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UNDERSTANDING HOW PEOPLE DECIDE: DECISION-MAKING THEORIES AS MENTAL REPRESENTATIONS[1]

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Abstract: *This paper argues that instead of seeing the most influential theories in decision-making as competitive, one may contemplate the possibility that they are part of a wider theory of decision-making. This theory looks at how people decide based on how they structure a mental representation of a complex reality. Further, it gives a brief presentation of the mainstream theories in decision-making: expected utility theory, prospect theory, bounded rationality, parallel games, Rawls' theory of justice and multi-criteria decision-making. The conclusions suggest that research in the field should include the current theories of decision-making as possible mental representations, while also acknowledging some important epistemological problems in this field.*

Keywords: *mental representations, decision-making, expected utility, prospect theory, bounded rationality, parallel games, justice, multi-criteria decision-making.*

Understanding *how* people decide purports the problem of knowing what *how* means. What is it that we expect to find when studying decision-making of people in real-life situations? How far can we and how far *should* we go in pursuing an answer to this question? Suppose we consider the example of a sculptor who wants to model in clay the portrait of a person. First of all, the task can be summarized as follows: a three-dimensional subject is to be re-constructed in a three-dimensional representation of it. The sculptor should decide at every step where and how a surface should be constructed, usually by using only the eye and the movement of the hand, without the aid of a computer or of a scanner that can transpose the portrait point by point. The decision-making of our sculptor is mostly performed *subconsciously*. On the other hand, constructing a clay model in a *conscious* manner would imply the ability to name and explain *why* each action has taken place, thus giving *justification*. This process is usually called *post-hoc* rationalization. It is usually the basis for the assumption that conscious acts are also logical.

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The rationality of an act depends on the definition of rationality. Eilon (1969) argues that conscious decisions can also be irrational if the preferences are circular. For him and the scholars of rational choice theory based on the writings of von Neumann and Morgenstern, rational decisions are decisions based on a set of preferences that an individual is able to rank order. Therefore, if individuals do not "abide by an agreed criterion that specifies how a choice between alternatives is to be made" of if they cannot rank order their preferences, then their actions are considered to be *irrational* (Eilon, 1969: B177). On the other hand, rank ordering preferences implies the use of numbers, ratios, proportions, comparison and/or of quantification. In other words, there is also a problem of measurement in the definition of rationality (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Framework for understanding rational decisions in terms of measurability and consciousness of decision-making process
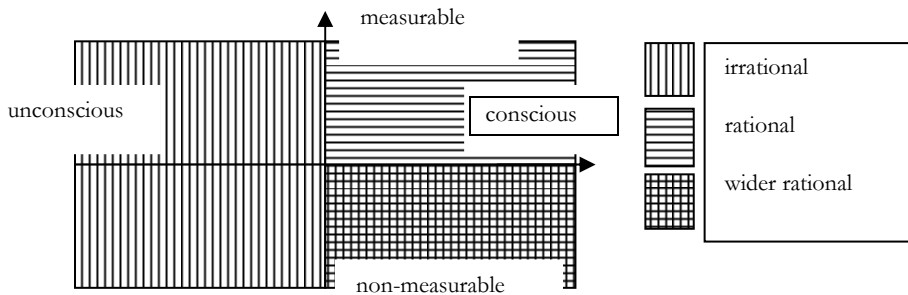
What scholars usually call rational decisions are conscious decisions based on *measurable* preferences. Irrational decisions are usually unconscious (Kahneman, 2011) or based on both conscious and non-measurable preferences. Not far ago, rationality was defined as also emotion-less, until sociological critique (Archer & Tritter 2000) and psychological research has shown that decisions are impossible without emotions (see for example Sacks, 2011; Schwartz et al., 2002) and that preferences are influenced by emotions (Andrade & Ariely, 2009).

However, it is not decisions or choices that are rational, at least not in the sense of decision as resolution. Instead, the mental representations on which they are based and the way in which these representations are built can be rational or irrational. A mental representation in this case is a mental re-construction of a perceived reality or a cumulated set of perceived stimuli. In decision research this is a relatively new term[1] which has the potential to de-construct the classical boundaries between different decision theories (Loewenstein, 2001; Mazur, 2015; Arentze et al., 2008; Huber et al.,

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[1] however not new in psychology and linguistics (Mental Models and Reasoning Lab n.d.; Wittgenstein, 1922)

2011). It is important to note that this is not a strictly psychological definition as the stimuli does not have to be strictly external or based only on the human sensorial organs. A mental representation can be made based on the perception of an "intangible, formless idea" (Solomon, 1991: 12). In this way, a representation is a symbol, but it can also be a representation of a symbol. Thus, the perception of stimuli generates a mental representation based on which decisions are made, followed by actions in the chosen direction. Actions are followed by verbalization which leads to meaning (Figure 2).

Figure 2. *The construction of meaning in decision-making*
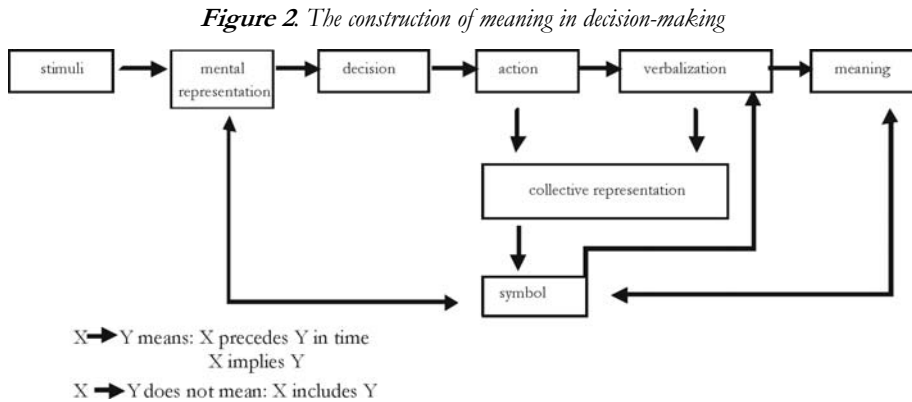
The very idea of decision frames proposed by Tversky & Kahneman (1981) touches on the idea of mental representations presented here when it describes frames as "the decision-maker's conception of the acts, outcomes, and contingencies associated with a particular choice. The frame that a decision-maker adopts is controlled partly by the formulation of the problem and partly by the norms, habits, and personal characteristics of the decision-maker" (Tversky & Kahneman, 1981: 453). The difference between the notion of frames used by Tversky and Kahnmann and the notion of mental representations used here is that mental representations are not necessarily in terms of acts, outcomes and contingencies associated with a particular choice. Mental representations can be constructed in any terms an individual wishes, from justice, to prospects, to power or social relations. The structure of a mental representation is left at the individual's choice. It is also close to the concept of cognitive image used by Zamfir (2005). Taught representations are socially constructed and can be transmitted from generation to generation. Loewenstein (2001) shows how previous research in decision-making points out that people "figure out what kind of situation they are in and then adopt choice rules that seem appropriate for that situation" (p. 503).

The construction of mental representations requires an act of "seeing" not only in the sense of visual stimulation of the eye, but in the sense of absorbing information about the environment in any form and in this way making sense about it. In her brilliant article on what a line is, Solomon (1991) points out the paradox of the line as both a

discrete physical object and a continuous representation of it in an attempt to emphasize the difficulties of understanding "the experience of 'seeing' which is the core of inquiry" in general (p. 12). It is this very difficult of the experience of 'seeing' that is at the core of decision-making as well.

Scientists have mostly proposed models of decision that are meant to reveal human judgment errors or normative models of how decisions should be made in order to achieve the desired goals. In this sense, scientists have been "seeing" the world in many ways. But what is it that they have exactly "seen" when looking at how people make decisions?

Let us consider how decision making can be studied by:

1) looking at what decisions people make

2) looking at how they justify their decisions

3) looking at how neuronal networks in the brain are activated when making decisions

In short, there are three proxies that scholars use in order to understand how decision-making is performed: actions, language and the bio-physical. However, these proxies do not provide information about the way in which information is used or aggregated in the mind, either consciously or unconsciously. In decision-making, research has been performed by observing actions and language (Slevin et al., 1998; Laughlin, 2011; Hinsz, 1999; Sniezek, 1992; Schwartz et al., 2002; Frederick et al., 2002) as well as neuronal networks (Wang 2008; FitzGerald et al. 2015). In the case of observing decisions from language there is a problem of double-reflection. Unlike in the formal representations of language (Reach, 1939: 59) human language in itself is yet another representation of the mental representation of the perceived situation and not a direct representation of the objective world (Wittgenstein, 1922). This is why observing decisions through language is like looking at the back of your head by using two self-facing mirrors: you can see everything, except the back of your head. However, if two mirrors are not positioned to reflect each other, there is potential to actually see the back of the head. In other words, the main problem for a researcher is to understand not just which of the elements of the stimulus (or situation) are chosen to make up the mental representation, but also why these elements are more important than others. Norretranders (2009) shows that mental representations cannot be identical reproductions of the situation or element that is being reproduced because of the known limitations of mind. The problem of understanding which of the elements of the stimulus are chosen to make up the mental representation purports the usual problems of mathematical modelling. The problem of why the chosen elements have been deemed more important than others is a problem of sociology. The issue of how the information that has been considered important is aggregated is associated with the cognitive sciences (Thagard, 2005).

Mental Representations in Decision-Making

The theory that has been briefly presented in the previous section regards most decision-making theories as potential mental representations of the decision-making

situation. In the following section several such candidates will be described and their constitutive elements emphasized in a way that allows their view as mental representations.

Expected Utility Theory

Expected utility theory in sociology is part of the wider theory of rationality or of rational choice, which comprises of game theoretical applications to social situations. In 2013 I synthesized the history and the evolution of this theory (Gheondea-Eladi, 2013). Game theory predicts certain behaviours only if certain assumptions are met, like comparability, transitivity and contextual stability of pay-offs and complete or incomplete knowledge (Colman, 2003; Dixit & Skeath, 1999). In recent publications, game theory has been developed by models which relax assumptions. For example the fact that the rules of the game are given is replaced by inductive trial and error attempts until knowledge is acquired about the rules of the game (Kaneko & Kline, 2006; Kaneko & Mitra, 2011; Kaneko & Matsui, 1999).

Another direction in rational choice theory was drafted by Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky (1979), called *Prospect Theory*. Utility is replaced by value functions which take into consideration relative gains and losses instead of pay-offs (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979b; Tversky & Kahneman, 1981). Yet another theory developed as a response to expected utility is called *bounded rationality* proposed by (Simon, 1965) and developed by many others (Kahneman et al., 1982; Heckathorn et al., 1996; Gigerenzer & Gaissmaier, 2011; Gigerenzer & Brighton, 2009). Bounded rationality states that since cognitive abilities of human decision-makers are limited, certain judgment heuristics are employed to compensate these limitations. In general rational choice theory has been the target of criticism (Frisch, 2001; Archer & Tritter, 2000; Colman, 2003; Martin, 1978).

Other contemporary problems of decision-making added more weight to the questions above: the inconsistency between game theoretical predictions and human behaviour in ultimatum games (Gil-White, 2004; Marlowe, 2004; Henrich, 2000); the lack of arguments sustaining the modelling of social factors as additional costs/benefits and adding them into game's final pay-offs (as is done in (Alesina & Angelotos, 2005; Rabin, 1993); the lack of alternatives to this modelling choice; the inconsistency between game theoretical assumptions of transitivity and non-contextual nature of preferences (Colman, 2003; Archer & Tritter, 2000; Rawling, 1990; Bondareva, 1990; Philips, 1989). Most game-theoretical models introduce fairness or social constraints or relational variables as costs in one model (Alesina & Angelotos, 2005; Rabin, 1993). In doing so, they assume that such variables can be commoditized. Although not all game theoretical applications assume that the pay-offs can be commoditized, they do assume that they are comparable, even in such widely applied games as the Prisoner's Dilemma (PD). In the PD, it is not the absolute value of the pay-offs which is of importance, but the relations between them that matters and this implies that the pay-offs are comparable, namely that it is always possible to say that, for example, either $x < y$ or that $y < x$. The problem of the comparability of pay-offs appears from the properties of *binary relations* which are usually employed when using game theoretical models to

explain social phenomena and interactions. The use of binary relations in economy appeared mainly as an answer to the problem of not being able to commoditize all possible pay-offs (Bridges & Mehta, 1995).

Parallel Games Models

In a different line of thought, George Tsebelis' theory of *nested games* unveiled a new perspective in political science. He observed that more than one game may be played in parallel in different arenas. Together with Alt & Eichengreen (1989), Hausken (1995), Bednar & Page (2007) and myself (Gheondea-Eladi, 2013b) they form a theoretical paradigm built around *parallel games*. Tsebelis (Tsebelis, 1988; Tsebelis, 1990; Tsebelis, 2010) argues that the actor and the observer may not share the same view over an objective situation. Therefore, he proposed that players play "games in multiple arenas" and "nested games with institutional design" (Tsebelis, 1990). However, he did not formalize his theory and despite the intuitive nature of his theory it lacks the rigour that allows testing and further applications outside of political science (Poulson, 2009; Croissant, 2004; Zuber, 2010; Schedler, 2002). On the other hand Alt and Eichengreen (1989) defined "parallel games" and "overlapping games". They show that cooperation is fostered within parallel and overlapping games. Parallel games involve simultaneous games with the same players, while overlapping games involve simultaneous games with different players. Similarly, Putnam (1988) proposed the notion of "two level games" to describe national and international games that may develop in parallel. In my Ph.D. theses (Gheondea-Eladi, 2013b) I placed the bases of a parallel games model with non-comparable pay-offs. Considering that people decide within multiple games that are played at the same time on different abstraction levels, with different players and for different types of pay-offs, the problems of non-comparability, intrazitivity and contextual instability of preferences are given a solution. Each game is built around a certain type of pay-off which allows a certain ordering of the alternatives of action. However, the pay-offs from different games are not comparable. The same objective action may lead to two or more types of pay-offs in two or more games.

Hausken (1995) identifies several directions in the study of multiple games such as: network studies, two-level, nested or hierarchical games, collective games and versions of the principal-agent theory (p. 471). However, he gives no consideration to the problems of commodification and non-commodification of certain pay-offs such as prestige, appreciation, self-esteem and so on. A more recent research in parallel games is given by Bednar & Page (2007) who wish to explain cultural differences. They create a formal model for parallel games played by finite state automata which move the player from one state to another. Just like most of the researchers in this field they do not discuss the way in which the utility function can be built or how it may be created based on non-comparable pay-offs. However, they only assume that pay-offs are comparable, such that only the order between the pay-offs is important and not their value.

Rawls' Theory of Justice

In Rawls theory, justice 'is the first virtue of social institutions, just as the truth is the first virtue of systems of thought" (Rawls,1971/2011: 26). Justice for Rawls is also fairness, which according to the Romanian Dictionary refers to two aspects. On the one hand, it is „righteousness, equity and honour; humanity" and on the other hand is an "ethical and legal principle at the basis of all social relations in the spirit of righteousness, equality, collaboration and mutual respect" (Academia Română, Institutul de Lingvistică „Iorgu Iordan", 2009). Although the notion of fairness appears also in the expected utility models as a result of experimentation and thereafter in the behavioural game theoretical models, the two theories differ only in the degree of relativization of social equity. In this way, "the principles of justice are the principles which *free, rational and self-interested* persons would choose in an initial state in which equality defines the fundamental terms of their association" and that "would govern all other subsequent agreements" (Rawls, 1971/2011: 33, emphasis added). This vision represents for Rawls the "theory of justice as equity" (p. 33).

Although in both expected utility and in the theory of justice individuals act in a rational manner for the promotion of their interests, starting from a position of equality but based on conflicting or cooperative interests, the criteria of evaluation of the alternatives are different. One is based on the evaluation of expected utility, which is a subjective measure for the individual, and the other is based on the evaluation of justice or equity/fairness. Another element of differentiation is that in the theory of justice players are in a "vail of ignorance", unable to know their social position, status, class or power offered by certain natural assets. This "vail of ignorance" ensures the position of equality which is at the onset of the fair social contract (p. 33). Nevertheless, Rawls defines "good" as "rationality" such that "a good for a person is determined by the most rational life plan, given certain sufficiently favourable conditions" (p. 353). In essence, the theory of justice has been built to offer an alternative for the expected utility theory. For the purposes of this paper, this theory proposes in fact that there is another possible criterion for decision-making: justice, as equity or fairness.

Multiple objective decision-making and multi-criteria decision analysis

The expected utility model and the theory of justice assume that there is a single criterion based on which pay-offs may be ordered. To address this limitation, multiple-criteria decision-analysis has been proposed (Roy, 1996; Keeney & Raiffa, 1976). It encompasses a generalization of the expected utility theory for the case in which pay-offs can no longer be ordered based on a single criterion. One such order is the lexicographic order (the order in which words in dictionaries are ordered). Other situations which purport multiple criteria comparisons are given by the choice of cars based on safety, security, esthetics, consumption level or carbon dioxide emissions and so on (Roy, 1996).

In multiple criteria decision-making there are two main schools of thought: the American and the French (Lootsma, 1992). The French school is based on the model proposed by Bernard Roy in 1985 and translated in English in 1996 (Roy, 1996), while

the American school departed from the sistematization performed by Keeney and Raiffa (1976). Although both models begin by successive comparisons of evaluation criteria, they use different mechanism of preference aggregation (Lootsma, 1992). Moreover, the ELECTRE algorithm, built by Roy allows the possibility that after evaluating all criteria a series of main alternatives is built (Lootsma, 1992: 254). By means of the Analytic Hierarchy Process built by Saaty (1980) based on the models of Keeney and Raiffa (1976), the "value of the impact score which approximates subjective values of the alternatives" for each criterion and the corresponding weights are obtained in order to be aggregated in a unique value, similar to a utility function for each single criterion. Despite the critiques of the general utility theory of Keeney and Raiffa (Treadwell and Myiamoto, 1996), multiple criteria decision analysis lead to the construction of computer programs meant to assist decision-makers, as well as a series of "interactive methods" which "alternate computation steps with consultation steps" (Vincke, 1989/1992: 79).

Conclusions

In the process of understanding how decisions are made, the current decision-making theories seem to be only parts of a bigger picture. Expected utility, the theory of justice, parallel games, multi-criteria decision-making are all possible mental representations of complex social situations proposed by researchers who are also human decision-makers. Unlike Loewenstein (2001), who dismisses these theories as possible mental representations, in this paper I argue that they may in fact be used by some people, alongside other representations. Two implications arise from this. First, instead of seeing these theories as competitive theories, they may be integrated in a wider paradigm of mental representations. Secondly, further research should comparatively test the extent to which either one of these theories or any other theories not included in this review are actually used by human decision-makers. However, such an endeavor is bound to the perils of differentiating between what is part of the human decision-making abilities and what is socially or culturally acquired or simply learned. To conclude, understanding how people decide brings important epistemological issues such as: (1) understanding how people say they decide vs. understanding why they choose what they choose; (2) understanding how people are naturally equipped to decide vs. what people learn about how to decide; (3) understanding how people create mental representations of decision-making situations vs. understanding why they choose certain aspects and not others.

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THE ETHNICAL OTHERNESS AND THE INTERETHNIC IMAGINARY AMONG THE CONTACT AREAS BETWEEN THE ROMA AND ROMANIANS[1]

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Abstract: *The social dialogue between the majority and an ethnical minority depends on how a thinking pattern or a map of collective representations crystallized in the „we and the others" relationship. The personality of an ethnic group isn't as simple as thought. Pride, fear of being labeled, uncertainty, depression, fear of the other, self-esteem, self-image, sense of justice, of belonging and other individual manifestations are reproducing on a group level through the up taking of mutual perceptions. In this article I noticed that the individual tendency is adhering to beliefs and experiences which do not belong to them, quietly inheriting a group doctrine without filtering the area of specific values. The research of group thinking from the cultural contact zone compelled me to shed light upon an imaginary theory as a both knowledge and interpretation instrument for interethnic psyche. The methodological contribution belongs to several disciplines: psycho-sociology, social anthropology, social care and cultural anthropology, followed by the uses of specific terms from image science with specific methods: symbolic interaction, analogy and the convergence method applied on the obtained answers from an interview guide. The deepening of collective imaginary can substantially improve the knowledge and objectifying of a real civic and political culture.*

Keywords: *Interethnic imaginary; collective imaginary; otherness/alterity; political culture.*

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A short introduction

In some of the sociological studies on Roma, from the late 20 years, several aspects have been revealed, regarding the case of an inter-ethnic collective imaginary. (Zamfir, C.&Preda, M., 2002: 13) Other specialists also recorded these aspects, which would require a specific research on problems regarding alterity and the political universe.

For example, a less known fact is that from a perspective of civic culture, Roma show in their way, a strong attraction and interest in politics. These lead to an increased proportion of concerns, attitudes and orientations, these being part of the political representations. Interestingly, in these representations, as we observed in this research, Roma from Bucharest are increasingly more drawn to politics, than Romanians. Analyzing the world of ethnic and interethnic imaginary through the method of interview identified by the given answers, opinions, attitudes and orientations we get to the anthropological question of the political dimension. I can state that the imaginary of a minority is the common floor of group beliefs by which we can decipher the world of perceptions formed at the confluence of the normative dimension, the evaluative and also affective. The regulatory and affective dimension form in the opinion of Crothers (2000: 51), is a kind of participatory-parochial culture, which requires the emergence of two political interests: national and local.

This work was focused on the level of consistency and sustainability of the interview results obtained within the relationship between the Roma community and Romanian ethnic majority. I sought to analyze issues related to perceptions, symbols and images that can be highlighted as value-promoted attitudes in the intercultural relationship between the two communities. Another factor that was taken into consideration is the high Roma and Romanian heterogeneity from Bucharest. Therefore, I resorted to a qualitative analysis represented by the interview method applied in two representative districts: Rahova and Ferentari.

1. The current knowledge stage in the field of research

In this study, I set a goal for developing a model for assessing the socio-political environment from the interethnic imaginary perspective. The usefulness of this research is to yield significant improvements to the knowledge and objectifying of an interethnic European culture on a member country level. The importance of such research in Romania is all the more relevant as the economic and moral crisis dominates the most part, the top structures of the political system."Social justice", "redistribution" and "social protection" have always hit the barrier of the national implementation level, remaining rather metaphors in general political discourse than political realities (Popescu, 2014: 100). The transition from collective perceptions to group beliefs and ultimately, to an imaginary interethnic configuration through the power relations is the most striking stage of the present research. The need for a multidisciplinary approach is vital in studying the imaginary and the approach results in justifying being a significant target objective in itself, in the complexity of the included domains of both community and integration politics.

In analyzing the specialized literature there are many sociological and anthropological currents of thought that were bent on the subject of collective imaginary. In the latest studies, the term "imaginary" is deepened in the psychology of education, namely in training and education of children as future adults and citizens with civic responsibilities (Fleer & Peers, 2012: 414). For Angela Becerra Vidergarr (2013:5), the collective imaginary is a oscillating combination resulting from individual experience and cultural background of the person in relation to his own community. The relationship of the individual with his own community, minorities' case, can become even stronger than the relationship with his own family, unlike members of a majority records a somewhat lower interest. In those circumstances, the collective imaginary may be stronger and more influential for the ethnic minorities than for the majority, a verified observation including the current study.

