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## JOURNAL OF COMMUNITY POSITIVE PRACTICES

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

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# A SUCCESSFUL EXPERIENCE OF IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION: EVIDENCE FROM UTAH

Kenneth P. JAMESON<sup>1</sup>

*Abstract: Immigration and the role of immigrants in U.S. society continue to be contested, though the effects of the 2012 Presidential election may lessen the national polarization. The experience of Utah both illustrates the tension in immigrant integration and offers insights into a successful attempt to address the issues. The Utah stance toward migrants has been and continues to be “blurred.” Several policies are quite welcoming, and the principles in the Utah Compact have provided a basis for measured discussion and have stopped new anti-immigrant legislation from being passed. The end result has been a relatively successful integration process that has melded the native attitudes toward immigrants, with the immigrants’ capabilities and efforts to integrate. So in contrast with other states, such as Arizona or Alabama, the mutual benefits that immigration offers have been largely realized.*

*Most importantly, the immigrants, both documented and undocumented, have actively pursued integration with Utah society on a whole series of dimensions, from obtaining driver privilege cards to participating in political activity. They may be transnational actors, but they clearly exhibit a commitment to their new physical location. As such they have been quite active participants in brokering the boundaries between them and the wider Utah society. This, along with the evolution of policy and attitudes in the state, has led to very positive results in terms of their social mobility and health outcomes, exactly as we would expect from the history of a nation of immigrants.*

*Key-words: immigration, integration, undocumented, brokered boundaries, demography*

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## 1. Introduction

President Kennedy's book, *A Nation of Immigrants* (1964) will soon be 50 years old, and its title is more true today than at that time. The immigrant flow into the US in the 1950s when Kennedy actually wrote the book was 1.7 percent of the existing population. In the 2000's it had risen to 5.7 percent.

The 2011 Utah Legislature passed an enforcement only immigration law already challenged in court. It also passed a proposed guest worker program to be run by the state, and which the Federal government is likely to challenge. These seemingly contradictory steps evidence not only the difficulty in formulating coherent state policy in this arena but also the continued evolution of Utah's stance toward the challenge of integrating. Utah has been much more successful in integrating immigrants than most of the states that had rapid increases in immigrants. The complex dimensions of that success are the subject of this paper.

Utah is a "new immigrant destination" being ranked sixth among states in the percent increase of foreign born during the 1990s, 174 percent (Stewart and Jameson, 2010, 2). The rate of increase slowed after 2000 but was double the national rate, resulting in 8.3 percent of the state's population being foreign born. Over half of them were from Latin America, predominantly Mexico, and an estimated 101,000 of the 226,000 foreign born are undocumented (Warren, 2011).

Utah policy at the end of the 1990's was quite accommodating, even to the undocumented. In 1999 they were allowed to obtain driver licenses using a tax number rather than a social security number. Since 2002 undocumented high school graduates have been allowed to pay in-state tuition at state institutions of higher education, consistent with the aspirations of the national DREAM Act. Over the decade, however, policy has hardened, e.g. in 2005 the driver license became a "driving privilege card" (DPC) that could not be used for other identification purposes. And every year sees legislative proposals to repeal both programs.

Nonetheless, the policy debate on immigration took a very interesting turn in Utah in 2011 when a new narrative on immigration and immigrants became a central factor in the debate. This was the "Utah Compact," brought forward by a coalition of religious groups, business people, and respected politicians. It suggested five principles to guide the debate: immigration policy is a federal responsibility; law enforcement should concentrate on criminal activity, not civil violations of federal code; policies that unnecessarily separate families should be opposed; Utah's immigration policies should reflect its welcoming and business friendly atmosphere; and immigrants are integrated into Utah communities and should be treated humanely. The Compact has been taken up by at least 12 other states and it succeeded in blunting the most extreme anti-immigrant tendencies of the Utah legislature and solidifying the success in integrating immigrants into Utah society.

The current US population is slightly over 300 million persons. Passel and Cohn's (2010) snapshot of foreign born immigrants highlights their significance. There were 39.4 million foreign born in the U.S. in 2009, including 14.6 million naturalized citizens, 12.4 million legal permanent resident aliens, 11.1 million undocumented aliens, and 1.4 million legal temporary migrants. Nonetheless, immigration policy and integration of immigrants is among the most divisive issues in the country today. In June, 2011, the Supreme Court struck down most sections of Arizona's highly punitive immigration law by holding that Federal policy pre-empts most state laws. Arizona had become a model for the anti-immigrant efforts of many state legislatures, and similar laws in Alabama and other states were effectively reversed by this decision. In addition, the Obama administration, after undertaking record-setting numbers of deportations, changed its enforcement policy first to concentrate on felons and then to exempt those under thirty who had been brought to the US illegally as children. In addition to being politically popular, this new policy resonates with the many pro-immigration positions of groups such as the Chamber of Commerce (2012, 10), which wrote "Even though immigration has slowed in recent years, it remains a major source of new workers and innovation. The United States' record of healthy and sustained immigration marks a major strategic competitive advantage."

Given the importance of immigration and the wildly divergent perspectives on the role of immigrants, the article will document Utah's success in integrating immigrants, using data from a unique database for the state of Utah to allow a deeper understanding of a number of the dimensions of immigrant integration. It combines these data with the analytical framework proposed by Massey and Sánchez (2010) to understand the factors that affect the actual integration of immigrants in Utah. The data allow us to separate undocumented immigrants from those who are in the state legally, and to compare both groups to those born in the US. After a survey of the literature on international migration, the next section lays out the Massey/ Sánchez framework of "brokered boundaries." The following section describes the context that Utah's policies provide for the interaction of immigrants and natives, the "framing and boundary work done by natives." (14) The next section specifies what documented immigrants bring to the interaction and that is followed by the same treatment of the undocumented. The final section provides detail on the successful integration of the immigrants into Utah, allowing a much broader perspective on the challenge of immigration and the fluctuating boundaries that determine its effects on the wider society.

## **2. Literature review**

The Utah experience can only be understood within the context of the post-industrial migration experience that began in the 1960s (Massey, et al., 1998). Several of its

characteristics account for the integration challenge that Utah faces. Among these are that the immigrants come from labor surplus countries whose wealth and income are vastly lower than the receiving country. In addition, immigrants are often not perceived as wanted or needed, despite the demand for their services (Massey et al., 1998, 6-7). So conflicts over integration of immigrants appear inevitable. The complexity of the process has made theorizing about its determinants very unsatisfactory. For example, Jennissen (2007) is forced to find causality in four factors, economic, political, social, and an amorphous "linkage." Such a broad array of factors does little to focus understanding. Approaches that see migration through the lens of globalisation and that can examine the gender, race and class dimensions to the migration process (Munck, 2008) are more fruitful and suggest important dimensions to understanding the challenge of integration of immigrants in receiving sites.

Another complicating factor in contemporary migration patterns is its transnationality (Faist, 2010; Levitt and Jaworsky, 2007). Because of the changed nature of migration and as a result of increased facilities for communication and transportation, immigrants often operate both in their new homes as well as in their sending countries and communities. They are part of the diaspora and so their sense of belonging is quite complex (Frykman, 2001). Thus their imperative to integrate is less and allows them to use their capacities to influence the degree of integration and to negotiate many of its dimensions. While this places the focus on the local/state level, Sassen (2004) has shown that transnationality has at the same time reduced the autonomy of the state in making immigration policy while multiplying the sectors in the state that are concerned with immigration.

The final point to emphasize, as we examine a successful experience of immigrant integration, is that the institutional structure is central to the process, a lesson that can be learned from all migration experiences, be they contemporary or those of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Bertocchi and Strozzi, 2008). Thus the focus of the paper is exactly where we can draw the strongest lessons on successful integration of immigrants.

### **3. Brokered boundaries**

Even a casual knowledge of the history of US immigration and the integration of large numbers of immigrants would cause one to expect that the large inflows of recent decades would occasion controversy and both pro- and anti-reactions. That is certainly the case. For example, between 2005 and 2008, the number of immigration bills in state legislatures rose from 300 to 1305 annually; most had an anti-immigrant tone and were a reaction to the increase in immigrants (Stewart and Jameson, 2012, 2). In Utah, there was one immigration bill in 1999, allowing undocumented immigrants to obtain a driver license under most circumstances. By 2008, there were thirty bills discussed, all aimed at creating barriers for immigrants.

Massey and Sánchez (2010, 16-17) establish a framework for understanding the dynamics of the overall integration process, suggesting that it is indeterminate, though three components will determine its outcome.

- First are the characteristics and motivations of the natives, with respect to both themselves and the newcomers. Of greatest importance in this case are the frames and boundaries natives deploy to define and characterize immigrants as an “outgroup.” The boundaries can be “bright” and rigid or “blurred” and fluid. As we will see in the next section, Utah’s boundaries have tended toward the blurred side, though they became brighter over time until the Utah Compact changed the nature of the discourse.
- Second are the characteristics and motivations of the immigrants themselves. They note a number of relevant elements: what they look like, the language they speak, their cultural beliefs, and what they are trying to achieve by migrating. When we examine the characteristics of immigrants included in our database, we will find that they have some characteristics that can aid their integration, while others complicate that process.
- Finally, daily encounters and interactions confront the competing frames, motivations and boundaries, and they broker the identity formation and integration of the migrants. These interactions are myriad and diverse, and our data allow us to view an important slice of them and to assess in some degree the differential experience of the documented and the undocumented immigrants.

This framework, combined with the data we use, provides a rich overview of the integration of the new immigrants in Utah. Past waves of migration to the US from the 1880s to 1930s were assimilated through the two-way negotiation process (Massey and Sánchez, 2010, 12-13). The same is not necessarily the case with these new migrants, particularly in a situation like Utah’s that had not seen large foreign immigration after its initial white settlement in the 1850s. However, the above three elements have intertwined in Utah’s successful process. To them we now turn.

#### ***4. Utah’s blurred boundaries to new immigrants***

Utah’s foreign-born population was only 3.4 percent in 1990, but had risen to 8.3 percent by 2008 (MPI, 2012). So immigration policy became a major concern. The seemingly contradictory steps noted above suggest that Utah’s “natives” frame their relation to the immigrants ambiguously, perpetuating blurred boundaries. The steps also capture the continued evolution of Utah’s stance toward integrating immigrants into a New Destination.

In 2008, Utah passed SB81 whose main purpose was to involve local law enforcement in immigration enforcement. It required immigration checks of those

charged with felonies or DUI's, encouraged Memoranda of Understanding between local law enforcement and the Department of Homeland Security to enforce immigration law, required documentation to access public services (as already required by the Federal government), required use of e-verify for public employers, and made transporting or harboring illegal aliens a misdemeanor. This was a comprehensive effort to create a bright boundary between natives and undocumented immigrants, and certainly led to a chill in relations with all immigrants. However, the boundaries remained blurred. For example, public or charitable aid and non-paid religious service providers were exempt from the harboring law. In addition, only three police agencies agreed to enforce immigration laws, one of which was later removed from the program by the Federal government. Many police departments, most notably in the capital, Salt Lake City, actively and aggressively objected to the program and publicized their rejection, in an effort to reassure immigrants and to insure their willingness to cooperate with law enforcement (Burbank, Goff, and Keesee, 2010).

The end result of over a decade of legislation carried out for its citizens by the Utah legislature is a set of boundaries toward immigrants that have hardened but remain quite blurred, particularly for the undocumented. In addition, the policy debate on immigration changed dramatically in Utah in 2011 with the Utah Compact. This assessment is further reinforced by the actions of the "Immigration Commission" established to "develop a comprehensive plan to address immigration, use of migrant workers, and integration of immigrants in Utah." They suggested that the 2012 legislature not pass any new immigration laws, and for the most part there was no additional activity.

Let us turn now to examine the information we have on what immigrants, documented and undocumented, bring to the negotiating table.

Any attempt to describe the characteristics of the immigrants, documented and undocumented, must be multi-dimensional. Massey and Sánchez (2010, 17) gained their information by in-depth interviews with 159 immigrants in three eastern urban areas. They describe "their social, economic, and physical characteristics, their motives for migrating to the United States, and their long-term intentions with respect to settlement versus return." Our approach is of necessity different, with advantages and disadvantages. We have the advantage of much more complete and representative coverage of immigrants, documented and undocumented, and a more complete description of their social, economic, and physical characteristics. On the other hand, any motivations or plans for permanency can only be inferred from the data, rather than directly represented. In any case, we find that the immigrants have many of the characteristics that support the claim that they are an important new resource for the country and for Utah. Let us turn now to examine their characteristics as captured in Table 1.

Table 1  
*Characteristics of documented and undocumented immigrants*

	<b>1: Total DPC holders</b>	<b>2: Foreign born: total</b>	<b>3: DLD: total-valid</b>	<b>4: Census/MPI data-Utah</b>
Total	55,603	192,736	1,775,713	2,000,455 <sup>1</sup>
Percent male	65.9 percent	58.8 percent	50.5 percent	49.9 percent <sup>1</sup>
Median age	31.5 years	38.5 years	40.0 years	39.5 years <sup>1</sup>
Age at 90 <sup>th</sup> percentile	44 years	60 years	71 years	67 years
Share of foreign born			8.4 percent <sup>2</sup>	8.3 percent (226,440) <sup>4</sup>
Birth Country Mexico	87.0 percent <sup>2</sup>	42.3 percent <sup>2</sup>	41.2 percent <sup>3</sup>	44.2 percent <sup>4</sup>
First known pre-2000	592= 1.4 percent	99,527=51.6 percent	1,024,732=59.9 percent	

Source:

1. US Bureau of Census. Annual Population Estimates, Table 2, 2008 (Total population 16 years and older). The MPI (2012) estimates of foreign born and Mexican origin are based on the Census and are for the total population.
2. The numbers and percentages are of those with birth country listed. In the full sample, 19 percent have no birth country; in the DPC group, 31 percent have no birth country.
3. There are 330,861 valid license holders who have no birth country listed in the DLD file.
4. As percent of foreign born (MPI, 2012), estimated to be 226,440.

First, comparing the Census calculations for Utah's population (Column 4) with the Driver License Database, on which our empirical results are based (Column 3), shows that the DLD is representative of the state's adult population. That 1.77 million persons have driver licenses indicates that 88.7 percent of the population over 16 years of age (2,000,455) have valid driving documents, including the DPC.<sup>1</sup> More importantly, the demographic characteristics of the driver license holders are similar to those of the adult population, and the differences result from known patterns of driver license accession. There are slightly more males than females who have driver documents, 50.5 percent. Males are only 49.9 percent of the population over 16, but studies have shown that they are slightly more likely to drive than females. The median age is 39.5 years in the Census data and 40.0 years in the DLD, which reflects the observation that the likelihood of obtaining a driver document increases with age (Sivak and Schoettle, 2011). The large difference in the age at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile, 67 years in the Census data and 71 in the DLD data reinforces this

<sup>1</sup> The 2009 Federal Highway Administration estimate is that 86% of eligible persons have licenses in Utah. The difference is that their data exclude the holders of driving privilege cards. When they are removed from our total, the percent with driver licenses is 85.9 percent, almost exactly the FHA share.

pattern. In addition, the total share of the foreign born in the two data sets is quite close, 8.3 percent in the MPI (2012) estimate (based on the Census) and 8.4 percent in the DLD data. The MPI count of foreign born is 226,440 in total. The 192,736 foreign born in the DLD data are only those over 16. The other 33,704 persons are mainly foreign born children. The only important difference is the share born in Mexico, where the MPI estimate is 44.2 percent and the DLD data is 41.2 percent. The explanation is that the immigrants, especially the undocumented who are heavily from Mexico, are younger and largely in the child bearing ages. So they are more likely to have children born in Mexico who are too young to obtain driver documents.

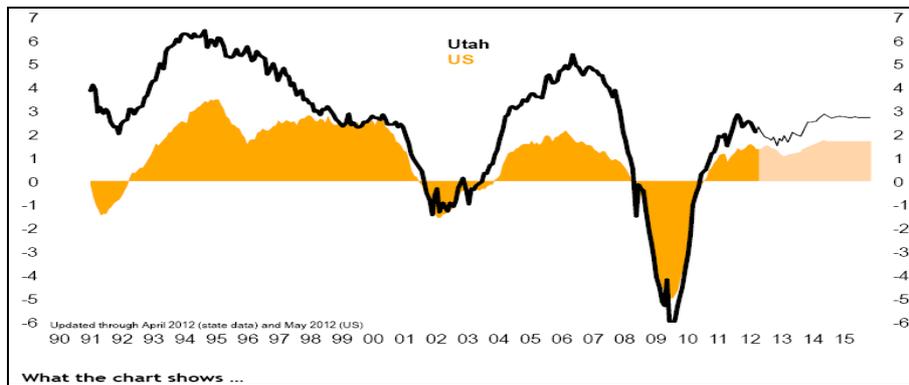
The contrast in the characteristics of the immigrants and the full population of Utah is quite strong, highlighting the characteristics that the immigrants have contributed to the state. The foreign born tend to be much more heavily male, 58.8 percent in contrast to 49.9 percent for the state as a whole. They also tend to be younger, with a median age of 38.5 years and an even larger difference when the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile is compared, 60 years compared with 71 years in the full DLD. In addition, the share with Mexican origin is slightly larger than in the total database, 42.3 percent as opposed to 41.6 percent. Finally, about half of the immigrants entered the database, generally by obtaining a driver license, prior to 2000, while 60 percent of those in the full database were already licensed by 2000. This reflects the upsurge in immigration during the 1990s (Passel and Suro, 2005). These characteristics reflect the general pattern of immigration: the migrants come to Utah to work, they tend to be males both because of their family relations and their greater labor force participation rates, and the migration inflows have increased in recent years.

When we turn to the undocumented, these patterns are even more pronounced. The holders of DPC's are 65.9 percent male; they are on average eight years younger than the overall population and seven years younger than the average migrant. The 90<sup>th</sup> percentile age is even more notably younger, 44 years compared with 60 years for all immigrants. They are very heavily of Mexican origin, 87 percent.

These characteristics make it clear that they have contributed to the process of "industrial restructuring" described in Massey (2008). These predominantly young males came to states with more rapid job growth and into industries that required a different set of skills, generally lower skills. One factor was that employment growth in Utah since 1990 was quite robust.

Figure 1

Employment (percent change from 12 months earlier)



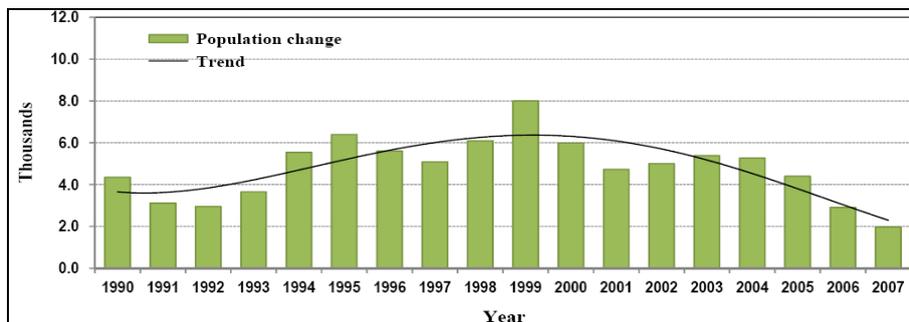
Source: J.P. Morgan, 2012.

We can see that almost uniformly the rate of employment growth in Utah was higher than the national rate, indicating the attraction to immigrants, including the undocumented. Another indicator of their link to the state's economy is captured quite well in a list of the ten top occupations of Utah's foreign born population (Perlich, 2008, 14). For example, the top five occupations were assemblers and fabricators, laborers/material movers, cooks, retail salespersons, maids/housekeeping.

Further indications can be seen in Figure 2, which shows the increase in the undocumented immigrants into the state.

Figure 2

Annual Change in the Unauthorized Immigrant Population in Utah: 1990 to 2007



Source: Warren, 2011.

The pattern is very similar to the employment growth pattern (Warren, 2011). Note especially the slowing of undocumented immigration during the 2001-2002 recession period, when employment actually declined in the state. This indicates once again that the undocumented immigrants brought a set of characteristics that fit the needs of the Utah economy quite well from the 1990s on. The decline from the peak influx of 8000 in 1999 to around 2000 in 2007 shows once again the link between the characteristics of the undocumented and needs of the Utah economy. That only 1.4 percent of the undocumented entered the database prior to 2000 reflects their peripheral links to the society prior to the law that allowed access to driver licenses in 1999. There was also a shift toward a higher percentage of undocumented Mexican immigrants at the same time (Passel and Suro, 2005), a pattern captured quite well in the DLD data.

In summary, the immigrants to Utah, including the undocumented, had characteristics that were valuable to the state. Their youth and male predominance clearly responded to a labor market that was restructuring during the period of highest immigration. Recent estimates suggest that there is currently almost no immigration to the state and perhaps an outflow of foreign born workers. Again, this would reflect the downturn occasioned by the 2007-2008 recession and the non-recovery since that period. In any case, the characteristics of the immigrants were quite positive in the context of the needs of the economy of the state.

Let us turn now to the interactions of migrants and the native society, the third and key factor in the integration of immigrants and in their identity formation.

The Driver License Database is one component of the Utah Population Database, which has allowed investigation of a broad set of integration indicators that capture the outlines of the brokered boundaries between natives and immigrants. The ability to isolate the undocumented has made it a unique resource, for the DPC allowed specific consideration of the degree of integration of the 55,603 undocumented who held a DPC in 2009. There are no other studies that have been able to directly research such a significant share of a state's undocumented population.

The general conclusion is that both documented and undocumented actively pursue the avenues of integration afforded them. For example, we estimate that 71 percent of undocumented adults have obtained DPC's, even though that specifically identifies their migration status.<sup>1</sup> And state audits indicated that 76 percent of DPC holders have auto insurance, compared with 81 percent of all drivers (Stewart and Jameson, 2010). Similarly, the rate at which all immigrants obtain driver documents is approximately the same as the rate for natives, or perhaps even slightly higher. The

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<sup>1</sup> The 55,603 are 71 percent of the estimated 78,314 adult undocumented persons in the state.

share of foreign born in the total population is 8.3 percent and their share of driver licenses is 8.4 percent. As noted above, this is one area where the boundary in Utah has remained blurred, and the immigrants have clearly taken the initiative to cross this boundary.

Another example is the willingness of undocumented students to take advantage of the in-state tuition program, HB-144. The numbers increased from 87 in the first year to 182 two years later. (Robinson, 2007) The number attending the University of Utah increased from 14 in 2003 to 134 in 2010.

Immigrant integration is ultimately a political process, and since 1999 immigrants have used political actions to foster integration, to broker the boundary with the wider society. This was despite the increasingly hostile legislative atmosphere. As noted, there was only one immigration bill passed by the legislature in 1999, but by 2008 there were 30 such bills considered, and the general tone of virtually all the bills was antagonistic to undocumented immigrants.

A positive counter to this hostility, which reflects immigrants' active participation in brokering boundaries, has been the political activity on the part of legal and undocumented immigrants, which appears to have increased in tandem with anti-immigrant legislation. Between 1999 and 2008 there were 32 protests with an estimated 74,500 people participating, peaking in 2006 when more than 30,000 pro-immigrant supporters – including thousands of undocumented immigrants -- turned out for the state's largest-ever protest march (Stewart and Jameson, 2012).

The final determination of policy toward immigrants will be through the ballot box, and turnout among foreign born Latinos has increased over the last decade, even though overall turnout rates in the state have declined. In examining this process more closely, the likelihood a naturalized immigrant from Mexico voted in the 2008 presidential election more than doubled if they also voted in the previous *local election* (Holzner and Goldsmith, 2012). Thus, to the extent that Utah's bi-polar immigration policy draws immigrants into local politics, it will create a new voting bloc that will make its voice heard in 2012 and beyond.

We have noted the exceptional efforts of immigrants to integrate with the wider Utah society and the generally positive contributions of documented and undocumented immigrants to the state. This immigrant behavior and political involvement, along with the power of the narrative in the Utah Compact, have successfully offset the political capital to be gained through an anti-immigrant stance. In this, Utah seems to be showing the wider United States a viable direction. For the results of the recent Presidential election have exposed the exhaustion of the anti-immigrant rhetoric as a political tool. There appears to be the best possibility in years for a national immigration reform, and that is likely to be quite consistent with the Utah Compact.

## **5. Other evidence of positive success in immigrant integration**

To provide final indications of Utah's successful integration of immigrants, we turn to a number of studies using the UPDB that have carefully examined other elements of the integration process. There is strong evidence of upward socio-economic mobility of immigrants, both the undocumented and documented (Maloney and Kontuly, 2010). Immigrants were able to move into better neighborhoods over time (as measured by median income, poverty, unemployment, and education at the block group level). In Salt Lake County, the median household income of undocumented migrants' locations was sixty-eight percent of natives in 1999, but had increased to seventy-four percent in 2007. This increase was more rapid than that of legal immigrants. The undocumented lived in areas whose income was seventy-seven percent of legal immigrants' in 1999, but this had increased to eighty-five percent in 2007.

Immigrant health studies illustrate the relative success of the integration process as well. Undocumented mothers were less likely to receive adequate prenatal care than their documented counterparts and than U.S. born Latinas, particularly if they had not obtained a driving document (Korinek and Smith, 2011). Despite being disadvantaged in this regard, foreign born Hispanic women had a lower incidence of low birthweight babies than all categories of natives, whether they had a driving document or not. This reflects what they bring to their host country, i.e. young and healthy women in child bearing ages.

Examination of the incidence of overweight/obesity again shows a complex pattern. Undocumented Latino males have the lowest incidence, while documented Latino males have a lower incidence than native born Latinos, though higher than US born whites. (Wen and Maloney, 2012). On the other hand, undocumented Latinas (females) have the highest incidence of overweight/obesity, and documented Latinas have a higher incidence than native white women, but slightly lower than native Latinas. The importance of integration was underlined by the finding that the risks of obesity increase with Latino residential isolation.

## **6. Conclusions**

The post-industrial migration process that began in the 1960s has carried with it a set of unique challenges to the integration of immigrants in their destinations (Massey et al., 1998). Since the immigrants are often perceived as not wanted nor needed, conflicts over their integration are almost inevitable. To understand its many dimensions, the lens of globalization suggests the necessity of an examination of the gender, race and class aspects of the migration (Munck, 2008). Add to this the transnational nature of contemporary migrants, and data on the specific characteristics of immigrants and on their experience at a local level is essential.

The UPDB provided a wealth of information on what the migrants have brought to Utah and allowed differentiation of the undocumented from the documented. It is clear that the characteristics of both groups have fit well with the needs of the state in the recent decades of rapid job creation and growth. And the slowing of immigration in periods of economic stress further illustrates their economic complementarity. The evolution of policy both in the state and nationally should ensure continued success in this regard.

Immigration and the role of immigrants in U.S. society continue to be contested, though the effects of the 2012 Presidential election may lessen the national polarization. The experience of Utah both illustrates the tension in immigrant integration and offers insights into a successful attempt to address the issues. The Utah stance toward migrants has been and continues to be “blurred.” Several policies are quite welcoming, and the principles in the Utah Compact have provided a basis for measured discussion and have stopped new anti-immigrant legislation from being passed. The end result has been a relatively successful integration process that has melded the native attitudes toward immigrants, with the immigrants’ capabilities and efforts to integrate. So in contrast with other states, such as Arizona or Alabama, the mutual benefits that immigration offers have been largely realized.

Finally and most importantly, the immigrants, both documented and undocumented, have actively pursued integration with Utah society on a whole series of dimensions, from obtaining driver privilege cards to participating in political activity. They may be transnational actors, but they clearly exhibit a commitment to their new physical location. As such they have been quite active participants in brokering the boundaries between them and the wider Utah society. This has led to very positive results in terms of their social mobility and health outcomes, exactly as we would expect from the history of a nation of immigrants.

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# IMMIGRANTS COMMUNITIES FROM ITALIAN SOCIETY

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***Abstract:** International migration is one of the characteristic phenomena of the contemporary world. Several countries in Western Europe, like Germany, France, England, Spain, Italy and others, were experienced in the last two decades, successive waves of immigrants, whom social and cultural integration difficulties raised many communities human adoption. For example, more than 7.5% of Italy's current population (60.6 million people) is represented by foreigners, who are concentrated in metropolitan areas in the North and Center of the country. This study, conducted from a sociological perspective gives us significant information on the characteristics of current Italian society, the distribution by region of the Italian population living in this country, the reasons for the presence of immigrants in Italy, the geographical area and country origin of the foreign citizens, their age group and sex, the dynamics of migration flows, etc. The largest foreign community in Italy is made up of Romanian, Albanian and Moroccan. The main objective pursued in our research was to see a picture of the immigrant population in Italy and to know its structure based on relevant indicators. The underlying assumption, from which we started, is that the process of immigration is, in social terms, one of the most important processes that define the Italian society at present, a society undergoing a difficult period, because of the consequences of financial crisis. Our conclusions are based on quantitative analysis of data collected by statistical method. Other interpretations are based on appeal to the historical method and the comparative method.*

***Key-words:** Italian society, the structure of immigrants, immigrant population, immigration reasons, migration flows*

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## ***Introduction***

In the present days, mankind is facing some global problems, such as: underdevelopment in several human societies, poverty, illiteracy, expansion of diseases, pollution, natural disasters, defending peace, international terrorism, consequences of the global economic crisis, migration of people from a continent to other etc.

At the end of 2010, the total number of international immigrants was around to 214 millions, and the country that faced the biggest number of immigrants was the United States of America (International Organization for Migration, 2011, p.115). In Europe, during the last two decades, the Italian society knew a veritable assault of the immigrant flows that has arrived especially for working, completing their families and studying. We mention that other societies (England, France, Germany, Spain) have faced, them too, successive waves of immigrants, whom social and cultural integration generated certain difficulties for the local communities (e.g. ensuring houses for the exceeding population) and for the educational institutions (e.g. acquiring to school the immigrant children, who arrived of different social and cultural environments).

Sociological examination of the immigration phenomenon from Italy is requesting, from one side, to establish the structure of immigrants, and, on the other, to evaluate the different percentages of foreigners. We may conceive the immigrants structure if we are starting from several indicators, such as:

1. distribution on regions of the foreign population from Italy;
2. reasons for the immigrants presence on the Italian territory;
3. geographical area and the departure countries (the citizenship of the immigrants);
4. age, sex and marital status;
5. dynamics of the immigrants flows in different period of times.

The data that we will present in this study are regarding the immigrants who have legal documents for residence (*permessi de soggiorno*), who are officially registered in Italy, at the beginning by the Statistical Service- Ministry of Interior and, later, by the National Statistical Institute. In this context, we have to mention that the elaboration of a data base for Italian immigrants was first conceived in 1992 by the National Statistical Institute (*Istat*), which it is a component element of the *Sistema Statistico Nazionale*. Consequently, the informations on the foreign population from Italy (till 1992) are in the archive of the Italian Ministry of Interior. This means that the sociological research of the immigration phenomenon from Italy is deprived (in a statistical sense) by the informations on the other immigrants, that have arrived in this country without being registered in official documents, and whom number is hard to appreciate.

Therefore, statistical data offer us an overview on the immigration phenomenon, but not a complete, detailed one. Other data, sociological relevant, are those resulted from poll queries, case studies, interviews etc.

### **1. General and specific characteristics of the Italian society**

In order to understand the present Italian society, with all its structures and manifestations, it is important to know certain specific data: historical data, cultural and educational data, and political, economic, demographic and administrative ones. Italy is one of the 48 countries of the European continent and it is situated on the south part of it. Its territory encompasses 301.230 square kilometres (being placed, on this criterion, on the 7 rank of the 191 world states) and consists mainly in a peninsula and two big islands – Sicily and Sardinia – situated on the Mediterranean Sea. In the North, Italy is crossed by the Alps Mountains and is neighbouring France, Switzerland, Austria and Slovenia (according to <http://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italia>, June 2010).

By its past and values created over the time, Italy was stated as a prodigious source of history (especially in ancient times), as a queen of European culture (especially in the Renaissance) and as diffusion factor of the attributed of civilized social life (in all historical eras).

**Historically**, Italy was the centre of radiation in ancient Roman Empire, which stretched almost across Europe, leaving deep scars and evidence of material civilization and social life in the territories that it conquered and dominated. Then, in the Middle Age there were built stately castles and religious establishments that are showing Italians sophistication in architecture and their creative power in the field of building. Later, the Italian Renaissance imposed to the world a gallery of brilliant minds, who are representative for the arts (Leonardo da Vinci, Raffaello, Botticelli, Michelangelo), literature (Francesco Petrarca, Dante Alighieri, Giovanni Boccaccio), science and other fields of cultural creation.

In Modern times Italy became (like other European countries in the nineteenth century) a national state, on March 17, 1861. Then, King Victor Emmanuel II (from the Savoy dynasty) unified states of the peninsula and the *Two Sicilies*. However, for nearly a decade, Rome was under the authority of the Papacy, so that the final date of Italian unification is considered to be September 20, 1870 (the architect of this building is considered the prime minister of Victor Emmanuel). On the Peninsula territory, there are two small countries - the Vatican and San Marino - which are surrounded by Italian territory, being independent enclaves. The Vatican is even the smallest country in Europe and occupies a small area in the centre of the capital – Rome, and San Marino - is located in the western part of Italy with an opening to the Adriatic Sea and neighboring Venice

In terms of **culture** Italy is representative and unique in almost all branches of cultural creation. Art (painting, sculpture, architecture, music, fashion, film), nature sciences, law, literature, football are fields of creation and activity that are illustrative for the major contributions of all the thinkers and talents of the Italian society. From several centuries, internal spiritual life is complemented and supported the Roman Catholic religion. We know that Rome is the centre of this world religion, that is headed by a Pope, and the Vatican represents the Roman Catholic world headquarters (in 2010 statistics showed that, on the globe, there were 1.18 billion Catholics). In the same time, Italy is one of the most visited European countries, by the tens of millions of tourists, from all the continents, being a real country of world tourism.

Therefore, Italy represents not only a big economic power, but also a tourist power, qualities at which we can add also that it has a higher education system with an old tradition, well-known all over the world.

We mention that, for instance, the first university form the world was established in 1065, in Parma, followed by the one of Bologna (1088) - where in 1999 was set the higher education restructuring process, for the European Union Member States (with the three cycles: Bachelor - 3 years, Master - 2 years and Doctoral school - 3 years) – then by the foundation of the universities form Modena (1175), Padova (1232), Siena (1240), Perugia (1276), Rome ("La Sapienza ", 1303), Florence (1321) etc.

From a **political** point of view, Italy knew two distinct periods, between 1922 and 1948, which marked the transition from the fascist dictatorship and, then, to the republic.

Since 1922, Italy was ruled by Benito Mussolini and his political party, who has established the fascist dictatorship in the country and have made a disastrous alliance with Germany and Japan during the Second World War (Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Axis)

The Axis Power was defeated, and Mussolini ended by being executed. Soon after the war it was held a referendum on the monarchy, which took place on June 2, 1946, its results expressing the option of the Italian people for republic, which led to the adoption of a new constitution on January 1, 1948 (which established a bicameral Parliament - the Chamber of Deputies, with 630 members and the Senate - with 315 members elected).

Royal family was sent into exile, being accused that he supported Mussolini's fascist dictatorship. In fact, the choice of Italians for the republic, as that of the Communist Party of Romania (which forced King Michael I to abdicate, proclaiming the Romanian People's Republic, on December 30, 1947), was making the Royal presence unnecessary and risky, in a country devastated by war and affected by social disorder, the exile being the only solution.

Rebuilding the country after the war was difficult and time consuming. For this reason, many Italians have chosen the external migration, settling for a long time or permanently in other countries, that were less affected by the consequences of the Second World War.

Our days, the Italian political scene is dominated by the direct confrontation between the two alliances - the centre-right and centre-left ones, who are succeeding at the governance. The last elections, from April 2008, were in favour of the right-group leader, Silvio Berlusconi, who became premier for the third time, and the coalition of parties led by him won the most seats in the Senate and Chamber of Deputies.

Although they were disappointed by inefficient role of the political class, the stagnant rhythm of the economy and the electoral law (because of which during the last 63 years have been 62 general elections), the Italians that were present at the second edition of the electoral show from Italy (April 13, 2008) decided to return to the political forces of right. Centre-right alliance assumed by Berlusconi's voice, "the campaign to save Alitalia from bankruptcy," stopping "of the immigrants and crime crisis", "implementation of economic reforms", etc.

**Internationally**, Italy is a founding member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and of the European Union. She also joined the group of EU countries which actively promoted the political and monetary European unification, thus requiring the adoption of the euro in Italy, since 1999. In the same time, Italy is part of the world's biggest industrialized states (G8), due to its economic performances.

**Economically**, we find out that Italy is the sixth economy in the world, after the United States of America, Japan, Germany, United Kingdom of Great Britain and France. Although in the global hierarchy its rank is at the forefront, in relation to other European partners it occupies a certain place in order to mobilize it to get new economic performances and to resist to the European and international competitiveness. In this way, the Italian government initiated a series of short-term reforms, in order to stimulate the competitiveness of national economy and to generate its long-term growth. We may note that Italy has pursued, over the past decade, a strong fiscal policy, which has managed to maintain a low inflation rate, which allowed it to join to the countries that were using the Euro. This allowed it to control the external balance, with positive effects on the population's living standards. In this context, we must provide that most of the raw materials needed by the Italian industry and over 75% of Italian domestic energy consumption are covered by imports.

Italy has a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 1550 billion \$, which ranks it on the 8<sup>th</sup> position in the world, and per capita the GDP is around \$ 30.700. Generally, in the Italian society living is relatively easy, especially in large urban centres, where the ordinary citizen is earning enough to cover its material needs and to lead a decent

and civilized life (the average salary is 30,000 euro, per year). Italy's main cities are not only those that have the role of residence of the region, but also different others. For example, we may note: Rome (the capital city), Genoa, Turin, Milan, Bologna, Ravenna, Venice, Livorno, Florence, Naples, Palermo, etc. Among the best known rivers that cross the country we may highlight the Pad River, Tiber, Adige, Arno.

During the past three years, the Italian society has known, as most countries in the world, the negative impact on the socio-economic and political plan of the global crisis, which worsened, primarily, the situation of immigrants, who are the most exposed to the risk of unemployment (fact that forced them to think of returning to their countries of origin).

The excessive development of the budgetary system and the increasing of public debt (which places it, after Greece, on the second rank in the European Union, debt estimated at 1,9 trillion dollars, which is representing 116% of Italian GDP), the financial instability of banking institutions and their dependence on the European Central Bank, the decline of wages and deteriorating of the living standards, the phenomenon of corruption, the threat of financial bankruptcy of the Greek economy, etc. affected the situation of immigrants from all over Italy. The economic recession and the deterioration of life conditions has determined national public protests in Italy, which have obliged the government held by Silvio Berlusconi to resign, in November 2011.

Note that Italy has a capitalist economy, which is divided into two main branches of activities:

1. *Prosperous industrial activities*, dominated by private companies, especially present in the north of the country, illustrative being city of Turin (where is the famous firm *Fiat*) and Milan, but are also present in the middle of Italy;
2. *Agricultural activities*, land cultivation in the plains, especially the South, that are temporary and generate an unemployment rate of about 20% (dry land and prolonged drought in Sicily maintain this part of the country in a social and economic underdevelopment). The climate is Mediterranean and, generally, the temperatures are positive over several months

In terms of **demography**, Italy is also a world power, being ranked on the 22 place in the world, according to the number of inhabitants: 60,045,100 (on January 1, 2009). Regarding the population density, it is 196 inhabitants per square kilometres, which places it in 5th place among other European countries. Now, the Italy's population is lower than that of Germany (82,002,400 inhabitants), France (64,367,000 inhabitants) and of the United Kingdom of Great Britain (61,595,000 inhabitants), but higher than all of other EU-27 countries.

Table 1  
*Population of European Union (2007 and 2009)*

No.	Country	Total population 2007	Total population 2009
	Belgium	10.584.534	10.753.100
	Bulgaria	7.679.290	7.606.600
	Czech Republic	10.287.189	10.467.500
	Denmark	5.447.084	5.511.500
	Germany	82.314.906	82.002.400
	Estonia	1.342.409	1.340.400
	Ireland	4.314.634	4.450.400
	Greece	11.171.740	11.260.400
	Spain	44.474.631	45.828.200
	France	63.392.140	64.367.000
	<b>Italy</b>	<b>59.131.287*1</b>	<b>60.045.100</b>
	Cyprus	778.684	796.900
	Latvia	2.281.305	2.261.300
	Lithuania	3.384.879	3.349.900
	Luxemburg	476.187	493.500
	Hungary	10.066.158	10.031.000
	Malta	407.810	413.600
	The Netherlands	16.357.992	16.485.800
	Austria	8.298.923	8.355.300
	Poland	38.125.479	38.135.900
	Portugal	10.599.095	10.627.300
	Romania	21.565.119	21.498.600
	Slovenia	2.010.377	2.032.400
	Slovakia	5.393.637	5.412.300
	Finland	5.276.955	5.326.300
	Sweden	9.113.257	9.256.000
	United Kingdom	60.852.828	61.595.100
	<b>EU-27</b>	<b>495.128.529</b>	<b>499.703.300</b>

Source: Eurostat, *Population and Social Conditions in Europe* (<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu>)

Currently, the Italian society is mainly formed by older generations (average age was 41.4 years in 2004), and the birth rate is low (of 9.5 per thousand inhabitants), as in almost all of the other Western societies. The massive infusion of immigrants from

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\* In the archives of the National Statistical Institute of Italy (Istat), it is mentioned that the population of Italy was (on the 1st of January 2007) 58,751,711 inhabitants.

the last decade and a half is likely to stop the population decline and, in the same time, to provide an increased birth rate (especially by reproducing the families of Arabs, Muslims, Africans and Roma).

If from the economic, political and cultural point of view Italian society is characterized by diversity, from the linguistic and religious point of it is generally homogeneous. The official language is Italian throughout the country, but in some regions we meet also a second language as official, such as German and Latin in the South-Tyrol, Slovenian in Friuli - Venezia Giulia and French in Valle d'Aosta. In some areas of the country there are also minority ethnic groups, but numerically small, the largest one being that of the Germans in South Tyrol (in number of 287,503 people in 1991, and who are speaking German) and that of the Slovenes from Trieste (Slovene-speaking).

Except these communities, we meet other minority groups: the group of Valle d'Aosta - who are speaking French; of those who are speaking Catalan - in the city of Alghero and in Sardinia; of those who are speaking Albanian - in some villages of Calabria and Sicily; of those who are speaking the ancient Greek dialects - in the villages of Calabria and so on.

Religion shared by the overwhelming majority of Italians is Roman - Catholic, a fact that can be explained by the tradition of this nation and the existence of the Papacy in Rome. Statistics show us that 85% of native Italians are Catholics. Another religion important, according to the number of adherents, is the Protestant, which ranks the second place after Catholicism. In third place is situated Jewish religion, followed by Muslims - due to the increasing of the Islamic immigrant community

Italian society is a permanent source of international brands. So, they are well known foods like pizza or pasta; *Fiat* cars; *Cinecittà* studios; *Scala* opera in Milan; the *Duomo* in Florence; the Milan fashion houses; football teams and clubs like *AS Rome* and *Lazio*, *Juventus* in Turin; *Fiorentina* in Florence etc. Football is the main national sport in Italy and it brought to the country many European and world trophies

Popular lifestyle from Italy is a dynamic and noisy one; the Italians are talkative, adopting high tones in public places. For Romanian, Italian language is accessible and easy to learn: this is, perhaps, the reason that has determined them to work or to remain permanently in this country. Italians are generally opened people, communicative, cheerful and full of life.

## **2. Foreign population resident in Italy** *(distribution by regions)*

At the beginning of the 90's, the immigration flows (or the main migration flows), which concerned the Italians, were those that have left from the North African

countries, especially Morocco and Tunisia, where it was a potentially explosive situation, generated by mixing between difficult economic situation and the high birth rate. The three countries from North Africa are Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria. They called the *Maghreb*, which in Arabic means "sunset", "because the lands beyond the Egypt are considered Western ones" (Luigi Price, 1993, p. 59).

Morocco had about 21 million inhabitants and an average of 6 children per woman. Analysts have noted a shift in past migration flows from here - which were having as initial destinations Belgium, France, Holland and Germany - to new destinations such as Spain and Italy. Tunisia, located about 150 km from Sicily, had a population of about 5 million inhabitants, of which 65-70% is under 25 and a high fertility rate (3.39 children per woman). Algeria had a population almost equal to that of Morocco and a strong desire to emigrate, mainly satisfied by taking refuge in France, from historical and economic reasons.

In the past, Egypt did not represent an important source of immigrants for Italy, but the number of 50 million of inhabitants could be a latent source of growing the interest for the Peninsula. Turkey had an increasing population, as Egypt, exceeding 50 million, but emigration from here was especially to Germany. Among Asian countries, the Philippines had a low standard of living and an increased migration flow, its 50 million populations being oriented to the UK (ibid: 58-50). Other immigrants that have arrived in Italy came from Sri Lanka, Senegal, Bangladesh, Somalia, etc. The interest of the authorities for the migrant's knowledge was related in particular to their social absorption capacity and to avoid the amplification intolerant attitudes of the Italian population towards foreigners.

Later, after 1990, the hierarchy of the seven states mentioned above, which had over 10 thousands of immigrants in Italy, will undergo changes due to the entry into the current migration to the peninsula of the citizens from other European countries (especially from countries issued by the communist dictatorship). This explains why, later in the period after 1990, citizens of former communist countries, such as Albania and Romania, will come to lie on some of the first places among immigrants in Italy.

In terms of administrative-territorial organization, Italy is divided into 20 regions, of which five (Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Sardinia, Trentino - South Tyrol, Valle d'Aosta) enjoy a special status of autonomy. We may note that each region has a capital city and that a region can be subdivided into provinces. The following table represents a list of the 20 regions, with their capitals and the number of foreigners registered in these regions. From this statistical evidence, we can form an eloquent image on the foreign distribution by regions.

Table 2  
Regions and foreigners residents in Italy at January 1, 2007 and January 1, 2011

No.	Region	Capital	Foreigners - 2007 -		Foreigners - 2011 -	
			Absolute data	% from the population of the region	Absolute data	% from the population of the region
1.	Abruzzo	Aquila	48.018	3.7	80.987	6.22
2.	Valle d Aosta	Aosta	5.534	4.4	8.712	0.2
3.	Puglia	Bari	51.242	1.3	95.709	2.1
4.	Basilicata	Potenza	6.726	1.1	14.738	0.3
5.	Calabria	Cantazaro	35.216	1.8	74.602	1.6
6.	Campania	Napoli	98.052	1.7	164.268	3.4
7.	Emilia-Romagna	Bologna	317.888	7.5	500.597	11.0
8.	Friuli-Venezia Giulia	Trieste	72.462	6.0	105.286	2.3
9.	Lazio	Roma	330.146	6.0	542.688	11.9
10.	Liguria	Genova	80.735	5.0	105.320	2.3
11.	Lombardia	Milano	728.647	7.6	1.064.447	23.3
12.	Marche	Ancona	99.285	6.5	146.368	3.2
13.	Molise	Campobasso	4.834	1.5	8.929	0.2
14.	Piemonte	Torino	252.302	5.8	398.910	8.7
15.	Sardinia	Cagliari	19.445	1.2	37.853	0.8
16.	Sicilia	Palermo	78.241	1.6	141.904	3.1
17.	Trentino – Tirolul de Sud	Trento	61.674	6.2	90.321	2.0
	Trento		- 33.280		48.622	1.1
	Bolzano Bolzen		- 28.394		41.699	0.9
18.	Toscana	Florența	234.398	6.4	364.152	8.0
19.	Umbria	Perugia	63.861	7.3	99.849	2.2
20.	Veneto	Veneția	350.215	7.3	504.667	11.0
	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>2.938.922</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>4.570.317</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Istat, date combinate din La popolazione straniera residente in Italia al 1° gennaio 2007, p. 17 și 18; La popolazione straniera residente in Italia al 1° gennaio 2011, p. 9

Statistical information shows us that, in absolute numbers, the largest foreign communities are established in the following regions: Lombardy (1,064,447 persons), with the capital in Milan; Lazio (542 688), with its capital in Rome; Veneto (504 667), with capital in Venice; Emilia-Romagna (500 597), with its capital in Bologna; Piemonte (398 919) with its capital in Turin; Tuscany (364 152), with the capital in Florence.

From the above table we find out that 23.3% of all foreigners in Italy are registered in the Lombardy region, where 8.4% of foreigners living in Milan. Other regions in which there is a large number of immigrants are: Lazio (11.9% of total immigrants), Veneto (11.0%), Emilia-Romagna (11.0%). In the Lazio region, most foreigners are concentrated in Rome (9.7% of all foreigners living in Italy). Overall, the population of immigrants from Italy increased within four years from 2,938,922 people (January 1, 2007) to 4,570,317 (January 1, 2011), which implies an increase with 1,631,395 immigrants (resulting an increase of 35.7%).

The statistical documents, released under the aegis of the *Italian National Statistics Institute* (ISTAT) operate with greater geographical divisions of the territory, including also the 20 regions listed above. In this sense, there is the following national reference structure (with corresponding regions) for presentation of statistical information:

- North-West of the country: Piemonte, Valle d'Aosta, Lombardia, Liguria;
- North-East: Trentino-Alto Adige, Veneto, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Emilia-Romagna;
- Centre: Toscana, Umbria, Marche, Lazio;
- South: Abruzzo, Molise, Campania, Puglia, Basilicata, Calabria;
- Islands: Sicilia, Sardinia.

An examination, from a historical point of view, of the trend of immigrants in Italy leads us to the conclusion that in the early decades of the XXI century (January 1, 2003), the main regions of Italy where the immigrants with legal documents were established were, in decreasing their numerical order, the following:

1. *Lombardy*: 346,768 people (over 23% of total immigrants), the largest concentration being at Milan (170,300), capital of the region, and in Brescia (56.036), Varese (21,076), Como (15 310) and Mantova (15.175);
2. *Lazio*: 238,586 people (about 16% of the 1,503,286 immigrants), of whom 213,657 lived in Rome (i.e. 14.21% of all immigrants in Italy);
3. *Veneto*: 153,524 people (over 10% of total immigrants), mostly located in cities Treviso (35,839), Verona (35 817), Vicenza (34,870), Padua (11.524) and Venice (8,992), the capital of this region;

4. *Emilia-Romagna*: 147,787 people (9.83%) concentrated in this region - Bologna (34.660) and the cities of Modena (25.445) and Reggio nell'Emilia (20,544);
5. *Tuscany*: 111,133 people (7.39%), the largest group being in the capital of this region - Firenze (35.537);
6. *Piemonte*: 107,950 persons (7.18%), more than half (57,403) being in the capital of this region - Turin, and then in the cities Cuneo (13,214) and Novara (10,075) (Istat su dati del Ministero dell'Interno: 120)

Although all the 1.503. 286 immigrants were scattered in all of the 20 regions of Italy, a total of six of these had over a half (51%) of all immigrants with residence documents on January 1, 2003 (each of the six regions having over 100 thousand immigrants). Usually, the more the city is bigger, the share of immigrants is higher, the great urban concentrations from Italy absorbing the largest contingent of immigrants.

### ***3. Reasons for the presence of foreigners in Italy***

Western Europe is characterized by a high standard of living and a very low birth rate of the population. However, Third World countries, that are poor and very poor, have a relatively high birth rate index (in Africa, for example, it was 3% in the last decade of the twentieth century), and a poor economy, unable to absorb the surplus labor force. Because of the lack of jobs and of the possibility of living, the only saving was an emigration to these countries known for their better conditions of life, offered to their own citizens. Many people come from the African, Asian and Arabic world, from the former European communist countries began to exert a strong migratory pressure on industrialized nations, especially after 1990.

In Italy, the first legislation on immigrants was recorded in 1986. During the '60s, immigrants from underdeveloped states began to come to this country in large numbers. Later, the flow of migration to Italy has increased, and by the '70s, the foreign migration has become a real problem for the Italian society and for the institutions responsible for the fate of the country.

A research on the migration from Italian society, undertaken in 1978, has aroused the interest of governmental authorities, trade unions and political parties. Advanced data for the evaluation of the immigrants from Italy, at that time, stood to around 350.000 foreigners. In 1986 it was established the *Advisory Commission* – as a representative body of immigrants. Also in 1986, the Italian Parliament passed the Law no. 943, which established the day of January 27, 1987 as the last term to regularize the situation of immigrants in Italy. Because of the delay, the deadline was extended until the autumn of 1988 (Luigi Price, 1993, p. 40).

According to some appreciations, the Law no. 943 of 1986 "largely failed. The data speak clearly: those admitted were only 106,000. These, added to those who had been admitted before, reached about 400,000: a smaller number than the actual number of immigrants in Italy. It had a great influence on bankruptcy of the law from 1986 the fact that, those that were legally residents, if they did not managed to find a job, could be expelled" (Luigi Price, 1993, pp. 40-41).

In addition, "it was ignoring the immigration control and was making him even ineffective". The main reason for the immigration of foreigners in Italy was in the beginning, for working. Before 1989, this country was confronting with the phenomenon of unemployment, which affected about 2.5 million workers. Hence the fear, widespread among Italian citizens, that they will lose their jobs because of foreign workers who accepted lower wages than the Italians and had no complaints about working conditions. Some opinion polls showed that 7 of 10 Italians "wanted to send the immigrants of colour to their homes and to block their other future entries in Italy" (Luigi Price, 1993, p. 43).

The strong increase of the immigrants' flows, on the one hand, and domestic public reactions, on the other hand, have led the Italian official institutions to order a scientific research on immigration - completed in March 1990. This was giving a real perspective of knowledge of the phenomenon and was providing to the officials an important number of conclusive data.

For example, one of the research results at that time was that "the immigrant citizen is, on average, 30 years old and not married; 58.1% of immigrants are in Italy for at least three years, while 31.6% came to Italy previously during the increase of this process. Among the reasons for choosing Italy the most dominant are those of a stable job perspective (40.3%) and easiness of entering in Italy (40.3%)" (Ibid: 44). Other informations were attesting that among "the non-EU registered, self-dependent workers are about 25%. Those who are searching for a job are about 40%. The others are in Italy for family reasons, study and tourism" (Luigi Price, 1993, p. 64).

When we are examining the presence of foreigners in Italy we may use also other analytical descriptors, such as the residence documents (*permessi di soggiorno*). These were made available to all foreigners who are possessing legal documents to live in Italy. Holding a residence permit is an important for a foreigner to be included in the resident population registers. Because sometimes this permit was not obtained from any foreigner, means that the number of resident foreigners does not coincide with the number of foreigners who have residence permits.

The consultation of the data mentioned on the residence permits of foreigners - at January 1, 2007 and recorded by the National Institute of Statistics of Italy, on the basis of information provided by the Ministry of Interior - allows us to disclose the same main reasons for the presence of immigrant communities in this country:

- 1) For *work* – 60.60% of the total of the foreigners;
- 2) For *family reunion* – 31.62% of the total of immigrants; on sex: 48.4% of women and 14.6% of men came in Italy to reunion their family;
- 3) For *study* – 2.14% (more women came in Italy for study – 28,108 – than men). The 51.625 documents for study (their number increasing, comparing to 2005 – 40,355 and 2006 – 48,718) was interesting especially the Albanians, the Americans, Chinese and Romanians;
- 4) For *residence* - 1.85%: residence permits for selected residence in Italy – 44847- January 1, 2007 - were granted, at a rate of about 60%, to Germans, English, French, Swiss and North American. Their number has been decreasing compared to previous years (41,573 in 2006, 61,876 in 2005)
- 5) *Religious* - 1.33%: permissions granted for religious reasons (32,081- January 1, 2007) were mostly offered to Spanish, Polish and women from India and the Philippines. The number of permits issued for religious reasons was down from previous years (34,251 in 2006 and 53,249 in 2005);
- 6) *Political Asylum* - 0.66%; political asylum permits (16,079) and on humanitarian grounds (about 13 thousand, included in "other reasons") refers especially to those granted to persons coming from Eritrea and Kosovo (about 30% of cases), territories marked by internal ethnic conflicts. The number of permits for reasons of political asylum was maintained, with some deviations, relatively constant in the recent years (17,833 cases in 2005, 14,932 in 2006);
- 7) *Other reasons* - 1.80%; in addition to humanitarian ones, into this category are also the permits for adoption (being the least: at January 1, 2007 3,700 units.), mainly for children from Russia, Ukraine, Ethiopia, Brazil and Colombia, as well as the support permits (about 3,500) offered to Albanians and Moroccans (Istat su dati del Ministero dell'Interno, p. 40)

#### **4. Structure of immigrants according to geographical area and by country of origin**

In order to ensure a thorough knowledge of the immigration phenomenon it is important to know from which countries are coming the immigrants (their citizenship), and what is their gender structure. In the first 8 years of the twenty-first century, the Italian society has received an impressive number of foreigners. Thus, if on 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2001 the residence permits were 1,379,749, on 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2007 their number had reached 2,938,922 people, which means an increase with 213% of immigrants.

