at gaining the soul of man. And when man fell, his original ability and miraculous strength, all fell into Satan's hand" (Watchman, 1928, Ch. II). It is true that "the purpose of his tempting Adam and Eve in the garden was to gain control of their soul power", as Watchman argues, but Satan has no power over the human soul on neither side, as Book of Job reveals us. So much the less might Satan to control the *spiritual latencies* which in their essence are *uncreated energies*. All is depending on the human free-will. But if man opts for a negative act he loses any access and possibility of control to and over these energies. We may interpret what Revelation 18.13 "means by making merchandise of men's souls. Indeed, man's soul has become one of the many items of the enemy's commodities" (Watchman, 1928, Ch. II). Two aspects are to be set forth here. The first one: not all human souls had become merchandise, but those souls belonging to the fallen humans who by their own free will wished that. The second: once a given soul had become "one of the many items of the enemy's commodity" it lost truly its latent power so that the enemy got but *dead souls*. Here it is what we may emphasize as a self-deception of Satan. He does not obtain but a downgraded, powerless and chaotic world, populated with *dead souls* and nothing more. It is true that Satan found here and there persons "from whom he succeeds in drawing out their soul force" and even to promote them in the position of "leaders of the ages" but the result is the same: a chaotic, downgraded and powerless world transformed finally into a huge graveyard full of dead soul. It is a world populated with the 'vertical corpses', as Tolstoy prophesized it, that is, a world of humans physiologically alive but spiritually dead. Satan "intends to release all the latent powers of men. This is his singular purpose which he has been cultivating for thousands of years. This is why he trades in the souls of men besides such merchandise as gold, silver, precious stones, pearls, and cattle and horses. As a matter of fact, he has exerted his utmost strength to obtain this special commodity". (Watchman, 1928, Ch. II).

Finally he obtains but dead souls, a market of dead souls. That is the tragedy of Satan (and of the world fallen under his control). And here it lays our most radical distinction from Watchman's theory and concept. From this point on there is no compatibility between the two anthropological perspectives and noological theories.

The distinction we propose refers, therefore, to the meaning we ascribe to *spiritual latencies*. In Watchman's view, the latency is equal with "powers" that man bears on him from the first man only that these *powers are "buried in his body"* as a consequence of the fall. In our view, the spiritual latencies are but *virtualities, divine gifts, charismas*, like a sort of *divine permanent expectations*, as parable of pounds teaches us, and they become real only by their actualizations through the uplifting acts: creativity, love etc., and by permanent intervention of the Holy Spirit.

Here it is the point where we separate from Watchman's view¹ on the hypothesis of dormant "powers of soul", as he used to call them. The Chinese American theologian considers that the most part from the power of the soul, which God planted in man in the day of man's creation from dust and divine spirit, was actually lost when Adam fell through the sin of deviation from God's teachings and order.

The powers of soul "have been buried in the fallen man", as 'immobilized, frozen powers'. "At the fall, though, the power which distinguishes Adam from us *is lost*. Yet this does not mean there is no longer such power; it only denotes that though this *ability* is still in man, *it is nonetheless "frozen" or immobilized*; this primordial ability of Adam has become a "latent" force in his descendants. It has turned to become a kind of "hidden" power". (Watchman, 1928, Ch. II). As a matter of fact, God planted these "powers" as *spiritual latencies* ("uncreated energies", as St Gregory Palamas called the divine energies working permanently in the world) from the very beginning, that is, by His design. The fall has not stopped the continuous manifestations of the uncreated energies in the world

¹ "When Adam fell in the Garden of Eden his power was immobilized. He had not lost this power altogether, only it was now buried within him. He had become flesh, and his flesh now enclosed tightly this marvelous power within it. Generation has succeeded generation with the result that this primordial ability of Adam has become a "latent" force in his descendants. It has turned to become a kind of "hidden" power. It is not lost to man, it is simply bound up by the flesh. Today in each and every person who lives on earth lies this Adamic power, though it is confined in him and is not able to freely express itself. Yet such power is in every man's soul just as it was in Adam's soul at the beginning. Since today's soul is under siege by the flesh, this power is likewise confined by the flesh. The work of the devil nowadays is to stir up man's soul and to release this latent power within it as a deception for spiritual power. The reason for my mentioning these things is to warn ourselves of the special relationship between man's soul and Satan in the last days". See Watchman Nee, retrieved from <http://www.worldinvisible.com/library/nee/5f00.0634/5f00.0634.01.htm>

when Adam fell¹. What does it mean that these powers have fallen when Adam fell? Have these powers themselves fallen or has it fallen but the *man's ability of actualizing them* directly through his workings and ways of living? It appears clear to us that what the fallen man has lost when he fell was but the ability of actualizing this powers of soul directly not their virtuality. This is the *hidden ability of man* that modern thought ignores it. That is why, the fallen man can make use but of a very small part from his latent powers and only in and through the dialogue with God and by using God's teaching as guide and Code of man's life and acts. For Watchman, the *latencies* and the *ability of using them* are one and the same thing. We consider, by following St Gregory Palamas's idea, that the powers God planted in man are part of the "uncreated energies" and, by the consequence of the fall, the first man lost but the *ability of actualizing them directly* not their *availability*, as we have already mentioned it. *It is absurd to conclude that the uncreated energies might depend on the circumstances emerging from the transient, temporary world or from the one who does not respect God's order and design.* In exchange, man's manifest ability depends on his own condition so that as long as by his condition Adam fell, this downgraded state resulted into the falling of his ability also. In Watchman's view, man lost the latent "force" and the manifest ability of using these powers as long as, as a consequence of the fall, they "have turned to become a kind of "hidden" power. (...) Today in each and every person who lives on earth lies this Adamic power, though it is confined in him and is not able to freely express itself" (ibidem). That is why another extraordinary power appears to be able to release the Adamic hidden powers and such an extraordinary non-human force is, in Watchman's view, devil. In *Noology's* view, God has left to man and for his potential recovery, not only the *spiritual latencies*, as un-actualized latent forces of mind (and Soul), but also those *latent frameworks* we called *noological or spiritual frames*, whereby man might regain *the ability of actualizing* the spiritual latencies God planted in him (when created him as a creature made "in the image and after His likeness"). Besides, together with these noological frames, whose prototype is right the Garden of Eden, God has left to man also the divine teachings, so that the theoretical background of any epistemological path towards explaining man consists of these four categories: *spiritual latencies, noological frames, spiritual teachings and human manifestations*. In Watchman's view the man became a "living soul" when God created him from dust and by breathing on him from His divine spirit, but Adam became a *dead soul* (as the powers of soul ended by being

¹"As soon as man fell, God imprisoned man's psychic powers in his flesh. His many powers became confined and hidden in the flesh as a latent force-present but inactive. After the fall, all which belongs to the soul comes under the control and bondage of that which belongs to the flesh. All psychological forces are thus governed by physiological forces. Satan's objective is to liberate man's soul power through the breakdown of the outer shell of his flesh so as to free his soul from its fleshly bonds, thereby manifesting his latent power" (retrieved from ibidem).

“buried in his body”, turned itself into a powerless and mortal flesh) after and *by consequence* of his fall. In our view, by the consequence of fall, Adam *has not* become properly a “frozen soul”, therefore a “dead soul”, but a *virtually spoiled dying soul*, who dies bodily but spiritually he can regain immortality, although he is in danger to die spiritually also, to be a *dead soul* while biologically he is nevertheless a living creature. Therefore, man is mortal but bears on him also the stamp of immortality. ***The man is actually mortal and virtually immortal***, he dies with and through any sin but he is restored from death by removing his life within the noological frames and following divine teachings as the guide and design of his way of living. On the other hand, spiritual latencies are unconditional energies, so that they cannot be narrowed by anything proceeding from the immanent world, depending exclusively on the God’s decision and will. This is the main distinction from the Watchman’s view. In his approach, the Adamic powers are over there, hidden, buried in our body as latent powers so that the only problem for man is to disclose them, to channelize them from the internal body unto the external world. In our view, the spiritual latencies are but virtualities as, for instance, the divine gifts and charismas appear to be, and they become real but by their actualizations through the uplifting, creative and ethically positive acts, that is, through those facts which keep on their orientation towards God’s will and way of being and doing things. The spiritual man is not a *given being*, but a *promised being*, depending on the free will of man for becoming so, to fulfill himself in the horizons of Godliness or to fall again and again by his transgressions and iniquities, his wrongdoings and trespassing. As Nichifor Crainic says, there is a special state of mind that keeps man on this divine horizon and that state of mind is a universal one, being witnessed in all cultures. Crainic called it “nostalgia of Paradise”.

In Watchman’s view, after man’s fall, “this power of his was interned by his body. Formerly the body was a help to Adam’s powerful soul; now the soul had fallen, and his power was circumscribed by the shell of the flesh. Satan, however, attempts to break open this fleshly shell and to release the power dormant in man’s soul in order to gain control over man. Many do not understand this strategy, being deceived into accepting it as of God”. (Watchman, 1928, Ch. II)¹.

The flesh is, in Watchman’s view, a grave where powers of soul are buried so that between flesh and sin is set almost a sign of equality. As a matter of fact the *uncreated energies* do not quit the man any longer and neither end they by becoming merely buried powers “dormant in man’s soul” by the effect of the Adam’s fall. They are dormant but apparently because they are permanently activated by and through the *good acts* of man. Moreover, they can be actualized in man’s acts *but through the continuous intervention and help of God*. By these spiritual latencies, by the images of the Garden of Eden really planted in the

¹ Ibidem

undulating landscape of existence, or left under their form of virtual noological frames, by divine teachings, left themselves to man for guiding him after his fall, God offers us the proof that He has never taken from us our character of having been created in the image and unto the likeness of God. Therefore, God has not ever stopped His divine intervention to help man permanently, to work incessantly with him for his marvelous fulfillment, culminating just by the God's Incarnation for our own salvation. Beyond of such a divine intervention man cannot make use of his ability to actualize the *spiritual latencies* in his everyday life. A radical and saving intervention of God consisted of His decision to come down on earth and to be incarnate of the Wholly Spirit and Virgin Mary restoring our fallen life by accepting to suffer and to be buried in order that we may receive the benefit of redemption and therefore the healing of the illness of death and the deliverance from the evil one. The flesh is not a tomb of soul by itself. *The sin, our transgressions and iniquities, are themselves the graves of our living soul not the flesh itself. We do not see in flesh a danger, neither an ally of Satan, because just the sin, not flesh, is the one which makes of us such an ally, even the conspirators with evil against God*, as Fr. Arsenie Boca says. That is why, we consider that Satan cannot "breaks open this fleshly shell and to release the power dormant in man's soul in order to gain control over man", as Watchman says, without our free will, that is, out of our own decision to accept the works of Satan and even to cooperate with him by living ourselves into temptation of sin, into transgressions and iniquities. Moreover, being the uncreated character of the spiritual latencies, they wouldn't ever fall under the control of Satan. Flesh can become an ally of Satan only due to and as measure of the sin, but the spiritual latencies, at liberty or dormant even within his flesh (although not reduced neither exhausted at this level), will give man power in order that he, finally, defeat Satan's works. *Therefore, "the power of soul" can be used but positively, being that they are under the permanent control of Holy Spirit of God and the evil can but to obstruct their actualization in the real life of ordinary man and only by his actual consent and exclusively along the duration of such a consent*¹.