In the Romanian literature there are very few studies, most of the existing being due to the Imaginary Research Center from Cluj, which addresses this issue from a historical perspective, such as the work "The violent imaginary of Romanians" written by Ruxandra Cesereanu. In the African literature there is an interesting approach to ethnic collective imaginary, as a research tool for civic and political culture. Ebenezer Obadare (2010:60) believes that in the current democracy in Senegal, any ethnic community must be politically represented, otherwise ignoring this principle inevitably leads to interethnic conflicts.

The history of the 20th and 21st century Africa is full of such examples where the consequences were tragic and the politics could never offer peaceful and lasting solutions. The racial approach of the interethnic collective imaginary is another dimension of concern nowadays, for EU policies, as well as for Romania, when a community such as the Roma, is regarded as belonging to a different race from the majority. The issue of racial differences generally occurs in the case of indigenous immigrants, who disturb the economical interests of the autochthons. The interethnic contacts become aggressive and perceptions of neighborhood become truly combat camps where the parties repel each other. The adopting of collective stereotypes, the autochthons are passively consumed and the frustrations and personal prejudices are considered to be the fault of immigrants (Taguieff, 2001: 174). Behind these economic reasons lies again the territory problem as historical belonging versus the rights for the freedom of movement, treatment, salary, etc. Unfortunately, since the European crisis which began in 2008 is also a crisis of intensive demographic changes occurring in the past decade. This year, 2015, Germany officially received over 800.000 immigrants. These are some of the issues that the nowadays ethnic imaginary theme may raise and there are unfortunately few solutions when many of the sensitive issues of living together are ignored by the political class, or are at least unknown to many politicians.

2. The theoretical frame and definition of concepts

For Culas, C. & Robinne, F., (2010:9) the term interethnic imaginary is required in the research and understanding of ethnic communities in the act of building space and community territory in its dealings with a space or domestic territory. Each geographic area is determined by a community spirit and historical timeline which manifests and

ritual maintains around a collective imaginary. This principle of continuity is representative towards the relations with the others. "We and the other" requires the separation and differentiation from others by legitimizing a local distinction for group identity. The community's diversity operates on the principle of diversity and uniqueness of the individuals that compose any society. For Culas and Robinne the territory isn't just a physical space limited by certain rights and borders, but also a repository of collective memory in the relationship of the individual with his own community.

The collective imaginary of a community is formed by the ensemble of psychological nature containing national symbols, personalities (public, media, culture, politics, music and sports), beliefs, customs, rules, norms and traditions inherited or created by a certain structure of thought referred to a historical role and to an identitary project. Resorting to a simpler definition, the collective imaginary is a veritable collection of mental images, a world full of symbols, fantasies, myths, historical representations and historical perceptions which define the collective memory of a community. Usually, any nation makes sure that the amount of the most important historical memories to always be updated through rituals of a public nature. This semantics enter into comprehensive imaginary universe, representing its matrix of the developing concurrently compositional a mythical world and accompanied thinking by a vast semiological cortege (Durand, G., 1992: 438).

The psychoanalytical approach of the imaginary begins with the philosophy of the mental image. For Jung (1997: 476), the image is "not a mental copy of the external object, but rather a representation coming from the poetic terminology, namely the imaginary representation, which refers only indirectly to the external perception of the object. It is based rather on the activity of the unconscious imaginary; consciousness manifests as unconsciously produced, ie more or less suddenly, somewhat like a vision or a hallucination, but without its pathological character, ie without ever part of the clinical picture of the disease". It is rather based on the activity of the unconscious imaginary; it manifests in the consciousness as unconsciously produced, more or less suddenly, somewhat like a vision or a hallucination, but without its pathological character, meaning without ever being part of the clinical picture of a disease."

The otherness is seen as a distinction made whenever someone meets a foreigner, classifying him among "the good" or "the bad", and then questions arise, as: "I love him or love him not, or [...] It is my equal or inferior to me (for it is understood that most of the times I think highly of myself ...)" (Todorov, 1994: 173). When otherness becomes an issue of interethnic nature, multiculturalism and pluralism are treated as two separate solutions that respect contrary, without taking into account the possibility of combining them.

The political culture is defined by Almond and Verba (1996: 42) as a set of individual attitudes and orientations towards politics, manifested among the members of a political system. In the Roma we take into account other variables of the political culture as characteristic features of this ethnic group, such as the relation with tradition, identitary values, or indigenous rules, customs, symbols and less religious beliefs. All these key elements justify the existence of a system of representing social, cultural and

political. I excluded the religious dimension, considering it less relevant for the research purposes. This is why I limited to qualitative research, applied in the urban areas.

3. The Plan and the research methodology[1]

The general question and substantive research is to what extent the intercultural problem between Roma and the majoritary ethnicity can be addressed through its political dimension, namely through its political culture? The objective of the research is exploratory and seeks to identify a forming pattern of the interethnic imaginary.

Regarding the employed scientific methods it's been used the qualitative research of the interview (as method), along with other specific methods in the study of the imaginary. The structured interview is designed to capture a generally accepted pattern of thought, which helps to better understand the formation of interethnic imaginary. The method is limited by the intellectual application parameters, because it doesn't represent the whole segment of representativeness of a complex environment, but has the advantage of speculating the cognitive thinking of the respondents. This way, qualitative results can be obtained, which would describe the world of collective perceptions or the forming and thinking way of common directions of civic and political orientations. Beside the urban environment of proximity, the universitary intellectual environment was also included, being selected as the research sample of the interview, for diminishing the potential confusion or terminological ambiguity. The university environment has the advantage that a respondent can pay a closer attention to speciality details and to theme hues. The cognitive and psychological condition of a respondent can be an advantage but also a communication barrier, when the pretentious terms phenomenon occurs.

In the Bucharest urban environment, 20 individuals were interviewed, respectively 10 Roma ethnics and 10 Romanian ethnics. Their selection was made through the "snowball method", due to the proximity relations. Therefore, there were selected two samples, each having two target audience subcategories, which would represent the intellectual environment and the usual one. In the first stage of research, I carried out a socio-demographical survey attached to the interview guide (background information) were I requested data regarding the level of education, income and occupation. I obtained a first respondents group, with five Roma students from different Universities – University of Bucharest and N.S.P.S.A. (National School of Political Studies and Administration) and a second group with five Roma ethnics randomly selected through the "snowball method", aged between 30 and 50 years old and with an education average between 4 and 8 grades, from Rahova and Ferentari. In the second sample I obtained a group of five Romanian students from the same Universities and another group with five Romanian ethnics (neighbours with the five Roma ethnic citizens, aged between 30 and 50 years old and with an education average between 8 and 12 grades).

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[1] This research was applied by substantially modifying the interview guidelines presented in an earlier study entitled "Psychosocial and Identity Aspects, inter - ethnical Dialogue and alterity issues Between the Romanian People and Roma People" published in Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences , EJSER, 2014 no. 3, Vol. 1.

In this sampling I haven't disregarded gender criterion or religion, considering that these variables questions have relevance for the present research. The reason there were chosen five students from both ethnic groups was to pinpoint the position of young people from both groups regarding perceptions, otherness and some political aspects, but also to address certain topics or terms that imply a necessary academic preparation. The intellectual environment facilitates a wider knowledge of certain psychosocial aspects, including a thorough analysis of specialized details of semiotized words. The cognitive as psychological requirement of a respondent could be either a communication barrier, or an advantage. Regardless of these difficulties, the interview has the privilege of capturing the emotions as subtle aspects of symbolic communication, improving the means of knowledge of reality that a survey would not be able to observe. Another motivating advantage to this method is given by the operator's ability to note the important details of nonverbal language, gestures and proxemics that occurred through direct observation data. Each interview was recorded in writing, to be read as evidence or testimony at any time.

There are listed below 10 questions from the interview guide, with different indicators which, in the view of specialist as Vidergarr, A. B. (2013); Fleer & Peers (2012); Culas&Robinne (2010); Gerhard, E. L. (2002); Agamben, G. (1998); Sartori, G., (1997); Girardet, R. (1997); Roger, C. (1997); Kymlicka, W. (1995); Lips, H. (1995); Tzvetan, T. (1994); Durand, G. (1992); Taguieff, P. (1987); Zamfir, E. (1975); can theoretically help in the current research to substantiating and identifying of a specific interethnic imaginary pattern. The questions were randomnly set for not purposely inducing the answers, discarding the respondent from his own belief parameters, judgment and perception. The questions were displayed here in order to explain all the desired objectives in research, motivations, and especially for analyzing the results. The purpose of this interview was to follow the structure, the logic and causality of interethnic imaginary formation, among the group of respondents through differentiation and similarity of perceptions on certain precise themes. The symbolic convergence, the antagonistic differences and similarities of perception and opinion form the guidance milestones and identification of a thinking pattern of a collective imaginary Roma mind set, respectively of Romanian ethnics. The dissemination of these results determines the occurring of structures for collective thinking. The sum of these combinatorial structures of both main groups forms all preferences, attitudes and guidelines as a pattern of interethnic collective imaginary.

Guide to interview questions:

1. What is your image and confidence in EU institutions and policies?

2. Do you consider that the involvement and active co-participation the Roma in Romanian political life could improve relations with the ethnic majority?

3. To what extent do you feel discriminated against as Roma ethnic (i.e. or Romanian whether the respondent is ethnic Romanian) in the plan of interethnic interaction at the workplace?

4. What are the first words, impressions or images that come to mind when you meet a Roma ethnic (Romanian respectively if ethnic Roma respondent).

5. Would you mind having a Roma neighbour (i.e. ethnic Romanian if Roma respondent)?

6. Assuming hypothetically that you fall in love with someone and you find out later that it is of Roma ethnicity (i.e. Romanian if the respondent is Roma) do you continue the relationship for marriage?

7. If you are during the presidential elections, to what extent would you be willing to vote for a Roma president? (question asked only to Romanian ethnic)

8. What are the three most important political figures in Romania today?

9. Did you ever suffer in your personal or professional life because of a Roma ethnic? (question asked only to Romanian ethnic)

4. Analysis and interpretation of data

The analysis of answers from the interview was done in an unitary order, selecting key data that can help complete the central objective of the research. For this approach was used the analytical method, the analogy and the symbols convergence. The analytical method established the series of details and arguments related to the guidelines and common attitudes that have been extracted from the logic of the given answers on various topics or themes. Through the convergence method the perceptions were analyzed, regarding the ethnic otherness present in the signifier of words that had been used in the answers. And, by the analogy method, was sought to identify the frequency, similarity and repetition of common terms that are found in many respondents' answers.

To the first question, the respondents' position (Roma and Romanian) was unanimously positive regarding the role and confidence in European institutions and policies. From the sum of all answers I deduced that the EU is a solid institution that enjoys a high confidence and at the level of general opinion there is a favourable current among both ethnicities. Analytically by the semantic inversion of excessive appreciation, this indicates a passive attitude of citizens to the confidence in the national political system. In the collective imaginary of respondents, the European Union is like a mother who is trying to grow and to help her children. This image demonstrates that the expectations come from outside and not from inside, conclusion met to the other answers, also.

On the second question, Roma respondents believe that their involvement in the Romanian political life is beneficial to all. Mostly among students of Roma origin, they have strengthened and underlined the need of joint participation in politics to fight against inequality, discrimination and the right for education, health or employment. Of the group Roma ethnics who are not students, there were manifested certain deductions related to the positive effect of interethnic integration by the joint participation to the political life, justifying that the Romanian politics isn't built on fairness and fair play. The political life from Romania is considered by both ethnicities to be negative and the analogy of this image is similar to a "bottomless precipice" (imaginary analogy encountered to several Roma respondents). Equal pay on merit and

not on ethnic criteria is not working on regular basis. Within the group of Romanian ethnicity respondents the views were somewhat mixed. Thus, three out of five ethnic Romanian students expressed their pessimism regarding the improvement of interethnic relations in the joint participation in political life. The restraint was motivated by the incompatibility of both ethnicities for the same beliefs and values. In conclusion, it was noted that on the political dimension there is an emphasized threshold of detentions and concerns over the mutual cooperation. On the level of interethnic collective imaginary, it seems that the first signs of otherness are being marked, by the presence of mistrust of each other.

On the third question, the Roma students have reported that there is a degree of ethnic discrimination more present at the bottom of the social pyramid, especially in the area with low income people. Through the analytical method of the responses I observed that the respondents support the following idea: since the standard of living is lower in Roma communities, the interethnic discrimination phenomenon becomes stronger and the higher the living standard gets, more diffuse this phenomenon becomes. In this category are the poorest Roma, without jobs, some of them uneducated, with no health insurance, etc. The marginalization and discrimination coexist depending on the level of acute poverty, part of the blame belonging to the political system that has a very late response to the urgent problems of the Roma. One of the major shifts brought by the new status of Romania of EU country was the emergence of the discourse centered on the concept of social inclusion rather than poverty (Briciu, 2014: 5).I quote from an answer given by a student of Roma origin: "The current situation is a continuation of mutual negligence; certainly it is also the fault of the Roma (...) Nevertheless, when discrimination at the workplace makes its presence felt, then the problem becomes one of politics nature, and the Romanian state must prevent such social phenomena through public policy ".

Two of the Roma students said they were active militants fighting for improvement and solving of social inequalities following the political path. In the case of Roma respondents who are not students, they expressed their pessimism towards the employment situation. I quote: "they do not care, we tried to get a job, but no one employs us. From the beginning they consider us culprits, thieves and beggars, but they forget that many of us have make no living and those who want to work tell us they don't need us [...] ". In another response was reported the case of a Roma employed to a Romanian patron. He received from the very beginning a significantly lower salary than the Romanians on the grounds that he is "Gypsy" and "Gypsies" should be paid less. In the case of Romanian ethnic respondents, they felt no discrimination on salary criterion. Nevertheless, I mention that two students felt disadvantaged, by the fact that the Ministry of Education finances special places in the budget only for the Roma who want to pursue higher education (by the educational policies that use the kind of positive discrimination).

In the context of responses to the fourth question only the major differences and similarities between keywords with symbolic role have been taken into consideration. As a first step, on a general view all Roma respondents associated the image of

Romanian ethnics with the one of "rich but very stingy brothers"[1]. Here are some words and suggestive images that deserve to be listed and analyzed: "Romanians are generally hardworking but also very cunning", "there are some hearted Romanians, but others are so evil and they hate us because we are poor," "Romanians are workers but others steal beyond imagination, more than all our Gypsies thieves with whom we are ashamed; the real thieves are some Romanian politicians who keep people in poverty ","Romanians are always perceived as strangers and we always feel rejected by their community ", " there are Romanian patrons who have often infringed our rights and we have put us all in the same pot, holding ourselves unworthy, but I find myself as a gypsy, to always have been honest and I did not judge crookedly on anybody from the start without first seeing the facts", "some Romanians don't tolerate us at all and do us much injustice, accusing us that evil comes only from us". Roma people perceive their relationship with the Romanians in a disadvantaged position. Here are some examples from across the Romanian ethnics group: "[...] Gypsies do not work, they steal!" Or "outside the country, Gypsies beg and embarrass all Romanians abroad. Here we see how in level of perceptions, the Romanians are placed on a position of imaginary, inquisitors and judges of Roma ethnics. At this lopsided balance Roma perceive themselves as victims of otherness, which results in a vicious circle.

To the fifth question, the Roma respondents have generally displayed a positive and tolerant attitude regarding the idea of inter-ethnic neighbourhood. "Our homes may be in the vicinity of the ethnic Romanians. We don't mind as long as we are left alone, and it's even an honour to be close so we can communicate as humans and not as different ethnic groups." I note from the answers that it shows again the same fear of being judged or rejected by Romanian ethnics. In the other group, the responses were not as homogeneous. Of the ten ethnic Romanian respondents, only three replies were favourable- pro-neighbourly and seven showed against.

On the sixth question, we dive into the most profound area of the interethnic imaginary perceptions by reaching some interpersonal problems. I designed this interview question for several reasons, as the interethnic relations often involve such circumstances, especially when there are cases of successful interethnic marriages that bring new light into the area of different social stereotypes. Here are six interesting answers that were expressed by respondents from both ethnic groups:

1. Roma respondent "I would have nothing against it if we had true love";

2. Another Roma respondent: "if my wife would be ethnic Romanian, I love her as much as a gypsy of mine";

3. Another Roma respondent: "our law doesn't normally allow interethnic marriages, but if there is the one and only, true love, not even our emperor would stand against it."

Here are some answers came from the Romanian ethnic group:

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[1]Sentence from interview.

1. Romanian respondent: "It would be really a romantic story. Why not? As long she's not deceiving me and will not steal from me, she would make the perfect wife";

2. Another Romanian respondent: „I would have nothing against it; love conquers everything".

3. Another Romanian respondent: "I would love her from the bottom of my heart; you don't find a gipsy heart everywhere".

On the eighth question was only ethnic Romanian respondents answered, three of which were „for", one has abstained and the remaining six „against". We quote a few words from each of the two positions „for" and „against":

1. "I would have nothing against voting a Roma President if he would prove he is a good President, through his character and professionalism, so yeah!"

2. "[…] under no circumstance I would ever vote such thing, as I strongly believe that a Roma President couldn't actually represent us in EU or on Earth";

3. "Personally, I do not trust Roma, therefore, I would never vote for a Roma President."

On the seventh question, I noticed a manifested reluctance of the ethnic Romanian respondents when it comes to voting a Roma President. The refusal is justified by the presence of the same type of association of the word Roma with various negative features. One question that is required to ask on this dimension of politicswould be: can social stereotypes influence a collective thinking which doesn't start from personal experience? As we shall see on the last question, some of the Romanian ethnic respondents justify their positions and attitudes blaming the influence and presence of collective stereotypes. In these situations the transmission of their prejudices among groups of individuals has no proper filter of selection and occurs through mental contagion.

On the eighth question, we have three groups of ranked answers, according to the number of nominations. In the first group, where we have only Roma respondents, on the first three places were selected as follows:

1. Ion Iliescu;

2. Marian Vanghelie;

3. Klaus Johannis.

In the second group, where we have only Romanian respondents, on the first three places were selected:

1. Klaus Johannis;

2. Ion Iliescu;

3. Traian Băsescu.

In the third group, were we have all respondents, the first three places were selected as follows:

1. Ion Iliescu;

2. Klaus Johannis;

3. Marian Vanghelie.

Ion Iliescu recorded the most nominations in both groups, followed by Johannis (nominated predominantly among Romanian respondents) and Marian Vanghelie due to the large number of nominations only among the Roma respondents came on third place per-total. The mentioned political figures play an important role in the interethnic collective imaginary, and they represent an important milestone for orientation and political attitude of the people towards the political system. The culture level and the political dimension of both groups of respondents find their common denominator around these three characters. Why was it important to know through this question about the three political figures? Thus we can find out the most popular politicians in the political imaginary space.

The ninth question was asked only to the Romanian ethnic respondents, as key question. All respondents said they had never personally or directly suffered from a Romanian citizen of Roma ethnicity. In this question I tried to decipher the attachment of images during the formation of the collective stereotypes. The seventh question is a good reminder: six ethnic Romanian respondents rejected the idea of voting a Roma president, associating it to Gypsy Roma. Interesting to note is that although this ethnic Romanian respondents have not suffered any direct personal detriment from a Roma person, however, some of them reject this ethnic cohabitation or interaction without any empirical argument. If we agree upon this conclusion, then we can provide the first viable explanations related to the twilight zone where the interethnic social stereotypes are formed.

5. Conclusion

From the first results a higher confidence of respondents in the European Institutions is reflected, in detriment of the trust in the autochthon institutions of the Romanian state. It is true that the Institution of European Commission showed in the past 10 years a continuous concern towards minority integration strategies in Eastern Europe. Most of the European funds were allocated to the following four pillars: access to education, jobs, housing and medical care. The links between the expectations of citizens, regardless of ethnicity and the role of the European Union appear to be in full compliance. It explains why in the collective imaginary, all respondents, regardless of ethnicity, consider the European Union a "caring mother" who engages authority in the social problems of citizens.

With regard to the interethnic relations, the problem occurs in the case of confidence in the other. The source of conflict occurs on the patronizing attitude of Romanian ethnics towards the Roma ethnics. The analogy to the "unfair executioner" - "gang of beggars and thieves" is represents therefore the two key images of the imaginary arche types that underlie the interethnic neighbourhood conflict.

Concerning the interpersonal relations, I guessed some networking structures identified as problems of ancestral nature of the Romanians towards Roma. The Roma seem to be more open, conditioning only the presence of nothing but a candid love, while some Romanian ethnic respondents showed a high dose of reticence. In the meta-language of the Romanian ethnic respondents it is obvious that such relations can only be adventures or accidents, whilst the Roma respondents showed themselves open about this hypothesis. It is interesting to note that the discussed topic was treated in a positive manner, and respondents had not reacted conflictingly in the area of perceptions, but fear is still there. Roma ethnics don't start from an associative premise putting the evil ahead of facts. In this case, the otherness phenomenon has a greater presence among the Romanian ethnics.

The interethnic imaginary between the Roma ethnics and Romanian ethnics displays several divergent and convergent points in the same time. The rejection tendency of "the other" manifests especially on economical grounds. This proves that a major cause for otherness is due to poverty, reason which leads to altering the social interethnic relations. Therefore, there is an interethnic imaginary between neighbourhood relations. This space is the product of a collective pattern being configured rather more on the economic welfare of ethnic groups and less on the criterion of historical or ideological visions. For this reason, the Roma are perceived by the majority ethnicity as poor and unemployed people. The solution might be an intensification of integration the Roma into the labour market, and this result would inevitably lead to changing the interethnic imaginary as convergent space with a constructive role in facilitating the good relations between Romanian and Roma ethnics.

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FROM SOCIALIST UNSUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT TO CAPITALIST SOCIAL UNDERDEVELOPMENT. POST-COMMUNIST EVOLUTION OF TWO SMALL CITIES: ANINOASA AND BUDEŞTI[1]

Mihnea PREOTESI[2]

Abstract: *In a recent Report of The World Bank (Stănculescu (coord.), 2014), that intends to describe in depth the urban marginalized areas, the small towns are presented as disadvantaged on all the dimensions of social inclusion (synthesized by the authors of the mentioned report in 3 categories: inhabiting, occupation on the formal labour market, human resources). On aggregated level, correlated with the low level of development operated on the three dimensions, the respective towns represent the highest percentage of population living in areas considered marginalized (for 5 towns, all from this category, more than one third of population lives in such marginalized areas). This article is focused on two of these five towns (Aninoasa, Hundoara County and Budeşti, Călăraşi County), from the perspective of the relation between economic development and social development.*

Both towns achieved the status of city in the last year of the communist regime,1989.Aninoasa is one of the mono-industrial towns created in the mining area of Valea Jiului and its post-communism evolution is very affected by this statute. The town faced a socio-economic regress caused by the desindustrialization from the post-communist period that leaded to its official ruin. It is the first town in Europe in this situation. Even though the entire area was affected by the restructuring of the mining, there are significant differences regarding the development and the percentage of population living in marginalized areas among the towns of Valea Jiului. According to the mentioned above report, this percentage varies between 2,65% in Petrila and 47,16% in

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Aninoasa. Hence, in Aninoasa, almost half of the population lives in areas that are defined now as marginalized. Budești was defined in 1989 as an agro-industrial city and the both dimensions which define this type of economic development have been affected by a major decline in the post-communist period. The analysis of two different types of unsustainable development aims to present a common pattern of social underdevelopment.