Further, we present the structure of immigrants from Italy - holders of residence permits – according to the geographical continents of origin. In addition, we must specify that the development of the database relating to foreign presence in Italy was initiated barely in 1992 by the National Statistics Institute of Italy. Therefore, the informations about foreign immigrants in Italy, until 1992, are in the possession of the statistical office of the Italian Ministry of Interior.

Table 3  
Foreign population in Italy, on continents of origin and sex  
(1<sup>st</sup> of January 2001-2003)

Year Sex Continent	2001			2002			2003		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Europe	280.136	280.452	560.588	289.120	307.124	596.244	302.227	337.339	639.566
Africa	268.134	120.193	388.327	271.177	129.873	401.050	267.102	134.340	401.442
Asia	145.343	119.697	265.040	149.718	128.285	278.003	149.219	131.912	281.131
America	50.765	112.025	162.790	53.390	116.582	169.972	56.937	120.915	177.852
Oceania	1.087	1.343	2.430	1.555	1.392	2.547	1.204	1.476	2.680
Stateless	371	203	574	370	206	576	387	228	615
<b>Total</b>	<b>745.836</b>	<b>633.913</b>	<b>1.379.749</b>	<b>764.930</b>	<b>683.462</b>	<b>1.448.392</b>	<b>777.076</b>	<b>726.210</b>	<b>1.503.286</b>

Source : *Istat su dati del Ministero dell Interno* (data collected in 2006 from the pp. 49-50; 105-106)

As we can see also from the table above, the number of immigrants in Italy has increased continuously during the first three years of the twenty-first century: with 68,000 people in 2002 compared to 2001, and 54,000 persons in 2003 compared to 2002 . So, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2003 there were in Italy with 122,000 holders of residence permits more than on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2001. Most immigrants came from Europe, from Africa and Asia.

In 2003 the situation of immigrants in Italy, according to nationality and departure are was as follows:

- about 43% of those with residence permits were from Europe (especially from the central-eastern part: 467,434 people, coming mainly from Albania – 171,567 and Romania – 94,818);
- a number of 150,866 were citizens of the 15 countries Member States of the EU from that time;
- about 27% were from Africa (especially from Morocco – 170,746 persons and Senegal – 36,959);
- about 19% were from Asia (mainly from Philippines – 65,575; China – 64,100; India – 34,324; Bangladesh – 22,237);

- about 12% were from America (especially from United States – 45,632; Peru – 31,323 and Brazil – 20,941);
- 0.15% was from Oceania.

We may note that on all immigrants, males have a higher percentage (approximately 52% in 2003) than females (48% in the same year). For those coming from Romania, the men dominated only in 2001, because since 2002 there has been a sharp increase of female immigrants. They represented 51.79% of Romanians with residence permits in Italy in 2002 (82,555 persons) and 53.76% in 2003. Moreover, we can see a general trend of increase the number of female immigrants coming to Italy from the European continent. For example, in 2001 over 50% of immigrants were female, and, in 2003, their share in the total of the European immigrants reached to about 53%.

In exchange, the immigrants from Africa and Asia are, mostly, men; in 2003, African men represented about 67% from the total of the persons coming from the black continent, and the Asian men represented over 53% from the Asian arrived in Italy. Almost 70% of people coming from America to Italy were also male. Foreign nationals who possessed residence permits in Italy numbered 490,388 people in 1989. This year shows a massive presence of those coming from countries which granted a right to free movement for their own citizens. Thus, there are a total of seven nations that were having, in 1989, over 10,000 citizens' immigrants in Italy, registered with residence permits:

1. Morocco – 26.752 persons (5.5% of the total of 490,388 legal immigrants);
2. Yugoslavia – 17.124 persons (3.5%);
3. Philippines – 16.131 persons (3.3%);
4. Tunisia – 14.145 persons (2.9%);
5. Iran – 11.827 persons (2.4%);
6. Egypt – 10.209 persons (2.1%);
7. Poland – 10.091 persons (2.1%) (*Ibid*: 62).

Just after 1990, citizens of former communist countries such as Albania and Romania will arrive to rank on the first places among immigrants in Italy. For example, the number of legal Romanian immigrants in Italy has increased continuously from 8,250 persons in 1992 (January 1) to 12,026 persons in 1995, and later, to 26,894 people in 1997 (January 1). Similarly, the number of Albanians with residence permits in Italy has evolved rapidly upward, from 24,886 (January 1, 1992) to 25,245 (1 January 1995), reaching 66, 608 people (January 1, 1997). On the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2003, 171,567 Albanians were registered in Italy and 94,818 Romanian were holders of residence permits in this country. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2001, the first

five nations that "fuelled" the phenomenon of immigration in Italy were, in descending order of number of persons, the following:

1. Morocco – 162.254 persons;
2. Albania – 146.321 persons;
3. Romania – 69.991 persons;
4. Philippines – 65.073 persons;
5. China – 60.143 persons.

Total: 503.782 persons.

They were forming 36.51% of the registered immigrants from Italy (1,379,749) (Ibid: 51). In 2003 (January 1) there is a change at the top of the hierarchy of the five countries, meaning that Albania goes the first, although all five countries continue to remain in the top (Romania retaining, also in 2003, the third position, occupied since 2001). On the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2007, a distinguished record of immigrants, on countries of origin, was like that:

Table 4  
*Number of immigrants, by countries of origin*

1. Albania – 171.567 persons	26. Switzerland – 15.852
2. Morocco – 170.746	27. Ukraine – 14.802
3. Romania – 94.818	28. Russia – 12.787
4. Philippines – 65.575	29. Bosnia and Herzegovina – 12.776
5. China – 64.010	30. Ecuador – 12.281
6. Tunis – 51.137	31. Algeria – 11.943
7. United States – 45.642	32. Dominican Republic – 11.794
8. Yugoslavia – 40.237	33. Columbia – 11.490
9. Senegal – 36.959	34. Argentina – 11.266
10. Germany – 36.320	35. Cuba – 10.086
11. Sri Lanka – 35.696	36. Bulgaria – 8.535
12. Poland – 34.980	37. Austria – 8.254
13. India – 34.324	38. Greece – 7.271
14. Peru – 31.323	39. Japan – 7.124
15. Egypt – 31.061	40. Ivory Coast – 7.122
16. France – 26.274	41. Moldavia, Republic of – 7.111
17. Macedonia – 26.210	42. Turkey – 6.846
18. United Kingdom – 24.491	43. Holland – 6.763
19. Bangladesh – 22.237	44. Mauritius – 6.407
20. Brazil – 20.941	45. Iran – 5.814

21. Spain – 20.930	46. Eritrea – 5.598
22. Pakistan – 20.616	47. Somalia – 4.882
23. Ghana – 19.691	48. Belgium – 4.867
24. Nigeria – 19.508	49. Mexico – 4.772
25. Croatia – 16.858	50. Portugal – 4.732
	51. Other countries – 119.960
Total = 1.503.286 persons	

Source: *Istat su dati del Ministero dell Interno*, data collected in 2006, p.107)

In 2005 (December 31), over a third (33.5%) of foreigners carrying residence permits in Italy (2,271,680) were people who came from Romania (11.9%), Albania (11.3 %) and Morocco (10.3%). In descending order of percentages, we find citizens of Ukraine (5.2%), China (4.9%) and others (Source: Ministero dell Interno e Caritas, ISMU - Centro Documentazione).

A comparative analysis of foreigners registered in 2004 and 2007 in Italy shows us that the main continents and demographic basins from where they started are Europe, Africa and America. Data in the table below are illustrative for the knowledge of the dynamics of immigrants and of their share, according to the states of origin.

Table 5  
*The resident foreign population – on sex, age, geographical area and the main citizenship countries (1st of January 2004 and 2007)*

Geographical areas and the citizenship countries	1st of January 2004			1st of January 2007			Variation % MF in this period of time
	M	F	MF	M	F	MF	
EUROPE	423.600	490.020	913.620	629.282	756.224	1.394.506	52.6
E.U. 15	51.344	82.201	133.545	57.648	91.263	148.911	11.5
Countries that recently entered the E.U.:							
Poland	106.426	139.306	245.732	197.176	260.101	457.277	86.1
Romania	10.557	29.757	40.314	20.516	51.941	72.457	79.7
Bulgaria	86.754	91.058	177.812	162.154	180.046	342.200	92.5
	4.902	6.565	11.467	8.486	11.438	19.924	73.8
E.U. 27	157.770	221.507	379.277	254.824	351.364	606.188	59.8
Central and Eastern Europe:							
Albania	260.042	261.451	521.493	368.856	406.953	775.809	48.8
	155.082	115.301	270.383	209.209	166.738	375.947	39.0

Ukraine	8.551	49.420	57.971	23.058	97.012	120.070	107.1
Moldavia	6.607	13.038	24.645	19.488	36.315	55.803	126.4
Other European countries	5.788	7.062	12.850	5.602	6.907	12.509	-2.7
AFRICA	342.669	207.132	549.801	461.200	288.697	749.897	36.4
North Africa	244.166	136.114	380.280	328.538	193.995	522.533	37.4
Morocco	157.178	96.184	253.362	205.852	137.376	343.228	35.5
Tunis	45.775	22.855	68.630	58.294	30.638	88.932	29.6
Egypt	28.198	12.385	40.583	46.791	18.876	65.667	61.8
Other African countries:	98.503	71.018	169.521	132.662	94.702	227.364	34.1
Senegal	39.370	7.108	46.478	48.984	10.873	59.857	28.8
Ghana	16.910	12.342	29.252	20.729	15.811	36.540	24.9
ASIA	180.343	154.661	335.004	279.494	232.886	512.380	52.9
Eastern Asia:	79.706	94.758	174.464	124.462	140.426	264.888	51.8
China	45.688	41.050	86.738	76.739	68.146	144.885	67.0
Philippines	28.652	43.720	72.372	41.591	59.746	101.337	40.0
Other Asian countries:	100.637	59.903	160.540	155.032	92.460	247.492	54.2
India	27.465	17.326	44.791	42.275	27.229	69.504	55.2
AMERICA	63.940	124.515	188.455	101.735	177.225	278.960	48.0
North America	7.441	9.017	16.458	7.831	9.470	17.301	5.1
Central and South America:	56.499	115.498	171.997	93.904	167.755	261.659	52.1
Ecuador	11.343	22.163	33.506	27.004	41.876	68.880	105.6
Peru	15.824	27.185	43.009	25.884	40.622	66.506	54.6
OCEANIA	1046	1516	2.562	1.008	1.528	2.536	-1.0
Stateless	329	388	717	354	289	643	-10.3
TOTAL	1.011.927	978.232	1.990.159	1.473.073	1.465.849	2.938.922	47.7

Source: Istat, *La popolazione straniera in Italia al 1 gennaio 2007*, p. 6

The examination of data from the table above shows a strong increase of the number of foreigners that have arrived in Italy in the period 2004-2007. Compared to 2004, the number of those arrived from all over the Europe increased in 2007, with 52.6%. For those coming from the European Union (EU-27), the increase is even higher - 59.8%. Compared with 2006, the number of foreigners resident in Italy was much higher in 2007 due to the influx of citizens from Romania and Bulgaria, countries that on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2007 became members of the E.U. This explains why the number of Romanians grew by 92.5% in 2007 compared to 2004, while the number of Bulgarians with 73.8% (in absolute number the increase is small, but they still increased from 11,467 persons to 19,924 people in the years mentioned above). In the case of Romanian citizens, the increase is dramatic: from 17,812 in 2004 to

342,400 immigrant people in 2007. From Central and Eastern Europe had arrived in Italy 775,809 immigrants in 2007 compared with 2004, when 521,493 were recorded, resulting in an increase of 48.8%. Same important are the increases of citizens from Ukraine (107.1%) and the Republic of Moldova (126.4%).

Overall, Central and Eastern European countries, especially Romania and Bulgaria, have provided more than 1 million immigrants to Italy, which represents almost 39% of the total foreign population resident in Italy.

Asia continued to fuel the substantial flows of immigrants from Italy, the number of those coming from countries like China, Philippines, India, etc. reaching 512,380 people in 2007 (17% of all foreigners) comparative to 2004 (when there were 335,004 persons), resulting an increase of approximately 53% of the number of Asian origin foreigners. The most numerous are Chinese (144,885 in 2007) and Filipinos (101,377), while the Indians reach the number of 69,504 people.

A numerically significant group of immigrants in Italy is one of those coming from African countries. In 2007, their number reached 749,897 people (26% of total immigrants), increasing by 36.4% compared to 2004, when there were 549,801 people.

Depending on the geographic area of origin, the largest groups of immigrants in Italy are the citizens who came from Central and Eastern Europe (775,809 persons in 2007) and those of African origin (749,897). From African area we may mention those of Moroccan origin, who form a large community (343,228 people in 2007) and with old roots within the Italian Peninsula.

An increasing group of immigrants is one of those that have left from Central American countries (their share increased by 48% in 2007, compared to 2004). These are people who left Ecuador (68,880 people) or Peru (66,506 people) and came to Italy.

Some scientific studies reveal that the size of the number of foreigners in Italy is due not only to certain legislative measures, which have facilitated immigration, "but also to post-census adjustment operations, made in order to include in the documents those who were not included at the 2001 Census. The largest operation like this was done in Rome" (Istat, 2007, p. 5).

Analyzing immigrants by sex and country of origin shows us the following hierarchy of people coming to Italy and having legal residence documents (on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2003) (*Istat su dati del Ministero dell Interno*, p.107):

Table 6  
*Number of Immigrants, by sex and country of origin*

No.	Country	Male	Country	Female
1.	Morocco	113.384	Albania	70.693
2.	Albania	100.874	Morocco	57.362
3.	Romania	43.842	Romania	50.976
4.	Tunis	38.027	Philippines	42.408
5.	China	33.500	China	30.510
6.	Senegal	33.352	United States	29.741
7.	Egypt	24.026	Poland	25.282
8.	Philippines	23.167	Germany	21.450
9.	Yugoslavia	23.012	Peru	20.696
10.	India	20.199	Yugoslavia	17.225
11.	Sri Lanka	19.866	France	15.963
12.	Bangladesh	17.309	Sri Lanka	15.830
13.	Macedonia	16.882	Brazil	15.513
14.	Pakistan	16.512	Spain	14.244
15.	United States	15.901	India	14.125
16.	Germany	14.870	United Kingdom	13.819
17.	Ghana	12.006	Tunisia	13.110
18.	United Kingdom	10.672	Ukraine	11.875
19.	Peru	10.627	Nigeria	11.609
20.	France	10.311	Russia	10.334
21.	Poland	9.698	Macedonia	9.328
22.	Algeria	9.599	Dominican Republic	9.033
23.	Croatia	9.186	Switzerland	8.999
24.	Nigeria	7.899	Ecuador	8.528
25.	Bosnia-Herzegovina	7.250	Cuba	8.473
26.	Switzerland	6.853	Columbia	8.187
27.	Spain	6.686	Ghana	7.685
28.	Brazil	5.428	Croatia	7.672
29.	Argentina	5.292	Egypt	7.035
30.	Turkey	4.098	Argentina	5.974
31.	Greece	3.863	Bosnia-Herzegovina	5.526
32.	Ivory Coast	3.803	Moldova, Republic of	5.151
33.	Ecuador	3.753	Austria	5.128
34.	Bulgaria	3.583	Bulgaria	4.952
35.	Iran	3.426	Bangladesh	4.928
36.	Columbia	3.303	Japan	4.582
37.	Austria	3.126	Pakistan	4.104
38.	Ukraine	2.927	Eritrea	3.875
39.	The Netherlands	2.915	The Netherlands	3.848
40.	Mauritius	2.840	Senegal	3.607

No.	Country	Male	Country	Female
41.	Dominican Republic	2.761	Mauritius	3.567
42.	Japan	2.542	Greece	3.408
43.	Slovenia	2.472	Ivory Coast	3.319
44.	Russia	2.453	Czech Republic	3.215
45.	Belgium	2.128	Ethiopia	3.169
46.	Burkina Faso	2.117	Somalia	3.150
47.	Lebanon	2.113	Hungary	3.090
48.	Portugal	2.051	Cape Verde	3.047
49.	Moldova	1.960	Mexico	2.885
50.	Mexico	1.887	Turkey	2.748
51.	Other countries	50.725	Other countries	65.232
	Total	777.076	Total	726.210

Source: *Istat su dati del Ministero dell Interno*, data collected in 2006, p. 107

As we may see, in 2003, in the hierarchy of foreigners from Italy (on sex), were those who came from Morocco, Albania and Romania. In the category of females, first place was occupied by Morocco, Albania - the 2nd (with over 100,000 people, each of them), followed at a distance by Romania, Tunisia, China etc. Regarding the foreign males, we find Albania on the first place (over 70,000 women), then Morocco and Romania, on the third, each of the three countries with over 50 thousands women in Italy. We find also important percentages also at women from the Philippines, China, USA, Poland, Germany etc.

On 1st of January 2007, the first 16 countries with over 50,000 immigrants for Italy (each of them) were the following:

Table 7  
*Foreign population resident in Italy and the residence permits, on sex and citizenship countries (on the 1st of January 2007)*

Citizenship country	Foreign residents			Residence permits				
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	From which, presents from:	
							At least	
							5	10
							years	
Albania	209.209	166.738	375.947	159.715	122.935	282.650	57,5	22,3
Morocco	205.852	137.376	343.228	162.847	95.724	258.571	63,5	37,1
Romania	162.154	180.046	342.200	127.777	150.805	278.582	27,5	7,3
China	76.739	68.146	144.885	64.729	57.635	122.364	53,5	25,7
Ukraine	23.058	97.012	120.070	19.887	98.637	118.524	21,0	1,0

Citizenship country	Foreign residents			Residence permits				
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	From which, presents from:	
							At least 5 years	10 years
Philippines	41.591	59.746	101.337	29.225	47.188	76.413	75,0	55,8
Tunis	58.294	30.638	88.932	46.174	18.696	64.870	68,0	47,0
Macedonia	42.943	31.219	74.162	26.690	17.463	44.153	58,2	30,5
Poland	20.516	51.941	72.457	22.451	56.479	78.930	32,1	16,4
India	42.275	27.229	69.504	35.324	21.798	57.122	49,6	23,7
Ecuador	27.004	41.876	68.880	18.338	31.936	50.274	34,3	8,1
Peru	25.884	40.622	66.506	18.864	33.269	52.133	55,2	33,7
Egypt	46.791	18.876	65.667	38.789	10.763	49.552	55,8	34,3
Serbia and Montenegro	35.624	28.787	64.411	32.007	23.694	55.701	64,2	35,6
Senegal	48.984	10.873	59.857	42.991	6.814	49.805	71,3	50,4
Sri Lanka	31.667	25.078	56.745	25.641	19.316	44.957	66,7	38,9
Total 16 countries	1.098.585	1.016.203	2.114.788	871.449	813.152	1.684.601	50,4	25,3
TOTAL	1.473.073	1.465.849	2.938.922	1.198.452	1.216.520	2.414.972	50,5	26,2

Source: *Istat su dati del Ministero dell Interno*, data collected in 2006

It results that the same countries mentioned above, remain in the top, except that the share of immigrants is decreasing: Albania (375,947 foreign residents), Morocco (343,228) and Romania (342.200).

The examination of the residence permits from 2007 reveals that over half (50.5%) of the population legally present in Italy came from 16 countries (a total of 2,414,972 people) has a relatively a short presence in this country – less than 5 years. In the category of those who are in Italy for less than five years are the citizens of the Philippines (75% of the total population who came from this country are up to five years in Italy), those from Senegal (71.3%) of Tunisia (68%), Sri Lanka and Morocco (63.5%).

Among the immigrants with a long presence in Italy we may include Filipinos (55.8%), Senegalese (50.4%) and Tunisians (47%), which are in Italy for more than 10 years. Among countries with relatively recent emigration to Italy we may include Ukraine, Romania and Ecuador.

During 2010, 65,938 foreign citizens acquired the Italian citizenship, their number being with 11.1% bigger, comparing to the previous year. If we take into consideration the hierarchy of the first ten countries (by the immigrants' origin) the

first five places are occupied by Romania, Albania, Morocco, China and Ukraine. More than a half (2,314,000) of the total of immigrants are from these five countries (three are European, one is African and one is Asian):

Table 8  
*Number of immigrants from Italy (on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2011)*

No.	Country	Number of immigrants
	Romania	968.576
	Albania	482.627
	Morocco	452.424
	China	209.934
	Ukraine	200.730
	Philippines	134.154
	Moldova, Republic of	130.948
	India	121.036
	Poland	109.018
	Tunis	106.291
	Peru	98.603
	Ecuador	91.625
	Egypt	90.365
	Macedonia	89.900
	Bangladesh	82.451
	Sri Lanka	81.094
	Total 16 countries	3.449.715
	Total immigrants (Italy)	4.570.317

Source: Istat, *La popolazione straniera residente in Italia al 1 gennaio 2011*

From the table above we may observe that the most numerous foreign communities that of the Romanians: it reaches about 1 million persons and represents 21,2% of the total number of the foreigners from Italy.

The second community, numerically significant, is that of the Albanians (accounting for 10.6% of the total foreign population), followed by the Moroccans (9.9% of immigrants).

The conclusion that the Romanians represent the largest immigrant community in the Italy is evident also from the table below, the statistical data showing that they are a majority in 15 of the 20 administrative regions of Italy.

Table 9  
Share of foreigners in Italy (on regions and origin countries)

Region	First country	% of the total foreigners	Second country	% of the total foreigners	Third country	% of the total foreigners
Piemonte	Romania	34,4	Morocco	16,1	Albania	11,5
Valle d Aosta	Morocco	26,5	Romania	23,3	Albania	10,5
Lombardia	Romania	12,9	Morocco	10,3	Albania	9,4
Trentino Alto Adige	Albania	13,6	Romania	11,6	Morocco	9,1
Bolzano Bolzen	Albania	12,7	Germany	11,0	Morocco	8,1
Trento	Romania	17,6	Albania	14,4	Morocco	10,0
Veneto	Romania	20,2	Morocco	11,4	Albania	8,4
Friuli Venezia Giulia	Romania	18,7	Albania	12,4	Serbia	8,6
Liguria	Ecuador	17,6	Albania	16,7	Romania	12,0
Emilia Romagna	Morocco	14,1	Romania	13,2	Albania	12,1
Toscana	Romania	21,2	Albania	18,8	China	8,7
Umbria	Romania	24,4	Albania	17,0	Morocco	10,4
Marche	Romania	15,7	Albania	15,0	Morocco	10,0
Lazio	Romania	36,2	Philippines	5,9	Poland	4,5
Abruzzo	Romania	27,6	Albania	17,0	Morocco	7,1
Molise	Romania	34,9	Morocco	12,6	Albania	8,6
Campania	Ukraine	22,8	Romania	17,8	Morocco	8,1
Puglia	Albania	23,8	Romania	23,6	Morocco	8,0
Basilicata	Romania	41,4	Albania	11,2	Morocco	9,8
Calabria	Romania	32,2	Morocco	16,1	Ukraine	8,3
Sicilia	Romania	28,4	Tunisia	11,9	Morocco	9,0
Sardinia	Romania	26,2	Morocco	11,7	China	7,6
Total Italia	Romania	21,2	Albania	10,6	Morocco	9,9

Source: Istat, *La popolazione straniera residente in Italia al 1 gennaio 2011*, p. 9

## Conclusions

The consequences of the global economic crisis and the economic and demographic contrasts that currently exist in the world (and the devastating effects of natural disasters will put further influence on the territorial mobility of population in different parts of the world. Those who belong to the younger generation will be not only the most committed to radically change their own condition of life, but the most qualified to assume the entry into the international trend of migration. The analyze of the world population by geographic region indicates the predominance of young people in

underdeveloped regions (80% of young people are living in these areas of the world) and their low share in developed societies (20% of all existing youth around the world).

Therefore, it is not only assumable, but also expected in the future a massive emigration of young people from underdeveloped countries to developed ones. According to the last U.N. estimations, if the number of the immigrants will continue to rise in the same rhythm like in the last 20 years, their total numbers will reach, till 2050, 405 millions. The international migration, along with its opportunities and challenges represents and it will continue to represent a subject of interest for the literature and the researches on this topic. Taking into consideration the evolution of the number of immigrants in Italy, during the last two decades, particularly within the current global economic-financial crisis (Nicolaescu, 2011, p. 114) we may conclude that the immigration represents one of the most relevant aspects of the contemporary Italian society.

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# SOUTH ASIAN WOMEN AND THE LABOUR MARKET IN THE UK: ATTITUDES, BARRIERS, SOLUTIONS

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***Abstract:** This paper draws on research carried out in the UK which examined the views of South Asian women towards employment, looking in particular at why the participation rate of Bangladeshi and Pakistani women in the labour market is very low. The focus of the paper is on non-working women. The research was aimed at informing policy design, so that policies intended to assist certain groups of people enter, or get closer to entering, the labour market might be more effective. The research involved carrying interviews with 212 Bangladeshi and Pakistani women in West Yorkshire, a sub-region of the UK with a relatively high Asian population. 26 focus groups were also carried out. It is argued that there are three broad groups of South Asian women in relation to employment: women who are some distance from the labour market; women who wish to enter paid work; and women who do currently work but require support. There are different policy implications for each of these groups. The paper concludes that the barriers to labour market entry are deep-seated, complex, and rooted in cultural, familial, and societal norms. It provides a case study of an innovative programme which was piloted in a nearby sub-region of the UK, South Yorkshire, which was tailor-made to meet the specific needs of South Asian women and was very successful. The paper argues that this could provide a template for programmes in the future aimed at assisting groups facing challenges in relation to labour market entry, such as minority ethnic women.*

***Key words:** ethnicity; gender; work; aspirations; attitudes; employability policy.*

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## 1. Introduction

Bangladeshi and Pakistani women are more likely to be unemployed or economically inactive than any other group in the labour market in the UK (Nandi and Platt, 2010, p.6). Orthodox economic regeneration policies have largely failed to reach such groups of people in any meaningful or lasting way thus provoking a need for a re-evaluation of strategies aimed at boosting local economies and getting people into paid work, and this paper outlines a potential way forward in assisting minority ethnic groups to enter the labour market.

Participation rates in the labour market in the UK among certain groups of people have traditionally been very low. The participation rate of South Asian women, in particular, has been low, especially women of Bangladeshi or Pakistani origin. Figures published in 2010 show that non-employment, both unemployment and economic inactivity was 80 per cent among Bangladeshi and Pakistani women, compared to 30 to 50 per cent for other women (Nandi and Platt, 2010, p.6). This is a potential loss for the individual concerned and for the economy in general. This paper draws on primary research carried out in a sub-region of the UK, West Yorkshire, with a relatively high Asian population - over 10 per cent for the sub-region as a whole, and over 20 per cent for one of the larger cities within it, Bradford, - compared to less than 6 per cent for England and Wales (*The Guardian*, 2011). The paper examines the potential explanations for this low level of labour market participation, examining: the attitudes and aspirations of Pakistani and Bangladeshi non-working women; the ways in which they can be supported to enter the labour market; and provides a case study of one specific attempt at micro-intervention, implemented in Sheffield, South Yorkshire, UK, in 2006, which *did* achieve considerable success in relation to assisting South Asian women into, or at least closer to, the labour market. This novel approach was pioneered in three multi-ethnic, relatively deprived, areas of the city. Known as the *Ethnic Minority Women's Employability Project*, it was an innovative package designed to be culturally-sensitive and also to deploy new tools in assisting South Asian women. The project is worth recording and critically appraising because, with high unemployment across Europe, often concentrated among particular groups of people, and with higher numbers of people from minority ethnic groups than ever before in the UK and in other parts of Europe, new and innovative policies will be needed to bring about effective economic regeneration that can help individuals find paid work.

The paper, firstly, outlines the methodology employed in the primary research in West Yorkshire, England. Secondly, it reviews some of the barriers to labour market participation as outlined in existing literature. Thirdly, it looks at the educational backgrounds of the Pakistani and Bangladeshi women who were researched, examines their employment experiences, and shows that they can be categorised

into different groups. This aspect is important when turning to policy design later in the paper. Fourthly, the paper addresses barriers relating to peer pressure, discrimination, and aspirations. Fifthly, the paper outlines support needed to assist South Asian women in the labour market. The paper then outlines a strategy which was implemented to assist South Asian women into the labour market in Sheffield, South Yorkshire. Finally some conclusions are provided.

## **2. Methods**

Literature outlining the barriers to Pakistani and Bangladeshi women entering paid employment, and explanations for their low level of entry into the labour market, already existed prior to the primary research which was carried out across five local authority districts in West Yorkshire in 2007 (see for example, ANISSA UK, 2005; Ahmad, Modood, and Lissenburgh, 2003; Modood, Berthoud, Lakey, Nazroo, Smith et al, 1997). The aim of the research in West Yorkshire, however, was to go *beyond* an examination of those barriers, to explore Pakistani and Bangladeshi women's aspirations and views towards paid employment that would lead to practical policy proposals which could assist them to realise their potential and enter paid employment. A series of research tools were used in order to extract this information, primarily drawing upon qualitative methods.

Firstly, a literature review was carried out which focused on an examination of barriers to Pakistani and Bangladeshi women on a national, regional and local level, as well as seeking out additional research that examined the employment aspirations of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, for example Botcherby (2006). The information collected during this stage of the research provided a base from which to develop and fine-tune the empirical research questions and issues.

Secondly, 212 face-to-face, in-depth, semi-structured, interviews with non-working Pakistani and Bangladeshi women living in West Yorkshire were carried out. To make sure that a cross section of the population was reached, a sampling frame was developed with target interview numbers for each of the five local authority districts in West Yorkshire. Efforts were made to ensure that the views of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women of different ages were captured.

Within each local authority district, wards with key concentrations of Pakistani and Bangladeshi residents were highlighted and, as far as possible, interviews took place across these wards. Interviewers used a variety of mechanisms for identifying women to be interviewed, including visiting local community centres, parent and toddler sessions, attending community events in parks, visiting shops, markets, calling at people's homes. The objective was to seek out people who do not usually participate in research and to 'take the research to them'.

'Community researchers' were recruited to maximise the effectiveness of the research itself and to provide a capacity-building exercise for those who got involved. These researchers were drawn from the community being researched. The vast majority of the interviews were carried out by Pakistani and Bangladeshi women living in West Yorkshire, all of whom received initial training and on-going support. This method ensured that it was possible to identify women who were suitable and willing to be interviewed. The interviews took place in English, Punjabi and Bengali. The majority of those interviewed spoke some English, ranging from the highest proportion at 87 per cent in Leeds, to the lowest at 73 per cent in Calderdale. However, the level of English spoken varied substantially from very good at one end of the scale, to some women who could understand English but could speak only a few sentences.

Twenty six focus groups with non-working, as well as with working, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women were held across the five local authority districts, each of which followed a set of pre-defined issues/questions, to ensure consistency for analytical purposes. As part of the deliberate strategy to seek people out and reach people in places where they felt comfortable, the focus groups took place at a range of local community centre venues.

To capture the views, aspirations and perceptions of different Pakistani and Bangladeshi women across the sub-region effectively, it was felt important to deploy a variety of techniques. It was recognised that some women had valuable contributions to make but often feel unable to contribute through the conventional interview and focus group mechanisms. The research methodology, therefore, encompassed 13 interactive poster displays which were located in key venues across the sub-region frequented by Pakistani and Bangladeshi women. The methodological approach was created with the aim of being as inclusive as possible, and to hear the real stories of people so that policy guidance could be as effective as possible. In total, 1,112 Pakistani and Bangladeshi women were consulted, 212 through the in-depth interviews, 139 through the 26 focus groups, and 761 through the 13 interactive poster displays.

### ***3. Identifying perceived barriers of labour market entry for South Asian women through existing literature***

To help inform the empirical study, a review of existing literature was carried out which identified a number of categories of labour market barriers facing South Asian women, including: education; language; employment experience; cultural and societal norms; and discrimination. Each of these are summarised below and returned to in sections 4 and 5, which outline the empirical research findings.

### *Education*

Black and minority ethnic individuals in general clearly face educational barriers. Tackey, Casebourne, Aston, Ritchie, and Sinclair et al (2006, p.2) note that people of Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage have the lowest levels of education and qualifications among people migrating to Britain aged 16 and over. Seeking reasons for the lack of educational achievement in an earlier study, Bhavnani (1994, p. 43), criticised teachers and careers services for the lack of guidance that had been given to South Asian women when they were at school. ANISSA (2005) reported similar findings from the women they interviewed, stating: 'Pakistani girls were marginalised because we were stereotyped, thinking all Pakistani girls get married at 16'. Several women surveyed by ANISSA felt that their parents had not encouraged them at school but that their male counterparts had been encouraged. A study by Tyrer and Ahmad (2006, p.31) found that it is important for careers services to have staff trained in, and who have an understanding of, the specific barriers facing Muslim women in education and the labour market.

Other research, carried out through the Economic and Social Research Council's Future of Work Programme by the Cathie Marsh Centre for Census and Survey Research at the University of Manchester, and utilising data from the 1991 and 2001 Censuses, highlighted the increase in uptake of higher qualifications amongst young South Asian women, especially those of the Pakistani and Bangladeshi women (Dale, Shaheen, Kalra and Fieldhouse, 2000). This indicates that some of the educational barriers may be lessening, at least for some, often younger, second or third generation Pakistani and Bangladeshi women.

### *Language*

Fluency of English obviously affects the ability of women to enter paid employment. Learning English and attending appropriate classes is not always easy due to a range of issues such as lack of availability, childcare, other caring and domestic responsibilities. Ahmad et al's (2003) survey also found that some women, especially Bangladeshi women, were concerned about attending colleges in the UK for fear of being 'westernised'. Research carried out for the Department for Work and Pensions (Tackey et al., 2006, p.2), noted that people of Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage have the lowest level of English language proficiency of all the major minority ethnic groups. It pointed to the Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities in 1997, which found that only four per cent of Bangladeshi and only 28 per cent of Pakistani women aged 45-64 years spoke English fluently or well. Fluency in English, Tackey et al (2006) argued, increases people's probability of being employed by up to 25 per cent. Moreover, it put forward the view that poor English impacts negatively upon the views of prospective employers.

Data from the 2011 Census shows that this is a growing issue overall, as a decade of relatively high inward migration has increased the number of households in the country where no one speaks English to three million (Swinford, 2012, p.1). In many parts of London, for example, a quarter or more households do not have anyone for whom English is the main language. In Newham, the east London borough where the Olympics were hosted in 2012, 24.3 per cent of households have no one who speaks English as a main language (Bingham, 2012, p.1).

### *Employment experience*

Disadvantage in the labour market for people of Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage overall arises, according to Tackey, Casebourne, Aston, Ritchie, and Sinclair et al (2006, p.2) because they have 'substantial' problems in relation to what they call human capital. 'Human capital', they argue, 'is the possession of high level qualifications, vocational skills and real world experience of work.' These challenges facing minority ethnic women in relation to the UK labour market were highlighted as recently as December 2012 in a report by the all-party Parliamentary group on race and community (comprised of Members of the House of Commons and the House of Lords), which found that large sections of minority ethnic women are more than twice as likely to be unemployed as their white counterparts. The report found that: 'Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are particularly affected, with 20.5 per cent being unemployed compared to 6.8 per cent of white women, and 17.7 per cent of black women also being unemployed.' Moreover, this higher unemployment rate covers all age groups. The report also states that the rate of joblessness for minority ethnic women has failed to come down in the past three decades. Moreover, evidence from the Equal Opportunities Commission (2006) in *Moving on up? Bangladeshi, Pakistani, and Black Caribbean Women and Work*, found that when minority ethnic women are in work they are segregated into certain jobs. The report showed that 32 per cent of Bangladeshi women work in just five occupations, compared to 24 per cent of white women. Nevertheless, Ahmad et al's work (2003) showed that where Asian women have been employed they can act as positive role models and can pave the way for other women in their family and/or community to remain in education or enter the labour market.

### *Cultural and societal norms*

Literature frequently emphasises the importance of traditional cultural values in the family, community, and societal spheres and discusses the impact that this has on perceptions of women's role in the labour market. It has been argued that lower rates of labour market participation by Bangladeshi and Pakistani women is due partly to

religious and cultural factors in Muslim communities, where women are firmly located within the domestic sphere (Modood, Berthoud, Lakey, Nazroo, Smith et al, 1997). Ahmad et al (2003) suggests that parental influence is important in the education of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women beyond the age of 16 and also in their participation and progression in paid work. Other findings, based on research in Oldham, demonstrates that remaining economically active after marriage is recognised by Pakistani and Bangladeshi women as requiring negotiation between the husband and mother-in-law and the woman herself (Dale et al, 2000).

ANISSA's (2005) report which examined barriers to employment suggests that, for many South Asian women, gaining employment is not necessarily seen as a priority, and that many of these women make a decision to stay at home, a choice made freely. Ahmad et al (2003) say that, of the women spoken to in their survey, many of the Pakistani and Bangladeshi women with young children preferred to look after their children themselves rather than leave their child with a non-family member. This was, in part, due to distrust of a stranger, but also due to the cost of childcare. Badawi (2007) explains in his article, Gender in Equity in Islam Basic Principles, how leaving children in the care of 'others' is at odds with Islamic culture, 'Islam regards her [woman's] role in society as a mother and a wife as her most sacred and essential one. Neither maids nor baby sitters can possibly take the mother's place as the educator of an upright, complex-free, and carefully reared child'. As Ahmad et al (2003) comments, this supports the general view that childcare still poses a significant barrier to employments amongst Pakistani and Bangladeshi women in particular.

Other authors (Anwar, 1999; Griffin, 1995; Khanum, 1990) suggest that some fathers encourage their daughters to do well at school but that this is primarily because 'an educated daughter can be seen as an advantage towards a dowry package.' However, Ahmad et al (2003) also point out that sometimes success is seen to change the individual women and they may become less accepted by other women in their community. The example provided is a Bangladeshi architect who designs fashion catwalks around the world and was hugely successful. She was seen to 'stand out' at events like weddings because of her expensive designer clothes and bags.

### *Discrimination*

Numerous authors have postulated that minority ethnic women face disadvantage, discrimination and stereotyping in employment because of their gender and race (for example, Ahmad, et al, 2003; Bhavnani, Mirza, and Meetoo, 2005). These findings were reinforced by a Great Britain wide investigation into the participation, pay and progression of ethnic minority women in the labour market carried out in 2005 by the

Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), which focussed on Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women (EOC, 2006). This research involved a survey of 812 Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Black Caribbean and White British women in London, Birmingham, Bradford and Leeds. The survey focussed on three themes: aspirations, experiences and choices (Botcherby, 2006). One way in which discrimination can manifest itself is in relation to the ability of individuals to obtain work. Botcherby's research (2006) showed that around half minority ethnic women reported they had often, or sometimes, had difficulty finding a job, compared to about one third of white women. Furthermore, the same research concluded that one in five minority ethnic women compared to one in ten white women often work in a job below their potential because no one would employ them at the level they were qualified for. Minority ethnic women in Botcherby's (2006) sample were more likely to state that they often or sometimes have seen less qualified/experienced people promoted above them, this being especially so for Pakistani and Black Caribbean women.

More recently, the all-party Parliamentary group on race and community report, previously mentioned, stated that some minority ethnic women removed their hijab or made their names sound more English to try to beat discrimination in securing a job (Dodd, 2012, p.1). The report argued that prejudice and discrimination were responsible for a quarter of the higher rate of unemployment faced by women from Pakistani, Bangladeshi and other black communities. The role of discrimination in preventing labour market entry was corroborated by Tackey et al (2006, p.2) who also argued that it had impacted negatively on labour market outcomes, noting that 'Ethnic penalty is most severe for Pakistani and Bangladeshi men and women.'

#### ***4. The position of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women in West Yorkshire in relation to education and employment***

The findings from the interviews and focus groups carried out with Pakistani and Bangladeshi women across West Yorkshire revealed that there are a whole range of issues which affect the extent to which Pakistani and Bangladeshi women undertake paid work, including caring responsibilities, education, community values, family perceptions and values, perceptions of Islamic culture, parental influence, existence of positive role models, class, wealth, and length of time they have been in the UK.

##### ***Experiences of education***

In terms of education, three broad categories of women emerged: those with no or little formal education; those whose education was curtailed; and those who were well educated. Some women, around 11 per cent of those interviewed, had no formal education, they had not been to school at all. When they came to England they often

had no understanding of the English language. Women falling into this category tended to be older, 35 years of age or more, first generation migrants. Many of these women were from poorer families and had been brought up in rural villages in either Pakistan or Bangladesh. Their families could not afford to send them to school, and/or as girls they were not expected to go to school and therefore they had no formal education. When they became teenagers, these women were often educated by their mothers. They were taught about two key issues, firstly about the Islamic faith which included reading the Koran, and secondly 'how to be a good wife', involving teaching them how to cook, prepare meals, and undertake domestic duties such as cleaning, washing and so on. A Pakistani mother of three, for example, 46 years old, said: *"I only went to school for a few months, the idea of working was never a consideration, it was expected that you get married and look after the children, school is not important to our families for us [women]"*.

A second group of women had been educated in Pakistan, Bangladesh or in England, frequently to school leaving age and often, but not always, had gained formal qualifications. Their qualifications included nationally recognised examination-based qualifications gained at school at standard and advanced level, and even degrees. Of the 212 women who were interviewed, 38 per cent had gained formal qualifications. Although women educated in England clearly had different educational experiences from those educated in Pakistan and Bangladesh, the common denominator between them was that they were *not permitted to continue their education beyond a certain level*. Some of the women might not have wanted to continue to study anyway, but many of those who were interviewed explained that they did not have a choice. All of these women claimed that their education was cut short by the fact that they 'had to get married', or sometimes to help care for members of their extended family. All of these women had arranged marriages and explained that as they were growing up they always knew that at some stage they would be expected to get married. As a Bangladeshi mother of five, aged 35, said: *"I dreamt of education, but it was not an option for me. I knew I'd have to get married at a young age and had to leave dreams of education and qualifications behind"*.

Some of the women were happy to get married and considered this part of life, something that they never questioned. For them, that was their life course. They always knew it was, and they accepted that. A Bangladeshi mother of two, aged 25, said, for example, *"I went to school in Bangladesh. I knew that I would be a housewife and mother some day....I am very happy to be a housewife and to stay that way and don't want that to change. I am happy as a wife and mother and don't want to work."*

The existence of this view amongst some Pakistani and Bangladeshi women was confirmed through the responses to the interactive poster display, where 10 per cent of those engaging with the display said that they could identify with the image of a woman who *'is happy looking after the family and doesn't want to work'*.

A smaller number of other women had faced a much more challenging time. They strongly resisted marriage and this often resulted in them being given a choice by their parents of marriage or discontinuing contact with their parents. In order to satisfy their parents' wishes, most women in this category eventually agreed to an arranged marriage. There was some evidence from the interviews with this group of women that things are starting to change, however, and many women whose education was stifled so they could marry and start a family said that they would not want the same thing to happen to their own daughters, and that their daughters are being encouraged to pursue their education.

What is interesting is that for a large proportion of this group of women who pursued their education until they had a marriage arranged for them, parental encouragement was highlighted as a key factor which enabled them to gain their qualifications. This links to the research carried out by Ahmad *et al* (2003), mentioned earlier, which concluded that parental influence is important in the education of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women beyond the age of 16 and also in their participation and progression in paid work. In particular, women in West Yorkshire mentioned their fathers and uncles and, to a lesser extent their mothers, as key sources of encouragement when they were at school. However, these parents then effectively halted their daughter's educational achievement by arranging marriages for them and then expecting them to have children and stop their studies.

As one Pakistani woman, aged 60, said: *"mothers and fathers especially want their daughters to do well at school, it's a pride thing. They might even encourage their daughters to go to University. But then they are expected to marry. The education is to say that 'our family can do it' not to get them a job or career."*

Her daughter, aged 40: *"Yes, and then there are all sorts of problems, the woman might have been educated and has been taught to think for herself, has raised aspirations and then she is expected to get married and is much less likely to want to go along with that than if she'd not been educated to such a high level"*.

The reasons for this paradox – parental encouragement in education followed by parental pressure for educational curtailment – are many faceted. As noted above, 'honour' and family pride may be one factor. Evidence from the experiences of research team itself, together with some of the existing literature mentioned earlier (Anwar, 1999; Griffin, 1995; Khanum, 1990), suggests that one of the reasons that some fathers encourage their daughters to do well at school is that 'an educated daughter can be seen as an advantage towards a dowry package' and so having an educated daughter has a particular advantage *'if only for the prestige in the marriage market'* (Khanum, 1990, p.13). This latter perception was supported in discussions held in a focus group of professional Pakistani women.

A third, much smaller group, comprised of women who tended to be fairly young, in their early twenties, and had been educated to at least degree level, often in England but also in Pakistan and Bangladesh too. 24 of the 212 women (11 per cent) who were interviewed possessed a degree, a slightly higher proportion of these being Pakistani than Bangladeshi (31 per cent and 26 per cent respectively). Around two thirds of those educated to degree standard (16 women) were highly ambitious and motivated, and had decided that they were going to have a career and delay both marriage and childbirth. Some of these well educated young women had 'love' partners and had decided not to have an arranged marriage.

The key difference between these well educated women and those in the two earlier categories was social class. The well educated were more likely to come from 'professional and managerial' families, whose fathers worked in relatively well paid occupations. Often female members of their family - their mothers, sisters and aunts - had worked too. Again this confirms what was found in the study by Ahmad *et al* (2003) where women pointed to other women working and studying within the family such as older sisters, mothers, cousins or aunts who acted as positive role models for them, and therefore paved the way for them to remain in education or enter the labour market.

#### *Experiences of paid work*

The vast majority of the women who were interviewed across West Yorkshire had little, if any, experience of paid work. Many women (42 per cent) stated that they had never worked in the formal economy and had not had any experience of paid work. This pattern was similar for both Pakistani and Bangladeshi women. Looking at the women who *did* have experience of paid work, however, three broad categories emerged and again, this has implications for policy design and response.

The first group of women had gained work experience whilst studying. This was a relatively small group of women who were highly educated, often to degree level, and had gained work experience while studying for their degree or as part of a work placement for their degree. A second group was working out of necessity, to supplement the family income. One of the principal driving forces behind these women entering the labour market appears to have been their need to purchase a house and pay off the mortgage as quickly as possible as debt associated with mortgages is something that they are not comfortable with. Some of these women worked in the formal sector of the economy, though others were in the *informal* sector, often working as home workers making food items such as samosas and clothes for very little financial reward. They worked out of financial necessity but were unable to obtain work in the formal economy. Research by the National Group on Home working (2004) demonstrated that a large proportion of South Asian women

working from home are unaware of legislation regarding the minimum wage in Britain and are working for much less than the legal hourly rate. They also have a lack of understanding of working conditions, insurance and rights.

A third group of women had had their work experience interrupted. These tended to be younger, second or third generation migrants, who had chosen to work, gained work experience prior to having children, but had not been able to, or not wished to, return to paid employment because of their child and other care responsibilities, and the domestic duties they were expected to fulfil. The types of jobs that the women in this category had undertaken were concentrated into a narrow range of relatively low paid, part-time, stereotypical feminine occupations such as shop assistants, packing in factories, school dinner assistants and sometimes teaching assistants. This evidence corroborates that of the Equal Opportunities Commission (2006) mentioned earlier which shows that minority ethnic women and Bangladeshi women, in particular, work in a small number of occupations, compared to white women.

### ***5. Non-educational barriers to labour market entry***

The extensive consultations with Pakistani and Bangladeshi women provided a strong understanding of the barriers that face them in relation to entering the paid labour market. Barriers relating to education and employment experience facing many Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are examined above. This section looks at three other broad categories of barriers: peer pressure; discrimination; and aspirations.

#### *Peer pressure*

Some non-working women interviewed who had worked in the past explained that they were perceived to be 'different', almost outcasts, by their own community. This was particularly noticeable amongst older, first generation migrants who had worked when they first came to the country up to forty years ago. In one focus group, for example, a 60 year old woman who worked at the local confectionary factory on the production line when she first arrived in the UK said that other Asian women in her community would talk about her when she went into the local shops saying that she was 'a loose woman'. She said: "you see they didn't know about work, they had never worked, they assumed that I was going to a place that was full of men. Actually all the workers on the production line were women". The general consensus amongst the women who were interviewed and who participated in the focus groups was that things had changed a lot since then but that the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities often continued to hold perceptions and make judgements about women who worked, particularly if they were different in some way, for example very successful, in a senior position, or in a stereotypical masculine occupation. This is

interesting as it supports the research carried out by Ahmad *et al* (2003) which demonstrated that sometimes working women are perceived in certain ways by others in their community and that sometimes success is seen to change the individual women and they may become less accepted by other women in their community.

This peer pressure is often intensified through the attitudes of the extended family and affects women's abilities to work further still. A focus group of graduates at University of Bradford confirmed this, with participants stating that: "families are always under pressure from extended family members to stop their daughters working". Family and community pressure not to work was also discussed in the other focus groups. The traditional view of family life, where the wife is expected to stay at home and care for the family, was described as the norm by many focus group participants. One key obstacle to work, then, was that it was not culturally acceptable for women to work outside of the home in the same way that it was for men. Views of husbands, parents, and parents-in-law appeared to be particularly important in determining whether women would be able to enter and remain in paid employment. This was a common reoccurring theme, although there was also evidence to suggest that it was becoming more acceptable within many families and within many communities for women to work. As a professional Pakistani woman said: „*People in the community have accepted the fact that Asian women will work. Even though maybe ten years ago it was frowned upon if a woman was to work*".

### *Discrimination at work*

Another collection of barriers to Pakistani and Bangladeshi women entering the labour market relates to discrimination. Evidence from the research in West Yorkshire confirms what has already be written by other authors (such as Ahmad, et al, 2003; Bhavnani, Mirza, and Meetoo, 2005) to some extent, with numerous examples cited of Asian women, including graduates, finding it difficult to obtain employment. Some Pakistani graduates, for example, had difficulties finding work that they were qualified for and stated that they had to fall back on work at local call centres. As one Pakistani young woman said at a focus group: "*Finding work is not the problem, the jobs are there week after week advertised, but they don't want to give them to you, you see it when you go for an interview they don't want a Paki for the job*".

This kind of discrimination, which was also mentioned by Botcherby (2006), where minority ethnic women were found to be working below their ability in the workplace, was not mentioned frequently in the research in West Yorkshire but this may be because the majority of the women who were interviewed were non-working, and had a lack of experience of working in the formal paid labour market. However, some of the working women who participated in the focus groups suggested that they had

been overlooked for promotion or that they had to work twice as hard as non-Asian women in order to obtain promotion.

Furthermore, the focus group of graduates pointed out that they face discrimination in relation to the types of contracts they are offered in comparison to white workers, and also in their abilities to achieve promotion: *“I worked for [a big local authority], and in our department all the Asian workers were always on temporary contracts, or part-time contracts”*.

### *Wearing traditional dress*

The non-working women in West Yorkshire were asked specifically about how they would feel about wearing traditional dress including the hijab at work. Most women explained that they would wear the types of clothes that they normally wear. So, for example, women who tend to wear western clothes on a daily basis stated that they would continue to do this if they undertook paid work. Other women who wear the hijab on a daily basis, for example, stated that they would continue to wear the hijab if they obtained paid work. Because so few of the women who were interviewed had any experience of paid work, it was not possible to explore in more detail their experiences of wearing traditional dress at work and the extent to which this affected the way in which they were treated or perceived. However, this subject was raised in many of the focus groups by the women themselves, particularly amongst those who were currently working. A Bangladeshi mother of two, aged 45, said: *“It’s like if you wear the hijab and for a job, you know they are not going to give you the job, they don’t have to say anything, the look says it all. I worked at a bank and was the assistant manager there and always thought I would reach management position, then I went to Hajj and when I came back I decided to wear the hijab. I lasted six months. They indiscriminately made my working life impossible. I left and started to work at another bank, never went beyond the front desk. If your face, or more so your dress sense, don’t fit you don’t get the job”*.

Similar issues around dress also emerged in a focus group held in West Yorkshire of Pakistani graduates, and another focus group of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women. As one said: *“I know and have heard if you dress as Pakistani you won’t get the job, if you dress as a white you will be more successful in getting the job”*.

### *Knowledge of the English language*

Women attending the focus groups often felt that their less than perfect command of the English language and, additionally, the impact of this lack of English on health and safety issues, was often being used as an excuse not to employ them. This was

a source of annoyance to many of the women who, in one group, contrasted this to the way they perceive their east European counterparts are dealt with: *“but what I don’t understand is that they tell us we can’t work because we don’t have the language skills, and don’t have the understanding of health and safety procedures, but yet they employ eastern European women who don’t speak English”*.

### *Aspirations*

A central element of the study in West Yorkshire was to establish information about the aspirations and ambitions of Pakistani and Bangladeshi non-working women. Previous studies on minority ethnic women had focused on the barriers and obstacles to them entering paid work, but the aim of this research in West Yorkshire was to go beyond that and discover what they wanted to achieve in their lives. The women were asked, therefore, about their aspirations when they were younger at school, as they grew up, and their aspirations now for the future. Again different broad categories of women seemed to emerge from the interviews.

The first category of women did not have any ambitions or ideas about work or education when they were of school age. These women expected to grow up, get married, have children and take care of older relatives, if and when that was required. Women falling into this category tended to be comprised of those without any formal education, and those with formal education and qualifications but whose education was halted through arranged marriages and subsequent childbirth. For many of these women ‘marrying into a good and wealthy family’ was their ‘ambition’ for the future. Almost half the women who were interviewed stated that they had no ambitions in relation to paid work when they were of school age, a pattern similar for both Pakistani and Bangladeshi women. They had very low aspirations for the future. Asked ‘if they could do anything at all if their life what would they like to do?’ often this group of women had difficulty answering the question. A 57 year old Pakistani mother of six, made the following statement which was typical of this group of women: *“The only ambition for girls from the village was to get married into good family not too far from my parents’ home.”*

The second category of women were those who had ideas and ambitions when they were at school about jobs they would have liked to pursue in the future but who did not manage to fulfil these ambitions, again primarily because they married at a young age and had children. Just over two fifths (43 per cent) of those who were interviewed fell into this category. Pakistani women were slightly more likely to say that they had ambitions towards work that they did not pursue than Bangladeshi women (50 per cent and 41 per cent respectively). Women falling into this category varied, as did their ideas and ambitions. Some had no formal education, some had qualifications from Pakistan and Bangladesh, some had nationally recognised qualifications from UK schools and

colleges, and some had degrees. Some mentioned occupations such as school teacher, teaching assistant, nursery nurse, hairdresser and beautician, jobs which are clearly stereotypical feminine occupations. Very few of the women had ambitions and aspirations beyond these gender stereotypes. Many of the women had married early, often between the age of 16 and 25, although sometimes as young as 14 (in Bangladesh). The typical life-course was to marry early, become pregnant not long after marriage and then spend their life rearing and caring for their children, carrying out domestic duties around the home and, sometimes, caring for older relatives too. For these women the ideas and ambitions that they had at school age seem to be in the distant past and now they seem to have almost 'given up' on those ideas and ambitions and are settled on a life at home, caring, cooking and cleaning.