What man lost and continues to lose through his lapses and disequilibria is, on the one hand, his *ability of actualizing the perennial* spiritual latencies (including those latencies which takes on the expression of the divine gifts and charismas bestowed upon us as pure virtualities) and, on the other hand, the internal unity between spirit, body and soul as actual, unmediated reality, but not their unity as a *promise* and therefore as a *gift* of being, as a *treasury of gifts*. All these gifts are permanently present in the world as *spiritual latencies*, which can

¹ It becomes clear why the pivotal concept of the Noology is the inner spiritual experience and why spiritualist sociology appears us to be of so much importance for the "true knowledge" of man and of society. Theology alone cannot bear record realistically on the dramaturgical evolution of man on the stage of life being requested for such a task a new alliance with science in order to set forth such a terrible descriptum.

be actualized if man chooses the ascending path of spiritual experiences guided by the divine teachings and works. The uplifted, spiritualized level of existence is not an already given *datum*, something that actually exists in an unmediated way, but it is something *promised*, and it has a different way of manifestation, that of *gifts*. Man is endowed only with the *possibility of uplifting acts*, not with their readiness; the *spiritual experience* moves the latent *gift* into an uplifted *reality* of life. This is the main element that differentiates the theory of spiritual latencies from other spiritualist explanations so far, including the Watchman's theory of "latent powers". The theory of the spiritual latencies underlines the obvious fact that man is but *potentially* a spiritual being, as a *sum of gifts to be actualized*, as *spiritual latencies*, "uncreated energies" and, therefore, as *promised reality*. Otherwise, the human being is but "nature" ("Animalia", as Husserl argues it), that is, unfulfilled reality, becoming frail by his option for one of those mortal sins: the sin of giving up (that in theology is called un-assumption, sloth, neglect, slipping toward despair). Man is not a spiritual being unless he has become so by the actualization of his spiritual latencies, otherwise, spiritually, he remains but a promise, a calling, a potential virtuality. Man can find self-fulfillment as spiritual being, the same way he can fail as a being situated within the horizon of supernatural gifts, not of those that derive from the nature of things, but from those that derive from his quality of being destined to spiritual uplifting, for redemption and salvation (healing) from the "sickness unto death"¹ (Kierkegaard, 1849). Man has access not only to the *natural, given frames* of existence, but also to the *spiritual living frames*, of pure spiritual (*noological*) essence *and of supernatural origin*, the only ones that assert him as specifically human being, different from other beings, as it has been mentioned before. Spiritual frames have not been achieved by man in a natural way; they mediate

¹S. Kierkegaard (Anti-Climacus), (1849), *The Sickness Unto Death: A Christian Psychological Exposition for Upbuilding and Awakening*, (Sygdommen til Døden. En christelig psykologisk Udvikling til Opbyggelse og Opvækkelse): "A human being is spirit. But what is spirit? Spirit is the self. But what is the self? The self is a relation that relates itself to itself or is the relation's relating itself to itself in the relation; the self is not the relation but is the relation's relating itself to itself. A human being is a synthesis of the infinite and the finite, of the temporal and the eternal, of freedom and necessity, in short, a synthesis. A synthesis is a relation between two. Considered in this way a human being is still not a self.... In the relation between two, the relation is the third as a negative unity, and the two relate to the relation and in the relation to the relation; thus under the qualification of the psychical the relation between the psychical and the physical is a relation. If, however, the relation relates itself to itself, this relation is the positive third, and this is the self" (p. 13). Salvation from the sickness unto death is the salvation from the sickness of the spirit, of the self. In his comments on this study of Kierkegaard, Anthony Storm notes that the sickness unto death is phenomenally the despair that can take three forms: "in Despair not to be Conscious of Having a Self (not despair in the strict sense); in Despair not to Will to be Oneself; in Despair to Will to be Oneself". See: "Anthony Storm's Commentaries on Kierkegaard". See: <http://sorenkierkegaard.org/sickness-unto-death.html>

the fulfillment in the world of what is not *from the world*, of supernatural gifts, such as faith, clairvoyance and prophecy, of genius and sainthood, of heroism and exemplarity etc. The spiritual (noological) frames are also latent and they become manifest but in proportion as spiritual latencies actualize themselves. *These spiritual frames add to human society the second level of its existence, its uplifted quality, due to the actualization of the gifts incorporated in the structure of existence as pure spiritual latencies of unnatural origine. Due to this plan of latencies, we can daresay that the world is not strictly inhabited by evil, is not merely the host of evil, but, above everything else, it is the frame where gifts can find fulfillment, thus confirming its quality of a promised world, not of a simply given world. "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not."* (John 1:10 NIV)

When man uplifted himself to the consciousness of this *unifying meaning*, as Soloviov would put it, he uplifted to the level where consciousness itself can manifest completely as an organ of the uncreated light; in order to achieve this we have to admit that everything is here, in the world, as un-actualized latency, as un-affirmed soul, fallen from the first luminous unity, that of heaven. A supporter of inner spiritual experience sociology, such as Nichifor Crainic, considers that the first frame of *uplifting* human experience is the "nostalgia for paradise", which is the feeling of the lost unity, lost and looked for in everything. *We will see that at the end of this search man regains unity in a feeling.* Man can follow the way of the uplifting experiences, as he can also follow the one of the descending experiences, or he can simply drive away spiritual experiences, being content with the simple level of satisfying biological needs and instincts. Such a way of being can be displayed with pride, as it happens with so many of those that despise the spiritual matters. They do not notice that the organ of negation, the negative consciousness of pride, does not belong to the natural world, because an animal will pass through his life carrying the vigor of its body, and, moreover, he could not spiritually fall. But man had where to fall from; he can fail as spiritual being, if he did not taste the great gift that brings into the world the promise of a spiritually renewed life. He will end up looking with mistrust, then with despise and eventually with hatred at all that want to live in an enlightening way, within the horizon of promise, of fulfilling the gift of gifts, which is redemption. Man, as a spiritual being, lives, but, as a biological being, merely survives.

EXPRESSIONS OF MAGIC IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

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Abstract: This text starts from Ioan Petru Culianu's theses on the survival of magic, understood as a pre-modern spiritual discipline, in today's society. The emphasis is placed on magical (as described by Giordano Bruno) fantasies that can be found nowadays in public relations and communication, on the political scene, in the new media and in the cutting-edge technologies of today. The originality of the text consists in the interpretation of the Romanian presidential elections of 2014 as being, among other things, the perverse effect of a manipulation scenario that used fantasies of the "magical" kind. Another original element is the identification within state-of-the-art automotive technologies of certain human dreams and nostalgias that used to belong to the fabulous world of magic. The reference is to the GINA concept from the German group BMW and to two concepts (one from Mercedes and one from BMW) that allow "seeing" into the future and operation using only the owner's vocal commands. These are present-day "magical" actions: voice-based remote control, changing the appearance of the car and enhancing human sight by using automotive technology.

Key words: magic, fantasies, persuasion, manipulation, perverse effects, politics, technology

1. Magic is dead, long live magic!

Classical sociology and anthropology literature, be it of positivist or Marxist inspiration, support the idea of evolution and progress, including in the order of cultural and spiritual realities. According to this paradigm of thought, everything that is new is necessarily superior to what is old. Also in the order of spirit, we, modern people, are progressing. Today's religion has replaced yesterday's religion, and tomorrow's science will celebrate the extinction of all that was old and obsolete.

By referring to authors that were more subtle and more detached from the communist clichés (Mircea Eliade, Hans Peter Dueer, Ioan Petru Culianu, Michel Mafesolli etc.), we believe we can contradict and add nuance to the validity of the positivist and Marxist theories concerning spiritual progress. Today we can support the idea that old spiritual disciplines – magical healing, alchemy, astrology, classical magic – have survived in the modern world. According to Ioan Petru Culianu's theory, today, at the height of (post)modernity, magicians are not an extinct species. They are merely wearing

the mask of respected experts in human relations. "The magician is dealing today with public relations, with propaganda, with market prospecting, with sociologic inquiries, advertising, intelligence, counter-intelligence and disinformation, censorship, espionage operations and even cryptography, a science that, in the 16th century, was part of magic proper." (Culianu, 2013, p. 330).

Thus, much sought-after university specialisations of today's world disguise ancient magical desires under new, modern and secular clothes. The communication and public relations expert, for example, defeats space and time with the help of the *new media*. The Internet, Instagram, Facebook have updated the magician's dream of the past. It is no longer necessary to have techniques of *contagious* or *sympathetic* magic, both researched by James Frazer in a classical work of social and cultural anthropology, *The Golden Bough*. Seduction occurs directly, face to face, or via a medium, in the virtual space, with the help of modern communication technologies.

The modern magicians apply their persuasion and manipulation techniques, while still observing rules formulated by the classics of pre-modern spiritual disciplines (Giordano Bruno, Marcilio Ficino etc.). They are reflected, in essence, in the mediated *social action* of magic; in the *importance of fantasies* in the game of erotic or political manipulations; in the magicians' *total faith* in the success of their practices; in *the altruism of the magical manipulator* and in the relative easiness in manipulating *the masses* (rather than the individuals taken separately); in *the fate-related circle* of magical action and in the importance of *unseen beauty* in the erotic type of magical manipulation. Last, but not least, we are dealing with the paradoxical fate of the contemporary magician – his ability to achieve within himself that miraculous *coincidentia oppositorum* (Nicolaus Cusanus). (Gavriluță, 2000, pp. 91-94).

2. Magic in modern society

Rightfully, we believe we can argue today in favour of the existence of a genuine social destiny for magic. Drafting on Ioan Petru Culianu's thesis regarding the disguised survival of magical arts in the modern world, we offer a few examples for the troubling historical and cultural path followed by magic. Thus, the expressions of magic in today's world concern, above all else, *the contemporary archaic* (Marc Auge). It is the name given to certain instances of survival in the rural environment (and not only) of authentic, classical symbols, myths and rituals. Two well-documented examples are *molybdomantia* (divination using tin) and *the transfer of sickness from man to fowl*. Meanwhile, the Romanian media illustrate very well another face of contemporary magic, *the dissolution of magic into superstition*. One conclusive example is the broadcasting of *Baba Vanga's 11 rules for banishing bad luck*.

From our point of view, a noble and refined expression of magic has been the manipulation using fantasies. The idea is argued convincingly by Ioan Petru Culianu in his books. Based on his model of analysis and interpretation, we believe we can find examples to point out the current validity of his theory using relatively recent cases in politics and technology. The events that could be mentioned here concern the election, in 2014, of Klaus Iohannis as the president of Romania; the election, in 2016, of Donald Trump as the president of the United States of America; and the election of Igor Dodon as the president of the Republic of Moldova. Last, but not least, contemporary magic surprises again through its renewed public and ultra-publicised validity in the present, when it highlights the technologies of the future. We are dealing, among other things, with the dissimulation of human nostalgias and with the satisfaction of deep desires using futuristic technologies from the automotive domain.

3. The "magic" of Klaus Iohannis' election as the president of Romania

Social reality has proven that the principle of Greek medicine (also enunciated by Aristotle) regarding the precedence of fantasy over articulated language is still in operation. Dwelling upon the Romanian political scene, we illustrate the pre-eminence of fantasies over articulated language using the example of the presidential elections in Romania, in 2014 (Gavriliuță, 2015, pp.143-150). What is this about? About the relationship between images and words, above all. More precisely, over the campaign images shown by the TV channels favourable to the Social-Democrat Party (SDP), the broadcasters overlaid the propaganda discourse in favour of Mr Victor Ponta. Obviously, the entire pro-SDP propaganda discourse was virulently attacking his counter-candidate, Klaus Iohannis. The latter was stigmatised from every possible angle: *Nazi, anti-Christian cultists, incomplete human* etc. The precise insults referred to Klaus Iohannis' situation as a member of the Saxon ethnic minority of Romania, to the fact that he is a Lutheran and that he does not have children.

Meanwhile, the profoundly negative discourse directed at the liberal candidate did not have the support of an inner narrative of fantasies. More clearly put, it was not credible. Therefore, the Romanian voters were not convinced of its reality. Moreover, the SDP's election campaign broke one of the old principles of intersubjective magic subtly nuanced by Giordano Bruno in his book *De vinculis in genere*. In modern terms, it requires election propagandists and citizens alike to truly believe in the reality of the message being broadcast. On the contrary, "SDP's people" did not believe for a second the contents of the anti-SDP propaganda.

We can state that the SDP's entire propaganda activity in November 2014 was a failed political project aiming to manipulate a collective subject. Something truly spectacular happened: *the social sensitivity awakened, nurtured and amplified by the TV channels that were in favour of the SDP's ended up producing "perverse effects"*. Instead of garnering sympathy and enthusiasm, it produced adversity. The magical manipulation, did occur, but in reverse. The magical fantasies caught in the game of reversed manipulation turned instead on the SDP. We know, for instance, that not all the Romanians living abroad had wanted to vote. However, when provoked by the SDP's virulently negative discourse, those abroad urged their relatives in Romania to go out, vote and support Klaus Iohannis.

Continuing Ioan Petru Culianu's idea, we could argue that modern magic had a very important role in the campaign for the Romanian presidential elections of 2014. The magical devices used at the time were television, the Internet, Facebook, other social networks, text messages. Through their use, time and space were defeated. Communication and manipulation were achieved in an effective manner. The big difference was that the SDP's magic (television) was slower. The laptop, the mobile phone, Facebook and text messages made the difference in communication. People sprung into action. The political conviction was there – the mobilising discourse of the Romanian citizens living abroad worked much better when coupled with the images of the long waiting lines outside Romanian embassies. The magic of communication worked much better. A snowball effect was created, amplifying the emotional and frustration reaction of millions of Romanians in relation to the propaganda discourse of the Romanian Social-Democrat Party.

To conclude, the unlikely became likely. The miracle occurred. The magic worked. Klaus Iohannis won the presidential elections in November 2014, with the help of modern magic, through the professional manipulation of political fantasies and through the effective use of modern communication technologies.

4. GINA - BMW's "magician"

Modern politics is not the only social space in which modern magic is at work. State-of-the-art automotive technology is another illustration of magic in disguise. We shall use as an example the German car concept called GINA (GEOMETRY and FUNCTIONS IN N ADAPTIONS) BMW LIGHT VISIONARY – 2001-2010, which brings old magic back to life. What is this about? GINA works by "magic". It does not require being initiated in uttering magic formulae, instead, when a simple command is voiced, GINA "magically" changes appearance and shape, like an ancient magician. The magicians of old used to hide the tools of their trade (wands, swords, crystals, staffs etc.). Today, GINA the "magician"

hides and reveals her headlights upon hearing a simple command "GINA, blink". Another "magic formula" – "GINA, show us the oil" – the hood opens "as if my magic" and reveals the oil gauge.