Keywords: *deindustrialization, social development, communitarian development social change, underdevelopment*

Introduction

This analysis is made from the perspective of the social development paradigm. The general objective of the project is circumscribed to the accomplishment of a typology of underdevelopment in post–communist Romania. The accomplishment of such a typology comes from the necessity to have an innovating tool of shaping the strategies and the policy of response to the negative impact of social transformations. „The increase of social polarization and local disparities as effects of unindustrialization and return to agriculture, illustrates on one side the development of a certain pattern of the strategies of response to social transformations and on the other side, the low efficiency of the policy of support for the groups affected by the transition" (Preotesi, 2014:579). The analysis of two different types of unsustainable development aims to present a common pattern of social underdevelopment.

Theoretical frame

The two pillars which configured the theoretical frame are the social development theories and the functional classification of the towns.

Social development. Communitarian development

The communitarian development represents a particular case of social development. The communitarian development programs address "the communities with a marginal position within the market economy system" (Zamfir, in Pop (coord.), 2002: 252)

The concern for measuring the communitarian development leaded to the elaboration of some local indexes of development. The models for measuring the communitarian development, like that suggested by Sandu D. (Sandu, 1999), proposed a multi-dimensional perspective, reflected in synthetic indexes aggregating scores of sets of socio-economic indicators. The mentioned author identifies two types of structural factors of communitarian development: human capital, respectively, infrastructure, on communitarian level. Among the predictors of the level of development of the communes evaluated on these synthetic indexes are: the distance to the nearest town with over 30.000 inhabitants; the percentage of the persons over 60 years; the marginal position within the county: the location near a European road; the historical region. On other side, there are also ambiguous or ambivalent factors, in reference to the social

development: the distance to the nearest town with over 30.000 inhabitants and the percentage of the persons over 60 years have ambivalent characteristics, in reference with the communitarian development.

The data regarding the poverty rate in the communes with the lowest index of development shows that this is not always correlated with the development index. An example in this case is the commune Pietroasa, Timiş county, that has the highest rate of poverty (87%) and a negative moderate index of development (-0,29%), much higher that communes with a poverty rate under 50%.On the rural local administration, the poorest, according to Mihalache, (2013) are in the counties Alba, Caraş-Severin, Ialomiţa, Olt şi Teleorman, with values of 2-3 million lei). The median of the incomes is between 3-4 million (21 counties).On the opposite pole are the developed counties like Ilfov (20 of the 32 communes had in 2010 incomes over 20 million lei).The percentage of their own incomes in the total budgetary incomes exceeds 50% in the developed counties, while in the poor counties does not exceeds 1/5 of the total income: in 2010, the highest medium percentages of these were in Ilfov (67%), Timiş (59%), Cluj (53%), Sibiu (51%), Braşov (51%) and Constanţa (50%). The minimum values corresponding to the highest levels of dependence to the central budget were in Vaslui (17%), Botoşani (19%), Iaşi (23%), Olt (23%) and Maramureş (25%) (Mihalache, 2013).

Beside the level of own incomes, an important indicator of social development is the percentage of categories of expenses on local level. According to the quoted author, the main direction of using the money from the local budgets is the expenses for the budgetary employees in communes (this is between 58% in Vaslui and 33% in Constanţa, Braşov, Sibiu, Tulcea and Timiş) The expenses for insurance and social assistance (the expenses for the minimum guaranteed income are the most important part) and the contributions for persons with disabilities exceed 125 lei/inhabitant in Mehedinţi, Vaslui, Satu Mare, Vrancea and Călăraşi.

A distribution "in the mirror" is that of expenses for public development services; the percentage of this type of expenses is more important in the developed counties, while in the poor counties "the structure of budgetary incomes does not allow ample investments in projects of infrastructure or in systems of public utilities because the taxes collected by the authorities are very limited and the redistribution of public funds are insufficient for these activities" (Mihalache, 2013:132).

Even if this analysis is referring to the rural communities, and my analysis is referring to an urban space, the mono-industrial area Valea Jiului, the post communist evolution of this zone balances the report among different aspects of the rural and urban. Such an illustrative example regards the local budget of some small towns like Aninoasa, which have under 3 million lei (in 2014, before the redistribution from the central budget) while most of the counties have an average budget of the rural localities of 3-4 million lei (21 counties, according to Mihalache, 2013:135).A resembling pattern is registered also in a large part of small towns, under 10.000 inhabitants. In a recent Report of World Bank (WB, 2014) that intends to describe in depth the marginal urban areas, the small towns are presented as disadvantaged on all three dimensions (inhabiting, occupation on the formal labour market, human capital). At aggregated level, in correlation with the low level of development operated on the respective three

dimensions, the towns under 10.000 inhabitants contain the highest part of the population that lives in areas considered marginal – in 5 towns within this category more then a third of population lives in marginal areas. Among these 5 towns are those two that are the object of this analysis - Budeşti in Călăraşi county and Aninoasa in Hunedoara County. Even though both became towns in the last year of the communist regime (1989), these towns are very different as regards their history and their pattern of development, but they are similar as regards the low degree of development at this moment.

The functional classification of the towns

The topic of the social development of the towns is approached in the specialty literature from different perspectives – the economic perspective, the urban sociology perspective, the anthropologic perspective or the urban geography perspective.

The functional classification of the towns operates with categories elaborated on basic elements defining their socio-economic profile. The relation between the profile of the labour force and the dominant economic activity was conditioned by the socialist project of fast urbanization combined with the extensive economic development.

During the communist period this process of urbanization evolved in strong connection with the process of industrialization. The active population of the towns was subjected to an urbanization process of industrial type that leaded to its concentration in the respective industrial branches. According to the percentage of the 3 large sectors of activity (industrial, agrarian and services) we may identify several categories of large towns (Dumitrescu, 2008):

− industrial towns (over 50% of the occupied population is in industry and constructions);

− agrarian towns (over 50% of the occupied population is in agriculture, forestry, hunting and fishing);

− services towns (over 50% of the occupied population is in third sector);

− mixed towns (none of the economic sectors has 50% of the occupied population).

Beyond these categories of towns defined from functional perspective there are also combined forms, the so called agro-industrial towns, where the agrarian component is subordinated to the industrial one. Budeşti, Călăraşi County, represents such town and is one of the two cases selected to illustrate this analysis. The other town, Aninoasa, is an industrial town, more precisely a mono-industrial town. In Romania, according to quoted authors, the general criterion for a town to be industrial is to have over 50% of occupied population in the second sector.

The mono industrial towns are those where the economy is based mainly on a single industrial branch; the inclusion within this category is based on the so called index of mono-specialization. Mono-industrial towns represent particular cases of industrial towns. The concepts of mono-specialized town and that defining the particular case of "mono-industrial towns" are elaborated from the perspective of functional

classification of the towns, as a tool used for defining the socio-economic profile of a town or a net of towns

The mono industrial towns are those where the economy is based mainly on a single industrial branch, and sometimes only one company; the inclusion within this category is based on the so called index of mono-specialization.

In defining a town or a zone as mono-industrial we have to consider several factors (Dumitrescu, 2008):

- structure of occupied population;

- percentage of the population occupied in only one industrial branch

- percentage of the value of the production and the amount of money in only one industrial branch;

- index of localization and specialization aggregated in the so called index of mono-specialization.

Another functional criterion in defining the mono-industrial character is the existence of an extra-urban function of the respective industry (the goods must respond to an external demand and not exclusively to the internal need of the town). Aninoasa belongs to the category of towns established as mono-industrial in the mining area of Valea Jiului and its post-communist evolution is marked by this statute. Budeşti was included in the category of the so-called agro-industrial towns. Both towns faced a significant socio-economic regress caused by the de-industrialization from the post-communist period. The impact was much stronger on the mono-industrial mining town, which was higher developed and ended in declared insolvency – the first European town facing this situation. Budeşti is a so called agro-industrial town. In 1989 when it became town there was a IAS-enterprise specialized in mechanized services for agriculture (AGROMEC) as well as several a mall industrial objectives.

Data Analysis: Budeşti versus Aninoasa[1]

The methodological perspective is mainly qualitative. Hence, beyond the documentary analysis completed with statistical data gathered directly from local authorities, data were collected by semi-structured interviews with the institutional representatives and in-depth interviews with the inhabitants of the 2 towns. The collected data were completed and validated by semi-structured observation made during a field research within the respective 2 projects.

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[1] Data to be analyzed in this paper were gathered within 2 projects:
  - Case study - Budeşti, Călăraşi county, the project Sărăcie şi dezvoltare comunitară în ruralul românesc (Starea comunităţilor ICCV, 2014, coordinator Cătălin Zamfir)
  - Case study - Aninoasa, Hunedoara county, the project Deindustrialization and under-development in the Romanian Transition. Individual/Collective Strategies/ Reply Policies. Case study: Valea Jiului, within the project ID- 141086 „Plural- and inter-disciplinarily in doctoral and postdoctoral programs".

There are few common elements for the 2 towns that will be compared based on the perspective suggested by the theoretical and methodological approach enounced at the beginning of this paper:

– Both towns are old localities, documentary mentioned since the 16 century;

– Both towns became town in the last year of the communist regime, 1989;

– Both towns are small, with less than 10.000 inhabitants.

Even though both cases illustrate the relation enounced in the title of this paper, between the unsustainable communist development and post-communist under-development, the selection of these two towns intends to present differential pathologies of this evolution. The differences refer both to elements defining the unsustainably of the development and the negative socio-economic effects of the particular manner of the communist transition.

First major difference refers to the history and economic tradition of the two localities. Even though they were established in about the same period, Aninoasa developed around the coal mine, Budeşti is a traditional area of cultivating cereals. The population of the center of Aninoasa, Iscroni area, has a dual tradition – raising animals and mining; the communist project of modernization finds a rural population of farmers and rural artisans in Budeşti area. Beyond the differences related to the natural opportunities (relief, clime and subsoil) the experience and occupational tradition represented and still represent important elements that influenced on local level the effect of the socialist modernization project and the socio-economic impact of the post-communist transition.

Aninoasa belongs to the category of towns established as mono-industrial in the mining area of Valea Jiului and its post-communist evolution is marked by this statute. Budeşti was included in the category of the so-called agro-industrial towns. Both towns faced a significant socio-economic regress caused by the de-industrialization from the post-communist period. The impact was much stronger on the mono-industrial mining town, which was higher developed and ended in declared insolvency – the first European town facing this situation.

Budeşti is a so called agro-industrial town. In 1989 when it became town there was a IAS- enterprise specialized in mechanized services for agriculture (AGROMEC) as well as several industrial objectives, the most important being a mill, a boarded floor factory and a furniture factory. Now the basic economic activities in Budeşti are the small trade and the furniture production carried out in small family enterprises without any employees, just the person in charge and, sometimes, the family.

The specificity of this town is the high percentage of Roma population – over one third of the population, according to the census in 2011, over half of population according to the local administration representatives. An indicator of the low rate of development of the town is the percentage of social assisted people, over a fifth of the 7000 inhabitants, plus the 2000 inhabitants of the villages Aprozi, Buciumeni, Gruiu. According to the same source, about 90% of the Roma population receives social allowance.

The agrarian dimension of the town is preserved by the included villages Buciumeni, Gruiu and Aprozi and by the agrarian activity continued on a diminished level comparing with the communist period. Most part of the agrarian land owners leased the land to the only large farm of the town (AGROMIXT) that has several tens of workers, all from Buciumeni where the farm is located. For the active part of the population the working places are quasi-inexistent. The closing in 2009 of the knitting factory where worked 90 women of Budeşti had a negative socio-economic impact that could not be enough compensated in the post-crisis period. Now, the active population in Budeşti commutes to work in constructions, insecure jobs, occasional and on black. The same happens in rural adjacent localities in Călăraşi County. The relative high distance (36 km.) to Bucharest implies certain costs that limit the efficiency of this choice. From the interviews made with the institutional actors and the Budeşti population representatives the work "on black" with all the related vulnerabilities is preferred to a stable and legal contract paid with minimum wage comparing with the higher salary on the black that also ensures the preservation of certain social compensations.

The decline of Aninoasa started at the end of the 90's when it was initiated the accelerate restructuring of the mining end it grow when the mine Aninoasa was closed in 2006.Aninoasa is the smallest town in Valea Jiului; its population never exceeded 6000 inhabitants and now is under 4500 people. According to one of the interviewed institutional representatives, almost half of the inhabitants are retired while the employees are under 20% of the active population. The large number of retired people does not necessary reflect a deep ageing of the population, but is caused by the special conditions of retiring offered to those restructured in 2006, which could retire before time at 45 and in normal conditions at 50 years. According to the interviewed institutional representatives if in 1997 the employees were restructured regardless the pensioning conditions, in 2006 almost all restructured persons retired directly. In the area there are a factory of metallic confections (ADARCO), a factory of car covers, a factory of electric components (ELECTROUTIL) and a factory producing sofas and a bed and breakfast motel. Together with the 100 miners (the closest mine is at Livezeni) the total amount of employees is under 400. If we compare with 20 years ago when only in Aninoasa worked 8000 people, the decline is obvious. But if we compare the current situation of Aninoasa with the similar localities, the insolvency that was declared in 2013 seems hard to explain. A first explanation, in agreement with the Mayor's position, is that the failure is mainly on communitarian level, especially on local administration rather than on population's level. Considering that there are 2000 pensioners and the average pension is a little higher that the national average, the failure of the community seems to be a paradox.

The insolvency may be partial explained by the very important budgetary impact of a un-performing credit contracted by the mayoralty in the year when the mine Aninoasa initiated the closing procedures.

The insolvency as is defined by the Govern Order of Emergency no 46/2013 regarding the financial crisis and insolvency of the administrative territorial units was caused by several factors among whom are mentioned (in H.G no 804/2014 cited in extensor in Preotesi, 2014: 60-61):

- over indebted of the public institution by contracting a credit for investments in 2006 and the lack of necessary resources to cover the rates and the interests unsatisfactory degree of covering the debts from own income;

- low degree of collecting taxes and imposts;

- difficult economic situation on zone level considering that the budgetary incomes diminished considerable because many companies in the area entered in insolvency and the chances to obtain the debts were very low and the percentage of these debts represented 66,95% of the total incomes at 31. 03.2013;

- decrease of the amount receive from the county council budget for balancing the local budget due to difficult economic situation on national level;

- high percentage of expenditure for employees of the total budgetary expenditures caused by the high number of employees comparing with the real need of the administrative territorial unit (which decrease from 126 employees in 2010, to 47 employees in 2015).

Hence, beyond the increased expenditures and the drastic decrease of the local budget incomes, among the mentioned aspects there are some relating to the inefficient functioning of the relation between the local administration and the population. The low degree of voluntary conformation to paying fiscal obligations is one of the indicators and also one the effects of this dysfunctional relation. The discussions with the institutional representatives confirm this situation and the attitude of a part of the population towards the fiscal obligations.

There were registered situations when pensioners with a pension of 2000 lei refuse to pay the loan of 20 lei to the mayoralty's apartments, sometimes for a period of 5-6 years. One of the explanations offered by those interviewed is that they "people were used to have only rights and only one obligation-to provide as much coal as they could". The social importance of coal extraction was highly exaggerated during the socialist economy and perceived by the miners as so and now is a persistent residue in the collective mental.

Authors like Kidekel D.(2010) or Stegar I. (2014) analyse the psychological effects of the dramatic changes in the manner of promoting the social importance of the miners 'work and their image as a professional body. Together with the economic arguments like the decreased demand for coal caused by the de-industrialization from the post-communist period and the lack of efficiency of the extractive industry, the "miners' riots" leaded to a negative image of the miners, mainly of those in Valea Jiului. A complementary explanation is provided by the analysis of the data from the interviewed institutional representatives and also by the WB-MDRAP Report. Disregarding the 3000 pensioners and employees and the minors, we have more than one third of population of active age that are without any occupation. Part of these persons without occupation and income share their parents, spouses or grandparents' pension.

Another part (200 people, mainly Roma according to the data from the local authorities) has social allowance. It should be mentioned that the institutional

representatives appreciate that there are working opportunities in the area and those who do not work choose to do this, is not the lack of jobs.

According to Raluca Popescu (Popescu, 2014), Romania has an interesting pattern compared to the European trend regarding the support for the vulnerable families: "it is clearly oriented on financial aid (financial support especially for poor families, but also for families in general or specific types of families) and at-risk groups – children (in institutions) and women. The majority of European countries have also the objective of financial aid for families, but the second interest is in the reconciliation of work and family life and the provision of services. Hence, if the EU pattern in family policy objectives is less passive, considering the focus on work/life balance and services provision, the Romanian policy is just reactive, focusing on the passive support of money and on the protection of at-risk groups" (Popescu, 2014: 103-104).

On the contrary, in Budeşti the institutional representatives appreciate that the lack of working opportunities generates a low rate of occupation. Analysing the data from the mentioned Report we notice an obvious contradiction between the data and the perception measured by subjective indicators on the vulnerability of the population related to occupation in the two localities.

Table1. Indicators of marginalisation - Aninoasa versus Budeşti

Town	Population	% marginal occupation	% marginal Human capital	% residents in marginal areas
Aninoasa	4360	35,28	6,31	47,16
Budeşti	7725	8.8	52,19	36,47

Sources: Atlas of urban marginalized areas

The analysis of this contradiction revels important contextual differences that are premises of the explanatory model suggested below. The construction of this explanatory model is based on three data sources with three complementary approaches of the same socio-economic reality: the statistic data, the qualitative data collected in face to face interviews and the direct observation made during the field research. The context will be operated of two dimensions: opportunities and constrains, with important elements of difference between the two localities on each dimension. Among these opportunities are the income sources like the miner's pension - enough to secure the living for an extended family. Unlike Aninoasa, in Budeşti the percentage of pensioners is lower and the medium value of the pension (numerous farmer pensions, under the minimum income) is significantly lower. It is true that not all pensioners miners benefit of high pensions, but only those fulfilling the condition of 25 years in mine, but also those who worked on surface in the so called coal preparation plants have pensions more than double than farmers.

The discussions with the institutional representatives showed that for over 80% of the inhabitants in Aninoasa the mining and the activities in the related industries represented the only sources of income considering that only a fifth of the population, the so called "momarlani" had the means and the tradition to be involved in

complementary activities, like raising animals. The working force flexibility is higher in Budeşti where an important part of the population was involved in agriculture and, collateral, in traditional rudars trades like working the wood of soft essence. Both agriculture and traditional trades were activities low paid and without an important social prestige. Unlike the miners that worked in well-formed teams and depending on each other, sometimes even for their physical integrity, the occupations of those in Budeşti, which worked in/with the family, represented premises for developing a certain individualism and, on the other side, of an entrepreneur spirit. While in Valea Jiului, in spite of the governs' naïve suppositions, the percentage of those former miners who became entrepreneurs is very low; in Budeşti is a higher rate of those who opened small business in the post-communist period. On the other side, the territorial mobility of the working force in Budeşti is much higher than in Aninoasa. Even though Bucharest is 30 km away from Budeşti and Petroşani only 1o km from Aninoasa, commuting to work is more frequent in Budeşti.

In Dumitru Sandu's words, Bucharest is a city "radiating development" in a significant higher measure than a town with under 4o.ooo inhabitants like Petroşani. Beside that there are more available jobs in Bucharest than in Petroşani, the data collected on field shows a lower interest of the unemployed in Aninoasa for territorial mobility. A pole made in 2014 (the results are presented and analysed in Stegar, 2014) at the mines still functioning in Valea Jiului, 3 of those are to be closed starting this year, shows that from the 5o% of the miners that intend to search for a job, more than a third would search only in Valea Jiului, while under a third would look anywhere in the country. Among the determinant factors in accepting a job at a high distance from home is the salary, a motivating package is the basic condition in accepting such offer. Considering that the level of average wage in Valea Jiului is even today higher than the national level, it is to be expected that the offered package should be higher to stimulate the mobility in Valea Jiului. In Budeşti never existed such high standards. This mechanism is presented also in the case of the massive restructuring in 1997 (Stegar, 2000), and is also validated by the data collected on the mentioned field research made this year – for instance, some of the interviewed institutional representatives in Petrila told about many cases of persons without occupation and without any stable income that refused offers in Timisoara paid 2000 lei per month, because they appreciate that this amount does not compensate enough the difficulty of commuting. In synthesis, we may say that on one side the unemployed active persons in Budeşti are forced in a higher degree to look for a job and more willing to accept low paid offers and to commute. The significant lower educational stock in Budeşti than in Aninoasa represents another favouring factor in accepting some offers of unqualified works, low paid and without any element of social security. On the other side, the job offer is much higher in Bucharest than in Petroşani. Even though the situation presented briefly above explains somehow the differences regarding the indicators of the marginalization from the perspective of labour market accessibility, looking in depth we may draw some conclusions relevant from the perspective of the pathology of the underdevelopment of these communities.

Conclusions

The first conclusion refers to some common elements that worked as premises of the underdevelopment Gaining town status in 1989 can be considered a strictly political

decision, in both cases this decision not being correlated with the socio-economical situation of the 2 towns. Besides the fact that the two areas still keep almost exclusively rural areas on their territory, an important part of the Iscroni area, the village of Aprozi in the case of Aninoasa and Buciumeni for Budeşti, the urban area of the two towns is very poorly developed regarding road infrastructure, inhabitancy, access to public utilities, the sewer system and the natural gas network. It is relevant that in both cases the only paved street was the main road. In 1989 both settlements had a relatively low stable population of under 10.000 and a low educational stock (even if the educational stock was higher in Aninoasa, the percentage of those who did not graduated high-school was over 5o%, a similar percentage to the miners in Valea Jiului today (Stegar, 2014:55).The even lower educational stock of Budeşti can be correlated with the large Roma population, which had a significantly lower educational stock, compared to the majority. (ANR, 2014). The low educational stock works as an important premise of under development, according to the community development model shown in the presentation chapter of the theoretical frame of this analysis. What's more, in the case of Budeşti, another element which favours underdevelopment (identifiable in the model proposed by Dumitru Sandu) could be the large percent of agricultural workers. The disastrous evolution of the city of Aninoasa can be largely blamed on the context in which the massive restructuration of the Valea Jiului mining industry, the context being configured by a few aggravating elements in the case of this town. Mining towns were small settlements (the smallest in the socialist space (according to World Bank, 2003), lacking not just economical alternatives, but also economic potential (including in regards to consumption).

Aninoasa was the smallest of these mining towns, and had the least alternatives to mining. The workforce, concentrated on mining and overall poorly qualified represented an important negative premise of the socio-economical regress of the small towns of Valea Jiului. In Aninoasa, the percent of workers out of the total number of employees was significantly larger compared to the other towns of Valea Jiului. (Krauss, apud. Stegar 2014).

In Budeşti, besides the low level of infrastructural investment and human capital, the post-communist transition signaled a rupture of relations between agriculture and industry, as in the case of the mining industry restructuration, without compensating for the negative socio-economic effects by developing viable alternatives. The result of this process of community decline materialized through the transformation of a quarter of the city population in socially assisted citizens and the increase in vulnerability of the workforce in relation to the labour market. The alternatives of occupation are precarious, like commuting to work in constructions, in unsecure jobs, temporary, on "the black". If in Aninoasa bankruptcy is present more on an administrational level rather than among the population, in Budeşti a quarter of the population can be considered bankrupt through their socially assisted status. With regards to the fact that the main source of income for the people of Aninoasa is represented by the pensions of former miners, a large part of the active population being dependent on this source of income, lacking a development strategy for the area would mean that the disappearance of the 2000 retired miners would generate, in the current situation, the bankruptcy of this town, through the percentage of social aid beneficiaries, which could significantly outnumber the 25% of the population already in this situation in Budeşti.