Around a half of this second category of women (45 women) now appear to be quite happy with this domestic and caring role in life and, in fact, explain that although at one time they would have liked to have worked they are currently quite happy with their family life and would not want to work now. This pattern was exactly the same (in terms of percentages) for both Pakistani and Bangladeshi women. Moreover, when asked 'if they could do anything they wanted in their life what would they like to do?' Most of these women do not really have any clear ideas beyond what they are currently doing. As a Bangladeshi mother of one, aged 23, said: *"I don't have an ideal job. My family is my job. ...I don't know what I want to do, just to look after my family and my husband."*

The remainder of this second category of women who had ideas and ambitions about particular jobs or occupations when they were younger, but were unable to fulfil their ambitions because they got married early and had children, felt frustrated and would now like to pursue paid employment. 46 of the 91 women who had ambitions at school age but did not pursue them fell into this category. This pattern was almost identical for Pakistani and Bangladeshi women. Some women changed the types of jobs that they would like to carry out since their school days, but many would still like to pursue their dream job. As a Pakistani mother of three, aged 34, said: *"I wanted to be a social worker but had to get married early, had children, and then got divorced, so it was difficult to have a career. Originally I'd planned to get a good job then to get married. I ran away to a refuge when I was younger because I didn't want to marry so young. My mother then arranged a second marriage for me so I'd have a companion.... I would still like to be a care worker or social worker...It's annoying that I can't do my dream job"*

For many of these women, early marriage, followed by childbirth and caring responsibilities for their children and sometimes for older relatives, has acted as a barrier for them pursuing and achieving their employment goal. Some of these women were very well educated to undergraduate level but still had difficulties achieving their goal due to family caring and domestic responsibilities. As a Pakistani

mother of two, aged 28, said: *"I got my degree and then was sent to Pakistan to get married against my wishes. I wanted to be a lawyer and travel but I won't be able to do this now I have a husband and children...maybe when the children are grown up but then it'll be too late"*.

The women who were consulted and fell into this category – wanting to work but unable to do so – explained that they face a range of different barriers. Some women faced multiple barriers: a lack of affordable childcare; their potential earnings being less than welfare benefits; pressure from the extended family; and a lack of confidence.

One of the key issues that emerged as a barrier was the lack of availability of affordable childcare. The issue of whether or not it was financially worthwhile to work was also mentioned in relation to the benefits system and levels of pay. Some of the women in the focus groups said they thought that they would often be better off financially by claiming state benefits than obtaining a low paid job, particularly if they had to pay for childcare. There were then women who desperately wanted to work but their husbands or in-laws were preventing them. As a Pakistani mother of three, aged 21, said: *"I want to work when my youngest child goes to school but my husband won't like it. He wouldn't like me working, he wouldn't like me working with men."*

Some of these women explained that their husbands not only prevented them from working but also from leaving the house. A key policy implication arising from this is the importance of adopting a holistic approach to assisting Pakistani and Bangladeshi women into the labour market, which includes engaging with South Asian men too. Many of the women explained that their husbands and family thought that there was no financial need for women to work, and that the responsibility for supporting the family financially should fall upon the male, emphasising the existence, indeed the cultural dominance, of the male breadwinner model (Lewis, 1992) within much of the Pakistani and Bangladeshi community.

Even if they could overcome obstacles from their husbands and family many of the women falling in this category – wanting to work but unable to do so – often had little, if any, work experience, and may not have had relevant qualifications. But a really crucial factor was that they often lacked confidence and knowledge about how to find and apply for a job and, even, what a job entails on a daily basis. This emerged strongly in the focus groups. As a Pakistani mother of one, aged 25, said: *"I don't know where to start, where do you find jobs? I don't have the confidence to get a job or apply for a job. I haven't got any work experience. I'm not happy with the way that my working life has gone because I always wanted to work. I still want to work but I'm not sure where to start."*

The final category was comprised of very ambitious women. Their ambitions were long standing, often held since they were at school. Well educated, to the equivalent of advanced school or college certificates or degree standard, around 16 women (8

per cent) fell into this category and they were more likely to be Pakistani than Bangladeshi. As mentioned previously, these women tend to be those whose fathers are in professional or managerial occupations and whose mothers, aunts and sisters work or have worked in the past. Some of these women were currently studying for degrees and it is clear from the interviews that the likelihood of them entering the workplace will be determined by a series of factors: how soon they marry; the views of their husband and his family towards women working in the paid labour market; how quickly after marriage they have children; the level of support from their friends, family and the surrounding community; as well as their own determination to succeed in paid work. However, even amongst this group of women, a very clear message emerged that working at the same time as they were bringing up small children, up to the age of five (when they can attend school), is not seen as compatible. This relates back to the work of Badawi (2007) who suggests that leaving children in the care of others is at odds with Islamic culture.

#### ***6. Supporting South Asian women to enter the labour market***

The research documented here has demonstrated that, in relation to labour market entry and participation, there are three broad categories of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women in West Yorkshire and therefore, presumably, in the UK: women who are some distance from the labour market; women who currently wish to enter paid work; women who currently work but require support. Clearly within each of these broad groups, individual circumstances vary. Policies aimed at assisting them need to be flexible enough to accommodate a range of individual needs and requirements.

##### ***Supporting women who are some distance from the labour market***

The first group of women do not want to work, had no intention of working at that time in their lives, and were unlikely to want to work in the immediate future. These women, for various reasons, have taken on the stereo-typical feminine role of staying at home, bringing up children, caring for older relatives, carrying out domestic responsibilities such as cooking and cleaning. There is a community, cultural and family expectation amongst a large group of Pakistani and Bangladeshi people that women do not carry out paid work, unless there are severe financial reasons for doing so. The study outlined here reveals that almost all the Pakistani and Bangladeshi women who participated in the research - regardless of their class, ethnicity, age or country of birth - strongly believe that they should be the main carers for their children, at least until children are school age. Women falling into this category were more likely to be first generation migrants, with less education and lower level qualifications, less likely to have a good understanding of English, or they

may have married into families who have a strong belief in rigid gender roles in society. For these women, developing policies that will assist them into work in the short to medium term would seem to be inappropriate and a largely inefficient use of resources. A large amount of pre-interventionist support would be needed before these women are in a position to even think about entering paid employment. Moreover, as Ahmad *et al* (2003) points out, many of these women feel they should have a right to decide if they want to work or if they want to stay at home and bring up their children. More appropriate policies for these women in the short term would be to assist them to develop their language skills, provide them with initiatives that help them engage in society, building on skills and interests that they already have such as cooking, sewing, childcare, providing meeting places and peer support structures so that they can develop as individuals, providing confidence building, assertiveness and motivation support so they can start to think that a different route is possible. In this way these women, who have deeply engrained stereotypical perceptions of their own roles in society, and/or whose family have, may then start to think about the wider world and their place and contribution to it. At the same time as providing this kind of support, strategies are also required for their family, particularly for older relatives and husbands. Within the few schemes that have existed to help Pakistani and Bangladeshi women into work, often attempts are made to provide them with the confidence and skills to obtain work, without any attention being paid to how these women are then to persuade their husbands and extended family that they should be allowed to work in the future.

#### *Supporting women who wish to enter paid work*

The research has shown that there is then a group of other women who wish to work but have a series of barriers and obstacles preventing them. These are often multitudinous and encompass both demand and supply side barriers. Supply side barriers include: caring responsibilities, domestic responsibilities, poor English, lack of confidence, lack of qualifications, lack of appropriate skills, lack of work experience, lack of experience of applying for jobs, lack of experience of interviews, some women (and/or their husbands) may not wish to work with men, stereotypical gender perceptions of husbands, parents, parent-in laws and other family members. There are then demand side barriers which include the types of jobs that are available, the location of the jobs, working hours, employer policies, procedures and attitudes. The distance that these women are from the labour market is clearly dependent upon the number and types of obstacles and barriers that each of them faces. Many of these women desperately wanted to work but needed assistance to overcome these barriers. The precise barriers for each of the women varied, and as one woman in a focus group explained '*it is important to find out exactly what support Asian women need, to provide one to one counselling and support and guidance from people who understand their position, where they should go next*'.

### *Supporting women who currently work but require support*

Although the research in West Yorkshire was primarily concerned with the views and attitudes of non-working Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, it became clear through analysing the existing literature, evidence from the interviews, and from the focus groups, that in developing policy mechanisms and recommendations for non-working women, the issues facing working women also need to be addressed. Many Pakistani and Bangladeshi working women appear to need additional support to both remain in, and progress within, the employment hierarchy.

### **7. A Case study of employability support: Ethnic Minority Women's Employment Programme**

Clearly, the barriers facing Pakistani and Bangladeshi women seeking to enter the labour market in the UK are both complex and deeply entrenched. Little impact has been made by mainstream efforts to find jobs for these groups of people in the UK. However, there have been some notable successes, one of which was piloted in Sheffield in South Yorkshire in 2005/6. It is worth recounting it here, because it was a programme specifically designed to meet the needs of minority ethnic women, in particular South Asian women, and because it addressed many of the barriers discussed earlier. In that sense, it forms a potential template to help other minority ethnic women get closer to obtaining employment. The programme was designed and implemented by the Policy Evaluation Group (PEG), a private sector research and training organisation, and funded by Jobcentre Plus, the government's main employment agency. It was designed to help move Pakistani and Bangladeshi women in Sheffield closer to the labour market. As with the women who were researched in West Yorkshire, the women in Sheffield faced significant barriers in accessing employment including poor English, barriers from family, friends and the community. Very few had ever worked; confidence and self-esteem was very low. The eight month pilot project was a huge success and exceeded the anticipated outputs and outcomes set for it by Jobcentre Plus. The project aimed to move 30 women closer to the labour market and the approach is detailed below.

Recruitment was pro-active. Given the lack of confidence of some women, and the cultural pressures against carrying out paid work, recruitment had to be pro-active. The programme organisers contacted community organisations, organisations supporting children and their mothers, doctors' surgeries, and anywhere else that they thought might be fruitful, to obtain referrals to the programme. Posters were displayed, and leaflets distributed, in local communities which had a high minority ethnic population, in shops, schools, housing offices, mosques, doctors' surgeries, community centres. Outreach workers walked around the communities, engaging with potential participants and recruiting them. Over 100 referrals were made, and 63 participants started the programme.

For each of the participants, action plans were drawn up in order to identify their needs and requirements for moving closer to the labour market. These were reviewed at the end of each session, and mentors assisted the participants to meet targets set in the action plan. Three community group venues were used for the training provision across Sheffield, in locations of high minority ethnic populations. They were deliberately chosen as places where the women would feel comfortable and not threatened. Another issue was making sure that the women attended. Again, the approach was pro-active. Each of the women was contacted prior to each session by 'phone and/or text to remind them of the training. Participants who lacked confidence were directly transported to and from the training venues.

Twelve sessions were offered in each of the three venues over a four month period. Participants were encouraged to attend all sessions, and new starts were only allowed up to session four. The sessions mainly focused on 'soft skills' such as confidence building, life planning, and assertiveness. Signposting to training, education, and to job brokers took place during every session.

26 women completed the course in full. All of them were signposted to further training and/or employment opportunities. 15 applied for a job and/or training course, exceeding the target of 10 set by Jobcentre Plus. Two even actually entered work while attending the course, which was beyond the outcome targets. In a real reflection of its success, all the women on the programme said that they would recommend the course to other women. An independent evaluation of the programme (Craig, 2006) concluded: '*many customers gained in confidence and this will put them in a good position to start seeking work or additional training programmes*'. Quotes from the women themselves who had been on the programme included this from one woman: "*This course has given me more confidence and encouragement. Now I know what I want*".

## **8. Conclusions**

This paper has examined the attitudes and beliefs of non-working Pakistani and Bangladeshi women in relation to the labour market in the UK. Primary research was carried out in West Yorkshire, a sub-region with a relatively high Asian population, involving a multi-faceted, and extensive, consultation with Pakistani and Bangladeshi women: 1,112 Pakistani and Bangladeshi women were consulted through in-depth interviews, focus groups, and through an interactive poster display in various venues.

This is an important area to examine. The participation rate in the labour market of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women remains very low. Nandi and Platt (2010, p.6) demonstrate the extent of non-economic activity which, at 80 per cent for Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, compares to 30 to 50 per cent for women from other ethnic groups. This non-economic activity is a potential loss for the individual and for the

economy as a whole. The National Audit Office (2008, p.1), for example, estimated that the overall cost to the economy from failure to fully use the talents of people from ethnic minorities could be around £8.6 billion annually.

Moreover, this is potentially a growing challenge for the UK economy given migration trends over the last decade. Figures from the Census show that the number of foreign born residents rose by more than 50 per cent over the decade, to reach 7.5 million in 2011 (Swinford, 2012, p.1). A high proportion of the new migrants – up to 20 to 25 per cent in several London boroughs, for example – cannot speak English (Bingham, 2012, p.1). As Tackey et al (2006, p.4) note: ‘demographically, ethnic minorities will account for increasingly large proportions of the working age population, providing a clear business case for raising the participation of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis in the workforce.’

Many Pakistani and Bangladeshi women in the UK face a series of barriers in relation to entering the labour market. The literature reviewed characterised these barriers as relating to education, language, employment experience, cultural and societal norms, and discrimination. These barriers were borne out by the primary research with non-working Pakistani and Bangladeshi women in West Yorkshire, which confirmed the extent to which these constraints govern behavioural patterns towards paid employment. Three broad categories of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women in relation to labour market entry were identified in West Yorkshire and, by extension, these categories are presumably applicable to the UK as a whole: women who are some distance from the labour market; women who currently wish to enter paid work; women who currently work but require support.

The barriers facing Pakistani and Bangladeshi women in relation to the labour market are complex and deep-seated, because some of them relate to cultural, societal, and familial norms. The research carried out in West Yorkshire, which is documented here, has added to the understanding of those barriers and, in that sense, contributes to the chance of devising policies that are effective for this group of people.

Prolonged recession in the UK, coupled with continuing financial crisis across the Eurozone, has resulted in high unemployment. In a situation where people in general are struggling to find paid employment, it is easy to see a situation in which those who are furthest away from the labour market, with relatively low levels of ‘human capital’ – say, in this case, Bangladeshi and Pakistani women – will be overlooked within labour market recruitment processes. Given that the minority ethnic population in the UK has grown considerably in the last few years, and given also that participation in the labour market by minority ethnic women has traditionally been very low, and remains very low, the importance of finding effective policies in this direction cannot be overstated. Though, as Tackey et al (2006, p.4) note, ‘welfare-to-

work programmes may not be operating as effectively for ethnic minorities as they do for the White population, and Jobcentre Plus staff do not always reflect the communities they serve.' This is why, as the case study presented here of a successful pilot policy aimed at getting South Asian women closer to the labour market has demonstrated, such policies need to be tailored for the client group that they are addressing. General welfare-to-work programmes are almost certainly unable to reach groups such as Bangladeshi and Pakistani women, where the stock of 'human capital' is relatively low, and the social, cultural, familial, and community barriers are relatively high. Overall, the main requirement of policy here is that it should take cognisance of the multiple barriers to labour market entry and address those barriers with flexibility and responsiveness.

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# DEFINING AND MEASURING PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYMENT: ROMANIA'S CASE

*Monica MARIN<sup>1</sup>*

***Abstract:** This paper is about the number of public sector employees in Romania. Subsequent research questions relate to defining what is the public sector in Romania, what are the data sources on employment in public sector units, which is the quality of the data provided and what are the solutions for improvement of administrative records. The study is based on a desk-review of national and international studies on public sector employment and examination of different national data sources for statistics on public sector. The study provides recommendations for improving data accuracy, directed mainly to the Ministry of Public Finance.*

***Keywords:** public sector employment; administrative data sources; government employees; public personnel.*

## **1. Introduction**

This paper is about the number of public sector employees in Romania. The size of the public sector becomes critical especially in times of economic crisis (Alonso, 2011; Lee, Strang, 2003; Boc, 2011). However, defining what is public sector and most important, measuring it through reliable data sources is not always straightforward. Therefore, downsizing policy options should first carefully examine the information available at the lowest disaggregated level, with as much as possible additional economic and socio-demographic data.

The paper looks at the methodological issues related to defining and measuring public sector employment in Romania. The main research question is represented by how many public sector employees are in Romania. Subsequent research questions

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relate to what is the public sector in Romania, what are the data sources on employment in public sector units, which is the quality of the data provided and which are the solutions for improvement of administrative records.

The study is based on a desk-review of national and international studies on public sector employment and examination of different national data sources for statistics on public sector. The main data sources used are: (i) Ministry of Public Finance; (ii) National Institute of Statistics; (iii) Romanian Court of Accounts; (iv) National Agency of Civil Servants and (v) Fiscal Council.

The first part analyzes the structure of public sector employment, according to the definition provided by the System of National Accounts (SNA) 2008. Secondly, indicators on government employment are examined, together with data sources and data availability. Recommendations for improvement of administrative sources are presented in the last section.

## ***2. Structure of public sector employment***

One of the most important problems in statistics of public sector employment is the lack of comparability between different countries (Alonso, 2011; World Bank, 2001; OECD, 2005; Schiavo et. al, 1997). The main problem comes from defining what is 'government' or 'public sector'. Some of the most important methodological exercises for harmonizing and improving data accuracy in this field belong to the research programs developed by OECD, the World Bank and the International Labour Organization (OECD, 1997, 2006; Hammouya, 1999; World Bank, 2001). However, efforts are still needed for ensuring further data comparability in different aspects related to public sector: inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes. This paper focuses on inputs part at the national level, more precisely on measuring the number of public sector employees. Although it analyzes Romania's case, similarity of problems in different countries makes the discussions useful for various international contexts.

The most commonly used criterion used at international level is that of the System of National Accounts (SNA). Two subsequent criteria are used in the SNA: market/non-market and control/financing (see Figure 2). According to the SNA 2008, the public sector includes general government and public corporations. 'The general government sector consists mainly of central, state and local government units together with social security funds imposed and controlled by those units. In addition, it includes NPIs [non-profit institutions] engaged in non-market production that are controlled by government units or social security funds' (European Commission, International Monetary Fund, OECD, United Nations, World Bank, 2009, p. 65). We have therefore an extended definition of the public sector, including, as identified by Figure 1, the general government sector, public financial and non-financial corporations.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The SNA divides the public corporations sector into: non-financial public corporations, financial public corporations other than the central bank and the central bank (SNA 2008, p. 439).

Figure 1  
Public sector according to the System of National Accounts (SNA) 2008

Public sector			
General Government Sector			Public Corporations Sector
Government Units	Social Security Funds	Non-profit institutions	Public Financial and Non-Financial Corporations

Source: System of National Accounts (SNA) 2008.

The methodological guidance of the SNA provides specific criteria for delineation between public units, part of it included in the decision tree represented in the Figure 2. Data source for the system of national accounts is represented by the administrative records. Employment data under the SNA, relevant for the public sector, are not reported by Romania.<sup>1</sup>

Within the public sector, the subsectors within government units identify the central, state (or regional government units) and local government units. Employment covers all persons, irrespective of the employment contract. Currently, the Government of Romania considers, as stated in the agreements with the IMF, that the general government includes 'the central government (state budget, treasury, self-financed state entities included in the budget, etc.), local governments, social security funds (pension, health, and unemployment), road fund company, and administration of the property fund' (IMF, 2012). It is not quite clear from this definition where ends the general government sector and where starts the public corporations sector. The same report states that an improvement will be made in order 'to cover state-owned enterprises incorporated into the general government accounts under ESA95, upon completion of the review being undertaken by Eurostat'. Hence, one important lesson is clearly drawn. An improvement in systematic and meaningful data collection on total public sector employment in Romania is needed. In particular, the public corporations sector remains in a 'grey area' of transparency.<sup>2</sup> Besides monitoring the expenditure size as stipulated in the current agreements with the International Monetary Fund, detailed data on employment should also be collected.

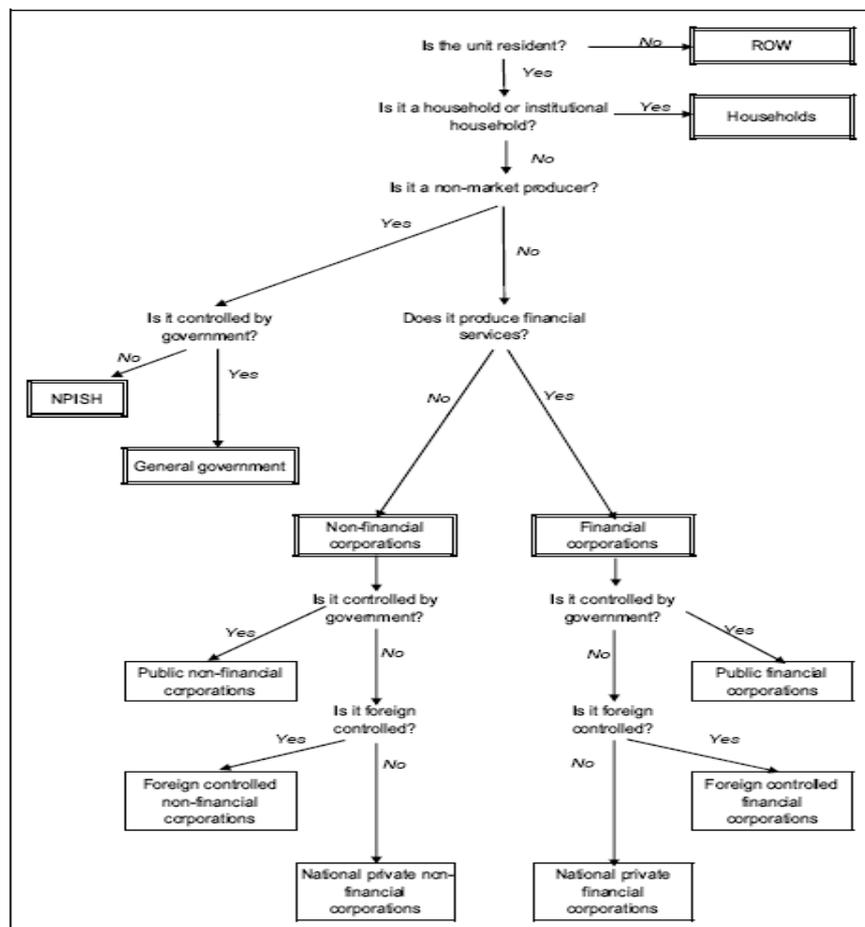
<sup>1</sup> According to Eurostat database, [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/search\\_database](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/search_database), accessed March 29, 2012. We refer to NACE Rev. 2 classification, including public administration, defence, education, human health and social work activities.

<sup>2</sup> The following public enterprises are monitored through the Memorandum of Understanding between Romania and the International Monetary Fund (Government of Romania, IMF, 2010: (1) C.N. Căi Ferate CFR; (2) S.N. Transport CFR Călători; (3) CN a Huilei; (4) SC Termoelectrica; (5) C.N. de Autostrăzi și Drumuri Naționale; (6) S.C. Metrorex; (7) S.N. de Transport Feroviar CFR Marfă S.A.; (8) SC Electrocentrale București; (9) Societatea Comercială Electrificare CFR S.A.; and (10) S.C. Administrația Națională a Îmbunătățirilor Funciare. However, the size of the public corporations sector in Romania is much larger.

Another possible distinction for identifying the public sector employment is based on the status of employees. The 'best' situation is when all of them or the largest part are under a Civil Service Act, and are therefore clearly identified. However, the vast majority of public sector/government employees are represented by the contractual staff, therefore this distinction is not useful for the study's research question.

Most relevant data sources, with specific coverage of public subsectors, are discussed in the next section.

Figure 2  
Allocation of units to institutional sectors, System of National Accounts



Source: European Commission, International Monetary Fund, 2009, p. 64

### 3. Indicators of government employment

Size of the public sector is generally measured, especially in terms of cross-country comparative data, in relation to the compensation of employees, employment and wage levels (Clements et. al, 2010; Alonso et al, 2011). With regards to government employment, the following indicators are mostly used: government employment as a percentage of total and private employment and government employment as a percentage of total population (For an extensive list of indicators and data sources on public employment see Sirovatka et al, 2012). Our main research question, that is how many government employees are in Romania, requires answering to a single indicator: number of employees in central and local government units. We assimilate county councils and municipalities to the local government units. However, the answer is not easily found.

At the institutional level, most recently, a protocol collaboration<sup>1</sup> for harmonization of statistics on the number of employees has been signed. The institutions represented in the protocol are: Ministry of Public Finance, National Institute of Statistics, Ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family, National Agency of Civil Servants, National Agency of Fiscal Administration, National Agency of Public Pensions, Labor Inspection and National Commission of Prognosis. These institutions are also relevant for data on public sector employment (Figure 3). If we consider the public corporations sector, data are processed by the Ministry of Public Finance and the National Agency of Fiscal Administration, Ministry of Labor, Social Solidarity and Family and the National Institute of Statistics. Still, their situation is not straightforward clear. The situation is similar in other fields using multiple administrative data sources (Marin, M., 2009).

Figure 3  
*Institutional mapping of data sources on public sector employment*

Institution	Registries/ Information administered	Source Type
Ministry of Public Finance	Central Government Finance and Number of Central Government Employees/ Positions	Administrative data source
National Agency of Fiscal Administration	Business Registry	Administrative data source
Ministry of Administration and Internal Affairs	Database on Local Public Administration	Administrative data source

<sup>1</sup> Signed on March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012, <http://www.mfinante.ro/acasa.html?method=detalii&id=999566574>.

Institution	Registries/ Information administered	Source Type
Ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family	Employees' Registry	Administrative data source
National Agency of Civil Servants	Central and Local Civil Servants Registry	Administrative data source
National Institute of Statistics	Household Labor Force Survey	Survey
	Labor Cost Statistical Survey	Survey
	Labor Force Balance	Survey
	Structural Business Statistics	Survey
	National Accounts	Administrative data sources

The diversity in official data sources and moreover, lack of coordination mechanisms between them transposes into coverage overlaps and methodological differentiation which results in different data for similar indicators, especially in what concerns the total number of employees.

For the subsector of government units, central and local government, the following administrative data sources have been identified: (i) Ministry of Public Finance; (ii) Ministry of Administration and Internal Affairs; (iii) Ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family and the (iv) National Agency of Civil Servants. The National Institute of Statistics is a user of administrative data sources as well as a producer for the statistics on employment (based on survey data). This case will be separately discussed.

Given the multiple data sources, with different coverage, consolidation of data is necessary. Most probably, the Ministry of Public Finance should play/plays this role. We will examine in what follows data available with the administrative data sources, analyzed from the point of view of quality of the indicator (Platek and Sarndal, 2001; Hoffman, 2003). These criteria refer to: population coverage, units of observation, main and descriptive variables – data consistency, availability of disaggregated information as well as data transparency.

#### **4. Data sources and data availability**

Population coverage is the key criterion which differentiates the data sources presented in Figure 3.

Let us take the example of the Ministry of Public Finance. First, a distinction concerning data transparency should be made. The paper uses mostly secondary data sources, based on the Ministry of Public Finance, as the Ministry in itself does

not publish consolidated data on the number of public sector employees. One of the datascource used in this paper is Boc, 2011. The former Prime Minister of Romania uses data on the public employees, computed based on unpublished internal documents.

A request for greater transparency concerning data on employment and average earnings in the public sector are also addressed by the Fiscal Council to the Ministry of Public Finance, in relation to the process of drafting the State Budget Law: 'The draft budget report does not explicitly state the number of employees and average wage in the public sector underlying the medium - term personnel expenditure path. Lacking these assumptions, it is difficult to asses the consistency of the personnel expenditure projection' (Fiscal Council, 2012, p.8).

The Ministry of Public Finance uses two indicators: (i) maximum number of positions (vacant and occupied), and (ii) number of occupied positions. The latter one is used for reporting purposes. The indicator covers government units and social security funds. It also includes part of self-financed institutions, such as health and education units, although it is not clear which part of them belongs to the central vs. the local government.<sup>1</sup>

As units of observation, the documents examined with data source represented by the Ministry of Public Finance use either the term 'position' or 'employee'. 'An occupied position' (post ocupat) is usually assimilated to an employee (Fiscal Council, 2011). Specific definitions are not explicitly made. These are the data used for monitoring the structural reforms, as envisaged in Romania's agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF, 2011).

Figure 4  
*Number of employees (occupied positions) in government units  
(thousands persons)*

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total government units	1,232.60	1,281.40	1,360.00	1,398.76	1,380.00	1,266.55	1,255.13
Total local government units	599.20	595.30	613.40	644.00	633.00	626.83	N.A.

Source: Romania Court of Accounts, 2009 for 2005-2007, Fiscal Council, 2011 for 2008-2010, Boc, 2011 for 2011 (July 2011). Note: As shown in the next figure, there is a data inconsistency between the data provided by the Ministry of Public Finance to the Court of Accounts and those provided by the same Ministry to the Fiscal Council.

<sup>1</sup> Part of hospitals have been transferred under the responsibility of local authorities in 2010.

As shown in Figure 4, there has been a constant increase in the number of employees in local government units in the period of 2005-2008. However, the analysis conducted for the local public administration, covering the period previously mentioned, concludes that what has been the key factor in increasing the personnel public expenditures is not the rising number of public positions but the increased wage bill (including bonuses) (Romania Court of Accounts, 2009, p.12).

Figure 5  
*Data consistency on the number of occupied positions in the public sector, for the year of 2008*

Primary Source	Secondary Source	Value of the indicator for 2008
Ministry of Public Finance	Romania Court of Accounts, 2009, p. 4	1,395.1 thou
Ministry of Public Finance	Fiscal Council, 2011, p. 19	1,398,757
Ministry of Public Finance <sup>1</sup>	World Bank, 2009, p. 2	1,353,180

Furthermore, data for the same indicator, number of occupied positions, same period of time (2008), with the same primary source (Ministry of Public Finance) differ between data sources (Figure 5). One possible explanation is that it has been processed at different moments of time. However, it also means that the Ministry of Public Finance should set a more rigorous data collection system<sup>2</sup> and a specific time frame (like end of the year) for making publicly available, for all sources, the number of occupied positions in the public sector in Romania.

The Ministry of Administration and Internal Affairs processes only data from local government units. Most important information refers to expenditures rather than employment. However, the publicly available database displays information on the maximum number of positions as provisioned in the Government Ordinance no. 63/2010.

The Ministry of Labor, Social Solidarity and Family uses the Employees Registry which covers all employees with an individual labor contract. However, it does not cover the civil servants, under the provisions of the Statute of the Civil Servants (Law no. 188/1999). Moreover, it does not publicly display statistics disaggregated either

<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Economy and Finance by the time the WB research has been conducted.

<sup>2</sup> Than the one provisioned in the Governmental Emergency Ordinance (G.O.) no. 48/2005, on measures regarding the number of positions and personnel expenditures in the budgetary sector.

under activities or forms of ownership. Nevertheless, theoretically, the information included in the electronic program REVISAL could be aggregated considering the units of interest for the public sector.

The National Agency of Civil Servants covers all public positions (n.a. Romanian 'functie publica') and civil servants in all government units and social security funds. The indicators reported by this agency cover both position, as well as person (civil servant). However, they account for only a small part of the total public sector personnel (around 10% of all employees in central and local government positions, including social security funds). Data on civil servants are disaggregated by gender, education, grade of the civil servant.

Figure 6  
*Number of civil servants in government units*

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Central government	58,796	76,467	69,720	59,883	64,948
Local government	42,655	44,669	52,650	53,061	55,736
<b>Total</b>	<b>101,451</b>	<b>121,136</b>	<b>122,370</b>	<b>112,944</b>	<b>120,684</b>

Source: National Agency of Civil Servants, 2007-2010 and Stan, V., Renert, C., 2007, for data on 2006

The data from the National Agency of Fiscal Administration together with the Structural Business Survey managed by the National Institute of Statistics are especially important for gathering data on the public corporations sector. A specific registry that will differentiate the public corporations sector from the rest of the companies should be put in place, to serve the data collection process for both institutions.

The National Institute of Statistics conducts several statistical surveys relevant for registering public sector employees: (i) Household labor force statistical survey, registering employment and ILO unemployment; (ii) Labor cost survey registering number of employees; (iii) Labor force balance, for data on civil employment. An additional source of information regarding earnings in public vs. private sector is the Family Budgets Survey which collects data on incomes from all sources. It has been used for conducting studies on earnings in public vs. private sector (Voinea et al., 2010). However, all of them are statistical surveys, based on a specific methodology for estimations. Due to lack of data availability with detailed socio-economic information on public sector employees from administrative records, they represent however one of best sources of information. For our research question, the problems with the NIS data are mostly related to population coverage.

The Labour cost survey and Labor force balance exclude the personnel of armed forces and similar staff (Ministry of National Defence, Ministry of Administration and Interior, Romanian Intelligence Service etc) (National Institute of Statistics, 2011). It is difficult to estimate the exact information gap as the data from the Ministry of Public Finance are not disaggregated under the civil employment and military staff. Estimates can be obtained from summing up the total number of occupied positions as provisioned in the Annual Budget Laws (Ministry of Public Finance, 2011).

The Household Labor force statistical survey collects data on employment for all persons aged 15 years and over, who carried out an economic activity producing goods or services of at least one hour during the reference period (one week) in order to get income as salaries, payment in kind or other benefits (NIS, Tempo online database). It covers civil servants, assimilated to the employees with an individual labor contract. It represents the official data source on public sector employment in Romania in the statistical database of the International Labour Organization (Public sector employment in the LaborSta database).

Figure 7  
*Employment according to NACE Rev.2, Labor Force Survey<sup>1</sup>*

Activities of national economy according to NACE Rev. 2		2008	2009	2010	2011- First quarter	2011- Second quarter	2011- Third quarter
Public administration and defence; social security funds	Total	465,516	489,945	471,048	463,353	460,609	464,154
	Urban	351,994	375,324	360,298	346,966	349,146	365,552
	Rural	113,522	114,621	110,750	116,387	111,463	98,601
Education	Total	399,375	386,140	385,172	395,045	388,841	394,210
	Urban	299,505	289,080	293,519	304,176	296,059	298,082
	Rural	99,870	97,060	91,653	90,869	92,782	96,128
Health and social assistance	Total	380,536	394,645	403,111	396,331	400,462	409,053
	Urban	311,835	321,795	331,313	328,980	328,769	338,866
	Rural	68,701	72,850	71,799	67,351	71,693	70,187
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,245,427</b>	<b>1,270,730</b>	<b>1,259,331</b>	<b>1,254,729</b>	<b>1,249,912</b>	<b>1,267,417</b>

Data: National Institute of Statistics, Tempo online database, [www.insse.ro](http://www.insse.ro)

Besides the fact that the data from the Labor Force Survey are estimations based on the population size, data on employment, as shown in Figure 7, also include all forms

<sup>1</sup> Data included in ILO database on public sector employment differ from the ones presented in Figure 7.

of property – public, private, mixed, or cooperate. Distinctions are necessary to be made. Therefore, the exact figure of government employees is difficult to be estimated from this research. It is however very useful to consider it for in-depth analyses considering only public units, as it provides detailed information on socio-demographic characteristics.

The international experience, comparing information from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and administrative records showed that the LFS 'does not provide a fully reliable measure of the total number of employees in the public sector', because 'it is a social survey, based on responses and self-classification from individuals in private households' (UK Office for National Statistics, 2012). It is usually an over-estimation, as respondents find it difficult to classify themselves according to the System of National Accounts (ibid.)

## ***5. Conclusions and recommendations***

This paper has clearly shown the importance as well as challenges of defining and measuring employment in the public sector. Answering to our key research question, how many public sector employees in Romania, results in different answers provided by different institutions or in different answers from the same institution. The main explanation resides in differences in population coverage but also in lack of using a methodological approach responding to the international standards. In this respect, improvement of administrative records becomes critical.

The main administrative source is represented by the Ministry of Public Finance. In order to become a reliable data source for this indicator, the first step would be to delineate the public financial and non-financial corporations. Besides monitoring the expenditures side, a monitoring system for detailed information on employment should be put in place for the public corporations sector.

Furthermore, the same central government institution should: (i) extend the coverage of data on employment to all public sector units; (ii) increase data consistency; (iii) consolidate information and improve coordination mechanisms with other sources: Ministry of Administration and Internal Affairs, National Agency of Civil Servants, Ministry of Labor, Social Solidarity and Family and the National Institute of Statistics; (iv) besides the number of occupied positions, collect information on socio-demographic variables such as gender, education, age, professional record, etc.; (v) provide transparent data on public sector employment as primary data source for Romania. The latter recommendation includes establishing a coherent communication strategy for all interested parties as well as public display of disaggregated level by type of unit, status of employees (civil servant/ contractual personnel), individual unit, socio-demographic variables, etc.

Most of the recent discussions on public sector size monitor a target on personnel expenditures of 7.2% of GDP for 2012. Moreover, a structural reform of the state is announced. Yet, some basic questions need to be answered: how many public sector employees? How many in government units/ public corporations? Are they well or rather poor educated? Are they young or middle/aged? Are there more female than male employees? What is their professional record, not to mention the necessity of a reliable sampling frame for conducting representative survey on their attitudes, opinions, motivation, quality of life, etc. For the time being, these questions are difficult, if not impossible to be answered in an accurate and comprehensive manner.

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# COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS AS A COPING RESOURCE AMONG ADOLESCENTS LIVING UNDER ROCKETS FIRE: A SALUTOGENIC APPROACH

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***Abstract:** The study examines community perceptions as coping resources among youth living in areas under rocket fire in the south of Israel. Community variables were examined as potential moderators and mediators of emotional reactions to stress. Data were gathered during 2007-2009 from 284 Israeli adolescents. State anger and sense of hope were measured as stress reactions. Adolescent community perceptions were investigated using a measure which integrated sense of community coherence and sense of community, and included four dimensions: influence, meaningfulness, comprehensibility and belonging to community life (IMCB). Type of community and community perceptions (IMCB) were found to be significant in explaining state anger and hope. In addition, interviews were conducted with 10 key persons working with youth in Sderot and in the kibbutzim, which enable a better understanding of the community profiles in which teenagers were living under the ongoing stress situation. Community perceptions as coping resources among youth are discussed against the backdrop of the salutogenic and ecological theoretical frameworks.*

***Key-words:** Salutogenesis; coping resources; community perceptions; adolescents; stress.*

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## **1. Introduction**

We employed the salutogenic approach (Antonovsky, 1987) as the theoretical framework for this study which examines the relationships between community types, adolescent community perceptions and emotional reactions of youth who live under the stress of rocket fire.

The salutogenic model defines health using a holistic approach, and suggests not only asking about risk factors but also studying health-promoting factors (Antonovsky, 1987). One of the basic ideas of the salutogenic model is that life itself is a stressful situation. Sense of coherence (SOC) is a central concept in the salutogenic model explaining the movement towards health. When facing a stressor, people with a strong sense of coherence will be motivated to cope (meaningfulness); will see the challenge as understandable (comprehensibility) and will believe that they have resources for coping (manageability). Thus, the salutogenic approach provides us with an important lens through which we can understand what distinguishes youth who show resilience when the entire community is under stress.

The salutogenic approach is integrated with the ecological model of Bronfenbrenner (1979) to provide this study with a conceptual framework for analyzing the relationships involved in the psychological consequences of a continuing stressful situation on youth. Following Bronfenbrenner, we examined the community as an environmental resource, which could be an important factor in understanding coping in stress situations.

This pilot research was conducted among Israeli adolescents, who were exposed to continue missile attacks during 2007-2009. In the present study, we seek to gain insight into community variables as potential moderators and mediators of emotional reactions to stress. To that end, we first reviewed briefly the issue of adolescent's community perception. We then consider the operational limitations of this concept along with our attempt to build a new index refers to the adolescent's community perception (IMCB) along with the role of major relevant demographic factors such as gender and age. We then present the results of our empirical study.

## **2. Research Background - Rockets fire on southern communities in Israel**

More than 3,000 rockets fell in the southwestern area of Israel between 2001 and 2009. About 190,000 citizens were living under potential threat of rocket fire, including the city of Sderot, and kibbutzim and moshavim located near the Gaza Strip. Life under these continuing attacks led many residents to leave the city of Sderot and the kibbutzim of the area, whether for short periods or permanently. The culmination of resident departure was in the summer of 2007, as a result of the escalation in fire (Cohen, 2007).

*Adolescent community perception as a mediator of emotional reactions to stress*

In this study we developed a new tool to measure adolescent community perception, which includes additional dimensions of the concepts defined by researchers as "sense of community" (Davidson & Cotter, 1986) "community sense of coherence" (Braun-Lewensohn & Sagy, 2011b) and "psychological sense of community" (Glynn, 1981). This new measurement represents feelings of adolescents towards their community. Adolescent community perception was defined in this study as the extent to which the adolescent perceives the community as a place which s/he can influence, as a significant place for him/her, as a comprehensible place, and as a place where s/he feels a sense of belonging. It includes four components: influence, meaningfulness, comprehensibility and belonging to the community (IMCB).

The first component of influence, which has been studied by several researchers measuring sense of community (e.g., Prezza et al., 2009; Evans, 2007), is considered a central dimension of sense of community experience as it is related to the adolescent's opportunities to interpret various social roles as the basis for community relations. The second component- meaningfulness- refers to the internal resources of the individual, used to consider the appropriateness of solving the particular problem (Antonovsky, 1987). Comprehensibility refers to the degree that community processes are more understandable, consistent and predictable (Antonovsky, 1987). The fourth component- belonging- refers to people's sense that they are part of the collective (Newbrough & Chavis, 1986), whether referring to the neighborhood, to the close community, to the nation or to any other group.

The concept of "sense of community" has become very popular in the last decade within a vast range of disciplines (e.g., psychology, sociology, social work, political science, etc.) and practices. In the context of community psychology, sense of community is considered a core construct, as well as a central value and ideal, and as such, it has been the topic of considerable research and intervention programs (e.g., Fisher, Sonn & Bishop, 2002). Further, the term has quite different meanings in commonsense discourse, and it is used to describe feelings of belonging to different kinds of communities (e.g., social organizations, formal and informal, that are bounded by a physical or geographical location - like the local community, the town or city, the nation, the neighborhood, the school, - or are based on common interests, goals or needs, - like sport groups, political groups, volunteering groups, etc).

Sarason (1974), defined the term as representing the special relationship between the individual and his/her environment. McMillan & Chavis (1986) defined the concept "sense of community" as including four components: membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection. Studies have found these four components to be closely related and to form a relatively uniform structure, which includes the feelings and the general tendencies of the individual

towards the community (Chavis et al., 1986; Pretty, 1990). Other researchers suggest that the conceptual structure, "sense of community", does not always represent the experience and understanding of people of the community, and the phrase "sense of community" is sometimes difficult to understand (Mankowski & Rappaport, 1995).

Community perception is a broad concept about which studies have demonstrated empirically that its various components manifest themselves across settings (Arnon, Shamai & Ilatov, 2008; Prezza, Pacilli, Barbarnelli & Zampatti, 2009; etc.). However, the way the concept is expressed in different settings has remained relatively unexamined (Sonn et al., 1999). Moreover, studies have indicated that there is insufficient attention to the dynamic and specific characteristics of the community (Mykota & Muhajarine, 2005; Sagy & Antonovsky, 1986). Thus, it seems important to explore community perceptions as a coping resource with regard to the specific communities involved. Specific contexts, such as contexts caused by stress resulting from political violence (Ungar et al., 2007), are of special interest.

The tool we developed to examine adolescent community perception includes, as mentioned above, dimensions relevant to the specific community and to the population of adolescents. This is based on Antonovsky's concept sense of coherence (1996) which suggests that the individual sense of coherence is influenced by and sensitive to the individual's life experiences and his/her specific culture. Our main objective was to explore adolescent community perceptions as a significant coping resource in reducing emotional distress reactions in communities with a variety of characteristics that have been exposed to a continuing prolonged stress situation. Our hypothesis is that higher measures of IMCB will enable adolescents to deal more successfully with stress. This hypothesis is based on studies which have found positive and coherent perceptions of the community to be positively related to well-being (Braun-Lewensohn & Sagy, 2011; Arnon, Shamai & Ilatov, 2008).

#### *Emotional reactions among adolescents in areas of political violence*

Two emotional reactions were examined in our study. One of them is commonly used in research as an indicator of psycho-physiological distress (Lazarus, 1993): state anger (Spielberger, 1972). Spielberger, Jacobs, Russell, & Crane (1983) have conceptualized state anger as the experience of negative feelings similar to being annoyed or irritated, or, to a greater extent, filled with rage. During this experience, the autonomic nervous system can become aroused to different degrees depending on the situation. State anger is defined in this measure as an emotional state marked by subjective feelings that vary in intensity from mild annoyance or irritation to intense fury and rage. Anger is one of the key long-term effects of trauma exposure

of all kinds and is strongly predictive of subsequent mental health difficulties, particularly posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms (Hawthorne et al., 2006). Among adolescents who have been exposed to violence, anger was found as a trauma symptom (Singer et al., 1995).

The salutogenic approach has directed us to explore another variable as a stress reaction: the level of hope. Hope is defined as the interaction of wishes and expectations (Staats & Stassen, 1985). Hope involves a consideration of the future. We hope for something that is not in the present but is an uncertain future event. Staats (1989) defined hope as the interaction between wishes and positive future expectations.

Most studies examining adolescents living in conflict areas describe the effects of exposure to violence on adolescents in terms of well-being (Barber & Schluterman, 2008). Exposure to political violence can be physical and/or psychological (Nader et al., 1993; Galea, et al., 2002). It increases the risk of both emotional and behavioral problems in the short and long terms. However, results are mixed in terms of range and intensity of problems (Braun-Lewensohn, et al., 2009). Many studies in conflictual areas indicate that children exposed to political violence do not necessarily suffer from serious psychological consequences (Cairns & Dawes, 1996; Zeidner, 2005; Sagy, 2002; Braun-Lewensohn et al., 2010a). Moreover, a large body of research has suggested that exposure to prolonged stress triggers a process of modulation that is characterized by a gradual decline in the number and intensity of symptoms over time (Punamaki, 1996). These studies have found that only a small fraction of those exposed to political violence will develop long-term stress reactions, while most individuals become accustomed to living under the shadow of political violence and danger (Ronen, Rahav & Appel, 2003). In our study we aimed to deepen our understanding of state anger and hope as reactions among adolescents exposed to stress situations. Based on the salutogenic approach, and its emphasis on the ability of human beings to cope with stress and stay well (Antonovsky, 1987), we hypothesized differences in emotional responses in accordance with the degree of exposure to rocket fire, community type and community perceptions (IMCB).

**Type of Community** is one of the ecological cycles affecting the individual coping with stress (Ungar, 2005). A number of studies have found communal style as a predictor of better mental health compared to urban living (Benyamini et al., 2004). In a study of community resilience in several localities in the north of Israel, it was found that living in a small community in a rural environment buffers stress and promotes community resilience (Shamai, Kimhi & Enosh, 2007). Type of community also makes an important contribution in the context of preparation for dealing with the threat of future terrorism (Shamai, Kimhi & Enosh, 2007). These results emphasize the importance of looking at individuals in their ecological contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), and the relations between the community context and emotional reactions and adjustment to stress.

### *The Role of Demographic Characteristics*

The role of demographics, such as gender and age, in explaining youngsters' psychological outcomes has often been investigated. Most studies confirm the importance of gender, as girls generally report more PTSS (Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome) and internalization of difficulties compared to boys, who report more externalization of problems and risk-taking behavior (Hoven et al., 2002; Pat-Horenczyk et al., 2005; Pfefferbaum et al., 1999). The research also tends to find that age explains the extent of stress reactions in the wake of terror attacks. Younger children appear to exhibit more severe psychopathology such as PTSS, somatic complaints, depression and distress than older children or adolescents (Hoven et al., 2002; Solomon et al., 2005). However, the effects of age remain unclear. Other studies which have focused on ongoing exposure to terrorist attacks have found no age effects (Braun-Lewensohn et al., 2009; Solomon et al., 2005).

The role of socioeconomic status as a differential factor among adolescents is well documented. Several studies indicated different challenges of stress for youths who come from a lower socio economic status (Evans, 2004; Grant et al., 2006) as well as relationships between SES and stress (Goodman et al., 2005). Generally, adolescents having a low SES reported lower levels of perceived health and more stress reactions than youngsters from a higher SES (Piko & Fitzpatrick, 2001; Berntsson & Kohler, 2001). One of the reasons for being more vulnerable is that low SES adolescents are assumed to lack psychological and/or other resources and therefore their ability to cope with threats decreases (Finkelstein et al., 2007).

To sum up, the purpose of this study is to expand the knowledge about community resources which might contribute to moderating reactions to stress. Our main goal is to understand the role of adolescent community perception (IMCB) when facing chronic rocket fire. In accordance with the literature review, we hypothesize that:

1. Adolescent Community Perception (IMCB) will mediate the relationships between exposure to rocket attacks and anger or hope. Adolescents that have a stronger community perception will present more moderate emotional reactions to stress (Zeidner, 2005; Arnon, Shamai & Ilatov, 2008; Braun-Lewensohn et al., 2010b).
2. The level of community perception by youth living in rural communities (kibbutz and moshav) will be higher than youth living in the urban community of Sderot (Arnon, Shamai & Ilatov, 2008; Prezza et al., 2009).
3. Youth living in rural communities (kibbutz and moshav) will report milder emotional reactions to stress compared to youth living in the urban community of Sderot (Dekel & Nuttman-Shwartz, 2009). Thus, youth living in the city will report higher levels of state anger and less hope compared to youth living in rural communities (Davidson & Cotter, 1991; Dekel & Nuttman-Shwartz, 2009).

4. The socio-demographic variables (age, gender, parents' education) will differentiate in community perception so that young adolescent girls from lower socio-economic levels will report stronger community perception compared to young adolescent boys from high socio-economic levels (Kirchler, Palmonari & Pombeni, 1990; Chiessi, Cicognani & Sonn, 2010; Evans, 2007; Arnon, Shamai & Ilatov, 2008).
5. There will be differences in the emotional reactions to stress, according to socio-demographic variables as well as to the level of exposure to rocket fire. Female adolescents will report higher levels of state anger and less hope (Braun-Lewensohn et al., 2010a; Shamahi & Kimhi, 2007). Young adolescents will report higher levels of state anger and less hope than older adolescents (Pat-Horenczyk et al., 2005). Adolescents from the lower socioeconomic group will report higher state anger and less hope than adolescents from the higher socio-economic group (Evans & Kim, 2010). And the exposure variable is expected to play a minimal role in relation to stress reactions (Braun-Lewensohn et al., 2009).
6. The type of community will moderate the relationship between community perception and emotional reactions to stress. Specifically, adolescents who live in rural communities, and have a stronger community perception will express moderate emotional reactions to stress and higher hope. However, among youth from the city of Sderot the relationship between community perception and emotional reactions to stress will be the weakest. Among adolescents living in a moshav, the relationship between community perception and emotional reactions to stress will be the strongest (Dekel & Nuttman-Shwartz, 2009).

### *Participants*

Two hundred eighty-four teenagers living in southern Israel participated in the study. The sample included adolescents aged 12-18 ( $M= 15.28$   $SD=1.58$ ) and a majority of girls (66%); 58% lived in the city of Sderot, 32% lived in kibbutzim and 10% in a moshav.

**Procedure** Data were gathered via self-completion questionnaires during the years 2007-2009. The first author and research assistants administered the questionnaires and provided general instructions and explanations regarding the anonymity of the data collected. After receiving permission from parents, the questionnaires were administered in the respondents' homes (sometimes in shelters) .

### *Measures*

Adolescent's Community Perception (IMCB): This questionnaire, which was constructed specifically for this study, included a combination of 14 items developed

by Davidson & Cotter, (1986) to examine sense of community, and four items from the index developed by Sagy (1998) to examine sense of community coherence. The current version of the questionnaire includes 18 items (For example: "I can influence what happens in my community / There are opportunities here to do many things"; "Sometimes I feel that things I'm involved in in the community have no meaning"; "Residents of my community have clear goals and objectives") each item rated on a scale of three levels (strongly agree - not so much agree - disagree). The mean was computed and Cronbach alpha reliability was .65; the recommended minimum Cronbach's alpha for exploratory studies is .60 (Nunnally, 1978; Robinson, Shaver, & Wrightsman, 1991).

State Anger (Spielberger et al. 1970), Hebrew translation (Teichman 1978) was used in order to assess adolescents' anger. The Hebrew translation proved to be reliable, valid and equivalent to the English State Anger Inventory (Teichman 1978). This scale consists of six items on a four point Likert scale. Cronbach alpha reliability was .89

Hope Index (Staats, 1989), is constructed as the interaction of wishes and expectations and includes items of hope referring to self and to others, or to broad global concerns. Participants were asked to independently rate the extent to which they would wish for a particular future occurrence and the extent to which they would expect this to occur. Responses were rated on a scale of zero (not at all) to five (very much). The multiplication of the wish value by the expect value generated the measure of hope. The Cronbach's alpha of the hope index was .91.

Exposure to missile attacks was assessed by five yes/no questions: Respondents were asked to report whether a missile had fallen on their homes, whether they had been hurt by a missile, whether someone they knew had been hurt, whether the home of someone they knew had been damaged and whether missiles had fallen in their neighborhood.

Demographic characteristics: Gender, age, parents' level of education as representing socioeconomic level, and place of residence were reported by the respondents.

### **3. Results**

Table 1 presents means and standard deviation of the study's variables. Community perception scores were towards the higher end of the scale. Frequencies of state anger and hope were towards the higher end of the scale, as well as level of exposure to rocket fire.

Table 1  
Means, Standard Deviations in the variables of the sample

Variable	Sample (n≈273)	
	M	SD
Community Perception	1.84	.31
State Anger	2.12	.73
Hope	13.44	5.04
Level of Exposure	.54	.18

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Table 2 presents One Way Anova of type of community in the different variables. Significant differences were found in community perception with youth from the city of Sderot reporting stronger perceptions compared to youth living in a kibbutz. Youth from moshavs reported strongest perceptions compared to all other groups. Contrary to the hypothesis, adolescents from the city of Sderot reported a higher level of hope than adolescents living in communities with collective characteristics.

Table 2  
One Way ANOVA of type of community in the different variables

Variable	City <sup>a</sup> (n≈152)		Kibbutz <sup>b</sup> (n≈89)		Moshav <sup>c</sup> (n≈30)		F
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Community Perception	1.82	.29	1.80	.33	2.04	.31	7.35* <sup>ab</sup>
State Anger	2.18	.67	2.10	.77	1.81	.76	3.28
Hope	14.15	5.85	12.02	3.63	13.46	5.09	4.68** <sup>ab, bc</sup>
Level of Exposure	56.	.16	50	.21.	.54	.15	3.18* <sup>ab, bc</sup>

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Tables 3-5 present the different study variables according to socio-demographic indicators. Regarding gender, no significant differences were found in community perceptions. Significant differences were found only in sense of hope with female adolescents reporting higher levels of hope compared to male adolescents. Regarding age differences, community perception was stronger among older adolescents compared to younger adolescents while no differences were found in stress reactions. No significant differences were found between adolescents from

different socioeconomic levels in community perception level. With regard to stress reactions, no differences were reported on state anger and hope.

Table 3  
Means, Standard Deviations and t test in the variables in the study according to gender

Variable	Girls (n≈181)		Boys (n≈95)		t
	M	SD	M	SD	
Community Perception	1.85	.31	1.80	.29	-1.4
State Anger	2.15	.73	2.06	.74	-.86
Hope	13.86	4.84	12.23	5.05	-2.37**
Level of Exposure	.54	.17	.54	.20	-.12

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Table 4  
Means, Standard Deviations and t test in the variables in the study according to age

Variable	Young adolescents (n≈143)		Older adolescents (n≈139)		t
	M	SD	M	SD	
Community Perception	1.79	.31	1.89	.31	-2.53*
State Anger	2.15	.75	2.08	.70	.87
Hope	13.61	5.27	13.30	5.16	.48
Level of Exposure	.56	.18	.52	.17	1.79

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Table 5  
Means, Standard Deviations and t test in the variables in the study according to SES

Variable	Mother's level of education				Father's level of education				t
	Academic (n≈195)		High school (n≈72)		Academic (n≈164)		High school (n≈101)		
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Community Perception	.31	1.82	.30	1.88	.31	1.80	.30	1.91	1.54
State Anger	.73	2.11	.71	2.17	.75	2.15	.70	2.08	.57
Hope	4.98	12.98	5.48	14.00	5.14	13.00	5.20	13.75	1.43
Level of Exposure	.18	.53	.19	.54	.19	.52	.17	.55	.27

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Following Baron and Kenny (1986), a pre-requisite assumption of mediation is that there should be a significant link between exposure to rocket fire and stress reactions, and between perception of community and stress reactions (correlation matrix is presented in Table 6). Since these two basic assumptions were not found, the mediation hypothesis was rejected.