The car's body is flexible, built on a metal structure. The secret consists in the fact that the car is covered in an impermeable and flexible fabric that can also withstand temperature variations. The car can "magically" change shape, no longer having the habitual bonnet, wheel arches and trunk. It can adapt both to a trip to the mall for shopping, and to a pleasure cruise. It all depends on the owner's will or whims. To conclude, such a future car concept, which will (probably) be mass-produced, causes us to have many dreams and nostalgias for old magic performed using revolutionary automotive technology.

5. The car that can "see" into the future

The next example of modern magic also comes from the auto industry. In 2015, at the CES in Las Vegas, the Mercedes people "magically" conquered distances. In other words, the Mercedes specialists presented a new car concept *that had no windows*. They were replaced by *touchscreens*, and thus the driver no longer steers the car, but instead controls it by touch. The touchscreens help one see much further than human sight would, through the classic windows. What is more, the sensors installed at the car's front and sides help to brake it progressively, thus preventing accidents. Thus, the car that "sees" can become a form of magic accessible to those with deep pockets.

6. BMW magic. "Magically" summoning the car from the parking lot

The third technical instance of modern magic also comes from the automotive industry. This is the BMW concept car that listens and responds to its user's commands. In the old tales, Prince Charming's enchanted horse would arrive presently, crossing seven seas, when summoned by its master. Today, the car – the postmodern "magic horse" – can drive itself out of the parking spot when summoned by its owner using a smartwatch. This car will follow you, avoiding obstacles, wherever you may be. Here is how another dream of classical magic – long-distance communication – becomes reality due to modern European auto technology.

7. Conclusions

We can rightfully talk nowadays about a veritable social destiny for magic. Magic is consubstantial to the human condition. The path taken by magic through time and history can be traced from ancient, pre-Christian rituals to the present-day incarnations of magical rituals. One socially dominant

instance is that of *the dissolution of magic into superstition*. A transition is made from "magic" to "gimmick", as Camelia Burghel would put it. Another noble and refined expression of magic is *the art of political manipulation by means of fantasies*. Last, but not least, contemporary magic surprises again through its renewed public and ultra-publicised validity. We are dealing, among other things, with the fulfilment of human dreams and the realisation of ancient magical projects with the help of futuristic technologies, primarily from the automotive domain. Interpreted in this manner, socio-human sciences and the technologies of the future appear to be expressions of magic in a modern society.

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INTERCULTURAL EDUCATIONAL REPORTS IN SCHOOLS WITH GYPSY STUDENTS

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Abstract: *The intercultural education aims at developing an education for all in the spirit of recognizing the differences that exist within the same society. We can say that a large part of the gypsy population, so their children too, suffers from the process of marginalization and therefore requires a sustained intervention strategy, addressing both the marginalized and the majority, to form an intercultural society, by different but equal individuals, connected to the general values of humanity and respecting a common set of norms, but at the same time being in a permanent cultural and spiritual exchange. The education of gypsy children requires a special approach in which the initial data of this ethnic group can be a starting point for finding a solution to the issue of integration. In order to better understand the essence and the role of the intercultural education, we must accept that each of us is born in a particular culture, and in order to survive and grow in that culture, we must basically learn how to learn the basics, the norms, the values and the rules that make it possible to integrate into that culture.*

Key words: *intercultural education, gypsy ethnicity, intercultural commitment, intercultural curriculum*

1. The concept of intercultural education

The free movement of citizens, the widespread use of mass media and multimedia (mobile telephony, the Internet, e-mail, etc.) as well as the strong migratory phenomena (specific to the gypsies) in recent years have led to “mosaic” type societies in which elements of native culture combine (often unreviewable) with aspects of the culture of other groups (van der Velde, 2004: pp. 20-21).

In an even more concrete dimension, “and people themselves, somewhere in the more or less distant past of personal history, it is almost impossible that something or even someone of another religion, of another nationality or of another ethnicity should not have intervened” (*Teacher’s Guide*, 2001: 16).

We must be aware that, especially in the contemporary world, it is not known exactly who launched an idea, a fashion, a tradition, a proverb or even a

food dish. Around us, we all meet “intercultural communities that are ethnic, religious, cultural groups, etc., living in the same space, maintaining open relations of interaction, exchange and mutual recognition, respecting the values, traditions and modes of life of each of them” (Ciolan, 2000: 4).

We understand that the intercultural education is a process that takes place at the intersection of cultures and not an end in itself, and necessarily in the current educational system, the necessity of an educational, intercultural component, whose goals could be (*Ibidem* , p. 6):

- the formation of attitudes and behaviors based on the values of interculturality, both with regard to school principals and teachers in schools with gypsy population;
- methodological empowerment of teachers / teachers to design and carry out intercultural learning activities;
- providing and developing support materials containing elements of methodology and activities that teachers can use in the classroom;
- developing attitudes and behaviors, based on respect, understanding and communication;
- positive valorization of cultural differences through their acceptance, understanding and respect;
- developing the capacity to identify around us stereotypes and prejudices related to ethnicity, race, culture, religion, sex and awareness of their impact on each of us;
- providing a good visibility to minority groups and developing a positive image of themselves;
- stimulating communication and cooperation among members of different socio-cultural groups;

Starting from these general considerations, we appreciate that we can imagine gypsy school (or even a class that has many gypsy pupils) as a miniature community that we can say without being mistaken, that it is a “community that learns and forms through and for its cultural diversity” (*Ibidem*, p. 11).

These school communities are extremely diverse, both in terms of pupils’ learning styles and of the different socio-cultural groups from which these pupils come from:

“Each culture transfers to its members the system of core values, so children learn from adults how to understand and use the signs and symbols whose meanings can arbitrarily change from one culture to another. Without this process, the child will not be able to exist in a given culture” (*Educational package*, 1998: 21).

This process of transferring culture from adult generations to new generations is called socialization and is an interactive communication process that depends on several factors:

- family,
- school,
- media,
- interest groups (friends), colleagues of the same age etc.

The specificity of rural gypsy pupils is that in most cases they come from quite well-knit (even closed) communities, who usually live together in well-defined areas of rural settlements or even hamlets.

These children come to school in the first grade (often without attending the kindergarten), from a gypsy family, with many children, with specific and well-preserved traditional values and standards.

Here are some of these cultural landmarks specific to the gypsy family, such as: close relationships with relatives, respect for the elderly, traditional craftsmanship, marriage at a very young age (12-14 years), after some “bargaining” (negotiations between family members, the large number of children, the help given to parents in everyday life, the lack of a stable job, the dependence on social assistance, etc., and we called them only a few.

Once in school, these gypsy children face a culture whose value system is almost totally different from the one they have learned in the family, because school promotes competition, individualism, encourages personal success, makes the success of acquiring conditional and adherence to majority values, etc.

Thus a potential conflict arises between the traditional rules imposed by the gypsy family and the norms that school promotes, a conflict which, without being the only cause, can be a good explanation for school failure and school drop-out in a percentage among the gypsy children.

It is self-evident that as long as almost nothing in the culture in which they grew up during the first part of their lives and in their everyday life is not found in school, we must not regret that unrecognizing themselves in the school environment they came to, part of the gypsy children leave or fail because they fail to “reconcile” what they are told at home with what they are told at school.

Most often, the minority groups (in this case gypsy children) are forced to adhere to the rules of the majority, to the rules of dominant culture, which they must acquire and practice in order to succeed both in school and social plan.

This “accession” is, however, at the cost of giving up the elements of one’s own culture, a price that some minorities (students or their families) are not willing to pay.

The intercultural education supports (from a utopian point of view) that the gypsy population can integrate socially and in a “peaceful” way, without these students being forced or forced to give up the cultural values of this ethnicity, taking into account the character observation in general, that any

ethnic group can contribute to enriching the community to which it belongs by bringing new elements and by intercultural exchange and dialogue with members of the majority groups.

Equally, the intercultural education can be a viable response to some of the challenges of the contemporary world, the current social dynamics, because without strong promotion of the intercultural values we cannot speak of creating a positive attitude towards the gypsy community, in general, and to gypsy pupils in particular.

In literature (Cucos, 2000 ; Nedelcu, 2003: 48), there is no unanimous opinion on the scope of the intercultural education concept, but a summary of the main views indicates the following (Bennet, 1990: 102, apud Cucos):

- intercultural education is not a compensatory education for foreigners or minority groups, and not the children belonging to these groups are those who have problems, but the school institution has difficulties in adapting to the cultural diversity. The diversity of school performance should not be attributed to belonging to a different and sometimes disadvantaged socio-cultural environment (such as the rural gypsy community) but to be seen as an effect of the process of adaptation to a different context;
- intercultural education is not a new school discipline or an extension of programs for “teaching of cultures”, but it aims at forming positive and active attitudes towards other cultures;
- intercultural education is not confused with the classes of language and culture of origin, specific to the different minority groups, in the sense that it is sufficient to allow gypsy pupils to study their native language or other elements specific to the belonging culture;

Synthesizing, we can say that the intercultural education also means: interaction, exchange, communication, cooperation, penetration of cultural barriers, solidarity, trust and, last but not least, mutual respect, and if we should opt for a definition of intercultural education, we will chose the one of Christine Bennet.

“The intercultural education is an approach to the learning teaching process based on democratic values and beliefs that seek to promote cultural pluralism in the context of diverse societies and an interdependent world” (*Ibidem*, p.126).

2. Dimensions of intercultural education

From the definition of Christina Bennet it follows that the dimensions of intercultural education are the following (Cucos, 2000 :19):

- a. The intercultural movement
- b. The process of intercultural education

- c. The intercultural commitment
- d. The intercultural curriculum

a. The intercultural movement - focuses on ensuring equal educational opportunities and equity between different socio-cultural groups, in this case between the majority group and the minority group of gypsy pupils.

This dimension is aimed at transforming the school environment and especially attacking the “hidden curriculum” (eg. teacher’s attitudes and expectations, grouping pupils in the classroom, addressing forms used, ways to ensure discipline in school, relationships between school and community, teaching materials and strategies used in training), etc.

Many times, gypsy children have difficulties in adapting to the school environment when entering a school in which they are minor (in the first grade, the fifth grade, and sometimes in the 9th grade), as a rule at the beginning of the school cycle. In most cases, the major differences between the norms and values imposed by the school and those imposed by the traditional gypsy family place the gypsy pupil in a state of internal conflict that easily generates school failure (corrigenda or repetition) or even more seriously the school dropout.

b. The process of intercultural education

It focuses on developing competences to understand and at the same time to learn to appreciate the cultural diversity specific to the different ethnic groups, in this case the gypsy community.

An intercultural person has “an intellectual and emotional commitment to the fundamental unity of all human beings and, at the same time, accepts and appreciates the differences that arise among people of different cultures, being able to demonstrate the cultural empathy and to participate imaginatively at the world’s visions of others.”(Ciolan, 23)

The process of intercultural education itself is an interactive process that has as the ultimate goal of overcoming the prejudice that the culture of *others* is a threat to our culture and vice versa, but at the same time prejudice, perhaps as harmful, according to to which individuals belonging *to a minority ethnic group* must reject their own cultural values in order to function (and eventually succeed) in a different cultural environment. Intercultural education means identifying and understanding similarities and equally accepting and capitalizing on differences in a world where the relationship of cultural similarities / differences is extremely dynamic.

Teachers working in schools with a significant proportion of gypsy students must accept the challenge and make the children (whether they belong to the majority group or the minority group), become aware that what is different from a colleague is not necessarily dangerous, but also that what resembles you to someone can also distinguish you from someone else.

c. The intercultural commitment (Nedelcu, 2003:27)

It is that dimension of intercultural education which, in most cases, expresses an individual attitude, a unilateral manifestation of willpower directed towards combating racism or any other form of discrimination by forming values and attitudes appropriate to each educational sequence.

The intercultural engagement is at the same time a philosophical option, whereby the individual promotes according to his or her own attitudes and own level of education, attitudes, ideas and behaviors that ensure equal opportunities, combat discrimination and marginalization of socio-cultural groups, in this case the gypsy minority. This is an informed choice because the individual knows that official laws and regulations are not enough and consequently a conscious public commitment is needed that these laws, norms and regulations are beneficial and their values must be promoted and defended.

d. The intercultural curriculum

In order to have an intercultural school, it is not enough only the presence in the school of pupils from different ethnic groups in our case of gypsy pupils, but it is first and foremost needed the adaptation of the training contents to the actual state of school. This type of curriculum must be based on the real educational needs of the intercultural school community (school or class), so that all pupils (gypsy and non-gypsy who form that community) have equal opportunities to promote their own identity.

The intercultural curriculum proposes an integrated approach to the cultural diversity at local, national and even international level and given its role and importance, the organizational principles of this curriculum will be presented in the next subchapter of the paper.

3. Principles of organizing an intercultural curriculum

In an extended formula, the intercultural curriculum is interested both in content, in what is taught, but also in the way it is learned, by the concrete ways in which the specificity of minorities is considered and at the same time valued from a didactic point of view.