From a different perspective, compared to Aninoasa, where the current local administration seems to have a local development plan, in Budeşti interacting with the representatives of the local authority didn't leave the impression that they have any intention of configuring a local development strategy. A single person from the Mayoralty ("the tax lady") knows what EU financial funds have been (unsuccessfully) accessed. Certain mechanisms of implicating the inhabitants were built, strictly formally, but they aren't functional – the local initiative group only exists on paper -, the consequence being the total failure of the European Council's ROMED-ROMACT projects implemented in Budeşti. The analysis proposed here shows the impact and function of some underdevelopment mechanisms, whose action could be amplified in the future without a coherent development strategy, which would integrate the community level with the area level and the centrally elaborated policies and programs.

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EMPIRICAL EVIDENCES ON HOW WOMEN LEADERS CHANGING GOVERNANCE IN THE GRASSROOTS BASED LOCAL GOVERNMENT OF BANGLADESH

Mizanur RAHMAN[1]

Abstract: *From colonial era there was hardly any scope for women's representation in the UP, a local government unit in Bangladesh. Entering into the trajectory of local governance, since 1997 to till date the women leaders (WLs) ceaselessly struggled to ensure their participation and by doing so WLs have been able to achieve their limited participation and thereby as an aftermath of their constrained participation they have brought some changes in rural governance. Against such a backdrop, the paper purports to unravel the research questions: i) What were the challenges WLs encountered towards playing their role in the UP? ii) How did these WLs change rural governance through their leadership performance? The paper is based on in-depth case study method. The findings revealed that women's major challenges towards ensuring their participation were male domination, corruption, faulty legal provision, and the autocratic structure of the UP. Amidst their limited scope of participation in the UP some women leaders have changed local governance though rendering social justice and community services, ensuring women's rights in the UP.*

Keywords: *local government; Union Parishad; woman leaders; social justice; community service.*

1. Introduction

The present structure of Union Parishad (hereafter UP only) in Bangladesh was laid down by the British colonial rulers in 1870. Since from the colonial era there was hardly any provision of women representation in the UP. In fact women's representation in the UP was ensured in 1997 which provided one-third reservation of women. In a traditional society like Bangladesh just after securing their entry into the scene of local governance in the UP, women leaders (WLs) needed to encounter immense barriers to coexist with their male counterparts for playing their role and participation in the UP. Since their reservation, these women leaders have already passed about two decades

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and several terms in the UP amidst massive struggle and conflict. My paper is based on the argument that within this two decades time span, through their prolonged and ceaseless struggle towards playing their roles in the UP, these women leaders have ushered a few positive changes in the sphere of rural governance but there are lacks of such evidences in the existing literature. Against such a backdrop, this paper aimed at uncovering the research questions: i) what were the major challenges women leaders (WLs) encountered towards playing their role in the UP? ii) How did these WLs change rural governance through their leadership performance?

2. Methodology of the Paper

This paper is prepared from a Ph.D. dissertation and hence based on a few in-depth case studies comprising one case on Woman Chairperson, two cases on Women Members and one case on a particular UP, this paper aimed at delving into the major challenges and contributions to governance of the WLs while playing their role and participation in the UP affairs. To address the research questions, all these cases were abridged substantively deducting some data in order to make the cases focused and pin pointed. This paper is mainly based on primary data. These data were collected during July-December 2013. To support primary data some secondary data were also used. Following the principles of the qualitative method[1] the selected cases were chosen based on purposeful selection and easy access from different socio-cultural zones[2] of Bangladesh. However, sample design[3] of the whole research is given in Table 1 below.

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[1] In qualitative research, the size of the sample is of secondary importance to the quality of data, as "qualitative research is concerned with smaller numbers of cases with more intensive analysis" (Davidson and Layder, 1994, p.173). Moreover, in qualitative research, the selection of the sample does not matter much; rather collecting data from the real world and its analysis is much more important and even the term sampling is not used.

[2] In total there are 4527 UPs in 7 divisions and 64 districts in Bangladesh. The sampled UPs were selected from covering all seven divisions and 7 districts of Bangladesh i.e. Chittagong, Comilla, Faridpur, Sylhet, Barisal, Bogra and Gaibandha districts.

[3] In the main research, in line with the research questions, 10 in-depth case studies, covering 5 women chairpersons and 5 women members, were done in the major socio-cultural zones in Bangladesh. For doing case studies, data were collected from 73 Women Members, and 6 Women Chairpersons of 27 UPs from 5 divisions of Bangladesh using a short questionnaire comprising demographic, socio-economic background, socio-political network, and challenges encountered and contribution of the WLs in the UP (Table-1). But for phenomenological analysis data were collected from 19 UPs from 5 major socio-cultural zones of Bangladesh. To verify some aspects of collected data obtained from the case study and phenomenology, 3 FGDs and 2 PRAs were conducted in 3 and 2 UPs respectively comprising different sections of villagers.

Table 1. Selection of Research Participants for All Methods

Division	District	Upazila	Union Parishad	No. of Women Members	No. of Women Chairpersons
Chittagong	Chittagong	Mirsarai	Wahedpur	3	
	Comilla	Comilla Sadar	Bijoypur Modham	2	
			North Durgapur	3	
			South Durgapur	3	
			Amratali	3	
			Kalir Bazar	1	
		Chouddagram	Alkora	2	
			Suvapur	3	
			Chiowra	3	
			Gunabati	3	
			Jannath Dighi	1	
Dhaka	Faridpur	Faridpur Sadar	Machaar	3	1
		Vanga	Manikdaha	3	1
		Boalmari	Chandpur	3	1
Sylhet	Sylhet	Sylhet Sadar	Jalalabad	3	
			Tuker Bazar	3	
			Khadimpara	3	
			Khadimnagar	3	
Khulna	Barisal	Agoljara	Bakal	3	
			Ratnapur	3	
			Rajihar	3	
			Goila	3	
		Wazirpur	Jalla	1	1
Rajshahi	Bogra	Sherpur	Mirjapur	3	
			Garidaha	3	
	Gaibandha	Palashbari	Betkapa UP	3	1
			Pabnapur	3	1
5 Divisions	7 Districts	11 Upazilas	27 UPs	73	6

Source: Data collected from the field by the researcher himself, 2013.

3. Women's Representation in Local Government in Bangladesh

Local government (LG) in this sub-continent has its deep roots in the past. The British colonial rule founded the cornerstone of today's Union Parishad in the undivided Indian subcontinent with the *Village Chowkidary Act of 1870*. After the end of British rule in India in 1947, India and Pakistan emerged as two different states. Afterwards, Bangladesh achieved its independence in 1971 and inherited the LG system from Pakistan with some modifications in its structure. Since from 1870 the functionaries of

local government[1] were always in the hands of males (Chowdhury, Islam and Mahtab, 1994:6) and rights to vote in the local bodies were dependent on the educational qualification, possession of property and tax payment etc. (Smock, 1977:117; Women for Women, 1992). Although women's representation in the political community was allowed by the Government of India Act in 1935 (Forbes, 2002) but women for the first time took part in the election of the rural local bodies in 1956 (Rashiduzzaman, 1968; Inter Parliamentary Union, 1987). Following this provision during Pakistan regime only one female candidate was elected in the UP election of 1956 and 1969. After independence of Bangladesh, in the first UP election of 1973, out of 4352 UPs, only one woman from Rangpur district was elected as UP Chairman (Alam and Begum, 1974: 38-51). Afterwards, women's representation to local government was enshrined by two presidential ordinances namely the Local Government Ordinance of 1976 and the Municipal Ordinance of 1976, which provided a provision of nomination of 2 women members in the UP. Regarding women's representation in the UP, important development took place during Ershad regime[2] through the passage of the Local Government (Upazila Parishad and Upazila Administration Reorganization) Ordinance of 1982 and the Local Government (Union Parishad) Ordinance of 1983. Following the Union Parishad Act of 1983, provision of nomination of three women members was introduced (Haque, 2003; Khan 2011; Khan and Ara, 2006). In 1993, the system of nomination of women members in the UP was changed to indirect election and accordingly three women members were elected by the 9 elected male members and the elected Chairman. A major breakthrough regarding the process of representation of women members in the UP was made in 1997, which provided reservation of one-third seats for women members. Later on by an office order from the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives (LGRD&C) women's representation in the UP was ensured in different standing and project committees. Still there are lack of clarity and vagueness in the legal provision regarding the roles and responsibilities of the women member in the UP.

Union Parishad serves as the lowest unit of rural local government in Bangladesh that covers an area of 10-12 sq. km. In every five years, UP representatives are elected on a non-party basis. A UP shall consist of an elected body comprising a Chairman and 12 members and it represents villagers ranging from 10,000 to 30,000. Among 12 members only 3 positions are reserved for the women members in the UP. A Union is divided

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[1] Here in this paper local government connotes rural local government, more specifically Union Parishad, the oldest rural local government body in Bangladesh. Till 1983, the only local government in Bangladesh was Union Parishad. In the last 145 years that spanned from 1870 till 2015, UP never loses it representative character and election was continued every 5 years alternate in UP unlike many ups and downs in Bangladesh society.

[2] Hussain Muhammad Ershad was one of the military rulers in Bangladesh. While he was the Chief of Army Staff of the Bangladesh Army, he declared Martial Law following a bloodless coup and became Chief Martial Law Administrator in 1982. Afterwards he became the President of Bangladesh from 1983 to 1990. During Ershad regime, following the suggestions of National Executive Committee for Administrative Reform and Reorganization (NICARR), he undertook substantive reform measures in the sphere of civil administration and local government system in Bangladesh.

into 9 Wards[1], among which 3 Wards are reserved for a woman member. In each Union nine male members are elected from 9 Wards and 3 women members are elected from their respective reserved Wards (Figure1). Apart from the elected representatives there are few other salaried employees *i.e.* Secretary, *Dafader* and *Chowkidar* in the UP. Jurisdictionally UP covers a wide range of community services such as, promotion of cottage industries and family planning; protection and maintenance of public property; maintenance of law and order, birth and death registers, UP records, hats and bazaars; lighting of public ways, public streets and public places; plantation and preservation of trees; maintenance and regulation of cattle pounds; issue of various kinds of certificates and license; settlement of pretty disputes; and excavation of derelict ponds for pisciculture; building and development of physical infrastructure; regulating community behaviour; and improving environment, forestry and disaster mitigations etc. UP has been involved in various food assisted development projects i.e. Rural Development, Vulnerable Group Development (VGD)[2], Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF)[3], Rural Maintenance Program, Food for Works etc. UP has to maintain a close relationship with lots of GOs, NGOs and international donor agencies.

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[1] Ward is the lowest planning unit of Union Parshad, which is composed of one or more than one villages. Nine Wards make a Union.

[2] Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) is a food based Social Safety Net Programs in Bangladesh, sponsored by World Food Program. The VGD target group comprised mainly destitute women covering landless and asset less women who are widowed, divorced, abandoned, having under-nourished children, lactating mothers and women with handicapped husband etc. In recent times, the program has moved from its role of relief provider to larger development role like providing training on life skills and income generating skills to women beneficiaries. The aim of the program is to enhance food and nutrition security of women and children through improved food consumption, education, skills development, livelihood diversification and risk mitigation. To achieve objective of VGD program, currently about 3.75 million beneficiaries from ultra-poor households are provided with the provision of monthly food ration of 30 kg of wheat or 25 kg of fortified wheat flour (*atta*, in Bangla) for a period of 24 months, and a package of development services for human capital development.

[3] VGF is an acronym for Vulnerable Group Feeding. The VGF program is one of the food-based social safety net programs in Bangladesh. It was created in the 1970s by the World Food Program (WFP) for emergency aid caused by disaster. Now the government provides food subsidy for the poorest under this program. The targets of the program are: i) daily labourers whose income is low or irregular; ii) the landless or those that have less than 0.15 acres of land; iii) persons with disabilities or their wives; iv) poor women/men affected by natural disaster.

Figure 1. *Structure of Union Parishad*
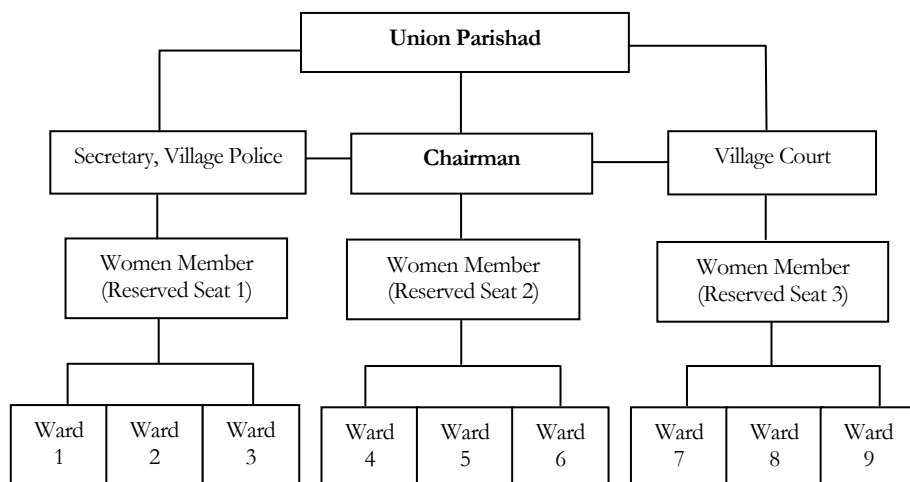
Source: Prepared by the Author, 2013.

4. Few Empirical Evidences of the Challenges and Contribution of the Women Leaders at the Grassroots: The Cass of the Union Parishad

Based the following evidence based in-depth case studies it was found that women leaders have contributed to pro-poor governance in some aspects of the rural life amidst severe constraints by the socio-political milieu and reinforced by structural and cultural impediments imposed by the patriarchal value system. These women have engaged themselves to a greater extent in transformative politics for the greater interests of the poor people of the rural society. The following cases will reveal the WLs' contribution in the UP jurisdiction.

4.1. The Case of Razia Begum (Mina), Chairperson, Bethkapa UP

Running for election 3 times Razia Begum (Mina), a widow of aged 48, was elected Chairperson in Bethkapa UP, Palashbari Upazila in the Gaibandha District in Bangladesh. As a widow she runs her small but single family[1] with a monthly income of

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[1] Single family refers to a single unit family of husband, wife and their children. In general husband acts as the family head in the single family concept. With the gradual development of the society the tradition of extended or joint family is changing whereas single unit family is getting preference in the rural society like the urban society.

about 40,000 taka[1] (514 US$). Her family is composed of 2 sons, both of whom are now studying at the master's level. Mina obtained a BA (Bachelor of Arts) degree, and she inherited some agricultural lands of about 2.5 acres from her husband and parents. Razia comes of a good family. Her parents were matriculated and service holders. Nobody in her family was found directly involved with any political party but a few of her ancestors served as Sardar/Matbor[2] in the village. Before she was elected in the UP she worked in the *Grameen* Bank[3]. She and her husband were found involved in student's politics during their college life.

Being the chief executive Mina had to face serious male domination in the Parishad. Sometimes the male members used to protest in groups when she distributed projects to the female members. At some point, a few male members even threatened her quite often, saying that they would file a fake case against her. However, Mina, an honest, skilled and articulate woman was able to handle the trouble because of her past experience at the *Grameen* Bank. Mina nevertheless tried to distribute project assignments to female and male members equally in line with the legal provision but the male members did not accept that and therefore they imposed their domination in unjust, cruel and illogical manner by unnecessarily harassing the female members. Thereafter, as the Chairman, she shared how she resolved the problem while a male member suited a fake case against one female member in her UP. All male members several times verbally threatened her to start movement and write against her in the media due to practicing her judgment for ensuring gender equality in the UP. Once she gave big projects to the female members, male members jointly made a complaint against her to UNO[4], ADC[5], DC[6]. Now she tried to consult with the male members when she provided any project to the female members. The Chairman informed that

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[1] One US$=77.88 taka as of 27 March 2015. The figure is calculated more or less in full digit deducting the fraction amount.

[2] Sardar and Matbor refer to the local leader that performs a leadership role in local dispute resolutions in the community through an informal and unstructured mechanism. The act of providing service from the sardar or matbor may be regarded as sardari or matbori. Both terms are interchangeably used in Bangla and English.

[3] Grameen Bank is a specialized financial institution in Bangladesh. The Grameen Bank is a Nobel Peace Prize-winning microfinance organization and community development bank founded in Bangladesh. It has developed a group-based micro credit approach which is applied to use peer-pressure within a group to ensure the borrowers follow through and conduct their financial affairs with discipline, ensuring repayment and allowing the borrowers to develop good credit standing. More than 99% of its borrowers are women and through micro-credit program Grameen Bank helps empowering the poor women in rural Bangladesh.

[4] UNO stands for Upaliza Nirbahi Officer meaning executive head of the Upazila, a sub-national administrative unit of Bangladesh.

[5] ADC is an abbreviation for Additional Deputy Commissioner at the District level, who assists the Deputy Commissioner in the work at the district level.

[6] DC refers to the Deputy Commissioner and DC is the administrative head at the district level. The activities of the nation building departments are coordinated by the DC. It is the third tire of the local government unit in Bangladesh although there is no representative local government body at this stage.

each woman member had to work in 3 wards and their jurisdiction was 3 times higher than that of the male members.

Sharing her experience as a woman Chairperson she shared how Upazila[1] administration sometimes took away some shares that were supposed to be channelized to the UP from Upazila. Citing memory from the last year she alluded that out of 12 tons rice allocated for the food for works, UP was given 10 tons rice because Upazila took the rest 2 tons rice. In case of 40 days' work; the government allocated fund for 160 villagers but Upazila gave UP only 115 and the rest was forcibly taken by the Upazila. Mina further elaborates that in the case of the VGD and VGF card, the Upazila administration followed the same strategy, which in fact created huge problem for the UP. According to her opinion, due to scanty resource allocations from the government, she could not undertake many development projects in her UP.

Mina noted that through attending rural salish[2] women members are providing various services to the society. She informed that when she could not attend any salish program, then she telephoned relevant female member to remain present over there. In some village women conduct salish themselves and doing good to the society. She told that when they faced problem, she went there with the UP secretary to look into the matter and do the needful. She achieved some crowning success in some areas, especially setting up a tube well for ensuring safe drinking water for the poor villagers. Before Mina's coming to the UP, many villagers used open toilets and also practiced open defecation, but after she staged a special movement to destroy/break those unhygienic bamboo-made open toilets in her territory Mina achieved remarkable success in sanitation coverage because she provided support from her UP to set up low cost water-sealed toilets. Due to her dynamic leadership she obtained more than 95% sanitation coverage in her UP. She solved a long-standing water-logging problem by constructing a drainage system in her Union and also upgraded most of the important roads in her Union. She was also very successful in increasing/extending the number of poor beneficiaries of various safety net programs in her UP, bargaining with the local administration.

Analytical implications of Mina's Case

Structural bottleneck: The UP structure is responsible for male domination: Being the head and chief executive of the UP, Mina faced serious problems from the male

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[1] President Lt. General Hussain Muhammad Ershad introduced the Upazila system, abolishing the Sub-Division system during 1982-4. Before that, it was known as Thana (Police Station). Afterwards, different governments used both terms (Upazila/Thana) interchangeably according to their preferences. At least 22 nation building departments (NBDs) are working at the Upazila level. Upazila is an administrative unit at the sub-district level in Bangladesh. The immediately-passed ruling party (2009-2014) formed an elected local government body at the Upazila level in 2009.

[2] Salish refers to informal local arbitration council for resolution of petty disputes conducted by the UP representatives. Salish is the platform of providing judgment in the village court.

members, who challenged her leadership position and role. In fact, the structure of the UP is one of the major challenges for women leaders.

Autonomy and corruption problems in the UP: Mina's case shows that without sufficient autonomy local government cannot perform better. The findings of the case study also corroborate the massive corruption in Bangladesh administration.

Male domination: The case also revealed that Mina encountered huge male domination in the UP. It was learnt from her case that when she started ensuring equal rights for women members in the UP, the male members were very annoyed with such a practice and they warned her that they would file fake cases against her; but as Mina was out and out honest and she knew how to tackle such problems, she tried to overcome the male domination.

Contribution of the women leaders in the UP: Because of her good leadership quality she achieved success in sanitation coverage, made available safe drinking water, increased the number of safety net benefits bargaining with the local administration, constructed a drainage system which was a much-demanded issue for the villagers, successfully managed serious male domination in her favour, and reduced the corrupt practices in the UP.

Women for women: Mina's case shows that women have empathy and feelings for women. She always tried to assign project responsibilities to the male and female members equally and unlike other male Chairmen, she provided big projects to the women members in her UP, which in fact spurred/evoked serious dissatisfaction and anger by the male members, but she did not compromise with their undue demands. She successfully overcame the threats and challenges posed by the male members. She had sufficient confidence in the female members and that is why she involved those women members in big projects and allowed them to perform Salish and when the female members faced challenges she personally handled those cases with boldness and courage. Above all her previous managerial position/qualities which she obtained in her work at the *Grameen* Bank job also helped her to manage the problems in the UP.

4.2. The Case of Fatema Akhter Parul, Woman Member, Khadimpara UP

Fatema Akhter Parul was elected UP member for two terms; the first time in 2005 and second time in 2011 in the Khadimpara UP, Sylhet Sadar Upazila, Sylhet District. She is 38, read up to class ten and hails from Jahanpur village. She is married to a non-matriculate village doctor[1]. Fatema's family is composed of 6 members comprising 2 sons, 2 daughters, and her spouse. She lives in a single family. Her monthly expenditure is about 35,000 Taka (450 US$), and the lion's share comes from her husband's medical

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[1] In Bangladesh village doctor refers to those people that have some a smattering knowledge of medical practices which can be acquired or learned through serving in a small pharmacy or serving as a compounder/assistant with a registered doctor. There are also para-medical diploma courses for being a village doctor. They are basically practitioners or sometimes may be quacks.

practice. Apart from homestead, Fatema has only .08 acres of land. Her husband heads the family with the active support of Fatema. Fatema's cousin, father-in-law and grandfather served as the UP Chairperson in the past. Her forefathers acted as Sarder and Matbar in the village. Before coming to the UP she was engaged in 2 NGOs: Grameen Bank and the Friend's in Village Development Society (FIVDS). She has good social mobility and linkages with some government officials including the Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO). Her knowledge about UP has substantially enhanced after she was elected second term. When she was elected for the first time she had no idea about the jurisdiction and prerogatives in the UP. At the initial stage the male members could not at all tolerate the female members, and they always frowned her saying that the women members were elected in the reserved seats so they had nothing to do with UP activities except supporting everything with them. In general, the UP Chairmen were men, so they tried to keep the women members subservient to their control. If any woman member had good understanding with the UP Chairman, then that particular woman got more projects from the Chairman. Parul shared a painful saga of deprivation done by the UP Chairman with the researcher. Once UP Chairman requested her to prepare an estimation of a small feeder road approaching to a male member's house in the Ward no 2 where she represented Ward no 1, 2, 3. She was very happy to prepare the estimation but when she was about to finalize the project proposal, the concerned male member came to the UP Chairman and requested the Chairman to assign that project to him. He convinced the Chairman saying that if the woman member implemented the project in his own Ward no 2, he would never be able to win in the election again. Thus the male member got the project assignment from the Chairman. Due to Chairman's such decision she was quite upset because she worked hard for preparing the project proposal. As per legal provision the women members should get a one-third share of the total projects conducted by the UP, but still women members had to face lots of problems to ensure their rights in the UP. In fact women members hardly got their equal share from the UP. Having represented 3 times higher jurisdiction, women are getting only one-third project benefits which are quite illogical and irrational.