Table 6  
Pearson correlations of variables in the study (n=284)

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Community perception	-	-.18	.09	-.00
2. State Anger		-	-.06	.14*
3. Hope			-	.08
4. Level of Exposure				-

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Tables 7 and 8 present regression analyses for the emotional reactions to stress – state anger and hope. The moderating hypothesis was not supported. Type of community did not moderate the emotional reactions to stress. In a preliminary analysis that was conducted, there was no statistically significant interaction effect for community perception X type of community ( $\beta = -0.13$ ;  $p = .40$ ); community perception X year ( $\beta = 0.32$ ;  $p = .15$ ) in explaining state anger. Therefore, they were not included in the regression. Community perception explained 6% of the variance of state anger. As for hope, there was no statistically significant interaction effect for community perception X type of community ( $\beta = -0.24$ ;  $p = .12$ ); community perception X year ( $\beta = -0.30$ ;  $p = .17$ ). Type of community explained 8% of the variance of hope.

Table 7  
Hierarchical multiple regression results for State Anger

Variable	B	SE	$\beta$	t	R <sup>2</sup>
Exposure	.55	.25	.14	2.15**	
Gender	.10	.09	.06	1.06	
Age	-.07	.09	-.05	-.79	
Mother's education	-.23	.12	-.13	-1.82	
Father's education	.16	.11	.10	1.39	
Type of Community	-.05	.05	-.07	-1.19	
Community Perception	-.36	.15	-.15	-2.35*	.06

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Table 8  
*Hierarchical multiple regression results for State Hope*

Variable	B	SE	$\beta$	t	R <sup>2</sup>
Exposure	1.61	1.74	.06	.92	
Gender	1.16	.68	.11	1.71	
Age	.07	.66	.07	.10	
Mother's education	-.50	.85	-.04	-.58	
Father's education	-.37	.81	-.03	-.45	
Type of Community	1.00	.36	.18	2.75**	
Community Perception	1.15	1.07	.07	1.07	.08

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

#### 4. Discussion

In this study we focus on community perceptions as potential coping resources mediating emotional reactions among youth who were chronically exposed to rocket fire. We further aimed to explore the role of type of community as well as other demographics in explaining the emotional reactions of state anger and hope.

Our main question dealt with the contribution of community perception as a potential coping resource in reducing anger and enhancing hope. Based on the salutogenic approach integrated with the ecological model of Bronfenbrenner (1979), we hypothesized that adolescents with a stronger community perception would report milder stress reactions, that is, lower state anger and more sense of hope. This hypothesis was partly supported by the data. First, the findings indicate different patterns of resources in buffering stress reactions. Anger was explained mostly by the perception of the community. Thus, adolescents with higher perceptions of community expressed less state anger. These findings are in accordance with previous studies (Sagy, 1998, 2009).

The level of hope, however, was explained mostly by the community type rather than by community perception. Specifically, adolescents from Sderot expressed higher levels of hope than their peers from the kibbutz settlements in this area. It appears that the differences between the communities during the ongoing stress situation affected the levels of hope. This general finding is in a different direction than findings from previous research which found higher levels of wellbeing among residents of kibbutz rather than the city of Sderot (Arnon et al., 2008). Residents of Sderot were found to have higher levels of anxiety than other rural communities (Dekel & Nuttman-Shwartz, 2009).

Moreover, contrary to our hypothesis, we found stronger community perceptions among youth from Sderot compared to those living in the kibbutz. Type of community

was the only significant factor in explaining variety in community perceptions among the adolescents.

It appears that there is a need to explore community perceptions with regard to local and contextual characteristics of the specific community settings. Perhaps we may understand the results against the backdrop of the different settings (Hill, 1996). In Sderot, large numbers of people left the area and this was widely reported in the media (*Ma'ariv*, 20.5.07). The public and political criticism led to a deep process which has changed the community organization in the city: "Still there are signs of a community initiative manifestations and inner strength of the region and the people of Sderot who choose to stay in the city of Sderot" (Sheleg, 2007). In turn, this new way of organization seemed to affect the youth and their involvement in the city.

The illustration below, taken from an interview with a key person in Sderot who works with youth, can clarify the situation in the city at the time our study was conducted:

*"... So last May, May 2007, we had a barrage of Qassams.., there was mass escape from Sderot. And a mass entry of various voluntary organizations that attempted to take the management ...which released us from all the education and the ideology and the development of leadership and assertiveness, concepts that we were working on with them as "positive" but not in stress situations ... and since we got back to the community, we continued to develop all of them (youth) as team leaders and as partners involved in emergency plans for stress situations. What are we going to do in case of escalation in rocket fire..." (an interview conducted by the first author, 11.2.08)*

The change in the city's organization appears to be reflected in the perceptions of the community by the youth at the point of time we approached them. Our results reflected the adolescents perceiving their community as a place where they had influence, as a significant place for them, as a comprehensible place, and as a place where they could feel that they belonged.

In a completely different way, the kibbutz communities have been undergoing an ideological crisis in recent decades that creates internal tension, reflected in the struggle for a new ideological identity formation on the one hand, as opposed to maintaining traditional kibbutz ideology, and the social and cultural values associated with the kibbutz idea on the other (Gutwein, 2010). This tension, combined with the stressful and continuous rocket fire, might have resulted in a lower community perception among those adolescents in our study who lived in collective communities such as the kibbutz.

A key person in the kibbutz community, working with youth explained in an interview:

*"I have no doubt the feeling of less togetherness is not only due to the privatization process of the kibbutz, but also a kind of feeling that when the "red alarm" sounds,*

*I will have to run alone... And that we are different... and the others don't understand us... everyone is for him/herself ...” (an interview conducted by the first author 28.4.08)*

Our findings may reflect tension within the kibbutz community between change and conservation, while the latter is more prominent. It appears as a naive desire to create a sense of 'business as usual' based on the ideological conception of patriotism on the one hand and not to whine and demand change on the other (Fiiraizn-Vail, 2007). To sum up, while the youth in Sderot perceived the stress situation and its implications as having the potential for promoting a better and stronger community in which they can be involved and grow up, the adolescents from the kibbutz communities seem to develop a lower sense of community, as expressed by feeling of less involvement and support in community.

Regarding the question about the role of other demographics in community perception, most of our hypotheses were not supported by the findings. First, no gender differences were found in the community perception of adolescents. Recent studies among adolescents (e.g., Postlethwait-Barth & Guo, 2010), which examined gender differences on issues related to behavior in the context of social relations, such as participation in volunteer activities in the community, reported fewer differences compared to the past (McKay-Killingbeck, 2007). It seems that an increase in opportunities within the community for females, as well as current trends in the direction of gender equality, might explain the findings.

Regarding age, contrary to our hypotheses, community perception level was stronger among older adolescents than among younger adolescents. Our hypothesis relied on the literature relating to indications of a decrease in the feeling of sense of community with increasing age of adolescents. This decline is typical at this stage of development because of multiple transitions, emergence of new opportunities, social groups, values and interests (Chipuer et al., 1999; Evans, 2007). However, in the present study, older adolescents who took part in the study, had lived under stressful conditions for many years, but also had been exposed to different and new types of organization on the community level. Thus, they took a more active role in coping with the stressful situation caused by rocket fire than their younger counterparts. The result was reflected in their higher sense of community perception.

Obvious differences were found between the studied groups in terms of socioeconomic level. Level of education of fathers was found significantly higher among young residents of kibbutz. It appears, however, that socioeconomic level also had no effect on the perception of community. This finding contradicts previous studies (e.g., Bo, 1989; Arnon, Shamai & Ilatov, 2008) which refer to the variable of education as an inner resource that affects the individual's estimation of other available resources (Brewin et al., 2000).

Our last question related to differences in emotional reactions according to demographics. No differences in state anger level were found according to the type of community. But contrary to our hypothesis, we found that adolescents who lived in Sderot reported a higher sense of hope. These findings could be explained by the changes Sderot has undergone in the last few years, as explained above. It appears that hope is not only a sensitive index of human needs but also a significant indicator of social change (Sagy & Adwan, 2006).

As for gender differences, we found higher levels of hope among girls than among boys. This finding contradicts previous research which has found that in acute stress situations, female adolescents reported lower levels of hope compared to their male counterparts (Braun-Lewensohn et al., 2010a; Sagy & Braun-Lewensohn, 2009; Shamai & Kimhi, 2007).

Regarding age, our study joins a series of other studies in which age had no effect on stress reactions during politically violent events (Solomon, Even-Chen & Itzhaky, 2007; Braun-Lewensohn et al., 2010b). These findings may indicate that, in the context of ongoing exposure to political violence, age plays a different role and the differences between younger and older adolescents are reduced. Perhaps the cumulative effect of stress is more significant for older adolescents and they actually lose the advantage of "maturity".

To sum up, we found community perceptions to be a significant factor in explaining some of stress reactions among adolescents living under prolonged stressful situations. However, not all of our hypotheses were supported and the differentiation between the communities appear to be a significant factor in understanding our results. Actually, community type (city versus kibbutz) distinguishes the community perception of adolescents as a potential resource as well as their sense of hope as an outcome. Residents of Sderot presented stronger community perception and higher levels of hope.

These findings reinforce the salutogenic-ecological approach employed by this study, and indicate that community is one of the ecological environments which relates to individual coping with chronic stressful situations. It seems that exploring adolescents' perceptions of community- influence, meaningfulness, comprehensibility and belonging to the community- can help to clarify the resilience of the youth and perhaps the community as a whole.

#### *Study Limitations*

Although the sample included a diverse population and was selected to reflect different parts of the adolescent population in the region according to age, gender and level of exposure, we should be careful in generalizing sample results to wider

populations since the communities examined were relatively small (Sderot and western Negev rural communities). It is also important to remember that our data were collected in the midst of a war and during missile attacks. Therefore, the samples are neither representative nor random but rather consist of youngsters whom we were able to reach during such a difficult time. Thus, some degree of potential sample bias should be taken into account. Apparently, the distribution according to socio-demographic criteria was not sufficient. For example, the samples included a higher percentage of girls than boys. Moreover, although young people's self reports are generally a reliable source of information about their stress experiences and community perception, a multi-informant paradigm could enhance the data.

In spite of these limitations, the importance of this study is in its being a field research carried out in the midst of the stressful situation of severe missile attacks. The unfortunate conflictual violent situation in the area served as a "natural laboratory" for investigation which was essential for studying human behavior (Lazarus 1982). Further studies should explore the views of adolescents from diverse backgrounds in terms of types of communities, their population and their "history" of coping with political violence.

## 5. Conclusions

The main aim of this study was to examine community perceptions as coping resources among youth living in areas exposed to ongoing rocket fire in the south of Israel. Type of community (city vs. kibbutz) indeed emerged as a central variable associated with adolescent's emotional reactions to stress. These findings strongly support the salutogenic – ecological approach presented in this study, pointing out that the community is one of the ecological environments which are related to the individual coping with chronic stress. A broader examination of the dimensions of community perception among youth might help clarify the strength of youth, as well as the entire community. These findings, should they be replicated, highlight the potential importance of community as a protective resource in times of stress, both in terms of intervention and prevention programs as well for clinical practitioners.

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# AGENTS OF COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT? THE POSSIBILITIES AND LIMITATIONS OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN BANGLADESH

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*Abstract:* This article considers the role of non-government organizations (NGOs) in term of their capacity as agents of community empowerment in Bangladesh. The article investigates the application of community empowerment using the domains provided by Laverack (2006). The article is based on qualitative research focusing on two NGOs in Bangladesh: Proshika and Practical Action Bangladesh (PAB) and their work in two communities, one urban and the other rural. The data are obtained from two indigenous occupants: blacksmiths and goldsmiths. The article argues that NGOs in Bangladesh are potential agents of community empowerment, but there are obstacles which limit this.

*Key words:* Non-government organizations (NGO), NGOs' capacity, community empowerment, Bangladesh

## 1. Introduction

This article is developed from and adds to a previous article published by the authors (Islam and Morgan, 2011). That article focused on non-governmental organizations

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in Bangladesh and their contribution to both social capital development and to community empowerment. Such development capacities, it was argued, provide a suitable framework within which to consider the elements and effectiveness of the community empowerment approaches suggested by Laverack (2006). It was observed that NGOs' interventions in developing countries such as Bangladesh are now focused on community empowerment. The research reported in that article selected two programmes from leading NGOs in Bangladesh: the Markets and Livelihoods Programme (MLP) of Practical Action Bangladesh (PAB) and the Small Economic Enterprise Development (SEED) programme of *Proshika*. The research also focused on two groups, blacksmiths (MLP) and goldsmiths (SEED), from communities served by the NGOs. However, the article focused chiefly on social capital development, while the role of the NGOs for community empowerment was explained only relatively briefly. This article is intended to report that aspect of the research in more detail, examining further the potential and the limitations of NGOs in Bangladesh as agents of community empowerment.

## ***2. Community development, community empowerment and NGOs: Theories and approaches***

Now a day, the concepts 'community development' and 'community empowerment' have become important aspects to the NGOs' activities. The term 'community development' (CD) has been used to a great extent in the social sciences. In general, it is used as a process/method for social development. Recently, the term is being used as a new, powerful tool in the war on poverty in the developing countries. The concept of CD had its origin during the post World War II period. It came to international attention in 1948, when the Cambridge Conference on African Administration, organised by the British Colonial Office, used the term 'community development' for 'mass education' (Abedin, 2000:1). In the late 1940s and the 1950s, the British Colonial Office, US International Cooperation Administration, and the United Nations Organisation (UNO) encouraged the underdeveloped countries to take an interest in the CD approach. As a result, it gradually appeared as a universal phenomenon in the developing countries. The UNO defined CD as 'the process by which the efforts of the people themselves' were combined with 'those of the governmental authorities' in order to 'improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities', to integrate 'these communities into the life of the nation' and to 'enable them to contribute fully to national progress' (Abedin, 2000:1). It is especially effective in combating the powerlessness of disenfranchised people.

A common definition of 'community development' (CD) is not simple to attain, nor is it universally agreed upon (Wise, 1998, p.1) because of its wideness and complexity (Kelly & Caputo, 2005, p. 234). It means different things to different people in different places, and has expanded considerably in the past few years. The field of

CD grew, in large part, out of the industrialisation model of the mid-1900s. Reviewing the contemporary literature, some paramount substitutes for the word 'development', in this context are: *advancement; betterment; capacity building; empowerment; enhancement; and nurturing*. Brennan (2004) argues that there is an inconsistency in the definition, usage, and general understanding of what CD represents. To some extent, it is synonymous with economic development and is characterised by efforts to recruit industry and services. For example, business development, infrastructure improvements, and city planning all often fall under the description of CD.

Holdcroft (1978, p. 48) and Malki (2006, pp. 51-52) consider CD from a wider perspective. They define it as a process, method, programme, institution, and/or movement. As a long-term process, it enables people to take collective action to achieve their common goals; as a participatory method it leads to improved resource allocation and sustainable outcomes, to increase the negotiation power of poor people, and mobilises greater local resources to be reinvested locally; as a programme it gives communities a sense of responsibility, authority and control over the development decision-making process, the set-up of the development agenda and thus in the process of resource allocation; as institution it represents the interest of the community members and is devoted to the improvement of the material well-being of rural peoples.

CD is the planned evolution of all aspects of community well-being (economic, social, environmental, and cultural). It is a process whereby community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems. It is considered as a 'grassroots' process by which communities: become more responsible; organise and plan together; develop healthy options; empower themselves; reduce ignorance, poverty and suffering; create employment and economic opportunities; and achieve social, economic, cultural and environmental goals. Frank & Smith (1999, p. 6) argue that effective CD should be: a long-term endeavour, well planned, inclusive and equitable, holistic and integrated into the bigger picture, initiated and supported by community members, of benefit to the community, and grounded in experience that leads to best practice. CD is a set of principles which attempt to achieve felt-needs, extensive citizen involvement, consensus and local decision making. The key purpose is to bring about social change and justice collectively by working with communities. The most important outcome of CD is to improve the quality of life. Effective CD helps to improve mutual benefit and reciprocal responsibility among community members. It improves connections between social, cultural, environmental and economic matters; the diversity of interests within a community; and its relationship to building capacity (Frank & Smith, 1999, p. 6).

On the other hand, the concept of 'empowerment' is a buzzword. Empowerment is a process whereby individuals struggle to reduce personal powerlessness and dependency by having increased control over their lives (Lord & Hutchison 1997; Rappaport, 1987). It is highly advocated by prominent development actors and mainly

NGOs (Bodja, 2006, p. vi). Labonte (1996) states it as an important outcome of community development. As a broad concept, it represents more than a simple increase in income level or access to material resources (Islam & Mia, 2007, p.15). Empowerment enables people to organise and influence change on the basis of their access to knowledge, to political processes and to financial, social and natural resources (Bodja, 2006. p. 11-12). The concept has been defined in the literature in two ways: individual empowerment and community empowerment (Arai, 1995), but there is no universally accepted definition. It means different things to different people, and it varies across countries and cultures. It provides rebalancing of the structure of power within a community by addressing: control of resources, control of decisions, control of information, and physical domination (INTRAC 2005). It helps to expand the assets and capabilities of the poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control and hold accountable the institutions that affect their lives. The basic elements of empowerment are rights, resources and support to information, inclusion/participation, accountability, and local organisational capacity (Narayan, 2002).

The concept of 'empowerment' is one of growing interest in development discourse. It is a process through which individuals struggle to reduce personal powerlessness and dependency and increase control over the circumstances in which they live their lives (Lord & Hutchison, 1997). It is advocated by prominent agents in economic and social development and especially by NGOs (Bodja, 2006: vi). As a broad concept, it represents more than a simple increase in income level or access to material resources (Islam & Mia, 2007. p. 15). Empowerment enables people to organize and influence change on the basis of their access to knowledge, to political processes and to financial, social and natural resources (Bodja, 2006, p. 11-12). The basic elements of empowerment are: rights, resource, information, inclusion, participation, accountability, and local organizational capacity (Narayan, 2002).

As we noted in 2011 it is argued that the discourse of 'community empowerment' has become the: '...common denominator of action for development agencies in a global world' (Tembo, 2004. p. 1025; Islam and Morgan, 2011, p.5). The concept was introduced in the 1990s to replace community participation (Rifkin, 2003, p.169), using the acronym CHOICE (C=capacity-building, H=human rights, O=organisational sustainability, I=institutional accountability, C=contribution, and E=enabling environment) theory, provided by Amartya Sen (1999). Rifkin shows, for example, how health equity can be achieved through community empowerment. The emergence of empowerment as a developmental concept is associated also with the shift to alternative development strategies as distinct from policies that derived from mainstream development theories. Empowerment is an 'alternative development approach' which recognizes the social aspects of development and the need for local communities to enhance their participation in the process through using local resources. Laverack (2006) reviews a number of approaches to such community

empowerment and develops nine components such as: improving participation; developing local leadership; increasing problem assessment capacities; critical awareness of people's needs; building of organizational structures; improving resource mobilisation; strengthening links to other organizations and people; creating an equitable relationship with outside agents; and increasing control over programme management. These enable individuals and groups to become better organized and to mobilise for community change in the direction that they have decided for themselves. Laverack states that there is considerable similarity between the approaches considered. He adds, however, that there is no consensus on which particular combination is the most effective for community empowerment. Instead, they provide a guide to community development practitioners in the planning, application and evaluation of community empowerment in a programme context.

Laverack says that, although such approaches have been used by practitioners for many years, their purposeful integration in a programme context is a more recent idea. The role of the practitioner in using an empowerment approach has been conventionally concerned with facilitating the movement of people along a continuum. These approaches give a more precise way of developing strategies for progression along an empowerment continuum. Laverack argues that this approach is very flexible and can lead to individuals and groups developing empowerment strategies which identify problems and their solution through collective action successfully.

NGOs have certain characteristics and advantages which allow the use of the elements of empowerment more successfully than state agencies. For example, Wuyts *et al.*, (1992, p.134), Cerenea (1988, p.18), and Islam and Morgan (2011) argue that such empowerment approaches can work successfully with the NGOs' advantages, such as acceptance and relation with marginalised groups, organizing participation, quick and flexible response, and cost-effectiveness. However, it is also suggested that NGOs perform differently from the above assumptions. Bodja (2006:20) argues that NGOs are accused of enabling well-established élites to corner development aid. Such élites are also seen as forming structures which perpetuate existing systems of neo-patrimonialism in poor communities. NGOs, especially international ones, have expanded their structure such that they have lost efficiency in terms of delivering cheaper and quicker service to the people they are intended to assist. Moreover, such NGOs are often accused of misunderstanding local conditions and of using staff without local knowledge and necessary skills (Wuyts *et al.*, 1992, p.134; Bodja, 2006, p.20), which misses the objective of community empowerment.

### 3. Research Methods Used

The research methods used were reported fully in our earlier article (Islam and Morgan, 2011). They are summarised again here for the benefit of new readers. A qualitative methodology was used, influenced by ethnography in that it considered different, but related social and cultural factors, such as people's attitudes, norms, values and practices in everyday life. The field work was based in two communities of goldsmiths and of blacksmiths, focussing on the Small Economic Enterprise Development (SEED) Programme of *Prokisha* and on the Market and Livelihoods programme of Practical Action Bangladesh (PAB) at the Mirpur market in Dhaka and the Mostafapur Union Bazar for PAB respectively. NGO staff members and community leaders were other stakeholders consulted. Qualitative data collection methods such as participatory rural appraisal (PRA), social mapping, participant observation, in-depth study, focus group discussion (FGD) and documentation survey were employed, including research questionnaires collected from community people, local leaders and NGO staff members. The data collected was also triangulated and analyzed *thematically* and ethical issues taken into account, which required detailed preparation.

### 4. The NGOs as potential agents of community empowerment

As we reported in 2011, the research found several capacities within the NGOs as agents for community empowerment. These are presented in the Table-1. The data gathered from the two NGOs are analysed on the basis of nine domains of community empowerment provided by Laverack (2006).

Table 1  
NGOs as potential agents of community empowerment

NGOs	Potential capacities for community empowerment
Both (common areas)	Community awareness, counselling & advocacy, training, participatory plan, meeting and consultation, information sharing, market chain, market map, seminars and workshops, involve with association, network with GOs-NGOs, monitoring & supervision, follow-up, research works, knowledge documentation, use of modern communication, donor friendly
MLP (PAB)	Exposure visit, partnership, formation of market opportunity groups, use of scientific tools (i.e. need assessment, market actors' behaviour assessment, learning log sheet and relationship matrix, etc.)
SEED ( <i>Proshika</i> )	Federation, social scheme, credit, internal programme coordination, computer software, use of unused local resources, raising self-fund

Source: Adapted from Islam & Morgan (2011)

*a) Community participation versus community empowerment*

Community participation in all its forms has become an increasingly important aspect of urban and rural policy globally (Lyons *et al.*, 2001, p.1233). Participation has a significant effect on empowerment for sustainable development, which Friedmann (1996) calls 'socially sustainable conditions'. Community workers should focus on assessing community feelings through encouraging active local participation and then transform these into constructive community action plans (Malki, 2006, p.52). The participatory plan of the NGOs was most useful where the local producers, such as blacksmiths and goldsmiths, improved their confidence, drew on their traditional knowledge, experience and skills. It was helpful to justify and verify their thinking within institutional arrangements. Both NGOs believed that more participation in such kinds of institutional arrangement decreased individual fears, apprehensions, and limitations, on the one hand, and increased the possibility of social empowerment, on the other.

The staff members of both NGOs said that they began this participation through their community survey, where they investigated all social networks and encouraged the active participation of local people. They also said that this kind of participation came about through a 'market chain', where all types of social networks were established through 'collective actions' to achieve greater community empowerment. It was perceived as 'genuine' or 'real participation', achieved when the populace had an active voice in defining or diagnosing its own problems. As a consequence, development activity had an authentic chance of meeting the real needs of the population (Goulet, 1989, p.175).

The MSL arranged the exposure visit, where a blacksmith had a chance to talk directly with other blacksmiths, brokers, wholesalers, and businessmen (both urban and rural), designers, and suppliers. Many blacksmiths said that their exposure visits and participation in different blacksmith enterprises in Dhaka improved their confidence and working attitude. This gave them more freedom and confidence in the assertion of their democratic rights, as the process was formed by the people and for the people. But the staff members of PAB agreed that they were unsuccessful in some cases, as the local producers could not free from the exploitation of local élites, such as wholesalers. But the research found that such participation was helpful in minimising the exercise of such élite power.

*b) Using scientific tools to increase problem assessment capacities*

In 'bottom-up' participatory development, the improvement of problem assessment capacities among poor people is now an important aspect of community empowerment. It is very important in developing countries such as Bangladesh,

where a significant part of the population is illiterate and not fully aware of their rights and potential to deal with problems. The tools used by the NGOs were effective in assessing local people's attitudes, culture, norms and values, and political situation. Both NGOs used a number of scientific tools, such as community surveys, participatory market chain, market assessments, participatory plan approach, rapid market surveys, participatory rural appraisal (PRA), training, technology fairs, and also monitoring and evaluation as their assessment methods. The NGOs developed these through a 'trial and error' process. They were useful to new local entrepreneurs in improving their own assessment capacity. For instance, the 'rapid market survey' (RMS) was used to assess the current market situation. The local producers found this an easy and useful method, through which they could gather and record necessary information.

PAB offered other tools to the local producers, such as learning log sheets, relationship matrixes, needs assessment and market actors' behaviour assessment tools. In this way, the PAB could assess the most useful resources through identifying specific actions, which contributed to team success, and to improved future action. The Table-2 shows an example of the 'Cold Milk-Hot Profits' project's learning log sheet of the MLP in Dinajpur District. This identified suitable trainees and the collection of fees as a project topic.

Table 2  
*Learning Log sheet of PAB: Assignment Paravet training fee collection*

<b>Specific actions for well assignment</b>	<b>Actions contributed team success</b>	<b>Actions for better next time</b>	<b>Most useful resources and reasons</b>
Identify professional demand Training demand creation Understand business interest Compare training cost & schedules with other organisations Registered form filled-up & training fee received	Minimised the expenditure of training Identified actual professional participant Maximised of training outputs	Open circulation of training Organising meeting	Human resources were most useful PNGOs & staffs of PAB motivated the paravets to pay fee
Learning: 1. The participants who had need the training only he/she would agree to pay the training fee. 2. Fee collection was a way to identify the effective participant.			

Source: PAB, 2006a, 2007a

The relation matrix shown in Table-3 was useful to assess the possible outcomes in favour of producer groups, where all possible related parameters/indicators were identified. This matrix was able to locate the current and future baselines on the basis of possible parameters. It shows how the milk producers and milkman relationship was developed in terms of information sharing, quality control, price settlement and improvement of trust. It was also helpful in improving social networks and social trust among the different groups of the community.

**Table 3**  
*Relation Matrix of PAB: Baseline, current & future picture on relationship between milk producer & milkman (milking and transport)*

<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Future</b>
Information sharing & communication	Regular communication occurred on milk purchasing purpose. No significant information, however, emerged on market prices and processor demands	The milkmen will disseminate the necessary information and will work with the producers in a group jointly
Quality control issues	-Lack of knowledge on quality milk production & hygiene of producers and milkmen The milkmen could not ensure the quality due to the small amount of collection as a long time	Quality of milk will be produced and it will be evident if tested and producers will get better prices.
Price fixation & payment	Generally the milkmen fix the milk prices for lack of alternative market and in some cases the milkmen provide money in advance to the producer and as a result producers are bound to sell milk to the milkmen at a lower price	Producer groups will enable price fixing through bargaining
Faithfulness & dependability	They have no faithfulness & dependability on one another in case of payment and extra weight	Producers will get regular payment and they will not be deprived about the weight.

Source: PAB, 2006a, 2007b

*Proshika* developed a number of techniques and measurements for proper performance assessment of the local producers, staff members and trainers. These included methodologies to develop good trainers, strategies for speaking, indicators of good trainers, questionnaires of producers' personal characteristics, producers' evaluation form and indicators of training demands, principles of communication,

learning strategies, techniques of memorising capacities, experienced-based learning-circle, visual aids of training, and principles of group learning. The staff members followed the SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) strategies and PRA (Jones & Laverack, 2003, p.7), which they used to provide statements about the 'needs' and 'problems' on the running projects (SEED, 2007).

*c) Group work practice to increase leadership capacity*

Leadership is an important determinant for organisational performance. The key elements of leadership are vision, innovation, decisiveness, and a strong people orientation (VanSant, 2003. p.9). Both NGOs observed that most of the communities in Bangladesh suffer from problems related to a lack of effective leadership. The NGO staff members developed leadership capacity for two reasons: First, they were working with group-based enterprises, where leaders had a vital role to maintain and sustain these group activities; and secondly, the NGO workers wanted to share their organizational values and norms with the leaders, who would be able to disseminate and share these values and practices with their group members. As we have pointed out elsewhere, this kind of leadership can be compared with Gramsci's<sup>1</sup> concept of 'organic' intellectuals, who are developed through their own social processes. Gramsci argues that 'organic' intellectuals are rooted in their class and communities, are conscious of and committed to a constant struggle to achieve both domination and hegemony (Morgan, 1987, pp.303-304). The research found that such community leaders were being developed through associations and clubs, and through links with overlapping social networks.

The PAB developed local leadership through making partnerships and building forums, such as producer groups, private service providers and business development service providers. As a lead NGO, the PAB provided financial, managerial, and technological support to the partner NGOs. For instance, the PAB worked with the blacksmiths group at *Mostafapur Bazar* under this partnership. The PAB staff members claimed that, at the local level, these sorts of forums played significant roles in exchanging information and knowledge. PAB had twenty three types of producer groups with 455 members (Faridpur had five, including the '*Bhai Bhai Kamar Association*', eight in Barisal, and ten in Dinajpur) with association of partner NGOs (PAB, 2007c, pp. 1-3). On the other hand, by December 2007, *Proshika* had established 220 area development centres (ADCs), 149,776 peoples' organizations, and 18,417 group federations (*Proshika*, 2008), which were maintained with proper organizational rules, regulations, principles, and values. These were helpful for developing leadership and leadership qualities among the

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<sup>1</sup> Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) was probably the most important Marxist theorist produced by Western Europe since Marx and Engels.

local producers. *Proshika* also formed business associations. These associations had a number of activities regarding local leadership. The staff members and the local community leaders confirmed that a good number of their leaders participated in the elections to the local public administrations, and many were elected as Union Parishad (UP) Chairmen, Ward Members and Ward Commissioners.

*d) More social networks to improve resource mobilisation*

One of the major functions of the NGOs is to improve resource mobilisation. Network structure(s) can create enabling conditions for the mobilisation of social capital within communities and for people to feel empowered (Dale & Sparkes, 2008:143). Social networks helped many of the local producers by providing work opportunities, financial support, justice and social security (Purvez, 2005, p. 94). Both NGOs shared knowledge through a number of activities, such as exposure visits, training, and supervision and monitoring. It was seen that both NGOs used many local resources, such as local trainers (i.e. cascade training) and local raw materials.

The PAB file documents showed that the MSL worked with a number of organizations as a part of this partnership scheme between April 2006 and March 2007. These organisations were: the Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU), Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI), Wheat Research Centre (WRC), Rural Development Academy (RDA), Vocational Training Institute, *Palli Karma Shahyak Foundation* (PKSP), CARITAS Bangladesh, *Parbatya Boudha Mission Bangladesh*, and Art Institute of the University of Dhaka (PAB, 2006b). They also participated in the 'local market development forum', and shared experience with ICT based organizations. The SEED staff members claimed that they had good relations with many market and business level government organizations (GOs) and NGOs.

The MLP programme emphasised capacity building, partnership development and collaboration between GOs-NGOs. This programme provided a significant number of credits, inputs and technical assistance, which were mobilised and channelled to the project beneficiaries. For example, a number of partner NGOs started an enterprise development loan programme with MLP, where Tk. 21,787,500.00 (£213,602) credited to 1011 small enterprises. Mondal (2000:34) found that under the saving scheme of *Proshika*, the development workers encouraged their target people to save a small amount of money from their everyday income to face their crises and further investment for more income. It was observed that about half of their income or profit was used on human development or placed in savings. According to a SEED (2007) office data sheet, their total investment was Tk. 177,756,941 (£174, 2710), net profit Tk. 66, 71,440 (£65,406) and self-sufficiency was 162 from July 2006 to June 2007.

*e) Social enterprise and the NGOs' holistic approach*

The concept of 'social enterprise' is a recent feature of NGOs' activities. The term social enterprise was first developed by Freer Spreckley in 1981. The social enterprises are businesses with social objectives (Cheung, 2006), whose surpluses are primarily reinvested to achieve social objectives or used in the community, rather than being driven to maximise profit for shareholders and owners (Taskin *et al.*, 2006, pp.362-363). The first Bangladeshi Nobel Laureate (in Peace) Professor Mohammad Yunus introduced this concept with his NGO-*Grameen Bank*, which has now become a new dimension of social development in the NGO sector.

Social enterprise can be effective to achieve broader development, as it attempts to secure interactions with many social networks, on the one hand, and its impact is more holistic and comprehensive, on the other. This strategy empowers local people to generate their own capital in a sustainable manner. This approach can work significantly, where many local NGOs are facing a funding crisis and where NGO-state relationships are often fraught with tension. This approach can be used as an alternative mode for empowering citizens. Cheung (2006) finds this an innovative approach for NGOs in meeting new needs, which creates job facilities, enhances integration into labour markets, encourages self-reliance, and increases the density of community network and cross-sector partnerships.

The positive side of NGOs' activities as social enterprises is that it works through an effective partnership. It is a kind of joint venture, where the NGO is a partner that works with the government and other business sectors. One of the merits of this partnership is to share social responsibility and accountability among multiple agents, as it does not work singly. The value of this approach is that it shares all earning benefits with the local producers who own the enterprise; it improves members' dedication, sacrifice, care, and attention to the enterprise. SEED established a partnership with the business sectors, social enterprise agencies, and government. The goal of SEED was to promote sustainable income growth amongst the micro and small entrepreneurs, and create employment opportunities for the poor. Until June 2006, the SEED disbursed Tk. 725.86 millions (£6.60 million) among 5,640 entrepreneurs. Up to December 2006, a total of 13,441 entrepreneurs (40% female) were organized at 76 *Proshika* Area Development Centres (ADCs), and Tk. 742 million (£6.74 million) loans were disbursed among them. A total of 43,095 new jobs (54% full-time and 46% casual) were created (*Proshika*, 2008). This social scheme provided a number of facilities, such as scholarships, further loans, medical and job facilities for SEED members. This was more comprehensive, holistic, and accountable for a sustainable community. One SEED staff member compared its social accountability with the bank sector in Bangladesh:

“Banks never go to the community; banks do not provide business plan, training, motivational and counselling supports to the community; they don’t have social schemes; rather SEED goes to the community and it builds up social networks with different sectors.”

As a socially responsible organization, *Proshika* widened its experience and skills base by carrying out relief and rehabilitation activities during the many floods, cyclones and tornadoes between 1984 and 2006; and the *monga*<sup>1</sup> of 2005. The floods of 1988 and 1998 and the cyclone of 1991 were colossal and caused unprecedented damage. During the 1988 flood *Proshika* carried out an extensive relief and rehabilitation programme at a cost of Tk. 71.90 million (£0.65 million). The relief and rehabilitation programme carried out during the 1998 flood was even more extensive, involving a cost of Tk. 192.30 million (£1.75 million) (*Proshika*, 2008).

#### *f) Communication and knowledge sharing*

The NGOs used four types of communications channels for improvement of critical awareness about the community needs. These were aid channel and knowledge transfer, partnerships and links with like minded GOs-NGOs, participatory plan, and media, including website connection.

NGO staff members explained that, due to the shortage of financial capital and lack of government help, they had to depend on external agents, such as on donors as an ‘aid channel’. But they confirmed that this ‘aid channel’ was helpful to build-up their capacity, particularly the management skills, new technology and innovation, and development policy between the North and South. The NGO staff members said that the donors had diverse experience working with different countries and with different communities. These networks were frequently international with the purpose of fostering social change (Bebbington, 2004, pp. 729-30) and were ‘transactional networks’ (Radcliff, 2001) in which both NGOs were embedded.

It is necessary for NGOs to have a precise knowledge and understanding of local people and their problems. This approach challenges the conventional development approach in which strategies are imposed from above. Laverack (2006, p.4) argues that, rather than using a formal education approach, the practitioners should help people by working with them in small groups, analysing why some people live in poor conditions and others not, and what local, state and national actions might

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<sup>1</sup> *Monga* is seasonal food insecurity in ecologically vulnerable and economically weak parts of north-western Bangladesh, primarily caused by an employment and income deficit before *aman* (a kind of paddy rice) is harvested. It mainly affects rural poor, who have an undiversified income based on agriculture (Zug, 2006:2).

remedy particular circumstances. This helped both NGOs and local people increase their level of critical awareness. (Jones & Laverack, 2003, p.7). One SEED staff member spoke about activities for the local producer:

*“SEED uses some local languages and techniques to understand the local producers- Who are their debtors? Who are their creditors? How will the creditors get their investments back? Why they are giving them the loan, and what sorts of financial and social benefits will they get and how? How will they pay their loan and how will they improve their savings? SEED is giving a real picture of their calculation how they will sustain their business.”*

Again, the PAB has partnership programmes: ‘...through shared responsibility to effect change, mobilise resources and exchange experiences with local NGOs. The MSL programme worked with seventy rural NGOs and 200 private ‘like minded’ service providers together to ensure 12,646 rural producers’ (i.e. smallholder farmers, non-farm enterprises and rural potters) access to skills, credit, information and technology, and market linkage until 2006. More than twenty government offices in project areas supported producers either by improving their own training curriculum or providing training, credit and other material support (Chaudhury, 2006, p.5). The NGO staff members claimed that their collaboration with other NGOs, GOs, and producers was established successfully.

NGO staff members claimed that they followed the participatory planning approach through PRA, FGD, dialogue, campaign, and rally, and they shared knowledge with local community people. The NGOs also knew how they would develop their work according to the needs of the producers. This plan included drawing upon local culture and practice, peoples’ choice, needs and demands, and norms and values. It was a ‘learning process’, through which an organization observed, listened, learned and identified the appropriate interventions. Both NGOs took the initiative to find out the real ‘mentors’ or ‘organic’ intellectuals in the local community from whom the local producers learned about their products. The NGOs also had continuous interaction with producers through monitoring and evaluation via mobile telephone. In such an evaluation of the MSL project, it was found that the programme had been able to change the real life story of many rural producers by facilitating technology innovation (PAB, 2006b, p.3).

#### *g) Decentralised and autonomous management*

At present: ‘...empowering organizational structures’ in terms of management sufficiency, control over management, and ‘ensured mutual support groups’ (Laverack, 2006, p.6) are important elements of NGOs’ work. Many authors state that, in an increasingly globalised world, whether a local NGO is using financial

resources from its own funds is an indication of its move towards 'self-reliance' and relief from donor dependency. However, it was found that both NGOs still were dependent on donors for funds.

Both NGOs had independent advisory and management boards which were adequate to control activities through autonomous and decentralised management. The MLP of PAB was managed by the head office located at Dhaka, linked with the main office in the UK. The head office of SEED of *Proshika* was located in Dhaka. According to area office staff members, there was full autonomy to work, and the central office did not impose unwelcome administrative decisions on them. However, the allocation of funds was through the head office which took all strategic decisions according to the assumed needs and demands of the local communities. Both NGOs had more organic relationships at community level; they seemed the most appropriate service delivery partners and were invited more and more by multilateral organizations to implement programmes. But their organizational structures did not fit the new large scale requirements; their accountability systems did not match either and there was the potential for problems with both government and the populations they serve (Scheper, 2000, p.3).

The sub-sector of PAB, for example, was the 'cold milk for hot profits' project<sup>1</sup> (PAB, 2007a, pp.1-3). From February to April in 2007, this sub-sector arranged sixteen group meetings with two partner NGOs in *Dinajpur* District, where the importance of vaccination for profitable cow rearing, the necessary care for pregnant and milking cows, and quality milk production experiences with group milk marketing issues, were shared among group members. This meeting was important for improving group functioning, but the question was about the quality and effectiveness of decision making. The group did not have the autonomy to decide what sort of help was needed, but received the interventions as the MLP decided and provided and it was found that the 'patron-client' relationship still existed. On the other hand, SEED also had links with other mutual peer institutions, such as the Bangladesh Women Enterprise, ASA, and BRAC, and their attempts for community empowerment were comparatively successful. As Fatmi & Islam (2001, pp.253) argue, *Proshika's* model for social development and poverty alleviation emphasises total empowerment. *Proshika* therefore followed an approach of 'walking on two legs'.

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<sup>1</sup> This project was run between April 2006 and March 2008. The aims were to increase the income and diversify the livelihood options of small milk producers through improvements in the quality and quantity of milk production. It helped to improve the livelihoods by creating a sustainable community-based integrated marketing system. The beneficiaries were 304 small dairy farmers, plus the local *paravets* and *goyalas* (milk collectors and milk processors) in the *Dinajpur* district of Bangladesh. This project has also been successful in encouraging others outside the area to adopt the scheme (PAB, 2008).

## 5. *The limitations of NGOs as agents of community empowerment*

A growing number of critical assessments suggest that the operational impact of NGOs in community empowerment is less than claimed. The NGOs' capacities, derived from the theory of community empowerment, have significant implications for Bangladeshi communities. However, the NGOs often follow a 'service delivery' paradigm, where the provision of services is strictly separated from engagement in the broader polity. In reference to this connection, NGOs become providers of goods to poor 'consumers', rather than 'facilitators' of collective action and empowerment (Rahman, 2006, p.452). The growing predominance of service delivery programmes among NGOs is problematic for the goals of empowerment and poverty alleviation (Rahman, 2006, p.455). Importantly, the NGO staff members had little theoretical knowledge about community empowerment though they still practised it. Moreover, the measurement of community empowerment within the role of NGOs is not easy. This is because the definitions of the concept are vague, qualitative and open to subjective interpretation. In addition, such an approach has limitations in terms of its broad applications within the Bangladeshi community. In some cases, the NGOs did take initiatives, but because of local problems, could not embed them as community practice. Moreover, NGOs' social contributions could not be visualised entirely.

The findings from both NGOs are summarised in Table- 4. This shows that there were some limitations in common to the community empowerment approach. The NGOs individually found a number of distinct limitations. It was also observed that some limitations were aggravated because of NGOs' weaknesses (i.e. a monolithic approach and the exclusion of ordinary people, unhealthy empowerment and malpractices of power, and management problem). Some limitations were related to the country's poor socio-economic and cultural conditions (i.e. lack of social trust, local power structures, and the negative role of religious leaders), and to those created by the government and by donor agencies (i.e. continuing debates between indigenous and global knowledge paradigms, donor dependency, inaccessible market and lack of government initiative, and challenges of knowledge transfer).

Table 4  
*The limitations of NGOs as agents of community empowerment*

NGOs	Barriers for community empowerment
Both (common barriers )	Lack of social education, social ignorance, traditional habits, peoples' financial crisis, lack of unity and mental limitation, reluctance to use GK bases, lack of knowledge ownership, role of brokers & other exploiting groups, non-cooperation of local leaders and GOs-NGOs. Others included lack of government plan initiatives, inaccessible local markets, shortage of

NGOs	Barriers for community empowerment
	financial and other capitals, lack of social trust, class conflicts, power-relations, chadabaji, lack of decentralised management, external interventions & donor dependency, lack of knowledge update, unavailability of local resources, shortages of training resources, market competition
MLP (PAB)	Demoralisation, lack of communication, problem of knowledge transfer, project discontinuation
SEED (Proshika)	Lack of staff members' dedication, bad relations with the Government, inadequate educational background of staff members, low staff salary and staff turn-over, malfunctioning of associations, negative role of religious leaders

Source: Adapted from Islam and Morgan (2011)

The research also confirmed that the NGOs' initiatives toward development created more problems than solutions for powerless people (Kusumahadi, 2002, p.12), such as local blacksmiths and goldsmiths. The prescription of community empowerment approach provided by Laverack (2006) was found to be ambiguous. Laverack listed nine components as 'domains', which the stakeholders felt were too many and some were duplicated. They found them complex, long, gloomy, loose, and incomplete and even obscure. For example, the stakeholders could not find a real difference between '...increase problem assessment capacities' and '...critical awareness about people's needs'. Again, '...strengthening links to other organisations and people', and '...create equitable relationships with outside agents' are also similar. The 'empowerment approach' should be conceptualised in such a way, that the local people, community leaders and NGO staff members can understand and apply it effectively.

Secondly and paradoxically, Laverack's empowerment approach may also appear incomplete. For example, the research showed that community participation was not secured simply by increasing people's assessment capacities and critical awareness, as they needed to fulfil some felt needs immediately, and then to address what may be discovered as their longer-term real needs. This is a 'social welfare' approach which is included in the study of Kusumahadi (2002, pp.5-6). The elements used there to 'increase access' and 'social control' should be added to Laverack's empowerment approach. To increase access is important to build community capacity, and to achieve access to the resources needed. The final element is that to: '...increase control over programme management' is phrased badly. It should be re-stated as: '...to increase self-management'. The concept of 'self-management' is more decentralised, understandable and pursuable. Such an approach would be considered as more convenient and acceptable for the NGOs, as a function of their direct links with local organizations and communities to gain a better insight into what kind of programmes are needed and desired by the poor themselves.

## 6. Concluding Remarks

To sum up, although the NGOs showed potential as agents for community empowerment in Bangladesh, their actual contribution in developing local leadership, creating empowering organizational structures and increasing people's control over management was weak. It was seen that both NGOs followed the so-called participatory plan (PP) and tried to consider the community feelings through their active participation, and then integrated these in community planning. But, practically, they faced contradiction as they could not include many marginal and ultra poor within their PP. The PP could not achieve 'real' or 'genuine' participation, as a substantial number of bureaucratic and top down methods existed. The NGOs used a number of scientific tools, such as the community survey, participatory market chain analysis, market assessment, rapid market survey, PRA, training, technology fair and monitoring and supervision as part of their assessment. But many of the local producers and NGO staff members claimed that they could not persist with such interventions, as they could not own them effectively. It was found that a good number of staff members believed that in many cases they failed to fit with the local context and with local producers' needs and feelings.

The paper argued that the reputational leaders/the 'organic intellectuals', who informally serve the community, had a better chance of building community capacity. It was found that both NGOs believed that leadership is not a process which could be developed by training; rather it should be developed through usual group activities, such as a participatory plan, market channel and business plan, involving people with different existing associations, and linking with different social networks. But this initiative was blocked by some of the local socio-economical and political processes, such as cultural lag, irrational attitudes, political influence, lack of GOs' help, and non-cooperation of the local power structure. On the other hand, NGOs' communication and knowledge sharing practices strengthened linking capacity with outside agents, and improved critical awareness among the local producers about their needs. It was found that both NGOs used aid channel, knowledge transfer, partnership with like minded GOs-NGOs, participatory plan, and media, including website connection under these interventions. The paper showed that decentralisation and autonomous management systems were significant aspects of community empowerment. It found some contradictions, such as self-dependency versus donor dependency and centralised versus decentralised management systems. It argued that without decentralised and autonomous management systems, the NGOs could not take any kind of decision independently, which would be in support of community empowerment.

NGOs' social enterprise concept was proved an effective intervention for community empowerment. It was considered to be a holistic approach, which could open many

windows to coordinate and accommodate many social networks through partnerships. The research illustrated that NGOs recent trend toward social enterprise was convincing, but the NGOs faced some contradictions, which included the socio-cultural barriers (i.e. self-interest attitude, cultural lag, and rigidity of traditional practice, financial insecurity) to such new social technology. The paper argues that neither of the NGOs could establish itself as a social enterprise, though some of their interventions were working toward achieving this goal.

The paper discussed number of limitations that the NGOs experienced, where their capacities were restricted. It was observed that globalisation made these limitations so complex that the NGOs faced tremendous challenges to overcome those limitations. One of the principal limitations was the poor socio-economic and cultural conditions of the community. The NGOs could not offer many of their interventions, such as loans, training, new information and knowledge, and technology to the local producers as the local producers were not able to utilise them. The NGOs' conventional roles (i.e. micro-credit business, target based approach, monolithic development approach, exclusion of the 'ultra' poor, work with existing employment rather creation new employment sectors, and downward accountability) were caught in this complex situation. However, the NGOs could not fulfil the demands of the marginal communities, such as blacksmiths and goldsmiths because of their lack of services and lack of dedication to social capital and community empowerment.

The research showed that the overall satisfaction among local producers was comparatively low with long-term social development interventions. The most disturbing finding of the research was NGOs' political empowerment. Such empowerment was used to perform their conventional role robustly. This attitude created many conflicts among different development agents. Eventually, the NGOs lost people's trust and confidence. Moreover, NGOs' exploitation, through money laundering, corruption, and misuse of donation, gave a negative impression to the community people, including community leaders and civil society. As a result, the NGOs could not find network-based broader supports at the community level. In addition, most NGOs in Bangladesh were dependent on foreign donation. Because of donors' terms and conditions, the local NGOs lost their autonomous management power. However, the NGOs lost their 'ownership'.

To consider the overall limitations, this paper purposes that an authentic participation policy can overcome many limitations, such as questions of accountability, NGOs' political empowerment, lack of social trust, non-cooperation of civil society and GOs, domination of local power structures, and so on. The research found that the participation between NGOs and other associated groups, such as local producers, community leaders, civil society, GOs and local institutions was not authentic. The thesis proposes that participation should be 'real', where the power should be held by the local people. This participation would be based on the indigenous structures,

where the local people would be able to determine which project they prefer and how the resources would be mobilised and utilised for community development. The research found that the poor and marginalised individuals and communities, such as blacksmiths and goldsmiths, were not able to achieve the full potential of their capability because of constraints imposed by the social/institutional structures of customs, control, and power. The paper proposes a more 'dynamic vision' that incorporated social networks and recognised dispersed and contingent power relations. This kind of participation could secure the development ownership for the local community, civil society, and institutions (NGOs and donor agencies). NGOs' role as a 'social mobilisation' paradigm of development would be more helpful for empowerment, collective action, and engagement with the broader political system.

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# EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVES ON THE SOCIAL ECONOMY

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***Abstract:** In Europe, social economy consists of a lot of actors and it manages to produce social usefulness and to cover needs that the public sector or the business environment fail to meet. The organisational forms, the social objectives and the areas of activity of the social enterprises can vary from one country to another because they may be involved in activities helping local development or promoting the environmental activities; they may provide services, manage finances, or they may apply commercial rules in order to encourage the international development. This paper approaches the social economy at European level considering the typology of the welfare systems and the peculiarities of each individual state. The portability and transferability of this organisational form may become a hindrance when the attention focuses only on the formal aspect regarding the mechanical transfer of some patterns from the European level to the regional level.*

***Keywords:** social economy, welfare, development, social enterprise, non-profit*

## **1. Introduction**

The definition of social economy is not an easy thing because this expression is used to define a complex world and a system of relations that govern the third sector and the non-profit enterprises: creation of flexible jobs, active citizenship, services for the people, decentralised social assistance, human rights safety, consolidated policies for local development and social cooperation. It is thus considered to be an economy with the most different actors, spanning from cooperatives to mutual aid associations,

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foundations and voluntaries associations and to other organisations whose common feature is their not-for-profit character.

The concept of social enterprise appeared in Europe around the 1990 years together with the identification of the third sector – established in order to meet the social needs which the public services of the enterprises working for profit failed to solve, or solved improperly – as driving force of the social entrepreneurship. It is noteworthy that, in contrast with the USA tradition, the European tradition considers that the third sector joins the cooperatives, the associations, mutual societies and the foundations or, in other words, all non-profit organisations labelled with the term of “social economy” in some European countries (Evers & Laville, 2004).

The perspective of the social enterprise in dynamics suggests that the notions of social enterprise and social entrepreneurship should be used as conceptual and analytical framework for the new perspective on the evolution of the third sector: establishment of new organisations or reorientation of the already existing organisations towards then entrepreneurial activity. Such approach doesn't accept drawing clear limits and, consequently, one tries to identify some “subsectors of the social enterprises”. Other approaches try to encompass a whole set of organisations that can be described as social enterprises which implement specific programs of the public policies. Anyhow, when making a detailed analysis of the context, it seems that most initiatives that are not covered by definitions can also be analysed in terms of social enterprises. It results that it is easier to take an approach on dynamic bases than a constructive and complementary perspective relying on statistics of social enterprises.

The organisational forms, the social objectives and the areas of activity of the social enterprises can vary from one country to another because they may work to facilitate the local development, to promote the environmental activities, to provide services, to do business administration, to apply commercial rules that encourage the international development.

## ***2. Typology of the welfare systems***

Behind this diversity of socio-economic objectives and areas, there are dynamic forces that play an important role within the European socio-economic context. More precisely, the persistence of the structural unemployment in many European countries, the need to cut down the state budget deficit, the need for more active policies of integration raise questions regarding how much the third sector can be of assistance in coping with these challenges. The social actors such as the social workers and the associative militants are hampered by the lack of efficient frameworks of public policies dealing with the increasing exclusion of some groups of people from the labour market or from society in general.

In the 1980 and 1990 years, this global context was common to all countries and it helped the entrepreneurial dynamics assert in the third sector as response to these challenges (Cace S., 2004). Anyhow, the forms of these initiatives vary according to the specificity of the different European patterns of the welfare state. The definition of the “welfare state” is rather difficult, some authors claiming that it is an “undefined abstraction” (R. Titmuss, 1968, p. 124). Other authors consider that the “welfare state” refers to four of the main activities of the state: cash benefits, health care, education and feeding, dwelling and other welfare activities (benefits in kind) (N. Barr, 1992, p. 742). According to A. Briggs (1961), the welfare state is characterised as a state which exists for four main reasons: guarantee a minimal income for the families, provide safety mechanisms against the social risks (incapacity of making an income in case of disease or because of old age) and to preserve some equality of the social services. Therefore, the welfare state is a “state whose organised power is used deliberately (via policies and administration) with the purpose to modify the market force play in at least three directions – first, by guaranteeing a minimal income to the individual families irrespective of the value of their work or of the state of poverty, second, by decreasing the social unsafeness of the people and families and third, by making sure that all citizens, irrespective of their status or class, are offered the best possible available standards for a particular social service” (A. Briggs, 1961, p. 222).

The classical typology of Esping-Andersen identifies the different configurations of the welfare systems.

*Esping-Andersen’s typology (1990) for the European countries*

<b>Liberal system</b>	<b>Conservative-corporatist system</b>	<b>Social-democrat system</b>
Ireland United Kingdom	Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Spain	Denmark, Finland, Sweden

Source: Esping-Andersen, G., *The three worlds of the welfare capitalism*, 1990.

Even though this typology is not enough to characterise the evolution of welfare in Europe (Evers, 2010), it remains a starting point in the attempt to understand the role of the third sector in a variety of European countries and of different social environments in which the social enterprises are enrooted.

Esping-Andersen distinguishes three major types of the welfare state, related to the different historical development of the different western countries. The “liberal” or

“Anglo-Saxon” regime is a system in which the “market” is responsible for the “social work” services. The social-democratic regime provides a wide range of social work services organised by the state at universal scale. According to Esping-Andersen, the conservative states focus on the preservation of order and status, and to do this, the funds for social insurances reward the work performance and the status. In these countries, the public insurance funds and the social work services have been established and regulated by the government or by the non-profit organisations.

### **3. European social economy patterns**

#### **3.1. The Scandinavian pattern**

The purpose of the Scandinavian pattern is to meet the need for social work of the community and to promote social solidarity and gender equality by involving the democratic organisations in sound social movements whose demands are included by the state in the social legislation (Anheier, K.H., 2002, p. 6).

In the Scandinavian countries, the new organisations reacted differently than the traditional associations and abandoned the political and cultural approach which dominated the 1970 years, proposing, in the 1980 years, “new forms and solutions of organisation for the local social problems”. (Cace, S., 2010, p. 93).

#### *Denmark*

The „social enterprise” (*social virksomhed*) as notion is still new in Denmark, being on the brink of entering the common vocabulary and the Danish discourse about social cohesion (Hulgård, L.; Bisballe, T., 2004). So far, it is used primarily by the researchers of the third sector, by the entrepreneurs and by the third sector representatives. The politicians use the concept as part of an active labour market policy, proposing to make the traditional enterprises – particularly the small and medium enterprises – much more responsible socially in matters of integrating the unemployed people on the labour market (Liveng, A , 2001).

The social enterprises and the social economy organisations can be classified in four main groups depending on their area of activity (Liveng, A , 2001):

1. Organisations which provide voluntary social support, such as the crisis centres and the shelters for maltreated women, “support groups” for all areas of social and/or psychological crisis (divorce, suicide, serious diseases etc.), or economy shops belonging to the religious communities.
2. Cooperatives and companies with democratic affiliation, whose members must not necessarily work for that company; they just influence the decisions by casting their vote.