Specific realities in schools with a multi-ethnic school population and/ or teaching and administrative staff belonging to ethnic minorities have dimensions and connotations that give specificity to these school units.

In this context, the intercultural education - also promoted through intercultural curriculum - is in fact an intervention in order to determine institutions and policy-makers to be more attentive to the human condition,

individual cultural identity and cultural pluralism in society (National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, S.U.A.) (*Education through...*, 2004:1).

Starting from these realities, the National Social Education Council of the United States published in 1991 a Guide (*Intercultural Learning...*, 2003: 41), which contains in an integrated approach the principles of organizing a curriculum with intercultural openness:

- Cultural pluralism must be reflected in the entire educational environment (from library structure, classroom decorations, formal curriculum, to curriculum design, hidden curriculum);

- The intercultural curriculum must present the concepts and values of the different ethnic and cultural groups;

- Intercultural curriculum must help students develop self-confidence and a positive attitude towards their own identity;

- School policies and procedures need to reinforce positive interactions and understanding between students, teachers and the community;

- The staff of a school must reflect the ethnic diversity of society and systematic teacher training programs must be a permanent reality for a school's activity;

- Intercultural curriculum should make the most of the experimental learning and, in particular, the resources of the local community, and interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches should be used in the study of ethnic and cultural groups;

- Schools should initiate systematic, continuous assessments of the objectives, methods and teaching materials used to teach ethnic and cultural diversity.

In order to substantiate this approach, educators resort to various curriculum reshaping strategies, but unfortunately their efforts often stop by half, with the intercultural curriculum remaining only an added presence of a curriculum that remains essentially a mirror of the majority cultural fund.

The curriculum-multicultural relationship is described by J. Banks in "Education for Cultural Diversity" (London 1993) and is synthesized as hierarchical curricular restructuring models (Ibid., p. 18) as follows:

a. The model of cultural contributions

- in this case aspects of cultural, folklore and artistic traditions are dealt with, but there is no adequate interpretation of the meaning of these characteristics and habits among minority groups.

At the same time, however, the main curriculum remains in fact unchanged and generally ethnocentric.

b. The cumulative/additive model

- involves the addition of new content to the main curriculum, but without intending to modify the general goals or principles of this curriculum.

Concretely, teachers can “join” with the main curriculum, additional themes or materials, which leads to enriching the content through new experiences, concepts and ideas of different cultural groups, but unfortunately, their selection is based on “majority optics”.

c. The transformational model

- this model develops new perspectives of approach, meaning that the ideas and values of cultural groups are perceived and understood from the point of view of the groups to which they belong.

d. The decision-making and social action model

- this involves a more intense participation of students, who are asked to reflect, find solutions, act.

In this way, pupils become proactive, self-analyze and make social intervention decisions, engage and participate.

The practical transposition of intercultural restructuring models of the curriculum is not always easy, being influenced by a multitude of internal or external factors to the school space, which requires the following observations:

○ Intercultural reshaping of the curriculum can be performed at the core curriculum, curriculum at school decision, or extracurricular activities.

○ Intercultural education can be articulated in all school disciplines, because all and not only those “privileged” for such an approach can invite tolerance and respect for human rights. In fact, any curricular area offers opportunities for multicultural approaches.

○ Intercultural curriculum does not mean a collection of folklore data or an encyclopedia of the world’s culture, but rather a new perspective, a misunderstanding of the equality of cultures.

○ Interculturalism in school does not necessarily require additional financial or extra resources, additional extracurricular activities or additional optional activities. It is considered that pedagogical mastery can value for this purpose any intercultural space emerging in the current teaching.

○ Intercultural curriculum should be seen as a constant of school life and not just as a spot of color on a monotonous background, not just as an “event activity”, because the power of “small” but steady things must be valued at its fair value.

The Romanian national curriculum, even if it does not explicitly contain chapters or special indications designed to promote interculturality in school, supports or attains these perspectives through many of the principles or ideas that it promotes.

The new National Curriculum, unlike the previous ones, advocates a learning that reflects the dynamics of socio-cultural values specific to an open and democratic society that takes into account that “pupils learn in different styles and at different rhythms” (National Curriculum Council, 1998: 16).

These general principles, implicitly accepted by the New National Curriculum, are customized across different curricular areas, some of the framework objectives being established by reference to diversity, human rights, traditions, etc. and are reflected to a greater or lesser extent by supporting materials accompanying them (programs, manuals, teaching materials, etc.).

5. Resizing school curricula and textbooks from an intercultural perspective

We present briefly some intercultural references for the following school subjects from the perspective of the new national curriculum.

History (Manea, 2003: 136): - is a discipline with maximum intercultural potential and must lead students to know and understand both their own culture and others (including those of ethnic minorities).

For this, the teaching of history must be based on a multidimensional conception, the purpose of which is not merely the description of parallel histories, but rather the emphasis on the historical overlaps of cultures, the elements that different peoples owe to each other.

The internal logic of this discipline must go beyond the presentation of wars and confrontations, which often account for the losses, but never the accumulations resulting from cultural contacts between different communities forced or not to coexist. For this reason, historical events must be viewed objectively and in no way unilaterally, the approach of a particular historical situation or context requiring more perspectives, not only of the conqueror and of the conquered, not only of the majority but of the minority.

Geography (*Methodological Guide...*, 2003: 23) – is also a generous land for intercultural capitalizations by inevitably referring to spaces, areas and geographical communities.

The link between the study of geography and the multicultural curriculum is obvious and inevitable. Geography classes often refer to different parts of the world and place the perception of the environment, economy and social structure in a spatial context.

Geography must also focus on overcoming descriptive methods, often economically substantiated from a subjective perspective, of a wide range of stereotypes and prejudices associated with nationalities, races and ethnicities.

Mathematics (*Methodological Guide...*, 2003: 31)

With regard to disciplines in the mathematics and science curriculum, the intercultural approach is more difficult because these mathematical disciplines are not immediately associated with a cultural background and although mathematics is taught in all schools, more or less but it is not perceived in terms of the cultural contributions that fueled the formation of the domain, sometimes ignoring:

- The history of mathematical contents, meaning that there are no references to the origins of concepts, processes, and the contribution of different cultures to building mathematical content;
- The field's personalities, although some have significant multicultural contributions;
- The values assumed by the language of the field, meaning that there are no explanations of purpose or detailed technological specifications, and terms such as "precise", "exact", "about" are used without explanation or encouragement for analysis;

In everyday life, practical examples are not exploited on the role of different school disciplines in current activities. Such approaches, such as those listed in history, mathematics, or geography, ultimately lead to increased focus on content and the internal logic of building them. In this way, additional attention is paid to hidden curriculum in the sense of comparative and integrative approaches to content.

Naturally, there is a great cultural diversity in all the elements that make up the new national curriculum and the information they contain has a tremendous formative potential that can remain in the student's attention even without the corrective influence of the teacher.

It must be said, however, that some of them carry stereotypes, prejudices and labels, albeit unintentionally.

For example, textbooks, which are an important part of the curriculum, strengthen many stereotypes over groups perceived as outside the dominant group.

We often find that textbooks are deficient either by omission or ignoring minority views or by misrepresentations of various minority issues and, more importantly, the views are sometimes discriminative as far as they are concerned on minorities.

The successful models promoted in some of these textbooks are those of the majority, "their history and significant facts belong to them" (Ciolan, 27), while minorities are predominantly decorative for color.

As far as the illustrations in textbooks and teaching aids are concerned, they are predominantly mono-cultural or disadvantageous for minorities. Aware of the danger of such inappropriate prospects, a 6-point strategy has been proposed, which includes:

- a. invisibility / visibility - in the sense that certain cultures "do not see", do not exist or are poorly represented in textbooks;
- b. selectivity - some data are interpreted from a single perspective, usually the majority, so that minority groups do not find their own cultural contributions in the textbooks;

- c. the presence of stereotypes and prejudices, the choice of certain information that betrays the presence of inadequate filtering patterns of reality;
- d. unrealism - textbooks present unrealistic sequences and portraits of history, avoid controversies, and at the same time avoid a clarification approach;
- e. fragmentation and isolation - presenting data about the different as an appendix, in a separatist manner;
- f. language stereotypes - presenting information only by reference to one gender, etc.

Conclusions

Within the intercultural educational programs, the purpose of each such program is the school education of the child belonging to an ethnic minority, in this case coming from a gypsy family from a rural community.

As a rule, the partners of the schools in the implementation of these programs are: representative organizations of parents (parent committees, representative councils of parents) local authorities (mayors, local councils, police), sanitary authorities, church, non-governmental associations (NGOs, foundations, ethnic associations, etc.), economic agents.

The main dysfunctions in the intercultural education programs in relation to the partners involved are determined by: the very large number of partners, which, as a rule, they propose schools in the course of some projects, the wrong perception that the large number of partners determines either the increase of the chances that the project is eligible or that its aims are better achieved.

In fact, the overly large number of partners implicitly creates difficulties in identifying the needs of each participant in the child's education process, as SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) known and applied by schools' managers - which are usually the project / educational coordinators - are not compatible with the specifics of each partner.

Another dysfunction is created by the real difficulties of establishing links with these partners, difficulties that are proportionate to their number. Sometimes the partners only exist in paper/ electronic format and have a purely formal decorative role, the program coordinators appreciating that it is sufficient for the project to have as many signatures and stamps in the partnership section as possible.

Obviously, through an intercultural education program, such as "keeping local traditions", "editing the monograph of the locality", or "school recuperation in certain disciplines", it is absolutely necessary and natural for partners to be school, family, representatives of NGOs or ethnic associations,

but it is totally inappropriate to engage with police, health authorities or the County Agency for Employment.

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CORRELATION BETWEEN COMMUNITY NEEDS AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE SYSTEM IN ROMANIA

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Abstract: *The social assistance system is a dynamic and complex one. Dynamically, because social phenomena are interdependent with the degree of development of society, and complex because social phenomena tend to become more and more different, that often the emergence of some involves the development of others. The structural elements of the social assistance system in solving social phenomena are fundamentally related to the personnel involved in the system (specialists - social workers and other specialized personnel), the categories of beneficiaries and the social environment (benefits, services, legislation, institutional network).*

Key words: *social phenomena, social services, social benefits, databases, interinstitutional network*

Generally speaking, social assistance intervenes and tries to identify and implement solutions for undesirable social phenomena within the community.

These social phenomena appear and disappear in direct connection with the way society is organized in general, with the generally accepted standards by community members, and obviously, with the level of socio-economic development of the country.

We can classify these undesirable community social phenomena into two broad categories:

1. *Traditional social phenomena* (found in the community at a lower or larger level for a very long period of time).

Regarding this, we can exemplify these phenomena as follows:

-Abandonment, whether we are talking about child abandonment by natural parents, or talking about family abandonment to a member in difficulty (disabled person, person belonging to a vulnerable group).

Abandonment must be understood both as an action of will and as an inability to provide the survival needs of a family member.

- Domestic violence - a social phenomenon that beyond the criminal nature of the facts and correlative sanctions must also be dealt with from the point of view of the social services at least at the counseling level of the victim, but also of the aggressor.

- Difficult socio-professional integration of people with disabilities.

2. *New types of social phenomena* (that appear at a certain moment in the community due to structural changes in the way the state is organized and functions because of strong socio-economic "disturbances", "earthquakes", or even on the background of natural calamities).

Regarding Romania, a clear example for this type of phenomena is given by the departure of parents in order to work abroad (massively after 2007 - the integration of Romania into the European Union) and leaving children in the country in the care of grandparents, of other children relatives, neighbors or friends, and the most serious situation in the care of the older brother who is also a child (under 18 years old).

The official statistics of the National Authority for the Protection of Child's Rights and Adoption on children with one or both parents working abroad showed a significant increase from approximately 70,000 children in December 2007 to 96,723 in June 2017. Data collected from the school inspectorates, revealed, however, a much higher number of children with parents working abroad, more than 212,000, and these data do not capture the full extent of the phenomenon, because they include only children enrolled in the education system. Taking into account both pre-school and non-enrolled children/school drop-outs, it is estimated that the total number of children with their parents working abroad was around 250,000 in June 2017.

The effects of this phenomenon are direct (psychic traumas of children based mainly on lack of affectivity, lack of supervision and direct education of parents) for which specialized social services should be developed accordingly, but we can also identify in this phenomenon also a cause for the occurrence or aggravation/development of other undesirable social phenomena: school abandonment, low school attendance (absenteeism is often found among minors left alone at home without constant supervision by an adult), association tendency in deviant groups, sometimes even criminal ones, risk of consuming drugs and so on.

Therefore, the link between the society as a whole and the social assistance system must be a direct one, both at organization and deployment level, and also at the level of evolution, reform.

It is absolutely necessary to be able to react to any community need (social phenomenon) and for this there must be a unitary, but flexible regulatory framework and relatively easy to be modified, improved, adapted to the new needs of the community without to intervene on negative manner (destructively) on the solutions identified and implemented in relation to the already existing needs.

From this point of view, in Romania there is a negative example, in the sense that immediately after the occurrence of this phenomenon, since 2009, all vacancies in public institutions (including those in social assistance) were

blocked and it was forbidden setting up new posts. This measure continued to be active by 2015.