Parul was able to win the love of the common villagers by playing a role in the village salish. She elaborated that once she attended a village salish where she come to know that a young man forcibly raped a young woman. Realizing the significance of such a sensitive incident in the context of Bangladesh she pointed out that as the young man just spoiled the young woman with force and cruelty, she thought that without finishing salish and giving justice for such issue she would not leave from salish. Then she called her husband there so that he could accompany her if it took late hours to finish the judicial procedure. She also requested some village elderly to remain present there so that they could provide due judgment to that case. Almost 150 villagers were present there to help her and it took several hours to finish the whole judicial procedure. Then the juries unanimously decided that as the young man put the women in extreme shame and it would be very tough for that victim woman to get marry with anyone because all villagers already came to know this, so it was decided that the young man should have to marry that girl on that particular night. Then the juries summoned an official match maker to register this marriage following proper religious fanfares and rituals. When

everything finished, it was 3 am. While the judicial procedures were going on, no male member was present there in the salish.

Analytical implications of Parul's Case

Male domination: Parul case represents the fact that women members were highly neglected by the male members in the UP during their entry period. Still, such male domination, negligence, and deprivation are quite existent now. Here she depicted the real picture of how women representatives were being deprived of their due rights in the UP and how the legal provision in the UP made the woman member's role shaky and subservient in relation to the role of male members.

Faulty legal practice imposed on the women in the UP: This is really surprising to think that as per legal dictum women members are given only one third of the total projects, while they represent an area that is 3 times larger. This is how state or legal provision also subjugates women by depriving them of their due rights.

WLs are serving the community through providing culturally-suitable judgments: The conduct of the salish is a glaring example of the community service of the woman members in her jurisdictional area. Such an act of social justice shows that woman have proper capacity to deal with life-related matters with proper dignity and honour. Through this case we can understand that woman members can perform their social commitment and responsibility with a strong hand and ensure the rule of law in the society. Thus these women members are contributing to social justice and good governance at the local level. This case shows that that woman can play a proper role in the community if they are provided with a suitable and favourable environment and a legal framework or structure to deliver justice in the society. There are other ramifications of such a case which demonstrate that she has an aggressive attitude to this extremely male-dominated patriarchal society, where she also considers herself as a victim, so she thinks that the rapist should not go unpunished rather by providing punishment she has ventilated her wrath and anger on the irrational draconian patriarchal social norm. Therefore, when she got an opportunity to take revenge through such a wrongdoing or misdeeds done by male domination and masculinity, she left no stone unturned to deal with it with an iron hand. Obviously men and women both live in a specific culture-bound, value-laden society, where all norms, values, actions, thoughts and beliefs are properly governed and applicable in line with that specific more of that culture. According to the social norms of Bangladesh, the judgment provided by the salish committee might be a culturally-appropriate decision. However, viewed from the substantive rationale it can be easily understood how awful it might be for a woman to endure her whole life being the wife to a rapist. Therefore, the pivotal question lies here is how will she suffer for the rest of her life, especially if her husband take revenge on her for a forceful marriage? Therefore, Parul's judgment concerning the rape case could not be supported at all; it axiomatically and unquestionably calls for necessary value changes in the society, where men and women can both enjoy the same rights and privileges without any discrimination.

4.3. The Case of Nazma Akhter, Woman Member, Amratoli UP

Nazma Ahkter has won the UP election of 2011 from Krisnapur village, Amratali UP, Comilla Sadar Upazila, Comilla District. Nazma, 37, is now married to a service holder. She has one son and one daughter and she lives in a joint family[1] with 16 members. Both spouses have an HSC (Higher Secondary Certificate) level education. She runs her family with a monthly income of 80,000 Taka (1027 US$). Nazma comes from a rich family and she possesses 3 acres of landed property. In her family no one played a representative role in any of the existing political institutions in Bangladesh, but her family had been involved in local judicial activities in the village for a long time. Before coming to the UP she used to work in an NGO named Prime Worker. She was involved with the student wing of the Bangladesh Awami League (BAL), one of the major political parties in Bangladesh since her school life and now she is also involved with the BAL. Her husband is actively involved with the local committee of the BAL politics. She maintains a linkage with the local MP in Comilla.

Nazma shared that once the UP Chairman assigned projects for improvements of Hut-Bazaars to all male members without informing the female members. But after few weeks women members came to know about such projects from the Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO). Immediately after receiving such information when they enquired about it to the Chairman, the UP Chairman then managed to provide each female member Tk. 10,000 (128 US$) collecting money from 9 male members and thus he managed the WLs in the UP.

In course of the conversation, Nazma shared a few experiences of rendering community services to the women. She helped a woman victim in her village that came to disclose all her painful story to her. The victim told that she got married 3 years ago, where she got a baby there in that family. The victim somehow came to know that her husband has got married another woman and her husband was away from her since last 3 years and he was not giving any money for running her family expenses. Her husband kept the victim in her father's home and did not take any attention and care for the last 3 years. Nazma, on hearing everything from the victim, decided to meet a local advocate in the local legal aid NGO. She went there taking the victim with her and disclosed everything to that advocate. Then the lady advocate informed them that at first they could send a "show cause notice" to the victim's husband informing him of the whole case. Receiving that notice the victim's husband did not respond. After that the advocate sent the victim's husband 3 notices consequently and with the last notice it was stated that if the husband did not come to meet them within 7 working days after getting that notice, a legal case would be filed against him in the Women and Children

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[1] Joint family refers to an extended family that is composed of the members of a single family plus other relatives of husband or wife living in that family. A joint family is headed by an elderly person that may be the father, mother, brother, sister, father in law, mother in law, grandfather, grandmother of either husband or wife or any other close relatives of the husband or wife. During earlier days in the typical rural society, most of the family belongs to such extended family but nowadays the concept of joint family is undergoing change in the rural society.

Affairs Court. Immediately the victim's husband came to meet the advocate. Then her husband promised that he would rent a home for her and would start a family with that victim again. However, after that her husband never did anything for her. Then they again went to that advocate and decided to file a law suit against her husband. In the meantime, the woman member also tried another strategy and contacted the UP Chairman of the jurisdiction of the husband and told him everything. Then the Chairman also informed her husband to meet him, but waiting 7 days the Chairman said that as the husband did not come to meet him within that period he requested that the woman member proceed further to file the case against the husband. Then the advocate made a case and after that her husband was forced to accept her as a wife.

In another case, Nazma informed the "interviewer" that as an aftermath of a trivial family feud, one non-commissioned solder in military service one day severely bit his wife and then demolished all of the valuables in the house. After that he went away to Dhaka and the victim woman came to Nazma and asked for her help. Then the woman member advised the wife to collect the address of the higher authority of military services at Dhaka. Following that the woman member sent a complaint against that man to the higher authority. And at the same time, she also talked over cell phone with that soldier and requested to meet her immediately. The solder immediately came and informed her that if the Union Parishad did not withdraw the complaint against him, the authority would suspend him. Then she told the husband that if he stopped all of this family violence and lived happily with his family then she would help him. After that the woman member took a written undertaking from the husband where he proposed that he would never do such misbehaviour with his wife in the future. Then the woman member informed again the higher authority about his current promise and thus served the woman member and saved the woman's family. From the innermost sense of humanity and community feelings, Nasima provided this community service for one of the constituents in her jurisdictional.

Analytical Implications of Nazma's Case

Male domination and deprivation to women members in the UP: Nazma's case revealed that how the male Chairman and male members imposed and practice deprivation to the female members in the UP.

Women for women: Women can play a role for the women, like a messiah, which is quite evident from her illustrations of the community service she shared in her case. This is exactly the most desired role that the women members can render to the community women. Previously the male members could never deal with such matters at the grassroots level, but now the women members are playing a formidable role to safeguard the interests of the life-related matters of women in the community and these women are contributing in terms of establishing the rule of law and social justice, which are the basic twin objectives of ensuring good governance in rural society. This is the best example of ensuring good governance at the community level by the women leaders in the UP.

Providing culturally suitable judgment: Like Parul's case, the same analysis is applicable here too. From the point of substantive rationale, the solution that Nazma provided to the

family is still questionable because other alternative solutions for the victim might represent better judgment. Forcing her husband to accept his married wife with a baby can be even more harmful for the victim's life if there is no mutual understanding, love or mental/emotional attachment for the sustenance of the marital relationship.

4.4. Male domination and deprivation and corruption in the UP: An extreme case

The following extreme case would present a vivid picture and stark realities concerning how the women members have struggled to establish their rights and how WLs tried to combat the highly corrupt Chairman in an extremely male dominated atmosphere. The following happened in the Chiora UP, Choddagram Upazila, Comilla District, where after the oath taking the Chairman convened the first meeting without the notice of 3 woman members. In that first meeting it was decided that through the VGF card, rice would be distributed among the villagers. One woman member, Laily Begum (preferred pseudonym) disclosed that the women had been deprived of their rights when all of the VGF cards had been given to the male members by the Chairman. After that, all of the women members protested altogether against such a decision by the Chairman. Laily opined that the Chairman did not give women members VGF cards because they were women. Moreover, the women members told the Chairman that they had come there by bagging popular verdict of the majority villagers, not by the mercy or whim of others, and they said that they had received more votes than the Chairman. Immediately after that, the Chairman gave 3 women members only 18 VGF cards, 6 cards for each member, but they decided not to take the cards. That was the very start of the women members' oppression in the Chiora UP. The Chairman personally offered Laily 6 cards. On the other hand, the Chairman gave 100 cards to the male member of her ward and then she requested the concerned male member to distribute the cards given to her also. The following day Laily submitted a list of 15 VGF card applicants who were extremely poor people in her village. She told the author that those people were so poor that they waited for the whole day with a hope of getting 5 kg rice each, which was supposed to be distributed through the VGF card system, even while they were fasting during the *Ramadan*[1] month. However, the Chairman did not give her rice for those people while there was enough stock of rice in the UP, and after that she went back home with a heavy heart and started crying when she reached home and became bewildered, saying that: "being a woman member I could not give rice to these 15 poor people".

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[1] According to Islamic rituals *Ramadan* is one of the Five Pillars of Islam. Muslims worldwide observe *Ramadan* as a month of fasting that starts before sunrise and ends after sunset with the taking of food and drinks. Fasting is "obligatory" for adult Muslims, except those that are ill, traveling, pregnant, breast-feeding, diabetic or going through menstrual bleeding. While fasting from dawn until sunset, Muslims refrain from consuming food, drinking liquids, smoking, or engaging in sexual relations. According to Islam, there are enormous rewards for observing fasting and it is believed that the offering of prayers, recitation of the Quran and other religious activities are multiplied during the *Ramadan* period.

Following this incident, all women and male members became united against the Chairman and decided to propose a "no confidence vote"[1] against the Chairman to the DC office, Comilla. After that move, hearing all of this from the general public the Chairman came to her home many times because she and the Chairman both were elected from the same ward. Then the Chairman requested her to stop the move, and promised her that he would give her everything according to her shares or rights in the UP. Then being sufficiently convinced by the utterance of the Chairman she thought that no one should be judged by only one occurrence and she also deemed that the Chairman could be given one chance more. Then the Chairman asked her to sign the resolution and she signed it. After that the Chairman made her one of the signatories for UP fund management. After she was given signatory power, the Chairman always sent her blank checks for her signature. Then she asked the Chairman why he always sent her a blank check. In reply the Chairman informed her that the UP Secretary signed that check, and he also signed it and asked her what the problem was with her signing it. The Chairman also notified her that if she did not give her signature, there would be no problem in withdrawing the money. In fact, all of these blank checks which were being signed by her were for LGSP projects and represented huge money, which was sanctioned for undertaking many projects in her name. The money was withdrawn by the Chairman without her knowledge. This incident made every member (irrespective of male and female) seriously angry with the Chairman and then altogether, 8 members jointly, filed a written complaint giving all of the details about the whole matter to the DC, and the UNO both and they also sent a copy to the concerned Ministry. In its wake, the DC formed an enquiry committee to probe into the matter and the committee then came to the UP and investigated the whole case. In line with their complaint the committee found that their written complaint was perfectly true and accordingly the committee accused the Chairman of stealing or misusing 5 lacks 60 thousand taka (7191 US$). Based on the probe committee report, the Chairman's position was declared vacant by the Ministry in April, 2011. Immediately after that the Chairman went to the High Court and requested a stay of the order of the Ministry for 3 weeks from the High Court. Thereafter, the Chairman managed the stay order but after that he continued his illegal activities avoiding 8 members in the UP. She then stated that except for those 8 members, 4 other members (one woman and 3 male members) were now working with the Chairman. She said that one might be astonished to know that to stop her from protesting against the wrongdoings of the Chairman, he also employed hooligans/thugs to threaten her so that she could be stopped and still the Chairman's hooligans constantly threatened her. She informed the Upazila Woman Vice-Chairperson of this incident so that something could be done about them and they were trying to bring the issue to the media but nothing has happened to date. The Chairman continued his wrongdoings apparently without caring about anything. She said that she believed that nobody might have heard about such an incident anywhere in Bangladesh. While sharing their painful experience,

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[1] There is a provision in the Local Government (Union Parishad) Ordinance (Amendments) of 2010 that says that "no confidence" charge can be framed against any act of the Chairman, members or the Parishad (council) and any elected member can submit such a charge to the UNO in written form having signatures of the majority of the elected members along with the particular complaint.

the women members even demanded justice from the present author and the media and they asked him how this was possible in Bangladesh.

During the data collection, a woman member shared a case of corruption of the Chairman of Chiora UP, which she had experienced very recently. That woman member experienced this case of corruption when she came to know that she was given a project of one lack taka (1286 US$), which was obtained from a 1% land transfer tax from Upazila Parishad. After getting the project the Chairman advised her to sign a check and thereafter the check was cashed. As soon as the check was cashed the Chairman took away the whole taka from her giving her 5,000 taka (64 US$) in her hand.

Another woman member shared another incident of corruption of the Chairman of Chiora UP with the author. She said that once the Chairman tried to pass a few projects by the UNO office using fake signatures of woman members and having doubt about its authenticity the UNO immediately probed it and he was caught red-handed because it was completely concocted and fake. At that time the UNO warned the Chairman that he would be suspended from his Chairmanship but the Chairman has continued his wrongdoing in the UP managing a stay order from the high court.

5. Summary

5.1. Summary of the challenges of the women leaders encountered in the UP

The above cases revealed that the women leaders in the UP have encountered the following major challenges towards ensuring their role and participation in the UP.

5.1.1. Extreme male domination: From the empirical evidence, it was found that male members are yet to mentality ready to accept the women members and to share an iota of rights, benefits and resources with women although legally government has made provisions for giving thirty per cent project responsibilities to the women members in the UP. It appears that women members have emerged as a threat for the male members as they have been well accepted by the community due to their better performance and good behaviours. In some cases female members succeeded in obtaining some shares from the UP Chairman after a serious bargaining and struggling with their rights but being defeated to stop their rights, some male members still bear the grudge of imposing such hegemony over women members by filing false cases against them and adopting various means of enmity with their female colleagues in the UP. The substantive fact is that women members are encountering serious male domination, where women's subjugated rights are accepted by men but they never accept equal rights for women. The major cause of such a mindset lies with the concept of patriarchy and paternalistic social systems, which has been continuing since time immemorial without having any change in its form, nature and structure.

5.1.2. Corruption blocked women's participation: The second obstacle women leaders identified in the UP is corruption. Corruption is highly prevalent in most of the third world countries and Bangladesh is no exception to this case. Due to massive corruption these women leaders have miserably failed to adjust themselves in the UP. Women

members have become the worst victim of corruption in the UP because women are deemed relatively less corrupt and when they experienced corruption of the Chairman and male members in the UP, WLs find helpless to coexist with malpractices. In true sense, corruption has plagued potentiality for smooth functioning of local governance, which is directly affecting the participation of women leaders in the UP. The whole society is engulfed with corruption, a draconian enemy for efficacious development of Bangladesh. Ground realities revealed the whole gamut of how corrupt practices are perpetuating in the scene of local governance through a conglomerate of patron-client relationship among the UP Chairman, local administration, contractors, suppliers, local political parties and concerned MPs.

5.1.3. Faulty legal imposition practiced for the women leaders have squeezed their participation: In a nascent democracy women's political participation should be bolstered with the axiom of affirmative action and it is quite *sine qua non* where a fifty per cent population belongs to women. The Chairmen and male members being obsessed with patriarchal values are constantly imposing insurmountable barriers labeling them as "reserved seat members". Being extremely prejudiced with the primordial social structure coupled with other cultural barriers imposed by religious ideology, kingship, factionalism and patron-clientele syndrome that governed the rural society, the whole male elected functionaries are depriving and denying of women's due rights in almost all spheres of the UP governance. The reservation system in the UP is designed in such a way that women members have find themselves marginalized in the UP. Holding the membership for 3 times wider jurisdiction than that of men, they were enjoying just only one thirds facilities in the UP, which is tantamount to doing mockery with the rights of women in Bangladesh. This again refers to patriarchy and paternalistic attitudes in case of policy making of the government machinery in Bangladesh. Therefore, the mismatch between women's enshrined rights and their entitlement should be withdrawn without any delay.

5.1.4. Structural bottleneck: The whole structure of the UP has been structured in such a way that women members have little voice in UP governance. Women's role has been weakened, emaciated, made feeble, and curtailed by the existing structural arrangement of the UP. Out of 13 elected representatives there were 9 male members and 3 women members in the UP. Male Chairmen in tandem with male members have extremely overpowered the entire governance, where women members found themselves helpless. Male Chairmen are omnipowerful in the UP, which helps them to maintain an excessively autocratic role in the UP. The women members are deemed good if they accept whatever the Chairmen allow or grant them but when women leaders call for their due rights, they no longer remain good and lose the supportive attitude of the male Chairmen.

5.2. Summary of how women are changing governance in the UP

It was evident that women are promoting rural governance by providing better services in many ways. The women leaders have engaged in transformative politics for the greater interests of the poor people of the rural society. The following is a summary of their contribution to pro-poor governance.

5.2.1. Women for women: All over the world women were found sympathetic to women's cause and interest, and the same was the case in the UP in Bangladesh. Drawing evidence from the global scenario it was found that all over the world, women leaders are found sensitive and sympathetic to women's issues, interests, and concerns. By serving the cause of the women, they were contributing their worth to bringing positive changes in the rural governance.

5.2.2. Women are rendering community services through village salish: Taking part in rural village court system (salish) women leaders have brought about a positive change in the outcome of the rural salish in the UP. Women members thus help rural women obtain social justice and a better life. The conduct of the salish is a glaring example of the community service of the woman members in her jurisdictional area. Such an act of social justice shows that woman have proper capacity to deal with life-related matters with proper dignity and honour. Evidence shows that woman members can perform their social commitment and responsibility with a strong hand and ensure the rule of law in the society. Thus these women members are contributing to social justice and good governance at the local level. This case reveals that woman can play desired role and deliver justice in the society if they are provided with an enabling environment and a legal framework. When poor women come to seek a remedy regarding any family feud or violence against women, these women members help them get legal support from the relevant sources, which were non-existent while women members were not in the UP.

5.2.3. Women are playing role in distributing safety net benefits: Women members are deemed pledge-bound to provide better services to the community people. At present the Bangladesh government is providing various safety net programs for diversified sections of poor people to address the problem of poverty, income inequality, malnutrition, and maternal mortality and famine. Many of those safety net programs, which include distribution VGD cards, VGF cards, old age pension, 40-day works, disabled people's allowances, widows' allowance cards, test relief and allowance for pregnant mothers, etc., are implemented by the UP. In distributing the assigned safety net programs to the UP, the women members are playing formidable roles in the selection of applicants based on judgments. Through effective bargaining they were able to enhance the coverage of those services for the women of rural society. In the rural society the villagers maintain very friendly relationships with the women members and these women members always help them get their son's or daughter's birth registration certificates easily, and they also help them obtain death registration and succession certificates.

5.2.4. Women are taking part in development administration: Some women leaders especially those who emerged as community leader using their NGO network and background are doing startling performance in bringing change and development by undertaking various development projects in the rural society. Based on the grassroots voices and the ground reality it has been strongly evident that the women leaders are now changing the rural governance in Bangladesh. They are bringing positive changes in the rural governance through undertaking various development projects, extending better community services to the rural poor, demonstrating their integrity by performing their jurisdictional role. The topmost significance credited to the women leaders'

performance was that these women leaders were able to bring such qualitative changes to local governance while accomplishing their regular household and reproductive role amidst challenges posed by the patriarchal social structure.

6. Conclusion

The basic premise of this paper was to delve into 2 research questions: i) what were the major challenges WLs encountered towards playing their role in the UP? ii) How did the WLs change rural governance while playing their role in the UP of Bangladesh? This paper was fully based on case study method. The paper revealed that the major challenges towards effective participation of the women leaders in the UP were male domination or patriarchy, corruption, faulty legal provision practiced for women members, and above all, the autocratic power structure of the UP Chairmen; all of these factors plagued the scope of participation of the women leaders. To answer the research question how the women leaders have helped changing rural governance, it was found that having ensured their limited rights and role in the UP, some women leaders were providing culturally suitable social justice to the women through playing role in rural salish and thus helping the vulnerable segment of the population in the rural society. Women leaders were found highly sensitive for the women's cause and interest and they are trying to serve their needs at the community level. These women leaders were also playing role in undertaking various development projects and helping distribution of pro-poor safety net benefits at the rural society. Thus, involving themselves in transformative politics, these women leaders were able to change rural governance in their day-to-day affairs of the UP.

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ASSESSMENT OF SETTLEMENTS' CENTRALITY IN BOTOȘANI COUNTY USING SHIMBEL INDEX[1]

Marian Ionuț ISTRATE[2]

Abstract: *Having its origins in social sciences, the concept of centrality has gained an important role in studying the spatial networks at different spatial scales. This paper examines the different facets of centrality and analyses the degree of centrality for the settlements with administrative role in one of the least central counties in Romania, the Botoșani County. Starting from the road network in this county, the Shimbel index is calculated for road and straight line distances between the nodes in order to show the present centrality of the settlements and the potential one. The straightness centrality is calculated. All the indexes are mapped. The results show that the settlements with high centrality values are located around the geographical center of the county and that the settlements on the western side are "more central" than those located on the eastern and southern side. Another finding is that the Shimbel index depends on the road network that is majorly influenced by the elevation and the number of direct ties between the localities influences their general centrality and accessibility.*

Keywords: *accessibility, closeness, rural infrastructure, Shimbel Index, straightness centrality.*

1. Introduction

When it comes to the competitiveness of an enterprise, industry, city, region or country, among other factors, their location has a significant contribution in the competition between these actors, cities and regions competing with each other in convincing entrepreneurs, enterprises and industries to choose them for future expansions and relocations. But these locations must have a very important characteristic, it must be accessible and beyond that it must be central in relation to the location of other industries, suppliers or markets that are active in the horizontal and vertical industries.