3. Organisations providing education and on-the-job training to the groups of vulnerable people or to the people excluded from the labour market.
4. Projects of local development and of urban renewing, which establish local partnerships between the representatives of the different sectors (public, private and the third sector).

### 3.2. The continental European pattern

The continental pattern of the social economy focuses on the public supply of social work. In Germany and Austria, the initiatives were called “self-support”, in the endeavour to reflect the attempt to empower the involved people. The initiatives can be divided into three sub-sectors: semi-informal groups, self-support groups and groups supporting the cause of the people not included in the support network (they are mainly voluntary activities, the paid work being just complementary; Cace, S., 2010, p. 94). Furthermore, the German tradition of subsidies provides a comprehensive framework for the relation between the state and the third sector for the supply of social work (Anheier, K.H., 2002, p. 7). In France and Belgium, the efforts focused on the development of new ways of supplying associative services, knowing that the lack of incentive does not ensure the respect for the user. The accent of the French notion of “social economy” is distributed on the economic aspects, on mutualism and communal economy (Anheier, K.H., 2002, p. 7).

#### *France*

In France, the concept of “social enterprise” (*entreprise sociale*) still is a new concept, whose use and understanding remain limited to a range of experts and social entrepreneurs; it is not used as key-concept by the politicians and it is not known by the public at large. The notion of social enterprise is far from gaining the acknowledgement similar to that gained by the concept of “social economy based on solidarity”, which received the consensus of the participants in the groups of analysis over the past twenty years.

The limits between associations and cooperatives are increasingly unclear; this evolution led to the creation of new legal forms which focus on the concept of social enterprise (Fraise, L., 2011).

Obviously, France – like the other EU countries – predicted the development of the different types of “social enterprises for integration in the labour market” (Eme, B.; Gardin, L., 2002). In their fight against the different forms of exclusion, the social enterprises for integration in the labour market were in the 1980 and 1990 years a strategy of struggle against unemployment and exclusion, which proved to be

innovating in terms of the establishment of enterprises serving a social purpose: integration of the disadvantaged people (unemployed, people receiving social benefits, low-skilled young workers, people with disabilities etc.) in the labour market.

In 2004, the 2,300 registered organisations which were supplying services of integration in the labour market – enterprise for integration in labour (*entreprises d'insertion*), enterprise for temporary integration in labour (*entreprises de travail temporaire d'insertion*), intermediating associations (*associations intermédiaires*) and work sites for integration in labour (*chantiers d'insertion*) – employed about 220,000 paid workers (Dares, 2006).

### *Belgium*

The concept of social enterprise is still unclear in Belgium, but it is increasingly used to emphasize the entrepreneurial approach adopted by an increasing number of organisations from the third sector. The introduction of the legal framework of the “company with social purpose”, in 1996, is definitely linked to this trend. Strictly speaking, this framework is not a legal form; actually, all types of commercial corporations can adopt the label of “company with social purpose”, on condition it doesn't focuses on the enrichment of its members and on condition that their statute observe several conditions. However, between 1996 and 2006, the legal status (reviewed in 2007) has been adopted by about 400 enterprises; this is so, maybe because once adopted, this statute brings about a large number of additional requirements compared to the legal form of traditional company (Nyssens, M., 2001).

The relevant types of social enterprises in Flanders are the social workshops (*sociale Werkplaatsen* or SWPs), the centres for labour medicine (*arbeidszorgcentra* or AZCs), enterprises for labour integration (*invoegbedrijven* or IBs) and protected workshops (*beschutswerkplaatsen* or BWs) (Gregoire, O., 2008). They target very different groups: BW workshops provide jobs for the people with physical, mental or sensorial disabilities. The centres for labour medicine ensure long-term jobs for a much more diversified target group whose main characteristic is that its members suffer of different problems (low skilling or drug addiction). The social workshops SWP focus on the people who were inactive during the past five years. Finally, the IB enterprises, whose entrepreneurial dimension is stronger, employ, with contracts on undetermined period, workers able to achieve a particular level of productivity. This diversity of the target groups resulted from the will of the public authorities to cover as much as possible the heterogeneity of the people excluded from the market labour and who are seeking a job.

In Wallonia and Brussels, the initiatives for integration in the labour market usually are the responsibility of the different regional authorities, but they are very

resembling, which explains why the initiatives from the two regions are grouped together for each type of social enterprise. The different types of initiatives include the enterprises for integration in the labour market (*entreprises d'insertion* or EIs), the enterprises for on-the-job formation (*entreprises de formation par le travail* or EFTs), adapted work enterprises (*entreprises de travail adapté* or ETAs) – previously known as “protected workshops” (*ateliers protégés*) – and social enterprises for the integration of the unrecognised work (Gregoire, O., 2008). Except for the enterprises for on-the-job formation (EFT), which provide training courses for a maximum of 18 months, all the other types of social enterprises for integration in the labour market from Brussels and Wallonia provide permanent jobs for the people excluded from the labour market due to different reasons: disability, low skilling level, psycho-social problems etc.

### 3.3. South-European pattern

In Italy, in the 1970 years, the social cooperatives were established in many regions due to their capacity to perform functions that were previously not done, such as ensuring jobs for the people excluded from the labour market and development of a range of services for these people. Even though the social economy from Italy is less substantial than in other countries because of the dominant position of the state in sectors such as education and health care, the recent dynamic activity of the cooperatives based on “social solidarity” is significant (Cace, S. 2010, p. 95). It is noteworthy to mention the notion of association (“Associationism”) in Italy, which is seen as a conservative power against both the power at the local level of the church and of the state (Anheier, K.H., 2002, p. 7).

In Portugal, the law of cooperatives on the basis of social solidarity (promulgated in 1998) joins the goods and services with the “paid” members, with the beneficiaries of services and with the “voluntary” members. The social cooperatives which were established in Spain (after the promulgation of the relevant law in 1999) provide social services of education, health care and insertion on the labour market, while also covering other social needs that are not covered by the market (Cace, S., 2010, p. 95).

#### *Spain*

In Spain, the cooperatives, voluntary organisations, foundations and other non-profit organisations are part, for many years, of the enterprises which generate income for social purposes rather for commercial purposes. Starting with the 1990 years, such enterprises have been classified as “social economy”. The term refers to any economic phenomenon which has a social dimension or any social phenomenon that has an economic dimension (Defourne, J.; Develtere, P., 1999).

The role assigned to the social economy within the Spanish system of social support underwent adaptations and changes over the past twenty years. Until the mid-1980 years, the traditional non-profit organisations which supplied services to the vulnerable people were regarded a rudimentary and vanishing species, like the large historic charity organisations such as the Red Cross and the Catholic organisation Cáritas (Vidal, I.; Claver, 2003).

The leaders of the country considered that the system of social assistance built at that time could take over the management, design, financing and administration of all the social, health and educational needs.

In contrast with this opinion and in parallel with the construction of the new Spanish system of free social aid, new organisations appeared within the civil society, which were also covering new areas of activity. The period with the largest increase of the number of non-profit associations and organisations extended from the 1980 to the 1990 years, period which actually coincided with the construction of that system of free social assistance.

In 2006, Spain had over 51,500 enterprises of social economy, with over 2.4 employees, more than 25% of the total active population in Spain (Li, S.; Wong, T., 2007).

About 51,000 enterprises of social economy are represented by a confederation called the Confederation of Spanish Social Economy Businesses (CEPES), established in 1992. Including 25 organisations of a member confederation, CEPES ensured a platform for the dialogue between the social economy enterprises and the public authorities. Furthermore, CEPES represents the network of the Spanish social economy within the European forums and coordinates the "Euro-Mediterranean network of the social economy" which includes Spain, Greece, Italy, France and Portugal.

Economic and social aspects of the social economy enterprises

*The economic aspects (Vidal, I., 2005) of the Spanish social economy enterprises are the following:*

1. They are directly and continuously involved in the production of goods and services.
2. They are established on a voluntary basis and are led by a group of entities that are not submitted to the control of the public or private organisations, although they can be subsidised from public grants.
3. Their financial viability depends on the efforts of the members and workers to guarantee enough resources.

4. They hold much or an increasing part of the market activities and incomes or from contracts with the public authorities.
5. They have a minimal number of employees.

*The social aspects (Vidal, I., 2005) of the Spanish social economy enterprises are the following:*

1. They promote a sense of social responsibility in order to serve the community or a specific group of local people.
2. They are established by a group of people who share specific needs or objectives and who want to contribute, one way or another, to the welfare of the society.
3. The profit will not be shared or will be shared in a specific proportion among the members.
4. They have a democratic management and their clients or consumers are represented in the managing bodies.

#### *Role of the government*

The development of the social economy was largely guided by the government. In 1985, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs established the Secretariat-General for workforce employment whose task was to tackle the problems of employment, including the development of the social economy. The Secretariat-General for workforce employment has a specialised structure (Directorate-General for the promotion of social economy and of the European Social Fund), which coordinates the governmental departments which promote the social economy, draws agreements and contracts of social economy with the 17 autonomous regions of Spain (such as the National Public Service for Labour Force Employment) and facilitates the financing of the social economy enterprises and associations (Li, S.; Wong, T., 2007).

The Spanish government regarded the social economy as an instrument for the fight against unemployment, poverty and social exclusion. In Spain, the unemployment rate increased from about 2% during the early 1970 years to over 10% at the end of the 1970 years, peaking at 24.2% in 1994. The unemployment rate decreased gradually from 18.8% in 1998 to 8.5% in 2006. According to the government, an important reason for the decrease of the unemployment rate was the growth of the social economy (Li, S.; Wong, T., 2007). The statistics of the Directorate-General for the promotion of social work and of the European Social Fund showed that from 1995 to 2005, the social economy sector created a total of 420,000 jobs representing a 67% increase (higher than the corresponding increase of 41% on the labour market in general).

### *Italy*

Once with the political unification of Italy (1861), the presence of the state was rather deficient in terms of social policies such as social work or health care. Formal and informal non-profit organisations have been established and have thus legitimated their activities which started hundreds of years before (Messina, A.; Meneguzzo, M.; Carrera, D., 2007) (such as: “Opere pie”, “Società di mutuo soccorso”, “Casse di risparmio”, forms of private non-profit organisations, cooperatives characterised by religious and political ideologies). The network of Italian cooperatives (“Lega nazionale delle cooperative”) has been established at the end of 1880 and had available a strong social basis consisting of over 300 cooperatives located mainly in northern Italy. Another organisation that has been established was the “Confederazione delle cooperative italiane”, with a clear Catholic orientation (Zamagni, V., 2000). Even though they had different “ideational” approaches and had unequal territorial distribution in some areas, the cooperative movement and the solidary way of supplying services were ultimately acknowledged (Borzaga, C.; Ianes, A., 2006).

Until the 1980 years, the solidarity movement of the Italian cooperatives displayed several limitations:

1. Mutual regime, according to which all activities had to be dedicated exclusively to the associates;
2. The entire sector has been characterised by a strong contribution of the voluntary organisations, according to which (particularly for the Catholic ones), all of these services could not be ensured by observing the entrepreneurial dynamics
3. The distribution of these organisations focused on few Italian regions, particularly in the central and northern regions
4. The public sector was rather distrustful in the official acknowledgment of the importance of this new and effervescent entity; it tested laws and norms with the purpose to preserve the political consensus and took into consideration the pressures of the two different Italian political movements (left wing and the democrats) (Messina, A.; Meneguzzo, M.; Carrera, 2007).

### *Development of the third sector*

The institutional purpose of the cooperatives is the mutual interest of their members and shareholders, who are statutory, but not exclusive beneficiaries, of the goods and services that are produced. More precisely, the cooperative enterprise is characterised by five principles of establishment: internal mutuality, external mutuality, non-profit distribution, inter-generational solidarity and inter-cooperative

solidarity. Due to these principles, the main objective of the cooperatives is not necessarily to obtain the highest returns from the capital investments, but to meet an existing requirement or demand, so as to provide a higher economic advantage to its shareholders or members than they could obtain separately (Thomas, A., 2004).

A new form of cooperative has been established in 1991, the social cooperative (Law 381), with the purpose to assist particularly the voluntary organisations involved in the improved implementation of human resources and in the integration of the disfavoured people. Observing the cooperative principles highlighted above, the social cooperatives include either *medical activities* (management of the services of health care and education, residential assistance for the people at risk, children-care services, cultural initiatives and environmental protection) or *training activities* (present the employment opportunities and the activity of the enterprises to the disadvantaged people who are not able to penetrate the productive areas).

In 2005, there were over 7,300 social cooperatives with over 244,000 workers (Borzaga, C.; Galera, G.; Zandonai, F., 2001). However, this impressive development of the social cooperatives didn't prevent other types of third sector organisations to develop entrepreneurial activities, or the adoption of a law for the social enterprises (Law 118/2005), a point of reference in the history of the Italian third sector (Borzaga, C.; Galera, G.; Zandonai, F., 2001). The new law includes the principle of the multiple forms of organisation and doesn't stipulate that the form of organisation is eligibility condition for a social enterprise. The law divides the eligible organisations in two subsectors: companies and non-company organisations. The innovative character of the law results from the openness towards new sectors of activity, other than social work, and from the variety of the types of organisation eligible to become social enterprises.

### **3.4. The Anglo-Saxon pattern**

The Anglo-Saxon pattern relies on the concept of non-profit organisations. The non-profit organisations (NPO) and the non-profit sector sparked again the interest for the third sector in the Anglo-Saxon countries. It is therefore useful to emphasize their contribution to the analysis of the social economy (Defourny, J.; Develtere, P., 1999). This pattern differentiates the social enterprises from the private sector. With voluntary support and with the support of the beneficiaries the activities focus on the disadvantaged areas or on the vulnerable groups, often involving community development through the efficient use of the financial and human resources. (Cace, S., 2010, p. 92).

The term of *non-profit sector* can be further explained by the following characteristics:

- The non-profit organisations have a formal, official character, meaning that they are institutionalised to a specific degree, which implies that they have legal personality;
- They are private and, consequently, different from the state structures and from the organisations directly related to the government;
- They are independent, meaning that they have to set their own rules and own decision-making authority;
- They cannot share the profit among the membership or leadership (this commitment of not sharing the profit is constantly reinforced within this sector);
- Their activities must involve volunteers and donators (the members of these organisations should also be volunteers) (Defourny, J.; Develtere, P., 1999).

The conceptual core of the non-profit approach is interdicting profit sharing and this is the key to understanding the non-profit associations, while the concept of the social economy relies largely on the principles of cooperation, of seeking an economic democracy (Defourny, J.; Develtere, P., 1999, pp. 18-19).

#### *United Kingdom*

The term of “social economy” acquired some popularity along the 1980 years, but it never entered the common British vocabulary. The term of “third sector” is categorically better known and it includes the voluntary sector, the associations, the cooperatives, foundations and social enterprises (Cace, S., 2010, p. 109). The third sector, at the highest level of generality, refers to the organisations situated between the market and the state in terms of control and property right. It also includes the self-governing organisations which are constitutionally independent; there is no sharing of the profit and there also is a large share of voluntarism (Kendall, J., 2005, p. 25). The comparative statistics show that the United Kingdom is among the top countries in terms of the social economy contribution to the economic activity and employment (Cace, S., 2010, p. 109).

The announcements from November 1998 and January 1999 regarding a major improvement of the unity within the central government responsible for the third sector brought a major change in the relation between the third sector and the central government of the United Kingdom. The development of the partnership relation with the third sector is a calculated attempt to set for the first time a proactive and significantly “horizontal” position of the policy towards the sector *per se*, to expand beyond the support structures ensured by the legal and fiscal system, and to supplement the agreements of the “vertical” policy in specific areas of activity which dominated in the past (Kendall, J., 2005, p. 22).

A three-year strategy was launched in July 2002 by publishing *Social Enterprise: A Strategy for Success*. The strategy involves interventions in three areas: establishment of an environment favourable; better economic performance of the social enterprises and determination of the value of the social enterprise. Its structure assimilated the Active Community Unit from the Home Office, thus forming the Office of the Third Sector – OTS, located within the department of coordination which reports directly to the Prime Minister (Cabinet Office) (Cace, S., 2010, p. 110).

The coordination department published in 2007 a report, *The Future Role of the Third Sector in Social and Economic Regeneration: Final Report* with the purpose of supplying information on the governmental policies for the third sector. This report gives a new definition and classification of the third sector: the government defined the third sector as nongovernmental organisations relying on values and which, in principle, reinvest the surplus in social, environmental and cultural objectives. There is a large variety of organisations forming the third sector and it is important that the relation between the government and the third sector reflects this diversity. The sector can be classified simply as follows:

Community and voluntary organisations (CVO), represented by charity organisations (registered or not registered) and non-charity organisations (at the end of 2006, in England and Wales there were 168,600 recorded charity organisations, not counting the 21,800 branches of the charity organisations). They range from organisations bearing the name of a household, such as Barnardo's (one of the 630 charity organisations with annual revenues in excess of 10 million), to small warehouses financed in order to assist a particular parish (specific to the 35,300 registered charity organisations which have an annual revenue less than 1,000 British Pounds). A recent estimation suggests that there are about 110,000 unregistered charity organisations (they include universities, museums and national galleries, some social work organisations and many small size educational and religious organisations).

The information on the non-charity organisations is vague; many of them operate without being known to the public organisations or to the researchers. Their variety in terms of size and activities resembles largely with that of the charity organisations, although they refer to some particular types of organisations (such as community sports clubs for amateurs or political organisations such as Amnesty International, which operate outside the purpose of charity). The common features of the organisations included in this category concern the fact that they exist and function more for an altruist purpose than for making private benefits, that they have been established and could be consolidated without needing state permission and that they rely more or less on voluntary support.

Social enterprises: in 2005 there were more than 55,000 social enterprises, some of them CVO or cooperatives. The annual turnover of the social enterprises was of about

27 billion Sterling and they contributed with about 8.4 billion Sterling to the GDP. The social enterprises are active in a wide range of economic activities in sectors such as professional training, social work, health care, social dwellings, leisure activities and child care. They include organisations which sell goods using fair trade (such as „Cafi Direct”), organisations established in order to ensure employment opportunities for the disadvantaged people (social companies) and development funds.

Cooperatives and the mutual organisations – in 2005 there were over 8,100 industrial and sparing societies registered with the Financial Services Authority, with about 19 million members. The most important are the consumption and production cooperatives, the cooperative consortia, the agricultural cooperatives and the social work cooperatives. In September 2006 there were 567 credit unions with almost half million members.

### **3.5. Pattern of the Central and East-European countries**

The case of the Central and East-European countries differs from the above mentioned cases because of the following obstacles that slow down the growth of the social economy organisations, as identified by J. Defourny (EMES, 1999):

- Influence of the “transition myth”, which induced so far policies which were very dependent of the establishment of a free market, failing to understand the value of the “alternative” organisations for the local and national development;
- Cultural opposition to the cooperatives and the opinion that they are somehow politically conservative. In many countries there is a negative perception of the old cooperatives as organisations related to the former communist regimes – even though many of these organisations were actually established before the communist period;
- Excessive dependency of the social enterprises on the donors, combined with a limited view of the role of the alternative organisations;
- Lack of the legal framework which to regulate the status of the cooperatives and of other non-profit organisations;
- General distrust in the solidarity movements – the concept of solidarity being used mostly to describe the relation of a person with his/her family and friends – and the perception of the economic activity as being oriented more towards personal profit than towards benefits for the whole community;
- Predomination of a “parochial” political culture which induces a trend of limiting the activity of the social economy actors to the achievement of the immediate interests;

- Difficulty of mobilising the human resources.

However, despite the cultural, political and legal difficulties confronting them, both the traditional cooperatives and the new generation of the non-profit organisations have a real potential for development.

#### *Poland*

The concept of social enterprise is a developing term in Poland; as yet there is no common definition of the concept which to originate in the concepts of the third sector, of the non-profit sector and of the cooperatives. The specificity of the social enterprises, compared to the third sector, with the non-profit organisations or with the cooperatives in general, relies in the fact that they produce profit (however, not to maximise the profit) and in the fact that they focus more on the general interest / community interests (not just on the objectives of the mutual interests).

The social enterprises are yet a rare subject of the political discourses and they are just partially integrated in policies and laws. Recently, some political debates acknowledged the potential of the third sector and of the social enterprises to establish services for households and communities and to create jobs for the groups of people that are “difficult to employ” (Les, E., 2001).

Most social enterprises from Poland run their activity while observing the legal framework of the associations or of other voluntary organisations, foundations or cooperatives.

Poland has recently introduced a new legal form particularly for the social enterprises for integration on the labour market. The law of the social cooperatives, promulgated in April 2006, allows the selected needy groups of people (such as former prisoners, long-term unemployed people, people with disabilities, former drug or alcohol addicts) to establish a social cooperative. This law is an important innovation of the policy for the employment of the disadvantaged groups. The social cooperatives have the right to assume and fulfil public duties similarly to the associations and foundations, and to produce goods and services, while observing the principle of limiting-maximizing the profits of the persons/cooperative members (Leś, E.; Jeliaskova, M., 2005).

#### **4. Conclusions**

In Europe, the development of innovative and entrepreneurial organisations paves the way towards an explicit reference of the social enterprises (Nicolăescu V., Căce S., Koumalatsou E., Stănescu S., 2011), being clear that the changes in the public financing of the third sector played their role in the development of new attitudes and

strategies for the social economy. In the USA, the public support for the non-profit organisations decreased, while the sharing of the commercial profit increased significantly (Kerlin, 2006).

Various forms of dividing the public funds have been noticed in Western Europe, these public funds being transformed into benefits for the community. In the corporatist-conservative countries, the labour market programs determined the dynamicity of the associative entrepreneurship. In contrast, the development of quasi-market in the “liberal” countries allowed the development of contractual relations between the associations and the public authorities within a more competitive environment. Both in the social-democrat countries, and in the Mediterranean countries, the organisations of the third sector, particularly the cooperatives, became suppliers of social work services.

During the recent decades, the social economy has proved its capacity to contribute efficiently to solving the newly-emerging problems, managing to consolidate its position of sector necessary for the balanced and stable growth of the state and of the business environment. The social economy entities succeeded to reduce somehow the differences between classes, to compensate the deficiencies of the state in providing various services, to support the labour market by inserting the different vulnerable groups, actually to improve the standard of living of the people and to foster democracy. In Europe, social economy consists of a multitude of actors; it succeeded to produce social utility and to cover the needs for which both the public sector and the business environment failed to find solutions. Social economy addresses all forms of social needs and the funds for these activities are obtained either from donations and grants, or, as lately desired, by running economic activities whose profit is directed towards such services.

The increasing interest for the social economy organisations may paradoxically decrease if their impact on the long-term sustainability is not taken into consideration and if the operational context is not evaluated adequately (Neguț A., Nicolăescu V. Preoteasa A.M., Căce C., 2011). What was an advantage before – the portability and transferability of this microeconomic organisational form – becomes an obstacle when the attention focuses only on the formal aspect of transferring specific patterns from the European to the regional level. Thus, the complex problem of the viability of the economic activity and the need for support structures should be taken into consideration. The sustainability of the social economy organisations capacity to empower the citizens economically, socially and culturally is complex and requires human resources (Căce C., Nicolăescu V., Katsikaris L., Parcharidis I., 2012) and financial resources (Nicolăescu V., Căce C., Hatzantonis D., 2012), and also the activation of an environment of public policies that demands this innovation.

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# CHALLENGING IMPLICIT GENDER BIAS IN SCIENCE: POSITIVE REPRESENTATIONS OF FEMALE SCIENTISTS IN FICTION

Helen MERRICK<sup>1</sup>

***Abstract:** Despite decades of research and affirmative action, women continue to be under-represented in the sciences. Cultural assumptions and stereotypes are a key factor impacting women's entry into and retention in the sciences, indicating the need for improved role models for girls in science education. This paper reviews the critical research on Media representations of female scientists, and argues that more positive role models are found in fiction. This research examines the kind of cultural work such representations might perform, analysing a diverse sample of texts from 1905 to the present. These images of female scientists provide numerous examples of positive, non-traditional role models, examples of egalitarian scientific cultures, and critiques of contemporary science. Informed by this analysis, the article considers how these representations might be used to challenge stereotypical assumptions concerning women's role in the sciences.*

***Key-words:** Gender, science education, female scientists, representation, role models*

For more than three decades, researchers and scientists have debated the “women in science” issue. Despite improvements in their position, the status of women in the sciences continues to provoke concern, as women remain underrepresented in most areas of science, have low rates of retention and are less likely to reach the higher echelons of research and academic positions.

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## *I. Representations of women in science*

As the 2006 report from the U.S. National Academy of Sciences noted, 'Neither our academic institutions nor our nation can afford such underuse of precious human capital in science and engineering' (NAS, 2006, 1). While these trends are mirrored in most of Western Europe (and other countries such as Australia), The Unesco Science Report 2010 shows that despite their pre-eminence in terms of research output and expenditure, the U.S. and Western Europe are outperformed by other countries in terms of gender equity (Schneegans, 2010). Women form close to 50% of science researchers in a number of countries in Latin America, Eastern Europe and Southern Asia.<sup>1</sup> In contrast, while US women's share of undergraduate degrees has soared in some areas, across most of the sciences women are less likely to continue on to advanced degrees or scientific careers. A 2011 National Science Foundation report shows that while women in the US now account for well over half of undergraduate degrees in areas such as biological sciences (59.8%) and medical science (84.5), they remain a minority in areas such as Engineering (18.5%) and Computer sciences (17.7% – down from 28% in 2000). Further, while women's share of graduate studies has improved in the last few years, these figures don't flow onto senior academic and career positions.<sup>2</sup> Women's share of S&E occupations is roughly half that of their participation in the general workforce, with a much lower percentage of jobs in professions such as Physical scientists (32%), Math/computer scientists (25%), and Engineers (11%) (NSF, 2011). So why do US women continue to fall foul of the "leaky pipeline"?

The example of countries which have achieved gender parity suggest that it is not lack of interest that keeps women out of science, but rather a complex mix of social, cultural, economic and political factors. The extensive body of research into the women in science question has documented numerous factors which impact on women's ability and desire to follow a career in science (Eisenhart & Finkel, 1998; Lederman & Bartsch, 2001; Rosser, 2004; NAS, 2006). A central concern are the factors influencing girls' early education choices, and how these are shaped by gender schemas, cultural stereotypes, and peer influence (NSF, 2003; Stake & Nickens, 2005; Dweck, 2007; Halpern, 2007; Hines, 2007). The 2006 NAS report,

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<sup>1</sup> For example, EU countries with leading % of women researchers are: Lithuania (49%), Latvia (47%), Bulgaria (45%); in Cuba 53% of all S&T professionals are women (Schneegans, 2010)

<sup>2</sup> The 2008 NSF report showed that women's share in postdoctoral fellowships showed a drop off in all fields, with a high of 40.41 % in biological sciences, and lows of 17.51% in both engineering and computer sciences and 20.21% in physical sciences (NSF, 2006-2008: G1). In terms of academic employment, the 2008 report found male doctoral faculty "outnumber female S&E faculty by more than 2 to 1" with the discrepancy even more pronounced in prestige institutions: only 29.5% of S&E faculty at first-ranked research universities are women (NSF, 2006-2008, H5). These figures included social sciences, thus the proportion of women in other science areas may have been even lower.

*Beyond Bias and Barriers* confirms that the existence of 'implicit biases' continues to play a central role in women's under-representation in Science and Engineering (NAS, 2006, 3). In other words, there are persistent stereotypes about girls and science that infuse popular culture, education, peer and family influence (resulting in the phenomenon known as "stereotype threat").<sup>1</sup> These are cultural, rather than structural issues and are thus difficult to identify and address directly through affirmative action and compensatory educational strategies.

A significant body of literature stresses the need for more positive role models as a way of countering such implicit bias (LaFollette, 1988; Schmidt & Nixon, 1996; Flicker, 2003; Steinke, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2005). Media role models have seen a marked improvement in the last few decades, with capable female scientists becoming more common in both film and television, yet many of these images are compromised by their continued reliance on stereotypes of normative femininity. A number of science communication studies consider the impact of such media images on girls' perception of science. Film is identified as a key source because 'images of scientist are more likely to appear in popular films than in the other media used by [adolescent girls]' (Steinke 2005, 30). However there has been little research focussing on the representation of female scientists in other forms such as literature. Yet fiction, and in particular the genre of science fiction (SF) is more likely to provide non-stereotypical images of female scientists. Unlike media such as Hollywood films where, as Steinke notes, there persists both "overt and subtle stereotyping of female scientists and engineers", SF literature offers a much greater range of positive, non-stereotypical and even feminist depictions of women in science (Steinke, 2005, 55; see also Flicker, 2003).

This article considers what science-fictional images of female scientists might contribute to the debates about women in science. First reviewing the literature from science communication on images of female scientists, I turn to consider the alternatives offered by SF. Based on analysis of a broad sample of SF texts from 1905-2010 the article explores how these representations both respond to, and interrogate, existing cultural mores, and the changing attitude to women's education in the sciences. Finally, the article concludes by examining the role such fiction may play in the efforts to make science more attractive to women and girls.

### *Comparing Media and Literature Representations*

Media SF has been identified by researchers in science communication and education as a forum that highlights and reinforces certain cultural and popular

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<sup>1</sup> Stereotype threat refers to the negative impact on girl's performance when stereotypes about innate abilities are reinforced — for example, girls will not perform as well on tests when told boys are better than girls at math, but perform better when told both are equally as good at math.

understandings of science. Particularly given a persistent concern over how scientists and their activities are stereotypically represented, a great deal of attention has been given to media images, including fictional representations in film and television. SF *literature*, however, has been undervalued as a resource for science studies and the public communication of science. Yet as some critics have noted, SF provides a unique source for considerations of the socio-cultural relations and discourses of the sciences (Haraway, 1989; Rose, 1994; Willis, 2006). Beyond the stereotypical “space operas” and media blockbusters, the genre has produced many serious considerations of the impact of science and technology, with the relation of gender to science an ongoing theme since the genre’s beginnings in the pulp magazines of the 1920s. Like science studies, SF is fascinated with science but importantly its engagement is played out in a public and popular domain (Grebowicz, 2007, xvi). The value of SF lies not in its predictive capabilities, or potential to cushion “future shock”, but its function as a thought experiment or “dream laboratory” (Rose, 1994, 228), which reflects social hopes and fears about scientific and technological developments. As author Nancy Kress observes, “In the world’s laboratories, science rehearses advances in theory and application. In Fiction, SF writers rehearse the human implications of those advances” (Kress, 2007, 207). While there has been little work to date specifically on scientists in SF, other studies have utilised the genre to explore science related themes, including the use of SF texts in science education (Berne & Schummer, 2005), sustainability education (Gough, 1993, 2005); the intersections of nanotechnology and SF (Milburn, 2002); and the representation of science and technology in comics (Locke, 2005).

#### *Literary vs. media SF*

Two important distinctions need to be made between literary and media versions of SF in considering how the genre might reflect, reinforce or intervene in popular understandings of science. Firstly, written SF is less constrained by the cultural and economic imperatives of the mass market. Being individually authored, much cheaper to produce, aimed at narrower, specialist audiences, with numerous publications venues (from specialist and trade presses to short fiction markets) SF literature has more freedom to critique and depart from the norm. Thus in SF books we are likely to find a greater diversity of ideas and more complex representations of both science and scientists. Additionally, unlike the majority of film or television scriptwriters and producers, a number of SF writers are scientists (or have science qualifications).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, the SIGMA organisation: “a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the understanding of the future and the long-term consequences of government actions” comprised mainly of SF writers who also have PhDs in Science and engineering <http://www.sigmaforum.org/members.php>

There are also significantly more women (and feminist) writers, editors and publishers of SF than female screenwriters or film producers.<sup>1</sup>

Balanced against the relative constraints on media representations is the greater scope for potential influence in terms of audience reception. Media texts are seen as the pre-eminent vehicle for reproducing and reinforcing cultural models in contemporary society. Undoubtedly, claims about impact on public perception are more easily made for blockbuster SF movies than for SF novels, which have a much more limited audience. As many researchers have noted, popular media engagements with science through SF film, for example, can have a significant impact on the public perception of certain issues, debates, and importantly, conceptions of scientists (Griffin, Sen, & Plotkin, 1994; Flicker, 2003; Lowe et al., 2006; Steinke, 2005, 1998). In particular, media is viewed as a crucial shaper of children's and adolescents' perceptions of science, due to its mass appeal, young people's increasing media literacy, and the amount of leisure time spent viewing media such as television and games (Steinke 2005).

Despite the broad appeal of media for young audiences, written texts still have an important role to play, not least in education, ensuring that reading remains an important facet of young people's lives (even if enforced, rather than chosen). When our concern is with the socialisation of girls in particular, then reading may be an even more important consideration, as research suggests that girls continue to be more frequent and stronger readers than boys (Ford, Brickhouse, Lottero-Perdue, & Kittleson, 2006, 271). Research by Ford et al (2006) focuses on the function of written texts in science education experiences for girls. As they argue, it is important to consider the role of fictional texts as "socialising agents", particularly as girls are shown to be less likely to read non-fiction texts such as science books. While Ford et al consider a range of fictional and non-fictional genres which touch on science, including 'animal' books and fantasy, they do not specifically consider SF. However other studies have noted the role that SF books might play in school science curricula (Weaver & Black, 1965; Gross & Woodburn, 1959; Berne & Schummer, 2005).

#### *Cultural images of scientists*

The issue of how scientists are represented in the mass media has occupied many science communication researchers, with attention increasingly turning towards

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<sup>1</sup> Female membership of the SFWA (SF and fantasy writers of America) is around 38% (from 2000 and 2007 figures). In a listing of SF&F books forthcoming from U.S. publishers from October 2007- September 2008 (calculated from trade magazine *Locus*), 40% were by women (statistics collated at <http://www.broaduniverse.org/stats.html#field>). In contrast, women constitute about 27% of TV writers, and less than 19% of film writers; (2007 Hollywood writers report [www.wga.org/uploadedFiles/who\\_we\\_are/HWR07.pdf](http://www.wga.org/uploadedFiles/who_we_are/HWR07.pdf)).

fictional representations. Indeed, as Peter Weingart and Petra Pansegrau note, it is “plausible to assume that popular images of science and scientists are influenced far more by fictitious characters than by real people” (Weingart & Pansegrau, 2003, 227). However, despite this observation, little research to date has looked at the role of the scientist in literature, perhaps because “(l)iterary fiction has seldom been seriously considered as a mode of science communication” (Russell, 2007, 205). Consequently few studies have examined SF literature for its impact on cultural images of scientists. Even in the emergent area of literature and science studies, the focus is on canonical literature, and most often on nineteenth century texts (including almost an entire subgenre of studies on *Frankenstein* alone) (Russell, 2007; Willis, 2006). This lack is also evident in the specialist discipline of SF studies, where, as Willis argues, “extended readings of the use of science in SF texts is extremely rare” (2006, 1).<sup>1</sup>

One of the few studies in this area is Roslynn Haynes’ survey of the scientist in western literature, which identified a number of stereotypes such as “the mad, bad, dangerous scientist”, and found that representations of “good scientists” were in a minority (Haynes, 1994, 2003). While including a number of SF texts, Haynes’ overview does not extend to a broad sample of the genre, which in part impacts her conclusions about the scarcity of positive images of scientists. One of the very rare studies to focus specifically on SF provides quite a different picture. In 1958 William Hirsch conducted a content analysis of SF, which found that the image of scientists had improved since the 1920s and ‘30s, moving towards more realistic depictions of scientists as “real human beings” rather than “supermen or stereotyped villains” (Hirsch, 1958, 512).<sup>2</sup>

The area of fictional film and television, in contrast, has been the subject of a growing number of studies, particularly in science communication (Vieth, 2001; Weingart, Muhl, & Pansegrau, 2003; Frayling, 2006; Terzian & Grunzke, 2007; R. Jones, 2001). Not surprisingly, SF is an important focus in these works, for as Flicker notes, it is “the genre that most often thematizes science” and is thus most likely to feature scientists (Flicker, 2003, 310).

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<sup>1</sup> Other critics such as Roger Luckhurst have argued for the need for scholars of SF to situate the genre within broader disciplinary contexts including studies of science and technology (Luckhurst, 2005: 3).

<sup>2</sup> More recently, Jennifer Rohn has written about a new genre she terms ‘lab lit’, referring to “novels containing realistic depictions of scientists plying their trade” (Rohn, 2006). Rohn’s online magazine designed to promote includes a separate section on SF, even whilst many SF authors appear in the main list: see [http://www.lablit.com/the\\_list](http://www.lablit.com/the_list)

## *II. Media images of female scientists*

There are a number of studies focussing specifically on representations of women scientists, ranging from their depictions in journalism (LaFollette, 1988; Shachar, 2000), to science books (McArthur, 1998), television (Steinke, 1998), and film (Steinke, 1999, 2005; Elena, 1997; Flicker, 2003; Noonan, 2005). These studies (and those on images of scientists generally) fall into two distinct groupings, distinguished by their disciplinary approach. One focuses more on the range of *cultural meanings* represented by such texts, and the ways in which they both reflect and intervene in cultural understandings of science. These studies are generally cultural or literary studies, or emerge from the interdisciplinary area of science and literature studies (Noonan, 2005; Squier, 1999; Russell, 2007; Willis, 2006).

The other approach, issuing from science communication and education, is often primarily concerned with the ways in which images of scientists might function as *cultural role models*. Such studies proceed from the understanding that there are significant links between popular perceptions of scientists and media representations (Chaloner, 1999, 259; see also Flicker, 2003). In those studies looking at images of female scientists, a key assumption is that improvements in media representations will have measurable effects on the entry of women into science. As Steinke, for example, argues, “[p]ortrayals of female scientists and engineers that show women as realistic professionals in prestigious positions may provide adolescent girls with positive role models” (Steinke, 2005, 53). The differing perspectives and modes of analysis offered by these approaches both provide important contexts for my investigation of female scientists in SF, in particular the work of Noonan and Steinke.

### *Gender, science and 1950s films*

In *Women Scientists in Fifties SF films*, Noonan – an English Professor – focuses on representations of female scientists in these iconic “B” grade films. Perhaps surprisingly, given the subject matter, Noonan’s analysis suggest these films present quite radical challenges to the stereotypes of women and science that were current at the time. A similar argument is provided by Errol Veith, who offers an even more positive reading of the “liberation” afforded these female characters through their access and exposure to scientific knowledge and education (Vieth, 2001). Informed by feminist theory, Noonan’s analysis is a more cautious and complex reading of societal fears about changing gender roles, in particular the conflict between women’s traditional family-orientated roles, and emerging professional opportunities. The figures of the women scientists in these films clearly demonstrate “the tensions inherent in attempting to represent gender equality without challenging patriarchal norms” (2005, 59).

Nevertheless, Noonan argues that these fifties films offer potentially liberating visions of women's engagement with science. A number of the films she discusses represent women as "full-fledged scientists", including: Dr Lisa Van Horne, (chemistry, fuel engineer) in *Rocketship X-M* (1950); Dr Patricia 'Pat' Medford (entomologist) in *Them* (1954); Dr Lesley Joyce (marine biologist) in *It Came From Beneath the Sea* (1955); Dr Ruth Adams (nuclear Physicist) in *This Island Earth* (1955); and Dr Diana Fairfax (medical science foundation administrator) in "X" *The Man with the X-Ray Eyes* (1963).<sup>1</sup> The range of scientific specialties represented in this list itself suggests a significant departure from the usual 1950's stereotypes of women. Films such as *It Came from Beneath the Sea* (1955) were, Noonan argues, radical for their time in their extrapolation of "a socially acceptable representation of a successful woman scientist" (2005, 69). Noonan acknowledges that this film was somewhat atypical in presenting a professional woman whose sexuality was not contained by being subject to a male authority figure, such as a father figure or lover. In other films, the tensions arising from gendered relations are more traditionally resolved by ending in catastrophe, as in *Rocketship X-M* (1950), with the death of the female scientist (62).

As Noonan emphasises, the scientific capabilities of these women scientists must be moderated by physical attractiveness – a factor that is still present in much later films (Steinke, 2005). Interestingly, Noonan sees this image of women as "both professionally successful and sexually attractive" as a positive feature, given the constraints of fifties gendered schemas (53). However, the connection between sexual attractiveness and scientific success has by the 1980s and 1990s, become another restrictive stereotype that tends to detract from, rather than enhance, the believability of the fictional female scientist.

Noonan also makes some important points about equality that have implications for the notion of role modelling. In these fifties films (as in later movies) it would appear that merely having a capable woman accepted as an equal part of a scientific team is an important and positive development. However, such gestures towards equal opportunity do not necessarily advance a better, or more accurate, understanding of gender and science, as they tend to reinforce what Noonan calls the 'hypothesis of the genderless nature of science' (56). Drawing on feminist science theorist, Evelyn Fox Keller, Noonan argues that: "such an elision of gender difference presupposes a relationship between 'humans and science' as opposed to 'men's and women's relations to the pursuit of science', a relationship that thus perpetuates existing social inequalities" (Noonan, 2005, 54; Keller, 1991, 226-7). That is, a straightforward representation of men and women working equally in science (which does not

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<sup>1</sup> Other characters include science students such as Lori Nelson (ichthyology graduate student) in *Revenge of the Creature* (1955) and Stephanie "Steve" Clayton (biology graduate student) in *Tarantula* (1955).

acknowledge the various cultural and structural difficulties or barriers faced by women) presupposes an environment of “gender neutrality” which may be detrimental to efforts to improve women’s participation in the sciences (see also Eisenhart & Finkel, 1998, 179-206).

### *Contemporary female scientists in film and TV*

Jocelyn Steinke has conducted a number of important studies on the impact of media on girls’ and women’s relation to science (Steinke, 2005, 1997, 2004, 1998, 1999; Steinke et al, 2012). Much of her research is concerned with the effects of media representations on the “gender-stereotyped perceptions of science and engineering as masculine careers” (Steinke, 2005, 35). Media images of female scientists and engineers are, Steinke believes, “important for advancing our understanding of the gender schemas that serve as potential sources of influence during a particularly impressionable time in the lives of adolescent girls” (2005, 36). Studies show that girls’ interest in science begins to decrease from about twelve years of age (Steinke, 2005, 29), “the same age at which many girls show a heightened awareness of gender roles” (30).

Steinke’s 2005 study considers female scientists in 23 films from 1991-2001.<sup>1</sup> Steinke analyses the fictional female scientist in terms of five key representational themes: ‘appearance; characterization; expertise, ability, and authority; work versus romance; and work and family life balance’ (Steinke, 2005, 38). In terms of characterisation and appearance, Steinke found that all characters were (eventually) depicted as attractive, if not glamorous (39); eighteen were characterised as ‘professional’ with a few as “mad” and “clumsy” and one as “nerdy and antisocial” (42). Nearly all the scientists and engineers were depicted as being of a high professional status, with eleven being directors, two administrators, nine equal members of research teams, and only one an assistant (44). Twenty out of the twenty three characters were shown as being involved in romantic relationships, but in only four of the films were the women also mothers (50, 52).

Steinke concludes that although gendered representations have improved, “stereotypical images of women still are found in the mass media today” (2005, 53). However, despite the trappings of femininity that remained key to these representations (beauty, romance etc.) Steinke notes that the films “did not necessarily, in all cases, urge conformity to traditional stereotypes of women” (53). That is, while physical

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<sup>1</sup> This sample was drawn from a broader pool of popular films featuring scientists as major characters; the films comprised a mix of genres including: action/adventure, comedy, drama, science fiction, and horror.

attractiveness and the presence of romance were important, most of the female scientists were:

shown in positions of high prestige, such as project directors or equal members of research teams, and were knowledgeable, articulate, outspoken, driven, confident, competent, creative, and independent, even when romance was a dominant theme (53).

Indeed, the very juxtaposition of realistic, competent portrayals with the more traditional feminine trappings of beauty and romance may, according to Steinke, be a positive factor, allowing for “better identification” by young female viewers (53). However, as Steinke also notes, a crucial factor mitigating against these portrayals was the lack of balance in work and family life depicted in the films. As many researchers suggest, a significant factor in women’s under-representation in the sciences is the difficulty of combining scientific academic careers with motherhood and family care (Steinke, 2005; see also Hanson, 2000).

Steinke concludes that “[m]ore research is needed to examine the features of these media portrayals of female scientists and engineers that most appeal to girls and to determine which portrayals, if any, are most effective in changing girl’s attitudes toward SET careers” (2005, 55). However, given the limitations of these media portrayals, I argue that such examinations could also be extended to areas where we are more likely to find non-stereotypical portrayals – in written science fiction.

### *III. The female scientist in Science Fiction*

Writing in the late 1990s, SF critic Jane Donawerth observed that ‘[a]lthough SF by men generally lacks women scientists, women writers have regularly pictured women as scientists’ (Donawerth, 1997, 4; Rose, 1994, 215). Thus, the likeliest source of positive images of female scientists in SF is the growing body of women’s and feminist SF which emerged most visibly from the 1960s onwards.<sup>1</sup> The burgeoning of women writers and readers in the field during this period coincided (and was invigorated by) the women’s liberation movement, which included significantly increased opportunities for women in science and engineering education and careers. The last couple of decades have seen a shift, as an increasing number of male SF writers have written about female scientists.

The following analysis is based on an initial sample of SF texts featuring female scientists, sourced from my previous research on women in SF (Merrick, 2007, 2009); Donawerth’s work (1990; 1994; 1997), online subject bibliographies, online

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<sup>1</sup> Key studies of women’s and feminist SF include Lefanu (1988) and Wolmark (1993).

databases and Encyclopaedias.<sup>1</sup> The texts range in publication dates from 1905 to 2012, featuring 106 examples of female scientists of which 94 are the protagonist or a major character. This selection of texts is not intended as an exhaustive or representative survey, but rather a preliminary sampling that serves to indicate a range of possible representations. Given these limitations, some trends do seem significant and worthy of further attention. Firstly the gender balance seems to bear out Donawerth's earlier observation, with 42 authors being male and 64 female. The range of scientific professions represented for the most part mirrors real world trends, with the largest category of characters shown as working in the biological (31) and medical sciences (12), compared to much lower numbers in computing (9) agricultural sciences (2) chemical sciences (3) earth sciences (4) engineering (6) and maths (5).<sup>2</sup> A surprising number of the characters are physicists, with 17 in all (although interestingly only five of these characters were written by women). The sample also demonstrates that positive images of female scientists are not just confined to the post-war era, but in fact reflect the much longer history over the struggle for women's place in the sciences.

#### *Historical contexts*

It is important to note that the history of women's campaigns to enter the sciences has been reflected in popular texts throughout the last century. Images of female scientists can be found in a number of nineteenth-century female utopias, coterminous with the first wave of women's rights and suffrage movements. Texts such as Mary Bradley Lane's *Mizora* (Lane, 1881) and Charlotte Perkin Gilman's *Herland* (Gilman, 1915) feature imagined societies where women hold important roles in scientific research and education.<sup>3</sup> Somewhat later, my sample shows a group of SF texts from the 1920s and '30s depicting women as scientists and engineers, such as "The Menace of Mars" and "The Ape Cycle" by Clare Winger Harris (1928; 1930), and Louise Rice and Tonjoroff-Roberts' "The Astounding Enemy" (1930). There are obvious links between these stories and the earlier feminist utopian writings that emerged in the context of late nineteenth-century

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<sup>1</sup> Online sources included: Jennifer Rohn's Lablit site [http://www.lablit.com/the\\_list](http://www.lablit.com/the_list); SF author Alison Sinclair's site <http://www.alisonsinclair.ca/reading-writing/women-scientists-in-fiction/>; Laura Quilter's Feminist Science Fiction, Fantasy and Utopia site <http://feministsf.org/>. The site also allowed visitors to suggest examples through an email form. The database is available at <https://projects.ivec.org/womeninscience/>

<sup>2</sup> Seventeen of the characters' field of science is classified as 'other' – which includes archaeology, linguistics, or invented or non-specified sciences.

<sup>3</sup> Another interesting example from outside the Anglo-American tradition is a scientific utopia written by a Bengali woman, Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, in 1905, 'Sultana's Dream'.

campaigns to gain science education for women. As Donawerth argues, 'Women scientists as characters in women's SF are thus a legacy of the earlier feminist utopias, which represented the dreams of women for education in the sciences' (1997, 5). There is something of a hiatus during the war years, (with only one example from the 1940s, Miriam Allen deFord's "The Last Generation" (1946)) followed by another cluster of texts in the 1950s. This period also marked a time of increased interest in science education generally, although critics argue that overall the post-war reinforcement of domesticity was detrimental to women's opportunities in science (Schiebinger, 2001; Rossiter, 1995; Watts, 2007).

A number of examples from this period were by male authors, with the most (in)famous science-fictional female scientist, Dr Susan Calvin, appearing in Isaac Asimov's story, "I Robot" (Asimov, 1950). The image of Calvin is marred for contemporary readers by the conflict between her role as scientist and the trappings of traditional femininity. In order to maintain her scientific identity, Calvin's "feminine" qualities are ossified – she is depicted as a repressed, unfeminine, spinster who looks to her own artificial creations for affection. More interesting and complex representations are found in John Wyndham's 'Consider her ways' (Wyndham, 1961) which shows an alternate female-only 'hive-like' world where many women are scientists; and Philip Wylie's *The Disappearance* (Wylie, 1951) where both sexes effectively 'disappear' as far as the other is concerned, and women are shown performing all the roles left vacant by the men. Katherine MacLean also published a number of stories from the 1950s which routinely featured female scientists working capably alongside their male counterparts including "And be Merry..." and "Contagion" (1950a, 1950b). The early 1960s brought two very different but significant texts featuring female scientists. In *Memoirs of a Spacewoman* (1962) British writer Naomi Mitchison imagines a future where science is full of women (including women of colour) who partake equally in scientific research and alien expeditions to other worlds. The imagined society of *Memoirs* displays radically altered attitudes to motherhood, childcare and partnering, resulting in an environment where women routinely take on the roles of both scientist and mother. The children's book *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle (1962) also features a scientist mother, who does her lab work at home so she can continue to look after her children.

#### *Women's and feminist SF*

From the late 1960s onwards, the growing body of work by feminist authors in SF, along with a broadening of the genre's themes and concerns, produced many images of female scientists. Even texts which did not directly represent scientists were often engaged in explorations and re-imaginings of the sorts of cultural, political and economic institutions that contextualise and underpin contemporary science,

with obvious consequences for women's potential to engage in, and with, the sciences. Examples include the group of feminist utopian SF texts that for many critics later come to codify the intersection of feminism and SF writing in the late 1960 and early '70s (Russ, 1981; Lefanu, 1988; Barr, 1987). While few of these texts are centrally focussed on female scientists as such, many of them imagine transformed societies where the practice of science and role of the scientist have been radically changed. Female scientists are an accepted part of the society of Anares in Ursula Le Guin's *The Dispossessed* (1974), although they do not figure as central characters. In texts such as Joanna Russ' "When it Changed" (1972) and *The Female Man* (1975), or Marge Piercy's *Women on the Edge of Time* (1976) we see cultures where understandings of work, education, technology and knowledge have been so re-imagined that one almost overlooks the scientific work carried out by women as a routine part of everyday life. In quite a different example, the post-apocalyptic, tribe-like society of the Riding Women in Suzy McKee Charnas' *Motherlines* (1978), appear to possess no advanced science or technology. However their very existence and continued reproduction has been made possible by their female ancestor's experiments with cloning and parthenogenesis.

#### *IV. Contemporary images of female scientists*

As women authors, female characters and feminist themes have become more common in the SF field, representations of female scientists have become more numerous and varied. These images of women in science may function not only as non-traditional, positive role models, but more complexly as a way of thinking through the cultural and political contexts which impact on women's relation to the sciences. In some cases, texts which contain critical or negative portrayals of women's struggles as scientists may be as powerful as positive role models in thinking through the "women in science problem". Further, texts which present an egalitarian vision of science, while offering positive images on the surface, may not be as useful as they first appear.

##### *Critiques of science as usual*

Many women-authored and feminist SF texts offer explicit critiques of the practice of contemporary western sciences, some through envisioning radical alternatives, and some by emphasising the problems faced by working female scientists. A short story by the East German writer, Christa Wolf, offers an intriguing, early consideration of the intersections of science, gender and sex. First published in 1973, her "Self Experiment. Treatise on a Report" concerns the involvement of a female scientist, Anders, in a sex-change experiment, which successfully turns her into a man (Wolf, 1973). Unusual both for its mimetic representation of a female scientist at work, and

its interrogation of scientific practice and language, the story takes the form of a 'treatise' or supplement to the official (and classified) research report on the experiment written by Anders. Wolf's story illuminates the conflicts and contradictions characterising the question of women's place in the sciences; as Friederike Eigler notes: "As the narrator realizes in hindsight, she had to deny her gender in order to be successful as a female scientist. In other words, in order to prove herself as a woman, she had to become (like) a man" (Eigler, 2000, 2)

In "Self Experiment" this "denial of gender" that has often characterised women's struggles to carve out an identity as scientist is made overt as Anders quite literally becomes a man. The notion of a "Female Man" was powerfully utilised by Joanna Russ (in her 1974 novel of the same name) as an ironic figure for critiquing and exposing gender bias in all areas of knowledge including science. In Russ' novel the main character claims 'manhood' for herself in order to articulate the dislocation between gender schemas and women's ability to take on roles and behaviour deemed masculine.

In many ways, women have had to be "female men" in order to successfully function as scientists, a notion that is critiqued in a number of texts dramatising the problems faced by female scientists. A powerful example is Kate Wilhelm's *The Clewiston Test* in which Anne Clewiston, a brilliant medical research scientist falls victim to gendered prejudices and power struggles in her work, social circle and marriage (Wilhelm, 1977). In the beginning of the novel, Clewiston is represented as an admired, well-funded research scientist heading an important project into pain management. As complications arise with the project and her personal life, the issue of her gender is used as an excuse to characterise her behaviour as irrational and dangerous, as the company executives, colleagues and her husband wrest control of her project. Ultimately she is forced to escape by the only means left available to her, by admitting herself to psychiatric care.

More recently, Gwyneth Jones' novel *Life* (2004) provides a contemporary vision of the difficulties of a woman working in science. Reflecting the present-day environment of much improved educational and career prospects for women, the protagonist, Anna Senoz is a bright, single-minded student who chooses to study biology, and seems unaware that her gender should pose any barrier to her continued success. *Life* charts the difficulties Senoz faces in her career, set within a broader critical examination of the institutional, epistemological and methodological operations of modern corporate science. The ingrained sexism still prevalent in many university and research environments is painstakingly drawn, as Senoz faces numerous challenges in both her professional and personal life. From her rape by a fellow graduate student, to her consequent failure to achieve a prestigious graduate placement, her scientific work choices, opportunities for research, publication and peer acknowledgement are shown to be impacted by the fact she is a woman.

Woven through the narrative is also the story of her central scientific discovery (which ultimately brings her infamy) – the Transferred Y (TY) viroid. Extrapolated from real-world research into the “descent” of the Y Chromosome (Aitken & Graves, 2002; Graves, 2002; S. Jones, 2003), TY describes a phenomenon whereby sections of the sex-determining region (SRY) of the Y chromosome are transferring over to the X chromosome, eventually producing men who are effectively XX males. Jones uses this imagined discovery to engage in detailed critiques of the sex-gender system, evolutionary biology, and the language and production of biological knowledge itself. The most important effect of *Life*'s broad-ranged critique of gender and science is the way it focuses on cultural and political contexts, arguing that gendered discrimination is the result of systemic and cultural biases, rather than biological difference or individual failings.

Although Senoz is in many ways an inspirational figure, she is not so much a positive role model as a realistic and thus troubling representation of a woman in science. Nevertheless, texts such as *Life* can be useful in thinking through the factors shown to impact on girls' and women's success in the sciences. Research on girls' performance in science emphasise the detrimental effects arising from cultural assumptions (from media, teachers, parents and peers) that designate or stereotype a particular group as unsuited to science (Hines, 2007; Hyde, 2007, 138) The complex rendering of Senoz's experiences works to break down such stereotypes, as we are encouraged to read the causes of her marginalisation as arising from cultural and institutional forces, rather than individual failings. Thus, even less-than positive representations of female scientists may provide powerful correctives to the notion that women as a group are inherently unsuited to science.