Basically, we can say that the state has blocked the establishment of social services to deal with the effects of a "new type" of social phenomenon, consequently, there was no natural link between society and its needs and the services provided by the social assistance system that led to the amplification of the phenomenon and the diminution of the possibilities to blur the unwanted effects.

When talking about a situation of difficulty for a member of the community, it is very important to identify very correctly the needs, their causes in order to be able to objectively identify the solution to be followed and then make a decision in this regard.

Of course, we are in the presence of an extensive, complex process that is necessary to analyze the problem from multiple perspectives (social, psycho-medical, legal, economic, etc.) and from this point of view, it is necessary the opinion of several specialists.

When analyzing the provision of social benefits, such analyzes are carried out at national level and an amount of these benefits is determined to provide the necessary support to manage the difficulty of a person's situation. Subsequently, this amount becomes a social benefit through the adoption of a normative act.

At the same time, a procedure to be followed regarding the granting of these social benefits is established, a procedure that will necessarily include a set of conditions that must exist for a person to benefit from that social benefit.

Consequently, we are in a situation where a person in need demands the social benefit and proves that he / she fulfills the conditions for granting.

Under these circumstances, the "individual decision" method can be applied, namely one person checks, one person proposes/refers, one person approves the granting of the respective social benefit.

When talking about social services, we cannot identify generally valid solutions, but only solutions for each case.

From this point of view, a multidisciplinary case study (minimum socio-psycho-medical) is needed.

In Romania, since 2006, the "case management system" has been regulated. Thus, the bases for the functioning of a multidisciplinary team, under the coordination of a case manager (usually a social assistant) to identify the needs, their causes and to propose the solution/solutions to be followed, have been created.

The solution for the provision of social services is identified by a team, and the approval of this solution for implementation is the responsibility either of an institution (e.g.: Child Protection Commission) - when there is agreement

for that solution of all parties involved - either of a court - when there is no consensus of all parties involved in the identified solution.

Such a control, a verification of the reality and the conformity of the proposed solution is achieved and the general competence in making decision in conflict situations is respected.

Consequently, if in the case of social benefits, the "individual decision" of an authorized person can be used, as regards social services it is strictly necessary to use the "team solution" followed by a control and an "institutional decision"; or a "court order".

We appreciate that the general role of the social assistance system is to provide support for the people in difficulty, but also to take actions in order to prevent the occurrence of difficulties for the members of the community in the socio-economic conditions of the country.

This role is currently fulfilled by:

- Granting to social benefits
- Providing basic social services (especially prevention services)
- Providing specialized services.

Social benefits are a form of financial support that responds to a wide range of social needs and covers both universal rights (for example, state child allowance) and benefits that only address individuals or families in difficulty, vulnerability or addiction.

The social benefits system in Romania includes: family allowances, social benefits, allowances and benefits.

Social services are the activity or set of activities designed to meet social, individual, family or group needs in order to overcome situations of difficulty, prevent and combat the risk of social exclusion, promote social inclusion and enhance the quality of life.

The responsibility for developing, managing and granting social services is shared as follows:

- a) elaboration of public policies, national programs and strategies in the field, regulation, coordination and control of their implementation, as well as evaluation and monitoring of the quality of social services - under the responsibility of central public administration authorities;
- b) organization, administration and granting of social services - under the responsibility of local public administration authorities, attributions that can be outsourced to the non-governmental sector, religious institutions, other natural and legal persons of public or private law, according to the law;
- c) the financing of social services, according to the law - from the local budget, from the beneficiary's contribution and/or, by case, from his family, the state budget, as well as from other sources.

The main areas where social services are organized and granted are the following:

- preventing and combating poverty and the risk of social exclusion;
- social assistance for the child and the family;
- social assistance for people with disabilities;
- social assistance for the elderly.

It is relatively easy to identify, on one hand, a lack of correlation between the organization and functioning of the system of granting benefits and the system of granting the primary or specialized social services and, on the other hand, a separate action of the two subsystems (benefits and services) to achieve objectives that should be treated unitarily (ensuring the "social health" of the community in question, providing the basic needs, and the fundamental needs for our fellows unable to provide themselves).

Social work, as it is normal in a state of law, is organized at the level of competence and limits of competence, mode of action (organization and performance of the activity), general and specific objectives, by a series of normative acts, namely:

- the normative acts of organizing the social assistance system;
- the normative acts regulating the method of action (methodological norms) of the institutions or the way of acting of the specialists;
- activity norms that define and regulate mandatory minimum standards regarding the quality of social services.

This general classification (we have not proposed a classification and a comprehensive enumeration, but only one as an example) of the normative acts in the field can lead us to the conclusion that it is necessary to codify the legislation in the field of social assistance for increasing efficiency to ensure a unitary approach to make it easier for both professionals and potential beneficiaries to understand.

On the other hand, in order to respond to social needs in order to overcome difficulties, the main responsibility lies with the specialized institutions, but they must actively collaborate with other public institutions holding information of interest in social causes. This type of collaboration must be one at an immediate operative level that does not hinder or prolong the identification of the solution and the decision making.

Databases are a very useful tool in identifying the needs of the population, the quantitative analysis of social phenomena, the dynamics of these phenomena and, of course, in establishing action strategies.

The legislation on the establishment and management of databases in Romania is not a unitary one that ensures consistency in the actions of the institutions both at the level of own actions and at the level of common actions.

In general, the official databases are regulated at the level of the establishment and management of normative acts which, beyond the provisions that make this information to be useful, also establish limitations on

the reports that may be generated, on direct or indirect users, and especially regarding interinstitutional communication.

Usually, databases are set up at national level by collecting data from institutions at the local level. Although local institutions collect this information, their access to reports, their own analyzes, comparative analyzes etc. is limited, being the attribute of the central institutions.

This access can still be made possible after wearing a correspondence and obtaining special agreements. This kind of correspondence takes time, and obtaining information after 30 days (general term) or more, may make it impossible to use them because, in the meantime, obviously they are no longer up to date.

A concrete example could be given by the steps to be taken by specialized institutions immediately after identifying an abandoned child in a sanitary unit:

- Address from the sanitary unit to the General Directorate for Social Assistance and Child Protection (GDSACP) to file a case;
- Identification of natural parents (inter-institutional correspondence: DGASPC / Police / Population Records, etc.);
- Steps for child reintegration in the natural family;
- Steps in order to identify the extended family (relatives up to grade IV) (inter-institutional correspondence: GDSACP / Police / Population Records, etc.);
- Steps for child placements to the extended family;
- Steps for child placement to a professional nursing assistant by the court (again interinstitutional correspondence for finding civil status information, criminal record, etc.).

It should be noted that each institution has its own procedures, that the general response time to requests is 30 days, that the data thus obtained may change in the meantime, etc. All these aspects, on the one hand, delay the rapid identification of the best solution at a given time, and on the other hand make it possible to make a decision in the absolute knowledge of the case within a long term (3 to 6 months) from the abandonment. In the same sense it is worth mentioning that the intervention of specialists for prevention/avoidance of abandonment can be possible over a relatively long time since the action took place, which diminishes proportionately the chances of success.

Thus, we consider that it is necessary to analyze the way to set up and manage the official data bases in Romania and to identify solutions that will operationalize the interaction between the institutions regarding concrete, punctual case solving actions, but also in making strategies and public policies.

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PRIMARY SOCIAL SERVICES VERSUS SPECIALIZED SOCIAL SERVICES IN CHILD PROTECTION

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Abstract: *In child protection, the primary focus in the development of social services must be on primary social services that must respond to the needs of children in difficulty, so as to avoid family separation. If preventive services are not developed within the community, the specialized services, which have faced a growing number of beneficiaries in recent years, are used. Social services must primarily be provided by local professionals who can receive technical and methodological support from professionals providing specialized social services.*

Key words: *primary services, specialized services, day care centers, community consultative structures*

Social services, according to the Government Ordinance no. 68/2003, represent the complex set of measures and actions undertaken to respond to the individual, family or group social needs in order to prevent and overcome situations of difficulty, vulnerability or dependence in order to preserve the autonomy and protection of the person, to prevent marginalization and social exclusion, to promote social inclusion and to increase the quality of life (OG 68/2003 privind serviciile sociale, art. 1, alin. (1)).

Social services can be primary social services and specialized social services. For easier understanding, the relevant aspects relating to primary services and specialized services regulated by legislation are presented in a structured form in the table below.

Type of services	Activities
Primary social services Social services aimed at preventing or limiting situations of difficulty or vulnerability that may lead to marginalization or social exclusion.	activities to identify individual, family, and group social needs
	Information activities about rights and obligations
	measures and actions of awareness and social sensitization
	emergency measures and actions to mitigate the effects of crisis situations
	measures and support actions to keep people in difficulty in the community
	activities and counselling services

	community organizational and development measures and activities at social level to encourage participation and social solidarity
	any other measures and actions aimed at preventing or limiting situations of difficulty or vulnerability that may lead to marginalization or social exclusion
Specialized social services Social services aimed at maintaining, restoring or developing individual capacities to overcome a social need situation.	recovery and rehabilitation
	support and assistance for families and children in difficulty
	extracurricular informal education for children and adults, according to the needs of each category
	assistance and support for the elderly, including dependent elderly people
	assistance and support for children, elderly people, people with disabilities, drug, alcohol or other toxic substances addicts, people who have left penitentiaries, single-parent families, people affected by domestic violence, victims of human trafficking, people infected or ill HIV / AIDS, free-income people or people without income, immigrants, homeless people, chronic patients, people suffering from incurable diseases, and other people in a situation of social need.
	support and guidance for integration, readaptation and vocational re-education,
	social-medical care for people in need, including palliative care for people in terminal stages of diseases;
	Social mediation
	Counselling in institutional framework, in information and counselling centers
	any other measures and actions aimed at maintaining, restoring or developing individual capacities to overcome a situation of social need

According to the provisions of OG no. 68/2003, setting up, maintaining and developing social services of primary character, depending on the identified social needs, with the priority aim of supporting the social functioning of the person in his/her own living, family and community environment is the responsibility of the public service of social assistance organized at a local level. Regarding the responsibility for the development and diversification of specialized social services, according to the identified needs, with the priority aim of maintaining the social function of the person, aiming at

reintegration into his/her own living, family and community environment, lies on the public social assistance service organized at county level.

The General Directorate for Social Assistance and Child Protection exercises, in the field of protection and promotion of children's rights, the following main attributions:

- a) coordinates the activities of social assistance and protection of the family and the rights of the child at the level of the county, respectively of the sector of the municipality of Bucharest;
- b) coordinates, at county level, the activities and measures to implement the objectives of the county strategy in the field of protection and promotion of children's rights;
- c) provides methodological guidance on the activities of public social assistance services;
- d) ensures, at county level, the unitary application of the provisions of the legislation in the field of protection and promotion of children's rights;
- e) monitors and analyses the observing of children's rights at county/sector level and proposes measures for situations where these are violated;
- f) monitors the authorized activity performed by children in the cultural, artistic, sporting, advertising and modelling fields within its territorial jurisdiction;
- g) requests information and documents, in accordance with the law, from any public or private legal person or individuals involved in its sphere of competence, which are obliged to make them available within 15 calendar days from the date request (Law 272/2004).

The public social assistance services organized at the level of the municipalities and towns, as well as the persons with social assistance responsibilities from the local communal councils' own apparatus, perform the following tasks in the field of child protection:

a) monitor and analyse the situation of children within the administrative-territorial unit as well as how children's rights are respected, ensuring the centralization and synthesis of the relevant data and information, based on a monitoring record approved by Order of the Minister of Labor, Family, Social Protection and Elderly People;

- a) carry out the activity of preventing the separation of the child from his/her family;
- b) identify and evaluate situations requiring the provision of services and/or benefits to prevent separation of the child from his/her family;
- c) elaborate the necessary documentation for providing services and/or benefits and provide these services and/or benefits, according to the law;

- d) provide counselling and information to families with dependent children on their rights and obligations, the rights of the child and the services locally available;
- e) ensure and monitor the implementation of measures to prevent and combat alcohol and drug consumption, to prevent and combat domestic violence and delinquent behaviour;
- f) regularly visit at home, families and children benefiting from services and benefits and look at how benefits are used, as well as families with dependent children with parents are gone abroad to work;
- g) submit proposals to the mayor, if a special protection measure is necessary, according to the law;
- h) follow the development of the child and how his/her parents exercise their rights and fulfil their obligations with regard to the child who has been under a special protection measure and has been reintegrated into his/her family;
- i) collaborate with the General Directorate for Social Assistance and Child Protection in the field of child protection and send it all the data and information requested in this field;
- j) follow the implementation of the decisions of the child protection commission/guardianship court regarding the performance of local actions or works (art. 118, alin. (1)).

In order to prevent the separation of the child from its parents, the local councils of the municipalities, towns, communes and sectors of Bucharest Municipality have the obligation to organize, autonomously or through association, day services, according to the needs identified in the respective community (art. 124, alin. (1)).