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Centrality is a concept that has evolved from social sciences in the mid 1950's when it studied the relations in social networks and the individuals where seen as nodes in these networks and all of them had different degrees of centrality (Bavelas, A., 1950). This type of centrality was based on the fact that an individual with a high degree of centrality was closer to the other individuals in his social network and he would have access to information much easier or the information would get to him faster (Leavitt, H., 1951, Stephenson, K., Zelen, M., 1989)

The concept of centrality has become an important one in every science that is using a network in order to analyze or explain different situations. Centrality is used in graph-theory in order to identify new ways to calculate centrality (Freeman, L.C., et al., 1991; Klein, D. J., 2010; Farbey, B., et al., 1967; Freeman, L.C., 1978). Having this baseline, centrality began to be used in psychology (Mackenzie, K.D., 1966), telecommunications (Slater, P.J., 1981) , ecology (Timothy, C., Murray, A., 2009;Bauer, B., et al., 2009; Tian-xiang, Y., et al., 2002), biology (Keunwan, P., Dongsup, K., 2009), physics (Tarafdar, S., Citron, Z., Milov, Al., 2014), computer sciences (McLaughlin, A., Bader, D., 2014;Chehreghani, M. H., 2014; Qin Gao, C. S., Chunyan, Y., 2014) and even political studies (Sinclair, P. A., 2009; van der Wusten, H., 2004).

In geographical analysis, centrality is used for all scales, at global level to assess the world-city hierarchies (Neal, Z., 2010; Boyd, J. P., et al., 2013) where the largest cities in the world are the places where resources and flows concentrate because they are key-nodes in the world city-systems. The circulation of flows between these nodes is the main engine for globalization and in the global system it is important to locate in a central place.

Cities build infrastructure like roads, highways, railways, ports and airports in order to increase their hinterland and to be the central place to more people, money, information, power. At global scale different authors argue that ports (Cullinane, K., Wang, Y., 2009; González, F., et al., 2012), and airports (Shaw, S., et al., 2009; Bowen, J., 2004; Neal, Z., 2010) are the key infrastructure for achieving a good degree of centrality and power in the world city network.

Centrality is also used to analyze different spatial distribution of certain areas within the cities using the street network for determine the centrality of the economic activities (Porta, S., et al., 2012), of the public spaces (Porta et al., 2008), how it influences the land use of a city (Wang, F., et al., 2011). Given the fact that only a part of the population is using a personal vehicle in order to get to different places around the city the public transport networks can attribute to a place a certain degree of centrality. In the big cities, being close to a node where different types of public transport combine can make a place to be more central than the ones located in the center of the city (Derrible, S., 2009). Other authors used a combination between street network and public transport network (von Ferber, C., et al., 2009; YANG, C., ShuLin, H., 2010) or the cheap and ecological alternative for urban transportation, the bicycles lanes (Goodman, A., Cheshire, J., 2014)

There is a lot of literature exploring different methods to assess centrality at the city level due to the importance of central places inside a city and besides the two territorial

levels mentioned above, the regional level centrality is a characteristic that weighs a lot in the development of a city or of a network of cities, because their place as nodes in the regional settlements' network can give them a high or low degree of centrality. The advantage of a city that is close in relation with the other cities in his region can be transformed in an economic advantage, through new investments that creates new jobs and more money from tax revenues for the local authorities and this economic advantage will later turn in a social advantage.

2. Methodology

There is a tight connection between centrality and transportation systems and infrastructure; a good infrastructure can increase the accessibility of a city. The two terms, centrality and accessibility, share almost the same meanings. The "accessibility" concept is defined in relation with what is defined as "accessible", the most common definition is that accessibility is the property of a location to be easy to reach using a particular transportation system (Dalvi, M. Q., Martin, K. M., 1976) therefore, it is easy to understand the fact that both terms are often used to define the same concept.

The Shimbel index uses the topology of a network, in order to determine the degree of centrality of a certain node or for all the nodes in that network. This is considered an index that measures both, accessibility and centrality, due to the fact that, as it will be shown further in this paper, the most accessible nodes in a network are the one that are positioned in the center of the system. The Shimbel index is "the total number of edges needed to connect any one place with all the other places" (Waugh, D., 2000), but only using the minimum number of edges between the nodes of the network, so a smaller Shimbel index means that the node is more central and it has a better accessibility.

In time, different variations of this index have emerged. For example, the simple Shimbel index failed to take into consideration the notion of distance, the edges between the nodes have different lengths that must be traveled thorough. Therefore a value was given to the links between nodes and that value may differ, from the actual distance between the nodes, the time necessary to reach point A from point B or the cost of the travel can be the values that may serve as inputs in calculating the Shimbel index, expressing the minimum distance, the minimum time or the minimum cost. In a territorial system, if we consider the settlements nodes and the transport infrastructure the edges that links the nodes, the shortest route on road between two cities isn't necessary the one that takes the minimum amount of time to travel or it is the cheapest, because of different types of road infrastructure that have different legal speed limits or the modal options. The index is measured as follows:

$S_i = \sum d_{ij}$, where S_i is the Shimbel index for node i, and d_{ij} is the distance between nodes i and j. The inverse of this formula results in what is called the closeness centrality, the advantage of this being that it is expressed in values between 0 and 1.

The closeness centrality is, together with betweenness centrality, degree centrality, eigenvector and straightness centrality, one of the measures for assessing centrality. The degree centrality is a basic measure that consists in the idea that the most important nodes in a network have the largest number of ties with the other nodes. The

betweenness centrality was first introduced by Freeman, (Freeman, L.C., 1978) and was used for sociological studies like the connection between humans in social networks. This measure for centrality quantifies the number of times a node or an edge of a network was transited as the shortest path between other two nodes of the network, assuming that the flow of information or of the goods is done taking the shortest path (Chehreghani, M. H., 2014). The eigenvector measure (Bonacich, P., 1987)is most commonly used in social and computer sciences where it quantifies the influence of a node in a network by assigning relative values to all the nodes and a node with a high eigenvector score will be in the proximity of other nodes also with a high score (Borgatti, S. P., 2005).

The straightness centrality is a measure for efficiency assessing the ratio between the geodesic values of the Euclidean distance and the shortest path distance between two nodes. The straight line distance being the most efficient, this measure for centrality assesses the deviation of the road's layout from the straight line.

Botoşani County is located in the north-eastern side of Romania and it holds a population of 412.000 inhabitants. The settlements taken into consideration for centrality assessment are the 78 localities that have an administrative role, thus hold a major significance in the county's territorial system. From these 78, there are seven towns and 71 villages (figure 1) the small number of cities determines the rural population to travel more for the services and goods that are not available in the rural settlements. The reason why only the settlements with administrative role were taken into consideration for the present analysis is that these settlements have also a large number of inhabitants, relatively low or medium economic activities in the rural ones and if all the settlements were to be considered the calculus for accessibility-centrality would have taken a serious amount of time, given the fact that Botoşani County has a total number of 350 localities and the distance matrix would have been hard to build.

The road network that was used (figure 1), contains the national roads, the county roads and some communal roads. Not all the communal roads were used because most of them are dirt roads and the best case, are macadamized roads. Their role is to link the residence of a territorial administrative unit with the other localities contained in that administrative unit so they were quite irrelevant for this analysis. Even when it comes to the county roads, a vast majority have asphalt garment, though, there are some road segments that have a macadam garment. The road layer used was an open source dataset derived from Open Street Map that was projected in Romanian Stereo 70 using the ArcGIS 10 software.

For assessing the centrality of the cities and villages from Botoşani County, two measures for centrality were calculated: The Shimbel index for accessibility-centrality and the straightness centrality.

For this two matrices were built, each with a resolution of 78x78 cells that were populated with the names of the settlements. Matrix A is a valued matrix containing the road distances between each settlement and second matrix that is also a valued matrix, containing the Euclidian distances between each analyzed settlement.

Figure 1. *The localization of the analyzed settlements and road network*
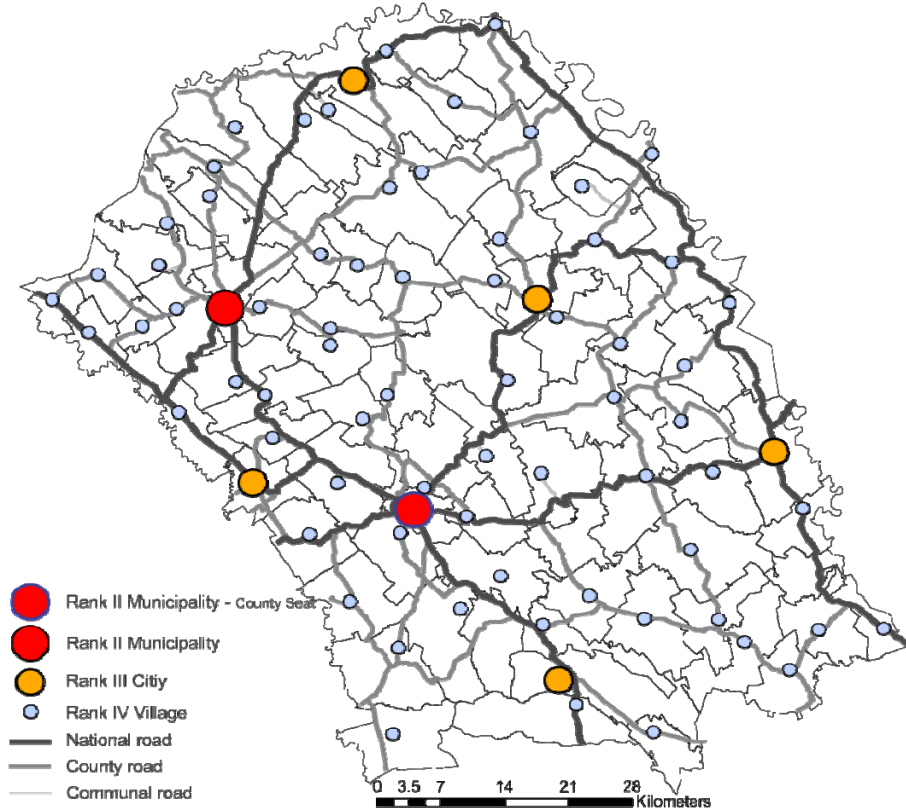
Table 1. Sample of the distance matrix using the road network (in kilometers)

	Botoşani	Darabani	Dorohoi	Saveni	Adaseni	Albesti	Avrameni	Baluseni	...	Vorona
Botoşani	0	70.6	35.9	35.7	58	44.7	47.9	17		20.8
Darabani	70.6	0	34.8	36.6	58.6	78.6	49.2	87.6		91.4
Dorohoi	35.9	34.8	0	43.8	66.2	79.9	55.9	52.7		56.5
Saveni	35.7	36.6	43.8	0	22.9	42.4	12.5	52.8		56.6
Adaseni	58	58.6	66.2	22.9	0	64.9	10.6	75.1		77.2
Albesti	44.3	78.6	79.8	42.4	64.9	0	54.7	40.3		63.1
Avrameni	47.9	49.2	55.9	12.5	10.6	54.7	0	65.1		68.9
Baluseni	17	87.6	52.7	52.8	75.1	40.3	65.1	0		23
⋮										
Vorona	20.8	91.4	56.5	56.6	77.2	63.1	68.9	23		0

The distances for both matrices were calculated in a GIS environment using the Closest Facility Tool for Arc Map that calculated the distances using the roads and in straight line.

For the Shimbel index a different formula than the consecrated one was used. The index is the sum of the sums of the distances between two nodes divided by the sum of the distances. The formula is this: $S_i = \Sigma\Sigma d_{ij}/\Sigma d_{ij}$. This variation for calculating the Shimbel index was first introduced by Ciceri et al (1977) and it was applied for the metro stations in Paris that were the nodes, and the subway lines were the edges. The difference between this method of calculation and the original one is that the node with the highest value is the most accessible/central one because it is reported to the sum of the distances for that node.

For the straightness centrality the value for Shimbel index resulted from the Euclidian distances was divided to the road distances index. The results of these formulas were mapped using the free software Philcarto 5.6 where the values for each node were triangulated in order to create areas with similar accessibility/centrality.

3. Results: The spatial distribution of centrality

The mapped Shimbel index for the localities in Botoşani County (figure 2) shows, first of all, that the high centrality area is localized around the geographical center of the territorial system. This is a common situation in the systems that have a good connectivity between its nodes. For Botoşani County the road network is relevant because it is the most used infrastructure and it has the best distribution, the rail has a low density network and it isn't used by the majority of the population.

The village that is most central in the county is Ungureni; also the closest to the geometrical central point it benefits from a good connectivity, this village is an intersection of four roads and it is transited by a national road. The high-centrality values are massed between this village and the county seat. The city of Botoşani is the largest city in the county and it has the most important and numerous economic activities. Its high degree of centrality is given by the fact that it has a large number of ties with the other villages and towns it is the most important node in the network. In the last two centuries the roads were built in order to ensure connectivity between the main city and the villages that provided agricultural goods for the urban population. At a smaller scale, the city of Botoşani had to be connected with the national and international road networks, due to its location at the border, therefore this city has a large hinterland and in the county system it has a high degree of centrality. There is a difference between the western side of the county and the eastern side in what concerns the centrality. The western side has bigger values for the Shimbel index justified by a bigger road density that makes the distances between cities become shorter.

The low accessibility localities are positioned at the extremities of the county, the south-eastern part being the most remote. Besides the fact that they are far from the majority of villages, the road infrastructure isn't as dense as in other parts of the county and the links are oriented in a north-south direction, for the west-east direction there aren't any roads.

Figure 2. *The Shimbel Index distribution calculated using shortest road distances between the settlements*
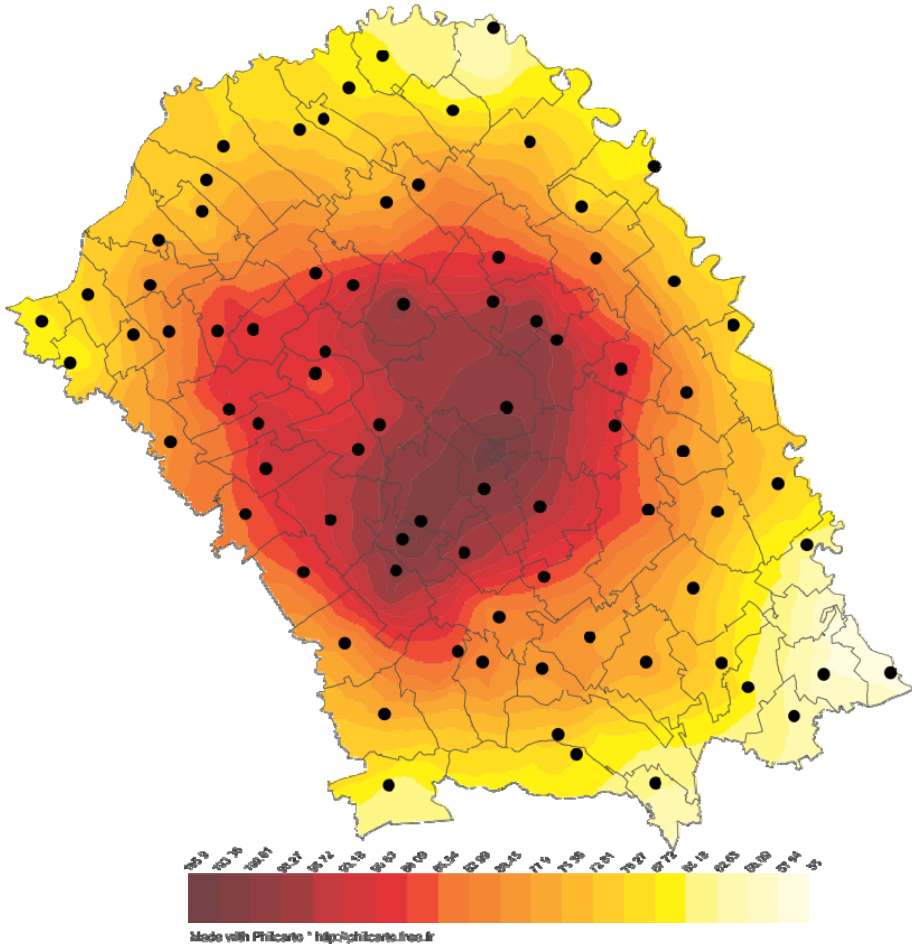
The straight line distances matrix was built with the assumption of an ideal mobility or road infrastructure, where all the nodes in a network where directly connected with one another in straight line, the distances having the minimum possible values. This was the second step in the aim to compare the present accessibility with the maximum potential of accessibility if no changes in the localities system occur.

Figure 3. *The Shimbel Index distribution calculated using the Euclidian distances between the settlements*
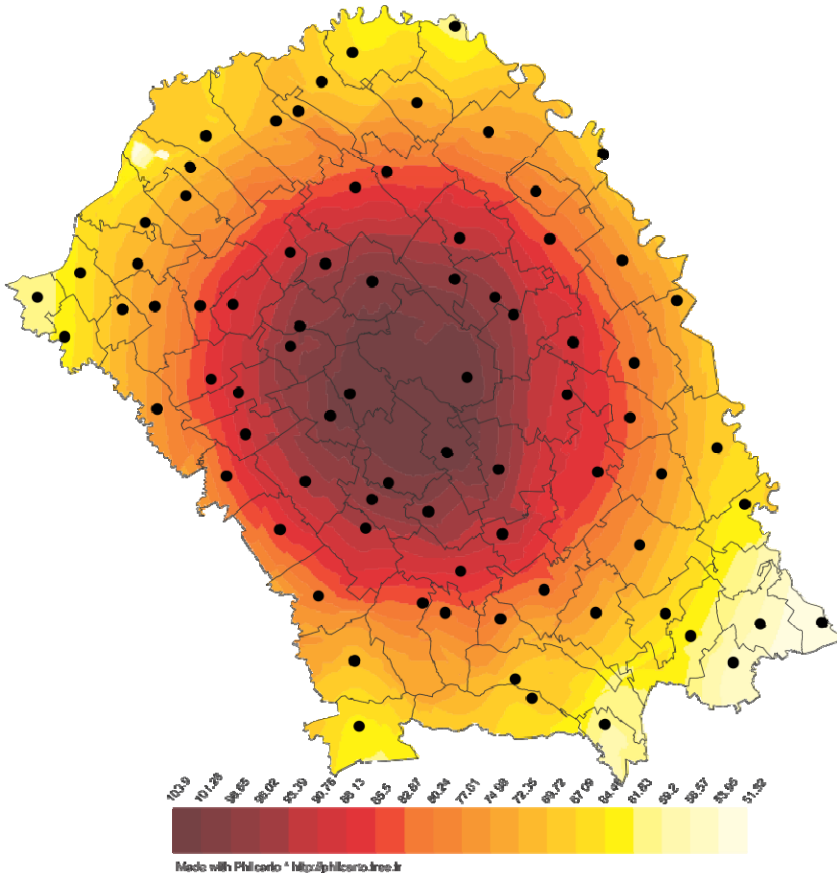
In figure 3 the mapping of the Shimbel index of accessibility/centrality using the straight line distances show an expected result. The most accessible villages and towns are the one that are the closest to the geometric center of the county, the values of the index decreasing towards the edges of the county in almost concentric circles. These circles aren't perfect concentric because of the positioning of the nodes, which are scattered inside the county and are not positioned on radial circles. Another factor that affects the spatial distribution of this index is the density of the settlements. If a certain part of the county holds more settlements the high centrality values will slide towards this side of the county and in Botoşani there are more nodes in the western and northern part, therefore those nodes are more central.

The straightness centrality for the settlements in Botoşani County was mapped using the same triangulation method (figure 4). This measure shows the differences between the maximum potential centrality and the present centrality, the map presenting in

shades of red with values greater than 1.03 the villages and towns that have good potential centrality but a bad existing one, in shades of orange and around the 1 value, the settlements that have almost similar centrality values both in road distance and in straight line distance and in a yellow gradient are the settlements that actually have a better existing centrality than the potential centrality.

Figure 4. The Straightness centrality measure distribution
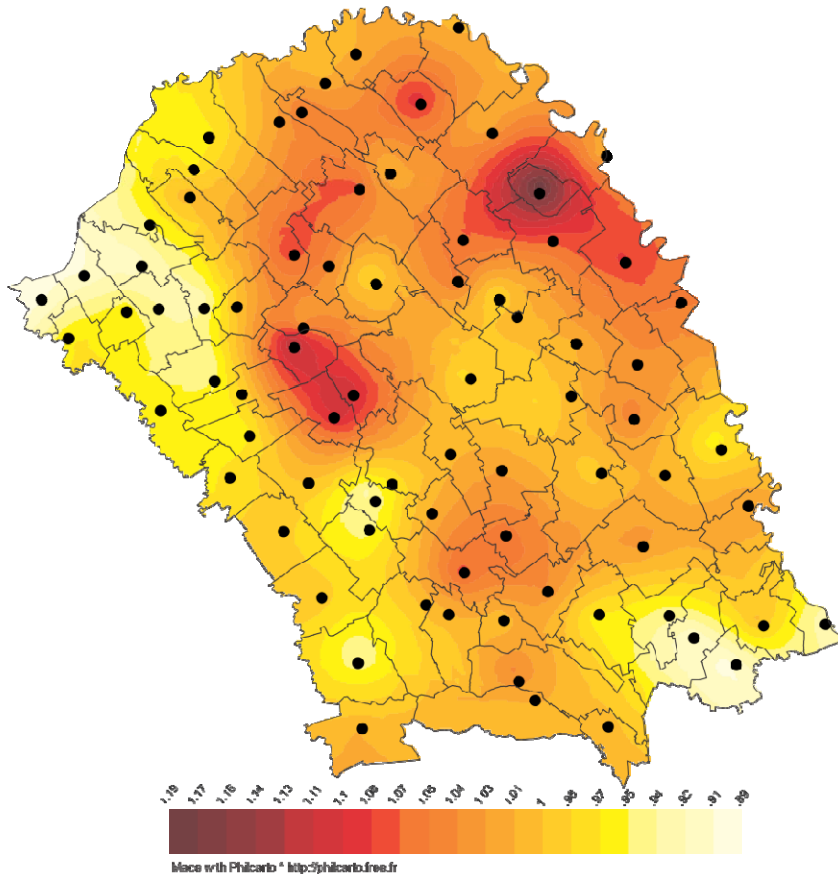
The low straightness centrality is registered only for a few villages from which the village of Adăşeni is the most evident. Located in the north-eastern side of the county, this village is far away from being a central and this isn't very surprising if we analyze the topology of the road network. With a straightness centrality value of 1.18, Adăşeni doesn't have direct access to a national or a county road and it is a „cul-de-sac" so the connection between other villages doesn't transit this node in the network. Also, the second „farthest away from the potential" village is Dimacheni who is also at the end of

a road that stops in that village. A pattern emerges at a close look: the nodes that have one or two links have low accessibility/centrality even though they are located in the central area of a spatial unit (city, region, country), the number of ties that a node has dictates its overall centrality values. This doesn't necessary mean that these settlements are inaccessible but they only few options in reaching other localities from Botoşani County and are vulnerable and can become isolated if the only road that provides connection with the rest of the territory breaks down during a major flood or during a blizzard in the winter, hence some investments must be done in the transport infrastructure in order to increase the resilience and to reduce the difference between the present centrality and the potential one.

The sub unitary values for straightness centrality are distributed in the settlements that are located at the county's extremities and the village of Vorona and the county seat, Botoşani are also in the same situation. The explanation is quite simple: like it was stated previously, the western side of the county benefits from a denser road network which gives a good present centrality to the settlements located in this area, but a lower centrality when it comes to straight line distances, due to the fact that are positioned at the edge of the county, so the shortcomings of being peripheral are reduced with a good road infrastructure.