#### *Equal playing fields – visions of gender-neutral science*

A different way of countering stereotype threat is of course the portrayal of positive role models for women in science. The availability of such role models may improve girls' ability to imagine themselves as scientists, as suggested by research on self-schemas and the “possible self as scientist” (Stake & Nickens, 2005, 2-3; Lips, 1995). Over the last decade in particular, many SF texts have presented societies featuring male and female scientists and engineers in equal roles. Here female scientists are taken for granted, hold positions of authority, are shown capably doing their job, and enjoying the research they do.

A number of such texts are set in the future, allowing for a shift in the cultures of science such that women are shown as equal participants, in sciences that have become effectively “gender neutral”. Sarah Zettel's *The Quiet Invasion* (2000) is set on a scientific research colony on Venus, which is headed by the eighty-year old scientist Dr Helen Fallia. Another key character is Dr Veronica (Vee) Hatch who has

a PhD in planetary atmospherics and works as a holographic artist and science populariser. The society Zettel depicts appears egalitarian in general, with high-powered women in other roles, such as the UN politician Yan Su. Set in a less-distant future is Greg Egan's *Distress* (1995), where women's equal participation in science also seems taken for granted. Here however, other shifts in gendered roles are apparent, most obviously signalled by the cultural phenomenon of "gender migration", which posits seven genders as the norm, including "a-sex" (or neuter). Like Zettel, Mitchison and others, Egan's expanded vision of science is inclusive in terms of race and ethnicity, as well as gender. The central scientist is a Black South African woman, Violet Mosala, who is a Nobel prize-winning quantum physicist. A central theme of the book is the development of a "theory of everything" (TOE), a project in which the work of Mosala and other female scientists (such as Helen Wu) are central. In terms of gender, race and science, the society of *Distress* suggests there is nothing preventing all women from being competitive in science at the highest levels, and in areas such as physics.

Not all gender-equal SF visions are distanced from contemporary relations through a futurist setting. *Darwin's Radio* by Greg Bear (1999), like Jones' *Life*, depicts a near-future much like our present, but in contrast, features a much improved atmosphere for women in science. Numerous female scientists appear in *Darwin's Radio*, which focuses on Dr Kaye Lang, a molecular biologist whose research provides a breakthrough in understanding what appears to be a virus affecting women's fertility. The apparent success of Lang and many other minor female scientists in the book, and asides which praise women's different style of doing science, are undercut by a number of factors. Firstly, the broader system of gender politics remains untouched, with most powerful political and administrative roles occupied by men. In addition, the character of Lang appears to be constrained by many traditional ideas of femininity, including a reliance on partners such as her difficult first husband, and a certain naivety when it comes to any affairs outside her own research. Kim Stanley Robinson's *Forty Signs of Rain* (2004) (and its sequels published in 2005 and 2007) is also near-contemporary, and features numerous female scientists. One of the main characters is Anna Quibbler, a statistician who works fulltime as a senior bureaucrat in the NSF, while her husband takes on the bulk of childcare responsibilities for their two sons. In contrast to *Darwin's Radio*, various factors are evident which support women's work in science – from the Quibbler's domestic arrangements, to the fact that the NSF director is also a woman.

These representations of senior, capable female scientists who are not isolated geniuses obviously contribute to positive images of women in science. However, as Noonan (2005) points out in relation to fifties film, it is problematic to present a gender-neutral ideal of science as a *fait accompli* (Keller, 1991; Eisenhart & Finkel, 1998). Particularly when coupled with relatively unchanged socio-cultural mores and

gender schemas, these texts beg the question of how such gender-balanced environments emerge. If there have been no significant changes in the ways science is taught, practiced or communicated (and no attendant changes in general societal norms), then the responsibility presumably lies with the individual, not the culture at large. That is, if the only difference between these visions and our society is the number of successful women in science, then the only possible site of change is women themselves.

### *Gender Equality in science*

Given the continuing barriers in real-world scientific cultures, more satisfying representations of gender parity in science occur in stories where there have been obvious shifts in socio-cultural relations and institutions. Such scenarios appear more frequently in texts written by women, which also tend to feature more complexly-drawn female scientists that are more attentive to the interpersonal dynamics and hierarchies which contextualise scientific work.

A recent example is the capable MacKenzie (Mac) Connor, a marine biologist in Julie Czerneda's *Species Imperative* series (2005). Mac could initially be mistaken for a "female man" type, who appears quite tomboyish in her disregard for traditionally feminine attachments to appearance and romance, and her delight in her often demanding outdoor fieldwork studying salmon. However a balance is achieved both through the complexity of Mac's character, and the contrast with her friend Dr Emily Mamani who plays on her femininity and sexuality, whilst being a top rank scientist and expert in her field. This representation of an egalitarian scientific context avoids a simplistic assumption of gender neutrality, due to the ways in which science is conducted and represented in the book. Whilst the plot centres around contact with alien species, the setting in which Mac does most of her research work presents a realistic picture of scientific fieldwork. On Mac's marine research station, graduate and postgraduate students work alongside their professors in a very egalitarian, community-based and gender-balanced environment. They all live and work together, seemingly not hampered by excessive institutional hierarchies and frameworks. Within such a setting, the equal participation of women and men, and the fact that many of the senior researchers and administrators are women appears natural. Furthermore, the characterisation of Mac as a brilliant and committed scientist is lent veracity by the detailed descriptions of her work (helped by the fact that Czerneda herself trained in biology), the discomforts of field research, demonstrations of support from her family, and reminiscences from her childhood that speak of a life-long love of, and fascination for science.

Other examples situate their female scientist in totally re-imagined political and cultural contexts, including Mitchison's *Memoirs* (noted above), and Vonda

McIntyre's *Starfarer* series (1989). McIntyre's scientists work on a space station where scientific research is integrated into daily life, in a future where there have been significant shifts in social institutions such as the family, and where group marriages have become common. As with Greg Egan's work, these texts also represent women of colour as central scientist characters. Overall, these texts evidence a balance of scientific work and family life which Steinke found lacking in her film examples. Indeed, the integration of scientific work into family and community life is a mark of much women's SF, from 1970s utopias such as the female-only world of Russ' 'When it Changed' (1972) to Joan Slonczewski's *A Door into Ocean* (1987). An active researcher in Biology herself, Slonczewski imagines an all-female alien society called the Sharers, who have a radically reformulated vision of biological sciences. An environmental ethics of care and holism is central to their practice, which does not separate work, home or family into different physical or conceptual spaces. Effectively this is a 'domesticated science' where "the person who cleans the labs is very likely the same person who does the science" (Donawerth, 1997, 11).

The visions of women in science depicted in these texts offer a greater range of alternatives and non-traditional images than visual mass media. When compared to Steinke's findings, we see that literature – like film – can offer engaging, realistic depictions of women working in responsible positions, accepted by their peers and enjoying the work they do. However, many more examples from SF literature show *balanced* visions of work and life, with women combining family and children with their scientific work, in non-sexist environments.<sup>1</sup> SF's function as a fictional "social laboratory" means it is freer to experiment with alternative ways of engaging, representing and re-imagining science that are difficult, if not impossible, in mass media. Unlike other media, SF texts are uniquely positioned to interrogate not only the institutional and structural contexts of the sciences, but also its language, theories, practices and methods. In this way, SF fosters an emotive engagement with speculative ideas or images, whether this be nanotechnology, or the depiction of autonomous, respected female scientists as commonplace.

## ***V. Conclusion***

This article has argued that SF literature offers alternative avenues for popular engagements with science that may be helpful in identifying (and rectifying) some of the cultural obstacles faced by women entering the sciences. As well as countering factors such as stereotype threat through the provision of positive role models, other

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<sup>1</sup> Of the examples discussed above, those scientists who have mothering or childcare responsibilities feature in texts by Mitchison, McIntyre, Bear, Egan, Jones, Robinson, Slonczewski, L'Engle and Bear.

factors identified in the literature may be addressed through recourse to imaginative resources such as SF. For example, research suggests that seeing science and maths ability as a 'gift' disadvantages girls, whereas an understanding of science expertise as the result of work and application may well positively impact on girls' performance (Dweck, 2007, 51-2). Therefore representations of women scientists that can provide compelling, detailed depictions of their work, interactions with others, and the ways their work is balanced with everyday life, offer valuable models. As this article has suggested, there are numerous examples of SF that provide realistic pictures of women doing scientific work and engaged in enjoyable intellectual labour alongside supportive colleagues. Characters like "Mac" from Czerneda's *Survival* and Anna Senoz in Jones' *Life* provide useful antidotes to the notion that successful female scientists must be isolated, rare geniuses. These representations of engaged women who care about their work can also help counter misconceptions of what various scientific careers actually entail, and whether or not they are compatible with more "humanistic" and altruistic values. Such representations may help counter misconceptions of scientific work that may impact on girl's decisions about pursuing science (Eccles, 2007, 209).

While these speculative images of female scientists may not have the popular cachet of Hollywood movies, I argue that they represent an important and under-utilised resource in the effort to improve women's entry into the sciences. More research is needed into the ways in which these role models from SF literature might be harnessed in the ongoing effort to improve the participation of girls and women in science. For, as Steinke argues of film, research into such representations "is critical for identifying specific strategies ... to encourage interest in science and engineering careers" (2005, 30). Ultimately, SF literature provides "fantastic" role models for both formal and informal science curricula, as well as representations that interrogate and challenge prevailing cultural understandings of how and why women might participate in science.

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# PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER INEQUALITY AND THE BARRIER OF CULTURE ON EDUCATION

Juliet JOSEPH<sup>1</sup>

*“Educate a woman you educate a nation”*

Former Deputy President  
Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka

***Abstract:** Education plays an important role in gender equality. Two thirds of illiterate adults are women; this impacts on the lives of families and children because many mothers are the caretakers of the family. This societal challenge might also not be resolved as fast as expected and remains high on the global agenda. It is for this reason that the study will discuss how education can impact on bridging the gender gap. From a young age, many women are taught to be submissive, subordinate and obedient to their male counterparts; and they are less valued than men. This level of consciousness which reinforces cultural norms and expectations ensures the continuous cycle of male patriarchy. Cultural processes maintain gender differences which act as barriers preventing an increase in the education of girls and women and ultimately reducing the number of women in positions of power, thus leading to a small scale of gender equality in a male-dominated society.*

*Children spend most of their lives in classrooms and the study presumes that education environments are also the incubation hubs where girls and women can be equally educated and eventually take on their rightful place in society. It has been demonstrated time and again that young girls remain excluded from society, alienated in some cultures because they are female or even unwanted, and can even be murdered because a woman is a liability to her father unlike a male. Education reinforces and conscientises both males and females on social justice, equality; fairness and respect.*

***Key-words:** Gender inequality; culture; education; inequality; discrimination*

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## **1. Introduction**

The aim of the study is to examine gender culture on the education of girls and women. The paper will examine the literature on gender and education and the access of girls and women to education and their experiences in developing states such as South Africa. This forms an important study because women, particularly in the developing world, who have not been represented much by early feminist scholars, do not have much access to secondary and higher education. This hampers their representation, progress and the advancement of families in this context. The paper will therefore discuss gender inequality and explain the barriers which prevent equal access to education for girls and women and how education can impact on creating a consciousness of equality for all.

Globally, there are 101 million children who do not attend school; the disturbing reality is that more than half are girls (UNICEF, 2003). Upon the release of former South African President Nelson Mandela after spending 27 years in prison, he communicated to the people that knowledge is power and that people should go back to school to educate themselves. This was communicated to many South Africans who were about to enter a transitional period after years of racial discrimination and gross inequality. Women continue to be marginalised and oppressed as a result of gender, socioeconomic circumstances and are deprived from access to free and quality education (UNICEF, 2003).

In 1990, in Jomtien, Thailand, at the World Conference on Education for All, world leaders agreed that the priorities were to ensure access to, and improve the quality of, education for girls and women, and to hindrances that prevent the participation and access for girls and women". The deadline at the time was to ensure universal access, and completion of primary education by 2000. At the World Education Forum, held in 2000 that year in Dakar, new deadlines were fixed: all children should complete "compulsory primary education of good quality" by 2015. At the UN's Millennium Summit, heads of states adopted these targets as two of the eight Millennium Development Goals for reducing world poverty (Choike, 2008).

Access to education has become an important civil rights issue. Access to education for women and minority rights is still a major challenge (Leer, Snedeker and Koszorus, 2010). There has been a neglect of racist, heterosexist, classist and religious biases among others, which have prevented social justice particularly gender equality (Okin, 1994). The World Economic Annual Global Gender Gap revealed a gender gap drop in recent years in some developing countries such as South Africa. There is a dire need to bridge the gap in ensuring gender equality. Women's rights are enshrined in constitutions, policies, Constitution Acts, employment equity documents, domestic violence frameworks, discrimination and empowerment documents; nevertheless, transformation remains slow. Even though

all these efforts have been made, women continue to be oppressed and side-lined in different spheres of society. Indigenous culture and societal norms often discriminate against women, leading to their exclusion from authority and succession. Traditionally, women have been discarded from progressing; hence they have been deprived of education, money, property and advancement in comparison to their male counterparts. The study will discuss the role of education in bridging the gender parity gap and how education and training can impact positively on the advancement of girls and women. The study will also explore whether cultures promote for women to have access to education, or not, further widening the gender gap in certain fields which remain male-dominated.

According to Wharton (2005), women perform 70 per cent of the world's work, receive 10 per cent of the world's wages and own less than one per cent of the world's property. These daunting facts demonstrate that women have been placed in these situations in an effort to ensure that male domination remains. The late 1980s led to women and children becoming the group living in poverty, this worsened into the 1990s. The transformation of the first world women's consciousness and the consolidation of feminisms in the third world helped to make constructive dialogue occurred in 2006 during COP 12 in Nairobi which witnessed the globalisation of the feminist movement. The paper will therefore discuss whether feminist work addresses issues of all oppressed women or only a specific category of women such as white middle and upper class women as opposed to poor black women.

Education has focused on access and parity closing the gap between girls and boys. However, decision makers have not addressed the norms and cultures that initiate inequality (USAID, 2008). O'Connor (2010) notes that women continue to face barriers mainly enforced by definitions of the sexes, males and male-dominated career paths; female embodiment and domestic responsibility. The paper will review the relationship between gender and education and will explore more specifically how indicators such as culture, religion and region impact on education. The paper will focus primarily on gender inequality, paying attention to the barriers of gender inequality which exist for girls and women. The study questions why women in third world countries have not managed to be at par with industrialised first worlds and why so many of these girls and women continue to be marginalised. This study will also explore whether all women are equally represented. Furthermore, the paper will discuss the challenges of gender inequality and why gender matters for the education of young girls.

The UN Entity for Gender Equality was created (1976) to ensure gender parity across field, the question that remains is how can this be mainstreamed into education for greater impact? Contradictory enough equality has relied on men, as most men continue to make decisions in big corporates, lead institutions and dominate most spheres on society. In order for change to occur society needs to let

go of patriarchal cultural influence. There is a need for policy intervention which will lead to a conscious shift in attitudes and behaviours from the grass roots. However, this can only occur when women make decisions and share power on violence against women, women's right and reproductive rights; ultimately, this will lead to action and ensure gender parity. In many developing countries, women are affected by conflict and displacement, leaving little room for decision-making. Women are often the ones who keep families together, the mothers of the nation and the ones who contribute most to reconstruction and reconciliation after war due to their inherent ability to cope, survive, protect nature and reconcile the nation. Often they are the ones to also suffer most in wars as their men go to war and they have to keep the family together; witness murders and killing; and are often victims by the opposition perpetrators, yet they do not classify themselves as victims, but society does (Coetzer, 2011).

The educational problems that face African communities are still present today. Education disparities have been as a result of social class inequalities, education is therefore a disadvantage for women. On the contrary, Jacobs (1996) notes that education is an advantage for women and gender inequality is evident in some area of the education system. Education institutions display themselves as being gender-neutral, although such institutions are clearly male dominated with male bias and cultures which ensures that the global balance of power remains under a male patriarchal system which promotes homosocial cultures. O'Connor (2010) agrees with Hasu and notes that men will not be the driving force in tackling gender disparities and attitudes; they will not fight a battle which resides with their male counterparts and which is in their favour.

The above demonstrates that there is a dire need for women to express their opinions, become the driving force in their destiny and for their contribution to be acknowledged. There is consequently a need for empowering women economically and strengthening their representation and participation which is gravely lacking in most spheres (Coetzer, 2011). Women must be encouraged to have equal access to education and culturally induced gender stereotypes which prohibit equal access for women within education and in their careers must be eradicated. Education will lead to achieving measurable and realistic results and will impact on greater achievement of the Millennium Development Goals such as reducing poverty; greater healthcare access; human right protection; this will also impact on families and communities as women often nurture societies and the role of women in society will be more present with them making significant contributions in the outcomes (Subramanian, 2005).

O'Connor (2010) notes that men are a social category which is associated with hierarchy and power over women, whereas women are defined as subordinates. The inability of most women to access education, and the lack of female representation in power and prestigious positions is a universal challenge. The Dakar Framework for

Action Education For All is a collective commitment to act. One of the frameworks goals aims at eradicating gender disparity in primary and secondary education in order to reach gender equality by 2015 through full and equal access to achievement of good quality education to girls. Subramanian (2005) notes that the Dakar "Education for All" and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) promotes gender parity through the participation of boys and girls and equal gender equality through education for both boys and girls.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) promote for eliminating gender inequality in primary and secondary education. The MDGs promote for gender equality and the empowerment of women (Subramanian, 2005). Therefore, the promotion of gender equality means that girls have the right to education through access and participation; right within education through awareness, environment, process and outcomes and the right through education through linking education in gender justice. Development and change are presumably occurring in most parts of the world, except in Africa and cultural features in the region have led to these negative effects (Harris and Huntington, 2000). Investing in the education of women ensures a socio-economic benefit for society such as increased productivity, higher family incomes, delayed marriages, reduced fertility rates and improved health and survival rates for infants and children (USAID, 2008, p 1).

## **2. Research Methodology**

The structure of the study will form the collection and documentation of data with the aim of answering questions and the hypothesis. Firstly, there will be a quantitative, exploratory literature study which will search definitions, theories, policy, viewpoints, principles, methodologies and other research findings. Statistics relevant to the global gender discourse will form part of the data collected. The study will focus on gender equality within the globe and how education can ensure gender parity.

Secondly, primary and secondary sources will be used to conduct desk research on library sources, internet sources, documents and frameworks. The study will also utilise global frameworks, plans and documents related to gender and education. The report findings will conclude on the dynamics responsible for reinforcing stereotypes and challenges related to gender discrimination.

### **2.1. Literature review**

#### *Background on gender studies*

Gender studies is an interdisciplinary study and academic field which focuses on gender identity and gender representation as central theme. The disciplines study

gender and sexuality in many fields. The term gender in gender studies refers to social and cultural constructions such as masculinity and femininity and the roles of being a male and that of being a female within societal constructions. Gender studies take into consideration biological features of both sexes and the cultural expectations by the men and women (Wikipedia, 2012). The study of gender grew out of the second wave of the women's movement; the movement expressed feminist criticism for ignoring women. Women were rarely subjects of research and activities dominated by women such as housework received little attention. There was a male bias in the literature particularly in sociology. Scholars have (O'Connor, 1995) questioned whether sociology could become a study of society not to promote for study on the science of a male dominated society. The differences between men and women were in the documents of gender studies which were gradually included into sociological literature. The sociology of women gave way to the sociology of gender. The increase in masculinity and femininity and its value was linked to domination and subordination, such examples include that male masculinity and female subordination are culturally applauded (O'Connor, 1995).

Between 1975 and 1985 women gained greater access to higher education due to liberal values, that posit that women alike men should be given the same opportunities as they are just as capable as men academically. The goal of this was to allow for women to graduate adding value to the labour market and integrating into high paying occupations ultimately adding value to the development of society (Bradley, 2002).

Mitra-Kahn (2000) (cited in Schober and Ebmer (2009) posit that discrimination of females was growth promoting in the early stages of semi-industrial states. However Seguinoi (2009) (cited in Schober and Ebmer (2009) notes that gender inequality in access to education and jobs can have devastating effects on economic growth, although this is based on the link between industrial exporting states. This study concurs with Schober and Ebmer (2009) that gender inequality in education is detrimental for economic growth as gender inequality reduces human capital which impacts on economic growth negatively.

The term 'women' has been criticised by feminist sociologists due to the increase in gender and its relations to age, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation and class are all features which impact on gender disparities. All these aspects remain intertwined and more investigation on their relationship is required. It is due to reasons like these that gender remains problematic. Some sceptics say that gender is as a result of language and not social constructional relations and overgeneralisations based on one group of women. Gender in culture is a way in which humans identify themselves, as lessons learnt have social relations (Wharton, 2005).

Gender has also increased in the development of studies and theories of justice since the 1980s. The neglect of gender inequality in the past was detected due to

household dynamics and public economics and politics. The second factor is due to arguments by sex, such as false gender neutrality which occurred and the neutrality between sexes was obscured. Domestic dichotomy poses problems that women are only good for rearing children and maintain households; their contribution has not been regarded as work. The work which is done in poor countries by women such as grazing land, farming and fetching water has been regarded as insignificant (Okin, 1994), although these duties in some instances keep economies and societies alive.

### *What is feminism?*

Feminism started with focusing on women's issues, but has also focused on activism such as environmental issues, animal rights and reproductive matters. Therefore, modern feminists promote equality on all levels in all areas of society, focusing on political, social and cultural indicators which prohibit civil liberties in society (Wikipedia, 2012). Feminists Harnet Taylor and Charlotte Perkins Gilman in *The Feminine Mystique* (cited in Okin, 1994, p 6) noted in their literature that the women they were liberating would have servants, thus demonstrating that their theory did not cater for women from the lower classes such as poor black African slaves. Virginia Woolf and Elizabeth Spelman however were the exception, as they noted that feminist theory was focused on one group of women (1998), that is middle-class women in Western industrialised cultures (Lorber, 2010).

Scholars have questioned why women should be discriminated on cross-cultural differences and notes that white feminists excluded women of different groups from their literature even though their sexist experiences are the same; black women endured the same experiences of prejudice and inequality, perhaps to a worse degree than their white sisters (Okin, 1994). The only difference was that the feminists at the time were the wives of white slave owners and could not communicate the extent of inequality and demeaning experiences of black poor slave women. Sexism is a form of oppression which is felt mostly by women, regardless of race or class. This questions why feminism and the justice of poor black women remain open for further enquiry. Currently, African women continue to be marginalised to a worse extent in comparison to their white female counter-parts (Okin, 1994).

### *Defining gender inequality*

Gender was previously known as psychological, social and cultural aspects of maleness and femaleness. Gender represents the characteristics of males and females in social life and culture. There is also the belief that biological and genetic difference allows that natural and social cannot be separated. Wharton (2005) notes

that other scientists argue that this isn't true. Gender is not an individual characteristic such as behavioural traits that people possess based on a particular sex category. Gender equality means that men and women have equal opportunity to realise their full human rights and contribute and benefit from economic, social, cultural and political development (USAID, 2008).

Gender parity and equity are the building blocks of equity in education. Parity is attained when the same amount of boys and girls in the same age groups, enter the education system, achieve and advance in educational goals (USAID, 2008). Equity is the process of treating girls and boys fairly. Equity does not entail treating all learners the same. The World Bank (USAID, 2008) notes that equity therefore allows for equality of opportunity among people, promoting their talents and efforts rather than predetermined circumstances such as race, gender, social and family background.

Gender is a system of social practices; creating gender differences and creates inequality on the basis of these differences. Gender therefore creates distinction and inequality. Gender also has three features which include that gender is a process and fixed state; gender occurs at all levels of social structures and is not only a characteristics of individuals and gender is important in organising relations of inequality. Okin (1994) notes that feminism generally transpired from a white middle- and upper-class perspective which did not include the concerns of other women from other races, cultures and religion or classes. This in itself posed a problem with the literature. The status of women, in the global competitive market has changed little (Subramanian, 2005).

There is a staggering amount of literature on gender which has led to an increase in conceptual and theoretical frameworks have sufficed. Gender has no common meaning even amongst feminists (Wharton, 2005). Wharton (2005) defines gender as a categorical denomination and the production of recognisable difference. Angela Harris (1990) (Okin, 1994, p 8) discussed the experiences of culture and gender inequality, she clearly demonstrated the difference between black women and white women with regards to rape and that this point needs to be explored even further, because there are difference in the extent of the women's oppression and inequality. Spelman and Harris (Okin, 1994, p 8) however do not agree with white feminists who ignore the continued marginalisation of poor black women.

Women have been oppressed as a result of institutions and processes which promote male bias; this has become acceptable by women in oppressive cultures. However, the oppressed eventually become silenced and become the oppressors themselves. One wonders if men would endure these practices if they were to be in the same position? Feminists should seek solutions to problems of all women. Okin (1994) notes that there is a need for educating women on oppression and knowledge

on culture. Different women from various races, cultures, places share a similar oppression. Therefore, there is a need to rethink justice and feminism all together.

## **2.2. Why does gender inequality exists?**

Attention has not been paid to the barriers of education of girls and young women. Access, duration, and the quality are all critical variables in the educational benefits. Cultural stereotypes often overlook educational policy and frameworks which do not further reinforce the gender gap (USAID, 2008).

Both women and men remain portrayed as villain and victim, inequality is viewed as a set of social forces. From a young age culture becomes entrenched into children, thus reinforcing gender difference. The forces are subtle and are an unconscious exercise of power over people (Wharton, 2005). As individuals develop they bring personal interests into institutions and this shapes their interactions (O'Connor, 2012).

Sex as a concept unifies anatomical features, biological functions, bodily desires and regimes of classification. Traditional beliefs on male dominance and male patriarchy are assumed to underline sexual division of labour positing that women should only produce babies. This implies that women do not have babies, but that babies are a product of material diverse social exchanges, relations and contributions. In contrast to her views women are seen to make babies only. Therefore, patriarchy reinforces views that women are exclusively meant for sex and making babies. On the contrary, women have demonstrated time and again them alike men can be both mother and a professional (Wharton, 2005).

Bradley (2002) notes that women's choice in education is based on rewards which are multidimensional and not economical. Gender impartiality has worsened due to the notion that women don't study certain fields such as Science, Education and Technology (SET).

Culture emphasises that women should be nurturers thus taking the caretaking roles which have lower rates of economic paying occupations feminine roles such as humanities and social sciences, whereas male dominated fields include business, engineering and technology. This demonstrates how culture has impacted on female choices in society (Bradley, 2002).

Mama (2006) notes that intellectual capital is related to cultural development. Cultural challenges create circumstances and cultural victims which prevents progress and development. There is a clear line between traditional expectations and challenges to gender equity and misconstrued representation such as violence and abuse which do not stem from culture. If gender inequality has become the norm then the distinction between culture and male patriarchy should be distinguished.

### **2.3. The relationship between culture and gender**

Cultural values do not define or constitute culture, although they are thought to be the key cultural barriers of economic progress. “Values “are defined as conceptions of the desirable, common ideas on what is good. (Harrison and Huntington, 2000) Cultural values are important as they are adaptive, subject to negotiations, however they don't determine cultural values which guide social action (Harrison and Huntington, 2000).

In certain cultures, women are oppressed and often regarded as less than that of a man due to stereotypes of masculinity, femininity, male patriarchy and because we live in a male dominated society as many men remain in the position to make decision and balance global power. This is evident in multinational corporations, delegations in Heads of States and education institutions more specifically. This means that men make decisions on the access that women have to education, opportunities available for women in education and higher education investments available for women. Therefore, there is a need for greater inclusion and participation for women, who remain excluded, oppressed and undermined in decision-making processes. There is ample research on the contributions that women have made in education such as their contribution to research, teaching and learning and different academic fields of study, thus demonstrating their value and contributions. Women remain at the forefront of education as most education institutions in developing states like Sub-Saharan Africa employ more women, their workforce comprises of women, yet these very women remain excluded in holding high ranks, decision-making processes and the representation of women.

Cultural careers in underdeveloped states such as Sub-Saharan Africa continue to the hamper economic growth. Harrison and Huntington (2000) note that a large number of African values and norms are compatible with economic development and political diversity). Cultural careers include vocations such as the caretaking of children; shared family work for children; compliance to elders and ensuring social networks remain intact. There often combat schooling because they are so time consuming and are regarded as more important that education. This is also as a result of economic and social activities.

Harrison and Huntington (2000) note that it is incorrect to say that culture and values which form part of national cultural “character is inflexible.” Cultural beliefs on the contrary are tools for adaptation not fixed patterns that determine institutions. Culture is a mix of shared values and beliefs, activities in daily routines of life and experiences based on interaction that have emotional meaning. Culture raises children in certain ways; this often creates problems later on in their lives. Harrison and Huntington (2000) give reference to the difference between how Western children and African children differ in their upbringing and later in adulthood. This

knowledge is transferred through nonverbal channels of participation and modelling. Matters such as practices around childcare cannot be blamed for hampering economic and social progress. According to Harris and Huntington (2000) it is because of the ecological differences around regional, national and international institutions which hamper the capacity of children and the youth.

There is a diversity across the African continent which is based on shared values, attitudes and institutions which binds African people together, there is also however an eagerness for social change which will benefit all the peoples of Africa. Culture has been a prominent feature which continues to impact on female education and cultural influences impede on education as seen in Muslim cultures and safety, security and distance issues. Where women are not allowed to travel alone or without the consent of a women's husband or father. African cultural values are the reason why social change is not taking effect and these values themselves need to be altered. Research and studies conducted that there is ample of opportunity for change which can be provided to children which turns to new child rearing practices. Cultural norms differ in various African states but one thing remains common, economic growth is slow or there is little growth. Perhaps this is because of a lack of the emergence of democracy, and other issues. Therefore this calls for a study of cultural circumstances which can add concrete value leading to meaningful change and above all social justice which promotes for the basic democratic right for all such as education, food and shelter too mention a few. Oppressive regimes often leave room for female oppression and discrimination to breed (Harris and Huntington, 2000).

Bradley (2002) notes that women's choices in education is based on rewards which is multidimensional and not economical. Gender impartiality has worsened due to the notion that women don't study Science, Education and Technology (SET). In South Africa more specifically female access to education has increased, but women still dominate vocational fields of study such as education, nursing and social science.

Traditions often play a role in deciding gender roles and occupations. This has been demonstrated through female nurses, male doctors and house wives, some people might have been taken aback when new job descriptions such as "male nurse, women lawyer" or stay-at-home-fathers" was introduced. The traditions of a particular culture assist in directing career choices which are acceptable to men and women within that culture. Social norms govern society's behaviours; they ensure societal control and are not legitimate laws. People who often resist these laws, such as when a women whose cultural role is to be a caregiver, decided to pursue her career as a fighter-pilot, which traditionally is not considered normal leads to her being considered deviant within society. Norms therefore conform and socialise people of a particular culture (Wikipedia, 2006).

#### **2.4. Education, equal opportunity and the gender gap**

Education can be defined as a means which ensures that the aims and habits of people are sustained from generation to generation. It is an experience which affects personal impressions of individuals, reasoning and the manner in which people act. Formally defined, education is the process by which society transmits knowledge, skills, and customs and values from generation to generation. Equal opportunity means that people are given the same opportunities free from barriers, prejudice or favour over other, unless a particular peculiarity can be made. There is therefore equal chance, there is fairness and free from nepotism (Wikipedia, 2006).

The gender gap narrowed down in the developed world from the 1960, but progress has been slow in the developing world. The literature points out that prior to this change; women did not have many choices such as birth control which influenced women's careers, education paths and age of marriage. Traditional gender roles for women in first world states have changed because women are not prohibited to pursue their careers. However, the developing world still battles because many girls do not have access to education; this reduced their opportunities and chances of progress. This is also depicted cross-culturally in women's dress roles, dress codes and behaviours (Wikipedia, 2006).

#### **2.5. Access to education and women studies**

Practitioners have remained focussed on class and race issues but more research is needed on the connection between schooling and gender inequality (Jacobs, 1996). Ramirez and Boli (Jacobs, 1996) suggest that in recent years there has been a diffusion in countries which has led to education for all, giving women access to education at the same time. There are however those women that have been denied access to education due to cultural practices which devalue any investment in women.

Education has started to serves many and has become a salvation, vocation, civilisation, participation and recreation. There are still those that have been denied access to education. The connection between culture and education of women need more investigation though. Okin (1994) notes that the wellbeing of women is equal to that of men; however there is a decline in the existence of women who are devalued in states where women are regarded as unimportant. Underdeveloped states devalue women even more than first worlds, and this leads to less investment and opportunity for girls and women in education.

Globally one-third of households are headed by single women and children who also bear the brunt of a high poverty rate. The division of labour and wages impact on females who are economically invaluable, this is worse in developing worlds. Poor

states also give work to younger less exposed to education and this is also why women are less devalued than boys. This has led to a decline in female morality rates due to boys being favoured and having greater access to food and healthcare-girls are often considered a liability in comparison to boys (Okin, 1994).

The discrimination and sex segregation in education and the workplace persists due to norms and values which unconsciously reinforce gender inequality. Even culturally accept work such as household work and the rearing of children is economically devalued, clearly depicting that condescending nature of male domination in society. This results in women becoming socially vulnerable and dependent on men, particularly in poor states. This also leads to women becoming subjects of sexual, physical and biological abuse by men in their social circles. Women are therefore marginalised and deprived from health, food, education and their birth right as a result of cultural influences (Okin, 1994).

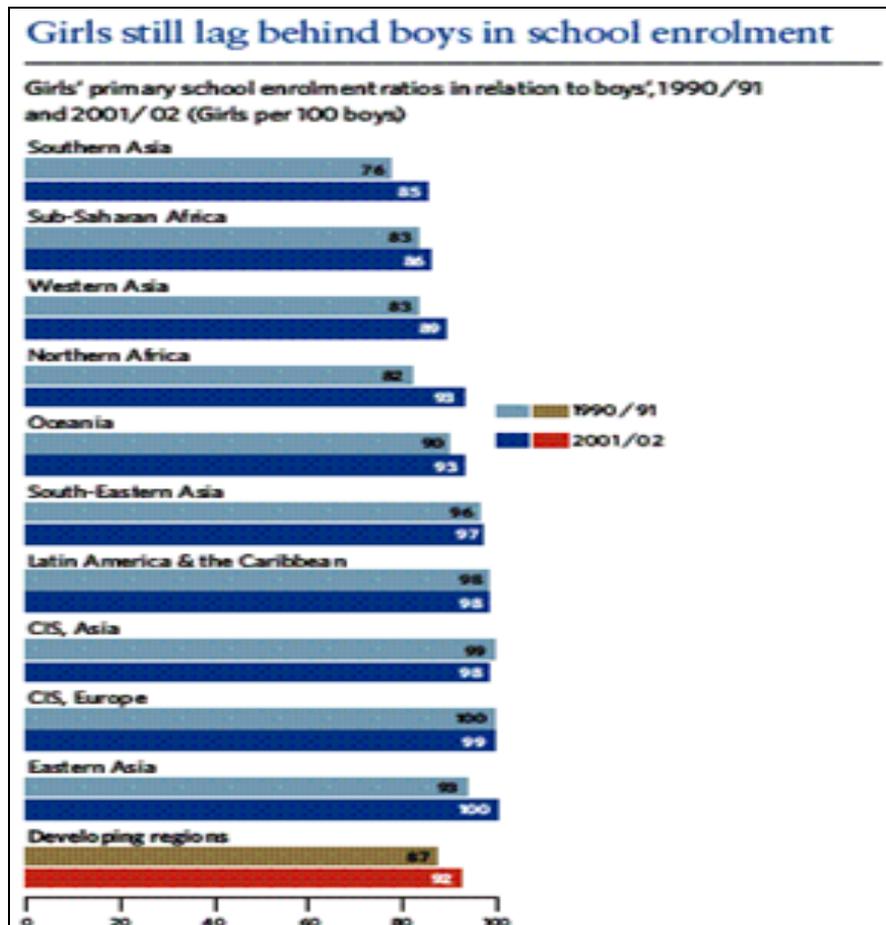
This explains why women are discriminated upon against jobs, pay and promotions in the workplace and society. Background on gender inequality and access to education. shows that the enrolment of girls grew faster than that of boys in poor countries during the 1960s until 1980s (Jacobs, 1996).

Gender remains important because it shapes the identities and behavioural temperaments of individuals. Gender shapes the way people see themselves, the manner in which they behave and how they view others. Gender matters because it shapes social interaction and organises social institutions which entails rules in institutions such as education, religion and sports, work and less formal institutions such as marriage and parenthood. Based on the above, gender shapes and gives significance to social relations and institutions. Benshap and Brouds (2003) (O'Connor, 2005) note that gender is as a result of aspects such as of organisational culture in the symbols, images and rules and values.

### **Access to education for women globally**

The more that multinational invest in a developing country, the less education is provided for girls and women, this is as a result on multinationals ideology and gender bias, as most of this corporations are headed by men who are also their decision makers (Jacobs, 1996) . Therefore this impacts on the status and work opportunities of women. There is evidence which suggests that the presence of brothers might reduce investment in daughters' schooling.

Table 1  
 Universal Gender Gap Bar Graph



Source: United Nations. 2005. *The Millennium Development Goals Report, 2005*. New York: United Nations.

Table 2

*Countries with least improved gender gaps*

<b>Countries where 75 or fewer girls for 100 boys are enrolled in primary education, 2001/02</b>	
<b>Gender parity index<sup>1</sup> in primary education</b>	
Chad	63
Yemen	66
Central African Republic	67
Niger	68
Benin	70
Ethiopia	71
Burkina Faso	71
Côte d'Ivoire	74
Guinea	75
Mali	75

<sup>1</sup> See technical note at the end of the chapter for definition.  
Source: United Nations Statistics Division, "World and regional trends", Millennium Indicators Database, <http://millenniumindicators.un.org> (accessed June 2006); based on data provided by UNESCO.

Source: United Nations. 2005. *The Millennium Development Goals Report, 2005*. New York: United Nations.

### **Female representation in education**

The absence of women in senior management positions in education is due to denial and structural factors. O'Connor (2010) notes that women are perceived as lower than men. Studies have revealed that culture is highly gendered in male patriarchy. For years, men have worked in patriarchal systems where they found the culture to encourage men to work with men, due to a lack of both emotionality and gender awareness. Women were seen as emotional, with a low-self-esteem, poor ability to market themselves and failure to make lifestyle choices. In recent years, there has been the promotion of diversity, transformation and more females being promoted to senior positions. There have been instances of homosociality and patriarchal bias in organisational culture. This remains problematic globally and needs to be addressed (O'Connor, 2010). Gender roles in society are promoting a better future for girls and women. However many girls and women do not have access to education, thus robbing them and society of progress and development (Oxfam, 2010).

### **2.6. Gender inequality in higher education South Africa**

Adedeji (2007) notes that Africa claimed this as its own century which is knowledge based and knowledge driven. It is for this reason that education remains a central

theme in the development of the African continent. The importance of knowledge, innovation and technology will only ensure development, intellectual independency and ultimately economic progress.

The educational problems that face African communities are still present today. Education disparities have been as a result of social class inequalities making education a disadvantage for women. On the contrary, Jacobs (1996) notes that education is an advantage for women and gender inequality is evident in some area of the education system.

Education institutions display themselves as being gender-neutral, although in practice they are male dominated with male bias and inherent cultures which ensures that the global balance of power remains under a male patriarchal system which promotes homo-social cultures. O'Connor (2010) notes that men will not be the driving force in tackling gender disparities and attitudes; they will not fight a battle which resides with their female counterparts and is in their favour.

Female participation and education ensures that women are given access to empowerment and resources in order to ensure parity and equality for all. Education is the gateway to economic security and opportunity for women. Gender bias does impact on the education choices of girls and it has been established that economic factors prohibit girls from entry into education. This is due to expectations, attitudes, traditions, religion and cultural beliefs. The UNESCO Institute of Statistics posit that two thirds of 875 million illiterate adults are women and half of them are in Africa (Sharma, unknown).

Osirim (2004) notes that education should act as a buffer for creating social justice and gender parity in Africa. This explains how women become groomed into becoming housewives through the education system as opposed to promoting a freedom of choice as demonstrated in images of women barefoot and pregnant with the baby on their back. These images are reinforced in society subconsciously and there is a need for a conscious shift in the thinking of gender.

### ***3. Policy implications on gender inequality***

Okin (1994) notes that policy solutions have been recommended to resolve social problems such as gender inequality in the public and domestic domain, to prevent the overlooking of women. This can also become an analysis of the individual access for women to education, skills, credit, labour markets, technologies and equal pay. There is a need to stringent policies on this for women to improve their socioeconomic status which will impact on their progress towards gender equality. There is however a need for equal treatment of females by policy makers, can this be achieved if the decision makers remain male dominated.

There is a need to universalise and reconcile justice by looking at different and multiple cultures and people in order to listen to the oppressed and marginalised women in society. A conscious shift is needed for the rejection of social and cultural norms that perpetuate inequality. There needs to be a common ground between culture and gender which ensures sustainable transformation, equality and access for all. Huntington and Harrison (2000) note that children and families throughout Africa are ready to engage new changes, due to diversity and eagerness for change.

Policymakers have a number of policy challenges to tackle in their efforts to ensure equality of opportunity. There is general agreement that programs to bring about equality of opportunity can be difficult, and those efforts to cause unintended consequences or cause other problems. There is agreement that the formal approach is easier to implement than the others, although there are difficulties there too (Wikipedia, 2006).

#### *Insights into further research on gender inequality*

The family remains the school of moral development, as males are taught to be patriarchal; females are taught to be subordinate, accept abuse in certain cases and taught that they will never be equal to males. Parents affect the development of justice in children and often certain societies cannot let societies unlearn gender inequality due to power, authority and access to resources. Inequality remains the main challenge in gender parity, whereas justice allows for equal access for both boys and girls to education, healthcare and food. Many cultures discreetly promote inequality and social justice. This poses great concern and a need for more investigation and enquiry.

Different women have different lives and experiences as women from rich industrial countries live different lives from women from poor states due to cultural and socioeconomic difference. Okin (1994) questions where feminists would voice the concerns of the poor in underdeveloped countries, whether it does justice to their livelihood and if it will impact significantly on these women's lives through policy and change the consciousness of the stakeholders.

Gender is an important part of socialisation. The study has revealed that gender studies are far too young and more investigation on the matter is needed. Women are disadvantaged in rank and institutional prestige. There is also not enough study on gender equality which can also entails social and racial equality. There is however a need for more study on gender in education. Economic, social, cultural and political indicators impacts on gender. The education-decision making process needs more attention though. Questions around access to education inequality, education experiences and outcomes need to be linked and considered for meaningful change

for equal opportunity for both girls and women who have been marginalised within the education sector, for far too long.

Individuals need to experiment with their cultural practices. There is a need for new institutions and community activities are applied with local cultural understanding, this will ensure that they find their place. Continuing gender segregation which restricts cultural careers of boys and girls will only prevent equality and social change; thus cultures that promote patriarchy need to find a common ground as this will impact on career choices, work environments and development within society (Harrison and Huntington, 2000).

The four dimensions of equality in education include access, equality in the learning process, equality of educational outcomes, and equality of external results. All of these aspects need further investigation and research in order to tackle educational equality challenges for women (USAID, 2008).

### *Recommendations*

Badat (2010) posits that the implementation of law will make the education sector which was previously dominated by males easily accessible to women. Bang and Mitra (2011) make a strong case for a global consciousness shift in the manner in which gender roles are enshrined in society.

There is a need for a conscious shift which goes beyond cultural challenges and aims to redressing legacies of the past. Mama (2006) prescribes that development for solutions should be based on past collective experiences gained, suggesting for new solutions to African gender problems based on experiences in an African context. This can be achieved through a commitment by all stakeholders to drive the gender agenda for gender equity across disciplines in education, specifically higher education which is the doorway to professional sectors.

Active policies are needed to develop a more diverse student profile at every institution. Equity of access starts with conscientising girls from primary schools and creating opportunity through working with schools and other institutions to ensure greater levels of academic readiness and freedom of choice for girls. It is imperative for institutions to be held accountable, there needs to be transparency and legitimacy in ensuring transformation in order to ensure social justice, rule of law and moral authority.

Tsikata (2008) notes that institutional change strategies which are responsive to dormant institutional and cultural dynamics of gender in all aspects of their operation require for policy and reform based on different contexts. Gender research should create for gender advocacy which ensures sustainable change which creates social

justice, the promotion of human rights and democratisation all of which impact on economic growth and development.

De La Rey (unknown) boldly notes that women need to collectively challenge cultural subordination and stigmas, which prevent them from gaining equal opportunity alike their male counterparts. The shift from gender disparity to equality will trace a number of changes in the understanding of the category 'women.' Gender inequality has been closely related to inequality of racism, colonialism and imperialism. Feminist sociology has become more interested in culture. Wharton (2005) notes that there is a need for an interdisciplinary, cultural, historical and sociological perspective on the sociology of gender and a refashion of core concepts. The study should ensure that there is tremendous diversity within the sociology of gender at the core meaning of the term gender.

Occupational sex segregation however persists and in Africa and cultures has framed educational choices of individuals (Bradley, 2002). Individuals should be given the choice and free will base on democratic values, to choice.

The is a need for greater study and investigation on the subordination and stereotypes of women , this needs to be revisited in order to bridge the gender gap where women are concentrated in low-paying occupations which hampers the progressive power relation of women globally, as males still dominate the global market system. Thus macro-economic policy does not deal with issues of women's empowerment and gender equality (Badat, 2010).

#### **4. Conclusions**

Change in society has however already occurred, but cultural norms which exist ensure that change in this regard is slow. Based on this there is a needs for intervention and new value orientations which require change within this new social and political system. Many individuals have therefore become cultural victims. Intervention should also however support security, stability, health and resources for girls in order for them to achieve a sustainable daily routine which meets the needs for their good (Harrison and Huntington, 2000).

The shift from gender disparity to equality will trace a number of changes in the understanding of the category 'women.' Gender inequality has been closely related to inequality of racism, colonialism and imperialism. Feminist sociology has become more interested in culture. Wharton (2005) notes that there is a need for an interdisciplinary, cultural, historical and sociological perspective on the sociology of gender and a refashion of core concepts. The study should ensure that there is tremendous diversity within the sociology of gender at the core meaning of the term gender.

Addressing issues of gender on issues of access alone are insufficient in the task of ensuring that they stay in school, learn and achieve requires much more of an action-orientated approach. The barriers that prevent the education of girls such as culture, religion and norms needs to be revisited and the opportunities available need to be seized, this will significantly impact on education and change the lives of so many millions of girls and women globally.

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# RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMUNICATION NETWORKS

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***Abstract:** The main feature of the present situation regarding communication is the impregnation of the social with technology. Computer-mediated communication systems has led to the crystallization of a strong specific interactions. This article describes how human relationships constitutes the ontological pillar of society and social relations form the axis irradiance of sociology. Overall, as social agents in social space, people come in a variety of social relationships. Thus, a distinct note of the article refers to the rapid development of information technology over the past decade, which has enhanced electronic communication between people.*

***Key-words:** communication, social agents, technology, network, virtual space*

## **1. Introduction - Communication creates relationships**

Social networks are also communications network. JR Taylor's thetic option, widely agreed by researchers, is „thesis that communication is the essential modality (...) of the constitution of organization and, more generally, of society” (Taylor J. R., 2000, p. 3). Relationship with the other is the base on which any communication develops. This can be subsumed to the input on different binary lines: submission-dominance, cooperation- competition, etc. Interaction in which communicative relationship develops produces primarily a communication that tends "to change the system of relationships" (Dăncu V.-S., 1999, p. 85). Staying right in terms of this perspective, communication, as shown by professor Laurențiu Șoitu is defined as "setting a relationship" (Șoitu L., 1997, p. 7).

Communicative situation creates primarily a communicational relationship. Specifically, communication generates a derived communicative relationship by which the reproduction of communication occurs. Secondly, infrastructures of

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communicational force are released: participants create and occupy at the same time places they deserve and which are capable of. "In general, as professor Ioan Drăgan argues, the human relations (and not only them) are communicational interactions" (Drăgan I., 2010, p. 728). Procedurally, communication gives thus a positioning of the actors one to each other, through the automatic construction of positions and roles. Once on a certain communicative relationship a communication is triggered and woven, it will reproduce inexorably the relationship and it will finalize and define roles, sites and communication positions for it.

The initial relationship implies a quality of the relationship between the interactants. From this perspective, it appears as partially preexistent to the communicational interaction. Communication is based on a relationship reproducing and modifying itself. The relationship is clearly evolutionary. When discussing an interpersonal relationship is taken into account that, as demonstrated by Professor Mihai Dinu (Dinu M., 2004, p. 106), it involves five phases: contact, involvement, intimacy, deterioration and collapse. The dynamic of the relationship is the engine of communication. Judging from this, we can say, slightly exaggerating, but no less true, that in communication the contents, messages are also excuses for the convictive or persuasive changing of the relationship by argumentation and expresses as influence. The relationship in self reproduction becomes a rule for the ones it connects. There are transient, perishable, poor relationships and fixed, clear, well defined relationships. If the first ones generate free, unlimited communication, unpredictable relationships, the last ones will lay the foundation of relatively predictable communications. The predictable, fixed relations, are the support of the situations named, as "sermon", "lesson", "meeting", etc. and they are questioning rather subsidiary the position, the place in communication. In contrast, the undefined relationships are structured in unnamed, unpredictable situations and where one of the main sides of the interaction is consumed in fixing the position, the place.

Therefore, communication creates and also recreates relationships. A communication started on a trusted relationship has the chance to develop in time a marital relationship, because as we know the components of the latter are trust, respect and admiration. A marital relationship can start from any of the three relationships. It is noticeable that the issue of the relationship is an axiological issue. Relationship is a value subsumed to some values, rules or principles. Although not invoked or mentioned, that is invisible discursively or actionally, relationships exist and create effects, because one cannot imagine a behavior, however trivial, that is not generated at least by a single value that it is trying to perpetuate in the same time with the creation of another.

## *2. Communication Expanding in Information Age*

According to Albert Bressand, in *Information Age*, the concept of communication "has become too tight"; so to speak about this informational universe would be better to use the concept of "relationship" (Bressand A., 1996, p. 112). In fact, the idea of moving from communication to relationship was exposed earlier (1995) in a book written with Catherine Distler. All types of communication would have gained the consciousness of intervenient in the consciousness of making contributions in what relationship is concerned (Bressand A., Distler C., 1995, p. 7). Communication would only fuel, facilitate, strengthen, extend, make loyal, destabilize or legitimize a relationship. Communication is reduced to message and products (Smarandache F., Vlăduțescu St., 2012, p. 101). The network communication is conceived as "relational machine" ("machine relationelle") which is as "a set of resources (infrastructure) and rules (infrastructures) allowing the actants who have access to it to undertake and carry out common projects when they are in line with expectations and common uses (infoculture)" ("une ensemble de moyens (infrastructure) et de règles (infrastructures) permettant aux acteurs qui y ont accès d'entreprendre et de mener à bien des projets communs dès lors que ceux-ci sont conformes aux attentes et usages communs (infoculture)") (Bressand A., Distler C., 1995, p. 12). However, communication does not occupy the central place in our society, because it has not ensured the function of relational machine. Communication is just one element of a "relational engineering" which communication networks involves it. The idea of relational engineering is inferred in the model underlying the contemporary representation of networks. For example, S. Kaser, N. Narang and S. Nrang show that "a communication network can be viewed as an interconnection of communicating entities" (Kasera S., Narang N., Narang S., 2006, p. 2).

Understanding organizations as networks allows the detection and exploitation of some relevant features in theory and in social practice. Mutual argument is valid too: the network-organization perspective makes visible the features of networks in general. For example, the organization features are found in all networks. J. Gammack and S. Poon argue: „The four level of a virtual organization infrastructure (in descending order of hierarcty) are: collaboration, conversation, communication and connection" (Gammack J., Poon S., 2001, p. 216). In other words, social networks and organizations are organisms, communicational machines. Any communicational network is a relational machine. A relationship is a combination of a contact with a contract and connivance (Bressand, 1996, p. 113). The perspective created by Bressand and Distler is to make visible the movement from monolithic communication to network communication. The new communicational conformation occurs through the increasing of the relationship importance. Under the pressure of a relationship exceeding and making it only mere a component, the monolithic communication is devalued. The relationship connecting in network the monolithic communications rises above each and every one of the

communications. The new type of communicational relationship makes the network to function as a relational machine. In the network, relationship commands but not the monolithic communications. Communications are related here: they are in contact, in the contract and connivance (Vlăduțescu Șt., 2006, p. 39). Communication networks appear as "relational economies". The management of the network relationship is a management of communications which exactly through this management become monolithic. "The contact, Bressand A. (1996, p. 113) argues, is set in relation to information". It is the one that information technologies are realizing with efficiency greater than ever. "The contract may be implicit or explicit. It is most of the time a combination of the two forms", A. Bressand asserts (Bressand A., 1996, p. 113). The contract is "essential for communication". In the network, it becomes also complex. The penetration into the telephone network makes the conversational contract broader and more difficult to define entirely. To an interpersonal contract a contract between the subscriber and operator is added. In the television network, financed indirectly through advertising, "direct" contracts are automatically signed between the viewer and the advertiser. An additional contract is established through digital decoders which allow "pay per view". Contractual size of the network itself relies on a beam of contracts between broadcasters, software companies and media production industries. The third part of the relational triptych may appear as expendable, considering that relationship may be reduced to contacts and contracts. As a relational machine, a network has the function to trigger and rule, but not to manage the relationships crossing it. "There is no really network communication, A. Bressand accentuates (Bressand A., 1996, p. 114), unless the relational machine is based on common values and objectives and if it allows the interlocutors to deal with any contingency which the contract rules are not enough to master". In this respect, in any relationship there is a connivance, whether ephemeral or limited, a connivance without whom the relationship can not be a meeting of minds, a meeting of two or more wills, of two or more persons. On this third part relies the development of the Internet as a network of networks.

F. Capra emphasizes that social systems self-generate their communication networks: „Living social systems (...) are self-generating networks of communications” (Capra F., 2002, p. 93). In his book "Communication Power" (2009), Manuel Castells defines social networks as communication structures: „networks are complex structures of communication constructed around a set of goals that simultaneously ensure unity of purpose and flexibility of execution by their adaptability to the operating environment” (Castells M., 2009, p. 26). This definition of networks is natural in the context in which the fundamental thesis of the book, otherwise robustly argued, is: „Communication power is at the heart of the structure and dynamics of society” (Castells M., 2009, p. 41).

The nuclear idea is that communication is the foundation of the social networks. Social networks are, above all, communication systems with well defined and judiciously hierarchized structures. Within these, the agents (actors) have stated and

fulfill roles that the network itself generates. Whether like it or not, everyone in the world is part of many social networks. Current society itself is a network of networks. Manuel Castells believes that one can speak of a „network society” and that „network society is to the Information Age what the industrial society was to the Industrial Age” (Castells M., 2009, p. 12). The communication networks are circuits of transmitting significances. They consist of communicators and the communication relations between them. These cross over the personal relational universes of communicators. The communication networks are based on consistent, cohesive and unified communication relationships. A communication network is a functional system of generating, attenuating, articulating, mobilization and circulation of meanings. In relation to the geometric configuration of the communication circuit, the network may acquire different forms.

### ***3. Types of “communication networks”***

With Georg Simmel and F. Moreno as precursors, the scientific research of "communications networks" began in the 40s of the last century. Among the pioneers and founders in the same time are included Kurt Lewin and his student Alex Bavelas. Before 1950, Alex Bavelas had founded "Group Networks Laboratory". In here there have been initiated the well known investigation of networks on the experimental formula of groups of 5 subjects. A. Bavelas (1950) and his student Harold J. Leavitt accomplish the design of a taxonomy of networks valid until today. In order to study networks, H. J. Leavitt has formed 20 groups of 5 subjects and has given them certain tasks to achieve. By making radiography of how the 5 person group interacted, he has inventoried, as A. Bavelas had previously done, the "communication patterns" (Bavelas A., 1950, p. 725). The communicational interaction patterns have led H. J. Leavitt to the validation of 4 archetypes of networks. Although the groups of 5 were artificial, he has concluded that in the natural groups of 4 too appears the same prototypical set of four possibilities of configuring the network. The 4 found forms are: "chain", "Y", "star", "circle" (Leavitt H.J., 1951, p. 39). The two extremes are "chain" and "circle". The networks belonging to such types have opposite marked attributes: „the circle, one extreme, is active, leaderless, unorganized, erratic, and yet is enjoyed by its members. The star, at the other extreme, is less active, has a distinct leader, is well and stably organized, is less erratic, and yet is unsatisfying to most of its members” (Leavitt H. J., 1951, p. 46). The four archetypes are delimited as a tandem: "circle" and "chain" are horizontal networks, "Y" and "star" are vertical networks. In horizontal networks, internal relations are egalitarian. In contrast, in the vertical type, the functioning is hierarchical and organizational relationships are of subordination. The circle is the type of network in which democracy is at home. Here the leader is a facilitator of group activities and the members attend visibly free to achieving the tasks. The problem is that, as Leavitt argues, "circle" „showed no consistent operational organization” (Leavitt H. J., 1951, p.