Day-care services are those services that help maintain, restore, and develop the abilities of the child and his/her parents to overcome situations that could cause the child to separate from his or her family. The analysis of the data downloaded from the National Authority for the Protection of Children's Rights and Adoption gives us information on the number of children who have benefited from day-care services subordinated to local councils and subordinated to GDSAPCs.

Table 1. *Beneficiaries of day-care centers subordinated to local councils and subordinated to GDSAPC*

Day care centers, of which	Number of children - cases active on:				
	31.12.2012	31.12.2013	31.12.2014	31.12.2015	31.12.2016
-day-care centers subordinated to local councils	3785	4010	4476	4498	5344

-day-care centers subordinated to GDSAPC	7649	7969	8107	8155	8419
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From the table above, it can be seen that the number of children receiving services within day-care centers subordinated to the general directorates of social assistance and child protection is considerably higher than those who benefit from services in centers subordinated to local councils, which could be explained by the fact that the number of centers organized and managed by the directorates is much higher than those organized and managed by the local councils.

In Dolj County, for example, where 111 territorial administrative units operate, a day care center operates under local councils, while 7 such centers operate under the authority of GDSAPC Dolj.

The limited involvement of city halls in organizing and managing day-care centers for children is closely related to entrances to the child protection system, the number of children for whom a special protection measure is being instituted is increasing from one year to the next. Local authorities require for a protection measure to be taken in crisis situations, without those special cases to have been received social services for preventing crisis, and implicitly for reducing the risk of separation of the child from his/her family (Cojocaru&Cojocaru, 2008: 222).

At the same time, the number of outputs from the system is influenced by the level of development of services at the community level. Even if the GDSAPC does everything possible for the family reintegration of children from the protection system, the measures must be accompanied by the efforts of local authorities to support, monitor and advise the family (*Ibidem*, p. 292).

At local level, it is necessary to assess the needs of the community and mobilize resources accordingly, for setting up and dimensioning prevention services.

In the process of identifying the needs of the community and solving social problems related to children at local level, the local public administration authorities have the obligation to involve the local community, according to the provisions of Law 272/2004 on the protection and promotion of the rights of the child, republished.

For this purpose, community consultative structures can be created including, but not limited to, local businessmen, priests, teachers, doctors, local counsellors, and police. The role of these structures is both solving concrete cases and responding to the global needs of that community (Law 272/2004).

Community consultative structures are set up by administrative acts of the local public administration authorities, mayor's provisions, or local council

decisions. The Act of foundation establishes the nominal composition of the consultative community structure, the majority being made of 7-9 members.

In fulfilling the mandate, the consultative community structures must mainly pursue:

- -promoting family values, family stability, and child care by parents;
- -preventing the separation of the child from parents and supporting the family in order to assume their responsibilities;
- -cooperation with the social assistance public service.

At the same time, the consultative community structure assumes the role of solving concrete cases and responding to the global needs of the community.

Unfortunately, today there are communities where these consultative community structures have not been set up, or there are situations on which they are only formally constituted and does not carry out any activity.

At the level of Dolj county, from the information gathered by GDSAPC from local communities, in many administrative-territorial units (88 more precisely, representing 79.27% of the total number at county level) such structures have been set up, but they are still not working to produce the intended effects.

Table 2. State of setting up consultative community structures in Dolj County on 31.09.2017

	<i>Communes</i>	<i>Cities</i>	<i>Municipalities</i>	<i>Total</i>
Number of administrative-territorial units	104	4	3	111
Number of consultative community structures set up	84	3	1	88

The development of consultative community structures is a process that has begun in most communities, but has not yet achieved visible results in reducing the risk of separation of the child from its family.

Starting from the proverb "it is better to prevent than to treat", in the development of social services in child protection the focus should be on social prevention services.

In order to assume at local level, the development of services aimed at preventing the separation of the child from his/her family, there must be aware on the one hand, that prevention does not just mean intervention on crisis situations, and on the other hand that prevention services are delivering results as they are organized and dimensioned starting by identifying needs in the community.

The interdependence principle between identifying needs and providing services must be applied either in specialized services.

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YOUNG PEOPLE AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION. A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS ON CRAIOVEN STUDENTS

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Abstract: *The involvement of young people in politics is a recurrent topic in local public debates. Protestant movements in the last period come to confirm and enhance the interest of researchers and public figures for this issue. Through this research, without any exhaustive claims, we intend to investigate the degree of interest and participation of the students in Craiova in the political life, the perceived quality of life among them, the trust in the political institutions, their ideological positioning. The conclusions we have reached show an increased interest and active political participation of young people, satisfaction and optimism regarding the political direction in which Romania is heading, but also a notable contradiction between the self-positioning and the real ideological positioning.*

Key words: *political participation, ideological positioning, quality of life*

1. Theoretical premise

1.1. Argument

There has been a great deal of talk about young people and their role in various contexts, so that, being associated with the idea of change and novelty in a society, a social distance has been created between them and the elderly, socialized after another value and behavioral pattern. Recently we participated in an academic debate where one of the topics was "the withdrawal of the right to vote for retiring people".

Thus, through our research we aim to find out the degree of interest and involvement in the political life of young people, in the context of the monopolization of their political and social life. We want to make it clear from the beginning that in the present study we have identified young people with the students, so that the research will not have holistic claims, not taking into account the attitudes of those without a high formal education.

In the recent history of Romania, after 1989, there was a balancing between the attitude of repudiation towards the students, who were

considered intellectuals and therefore, the natural enemies of the working class and the exaggerated valorisation, attributing the qualities of the rescuers of a population knelt and chained by venal leadership. Thus, epithets such as "country hope", "beautiful and free", "bright future", etc. were joined by them. Also, the social movements that marked the beginning of 2017, had this peculiarity, the mobilization and the massive participation in youth protests across the country. Above all fetisation or defamation is the extent to which these social groups actively involve, know and understand the phenomena of socio-political life.

Young people who engage in political life, though very active, remain minorities. Many previous studies have shown that young people are less interested in political life because of scandals, corruption and nepotism, which they all claim. Also, from the same studies, there is a sense of mistrust and repulsion towards the entire political class, with no nuances of ideological coloring. We also want to test this, namely, the involvement of young people in political life, but we also want to find out if there is a correlation between the state of gratitude and involvement in the political life and the participation in the January-February protest movements 2017 and the right-wing political position.

1.2. Defining and operationalizing concepts

1.2.1. Participatory citizen

In the national and international political leaders' discourses, we hear about the so-called "participatory democracy" frenetic. Citizen involvement in decision-making is a sine qua non condition of a mature democracy. The participative citizen is, in this context, an indicator of the degree of evolution of democracy in a particular state. We will illustrate, in the following, the defining features of the participative citizen:

- "Believes he can influence public decision; Believes equally that others can and should participate;
- Considers that public authority has an impact on one's own life;
- Believes that cooperating with fellow citizens to influence a public decision is possible and effective (cooperation);
- Has the inclination to be active: pursues politics, debates politics; If it has a political communications network it will be inclined to mobilize it to try to influence the government;
- Has a high level of trust in people in general; Its social values are not separated from political values, but on the contrary, it can be said that political action is influenced by social values, (such as trust in people and cooperation with fellow citizens);

- He is part of a kind of organization, which increases its level of political competence;
- He has experience of participating in family, school or work decision making;
- He is more inclined to express its attachment to values associated with the democratic system; Is more inclined to believe that the common man has an obligation to participate in community affairs;
- He is more inclined to have a more positive attitude towards the performance of the political system;
- He maintains a balance between commitment to and independence from politics, avoiding alienation or excessive partisanship. (Westheimer and Kahne, 2004: 22-23)

1.2.2. Political participation among young people in Romania

The presented operational definition expresses, in a synthetic manner, some of the attributes of the participatory citizen, which we will use to evaluate the degree of participation in the political life of the young people we are going to question. Regarding the stage of knowledge accumulated so far on the subject, the literature includes numerous sociological investigations, focusing on objectives such as evaluating the trust of young people in political institutions, participation in voting, their involvement in nongovernmental organizations, etc. As far as the political information of young people is concerned, research carried out in 2010 reaches several recurring conclusions in most investigations:

- “The Internet and television occupy a significant place in the lives of adolescents interviewed by us”; (Soros Foundation Romania, 2010: 62-63)
- “Romanian adolescents predominantly prefer media channels that provide condensed information and selectivity”; (Ibid)
- “The Internet is the most accessed media channel by adolescents and, at the same time, the least used for political information”; (Ibid)
- “Politicizing the adolescent's family environment (the extent to which adults around it are interested in and aware of politics) seems to play an essential role in the interest of children's politics and their attitudes towards the importance of being informed on political issues.” (Ibid)

1.2.3. Operationalization of *right* and *left* concepts

Another sub-theme of this research is the issue of ideological positioning and self-positioning among young people. The right-left cage, emerging in modernity, remains an essential paradigm distinction for the understanding of

political guidelines, both at the level of political theory and in the concrete elaboration of public policies. Based on the traits that differentiate the two fundamental dimensions of the political spectrum, we will operationalize the right and left terms within a matrix:

Table 1. Operationalization of *right* and *left* concepts

LEFT PERSON	RIGHT PERSON
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is for progress at all costs, for radical structural changes, even if they involve the risk of destroying traditions. • He prefers to experience new experiences, to change his or her innate spirit. • It shows a high degree of tolerance towards disadvantaged social group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is willing to accept marriages between same-sex persons, - is willing to accept Muslim immigrants coming from war zones or economically unstable ones, - engages in campaigns to protect children, protect people with disabilities, etc. • Considers that the state is responsible for the well-being of every citizen (it must provide jobs, social assistance, subsidies, etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He prefers gradual changes that do not over-render the traditional order of things. • Prefers conforming to institutionalized behavioral patterns without trying to create new ones. • Reject same-sex marriage and refugee reception, as it could jeopardize traditional rule. • Considers that every person is responsible for its successes and failures, and must bear the consequences of the decisions made. • Believes that everyone is responsible for their well-being (finding a job and ensuring daily living.) The state is not responsible for the economic situation of everyone.

1.2.4. The specificity of the protesters movements

Social movements, as a theme of reflection and sociological analysis, have been concerned with researchers since the end of the 19th century. Gabriel Tarde and Gusatve le Bon are the founders of the psychology of the multitudes as a self-conscious study, the latter emphasizing irrationality as a defining

feature of the crowd. Protestant movements are a particular type of social movements that publicly declare their refusal or hostility to certain values, behaviors, states of things, ideologies, to what is accepted or institutionalized in a society, being constituted around personalities (In the fields of literary, political, philosophical, religious), but do not seek to change the essence of the existing social-political order; (Otovescu, 2009: 435).

The second half of the previous century meant strengthening democracy and promoting civic and political activism as a central element of any consolidated democracy. At that time, there are ample social movements for the emancipation of blacks, the widening of women's social and legal rights, the acceptance of sexual minorities, etc. The rise of social movements has accentuated the dynamics of thought-driven ideological trends since the beginning of modernity: progressive currents and conservative trends.

While Progressivists emphasize the role of protest as a regulator of the political factor, Conservatives emphasize the importance of respecting democratic legitimacy mechanisms (participatory democracy versus representative democracy). According to them, citizen participation in the life of the fortress is carried out by voting, and protest movements can not influence the actions of the decision-makers, legitimated by the vote of the majority of citizens. This debate is extremely important in the Romanian society, and the theme divides the society into two camps: those who consider these movements to be necessary and those who consider them unnecessary or even dangerous for the health of Romanian democracy.

2. Methodological landmarks

2.1. Purpose and objectives of the research

Purpose of the research: sociological analysis of the degree of participation of the students in the political life in the context of the protestant movements in January-February 2017.

Operational objectives:

- Measuring students' degree of interest for politics,
- Identifying the main source of information used by students to keep up-to-date with political,
- Measuring students' degree of satisfaction with the current political situation,
- Identifying the most serious problem of Romanian politics, in the opinion of the students.
- Measuring the trust of students in different institutions of the political system.
- Determining students' attitudes towards the protesters' movements in the

last period,

- Ideological positioning and self-positioning of students (right-left).

2.2. Assumptions and research questions

Hypothesis 1 - The majority of students who consider the protest movements lately to be necessary, are self-positioning to the right of the political spectrum. Protestant movements generally focused on a move taken by a left-wing party. But are most supporters of right-wing movements, or are we talking about an ideological heterogeneity? To determine ideological positioning, we used both an item that describes how respondents define themselves (self-positioning), and an array in which we have operationalized the two concepts.

Hypothesis 2 - The more students are dissatisfied with the current political situation, the less their participation in political life. Another research question concerns the possible causal link between student dissatisfaction and participation in political life. We aim to see to what extent students' pessimism, measured by a few indicators in the area of quality of life adapted to the topic of this research, corresponds to low political participation.

2.3. Methods and techniques used

To achieve the purpose and objectives and to verify the hypotheses, we used the sociological survey based on the questionnaire. The questionnaire contains 21 closed and open questions.

Target population: students of the University of Craiova.