Straightness centrality is used to assess the general detour of a road connection from the shortest path possible that is the straight line connection. So this measure for centrality can be higher or lower, depending on the layout of the road network, the number of curves and their amplitude. The path of a road is influenced by many factors, depending on the type of the road and we will shortly give some details on two of these factors: the relief and the historic legacy. The landform is influencing the layout of a road through costs of construction and reducing some risks related to landslides, so the roads must follow the most suitable routes in order to reduce costs of construction and maintenance. Botoşani County has a topography predominantly formed of succession of hills and valleys and most of the roads follow the valleys but there are some that pass across the hills and make very steep curves that increase the length of the roads making larger distances between settlements.

The nowadays roads' layout in Botoşani County is not so different than what it was a century ago. Because of the low investments in correcting the roads' alignment or building new, straight line roads, the distances remained the same between the county's settlements without freeways or expressways to eliminate the spatial impedance and encourage the exchanges between the cities and villages. The population that lives in Botoşani County inherited this road network from the previous generations, but this network isn't capable to connect properly some nodes to the cities that provide the goods and the services the rural people need and also don't allow to sell their products in the urban markets.

4. Conclusions

Centrality is a highly-desirable characteristic to all the companies or settlements that act as a node in a certain network. Often used in the research of the social scientists, the measure of centrality has revealed some great findings in other sciences too. The

Shimbel Index is a simple to calculate but very enlightening way to assess the centrality of a network's nodes or edges, but for a proper view of what's central and what is not, further research must be done using the other mentioned measures for centrality, the MCA (Multiple Centrality Assessment) (Crucitti, P., et al. 2006) being a very powerful tool in this sense.

Considering that the people of Botoşani County travel by using the shortest distance path and having a good spatial distribution, the road network in Botoşani County confers good centrality values to the settlements located in the geometric center of the county and they slide to the south-central part where the main urban center is located. The utilized measures for centrality are influenced by the nodes' location inside a network, the topology, the connectivity and the number of ties they have between them. Also, in a territorial system the results depend on the layout of the utilized network, in this case the road network that is also depending on many other factors like the topography of the terrain and the investments in the road infrastructure.

The current approach showed that there are some settlements with administrative attributes that have a low accessibility when they are related with all the other settlements in the county. This paper's results can be used by the authorities in order to prioritize the next investments in the road infrastructure. These results can also be used by the investors in order to identify proper location for their investments if they're in a search for central and accessible locations. This can mean jobs and a better life especially for the people in the rural area where agricultural activities are the main source of income. The assessment of centrality of the cities or villages has, therefore, a social dimension, besides the information that can be valuable for investors it shows how accessible are the main public services for the population, because if a city is accessible the services located in that city are also accessible, the quality and if they are affordable being different issues.

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CHANGES IN AN AGE OF MASS HIGHER EDUCATION[1]

Dana-Ioana EREMIA[2]

Abstract: *This study offers an overview of the main theoretical discussions about how the increasing phenomenon higher education massification meets the needs of an emerging economy in post-industrial societies. Based on the decomposition of the concept of social change in several frames of analysis, the study synthesizes how individual life is unstandardized in the context of risk society (Beck) and late modernity (Bauman). The study continues to analyze the social changes occurring in the age of mass higher education in relation to the transition of young people, with a special focus on the professional dimension, the shifts on the tertiary education system and its labour market effects. In a broader perspective, the theoretical analysis underlies the debate about the persistence of social inequality through higher education. Placed at the crossroads between sociology of education and social mobility, the paper wants to capture the extent to which higher education universalization manages the social change, which, in turn, accelerates the economic growth and technological development. Considering that the extension of education not only changed the number of those educated, but it created qualitative changes through social groups, in terms of composition and structure, due to increased selectivity in the labour market. The aim is to show how the new route that young people must travel from school to work is designed, under the pressures of a globalized labor market, and under the impact of an increasing educational homogeneity.*

Keywords: *youth, higher education, massification, labour market, social inequality, social change, social capital.*

1. Introduction

Economic growth and technological development have increasingly accelerated competition between economic sectors, as a consequence of globalization. This social reality has created the necessity to use the potential of the entire population, through elevating the level of education and competencies on a large scale, for all social

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segments. At the same time, workplace competition has also grown; hence young people must keep up with all these changes, as education plays an essential part in an individual's professional life. Education represents an important resource for young people, especially from the point of view of developing the necessary skills for the future, but also as a departure point of the transition towards paid employment. During the last decades, transition models have suffered major changes, especially under the impact of time frame extension, but also of profound changes connected with the orientation of transition towards non-linear trajectories. Regardless of their type, transitions are social processes, which mark an individual's evolution towards a new stage in his life. They are products of the life conditions which the individual has access to, as well as products of personal decisions regarding one's own life trajectory, with a strong focus on the work component, under the current pressure of post-industrial society. The educational strategies accessed by young people can shape their transition in different ways, and this is why they become key factors for the study of social mobility and the persistence of social inequalities. Social origin, education, work opportunities, institutional regulations, states' social and welfare policies (Cace, 2008) are determinant factors in the way that young people manage the uncertainty of transition towards adult life, where the development of professional competency represents a key to success.

2. Youth transition and social change

The reasoning of economic evolution and the inherent social change process has always marked the transition from one type of society to another. The reconceptualization of change and its impact on postmodern society led to the apparition of theories such as the one of risk society (Beck, 1992), defined by a weakening of social traditions and institutions, as well as of the standards connected to life's natural course, leading to a reinterpretation of individual identity through an increased inclination towards reflexivity and individualization (Bauman, 2001). Economic and social policy changes have led to the adoption of the new-liberal model, based on meritocracy and the growth of individualization and individual responsibility for managing one's future in an unpredictable society. Individual liberalization, fading tradition, as well as outgrowing old patterns of life and work represent an answer to postmodern abundance, a form of managing uncertainty in the context of new technologies, and a form of adaptation to consumer society. Although the wind of change has entered all areas of life, the results remain almost the same concerning the social inequalities reproduced through education – the problematic areas moved from secondary schooling to university level; polarization has been maintained on social class and gender criteria; and the new post-industrial economy led to increasing income inequalities through labour market segmentation between men and women (McDowell, 2009:58).

Social change has modified all stages of life from the structural point of view, and in this context the young generation, together with adults and seniors, must find a new way for the optimization and management of social life balance. In the context of a risk society (Beck) and the exponential growth of uncertainty (Zamfir, 1990) in all areas of social life, the young generation is required to be accountable for the decisions regarding their own education, formation and employment on a volatile work market,

as well as to become flexible participants in social life. For young people, education-to-work transitions in the post-industrial society represent the link between the future aspects of adulthood. But the functional core of this phase of passage towards maturity depends on the compatibility between education and the future professional career. One of the characteristics of late modernity is that it led to blurring social barriers regarding age and age brackets representations, as well as individual liberalization through increased responsibility and autonomy. In this context, incrementing maturity led to blurring age limits and new adulthood patterns, which can be achieved much faster and easier compared to previous generations.

Structural changes have affected life's general course, especially because of the focus placed on individual autonomy, but a more complete explanation should be sought in the way that labour market and the social policies specific to post-industrial societies restructure youth transitions, as a new adulthood entry phase (Heinz 2009:3). We identified three factors influencing the new professional transition patterns of university graduates:

1. Changes on the level of traditional representations connected to work and employment, caused by the extended access to education and work productivity growth. All these led to modifying practices and content regarding young people's maturity process, bringing important changes to their professional transition.

2. Extending the time frame allocated for studies (formal education and lifelong learning – EU objectives), juxtaposed with intermediary precarious jobs, as attempts to enter the labour market and stabilize one's position; this pattern is dominated by vulnerable recurring positions (e.g. researcher, intern, freelancer). The duration of these jobs represents, in itself, a structural factor shaping youth transition in relation to the labour market.

3. The variety of types of transitions which young people find them in, led to emerging non-linear trajectories (education, work, formation, unemployment, education, etc.), as a consequence of the destandardization of social life. Studies show an unsynchronized relation (Marques, 2015) between basic social life structures: work, education, family and spare time activities. The boundaries between professional emancipation and family life became increasingly unclear, as the new economic context claims continuous of professional flexibility and mobility.

These specific trends of post-modern societies have caused structural changes to work in general, and determined reconsiderations concerning youth transition towards working life.

3. Mass Higher Education and Persistent Inequality

The role of education in contemporary society is that of correcting the persistence of social inequalities, through meritocratic educational reforms and through stimulating individuals' social mobility. The theoretical context of social mobility and stratification was traditionally ensured by the functionalist paradigm (Coleman 1988) specific to industrial and post-industrial societies. The initial principle at the foundation of these

processes is that of linking individuals' potentials with society's needs, and individuals' tendency was to remain close to their original social class. Goldthorpe (2013) believes that this macro-social perspective lost its explicative power, a change of paradigm being necessary especially because the trajectory from the class of origin to that of destination has changed, through education mediation. The association between education and destination has been consolidated thanks to technological changes and economic development. The increased growth of the request for qualified professionals needs the extension of education systems, and the progressive reform requires creating more educational prospects and increasing equal opportunities, so that all available human resources can be most effectively employed. From this point of view, it is necessary to build a new theoretical approach, oriented towards micro-level analysis, starting from the field of economic theory and the labour market, and especially the three theories which stray from the dominating human capital theory: "screening and signaling theory, job competition theory, and incentive-enhancing preference theory". Expectations are connected to the fact that the association between education and the destination class would grow, whilst a certain degree of association between the class of origin and education would be recognized as an unavoidable consequence, but the latter would decrease (Goldthorpe, 2013:5).

"Where and when social mobility occurs?" represents a continuous challenge for sociologists, debates being divided around the social or cultural theory of educational reproduction. These theories, although they acknowledge the fact that mobility is possible, do not succeed in explaining exactly who becomes mobile and in which situation (Roberts, 2009). Throughout the last four decades, education-generated inequality has been systematically studied starting with the works of Coleman, Bowles and Gintis in the USA, Halsey in Great Britain, Boudon, Bourdieu and Passeron in Franţa, etc. The main social reproduction mechanism being studied is the relation between the education system and the working system in capitalist societies.

Socio-cultural reproduction was synthesized by Bourdieu by making recourse to an economic concept, that of capital. This theory explains differences and similarities between socio-cultural classes through socio-cultural capital (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977; Coleman, 1988). Regardless of social origin, all individuals possess social capital, offering trust to social relations, strengthening them and converting them into material benefits. Cultural capital refers to the non-material resources which individuals possess: education-certified knowledge and taste in music, art, etc. However, there are differences in values between social classes as far as social and cultural capital is concerned: some succeed in converting social and cultural capital into economic capital better than others. Bourdieu claims that when individuals enter education or employment, those with similar cultural capital recognize each other and act in similar ways. He also states that in all societies, the dominating culture in schools is the middle class culture, and education is a social stratification process. Children entering school are already prepared to act with respect towards this norm, the lower class being discredited from the start. Parental support models and the cultural capital of the family of origin represent an important habitat (Bourdieu) for the child's future success and performances.

The growth and persistence of social class based inequalities concerning tertiary education is, on one hand, also explained by the increasing gaps between the incomes of the population (Ilie, 2007). The economic capital based on parents' income generates unequal opportunities regarding access to education (Furlong and Cartmel, 2009:122).

The theory of rational action offers an alternative explanation concerning the role of education in intergenerational mobility (Goldthorpe, 1996a, 1996b, 2013). While the theory of social reproduction focuses on cultural and values differences between classes, the former emphasizes the similarities between them. Regardless of class origin, all families would seek achievement opportunities for their children, the differences consisting of the fact that those belonging to lower classes would settle for modest success targets compared to the middle class. According to the rational action theory, the financial (the effort to maintain a child at university) and cultural investments necessary in order to achieve an upwards mobility make all the difference between social classes in relation to educational achievements and the opportunities to reach a middle class destination.

For most developed countries, the past decades have been marked by the increased participation of the population in higher education, the access to it becoming a mass process instead of an elitist one. Nowadays, university studies are being taken for granted, because they have become the norm for many middle class young people. There are numerous factors contributing to the appearance of differences in access to superior levels of education (Shavit, 2007). One of them is related to family background. As Mare shows (Mare, 1981), "in the Western countries during the 1980s, the educational evolution tended to be the product of successive negotiations between the pupil / student and his family, leading to the option of continuing studies on the academic route (high school – university), or the vocational one (professional school – diploma) or towards the abandonment of studies". In the contemporary context, the apparition of student credits can diminish income-induced inequalities (Voicu and Vasile, 2009). The extended access to higher education, regardless of individuals' social origin, increased the population's general education level, especially favoring increased access for women and for other ethnic groups (Joseph 2012). On the other hand, the ideal of a pure access equality does not keep into account the existing social structure, neither labour market tendencies, and nor does it make any difference between individuals (Shavit, Yaish, and Bar-Haim, 2007; Voicu and Vasile, 2009). Therefore, the principle of applying equality moved the attention from equal access to equal opportunities, focusing on a good quality education. Kucel shows (Kucel, 2014) that the power exerted by social origin in relation to choosing education forms can be an indicator of equal opportunities within a state. It draws attention towards the effects of family background on the probability to reach a certain level of tertiary education, but also the effects on the type of study programme within a certain level (Kucel and Vilalta-Bufi, 2014).

Analyzing the experience of the higher education system of the United States, Trow identified three main development stages of higher education, according to the levels of access and participation: elites', masses' and universal level (Trow 1972, 1974). During the past 20 years, quantitative changes have been registered at the level of the identified stages: hence, if Trow's expectations in the 1970s were directed towards 15% of the

masses of young people being able to make a change from elitist participation to mass participation, and 30% from mass participation to universal participation, after the 1990s thresholds kept on rising, exceeding 25% and respectively 50% (Koucký, Bartušek, and Kovařovic, 2007; Trow, 1999, 2005). But the change was not unexpected, as the expansive tendency of higher education replaced the mass secondary education system, following the same stages. Previously, at the beginning of the 1950s, in order to respond to the needs of industrialized economy, most Western countries underwent transformations within education systems, massifying secondary level access. The only differences between states had to do with placing more emphasis on vocational and technical education, but however, young people's expectations were pretty clear for that period in time: continuing high-school studies, or, in case of school abandonment, entering the labour market. Education was largely oriented towards technical bases, in order to prepare the future workforce, which was divided between manual work, specific to "blue collar" workers, and professional work for the "white collar", who could afford elitist access to higher education.

The natural extension of higher education from the elitist form to the universal one was directly linked to the diversification (Teichler, 2008) of the educational offer and narrowing study specializations and domains (Klein, 2010; Ortiz and Kucel, 2008; Reimer and Steinmetz, 2009; Vila, Garcia-Aracil and Mora, 2007). Nowadays, we should expect the same trajectory to be followed by the first higher education cycle (bachelor degree level) and Voicu (2009) believes that it would be followed by the upcoming two cycles: master and doctoral degrees (Kehm and Teichler, 2006; Voicu, Tufiş, et al. 2010). The natural tendency to extend the duration of education is motivated by the requirements of technological and scientific progress. Digital technologies and the wide spreading of work flexibility, as well as the increased work market precariousness require adaptation through developing new competencies and continuous learning. The extended schooling period is possible due to increased life expectancy and work productivity. Moreover, "an increased productivity causes a lower workforce request, allowing younger generations to postpone entering the labour market, and creating, on a society level, the necessary financial resources for numerous individuals to embark on higher education (Voicu and Vasile, 2009:4-8). In the same context, for a few decades, Western and Eastern European states have encountered a continuous expansion and massification of higher education (Kivinen and Ahola, 1999; Teichler, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2008; Trow 1999, 2005). In Western Europe, for example, compared to the 1960s, the proportion of those attending university studies within a generation has grown almost six times, and similar tendencies can be found also in former communist European countries (Koucký et al., 2007).

4. Professional Transition and Labour Markets Changes

The last decades have been influenced by the major changes caused by labour market globalization, which had structural effects on education, formation and employment amongst young people. These changes led to increased work market flexibility and precariousness, because of emergent new forms of employment, considered "peculiar", compared to standard employment models. The typical employment model, inherited after the Second World War, had been adopted as dominant, because it responded to

the needs of industrial economy, and ensured a stable relationship between the individual and the labour market. It was based on a collective, full-time work contract, which consequently was remunerated through an equivalent salary. This employment model is considered traditional because it possesses the standard characteristics of a typical work contract: it is permanent, full-time, is remunerated accordingly and includes social protection benefits. In the postmodern society, the typical salary-based contractual model was replaced by new, flexible employment forms and zig-zag types of career, which present an increased precariousness potential, because of non-linear professional evolutions (formation, employment, unemployment, formation, long-term unemployment, etc.).

The phenomenon of (in) adequate or atypical employment is studied from the perspective of the influence it exerts upon university graduates' employment, and through the degree of correlation between education and the labour market. The analysis starts from a key question regarding the way competencies acquired through education keep their competitive advantage in the context of continuous work market changes. Therefore, tracer and follow-up type of studies such as: Hegesco/Reflex, Cheers, Sociolog pe piaţa muncii (Sociologist on the labour market), etc. have shown that there are differences in employment, which result from the level of inequalities generated by access to education (Blossfeld and Shavit, 1993; Hatos, 2006; Korka, 2009; Koucký et al., 2007; Păunescu et al., 2011; Shavit, 2007; Thurow, 1976; Voicu, Tufiş, and Voicu, 2010; Voicu and Tufiş, 2011; Voicu and Vasile, 2009) as well as the level of correspondence between the study field, the acquired competencies and those requested by the labour market (Chevalier, 2003; Garcia-Espejo, 2005; Kucel, Vilalta-Bufi, and Róbert, 2010; Kucel, 2010; McGuinness and Sloane, 2011; Ortiz and Kucel, 2008; Reimer, Noelke, and Kucel, 2008). Therefore, in order to compensate atypical employment situations, each young person will adopt different strategies for choosing the best employment option, according to his/her own dominant traits. One of these strategies which high-skilled young people use is over-qualification as an employment strategy. Moreover, it is expected that social sciences and humanities graduate to be found more often in inadequate situations, as a result of adopting the over-qualification strategy. During the latest years, the relationship between over-qualification and the field of study has been drawing the attention of economists, as well as sociologists, causing them to dedicate numerous studies to this subject matter (Battu, Belfield, and Sloane, 1999; Kucel and Byrne, 2008; McGuinness, 2006; Ortiz and Kucel, 2008; Sloane, Battu, and Seaman, 1999; Teichler, 2007b), but the connection between the field of study and its equivalent on the labour market has been less exploited. Moving one step further, the reasons behind over-qualification reside in the fact that "soft" disciplines create broad competencies for the targeted workplaces. For example, the services' market favours an increased access, representing a potentially extended market for these disciplines. In this context, work productivity growth represents an advantage through work offer diversification, as well as a disadvantage through an increased competitiveness within labour force. According to the job competition theory (Throw, 1975), the likelihood to attain top quality jobs belongs to those with the highest education level, but, in the context where the work request exceeds work offer, young people are at a high risk of placing themselves in inadequate situations, even under atypical employment forms. Sattinger's job matching theory (1993) shows that, when an

individual is inadequately employed, meaning that he occupies a position which involves little or no use of the competencies acquired through education, what happens is an "under-use of labour force", with effects on income and work productivity (Allen and Van Der Velden, 2001). That applies even more in economic crisis situations, when employers would seek to make the best choice (rational action theory) when recruiting the best-prepared candidates, considering the lowest costs (MacDonald 2011). The growth of the under-employment phenomenon amongst young people could occur largely due to the increased number of over-qualified or over-educated people being forced to accept temporary or marginal jobs (Eremia [Naghi] 2014; Naghi 2014). Atypical employment situations among young people could be also interpreted as intermediary stages towards permanent employment, according to the stepping stone theory (Korpi and Levin, 2001). Graduates enter the labour market on positions which are inferior to their educational level, due to lack of experience, but, with time, the level of job correlation grows (Battu et al., 1999; Sloane et al., 1999). However, a new hypothesis can be launched, if at a certain point in time (after approximately three years of experience) this correlation between educational level, the knowledge and competencies required at work does is not being achieved, it could mean there are reasons to doubt the level of adequacy of competencies and specializations.

5. Concluding discussion

The contemporary society is the product of complex processes, determined by social interactions in the economy (as a result of deindustrialization) and by socio-occupational structure, with positive results in relation to work productivity and extended access to education, simultaneously with the existence of less desired effects, such as unemployment and under-employment. Today's young generation has grown with an extended access to information and development of new technologies. Gathering an informational stock, which is difficult to control, as well as the extension of higher education as a means of knowledge management, have led to profound changes in connection with social structure and mobility. However, although social inequalities have diminished as a result of these strategies, they have not disappeared. They continued to exist, although they have changed their form or their place in the social structure. The way class and gender inequalities are being reproduced through education is visible in society's occupational structure (Kucel and Vilalta-Bufi, 2014). Moreover, if in the past the main focus used to be placed on access to high school education, nowadays the key discussion topic represents the population's increasingly wider access to a form of higher education. The massification of higher education puts pressure on education quality and moves the focus towards equal opportunities based on social class and gender criteria. Although social change led to diminishing inequalities between men and woman, qualitative inequalities concerning the type of attended education have remained an issue (Shavit et al., 2007; Shavit, 2007). Following the generalization of higher education, efforts have been made in order to maintain its meritocratic character, at the same time with respecting individuals' educational preferences and aspirations. However, academic performance continued to be conditioned by innate status (Voicu and Vasile, 2009:3), and therefore the transition from inherited merit-based access towards equal opportunities in higher education led

to diminishing inequalities, but not their disappearance (Clancy and Goastellec, 2007; Koucký et al., 2007). The three forms of capital, which families of origin possess to a variable extent, and which influence their children's life and education in a major way is economic, social and cultural capital (Bourdieu șiPasseron, 1977). Their effects influence the formation and functioning of inequalities in society to different degrees. Hence, the effects are given by parents' educational level, by exposure to books, by the level of aspirations, all depending on the family of origin (Bourdieu et al., 1977). The process is continued with the influence of school and the type of accessed social networks (Coleman, 1988), adding the role within the family of origin as first, second or third child (Shavit, 2007). Gender also plays an important part, despite maintaining access inequalities, the extension of higher-education access has increased the participation of previously excluded or marginalized groups, women having had mostly to gain following this extension of higher education access (Furlong and Cartmel, 2009; Shavit, 2007; Voicu and Vasile, 2009).

Sociologists consider education to be the main pillar assuring the economic progress of emerging and developed countries. It makes social mobility and stratification possible, causing the effects on occupational structure. Examining the access to higher education, the attention is drawn towards the real distribution of educational opportunities in society; what are the main causes and the inequalities-generating factors in education supply and participation? Ensuring access to education for representatives of all social classes facilitates the development of skills and potential for an entire emerging generation, and, consequently, ensures the most effective use of knowledge and competencies in order to stimulate economic and social development. At the same time, accessible higher education facilitates change through social mobility between generations of parents and children. Consequently, this prevents social conflicts generated by class-related social differences, which occur when one class is increasingly privileged, and the other tends to be marginalized, towards social exclusion. And, last but not least, equal opportunities represent one of the foundation pillars of democratic societies, as well as individual efforts made by their members. Through meritocratic approaches, equal access to education translates into the individual's possibility to determine his own successes and failures, as these are influences by his own capacities, not by the social and economic position of the family of origin. Although equal access to education, as an official objective, is guaranteed in all developed countries, there is still a strong influence of economic, cultural and social inequalities, all determined by family background, which largely affect not only school results, but also the motivation to study and educational aspirations. Therefore, the criticism given to meritocracy has shown that basically, by giving priority to individual abilities and achievement, only those who had favourable development conditions, thanks to family-transferred benefits, are being supported and promoted. Reality shows that, this way, the real causes of social inequalities are being dissimulated.