42). The "chain" is an environment of the leadership style "laissez-faire". The vertical networks "Y" keep pronounced elements of democracy, but it works hierarchically. The most verticalized networks are of "star" type (they are also called "wheel"). They are the paradigm of authoritarianism and of a single person management. On the other hand, it is noted that horizontal networks, not robustly structured, are at risk of disintegration. Particularly, "chain" networks have major trends of operational disruption. Mielu Zlate calls the "star" networks "X" networks and he argues: "X network is typical for groups practicing an authoritarian leadership" (Zlate M., 2004, p. 509). In general, these prototypical, pure networks are rarely seen in the communicational environment. The configurations of the communication networks are in most cases mixed. Depending on the significant contents in the communicational network flows, some of the geometric networks have been renamed. Thus, a chain communication network is a sequence network. In such a network, a person belongs to two sequences: the acquisition sequence and the transmission sequence. If the node-person distorts the meanings (the message, the information), then he will become a barrier in the network. The "star" format is specific to highly hierarchized groups. Here is the pyramidal network. The pyramid networks are also called merged networks. A highly efficient network is the team type network. Within it the node-persons are interdependent and establish a mutual communication. In relation to the ethical foundation it may be spoken of "formal communications networks" and "emergent communications networks" (Monge P. R., Contractor N., 2003, p. 9).

#### **4. Conclusions**

The world today has become a network of networks and the actors whether state or non-state, are interconnected. Connectivity is a type of diffuse and extensive relation. It is a product of the development of information and technology. Connectivity is not only a network feature; it is also a purpose of it. An enhanced connectivity means more links and a higher potential for achieving connections. An actant or economic actor with such a profile is better placed in the market and has higher profits.

As Thomas Homer-Dixon argues, „our connected world has given us great benefits“, „greater connectivity allows companies larger profits, and gives society better ways to combine diverse ideas, skills and resources“ (Homer-Dixon T., 2005).

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# THE DIGITAL DIVIDE: ICT DEVELOPMENT INDICES IN MEXICO

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***Abstract:** The integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to the manufacturing sector enables to reduce production, management and marketing costs, allowing achieve higher levels of competitiveness. In the social area, ICTs are tools of inclusion improving the provision of education, health and government services, as well as expanding its coverage area of these services. To achieve these benefits it is required a proper incorporation and adaptation of ICTs in the social area, as well as, the development of required ICT services, properly. In this work, we analyze the role of the digital divide in the information society, as ground for social exclusion in the use of ICT in Mexico. Afterwards, the behavior of the digital divide is analyzed, with its different dimensions through time, also describing the penetration and development levels of ICT. Moreover, the case of study of university students enrolled in Information Technology careers is discussed in order to determine the existence of a digital divide and its parameters. Finally, a diagnosis about the growth of the Internet and mobile telephony services in Mexico is carried out, considering the prevailing world economic situation.*

***Key-words:** Digital Divide; ICT; Internet; Social Exclusion; Information Society*

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have become the backbone for the efficient information management, encouraging the emergence

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of the information society. The main objective of the ICT is to improve and provide support process business operation and to increase the competitiveness and productivity of people and organizations in the treatment of any type of information (Tello-Leal, 2008). These technologies facilitate the rapid collection and dissemination of information, the interaction between user groups, communication and collaboration (Shirazi et al., 2010).

In CEPAL opinions, the digitization of various forms of information, such as text, sound, images and voice, have had a profound impact in four basic operations: 1) capture and adaptation, i.e. the reproduction of information from one format to another, 2) computation, in relation to their implementation according to a procedure and processing; 3) the storage, and 4) the transmission, in the sense of reproducing a given message from one point to another point. These functions closely interrelated are interdependent and compose the technological system is known as ICT. The economic benefits associated with the use of ICT are derived from its ability to increase efficiency in management processes, exchange and information management. From a social perspective, these technologies are a means to access information that enables the creation of knowledge, and thus represent important tools for reducing poverty indexes, where the knowledge gained is a means of improvement and progress (Guerra et al., 2008).

However, in order to realize these benefits, is not only necessary that people have the ability to access these technologies, but also to have the knowledge to perform efficient use of them. Accordingly, to the extent that use and integrate these resources to productive and social activities, will increase the opportunities for improvement. Different socioeconomic and cultural variables determine effective use of ICT, thus creating a digital divide (Guerra et al., 2008). The digital divide is one of the first concepts with which to start reflection about the issue of the social impact of ICT. It is clear that the use of these technologies will produce differences in opportunities for development of populations and cause a gap between communities that have or do not have access to these technologies, which is conceptualized as the digital divide (Pinkett, 2003).

The analysis of the concept of digital divide has changed over time. Originally was referred basically to connectivity issues (access and infrastructure). Subsequently, the analysis included the development of capabilities and skills required to use ICT (training and education). Afterwards, was added the analysis of usage intensity of resources and services integrated into these technologies (frequency/hours of use). Currently the intended purpose of the Internet usage is incorporated to the analysis of digital divide (Castaño-Muñoz, 2010).

The level of access to ICT varies considerably from one country to another. Although there have been efforts to close the digital divide, there are substantial inequalities in

access to and use of ICT in developing countries (Matuchniak, 2010). Therefore, the international organizations have defined their development policies aimed at reducing the digital divide. However, despite the evolution of the concept of digital divide, investments and policies to close the digital divide are oriented primarily toward the development of connectivity (Tello-Leal and Sosa, 2008).

Furthermore, it is important to mention that one of the ICT most representative and influential in recent times is the Internet. It's a cultural communicative structure, allowing the expression of experiences, knowledge and practices of human interaction (Cabrera, 2004; Villatoro and Silva, 2005). Internet has transformed the concept we had of ICT, converting to information and communication networks in an essential resource of modern society. Currently, the Internet is a basic resource for transmitting information, so it is important to have the skills needed to effectively use this technology. Therefore, we conclude that people who are excluded from ICT, are also excluded from the benefits they can provide Internet (Rodriguez, 2006).

In this paper we analyze the concept of digital divide as a cause of social exclusion in the use of ICT in Mexico. It describes the behavior of the digital divide over time, evaluating the level of absorption and the development of ICT. It also presents a case study focused on university students enrolled in Information Technology (IT) careers, with the objective of determining the existence of a digital divide and its dimensions. In this scenario, the methodology designs are exploratory and quantitative. Finally, we analyze the increase in the use of Internet services and mobile telephony in Mexico.

### ***3. Literature review***

The global digital divide is perceived of as the inequality in use and ownership of computers and the internet across nations (Wijers, 2010). Also, the digital divide has also been generally defined as the socio-economical difference in the use of ICT (Vehovar et al., 2006). We use the OECD's definition "the gap between individuals, households, businesses, and geographic areas at different socio-economical levels with regard both to their opportunities to access information and communication technologies and to their use of internet for wide variety of activities" (OECD, 2001).

There are two primary dimensions of digital divide: domestic and international. Domestic digital divide refers to a digital divide in a certain country or region, while the international digital divide refers to a gap between regions, countries, or continents. Although indicators used for determining international and domestic digital divide may vary, many common indicators are also used. Other than regions or geographic locations, a digital divide can also occur between genders, ages, education groups, income groups, racial, and ethnic groups (Ono & Zavodny, 2007). Studies indicate that an international digital divide originates from the difference in

social development and economical growth in developing and developed countries and regions, and in differences between the demographic quality of the citizens (gender, race, lifestyle, family structure, and size of family) (Chen and Wellman, 2004; Cuervo and Menendez, 2006; Ono & Zavodny, 2007).

In many studies, it is seen that the digital divide negatively affects women, old people, people with low education and with low income, large size families, people living in rural areas, low-skilled persons, and minorities at the domestic level, and poor or low-income countries at the international level (Chinn and Fairlie, 2004; Mariscal, 2005). The study variables have been taken from national and international institutions such as INEGI (INEGI, 2010), EUROSTAT, the OECD, the World Bank, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) (UNDP, 2001), the International Data Corporation (IDC) (IDC, 2007), and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) (ITU, 2003). Questionnaires have been often used in data gathering, and the multi-dimensional aspects of the information society have led to the development of various index measures to compare levels of the information society, such as the information society index (IDC, 2007), digital access index (ITU, 2003), and the technology achievement index (UNDP, 2001). Various components of the information society have been measured with these indices. Various components of the information society have been measured with these indices. These components determine international digital divide, among which are included ICT sector; ICT market and external trade; ICT penetration; ICT usage in households; ICT usage in enterprises; ICT education, training, and skills; and ICT in government and health. In addition, there are many variables measuring each component. ICT penetration; ICT usage in households; and ICT education, training, and skills components have gained importance in measuring the digital divide between individuals (Corrochero and Ordanini, 2002; Shirazi et al., 2010).

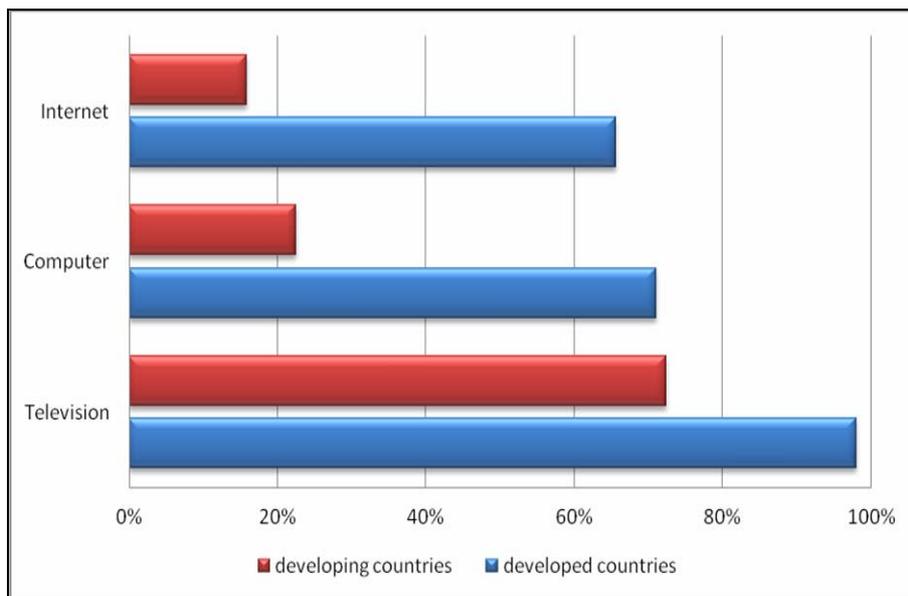
In (Billón et al., 2009) use canonical correlation analysis in order to take together a large number of dependent variables, such as computers, Internet users, broadband subscribers, mobile phones, telephones mainlines, and secure Internet servers. However, despite the impact of the digital divide socially, politically and economically, there is still a lack of theory supporting the existing measurement of the digital divide (Corrocher and Ordanini, 2002; Mariscal, 2005; Falch, 2007).

#### ***4. Level of absorption and development of ICT in Mexico*** ■

The ICT has a great influence on each of daily activities, where information and communication are essential to the progress and welfare of the persons, supported by education, allowing knowledge generation. Such is the importance and magnitude of ICT that the degree of progress in the use of these technologies will determine the level of development to be achieved in a society. This assertion is based on the

statistical information submitted by the ITU, in its report of ICT indicators, which are summarized in Figure 1. This figure presents a comparison between developing countries and developed countries, which include indicators of Internet access from home, households with a computer, and households with at least one television. On one hand, it shows that in developing countries the 72.4% of households have a television, 22.5% have a computer and only 15.8% have access to Internet. On the other hand, in developed countries, 98% of households have at least one television, 71% have at least one computer and 65.6% have access to broadband Internet (ITU, 2010). The data presented in this comparison (Figure 1) clearly shows that the difference in access to ICTs between developed and developing countries.

Figure 1  
Variables of ICT access in homes, in developed and developing countries



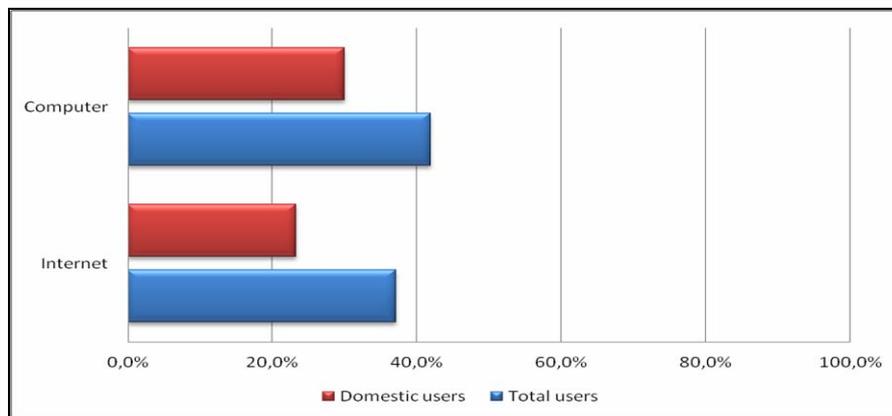
Source: Developed by the authors, based on INEGI reports (INEGI, 2011)

### 3.1. Related data to ICT in Mexico

ICTs are considered tools to trigger the change in terms of the productivity and competitiveness of a company. However, Mexico is below the world average on some indicators. Studies conducted by the INEGI (2011) showed that 41.6 million people in the country (México) have access to Internet-based services and 47 million of people

have access at the computer. These data reflect an increase in the use of ICT, especially in the use of Internet and all the services involved, compared to previous years. Figure 2 shows a comparison between computer and internet household users versus the total computer and internet users in the country. Data presented in this figure shows that 37.2% of the country's population are Internet users and 41.9% have access to a computer. It also shows that 30% of households have a computer, and 23.3% of households have Internet access, which represents an increase of 4.9% and 3.2%, compared to the indicators of 2010, respectively (INEGI, 2010).

Figure 2  
*Users with access to ICTs in Mexico*



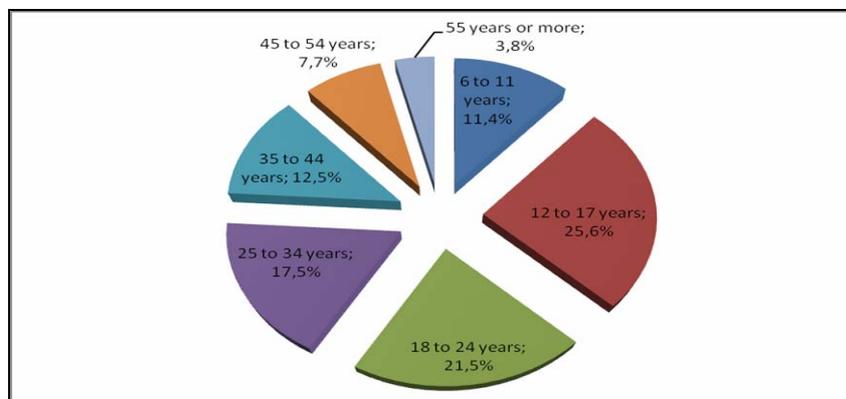
Source: Developed by the authors, based on INEGI reports (INEGI, 2011)

Furthermore, considering the composition of ICT users by gender, women represent 49.5% and men 50.5% of computer users. On the use of Internet, the participation of women is 49.6% and 50.4% are male users. According to these data, we conclude that there is no significant difference by gender among users of ICT in the country.

However, the situation is very different when the same indicators are analyzed considering the age of the users. Figure 3 shows Internet users by age in Mexico. This figure shows that people with more access the Internet are users whose ages range between 12 and 34 years. This group of users is composed of students, professionals and workers using ICT in their business, which represents a 64.6% of Internet users. People between 35 to 44 years old represent the 12.5%, users of the age range of 45-54 years represent the 7.7%, and children 6 to 11 years constitute 11.4% of total users. A group behind in the use of technologies is people over 55, of which only 3.8% use the Internet (INEGI, 2011).

According to the above data, the age of the users can be seen as a cause of delay in the adoption of ICT. However, based on the data presented in (INEGI, 2011) socioeconomic status, related to lifestyle and annual income of the inhabitants of the country, are the variables that have greatest impact in creating a digital divide. In this sense, the low-income population that uses ICTs lies well below the population mean, this leads to a huge internal digital divide in Mexico.

Figure 3  
Internet users in Mexico classified by age



Source: Developed by the authors, based on INEGI reports (INEGI, 2011)

### 3.2. The case of study of university students enrolled in IT careers in the North of Mexico

The Internet, computers and mobile phones are now indispensable resources in most activities, mainly in the teaching-learning processes (Buela-Casal and Castro, 2009). With the use of these technologies teaching strategies and feedback are enriched to facilitate the search for information, sharing such information, generates knowledge and then transmit it to others, regardless of their location and the type of connection used.

In order to know the level of absorption and utilization of ICT at the university environment, we conducted a study focusing on the students enrolled in careers of Engineering of Information Technologies (IT) in the state of Tamaulipas in the North of Mexico. Tamaulipas state has more than 5 graduates of IT per 1000 inhabitants, ranking among the states with the highest number of graduates in that area (SE, 2007). According to studies conducted by INEGI (2010), 26.9% of Internet users are college students, which in turn represent the 23.4% of computer users in the country.

The study consists of three groups with different geographical settings. The first group is comprised of students who live in cities located in northern Tamaulipas state, which have the characteristic that are U.S. border and its main economic activity is the electronics manufacturing industry. The second group is composed of students who live in cities located in the center of the state and its main economic activities are small companies and government employees. The third group is comprised of students who live in cities located in the southern state and its main economic activity is the petrochemical industry.

The population is integrated by students in IT careers, being exactly the population size of 4460 students. We defined a sample size with a confidence level of 95% and a sampling error of 2%, using a stratified random sampling with disproportionate allocation, the sample size calculated is of 1566 students (see Table 1).

Table 1  
*Stratification of students enrolled in IT careers*

	Group 1			Group 2			Group 3		
<b>Cities</b>	Mata-moros	Reynosa		Laredo	Victoria		Mante	Tampico	
<b>Careers</b>	BSc Eng	BSc Eng	Blnf Tech	Blnf Tech	Blnf Tech	Telecom Eng	BSc Eng	BSc Eng	Blnf Tech
<b>Students</b>	174	174	174	174	174	174	174	174	174

The study results presented reflect the current situation in the use of ICT by students from domestic and university approaches. Table 2 shows an extract of the questions in the survey and its relation to the parameters to measure of the Internet usage. Regarding access to ICT at the university environment, we found that all students in the sample have access to computer equipment and the Internet at your universities.

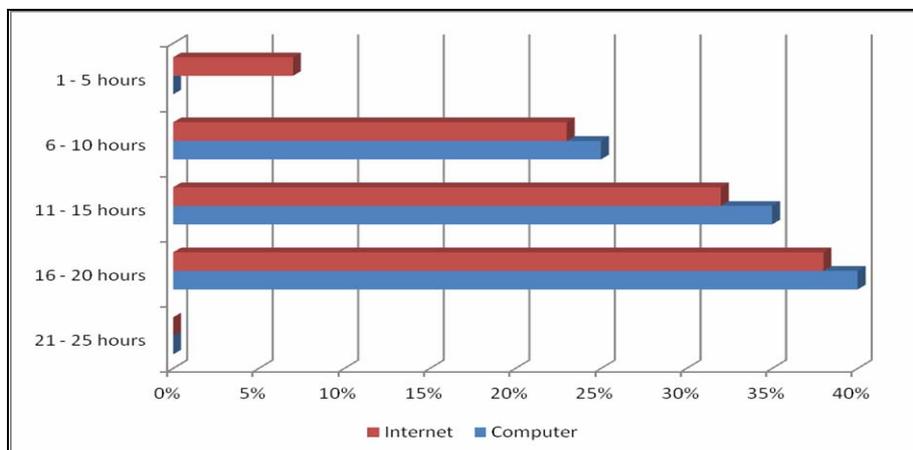
Table 2  
*Extract from the questionnaire applied*

<b>Internet use parameters</b>	<b>Questionnaire items</b>
Frequency of use	How many hours a week you use the computer at home? How many hours a week using the Internet service in your home?
Type of Internet connection	What connection used for Internet service? What is the speed of internet service you use in your home?
Online activities	What type of information do you look on the Internet from home? What is the main purpose of the Internet usage at home?

Figure 4 shows the number of hours that IT students dedicated both to Internet usage as use of computers at campus. On one hand, the 25% of students used computers from 6 to 10 hours, 35% of students did it from 11 to 15 hours and the remaining 40% from 16 to 20 hours by week. The hours of use of computer equipment is showed both for educational approach as for browsing the Internet. On the other hand, the 7% used the Internet service from 1 to 5 hours, 23% used it from 6 to 10 hours, 32% of students surveyed used the Internet access from 11 to 15 hours, and the 38% of students use the Internet service from 16 to 20 hours by week.

Considering that all students have access to the Internet within their university, one of the parameters to be evaluated is the purpose of using Internet services. The study results shows that 75% of the students of the sample have as main objective the access to social networks, email services and interactive communication applications (chat), and only 25% use it primarily for educational or research. It is noteworthy that 5% of the total sample performs e-commerce occasionally and 15% carried out visits to news sites. Based on that ICTs facilitate access to information allowing participation both in social issues as political aspects (Shirazi et al., 2010), within the sample of students identified that IT does not participate and/or use the Internet to perform consultations related to e-health and e-government.

Figure 4  
*Frequency of use of computers and Internet access within the university campus*



Source: Developed by the authors

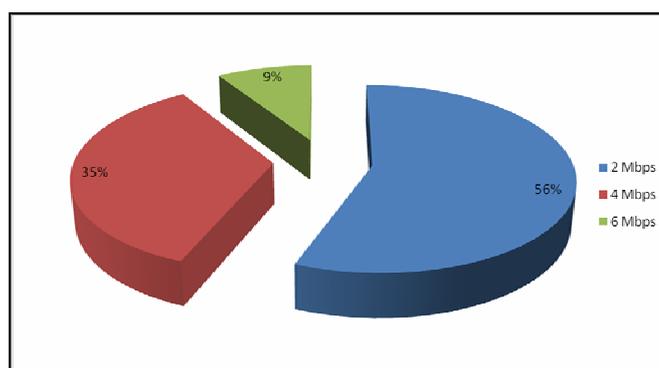
Furthermore, the students who formed the study at the 45% have Internet service at home, through xDSL broadband connection. Figure 5 shows the Internet access

broadband classified by connection speed. The 56% surfing on the Internet with speeds up to 2 Mbps, 35% of the connections have speeds up to 4 Mbps, and 9% have a broadband link up to 6 Mbps. The 43% of the connections are through a USB or Ethernet cable between the computer and the modem/router, and the 57% of the connections are wireless between the computer and the modem.

Another indicator evaluated in the present study is the time (frequency of use / hours of use) that students use the computer and Internet at home, considering that 49% of students in the sample have access to a computer in their homes. Figure 6 shows that 20% of students use the computer from 6 to 10 hours, 36% of students did it from 11 to 15 hours, 34% use the computer equipment from 16 to 20 hours, and the 10% use the computers from 21 to 25 hours by week. With respect to the frequency of use of the Internet service, 4% of students accessed 1 to 5 hours, 23% from 6 to 10 hours, 34% use it from 11 to 15 hours, 30% use from 16 to 20 hours, and 9% of students use it from 21 to 25 hours a week.

In this case study of IT university students identified that the main purpose of Internet usage by students are communication and entertainment, as most of them focus on the use of Internet services as social networks (such as *facebook* and *twitter*), chats, blogs, wikis and email. A smaller percentage of students use the Internet service to support academic and research tasks. On the one hand, this behavior can be caused by the low level of implementation and limited use of tools based on Internet services, oriented teaching-learning process, by educational institutions (Duart et al., 2008; Castaño-Muñoz, 2010). On the other hand this behavior can also be caused by the environment in which in which university students develop themselves today.

Figure 5  
Connection speed to Internet used by the university students in their homes



Source: Developed by the authors

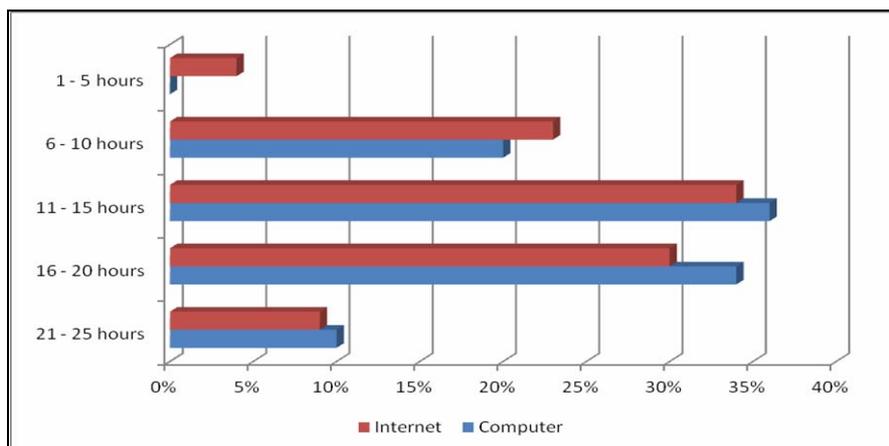
#### 4. Mobile telephony, the immediate future of Internet access

The use of ICT services, such as mobile telephony and the Internet, continues growing up around the world (ITU, 2010). This has been driven by the development and refinement of various technological resources that allow access to information in an efficient and immediate.

Consequently, the sector of mobile broadband has evolved rapidly because of its widespread presence feature, new service plans offered, and flexible payment terms. Therefore, the demand for access to high-speed mobile Internet has increased, and this increases the number of Internet users. This is presented both in the developed countries as in developing countries, despite the economic variables that might influence the generation and utilization of such resources (Ramirez and Burgos, 2010).

The use of mobile phones and the Internet has been increased significantly over the past three years in Mexico. However, participation in the Internet continues to be low by OECD standards (World Economic Forum, 2009). In Mexico the offer for mobile broadband has become an engine of growth for the Internet access service, as it facilitates the deployment of communication networks in remote areas, where there is usually no other connectivity (CEPAL, 2010), allowing more citizens to access the benefits of ICT.

Figure 6  
*Frequency of use of computers and the Internet by university students in their homes*



Source: Developed by the authors

Mobile telephony is the ICT segment which will continue increasing, moreover the number of active mobile phones will rise, exceeding the 870 mobile phones per 1,000 people in Mexico (Everis, 2011), of which a significant percentage will include plans of data to Internet access.

## 5. Conclusions

Nowadays, the optimal implementation of ICT in all areas is an essential requirement to participate in a global increasingly dependent society on technology. ICT is a key element in the information society, therefore, those communities promoting the development of its infrastructure, and adequate preparation to use them efficiently, will have a great capacity of decision and influence in building the knowledge society. In this paper has examined computer and Internet adoption in México based on a nationwide survey of individuals/homes by INEGI in 2010. The result analysis shows that age of user, socioeconomic status, related to lifestyle and annual income of the inhabitants of the country, are the important drivers for adoption and Internet usage.

Furthermore, in the case study presented, which is integrated by students in IT careers, the result analysis indicate that university students use the Internet mainly for entertainment and communication, considerably exceeding the educational or research purposes, adverse situation if they are to reduce the digital divide. When the university institutions engage students in generating knowledge through appropriate strategies and leveraging resources based on ICT services, there will be a larger possibility of closing the digital divide, thereby increasing the opportunities for development and improvement.

Moreover, in recent years significant progress has been achieved in terms of equipment and access to ICT services, which has reduced somewhat the digital divide. Results of several studies forecast that mobile phones will overtake telephone fixed-line, increasing the number of Internet users through mobile broadband network. However, the challenge is to overcome regarding the purpose of use of the Internet.

Finally, important factors reducing the digital divide variables are: capacity development and skills required to use ICT, the intensity of use of the integrated resources in technology, and the purpose of use of the Internet by individuals; is the increasing involvement of multidisciplinary groups in public policy to ensure that a greater number of research lines and knowledge generation (research and development, R+D) in the field of ICT, in order to certify their effectiveness, from the viewpoints economic, social and cultural.

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# SOCIAL POLICIES OF INCLUSION OF THE PEOPLE WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES IN ROMANIA – SOCIAL DIAGNOSIS

Ionela IONESCU<sup>1</sup>

*Abstract: The paper aims to debate this particularly complex phenomenon, aims to be a social diagnosis of the social policies for the people with disabilities from Romania. After a brief review of the concepts and relevance of some sociological theories on the disability as social problems, of the special character of the needs of the people with disabilities, we make a social diagnosis of this problem. For a better understanding of the topic we will present the parts involved in this process, the factors contributing to the social reintegration of the people with disabilities, the principles governing the policies for the social reintegration of the people with disabilities, we will show the current statistics, the legal framework of this problem, the causes and effects of the exclusion of the people with disabilities and the dynamics and running strategies. For the truly disadvantaged people with disabilities, the measures of social protection seem to be insufficient.*

*Keywords: people with disabilities, handicap, social policies, social diagnosis, discrimination, social inclusion*

## **1. Conceptual and theoretic framework regarding the people with disabilities**

### **1.1. Conceptual delimitations, definitions**

In Romania we often use the term of handicap; the handicap makes reference to social disadvantages and to unequal opportunities. Most often it is associated to

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physical disability, and the people with physical disabilities must be also perceived in Romania as ordinary people who have some difficulties to move.

The term of handicap comes from English and it refers to the sports area and it initially designed the intended reduction of the capacity of a competitor during a competition with the purpose to increase the chances of the other competitor. The handicap is a *“disadvantage which a particular person has due to infirmity (deficiency) or incapacity”* (Zamfir, C., Vlăsceanu, L., 1993, p. 276). The systemic definition of the handicap started towards the end of the 1970s and it was due to the influence of the international organisations of the people with handicap.

Many researchers attempted to give a definition, as scrupulous as possible, one of them being Philip Wood who identified three concepts, concepts which have been accepted by the World Health Organisation. These concepts aim to state additionally some modalities to classify the handicap, but they mainly make reference to the state of normality which a person with disabilities should enjoy. The handicap, as seen by Philip Wood, may be the *“reduction, lack of loss of the aptitude to perform an activity under conditions that are considered normal for a human being”*, or the *“disadvantage characteristic to a person due to a deficiency or disability which prevents it from performing totally or partially the tasks which that person considers as normal”* (Manea, L., 2008, p. 8). Other syntagms were proposed besides these definitions, such as “people with special needs” or “people with different abilities”, but these expressions have been rejected because they lead to the discrimination of the group.

The situation of “person with handicap” appears due to the *“correlation between the deficiency of the organic systems, the lower physical or psychic capacities and the obstacles met within the living environment of the parson. The pathological process acts at the organic level determining the appearance of a deficiency. The incapacity is different from the handicap by the social aspect, because the handicap appears at the people with incapacity which are confronted with cultural, architectural or social barriers which reduce their accessibility”* (Stoenescu, C., Teodorescu, L., Mihăescu, O., 2003, p. 39)

The term of handicap is rather ambiguous because it is sometimes used only in the field of sports, so that it was necessary to introduce another term, disability, which makes reference to the decrease of ability. Because it had no correspondent in Romania, we used the term of invalidity but it was increasingly contested because it would mean the lack of work capacity, which is arguable because a person immobilized in a wheel chair is not necessarily lacking the capacity for intellectual work.

In Romania, the handicap can be defined as the disadvantage of a person because of infirmity or disability that might prevent it to meet totally or partially the tasks

considered as normal for that person in relation with the age, gender and different cultural and social factors. (Manea, L. in Pop, L., 2002, p. 357).

In documents of reference, the word handicap was replaced gradually by the term of "disability". Disability is a generic term used for disturbances/deficiencies, limited activity and restriction of participation, so that "*disability is the general term for the significant loss or deviation of the functions or structures of the organism, for the difficulty of the individual in performing activities and for the problems met by involving is situations of life*"<sup>1</sup>. This definition is given according to the International Classification of the Functioning, Disability and Health and it highlights the negative aspects of the interaction between the individual and a state of fact.

As of November 11, 2001, Romania ratified the *Convention for the rights of the people with disabilities*, by adopting Law 221/2001 and by designing ANPH<sup>2</sup> as coordinating authority for the implementation of the Convention in Romania. According to the provision of the ratified convention, the **people with disabilities** are "*people with long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensorial deficiency which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder the full and actual participation of the people in society, under conditions of equality with the others*"<sup>3</sup>.

In the European space, the person with disabilities is that person with physical limitations which cannot perform normal activities, but disability is a problem of the society and it is not seen as a personal problem. The whole society must function and adapt in order to receive the people with disabilities in all spheres of the normal life.

In the Romanian legislation, law 448/2006 regarding the protection and promotion of the rights of the people with handicap, uses the term of **people with handicap**. The people with handicap are those "*people whom the social environment, not adapted to their physical, sensorial, psychic, mental and/or associated deficiencies, prevents completely or limits their access with equal opportunity to the life of society, thus*

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection, (2005), decision 1175 of September 29, 2005 regarding the approval of the National strategy for the protection, integration and social inclusion of the people with handicap in 2006–2013, <http://www.mmuncii.ro/pub/imagemanager/images/file/Legislatie/HOTARARI-DE-GUVERN/HG1175-2005.pdf>, accessed on 4 May 2012.

<sup>2</sup> ANPH is the abbreviation of the National Authority for the People with Handicap, authority which is currently restructured as the „ General Directorate for the Protection of the People with Handicap”

<sup>3</sup> UN convention on the rights of the people with disabilities. Article 1, paragraph 2.

*requiring protection measures in support of the social integration and inclusion*".<sup>1</sup> According to the same law there are four levels of handicap (slight, medium, strong and serious) and ten types of handicap (physic, visual, hearing, deaf-mute, somatic, mental, psychic, HIV AIDS, associated, rare diseases).

However, the concept of **person with disabilities** will be defined only in 2011 in the Romanian legislation, when Law 292/2011 of the social work entered in force. This law assumed entirely the definition from the convention, the people with disabilities being those "*people with long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensorial deficiency which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder the full and actual participation of the people in society, under conditions of equality with the others*".<sup>2</sup>

We also need to define the term of social inclusion, process which tries to provide the support for the achievement of everyone's potential, irrespective of its experience or life circumstances. We are referring here mainly, but no only, to material inclusion and to employment. The inclusion needs to be, however, at all levels of life, by reducing inequality and increasing social cohesion. The problem of the people with disabilities can be alleviated or even solved through the effort of the people active in the social, political, business, science, culture fields. According to the acting Romanian legislation, the process of **social inclusion** is the "*assembly of multidimensional measures and actions from the fields of social protection, workforce employment, dwelling, education. Health, information-communication, mobility, security, justice and culture, aiming to control social exclusion and to ensure the active participation of the people to all the economic, social, cultural and political aspects of the society*".<sup>3</sup>

The social policies are those activities "*conducted through the mediation of the state (strategies, programs, projects, institutions, actions, legislation), which influence the welfare of the individual, of the family or community within a society*" (Preda, M., 2002, p. 15).

The inequity of the access to basic social services, in relation with the other individuals, makes possible an exponential increase of the risk of exclusion among the people with disabilities, so that directly, the poor people are even more disadvantaged than those having higher material means. The term of "social exclusion" is increasingly frequent preferred to the classical term of "poverty" to

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<sup>1</sup> Law no. 448 of December 6, 2006 regarding the protection and promotion of the rights of the people with disabilities, Article 2, paragraph 1, [http://www.prestatiosociale.ro/legi/Legea\\_448\\_2006.pdf](http://www.prestatiosociale.ro/legi/Legea_448_2006.pdf), accessed on May 3, 2012

<sup>2</sup> Law 292/2011 of social work, Article 6, paragraph aa, [http://www.legestart.ro/Legea-292-2011-a-asistentei-sociale-\(NTk3Mjk4\).htm](http://www.legestart.ro/Legea-292-2011-a-asistentei-sociale-(NTk3Mjk4).htm), accessed on May 3, 2012.

<sup>3</sup> Law 292/2011 of social work, Article 6, paragraph cc, [http://www.legestart.ro/Legea-292-2011-a-asistentei-sociale-\(NTk3Mjk4\).htm](http://www.legestart.ro/Legea-292-2011-a-asistentei-sociale-(NTk3Mjk4).htm), accessed on May 3, 2012.

describe one of the most serious social problems confronting us. The syntagma “measures to control poverty” has also been gradually replaced by the “promotion of social inclusion. (Zamfir, E., Pedra, M., Dan, A., 2004, p. 40)

## **1.2. Relevance of some sociological theories in the disability/handicap as social problem**

There is no doubt regarding the social relevance and we need to see whether there also are social theories properly developed in this field. More or less elaborately, the sociologic elements are included in the social policies, in the social relations towards the people with disabilities, in practices and programs. Following is the illustration of some sociological perspective on this field.

A first perspective, the normative perspective illustrated by M. Faucault (in Manea, L., 2000, p. 61), identifies two procedures available for the development of the social sciences: the “system” – which means the *definition of a finite and rather limited assembly of features whose constants and variations will be studied in all the selected individuals* - and the “method” – which presumes *making total comparisons within empirically formed groups, in which the number of similarities is manifestly so high, that the enumeration of differences will readily be visible; thus, the identities and distinctions will be determined*. Through the prism of this perspective we can understand the phenomenon of disability by using the comparative method, relating an actual situation, characteristic to an individual, to a continuum put on a scale from “normal” to “pathologic” (problems appeared in the definition of the concepts of “normal” and “pathologic”).

Another perspective is that illustrated by the conception of E. Durkheim (in Manea, L., 2008, pp. 43-44), represented by the deviation from the normal, interpretation of the difference. This is also a normative perspective which starts from the distinction between the two categories of “normal” facts (those which as they should be) and of “pathologic” facts (which should be different from what they actually are, disease being one of the pathological states) which have several limits related to the processes of evolution and adaptation. One of the features of the social fact is represented by the *exterior constraint on the individual by those general manners of action*, which shows that disability belongs to this category because it has own existence independent of its individual manifestations. Due to the technology which is continuously changing, the features regarding adaptability also change, which increase the possibilities to support the access of the people with disabilities to the labour market.

The structural-functionalist perspective gives a central role to the concepts of “status” (position of a person within a social system) and “role” (expectations of the other

people from the particular person). These concepts have been expanded by Parsons T. and Merton R.K. (in Manea, L., 2000, p. 70), who fundamented the hierarchy and differentiation of the people in society (social structure) on these very concepts. A form of deviance analysed by Parson (in Manea, L., 2000, p. 71) appears by the *“deformation of the normal social roles, which requires the development of control mechanisms within the different social systems”*. Disease is not seen just a disturbance of the biological organism but also as a disturbance of the “normal” social roles. Thus, disability acquires an acceptation of social phenomenon, the disability as deviant form becomes active both within the social context and at the level of the social interaction, by relating the particular person to all the expectations presumed by the role.

The ethno-methodological perspective, whose father is Garfinkel H. (Zamfir, C., Vlăsceanu, L., 1993, p. 221-222), *“aims to study the methods, the subjective strategies (shared) on the basis of which the members of the human collectivities act and interact in the unfolding (production and reproduction) of the quotidian contexts and activities. The handicap is a disadvantage manifested in the routine of the daily life”*. Activities which are utterly common for any human being (communication, mobility, self-service) are difficult or impossible to be conducted by the people with disabilities which are thus placed in a state of disadvantage.

### **1.3. Special character of the people with disabilities**

The psychologist Abraham Maslow (in Baldwin, S., 1985, p. 43) developed a hierarchy of the human necessities after setting their typology. He considered that necessity was the condition for a proper functioning of the human system and divided the needs in five categories: necessities of subsistence (biological and social), necessities of security, necessities of love and acceptance, necessities of esteem and social status, necessities of updating (Maslow introduced here the notion of human development – the human being needs continuous improvement, creating development). The individual cannot focus simultaneously on meeting all his/her needs; the functional limitations make him/her focus the efforts on meeting a group of necessities, postponing the ones which are less vital.

Looking through the prism of the people with disabilities, their needs and necessities are determined by the specificity of their existence, by the limitations which the particular individual has in relation with the environment, with the attitudes of the other people towards his/her deficiency, by the attitude of the particular individual towards the other people. The interaction with the environment produces those special needs, which are not qualities of the individual, rather social constructs.

The special needs of the people with disabilities refer mainly to care, communication, movement, education, finding a job and income. (Zamfir, E., Zamfir, C., 1995, p.

315). The characteristics of the people with disabilities yield their necessities in various situations among which: personal autonomy, professional activity, earning a living, social relations, to communicate and to receive communications, to establish relations, family relations, the need to establish own family. (Albu, S., Albu, C., 2000, p. 135).

All the people with disabilities are able to grow, learn and develop irrespective of the severity of the disability, in accordance with their potential. Consequently, the needs of the people with disabilities are primarily personal needs, needs of human beings, normal needs adapted to individual situations (Gherguț, A., 2001, p. 26).

We need to know the needs of the people with disabilities in order to adapt the environment to the needs of these people.

## **2. Social diagnosis**

The diagnosis must take into account both the characteristics of the social exclusion, and those that will support the efforts to control social exclusion.

### **2.1. Presentation of the involved parts**

The people with disabilities enjoy special protection, according to article 50 from the Constitution of Romania, so that the state is the one which “ensures the accomplishment of a national policy of equal opportunity, prevention and treatment of the disability, with the purpose to ensure the actual participation of the people with disabilities to the life of the community, while observing the rights and duties of the parents and tutors”.

The person with disabilities is that person who runs the risk of remaining isolated within its own community and from the “others”. The psychological and sociological researches show the “impossibility to improve the individual resources of a person if that person lacks the stimulating contact with other people.”(Stoenescu, C., Teodorescu, L., Mihăescu, O., 2003, p. 3)

The institutions of social protection are some kind of support service which provide assistance, care, treatment, recovery, rehabilitation, professional guidance and formation of the people with disabilities.<sup>1</sup> Society should provide the free access of the people with disabilities to the existing goods and services. We can thus avoid the isolation of the individual from the society and we may promote the idea of social reintegration.

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<sup>1</sup> Official Bulletin, 1999, Emergency Ordinance of the Government no. 102/1999, regarding the special protection and the employment of the people with disabilities.

Currently, the social work and the special protection of the people with disabilities are provided by the governmental bodies coordinated by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection. According to article 34, paragraph 1 from Law 448/2006, the social services intended for the adult people with disabilities are coordinated by the General Directorate Protection of the People with Disabilities (DGPPH). The services delivered by the directorate can be provided both at home (special care at home, mobile team, personal assistant) and within the community (professional personal assistant), within day-care centres and in public, private or public-private residential centres. The people with disabilities are evaluated by the Higher Commission of Evaluation of the Adult People with Disabilities working within DGASPC (General Directorate for Social Work and Child Protection).

While in most EU countries the people with disabilities have some facilities, both in society and at the place of work, in Romania this rarely happens because most times the people with a disability don't have a job. The General Directorate Protection of the People with Disabilities, the central and local public authorities have to ensure the conditions for the integration and social inclusion of the people with disabilities.

The General Directorate Protection of the People with Disabilities and DGASPC monitor and check whether the rights of the people with disabilities are observed and to this end they may conclude partnerships with non-governmental organisations of the people with disabilities.

At the level of the European Union, the agency most involved in the process of social inclusion is the European Commission through the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, which administers the European Social Fund (ESF) whose goal is to promote social inclusion within the EU. By social inclusion we should understand the development of the capacities and opportunities through European programs with economic, social, psychological and political directions.

## **2.2. Factors contributing to the social integration of the people with disabilities**

An incapacitated person can meet two types of obstacles: physical (impossible access to the physical environment which prevents the people with serious disabilities to go out in society) and social obstacles (the people with disabilities are excluded from the labour market). The representation of the western-democratic society based on individual success supported by personal effort leads inevitably to the exclusion of the people with disabilities. The social exclusion is due particularly to the low abilities of the people with disabilities to compete equally with other people. The following two factors have to be met for a good social reintegration of the people with disabilities: information and participation, the latter one being seen as the

*“subjective involvement by attitudes, aspirations, knowledge, convictions, anticipations, involvement in a system of social relations “<sup>1</sup>*

Another factor of reintegration is represented by legislation, which can be set in several ways: by decreeing a special legislation which approaches exclusively the problems of the people with deficiencies; by including the problems of the people with deficiencies in special paragraphs within the law; by mentioning clearly the people with deficiencies in the texts serving to interpret the existing legislation.

The governmental involvement is another factor by which reintegration must be accomplished through the initiation and planning at the national level of the policies for the protection of the people with disabilities, which have to be included in the general plans of development; programs that have to be evaluated periodically and systematically, which to adopt general criteria and specific terminology.

A last important factor is education, for which we cannot speak of a systematic vision, although the reform is formulated towards education for all and for everyone. Although the policies stipulate the need for educational integration of all the children, the reality shows that there still are a lot of children with disabilities left outside the educational system, while the special schools are not sufficiently prepared to meet the educational necessities of the children with severe and profound disabilities. Many of the boarding schools for this segment were transformed into placement centres because many of the adult people with disabilities were abandoned children.

### **2.3. Principles governing the policies for the social reintegration of the people with disabilities**

The regulation for organization and functioning of the special education sets the 7 basic principles for the special education. The first principle is the prevention of deficiencies, for which the following measures have been taken: TV broadcasts providing information on the risks, periodical medical examinations in schools, early detection of deficiencies; medical examinations for the prevention of infectious diseases; implementing work safety measures to prevent work accidents. Another principle is the early educational intervention which is essential because it allows increasing the efficiency of the process of readaptation of the people with special needs (Albu, S., Albu, C., 2000, p. 22)

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<sup>1</sup> Centre for Resources and Information for Social Professions (CRIPS), Study *“Major elements for the evaluation of the level of social integration of the people with disabilities”* conducted by the Ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family, National Authority for the People with Disabilities, [www.crips.ro](http://www.crips.ro), accessed on 12.05.2012.

A third principle is the global, individualized approach of the children with special needs which presumes *observing the dignity of each human being; in all situations they must receive protection and social security; they must have the possibility to decide and choose in full awareness the actions to be taken; they must have optimal conditions for intimate life, which must be encouraged and respected; they must show autonomy in behaviour and must develop a positive self-image; all actions to be performed must take into consideration the individual particularities of each person, as well as the progress achieved up to that moment* (Ținică, S., 2004, p. 34).

The principle of the equal rights and opportunity must ensure that all individual necessities are met and that all social obstacles are eliminated. According to UN, there are four principles regarding the equal opportunities: the people with disabilities must remain within their community of origin and they must lead an ordinary life, with support, if needed; the people with disabilities must be involved in decision-making both at the level of the general problems of the communities, and at the particular level of the specific problems pertaining to the people with special needs. The people with disabilities must be supported and must receive the due assistance within the usual educational, health care and social work structures. At the same time, the people with disabilities must be involved actively in the social and economic development of the community to which they belong. The children with physical disabilities must learn in ordinary schools, next to healthy children. By ensuring quality education, the people with disabilities will get used to his/her infirmity and might integrate better in the community. All this is possible by materializing the principle of support services and structures. The principle of cooperation and partnership presumes the international cooperation regarding the equal opportunity policies for the people with disabilities. All UN member states participate in the development of the policies addressing the people with disabilities.

#### **2.4. Situation of the people with disabilities: statistics**

The access to statistics on the people with disabilities is more difficult after ANPH website was closed down which means that we don't have any more access to ANPH data bases.

According to the Statistical Bulletin<sup>1</sup> for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, issued by the General Directorate Protection of the People with Disabilities within the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection, on December 31, 2011, there were 689,576 people with disabilities, of which 97.5% are not institutionalised and 2.5% are

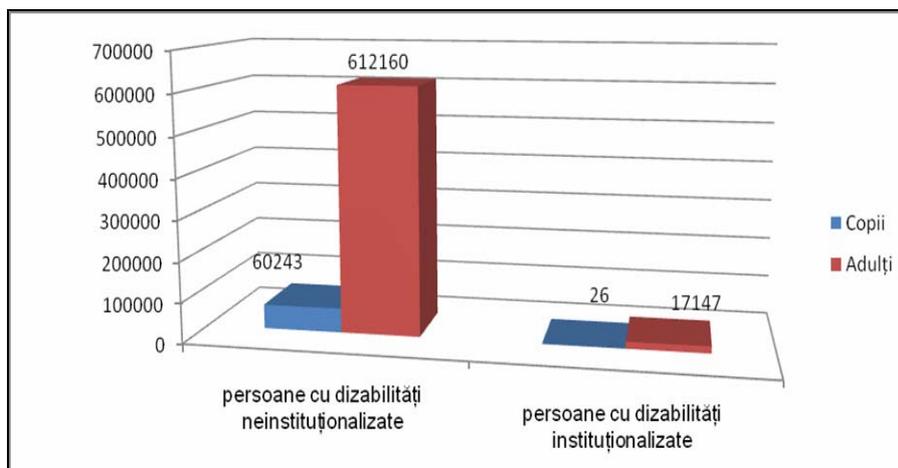
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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection, Statistical Bulletin, 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2011, <http://www.mmuncii.ro/pub/imagemanager/images/file/Statistica/Buletin%20statistic/2011/2011%20DGPPH.pdf>, accessed on 10 May 2012.

institutionalised; 60,269 are children and 629,307 are adult people. Chart 1 shows that of all the institutionalised persons with disabilities, 26 are children and the other 17,174 are adult people.

Chart 1

*Number of people with disabilities on December 31, 2011*



Source: Statistic Bulletin 2011<sup>1</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, issued by DGPPH.

According to the same statistical bulletin, the number of public institutions of social work for the adult people with disabilities on December 31, 2011, was 382, of which 324 residential and 58 non-residential – day-care. The Centres for Care and Assistance (CIA) account for 1/3 of the residential institutions and they accommodate 6,542 people with disabilities, 38.1% of the total number of institutionalised persons. In terms of regions of development, Muntenia South is on top, with 113,950 people with disabilities, which gives a rate of 3.5 people with disabilities for 100 inhabitants, calculated at the level of the entire country.

<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection, Statistical Bulletin, 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2011, <http://www.mmuncii.ro/pub/imagemanager/images/file/Statistica/Buletin%20statistic/2011/2011%20DGPPH.pdf>, accessed on 10 May 2012.

Table 1  
People with disabilities by type of disability

	Type of disability										
	Physic	Somatic	Hearing	Visual	Mental	Psychic	Associated	HIV/AIDS	Rare diseases	Deaf-mute	Social
<b>Total</b>	136,423	143,157	23,150	112,735	113,658	89,730	58,496	5,785	5,358	358	726
Non-institution alised people	135,463	142,768	23,027	112,243	104,561	85,606	57,302	5,732	5,348	353	0
Institution alised people	960	389	123	492	9,097	4,124	1,194	53	10	5	726

Source: County and Bucharest district General Directorates for Social Work and Child Protection in Statistical Bulletin 2011<sup>1</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, issued by DGPPH

As seen in Table 1, the most people with disabilities have physical and somatic disturbances. The people with mental and psychic disability are predisposed to institutionalisation, because of the 17,173 institutionalised people with disabilities, 13,221 people have psychic and mental disabilities. The people with a slight disability, social, also have a high rate of institutionalization (726 people).

The payment for the social work for the people with disabilities was covered in 2011 from the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection, with 24.7% of the total amount for the social programs financed by MMFPS. JIM 2005 data on the education of the people with disabilities show that in the school year 2003/2004, the number of children with special educational needs included in special schools was 27,299, compared to 11,493 children included in schools with integrating approach.<sup>2</sup> The last ANPH report shows that 343 county authorities and public institutions have been inspected, of which adapted authorities and public institutions – 74; authorities and public institutions sanctioned with fines – 34 (of which 30 fined with 3,000 lei and 4 fined with 6,000 lei); authorities and public institutions sanctioned with admonishment

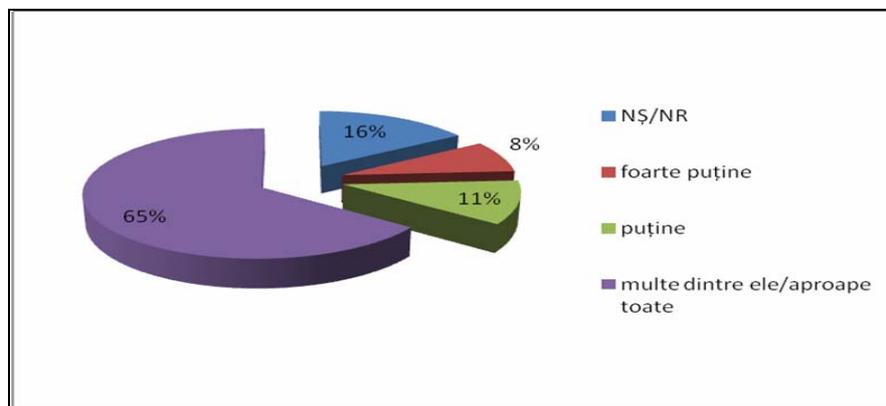
<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection, Statistical Bulletin, 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2011, <http://www.mmuncii.ro/pub/imagmanager/images/file/Statistica/Buletin%20statistic/2011/2011%20DGPPH.pdf>, accessed on 10 May 2012.

<sup>2</sup> JIM 2005(Joint Inclusion Memorandum)

– 77; authorities and public institutions which have projects of adaptation or the works are in progress – 133; authorities and public institutions which function in buildings of patrimony which are claimed or litigious – 9<sup>1</sup>. PUB+ study conducted by the Centre of Urban and Regional Sociology conducted on 199 subjects in June-September 2004, revealed the public attitude of the authorities and citizens towards the people with disabilities, as well the evaluation of the latter about the efforts displayed by the relevant authorities

Chart 2

*Perception about the number of public utility buildings inaccessible to the people with mobility impairment*



Source: PUB+ study conducted by CURS in 8 geographical regions<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> General inspection report on the accomplishment of adaptations specific for the people with disabilities stipulated by Law 448/2006 regarding the protection and promotion of the rights of the people with disability, according to norm NP051/2001. see [www.anph.ro](http://www.anph.ro) accessed on 9.06.2011

<sup>2</sup> Centre for Urban and Regional Sociology 2004 *Accessibility to public utility buildings for urban citizens with mobility impairments. Socio-economic comparative studies*, Bucharest.

Table 2

*Perception of the people with disabilities about the level of accessibility to the public space. The table below mentions the reasons why the buildings of public utility are evaluated as inaccessible*

(Question: From your experience or information, are there in the town where you live buildings of public utility ...?)

	Many/ almost all	Few	Very few/ almost	NS/ NR
With no ramps	78%	7%	3%	12%
With no chairs/benches for people with disabilities	75%	8%	4%	14%
Toilets not adapted	74%	6%	4%	16%
No parking lots for people with disabilities	68%	9%	5%	19%
Narrow corridors, passages, with no handles	67%	10%	8%	15%
Stairs not adapted	65%	8%	7%	20%
Slippery floors	65%	10%	9%	16%
Office desk too high/not adapted	65%	12%	5%	18%
No pedestrian passage in front of the building	63%	10%	6%	21%
No room in the elevator	62%	14%	9%	16%
Public phones placed too high	59%	15%	12%	15%
No space to enter the building	58%	15%	10%	18%
Doors and lockers placed too high	52%	15%	19%	14%
Differences of level at the same floor	52%	13%	8%	27%

Source: *PUB+ study conducted by CURS in 8 geographical regions, on 199 subjects, in June-September<sup>1</sup>*

Chart 2 and Table 2 show the perception which the people with mobility impairment have on the accessibility of the public utility buildings. The data show that the authorities didn't accomplish their tasks in this field. The evaluation of 401 objectives<sup>2</sup>, showed that just 88 public utility buildings have partial accessibility and

<sup>1</sup> Centre for Urban and Regional Sociology 2004 *Accessibility to public utility buildings for urban citizens with mobility impairments. Socio-economic comparative studies*, Bucharest.