Sampling: An exploratory lot was selected in a semi-linear manner. The batch picked up 40 subjects. Four students from each of the 11 faculties of the University of Craiova were interviewed. Only two people in Theology were willing to answer, and two questionnaires were canceled because of very contradictory responses. Because the lot contains less than 100 subjects, the results will be presented not in percentage but in the form of frequencies. For efficient space management, we'll only show the most relevant graphical representations.

3. Interpretation of results

3.1. Interest and participation in political life

To the first question (*It is said that in the democracy the citizens have to be involved in political decision-making. To what extent do you agree with this statement?*), 27 of the respondents stated that I agree with the great and very

much assertion, one person is indecisive, and two people agree little and very little. The second question is to confirm the increased importance that students attach to this area of social life (Table 2).

Table 2. Frequencies of answers to the question *On a scale of 1 to 10, how important are the politics for you?*

Numeric indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Frequency	3	3	1	1	1	3	5	5	6	12

We then measured this interest through two matrix questions based on a more specific indicator. Thus, most students discuss politics with their friends and family, vote in electoral elections and inform about candidates' political programs, as shown in Table 3

Table 3. Response frequency to political involvement.

You personally	YES	NO	DNK/DNA
Do you talk frequently with your friends about politics.	23	17	0
Do you often comment on the novelties of politics with family.	22	18	0
Do you usually vote in the election.	32	8	0
Are you informed about the political programs of the candidates / political parties before the elections.	28	12	0

Students agree with the principles of participatory democracy, considering cooperation with fellow citizens a possible and effective method to influence political decisions. Also, they validate citizens' initiatives, petitions and non-governmental organizations as forms of political participation. (Table 4)

Table 4. Response frequency to the principles of participatory democracy.

<i>To what extent do you agree with the following statements?</i>	<i>Total agreement</i>	<i>Partial agreement</i>	<i>Undecided</i>	<i>Partially disagree</i>	<i>Total disagreement</i>
Working with fellow citizens to influence a political decision is possible and effective.	27	2	2	6	3
The citizen must ensure that the principles of democracy are respected and intervene when they are violated.	33	2	0	3	2
It is productive to be part of a non-governmental organization.	23	8	4	2	3

Petitions and initiatives can influence political decisions.	22	10	4	1	3
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The main source of information on political life is, as expected, the internet (19 responses), followed by television (9 responses), written press and discussions with friends, with two answers each. Interestingly, it seems to us that no one has selected the radio as an information source, which shows its very low popularity among students. Also, the most serious problem of the Romanian policy, as seen by students, is the corruption (27 responses), followed by the abuses of justice (4 answers), the low political culture of the citizens (3 answers), the lack of transparency (3 responses), the low participation of citizens (2 responses) and the incompetence of politicians (1 answer).

Regarding the attitude towards protest movements in the last period, 19 people participated in the protests, with the mention that a larger number (24) consider these protests necessary even though they did not personally get involved. A larger number of students (31) attended the last parliamentary elections.

An interesting aspect is the attitude of the respondents regarding the political direction towards which Romania is heading. Thus, 25 people evaluate this direction as good and very good, 7 can not appreciate, while only 8 people think that Romania is heading in a bad and very bad direction. Optimism and satisfaction remain constant in the following question: How do you evaluate your life now, compared to five years ago? While 29 respondents think their lives are better and 8 people can not appreciate, only 3 respondents think their lives are worse than in the past. As regards the desire for emigration, as an indicator of the perceived quality of life. 28 of the respondents would not be willing to emigrate for the next 5 years, while 11 consider this idea, one being undecided.

3.2. Trust in political institutions

As shown in Table 5, students' trust in political institutions can be represented as a bipolar axis: the positive pole is the Presidency and Justice, and the negative one is the Government and the Parliament. By correlating this reality with the previous results, we can conclude that students' optimism about political life derives from the anti-corruption fight and the pro-Western direction of Romania.

Table 5. Students' trust in the institutions of the political system.

On a scale of 1 to 10, how much trust do you have in the following institutions?										
PRESIDENCY										
Numeric indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Frequency	5	1	1	3	2	2	3	1	5	17
GOVERNMENT										
Numeric indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Frequency	15	3	6	5	2	3	2	1	1	2
PARLIAMENT										
Numeric indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Frequency	12	11	2	4	4	1	1	1	2	2
JUSTICE										
Numeric indicator	1	2	3	3	5	6	7	8	9	10
Frequency	4	1	1	1	0	2	4	4	8	15

3.3. Ideological positioning and self-positioning

To measure self-positioning, we used a closed question, which showed that most (22) considered themselves close to the political right, 15 respondents considered close to the political left, and 3 people could not. For the right and left concepts we have selected four indicators that we consider to have a sufficiently large representation of these concepts, which we have integrated into an array of dichotomic items (Table 6). The items were interleaved in the questionnaire matrix so that the left column included both the right-hand and inverse indicators to avoid the position effect. The matrix was later rebuilt to facilitate an overview of the results.

As it results from the presented matrix (Table 6), the indicators of the left politica prevail over the right ones, which contradicts the way in which the students are self-positioning from the point of view of ideological orientation. We consider that there are two possible explanations: either there is an ignorance of these concepts, and the answers to the question of ideological self-position are vitiated by the prestige effect or the ideological incoherence on the Romanian political scene, where the left-wing political parties take measures right and vice versa, is also reflected in the minds of the citizens.

Table 6. Ideological positioning of the students in Craiova.

LEFT		RIGHT		DNK/DNA
The state must ensure the welfare of each individual citizen.	24	Every citizen is responsible for his own well-being.	14	2
We must be tolerant towards disadvantaged social groups, even if we have to leave more for that.	22	We must be tolerant towards disadvantaged social groups, as long as this does not affect our way of life.	16	2
The progress of society must take precedence over the preservation of traditions.	28	Conservation of traditions must take precedence over progress.	11	1
The state must intervene to protect domestic producers.	23	It is not the role of the state to favor domestic producers because we are part of a free common market.	15	2

4. Hypothesis check

To verify the formulated hypothesis we used correlative. The first hypothesis is confirmed: most protestors are defined as right, with the indication that self-positioning also contradicts the actual positioning, as shown in the first two correlative tables (Tables 7 and 8).

Also, the second hypothesis is confirmed. Young pessimists are also characterized by a lower degree of political participation, measured by participation in elections and protest movements (Table 8).

Table 7. The correlation between ideological self-positioning and participation in protest movements.

<i>From the point of view of political orientation, you consider yourself to be</i>	<i>Have you been involved in protest movements in recent months?</i>	
	YES	NO
Close to the political right	15	9
Close to the political left	2	12
Can not tell	2	0

Table 8. The correlation between the state's role in welfare and participation in protest movements.

Which of the following statements do you agree to?	Have you been involved in protest movements in recent months?	
	Yes	No
The state must ensure the welfare of each individual citizen.	16	8
Every citizen is responsible for his own well-being.	2	12
Can not tell	1	1

Table 9. The correlation between the political direction towards which Romania is heading and the participation in the last parliamentary elections, respectively the protest movements.

Do you think that the political direction Romania is heading for is:	Have you attended the last parliamentary elections?		Have you been involved in protest movements in recent months?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Very good	17	1	12	6
Good	7	0	5	2
Can not tell	5	2	2	5
Bad	2	3	0	5
Very bad	0	3	0	3

Conclusions

Contrary to common sense judgement, the participation and interest of young people in politics is high. Most young people are optimistic, get political information on the Internet, have high trust in the Presidency and Justice, and low trust in Parliament and the Government, and see corruption as the most serious problem of Romanian politics.

Young people are also the depositories of democratic values, and it can be said that with the maturity of this generation, the transition from communism to democracy tends to end. They accept citizens' means of influencing political decision-making, participate in elections, participate in, or at least approve, protest movements.

Young people's optimism and satisfaction is reaching surprising odds, most of them thinking that their lives are better than five years ago, not wanting to emigrate.

These facts contradict Inglehart's theoretical model, according to which the values of survival are dominant among the Romanians, which corresponds to a

low degree of political participation. The new generation does not seem to be guided by these values.

There is a contradiction between ideological positioning and self-positioning, which reflects the ideological incoherence of the parties on the Romanian political scene.

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AMENDMENTS AND COMPLETIONS TO LAW NO. 2017/2003 TO PREVENT AND COMBAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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Abstract: *The article focuses on the new amendments and additions to the Law No. 217/2003 on the prevention and combating of domestic violence. Within the article I have tried to identify the gaps existing in the current law, but also the pluses and minuses brought by the new law. Since 2003, when the law no.217 entered into force, the authorities had difficulties in its application, all to the detriment of the victims of domestic violence. Statistics in this period were not at all gratifying, and the effects were visible from year to year. The need to change legislation in the field of domestic violence has been increasingly pressing. It is desirable to change procedures, improve working tools, and involve more social actors in protecting victims of domestic violence.*

Key words: *victims of domestic violence; protection order; provisional protection order; social services; intervention*

The article focuses on the new amendments and additions to the Law No. 217/2003 on the prevention and combating of domestic violence. Within the article I have tried to identify the gaps existing in the current law, but also the pluses and minuses brought by the new law. Since 2003, when the law no.217 entered into force, the authorities had difficulties in its application, all to the detriment of the victims of domestic violence. Statistics in this period were not at all gratifying, and the effects were visible from year to year. The need to change legislation in the field of domestic violence has been increasingly pressing. It is desirable to change procedures, improve working tools, and involve more social actors in protecting victims of domestic violence.

The necessity of promulgating a new law on preventing and combating domestic violence was based on the statistical data provided by the IGPR, according to which in 2016 (according to the data from <http://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/index.php/ro/comunicare/comunicate-de-presa/5073-cp-ordin-protectie-provizorie-08022018>) a number of 2574 protection orders were issued, of which 743 were violated, and in the year 2017 (according to the data from <http://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/index.php/ro/comunicare/comunicate-de-presa/5073-cp-ordin-protectie-provizorie-08022018>) more than 3,000 protection orders were issued and 1011 were violated. So an increasing number of offenders who are likely to violate a protection order issued by the

authorities. According to the Law no.217 / 2003, this order of protection could be provisionally one or more measures-obligations or additions:

- a) Temporary evacuation of the aggressor from the family home, regardless of whether he is the owner of the property right;
- b) The victim reintegration and, as the case may be, of the children into the family home;
- c) limiting the aggressor's right to use only on part of the common dwelling when it can be so shared and the aggressor does not come into contact with the victim;
- d) To obligate the aggressor to keep a minimum distance from the victim, to his / her children or to other relatives of the victim or to the place of work or educational establishment of the protected person;
- e) prohibition for the aggressor to move to certain localities or designated areas that the protected person frequent or regularly visits;
- f) prohibiting any contact, including by telephone, by correspondence or in any other way, with the victim;
- g) To obligate the aggressor to hand over his weapons to the police;
- h) to entrust minor children or to establish their residence.

(2) By the same decision, the court may also order the aggressor to pay the rent and / or maintenance for the temporary home where the victim, minor children or other family members live or will live because of the impossibility of staying in the family home.

(3) Besides any of the measures ordered according to par. (1), the court may also order the aggressor to follow psychological counseling, psychotherapy or may recommend taking control measures, treatment or forms of care, especially for detoxification purposes (Law 217/2003, art. 23).

The first impediment to the application of Law no. 2017/2003 was the impossibility of police representatives to enter into the home where there is suspicion of a domestic violence act. This was because they could easily be accused of homeowning violation by the owner of the home, who sometimes was the aggressor. The new law introduces a new instrument for preventing and combating domestic violence, namely ~the provisional protection order (Chapter III2, Law 2017/2003). By comparison with the provisions Law no.217 / 2003 the new regulations are ~ (3) (...) the policeman has the right of access to the area where the aggression was reported, including in the premises or workspaces of a legal person, without the consent of the victim or of any person living with it, the owner of the space (Chapter III2, art 22, par.3, law 217/2003).

Although the cop will be able to enter the home or in another place where it is presumed that a domestic violence is being consumed, it is necessary that he or she be teamed with another policeman or witness. Most of the time in the rural area we meet only one police officer. According to this,

when he gets notified, he must immediately identify a witness with whom to go and check the reported ones. The police officer will find it difficult to persuade a person to become a witness, to sacrifice his time or to witness a violent event with a high emotional burden and a high personal security risk. In a small community, the aggressor can avenge the witness, which can be exposed any time. At the same time, a witness who is recorded in the police report, will have to get involved throughout the criminal trial if the act is to be described as a crime, and this involves spending time and money on travel. I believe that in order to stimulate a citizen's interest in providing police assistance in these cases, it would be appropriate to give him some tax incentives or even financial compensation from local authorities.

We observe that the Article 22 paragraph 3 of the new law, grants the policeman access to enter into any space / home, where the case of violence has been reported, but isn't said anything about the witness who, in order to support the verbally process document, must be physically present in the home and not stop at the door of the building.

The statistics for the next period will demonstrate the efficiency or inefficiency of this instrument, the provisional protection order.