<sup>2</sup> Program „Put yourself in my place!”, 2006, Foundation for an Open Society, with the support of the Romanian National Organization of the People with Handicap and of other six local organisations, [http://www.soros.ro/ro/comunicate\\_detaliu.php?comunicat=19](http://www.soros.ro/ro/comunicate_detaliu.php?comunicat=19), accessed on 14.05.2012

75 have large accessibility, but no one has full accessibility. The legal provisions regarding the sanctions are not stimulating the inactivity noticed so far.

Following are data on employment/formation/professional counselling according to the 2011 ANOFM (National Agency for Labour Force Employment) Report of activity. According to this report, 809 unemployed people with disabilities seeking a job have been counselled regarding their choice of employment in the following professions: unskilled workers, janitor, accountant, housekeeper, PC operator, economist, shop assistant, guardian, carpenter, sales person.<sup>1</sup>

## **2.5. Causes and effects of the social exclusion of the people with disabilities**

### *2.5.1. Making accessible the public utility institutions and spaces*

In order to achieve a higher rate of attendance of the usual education, professional training, employment and participation in the social life, the public utility institutions and spaces must be rendered accessible. The establishment of accessibilities for the surrounding environment is very important for achieving the equal opportunity principle between the people with disabilities and the normal people. This paper will attempt to solve this problem, as the current data show the lack of efficiency of the authorities in this respect.

Decree 1342 of December 4, 2006, promulgated the new Law on the protection and promotion of the rights of the people with disabilities, which stipulated changes in the terms set to make the public utility buildings and space accessible to the people with disabilities. According to this decree, by March 31 2007, all taxi operators have to provide at least one car fitted for the transportation of the people with disabilities using wheel chairs; the pedestrian crossings from the public streets and roads must be adapted according to the legal provisions, including tactile pavement; sound and visual signals have to be mounted at the intersection with heavy traffic. The hotel owners have the following obligations: they must adapt at least one room to host people with disabilities using wheel chairs; they must mark by tactile pavement or carpets the entrance to the hotel and the reception desk, they must have a tactile map of the building and elevators with tactile signs. The public authorities must: make accessible their websites in order to make their electronic documents accessible to the people with visual and mental disability; all public services must use pictograms; the telephones with telefax and teletext must be adapted for the people with hearing disability. By December 31, 2010, the authorities of the local public administration must take the proper measures in order to ensure the unimpeded

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.anofm.ro/files/Raport%20de%20activitate%20al%20ANOFM%20pentru%20anul%202011.pdf>.

access of the people with disability to the means of local public transportation; at least one railway car and the main railway stations will have to be adapted to allow the access of the people with disabilities using wheel chairs; the routes to the embarking platforms, to the ticket offices or to other utilities have to be marked by contrasting tactile pavement.<sup>1</sup>

So far, there is no evaluation of these terms, although a mere observation may show that many deadlines were not met.

Although the Romanian legislation is in agreement with the community acquis, several underlying causes have been identified for this problem. A first cause, the lack of proper sanctions in order to motivate the institutions to make their institutions accessible. Presently, the level of the fines makes the sanctioned institutions prefer to pay these fines and hold back making the proper works needed to make their institutions accessible. The data explained above show clearly that the lack of action characterizes all the levels with prerogatives in this field Table 2 also shows more than relevantly the negative evaluation of the people with disabilities regarding the works undertook so far.

Another cause is the lack of funds allocated to the institutions for these works. The authorities with competencies in this field clearly have insufficient funds, or at least this is what can be noticed. Although Romania benefits of many external sources of financing, the poor management or the lack of trained staff tends to be considered as cause of the inefficiency paralysing the entire system. The lack of an institution which to enforce penalties is another cause, although DGPPH has the necessary prerogatives to get control of the situation.

#### *2.5.2. Education of the children with disabilities and the professional education of the people with disabilities*

This section is very important to any society; children are the future and the timely support of the state may prevent the dependency of the future adult on the public system of support, being helped for a normal integration and development within the society. *The special education is organized in agreement with the type of deficiency (mental, hearing, visual, motor and associated) at all levels of the pre-university education. Depending on the type of deficiency, the children included in the special education may use the general curriculum, a slightly adapted curriculum or a special curriculum. The schools, gradually and at different levels, are open to the request for*

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<sup>1</sup> Law 448/2006 regarding the protection and promotion of the rights of the people with disability, Chapter IV, Accessibility,, [http://www.prestatiosociale.ro/legi/Legea\\_448\\_2006.pdf](http://www.prestatiosociale.ro/legi/Legea_448_2006.pdf), accessed on 3 May 2012

*modified method of teaching, changes which appeared with the aim to accomplish integration or inclusion.<sup>1</sup>*

Despite the provided support, some children and young people with special needs do not attend school. Some of them are educated at home by the teachers from the relevant schools, while others participate in courses organized by day-care centres and some of them don't attend any form of education. The services provided in 2004 within the Program for Special Education for the Children with Disabilities (SCINVAL<sup>2</sup>) included services for children rehabilitation and care and food allocation for the target groups.

The deficiency and lack of school education are often interrelated. Due to the lack of access to ordinary education and professional training, or due to the incapacity to maintain the acquired skills, the educational profiles and the aptitudes of the people with disabilities generally are those of the average unemployed people with no disability. The most affected groups consist of the least skilled and least educated people. Many of the people with disabilities from the present time are those which have been confronted with the discriminating system of the 1980 years in terms of access to education and school of the people with disabilities.

### *2.5.3. Exclusion of the people with disabilities from the labour market*

The employment of people with disabilities is a highly debated topic, very sensitive and very controversial all over the world. *The social inclusion of the people with handicap, the facilitation of their access on the labour market and the promotion of an inclusive society ensuring the welfare of this segment of population is another specific objective of the European Social Fund intervention in Romania. The measures of special protection are applied to the people included in different categories of disability after their evaluation by the commissions of expertise appointed by order of the Ministry of Health and Family. The participation on the labour market has several benefits for the people running the risk of social marginalisation because it ensures his/her financial independency and proves that*

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<sup>1</sup> JIM, (Joint Inclusion Memorandum )2005, [http://www.stpne.ro/documente/STRATEGII\\_PROGRAME%20NATIONALE-INTERNATIONALE/Memorandumul%20Comun%20in%20Domeniul%20Incluziunii%20Sociale%20\(JIM\).pdf](http://www.stpne.ro/documente/STRATEGII_PROGRAME%20NATIONALE-INTERNATIONALE/Memorandumul%20Comun%20in%20Domeniul%20Incluziunii%20Sociale%20(JIM).pdf), accessed on 10.05.2012

<sup>2</sup> It operated according to the Government Decision 261/2000 (updated) for the reorganisation of the institutions, hospital sections and of the other units of special child protection within the specialised public services subordinated to the county councils, and according to OUG 56/1994 which updated the expenditure norms to support the children from nurseries, day-care centres and institutions for special education.

*he/she is economically and socially useful.*<sup>1</sup> This objective is accomplished in Romania through various forms of drawing and reintegrating on the labour market the people running the risk of social marginalization and exclusion, as well as the people with disabilities.

The picture is bleak because many of the workshops employing people with disabilities have been closed down, or reduced their production due to budget restrictions. The new jobs that were created concentrated in small informal units which, proportionally, employ less people with disabilities. The managers have often reduced the number of workers with disabilities because of the increasing availability of workers without disabilities<sup>2</sup>.

Many people have been pushed by their economic situation towards badly paid jobs, while the real value of the social benefits lagged behind the true value of the average wages. Because many people with disabilities have special financial needs, the improper social benefits often prevent them from functioning efficiently.

Even the current program of governing has as objective a higher level of employment and the real decrease of the unemployment rate, objective which covers all categories of people, the people with disabilities included. Starting from this fact, among the main objectives set by ANOFM (National Agency for Labour Force Employment) for 2011 are subsidies for the employers hiring people belonging to one of the disadvantaged categories (graduates with disabilities and people with disabilities). The agency also established 20 centres for information, mediation and professional guidance for the people with disabilities. ANOFM supports the employment of these people by assisting the employers which hire this category of people, assistance "granted in order to ensure a sustainable employment of the people with disabilities and in order to create a support network together with other related institutions and organisations". (ANOFM, 2011, p.11)

Many countries encourage the employment of people with disabilities in protected labour, assigning special positions for these people. This meant the creation of protected jobs and of cooperatives (such as we have). They have advantages and disadvantages some of which are more serious in a free market economy.

The employment promoting policies belonged to an integrated system; the main disadvantage of this system is that the workers with disability were often undervalued and put into positions which were reckoned suitable to their type of

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<sup>1</sup> Article on the inclusion of the people with disabilities on the website of the European Social Fund, <http://www.fseromania.ro/incluziune-sociala-fse.html#> accessed on 12.06.2011.

<sup>2</sup> Option of work"- *Employment opportunities for the people with disability in the countries in transition.*- commented translation Nicolo Della-Pupa (1997), with the support of the Foundation for the Development of the Civil Society, p.13

deficiency. Because they have less professional education or training, partly due to the lack of proper facilities, the workers with disabilities are mainly used for semi-skilled handwork. Even those with a better education, which are a minority, tend to see themselves forced to take a job below their technical capabilities, while discrimination functioned more at this local level than at the actual employment. Although they were officially classified as productive workers, employment was rather a matter of social protection by providing jobs to these people.

The people with disabilities often suffer a combination of labour market disadvantages pertaining to age, education and environment.

First, many deficiencies are related to the process of ageing and, in many countries, the older workers, with disabilities, marginalised socially and economically, are compelled to early retirement with too low pensions for a decent living. When this state combines with the lack of school education and of professional training, their perspectives of employment are minimal.

In the past, the economic and political regimes provided financial security and protection to the people with disabilities, particularly to those which had acquired this disability on the job. However, criticisms were formulated to this social protection because it omitted the will of the people with disability to contribute to the development of the community/society and to their welfare, provided they continued to be employed.

The employment of the people with disabilities must be done in agreement with their professional training and according to their physical and intellectual capabilities. Because the labour market offer is low, the authorities prefer a “softer” form than job creation to assist the people with disabilities. *It is not always the case to look at these sick people from a pessimistic perspective. The more they get employed on the free market, the more solid is their recovery.*<sup>1</sup>

Directive 200/78/EC, compulsory for all EU member states, aims the accomplishment of several objectives among which: *ensure conditions for access to employment, to self-employment or to occupation, including selection criteria and recruitment conditions, including promotion; access to all types and to all levels of vocational guidance, vocational training, advanced vocational training; employment and working conditions, including dismissals and pay; membership of, and involvement in, an organisation of workers or employers (such as labour unions).*<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Axon, M., 2007, *The press stigmatise them, while the employers given them „ 0 opportunities“* [http://www.crainou.ro/?module=displaystory&story\\_id=10286&format=html](http://www.crainou.ro/?module=displaystory&story_id=10286&format=html), accessed on 10,06,2011

<sup>2</sup> Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000, establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation. [www.europe.eu](http://www.europe.eu) accessed on 11.06.2007

## 2.6. Dynamics and strategies. Legal and institutional framework

One question raises: *how many people with disabilities have influenced the process of policy development?* There is not an easy question to answer, but the people with disabilities got involved in processes of governing and management and build expertise in advocacy and social campaigns. (Drake, R., 1999, p. 128).

The National Authority for the Disabled People (ANPH) developed the National Strategy 2006-2013 for the protection, integration and social inclusion of the disabled people in Romania. *The purpose of this strategy is to ensure the full exercise of the basic rights and liberties of the disabled people with the view to improve the quality of their life.* The strategy proposes the following main ways to increase employment among the disabled people: *ensure school training for the disabled people; highlight the importance of evaluating their capacities and of their socio-professional abilities; run programs for the professional rehabilitation of the disabled people; the employers may get involved in the development of specific conditions for the disabled people, particularly by adapting the places of work; establishing a permanent communication between the National Agency for Labour Force Employment, DGPPH and the NGOs supporting a market for the goods produced by the disabled people.*

Among the objectives set by HG 197/2006<sup>1</sup>, there have been some national plans whose finality and accomplishment are yet unclear. One of the programs referred to the reorganisation of the old institutions for the disabled people and the establishment of alternative, residential-type services. We cannot know the efficiency of such program which should have helped at least 400 institutionalised people with disabilities lead a better life, because there was no evaluation or monitoring of this program. Another program whose results are yet unknown is that of professional formation for the integration of the disabled people in work, whose goal was to improve the professional training of at least 300 people with disabilities that may be employed.

The Government of Romania aims to improve the situation of the disabled people by implementing the following measures *“the continuous improvement of the quality of life of the people with disabilities and supporting their families; increasing the number of jobs adequate for the disabled people who have working potential; development of residential-type of centres and of alternative centres for the people with mental disability, for the people with psycho-pathologies and for the people with multiple*

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<sup>1</sup> See the appendixes from the Government Decision 197/09 February 2006 approving the programs of national interest for the protection of the disabled people and for the protection of the old people, of the homeless, of the people victims of family violence, as well as the appendixes showing the financing of these programs.

*disorders; access of the disabled people to physical and IT support, to public transportation, to enter public utility buildings.”<sup>1</sup>*

Among the legislative acts, we mention: Law 448/2006 for the protection and promotion of the rights of the disabled people, Decision 268/ April 4, 2007 to approve the methodology of applying Law 448/2006 for the protection and promotion of the rights of the disabled people, Emergency Ordinance 14/2007 of March 3, 2007 modifying and completing Law 448/2006 for the protection and promotion of the rights of the disabled people.

The following legal acts support the inclusion in society of the disabled people: Emergency Ordinance 102/1999 for the special protection at employment of the disabled people; Order 152/1999 regarding the payment of wages for the personal assistants of the people with serious disability; Decision 626/2000 to approve the methodological norms regarding the conditions, rights and duties of the personal assistants of the people with disability; Decision 427/2001 to approve the methodological norms regarding the conditions, rights and duties of the personal assistants of the people with disability; Law 517/2002 rejecting Ordinance 47/2001 which was changing and completing the Emergency Ordinance 102/1999 for the special protection at employment of the disabled people; Law 519/2002 approving the Emergency Ordinance 102/1999 for the special protection at employment of the disabled people; Order 794/2002 approving the manner of payment of the indemnity due to the parents or legal representatives of the child with serious disability and to the adult with serious disability or to his/her legal representative; Order 380/2002 approving the manner of payment of the indemnity due to the legal representatives of the child with serious disability and to the adult with serious disability or to his/her legal representative; Law 343/2004 changing and completing the Emergency Ordinance 102/1999; Law 448/2006.

The legislative framework which established a real system for the protection of the rights of the disabled people was Law 448/2006. The Romanian methodological norms set: the actual manner to grant some rights and to implement the protection measures; the organisation and functioning of the residential centred for the people with disabilities; the way to grant free public urban transportation.

The newest legal act, Law 292/2011 of the social work, stipulates at Article 80, paragraph 91) that *“For the protection and promotion of the rights of the disabled people, the public authorities must include the special needs of this category of persons in all the public policies, strategies and programs of regional, county or local development, as well as in the governmental programs”*.

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<sup>1</sup> Governing program 2012, Chapter 9 Family, child protection and equal treatment, [http://www.gov.ro/prioritatile-anului-2012-br-capitolul-9-familia-protectia-copilului-si-egalitatea-de-sanse\\_\\_1a116016.html](http://www.gov.ro/prioritatile-anului-2012-br-capitolul-9-familia-protectia-copilului-si-egalitatea-de-sanse__1a116016.html), accessed on 10,05,2012.

Even presently, most of the disabled children and adult people are still taken care by the special institutions: schools, hospitals. Therefore, society is not ready to receive most services for these people; given the medical services, the social needs of these people are disregarded.

The analysis of the social policies starts from the domains stipulated in Article 156 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which states that: “*With a view to achieving the objectives of Article 151 and without prejudice to the other provisions of the Treaties, the Commission shall encourage cooperation between the Member States and facilitate the coordination of their action in all social policy fields under this Chapter, particularly in matters relating to employment, labour law and working conditions, basic and advanced vocational training, social security, prevention of occupational accidents and diseases, occupational hygiene, the right of association and collective bargaining between employers and workers.*”<sup>1</sup>

The European Strategy 2010-2020 for the disabled people stated a renewed commitment for a borderless Europe and focuses on the removal of the physical barriers confronting the disabled people. The European Commission has identified 8 main fields of action: “*accessibility, participation, equality, labour force employment, education and formation; social protection, health and external action*”<sup>2</sup>

One of the most important documents of the European Union, the Amsterdam Treaty, states in Article 13, without prejudicing the other provisions of the Treaty and within the limits of the power conferred by it according to the Community, the Council, acting unanimously upon proposal by the Commission and after conferring with the European Parliament, may take appropriate measures to curb discrimination due to gender, race or ethnic affiliation, religion or belief, disability, age, sexual orientation (Hantrais, L., 2000, p.161).

The main ministries with impact on the life of the disabled people are: the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection (through the Directorate-General Protection of the Disabled People); Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports. Another public institution monitoring the rights of the disabled people is the National Council for the Control of Discrimination (CNCD). At the county level, other institutions functioning under the guidance of the national agencies are: the county agencies for Payments and Social Inspection and the county agencies for Labour force Employment. The county Directorate-General for Social Work and Child

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<sup>1</sup> Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, article 156, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:083:0047:0200:RO:PDF>, accesat la data de 8.05.2012.

<sup>2</sup> European Strategy 2010-2020 for the disabled people: renewed commitment for a borderless Europe, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0636:FIN:RO:PDF>, accessed on 9.05.2012

Protection (DGASPC) operates under the tutorship of the county councils, while the Public services for Social Work function within the town halls.

### ***Conclusions***

There is a diffuse consciousness of assuming the problems; the measures are taken by establishing institutions, NGOs; the available funds are not used properly; there is no focus on the efficiency of the social policies because the resources are limited and the problems are huge.

On the background of the general decline of the standard of living, of the costs born by the population, the state (which oriented its measures of social protection particularly towards the contesting or potentially contesting social segments) ignored partially or (sometimes) even completely the most vulnerable people, among whom the disabled people, as well as other categories of citizens who have been seriously affected by transition. Their problems worsen and it is increasingly difficult for the system to solve them so that the people are marginalised, excluded from rights and social participation. The problem of the selective, inequitable generosity of the governing bodies started immediately after the Revolution, and the first measures of social protection taken during the first half of 1990 were distributed inequitably.

The people with disabilities are vulnerably dependent on the social policies, on the institutions and practices on which they have no control at all. The lack of access to higher education prevents many of them from the possibility of acquiring qualifications and skills necessary to leave the status of poverty. Even those who acquire some vocational skill and qualification cannot rely on equal treatment.

The social policies proved sometimes to be inefficient and/or inequitable and also had adverse effects. Two of them are extremely serious: establishment or enlargement of a social subclass, of a “lower class”, of the poor people, marginalised and disadvantaged, which the western literature calls “underclass” and, in tight connection with it, but not only, stronger processes of social exclusion of some social segments flagrantly disadvantaged by the social policies.

Although EU member, Romania doesn't meet the community acquis in terms of making the public utility buildings accessible to the people with motion impairment; the degree of dependency of the disabled people increases year by year; the social integration of the people with disabilities is limited; additional costs to the state budget for supplemental social work (personal social workers for the people with motion impairment, maintaining some people outside the system of social contributions, etc).

Maybe, if the Government is to get a “yellow” card from the European institutions for this matter, things will move in the right direction; until then, however, the disabled

people remain to benefit of the little aid they are offered and on which they depend for survival.

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\*\*\* Versiunea consolidată a Tratatului privind Funcționarea Uniunii Europene, articolul 156, <http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:083:0047:0200:RO:PDF>

# SUBJECTIVE EVALUATION OF THE HEALTH STATE IN ROMANIA DURING 2006-2010 YEARS

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*Abstract: In the present paper we intend to estimate the subjective health state suggested by the individuals of two national representative samples selected from the population of Romania. The sociological analysis used the information collected by Institute for Quality of Life Research (ICCV) in the years 2006 and 2010. More statistics were given about the diagnosis of the quality of life data bases D2006 and D2010. The sample population was divided into disjointed groups depending on the age of the individuals, the person gender or on the place of residence. We proposed two statistical models, one being based simultaneously on the indicators mean-variance and the other taking into consideration a stochastic order. We also revealed the risk categories from the both samples for which the health individual score could be improved. We mention here that in the years 2006-2010 we have not significant changes regarding internal structure of the proposed statistical health system E-V. A comparative dynamic study about the population health state in the years 2006 and 2010 was also performed.*

*Key-words: health; program; indicators risk categories; social policies*

## 1. Introduction - General aspects

Knowing the health state of the people composing a population is particularly important in practice, first for an in-depth social analysis of the evolution of that population.

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This paper makes an evaluation of the health state of the Romanian people between 2006 and 2010, as it was perceived by the inhabitants. The correct evaluation of the health state of the people from Romania is absolutely necessary in order to make adequate decisions of social policies, for the optimal redirection of some social work funds (Zamfir C., Zamfir E., 1995; Zamfir C., 1999).

The data of this study have been collected by questionnaires, by the Institute for Quality of Life Research (ICCV), Romanian Academy, in 2006-2010. Two databases have been established on the "Quality of life diagnosis" for 2006 and 2010 (ICCV, 2006; ICCV, 2010). Samples D2006 and D2010 are representative at the national level and they include 1132 and 1161 people, respectively.

All the interviewed people responded to the following question regarding the individual health state perceived by each person:

*A lot of conditions and circumstances occur in the life of all people. They can be good or less good. Please characterise your health state by checking the proper figure. Please select just one answer.*

The score ranged on a scale from 1 to 5, which described the following variants of answer: "very bad", "bad", "satisfactory", "good", "very good".

The answers of the population to the question regarding their personal health state are characterised at the level of the entire sample by the ordinal variable *E*. In order to distinguish between the different categories of persons included in the sample, the name of the variable that defines the health state of a particular person shows the particular group to which the person belongs, as follows: *R* (rural), *U* (urban), *B* (*bărbați* - men), *F* (*femei* - women), *T* (*tineri* - young people), *M* (*maturi* - mature people), *V* (*vârstnici* - old people).

## **2. Methodological details**

The databases D2006 and D2010 include the questionnaire answers of the persons included in the representative samples from 2006 and 2010 which were determined by ICCV staff.

The surveyed population has been divided in several age categories. In order to simplify the statistical analysis, we only considered three age categories: the young people (*T*, aged below 40); the mature people (*M*, aged 40 to 60); old people (*V*, people aged 60+).

This classification can be changed taking into consideration disjunctive intervals that define the age groups, the number of categories not being set firmly to three. However, it is essential that the group of variables *T*, *M* and *V* has the possibility to characterise the process of "ageing" of the Romanian population.

For the convenience of expression we will mark by  $X_6$  and  $X_0$  variable  $X$  related to the sample D2006 and D2010, respectively.

The statistical analyses will use mainly the percentages, not the frequencies. This way we may make a correct comparison of two samples with different size.

Furthermore, we use with priority indicators regarding the average value, the dispersion or repartition. We avoided thus the errors due to an improper calibration of category from the sample in relation with the data for the whole population.

Variables  $E, R, U, B, F, T, M, V$  are ordinal and each of them may take 5 possible scores. Therefore, the repartition of these variables is defined completely by the values of 4 parameters. Consequently, we will have a "good representation" of these variables by the simultaneous use of the average and of the particular dispersion. We may thus use two essential parameters which characterise the analysed repartitions from a total of 4 parameters that define these repartitions.

Thus, the graphic representation of the variables  $E, R, U, B, F, T, M, V$  is done fool proof within a space with four dimensions. Such image would be difficult to interpret practically, however, because it presumes several other sections in that space, as well as adequate rotations of the coordinate axes. However, a graphic representation of these variables in a bidimensional space avoids all these inconveniencies and creates, at the same time, a synthetic image that is easy to interpret in terms of the general trend.

Concretely, we preferred the bidimensional representation of  $W$  variable through a point of coordinates  $(w_1, w_2)$ , where  $w_1$  defines the mean of variable  $W$  and  $w_2$  is its dispersion. Thus, the graphic position of point  $W$  has an immediate practical interpretation.

For two simple, discrete random variables  $X$  and  $Y$  which have the distribution functions  $F(k)$ , and  $G(k)$ ,  $k \in \{1, 2, 3, 4, 5\}$ , we define the relation of stochastic ordering  $X > Y$  when  $F(2) < G(2)$ ,  $F(3) < G(3)$ ,  $F(4) < G(4)$ . Obviously,  $F(1) = G(1) = 0$  and  $F(5) = G(5) = 1$ . Therefore,  $X > Y$  if the distribution function of variable  $X$  is below the repartition function of variable  $Y$ . In such situation, variable  $X$  may take higher values than variable  $Y$  (variable  $X$  is "more optimistic" in evaluation than  $Y$ ). Sometimes, instead of  $X > Y$  we will write  $Y < X$ . We may notice that relations " $<$ " and " $>$ " are transitive.

The reader may go through papers Iosifescu M., Moineagu C., Trebici V., Ursianu E. (1985); Joaquim P. Marques de Sá (2007); Mărginean I., Precupețu I. (2011) in order to clarify some theoretical aspects regarding the suggested statistical approaches. The statistical models were written with *MatLab* (Joaquim P. Marques de Sá, 2007); Quarteroni A., Saleri F., 2006). Databases D2006 and D2010 have been retrieved from

ICCV archives (ICCV, 2006; ICCV, 2010) as SPSS files (Gerber S. B., Voelkl K. F., 2005).

We intend to expand the proposed statistical models by developing some ideas which have already been presented in Mărginean I., Precupețu I. (2011).

### 3. Sample characteristics

Table 1 gives the values of some indicators that characterise samples D2006 and D2010, values related to variables *E*, *B*, *F*, *R*, *U*, *T*, *M*, *V* defined previously.

Table 1  
Indicators regarding samples D2006 and D2010

Indicator	Data	Variables							
		<i>E</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>U</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>V</i>
number	D2006	1132	552	580	500	632	426	425	281
	D2010	1161	549	612	514	647	453	387	321
average	D2006	3.182	3.317	3.053	3.038	3.296	3.749	3.139	2.388
	D2010	3.194	3.324	3.077	3.029	3.325	3.834	3.109	2.393
dispersion	D2006	1.167	1.101	1.195	1.237	1.082	0.709	0.995	0.999
	D2010	1.161	1.108	1.179	1.312	1.001	0.593	0.934	1.005

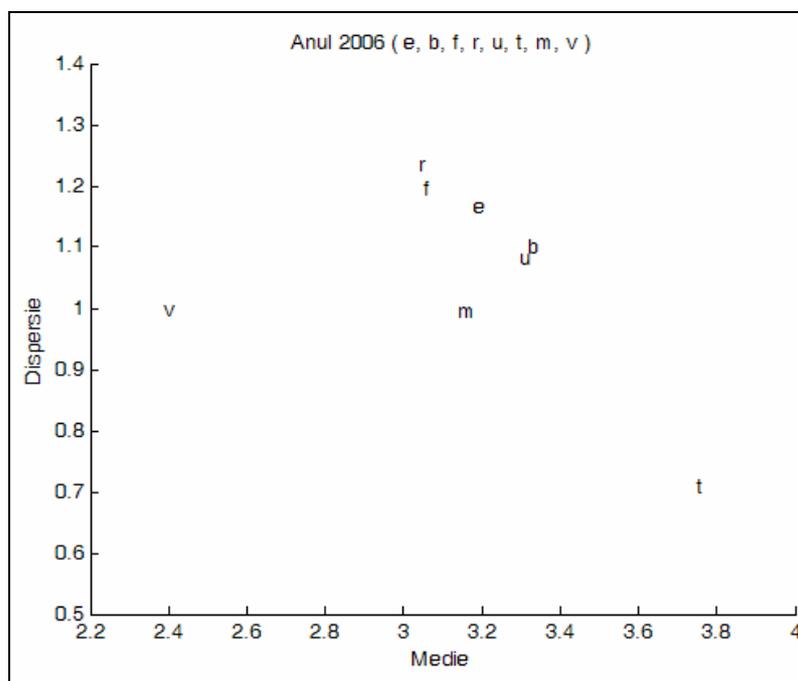
*Chart 1* shows synthetically the relative position of variables *E-V* within D2006 sample.

Analysing *Chart 1* reveals that:

- The age categories *T* (young people), *M* (mature people), *V* (old people) characterise best the variation of the subjective health state on the people included in sample D2006. Entities *T*, *M*, *V* from *Chart 1* are “very distanced” which confirms their status as reference points.
- Of the 8 analysed variables, variable *T* (young people) is characterised by a much higher average than the other groups, and it also has an extremely low dispersion. Under such circumstances, we may say that the multitude of the “young people” is the most stable one; this group didn’t display particular health problems.
- Except *T*, variables *V* and *M* have the lowest dispersions, with very close values (*Chart 1*). Therefore, categories *M* (mature people) and *V* (old people) are rather stable in their subjective opinion about their actual health state. The average score for the individual health state on the mature people (variable *M*) is almost identical with the average score of the people included in sample D2006 (*Chart 1*).

- As expected, variable *V* (old people) has the lowest average, the old people usually having health problems. As the dispersion of *V* is not too large, we may certify a mass alteration of the people aged 60+, the group of the old people being rather homogenous.

Chart 1  
Position of variables E-V in sample D2006.

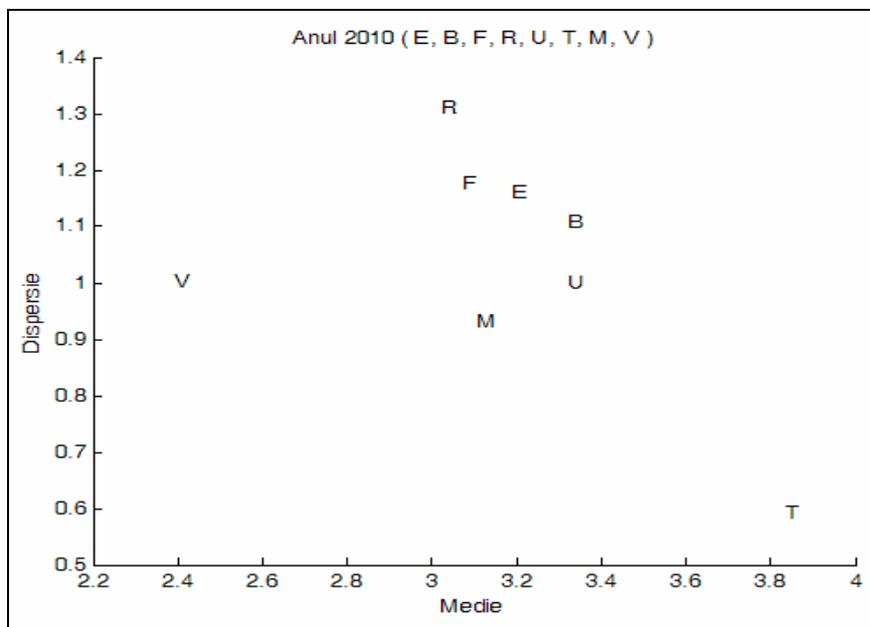


- The people from urban areas (variable *U*) are advantaged compared to the people living in rural areas in terms of their individual health state. Thus, the average value for variable *R* is obviously lower than the average value for variable *U*. On the other hand, the dispersion of variable *R* is clearly higher than the dispersion of variable *U*. This shows a higher inhomogeneity of the health state in the rural areas than in the urban areas.
- A similar characterisation can be done for categories *F* (women) and *B* (men). Compared to the men, the women have more health problems and their group also is less homogenous.

- We can also notice that in *Chart 1* points *U* and *B*, and points *R* and *F* are very close. This shows rather similar repartitions within the sets of variables (*U, B*), and (*R, F*). Under these conditions, the average health state of the men identifies with the average health state of the people living in urban areas. Likewise, the average health state of the women is very similar with the average health state of the people living in rural areas.

*Chart 2* gives us a global view of the positions taken by entities *E-V* in sample D2010.

Chart 2  
Position of variables *E-V* in sample D2010



Analysing the arrangement of points *E-V* in *Chart 2* as well as the “distances” between these points we may notice that all the previous observations regarding variables *E-V* from sample D2006 can be found, with no essential differences, in sample D2010 too.

There are, however, some nuances, that we would like to highlight:

- Except for *T*, variable *M* has the lowest dispersion, which proves the stability in options of the persons composing the group of the mature people (*Chart 2*). This

time, group *V* of the old people, is likewise “stable” compared to the people living in urban areas, but more fluctuant than multitude *M* of the “mature” people.

- Like in 2006, in 2010 there are outstanding differences between entities *R* (rural) and *U* (urban) and between variables *B* (men) and *F* (women). Unlike 2006, in 2010 we cannot highlight a similar behaviour of the pairs of variables (*B*, *U*), and (*F*, *R*). This might suggest the presence of beneficial evolutions in time, hypotheses that will be approached in detail in the following section.

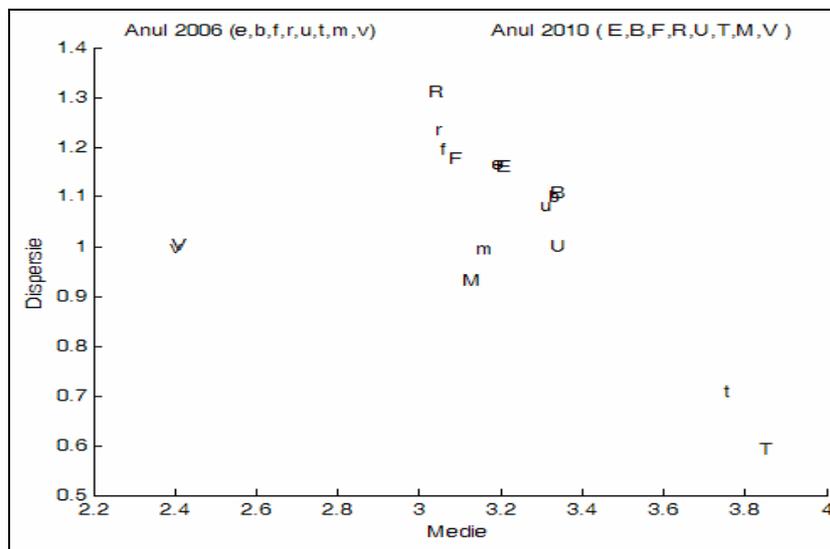
#### 4. Dynamic evolution of the population

The positioning of points *E-V* in *Charts 1-2* is rather similar. However, we noticed in the previous section some small differences regarding the status of *E-V* variables in 2006 and 2010.

We may wonder, however, whether during the four years that elapsed between the two points in time there has been any progress in the subjective perception of the population regarding the personal health state. The comparative analysis of *Chart 3*, which is a combination of *Charts 1 and 2*, may provide an answer.

To make it easier, we will add suffix *0* or *6* to the individual variables, thus showing that it refers to year 2010 or 2006.

Chart 3  
Position of variables *E-V* in the samples *D2006* and *D2010*



The comparative analysis of the position taken by variables *e-v* (*E6-V6*) and *E-V* (*E0-V0*) in *Chart 3* shows that:

- Points *E6* and *E0* overlap in *Chart 3* which suggests that the population had the same opinions about the personal health state in 2006 and 2010. However, the hypothesis that “nothing has changed during this period” is contradicted by the different position of the other key-points associated to years 2006 and 2010. See, for instance, the rather different position in *Chart 3*, of points *U6* and *U0* or *T6* and *T0*. In conclusion, we may say that “something has happened, nevertheless, between 2006 and 2010”.
- In *Chart 3*, the two components from the following pairs of variables (*R6, R0*), (*U6, U0*), (*B6, B0*), (*F6, F0*), (*T6, T0*), (*M6, M0*), (*V6, V0*) take sometimes the same position or are rather close. This suggests that the global structure of the system of variables *E-V* was preserved, the “fundamental problems” of the system remaining.
- A proof that the main characteristics of system *E-V* were preserved throughout 2006-2010, is the location on almost identical positions of entities *V6* and *V0*. Therefore, the opinions of the old people regarding their state of health seem not to have changed in time. This statistical hypothesis should be, however, validated, correlating the opinion of the person with his/her actual age. The statistical model becomes thus much more elaborated. Actually, the hypothesis of the “lack of variance in time of the subjective opinion on the health state of the old people” resulted from a simplified correlation if the individual opinion in relation with the age class.
- The opinion on the individual health state of the men or women didn’t change much throughout 2006 to 2010. A proof is the very close position, in *Chart 3*, of points *B6* and *B0* (men), and of points *F6* and *F0* (women).
- The differences of opinion between the rural and urban didn’t change, in average, in 2006 and 2010. Thus, in *Chart 3*, points *R6* and *R0* (rural) or *U6* and *U0* (urban) have approximately the same abscises, the mentioned variables preserving the same average. On the other hand, we witness a higher instability of opinion in the rural (the dispersion of variable *R0* is higher than that of variable *R6*, *Chart 3*). In the urban areas things are rather opposite, by a higher stability in time of the opinions (the dispersion of variable *U0* is lower than that of variable *U6*, *Chart 3*). The “distance” between points *R0* and *U0* is clearly higher than the distance between points *R6* and *U6* (*Chart 3*). This supports a higher difference of the repartition of variables *R* and *U* in 2010 compared to 2006.
- The larger dispersion of the answers in the rural environment signifies a higher polarization of the individual health state in the villages. This should be, however,

correlated in a subsequent study with the higher phenomenon of polarization, at multiple levels in the Romanian society, present at the level of the entire country, the rural population being the most affected.

- Some positive aspects may, nevertheless, be noticed in this evolution. This is the case of the “young people” (variable  $T$ ). Thus, variable  $T0$ , compared to  $T6$  is located lower and more to the right in *Chart 3*. Thus, the “young people” had a higher health score in 2010 and the fluctuation of their variants of answer is lower. This means that the group of the “young people” was more “stable” in 2010.

### 5. *Disfavoured categories*

We showed that although transformations took place in 2006-2010, the 2006 structure of the system of variable  $E-V$  was not altered significantly. Most relations between variables  $E-V$  were preserved in 2010.

Given this, and with the aim to reveal some essential structural aspects of the set of variables  $E-V$ , we will subsequently reveal some fundamental contradictions existing within the current system.

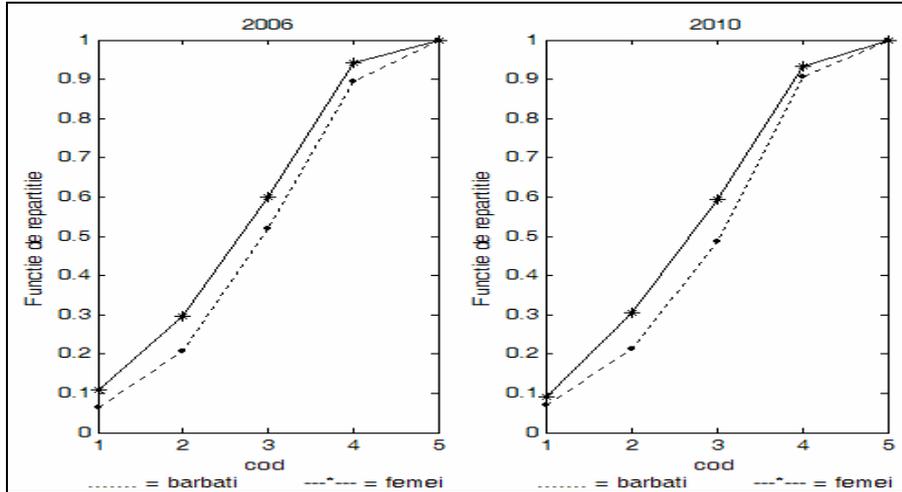
The previous results (*Chart 3*) already suggested possible major differences between the village and town, men and women or between different categories of age. We are interested to quantify these differences between groups with the intention to evaluate in the future the efficiency of particular social policies which alleviate the dissimilarities.

Within this context the statistical analysis will rely on the concept of stochastic analysis, concept already defined at section 2. We remind you that the “stochastic order” is not a relation of total order: there may be variables that cannot be compared between them. Actually, there may exist variables  $X$  and  $Y$  for which none of the relations  $X \leq Y$  or  $Y \leq X$  is not true.

Interpreting the images from *Chart 4*, differences may be identified between men and women, both in 2006 and in 2010. Furthermore, there also is a historic order relation between some entities:  $F6 < B6$  and  $F0 < B0$ .

In conclusion, in both samples, women are more favoured than men in terms of their health state; this is a surprising aspect that should not be normally present in an evolved society.

Chart 4  
2006-2010 comparison of "men-women" categories



A similar analysis covered the people from the villages and those from towns. In terms of the health state, compared to the individuals from the urban environment, the people from the rural environment are more disadvantaged (Chart 5). This aspect existed in 2006 and didn't improve in 2010 (Chart 5). We have:  $R6 < U6$  and  $R0 < U0$  (Chart 5).

Chart 5  
2006-2010 comparison of villages vs. towns

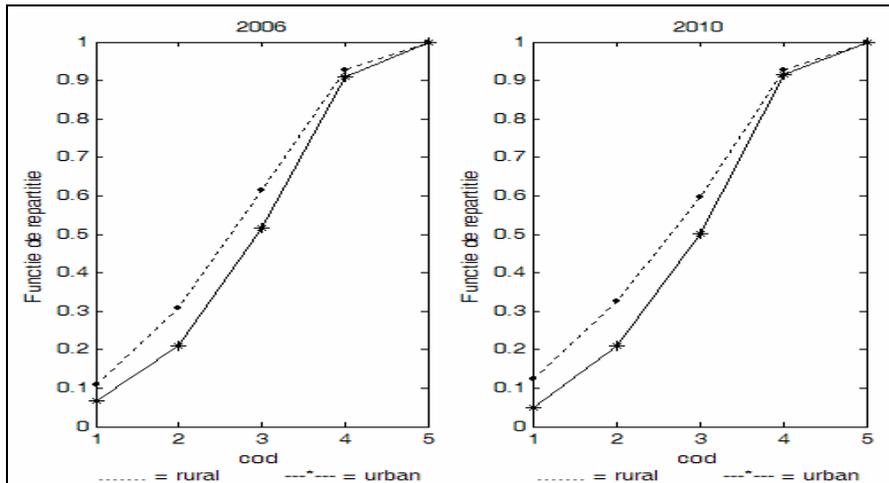
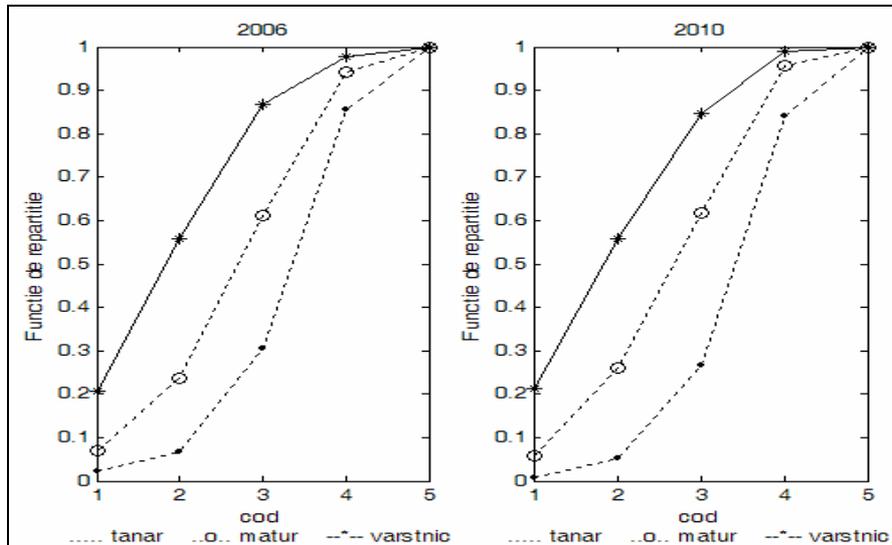


Chart 6  
2006-2010 comparison of the age categories



Intuitively, the personal health state is strongly influenced by the age category. This hypothesis is supported by *Chart 6*.

The differences in the personal health state are considerably higher for the age categories than for the rural-urban or men-women comparisons (*Charts 4-6*). This is normal, because the health state is strongly influenced by the age (*Chart 6*). Such result validates indirectly the proposed statistical model. Furthermore, as it was intuitively predictable, the age categories are more obvious in relation or stochastic order, which independent of the studied period (*Chart 6*). Actually, we have relations of "subordination":  $V6 < M6 < T6$ ,  $V0 < M0 < T0$ .

## 6. Other aspects

As already mentioned, there were no major structural evolutions of *E-V* system in 2006-2010. However, some transformations were highlighted partially in section 4. Such transformations concerned particularly the category of the "young people".

Chart 7  
Health state of the young people and of the mature people in 2006-2010

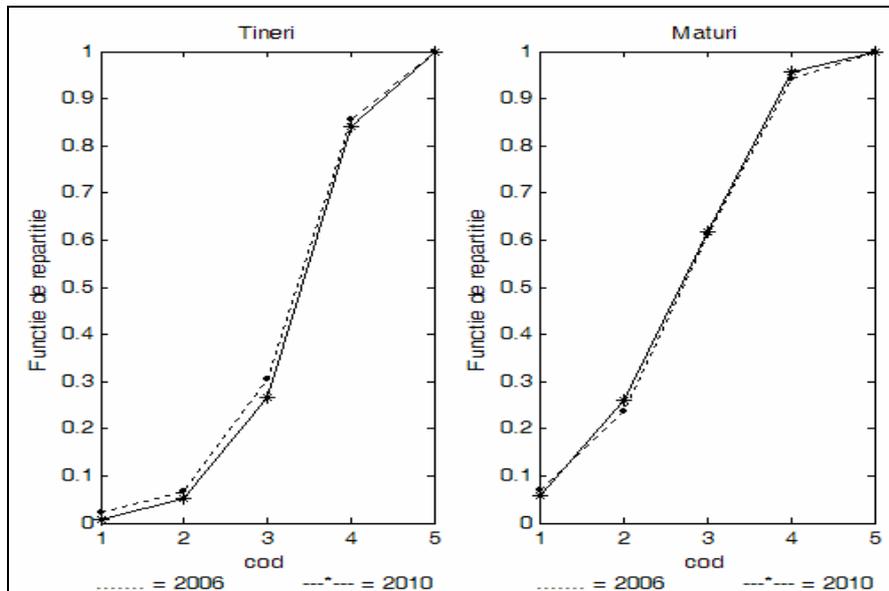


Chart 7 displays the comparison of variables  $T$  (young people) and  $M$  (mature people). In agreement with the previous results for both samples, there are no essential differences between these distributions (Chart 7). However, compared to the mature persons, differences may be noticed among the young people (Chart 7). Furthermore,  $T_6 < T_0$ , which supports the presence of a relation of “slight subordination” in time (Therefore, in relation with 2006, in 2010 the young people perceived a slightly better health state. This aspect has also been highlighted by Chart 3.

On the other hand, we may not draw the same conclusions for the mature people. We cannot say that  $M_6 < M_0$ : the reader should thus go over the distribution of variables  $M_6$  and  $M_0$  from Chart 7. Relation  $M_6 > M_0$  is not valid either: the curves describing the distribution of these two variables intersect in interval  $(0, 1)$  as shown in Chart 7.

Therefore, it is possible to witness beneficial transformations in time of system  $E-V$ . Nevertheless, to validate such hypothesis, we need to cover a longer period of investigations, larger than four years, and to design dynamic statistical models with a higher level of complexity.

## 7. Conclusions

As expected, the health state is more precarious in the rural environment than in the urban areas (interpretation of the distribution of points  $R$  and  $U$  in *Charts 1-2*).

For this evaluation we didn't correlate, however, the personal health state with the actual age of the people. Thus, compared with the men, women have more serious health problems. However, both in rural and in urban areas, women have a significantly longer life expectancy than men.

Predictably, the major health problems usually are among the old people (distribution of variable  $V$  in *Charts 1-2*). This group is rather stable in its opinions, the dispersion of answers being the lowest, second only to that of the "young people" (*Charts 1-2*). The fluctuation of the health state opinions produced by the old people is comparable with that of the mature people (*Charts 1-2*). We may thus say that the subjective health state of the old people is rather similar, not being influenced seriously by other factors than the age.

These results are rather similar for samples D2006 and D2010. Actually, in all these four years, no urgent and special measures have been taken in Romania which to change radically the subjective perception of the Romanian people about their personal health state. Actually, there is a relative conservation of  $E-V$  system. However, we must not forget that the period for statistical analysis is extremely short, of just four years.

Period 2006-2010 displayed, nevertheless, several beneficial evolutions too. This is the case of the young people, who had a more positive and less fluctuating opinion about their health state in 2010. This prompts for a positive interpretation of the distribution of variables  $T6$  and  $T0$  in *Chart 3*, as well the relation of "slight subordination"  $T6 < T0$  from *Chart 7*.

The relation of stochastic ordering confirmed rather large differences of the health state existing between rural and urban areas (*Chart 5*), the decisive influence of ageing (*Chart 6*) and even the significant, apparent inexplicable, differences between men and women (*Chart 4*).

The statistical methods that we applied revealed vulnerable categories such as the old people, the rural people or the women. In practice, we may perceive the existence of all these "disfavoured" groups, which validates indirectly the correctitude of the statistical methods that we used. Unlike the common intuition, however, the statistical procedures also show the measure of the intensity of these phenomena (Iosifescu M., Moineagu C., Trebici V., Ursianu E., 1985).

Given all these aspects, it is advisable to develop further a statistical analysis directed with priority towards the most disfavoured group, the "old women living in

rural areas”. This calls for a correlation of the individual health state with the general phenomena of inequality, poverty and social polarization, phenomena which are highly present in Romania in this decade (Mărginean I., Precupețu I., 2011).

This study aimed mainly to reveal some punctual aspects, without giving the measure of the level of functional efficiency of *E-V* system. In a subsequent study we intend to analyse intensively all these “disfavoured” categories. This study will focus on the ways to improve the health state of some categories of individuals. We will then quantify the importance of the some factors for the improvement of the public health in Romania. Among these factors we will necessarily consider the personal level of education, the material resources available to the individual and the correct application of some measures of social policies (Zamfir C., Zamfir E., 1995; Zamfir C., 1999).

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## Book Review

# **SOCIAL ECONOMY. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS IN EIGHT MEMBER STATES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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*Lucian SFETCU<sup>1</sup>*

Before going into the technical details of this book I would like to emphasize that the social economy, although a new concept, received a lot of attention in the recent years, mainly due to the efforts of the European Union to develop this sector. The European Social Fund boosted the development of the social economy in the member states through the Operational Program Human Resources Development, 2007-2013. The coordinators of this book have also displayed a constant interest for the social economy, as shown by the number of reference papers they have published (Cace S., Nicolăescu V., Scoican A., 2010; Cace S, Nicolăescu V., Anton A.N., Rotaru S., 2011; Neguț A., Nicolăescu V. Preoteasa A.M., Cace C., 2011; Cace C., Cace S., Cojocaru S., Nicolăescu V. 2012; Nicolăescu V., Cace C, Hatzantonis D., 2012; Cace C., Nicolăescu V., Katsikaris L., Parcharidis I., 2012)

The book I intend to describe briefly in this article was developed within the framework of the project „INTEGRAT – Resources for the socially excluded women

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and Roma groups”, co-financed from the European Social fund through the Operational Program Human Resources Development, 2007-2013 and implemented by the Association for Socio-Economic Development and Promotion Catalactica, Bucharest branch, in partnership with the Research Institute for Quality of Life (ICCV) and with Bolt International Consulting – L. Katsikaris – I. Parcharidis O.E. (Greece). The regions targeted by this project were Bucharest-Ilfov and South-East (Bucharest City, Ilfov, Buzău, Brăila, Galați, Constanța, Vrancea and Tulcea Counties). The coordinators of this manual - Victor Nicolăescu, Sorin Cace, Eleftheria Koumalatsou and Simona Stănescu, give an overall image of the social economy in eight member states of the European Union (United Kingdom, Belgium, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Spain), showing the way in which social economy contributes to the enhancement of social inclusion in each studied member state.

The text of the book is divided into four chapters. It starts with the description of the context and of the way in which social economy developed in Europe and continues with a chapter dedicated to the eight member states that were surveyed in terms of the relevant characteristics of the social economy. Chapter three makes a comparative analysis of some social economy organisations and projects in the eight member states, while the last chapter explores the ways in which the social economy activities can be financed and the ways in which investments can be done in social initiatives.

The first chapter describes the evolution of the social economy starting with the very first use of the term, in 1830, and passing through all the stages of its development, both conceptual, theoretic, and applied, by describing the institutions and systems that contributed to the evolution of the social economy to its present stage. The chapter gives a description of the types of organisations that belonged and/or belong to the sector of social economy, together with the criteria of classification as such. An increased attention is given to the social enterprises, a rather new concept compared to the other types of organisations included under the umbrella of the social economy, concept that has yet to reach its maturity and which is understood and used in many different ways. The social enterprise is a global phenomenon and the authors analysed the development of this type of organisation in different regions and states of the world. The present current of promoting social economy seems to revolve around the social enterprises which are, in many ways, caught in the trap of the context which often hinders their access to public and private funds (Nicolăescu V., 2011, p. 114). In most European states the social enterprise is seen as a cooperative or social association whose purpose is to provide employment or care taking services in participative ways. The perception of social enterprises in the United States is that of a non-profit organisation that produces income (Pîrnu D., Ungureanu E., Hagi A., 2009, p. 53). Another important concept approached in this chapter is that of “social investment”, investments that are “private contributions for

the public benefit” (p. 50) and which “bring additional benefits more than the monetary transactions and financial transfers in general” (p. 50). The financing of the small enterprises and of the social enterprises will most probably one of the main dimensions to be considered by the policies concerning entrepreneurship development as a whole, because the entrepreneurship has this general characteristic that it can be applied both to the economic field (of businesses) and to the social field, referring to a behaviour that can take many ways of manifestation (Cace C., Cace S., Nicolăescu V., 2011).

The second chapter starts with the description of the social economy within the boundaries of the European Union, starting from the premises that the “organizational forms, the social objectives and the areas of activity of the social enterprises can vary from one country to another” (p. 55). The authors correlate, in this chapter, the development of the social economy with the type of welfare state from which it started, explaining the different mechanisms which determined the evolution of social economy to its present stage. The chapter continues by describing the national frameworks of the social economy in the eight EU member states that were studied: United Kingdom, Belgium, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Spain and, more detailed, Romania. The concluding section of this chapter presents several support measures for the social economy observed in the eight member states. It also presents several operational characteristics of the social economy noticed in the same countries.

Chapter three shows the results of the comparative study conducted in the eight EU member states, which included 40 social economy projects and organisations. The first part of the chapter presents at length the methodology used for the analysis of the 40 surveyed social economy projects and organisations. In the final part of the chapter the authors present the results of this analysis, showing that the “analysis of the projects and enterprises/organisations showed that there is no particular pattern to follow; on the other hand, each case is unique, because many conditions influence its development, such as the socio-economic framework, the sources of financing, the experience and expertise of the professionals involved in it, etc. (p. 254). However, the study displayed several common operational characteristics that should be adopted by all social economy organisations.

The last chapter of the book focuses on the concept of social investment and on the different forms of making social investments. The authors show that the European Social Fund is the main instrument financing the social economy, together with the progresses achieved lately in Europe in the consolidation of the socio-economic environment.

The European socio-economic framework has been and still is dominated by the economic crisis, a crisis for which “there is no universal remedy that the national

policies can apply in order to limit the effects of the crisis and get past it" (Cace C., Cace S., Cojocaru Ș., Nicolăescu V., 2012, p. 51). The economic crisis stressed several problems that already existed both among the large communities and within the groups of vulnerable population. The consequences of the current economic crisis reflect on the vulnerable groups in terms of the social tensions generated by the increasing level of poverty of the population, of the fear of losing the job, of the increasing number of families that have serious financial problems, of the restrictions in financing the consumption credits and of the effects determined by workforce mobility (Bostani I., Grosu V., 2010, p. 20).

Social economy may bring a major contribution to the decrease of the socio-economic gaps confronting the different disfavoured groups, but it is very important that social economy activities receive financing (Nicolăescu V., Cace C., Cace S., 2012; Nicolăescu V., Cace C., Hatzantonis D., 2012), and that the results of social economy activities are properly evaluated and monitored (Cace C., Nicolăescu V., Katsikaris L., Parcharidis I., 2012; Neaguț A., Nicolăescu V. Preoteasa A.M., Cace C., 2011; Katsikaris, L., Parcharidis, I. 2010)

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