The new law also introduces a new electronic system for monitoring the protection orders ordered in cases of domestic violence - National Register of Protection Order (Chapter III1). What is actually RNOP :

~ (2) RNOP is an electronic, public register, set up and administered by the Ministry of Justice, which includes the records of the persons against whom judicial decisions have been issued regarding the establishment of a protection order and those regarding the establishment of provisional protection orders, as well as the evidence of the persons against whom judicial decisions have been issued regarding the prohibition of the exercise of parental rights and / or court decisions on the deprivation of parental rights.

(3) In order to verify with speedyness the domestic violence history of an aggressor, the courts and the prosecutor's offices with registered cases of domestic violence acts, as well as the police officers that have been notified about the offense of domestic violence facts and investigating such facts have direct and unobstructed access to information from the RNOP (Chapter III1, art 22).

An extremely important article, modified by the new Law, is that (3) Reconciliation does not remove criminal liability (art 32, par. 3).

In many cases victims of domestic violence crimes chose to withdraw their complaint against the aggressor, generating the close case and, implicitly, removing the criminal responsibility. The reasons why the victims chose to withdraw their complaint were different from case to case, for example:

- Poor information on the rights of victims of domestic violence;

- Incapacity of the victim to find viable solutions to segregate from the aggressor (home, financial power, etc.)
- Poor development of services for protection and support of victims of domestic violence;
- Psychological pressure induced by threats by the aggressor;
- The long period of time between the moment when the violence was reported and the culprit was sanctioned Etc.

The duty to inform the victim about the rights he has, was and is the responsibility of the central and local public administration authorities as provided by art. 7 paragraph 2 of the Law no.217 / 2003:

(2) The authorities of the central and local public administration have the obligation to ensure the exercise of the right to inform the victims of domestic violence, according to their competencies, regarding:

- a) non-governmental institutions and organizations providing psychological counseling or any other forms of assistance and protection of the victim, according to their needs;
- b) the criminal prosecution where they can make a complaint;
- c) the right to legal assistance and the institution where they can address the exercise of this right;
- d) the conditions and procedure for granting free legal aid;
- e) the procedural rights of the injured part, the injured part and the civil part;
- f) the conditions and the procedure for granting the financial compensations by the state, according to the law~.

Imagine a person, the victim of domestic violence, extremely disturbed and emotionally affected by the violent event he was subjected to, trying to obtain his only right to receive legal assistance (this after considering whether he or she is in the conditions imposed for the application of the free legal assistance procedure) or the right to receive financial compensation from the state, seeking a suitable place to take refuge with children etc. The association of these victims in the immediate aftermath of the violent event is imperative. The victim needs to feel really sustained so that in interaction with the authorities he is confident that in the procedures he has to follow is not the only one, and the authorities will be with him.

There were cases in which the victim needed medical assistance, and because she was not insured with the Health Insurance House, she was not insured, she was hospitalized in the hospital units for a maximum of 3 days, for the emergency medical intervention . So, Law no. 217/2003 was completed and in the new law a new provision is introduced in Article 13, paragraph 1: "i) to benefit from the local budget, in the cases of domestic violence ascertained, after the victim's record by the public social assistance services, medical expenses of the victims of domestic violence that are not insured (Art.13,

par.1). "The newly introduced article does not specify the way of payment of these services, leaving the institutions to appreciate how they work .

Regarding to the hosting of victims of domestic violence, we mention that there are quite a few such centers at the level of the country, most of them under the subordination of the General Directorates of Social Assistance. The maximum period of residence of the victim in such a center is limited to 60 days, insufficient in relation to the real need and the period in which a criminal trial takes place. Most often, after these 60 days, the victim chose to return to the home of the aggressor, hoping that after that period the tension in the family had diminished. But the statistics show us that as they return to the aggressor's home, the tensions increase, and the risk of relapse is huge.

Another important change brought by the new law is the fact that ~ (2) The Ministry of National Education establishes within 90 days from the date of entry into force of this law, the procedure applicable by the county school inspectorates for the temporary transfer, child victims or witnesses of domestic violence at the school unit recommended by institutions providing social services to prevent and combat domestic violence (art. 10, par. 2). When the victim chose to leave home with the children, the way the child was transferred from an educational unit to another was rather cumbersome. However, there was a great deal of disponibility from educational units to integrate such children from families with a violent past, just as minors are not educationally affected.

Next, the new law talks about the electronic bracelet, a monitoring system for the aggressor who:

- has been obliged to keep a minimum distance from the victim, his or her relatives or relatives, or the place of work or educational establishment of the protected person;
- it was forbidden to travel to certain localities or designated areas where the protected person frequented or visited them periodically.

Unfortunately, this system is far from being implemented due to the high cost of bracelets, the creation of a centralized monitoring system for bracelets users (alert system generated by the violation of restrictions) and even the staff wages that will be monitoring 24/24, 7/7 and the costs of continuing vocational training.

In the new law, it is put a great deal of pressure on the budgets of local authorities, which will have to develop more social services in the field of domestic violence, but also to pay the costs of hospitalizing the victims:

~ Art. 13

(1) The local public administration authorities have the obligation to take the following specific measures:

a) to include the issue of preventing and combating domestic violence in regional, county and local development strategies and programs;

b) to provide the logistic, informational and material support of the departments with attributions in the prevention and combating of domestic violence;

c) to establish, directly or in partnership, units for preventing and combating domestic violence and to support their functioning;

d) develop programs to prevent and combat domestic violence;

e) to support the access of family aggressors to psychological counseling, psychotherapy, psychiatric treatment, detoxification and de-alcoholism;

f) to develop and implement projects in the field of preventing and combating domestic violence;

g) to provide in the annual budget for the support of social services and other social assistance measures for the prevention and combating of domestic violence;

h) to support, from the local budget, in the serious social cases, the expenditures for drawing up the legal documents, as well as obtaining the forensic certificates for the victims of the domestic violence;

i) to support from the local budget, in the cases of domestic violence, ascertained after the victim's social welfare has been recorded by the public social services, the costs of medical care for the victims of non-medical domestic violence (art. 13, par. 1).

All costs of maintaining centers for victims or aggressors, whether day or residential, should be entirely supported by the local budget, which is not sustainable, and most Territorial Administrative Units have chosen not to open such services, although they are compulsory according to the law. By comparison, the operating costs of services for victims or domestic violence aggressors that are opened and subordinated to the General Directorates for Social Assistance are subsidized from the state budget according to the cost standards provided by the Government Decision no. 978/2015.

Book Review:

Ionela-Carmen Banța, *Ovidiu Bîrlea. Critical edition from the original documentary funds*, National Museum of Romanian Literature Publishing House, Aula Magna Collection, 2013

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1. About author and book



In 2013, at the Publishing House of the Romanian National Literature Museum, the light of the printing press was a work that would record and disseminate the fruits of an extensive research on the Bîrlea brothers, made by a reference frame of the Faculty of Letters of the University of Craiova: university doctor Carmen Banta, under the coordination of professor Nicolae Panea. With a rich research activity, Mrs. conf. Dr. Carmen Banta revolves around vast fields such as folklore, ethnology, cultural anthropology, Romanian literature, etc., supporting many courses in related fields at the Faculty of Letters in Craiova.

The paper I will present below is published in the framework of the project "*Valorisation of cultural identities in global processes*", co-financed by the European Commission and realized through the Romanian Academy. Co-financing of the work was done through the European Social Fund through the Sectoral Operational Program Human Resources Development 2007-2013.

2. Structure and content

The central personality of the work is Ovidiu Bîrlea (1917-1990), a well-known Romanian folklorist, writer, researcher and ethnologist, brother of the historian, theologian and Monsignor Octavian Bârlea (1993-2005).

The book is structured in two parts: the first part comprises a theoretical synthesis, which is divided into four chapters, and the second one brings together in a corpus the most relevant texts from the correspondence of the folklorist. To this is added a Preliminary Argument, the bibliography, the abstract in English and the contents.

In the first chapter, the author outlines the biographical profile of the folklorist Ovidiu Bîrlea, using two complementary categories of sources: direct sources (folkloric interviews, personal correspondence) and indirect sources (testimonials of some colleagues and his collaborators; other specialists who have leaned on the subject, including the lady academician Sabina Ispas, the file from the Securitate of the brother of the folklorist, Monsignor Octavian Bârlea). After graduating from primary school in the native village and continuing gymnasium in Baia de Arieș, the young Ovidiu Bîrlea manages to enter the military high school, where he follows the school of officers. After finishing high school studies, he studies modern philology at the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy of the University of Bucharest, where he participates in the famous sociological campaigns in the Dâmbovnic and Transnistria area, where he discovers and develops his passion for folk culture, the German paradigm to approach it paving his intellectual training and subsequent work. He is frequenting the courses of Nicolae Iorga, which he describes from a novel perspective, broadly presented in the pages of this book. He is a disciple of the folklorists Dimitrie Caracostea and Constantin Brăiloiu, from the latter he learns the meaning of the sociology of the folkloric product (Banța, 2013: 23) and the art of interaction with the respondents.

Completion of studies coincided with the onset of a bad period in his biography. He is sent to the front, taken prisoner and subjected to living conditions characteristic of the Soviet gulag, which will both psychically and physically mark the subsequent course of his existence. He then works at the Department of Nationalities and the Institute of Folklore, where he holds important leadership positions, refining and improving his folklore skills. He records over a thousand popular creations on tapes, of which he transcribes 154, which formed the basis of his famous works, *Folklore Anthology* (3 volumes, 1966) and *Folklore Research Method* (1969). He will continue to carry out numerous research fields, the results of which were reflected in reference works for Romanian folklore, ethnology and sociology. He will be pursued by a series of failures in occupying high academic positions and, at the same time, goodwill, failure justified by his political non-involvement, doubled by a radical

anti-Communist position, expressed as direct as possible. The first chapter ends with the full reproduction of the strictly secret record of the folklorist, found by the author in his brother's Security file, which reveals some particularly interesting details, but which I find it inappropriate to provide in the review of the book.

Proving a formidable capacity for synthesis and comprehension, the author reconstructs in the second chapter the evolution of Ovidiu Bîrlea's folklore, compiling in this regard all the documentary resources available: manuscripts, epistles, testimonies, other scientific works. The chapter starts with the reproduction of some sequences from the correspondence of the folklorist, in which he not only reveals the difficulties he has when he writes the conditions of the creative and innovative spirit, but also carries out an autocratic reflection on his own texts. The work of the folklorist is presented to us, taking into account the particularities of each stage of creation. An element of originality is conferred to us by the classification made by the author, which distinguishes five taxonomic categories in which the texts collected and exploited by the folklorist fall: I. The ritual of the dead, II. Funeral lamentations (Reconstruction) Feregi, III. Funeral wreaths IV. Lamentations parody V. Recruitment lamentations.

The third chapter is dedicated to the sketch of the troubled destiny of the historian Octavian Bârlea, the brother and the confidant of the folklorist, to whom the author dedicates a large number of pages and in the *Vatican Voice of Romanians* (1968-1974). *Documenti di archivio, Aius Publishing House, Craiova, 2015.*

3. Sociological and methodological relevance

Through an effort of remarkable originality, the author reconstitutes in the fourth chapter the whole family tree of the Bîrlea family, starting in this direction exclusively from the correspondence available. The technique of personal correspondence analysis, as part of the method of analysis of social documents, acquires new methodological valences, thanks to the ingenuity of the author. In addition to giving us important objective information about the folklorist and his family, and especially about the whole family relationship system, he puts us in front of Ovidiu Bîrlea radically different from the one presented in the first two chapters. The cold, communicative, lucid, and profoundly rational man in the first half of the book comes in obvious antithesis with the sensitive man, interested in his family life, able to wait many times for the turmoil of inner feelings. Thanks to the methods and sources of information used, the author presents Ovidiu Bîrlea in his entirety: as a professional, whose quill has normalized Romanian folklore, but also as a social actor, oscilating

permanently between reason and affectivity, between professional life and personal life . The correspondence inserted in the corpus of texts also reveals a great deal of information not only about the protagonist's psycho-intellectual profile and the social micro-universe in which he acted, but also about the socio-historical reality in which he lived and wrote, his relationship with the exiled brother being probably a paradigm for that historical period and the related social context.

Through the present paper, as well as many other materials (books and articles) signed by the associate professor Carmen Banta, the author puts us in front of an imperative approach for the Romanian ethnological and sociological science: the monograph of the interwar and post-war personalities, in circles of specialists. Restoring the link with interwar thinking, both at the spiritual and epistemic level, and rehabilitating the elements marginalized by the communist ideology criminality, should guide the concerns of more and more researchers in the field. The road opened by Mrs. Carmen Banta, updating and rehabilitating the contribution and memory of the Bîrlea brothers, should, in my opinion, continue to be the monograph of other resonance names of the Romanian socio-anthropological and ethnological reflection. Virgil Iuliu Barbat, Ernest Bernea, Traian Brăileanu, Vasile Caramelea, Alexandru Claudiu, Anton Golopenția - these are just a few names waiting for the rehabilitation and updating of their memory and ideas, as well as their placement in the wider context of international debates.