Due to labour market changes, effects on the decreasing number and quality of workplaces, especially for those who abandon school early on. Nowadays a "trendy" strategy, negotiated between young people and their parents, consists of continuing studies in order to compensate the unpredictability of labour market and to secure the future economic position.

To conclude with, the birth of a new economy of services and of a highly technological knowledge society requires new competencies and the highest possible educational levels, in order to accede a privileged status in the professional career. Work prestige implies well-paid workplaces, accessible only to those who can successfully correspond to an increasingly selective labour market. At the same time, workplaces have decreased from the quantitative and qualitative points of view, thanks to work productivity growth in the context of a competitive economy. Consequently, the creation of inadequate employment situations has been reached, young people being highly vulnerable in this respect (Preoteasa, 2011). The effect of diplomas' massification has led to over-qualification forms as an atypical employment strategy, acting as a compensation mechanism towards the dysfunctionalities of the labour market. In turn, its dynamic is influenced by the economic market, which shapes society's occupational structure. Thus, the existing work offer and request determines a higher or lower degree of correlation between existing and requested components. However, inadequate employment forms are present independently of the direction of economic evolution: in times of growth, workplace competition is smaller, and consequently the better-paid ones are more easily accessible, and the educational level adequacy becomes second priority; in times of financial crisis, employers seek to make the most rational choice in order to carry on as an economic actor on the market, inadequacy situations at the time of employment being the sustainable solution in order to resist in a changing economy.

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TRANSITION FROM UNIVERSITY TO WORK IN A ROMANIAN POST-SOCIALIST CITY: A CASE STUDY IN ORADEA

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Abstract: *In the post-socialist period, the State University become an important player on educational market area of North West of Romania (University of Oradea) and private or private-confessional universities have been founded in Oradea: Christian Partium University (with Hungarian as teaching language, set up upon the initiative of the Reformed and Roman-Catholic Churches in order to cater for the higher education needs of the Hungarian minority), Emanuel University founded by Baptist community) and Agora University (founded by a former vice-rector of University of Oradea). The article investigates the transition from university to work as a concern regarding of concentration of a relative high number of university graduates. The main conclusions will support to elaborate the future and adequate measures in order to correlate the educational market with labour market on Oradea area.*

Keywords: *university; work; labor market; educational investment; graduates*

1. Introduction

The post-communist transition of East-Central European countries led to a radical change of the occupational structure and of the entire economic system, the planned economy being replaced by the market economy. As the result of the socio-economic transformations occurred after 1989, in the post-socialist countries the centralized distribution of the highly qualified workforce was replaced by the liberalization of the labour market, which functions on the basis of demand and supply (Chisholm, 1999). As a consequence, the transition of young people from educational institutions to

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employment has become to an ever greater extent influenced by the new characteristics of the labour market. In this way, the social function of determining the individuals' social-professional status has been partially transferred from the educational system to the occupational system.

During the communist period, Romanian universities where located in a few big cities and graduates received jobs from the state, through the compulsory centralized job allocation system. The admission in the faculties was a rather complicated process, which supposed much work and ambition and in many cases private tutoring. The competition was very tough. There have been faculties (such as Law or Medicine), where competition reached at 25 candidates /place. Social and human specializations were limited to History and Philosophy, as the university training of sociologists and psychologists was abrogated. The main problem of the graduates has been where will you get a job after graduation, in a city or in a village, in your region, or far away? That is why many young people chose polytechnic specializations which guaranteed work places in urban environments.

After 1990 the situation changed gradually. There have been set up new university centres, private universities and many new specializations. Gradually most of the faculties gave up to organize competition for admission. Repartition of the graduates to jobs became a limited phenomenon surviving only in universities from the area of defence, public order and national security. In the same time, however, a new, previously unknown phenomenon rose, graduate unemployment.

Oradea was a small university centre during socialism. Beginning with 1963 there has been set up in Oradea a Pedagogical Institute which resisted until 1980's, when Ceausescu decided that our country needed more engineers than teachers and that is why the Pedagogical Institute profile was changed into a Polytechnic Institute which was subordinated to Cluj-Napoca Polytechnic University. In 1990 the former dean with his team decided the transformation of the Polytechnic Institute into Technical University of Oradea, but in 1992 at the pressures of the former academics from the Pedagogical Institute a new institution have been founded, the University of Oradea. This new institution has had a impressive dynamic, raising from 400 students in 1992 to 20500 students in 2014! That means that the number of students multiplied 50 times in 22 years.

There has been a strong criticism in the local media that University of Oradea developed more on a quantitative than a qualitative direction but the idea from the beginning was the set up of a strong university in the north-western part of Romania. First quantity and then quality! In the first ten years after 1989 the aim of the leadership was to build as many specializations is possible. The concern for quality was not an objective of the first leadership of University of Oradea. But after a financial scandal regarding the difference between the real number of students and the reported number of students many changes raised in the organization and a new leadership was chosen. After that it was another climate in the organization where under pressure of external environment it have been imposed another attitude of the leadership and a demand and concern for quality.

In the post-socialist period private or private-confessional universities have been founded in Oradea, too. We could mention here Christian Partium University (with Hungarian as teaching language, set up upon the initiative of the Reformed and Roman-Catholic Churches in order to cater for the higher education needs of the Hungarian minority), Emanuel University founded by Baptist community) and Agora University (founded by a former vice-rector of University of Oradea). Currently the University Centre of Oradea has around 24000 students.

After the revolutionary changes of 1989, the chronologically first initiative to establish an autonomous private Hungarian higher education institution in Romania dates back to 1990, when the Reformed Church District of Királyhágómellék decided to set up the Sulyok István Reformed College in Oradea, with the official task of training lay collaborators for the church. Beyond its officially assumed mission, however, the aim of the founders was to go beyond the Reformed denomination's own educational needs in order to establish a fully-fledged university under Christian ecumenical leadership, in the service of the entire Hungarian community. This intention was transformed into reality in the period 2000–2008, when Partium Christian University was first founded as a private educational institution, then recognized by the government to function provisionally, and finally established by law as a private university of public interest, part of the higher education system of Romania.

As a Hungarian language higher education institution of Romania, Partium Christian University has assumed to offer professional training in order to respond to the needs of Hungarian minority to have specialists with a good mastering of both Hungarian and Romanian language, and it is the only institution of higher education within the region with this kind of academic offer. The overwhelming majority of its around one thousand students (99%) are Hungarian ethnics, a fact which underlines the strong ethno-regional character and profile of this institution (PCU 2011).

Although PCU is a private university as far as its legal status is concerned, in practice it assumes the community task to support the access to higher education of Hungarian minority members and also of all those who wish to study in Hungarian.

According to its mission statement, „besides the educational and scientific challenges, the University has a strategic role in terms of national politics as well. Its purpose is to assure the equal educational opportunities for the Hungarian community in Partium and in Transylvania, and to educate well-trained and internationally competitive experts, according to the most excellent educational and research requirements. By forming intellectuals, the University also fulfils a cultural mission: it educates new professionals who will transmit and further develop the Hungarian culture" (PCU 2010).

The necessity for a distinct institution offering mother tongue education for Hungarian minority members is underlined by the 2002 census data,[1] which show that only 4,6% of ethnic Hungarians in Bihor had a diploma from a higher education institution, compared to a country average of 6,6%. While among the general population 45,7% finished only compulsory school (8 classes), in the case of the Hungarian community

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[1] The similar kind of data from the 2011 Census is not as yet available.

this figure was as high as 52%. Although the share of ethnic Hungarian population within the population of Bihor aged 10 or above was 26,5%, they made up only 18,8% of the population with a higher education diploma and 15,7% of the population employed in a leading position which requires university studies. In the same year, 72,8% of Hungarian university graduates had access to leading positions and jobs requiring higher education, compared to 81,4% of the county's general university graduate population. The census data also point to the fact that disadvantages due to ethnic background are likely to be amplified by the gender factor. In 2002, only 3,9% of Hungarian female population had a diploma from higher education and 60% did not continue education once they finished the compulsory years (Romanian Census Bihor Database 2003).

To the potential students belonging to the Hungarian community of Bihor and of the neighbouring regions, this young, recently accredited institution aims to combine the opportunity to study in native language in a small-size community type of educational settlement with financial and other advantages deriving from its geographical proximity to the students' residences. At the same time, the university also acts as a focal point for anyone who wishes to receive higher education in Hungarian language. Most Partium Christian University graduates work and live in Bihor County and in the neighbouring counties from which the institution aims to attract its future students.

Oradea was until the Second World War a city oriented to light industry and trade, with a majority of Hungarians and Hungarian Jews. In the period when Oradea belonged to Austro-Hungarian Empire, Oradea was called" little Budapest", because of fine architecture, palaces, historical center and a rich cultural life. Like Budapest, a famous city divided in two by the river Danube, Oradea is divided by Cris river, with two banks united by wonderful bridges. In that time Oradea has had even a royal academy of law where distinguished intellectuals taught.

In the socialist period official policies strongly connected urban development to industrialization.. That is why many factories as Alumina (Aluminum processing), Sinteza (chemicals), Avântul (food industry), Fabrica de Zahăr (Sugar Factory), Metalica (home appliances) and UAMT (components for auto industry) have been built. Most of them disappeared in the first years of transition from planned to market economy. This was not a specific phenomenon for Oradea but characterized the transition of Romania's economy. Oradea is now a city oriented to trading activities, services, high tech, light and food industry.

Oradea is the main city of Bihor county, one of the territorial-administrative regions of Romania located at the country's north-western border shared with Hungary, also generally regarded as one of the administrative units of the country where conditions for economic development are comparatively favorable. Beyond its proximity to the border, there are advantages deriving from the relatively well-developed infrastructure and human resources, which make the region attractive to foreign investors. It is worth mentioning here, that the proportion of university and high school graduates within population is significantly higher compared to the average Romanian level (Romanian Census 2003).

The opportunities related to the geographical position of Bihor are conducive to cultural and linguistic pluralism within the educational system, emphasizing the need for coordinated cross-border educational policies, to be adapted to the requirements of unifying the cross-border labor market. After the expected elimination of border crossing formalities between Romania and Hungary, the again increased number of onetime opportunities to study, work and live in the neighboring country will likely produce demographic, socio-economic and cultural effects which should be taken into account when elaborating development programs and cooperation projects within the Bihor-Hajdu-Bihar Euro-region.

Taking into account the above outlined transformations and social processes, this paper is focusing on a very important issue of contemporary society, namely, the linkage between abilities obtained by the graduates through the educational training in universities and the requirements of the employers from the labor market. How could be explained the unemployment of the graduates? What should be changed in the university system for a better linkage with the labor market? What is the rate of unemployment for different university specializations? What specializations are demanded on the labor market? What is the correspondence between different specializations and the jobs on the local labor market? We will answer these questions using a quantitative data analysis collected between 2010 and 2014 from the graduates 2009 of University of Oradea and Christian Partium University.

2. Literature

Universities have an important role to play in the present and future economic and societal development in a context in which the concept of higher education itself is going through a deep reconsideration of the modalities of responding to the expectations of extra-university world, as well as of the means of dealing effectively with the challenges of the future and with the potential opportunities. Shared concerns of governments in the European Union for economic recovery enhanced competitiveness and income convergence bring higher education and employability of graduates in the spotlight.

There is a huge literature focused on relationship between university and labor market. One of the most important authors who investigated the mentioned relation is the American **William Cummings**. In his book ''*The Institutions of Education*'' (2003) he has written on the development of education in six countries as USA, USSR, United Kingdom, France, Germany and Japan. In all the central societies the preparation for work is supported more with words but less with facts, believes Cummings. But only in the socialist societies the state tries to guarantee to each graduate a workplace. In corporatist societies it seems to be a lasting alliance between employers and education system, both at the political level and through personnel linkages. For instance, every high school and higher education institution from Japan has a network of employees who works for graduate placement. This institution of education considers that is their own responsibility of graduate placement on the labor market (Cummings, 2007: 123). We have to add that Japan's university-corporations linkages is also the focus of another book written by Brinton and Karya (1994).They refer to '' semi-institutionalized

networks" mediating employment between elite universities and corporations. After World War II, Japanese universities played an important role in linking their graduates to employment, and linkages were so strong that employers sent job applications only to their preferred institutions. But this led to harsh criticism in the 1970's, since those who did not attend the top universities were completely shut out of jobs with the most prestigious companies. This criticism ended the strong explicit relationship, and in the 1980's according to survey data, far fewer graduates than before reported that their school had channeled them into a position, and any student could apply for any job (Granovetter, 1995: 168). In the next chart it can be noticed the relation between school and labor market in societies compared by Cummings.

Table 1 - The Relation between education and labor market in six developed countries

Country	Conception	Programs of Human Resources Training	Searching for a job
USA	Market	Before-Employment,, Public Financing	Individual Responsibility
England	Market	Before-Employment, Public Financing	Individual Responsibility
France	Market and Corporatism	Before-Employment, Public Financing	Individual Responsibility
Germany	Corporatism	Before-Employment, Private financing	Individual Responsibility
Japan	Corporatism	After-Employment, Private Financing	By the help of the school
Russia	Socialism	After-Employment, Public Financing	Job guaranteed by the State

Source: William Cummings, 2007:123

A very important comparative analysis of different systems of educations (USA, Norway and Germany) and their relationship with labor market is done by **Jutta Allmendinger** in "*Educational Systems and Labor Market Outcomes*" (1989). The effects of educational attainment on occupational rewards are dependent on the educational system in which education has been pursued. Allmendinger created a typology of educational systems distinguished along *standardization* (the provision of equal educational standards nationwide) and *stratification* (the selection procedures within the systems) (Allmendinger, 1989: 231). The analysis showed that when a person is educated in a stratified system, his or her occupational status is strongly determined by educational attainment. The relationship between educational attainment and occupational status is less strong in unstratified systems. The educational system also shapes career trajectories – the likelihood of changing jobs. A person educated in a standardized system changes jobs less frequently than does someone educated in a unstandardized system. This research explains why job mobility is higher in the United States of America than Europe. Concerning this topic we have to mention the research of **Mark Granovetter** who studied job mobility in a suburb of the American metropolis Boston using a random sample of workers, professionals and managers.

Granovetter was amazed by the fact that those who had a great stability in the firm did not owe the stability to their excellent competence, but to the fact that they know almost nobody in other companies and so they were not taken seriously by the employers used to recruit through personalized information. At the same time, those who found jobs through personal contacts reported higher wages than those who used other methods (Granovetter, 1995: 22).

As regards to the non-white race, Granovetter believes that they are poorly connected to the jobs structure and have lesser influence in employment when they are connected. The racial differences in the rate of youth unemployment do not appear due to the fact that blacks got the air or leave their jobs, but because of the difficulty to enter the workforce. Granovetter criticizes the economic models that hypothesize all in the same key that the promotion depends on the productivity of workers, by adding to productivity the lordship and ethnicity, too(Granovetter, 1995: 5).

One of the main articles on the school-labor market transition is that of **Psacharopoulos** and **Velez** (1993). They used data from a sample of 4000 workers from Bogota, Columbia to investigate how several indicators of educational quality affect labor market outcomes. In their research educational quality is measured by using a variety of proxies at each level of education such as grade repetition in primary school, the score university entry examination obtained at the end of secondary education and the prestige rating of an institution on higher education. There are few conclusions derived from their research. One conclusion is the importance of the quantity of education and the traditional human capital variables on labor market outcomes. Secondly, worker's earnings and occupational status also depend on quality of education they received. Being a dropout, especially from higher education, has a negative effect on earnings and occupational status. High cognitive achievement at the secondary level and attending a prestigious university are associated with higher earnings and higher occupational status (Psacharopoulos and Velez, 1993:143).

Another article focused on Northern Europe's country of Finland is that of **Sakari Ahola.** During the deep recession in Finland at the beginning of 1990s, graduate unemployment grew approximately ten times. The government encouraged the universities to establish their own recruitment agencies and to actively monitor the employment of the graduates. Ahola founds comparing two large data bases from 1970 and 1995) that at the beginning of 1990s there are intensifying problems of mismatch between demand and supply. On the educational market young people's preferences are heavily geared towards higher education and certain popular fields of study. On the labor market, both numerous skilled workers on the dole and a shortage of skilled labor force in certain industrial areas can be found simultaneously. Different fields of study have been affected differently by unemployment. In 1995 graduates from the field of arts had the highest unemployment rate (8.8%). Unemployment was above average (5-6%) in the fields of humanities, natural and social sciences, engineering and agriculture and forestry. Graduates from law, medicine and teacher training had the lowest unemployment rates (2-3%). Another conclusion of his study is that female graduates tend to be in a disadvantaged position in most fields of study. Only in the fields of business studies and social sciences do men have slightly higher unemployment rates than women (Ahola, 2001:5)

In a more recent article "*Higher Educated but in the wrong field?*', **Reimer** and **Steinmetz** used a Labor Force Survey data from 2000 for comparing the situation from Germany and Spain. Results of the logistic regression models generally confirm the expectation that the field of study explains a sizable portion of the gender gap in unemployment in Germany and Spain (Reimer and Steinmetz, 2009, p.723). Field of study explains about one-third of the gender gap in Spain, compared to about one-fourth of the same in Germany. Graduates with higher-level tertiary degrees less often hold low status jobs, even though the gender differential is influenced by this variable only in Spain. The overrepresentation of women among holders of lower level tertiary degrees in Spain is partly responsible for the female disadvantages behind entry into low-status employment. In Germany male fields (natural sciences, engineering, and architecture), as well as those in the more gender-integrated fields (medical sciences and law), are less likely to hold a low status job than are education graduates. Liberal arts and "other" graduates however are more likely to be in low status job. The disadvantage of economic graduates is somewhat surprising given the supposedly good labor market prospects. The Spanish case shows that graduates in law, economics, social sciences and liberal arts are disadvantaged compared to education graduates, whereas only medical science and architecture graduates are at an advantage with respect to low status jobs.

In an article dedicated to the situation from Romania, Bucharest' Economics Academy professor **Mihai Korka** considers that fiscal spending on education constitutes the third largest functional spending category on the budget(after spending on transportation, public works and housing and national defence) making it one of the most potent levers available to policy makers (Korka, 2010:14). Demographic forces will continue to shrink Romania's workforce, placing the onus on policy makers to ensure that the remaining workers are better prepared to make up for the shortfall in numbers. As Romania continues to integrate its economy with the rest of EU, the demand for more an better educated workers is likely to rise. In Romania as in EU, the catering of large number of students, disregarding the specific needs of the labor market generated the first mismatches in terms of level of education: the over-qualification put a pressure on the employability of steadily amounting number of graduates. After the first cohorts of mass higher education graduates two imbalances of the labor market were considered as education mismatches. On the one hand, only part of the graduates was able to find a job corresponding to their level and content of education. On the other hand, graduates diminished the employment opportunities of less educated people. Even if the jobs are not requiring higher education competences, employers tend to ask for graduates and graduates accept frequently these positions in the labor market (Korka, 2010:15).

In a more applied article concerning the same topic **Nicolescu** and **Paun** explored the economic sciences' graduates expectations and employers requirements from Bucharest. In two surveys conducted in 2006 in Bucharest, Romania, both graduates and employers have been asked about skills and abilities developed through higher education programs and the extent to which these correspond to their expectations and requirements. Results show that both students/graduates and employers have to a large extent similar types of expectations of higher education services, but the degree to which they emphasize different aspects varies. Graduates emphasize the most of getting

practical knowledge, skills and abilities that they perceive should be acquired through their studies. Employers emphasize the most when selecting employees on moral and psychic qualities of the individual that are actually less related to being acquired through studies (Nicolescu and Paun, 2007:8). However, practical abilities are on the second place on employers' requirements, but their acquisition is preferred to take place via professional experience, rather than university studies. Students at graduation expect more from higher education than employers do. But most of the abilities appreciated by the employers (communication, team work, problem solving and assimilation of new knowledge) are developed and improved through the university study (Nicolescu and Paun, 2007:9).

3. Research methodology

3.1. Presentation of the project

University Graduates and the Labor Market is a national research conducted by the Romanian National Authority of Public University Financing in partnership with the International Centre for Higher Education Research (INCHER) Kassel and with public and private higher education institutions in Romania. The research tracked the relationship between university studies and the careers of young people, its main role being that of increasing the institutional capacity of the universities for developing monitoring studies constantly. The project aims to provide higher education institutions with monitoring instruments that allow the correlation of the study offers and the employers' requirements. It is hoped that the instruments developed and the experience gained this way will create the premises for a long term approach, in which this type of research will be repeated at national level annually (UGLM 2011).

A first survey was conducted in 2011, on 2005 and 2009 graduates, and another survey followed next year, on the 2006 and 2010 graduates. Oradea University and Partium Christian University from the same city were among the 55 public and private universities tracking their own graduates in this phase. This paper draws exclusively on the data collected during the first phase. The research consisted in the application of a questionnaire that surveyed the graduate's background starting with his/her university studies, continuing with getting his/her first job and then with other issues that were important for his/her professional evolution. The questionnaire was accessed on-line. A paper questionnaire was also available and sent, at request, to those who did not have access to the Internet (UGLM 2011).

During four contact stages, each university sent invitations to ask its graduates to participate in the study. Using regular mail and e-mail as back-up, the universities sent a first letter of invitation and three reminders. The filling in of the questionnaire ended on 31st March 2011, resulting in 39293 graduates who accessed it (UGLM 2011**). The** implementation period of the questionnaire, for Oradea University subsample, was 23 November 2010 - 31 March 2011, for a total of 4 rounds of application. The research method was based on online questionnaire (hosted on server core team). Total of study subjects was 8239 graduates, which 3442 were graduated in 2005 and 4701 in 2009. Were invited to participate in the study 3401 graduates, of which 1010 were graduated

in 2005 and 2391 graduated in 2009. Actually 3302 graduates were contacted and 99 proved to be invalid address. Effectively responded to the questionnaire 580 graduates of which 217 were graduated in 2005 and 363 graduated in 2009. Overall gross response rate was 7.1% of the target population. Of these gross rate for graduates in 2005 was 6.3% and the gross rate for graduates in 2009 was 7.7%. Overall average response was 17.5% of total graduates targeted promotions. Net rate for graduates in 2005 was 23.5% and the net rate for 2009 graduates was 15.2%

Partium Christian University sub-sample consisted of 148of its graduates who accessed the questionnaire (of which 72 graduated in 2005 and 76 graduated in 2009).The overall response rate of PCU graduates was 40%(51, 06% in the case of the 2005 graduates and 33, 18% in the case of the 2009 graduates).

In addition to the quantitative research we collected data from two focus groups with graduates from University of Oradea and Partium Christian University. Our objective was the refining of the quantitative data using qualitative techniques.

3.2. Statistical data analysis

3.2.1. The regions where the graduates come from

First questions of our analysis are regarded to the counties where Oradea students come from and what do they do after graduation.

We have to say that Oradea students come from almost all regions of Romania but the main counties represented are Bihor (where Oradea is the main city), Satu-Mare, Maramureș and Sălaj (which are located in the North-Western Romania), Mureș and Harghita (which are located in the center of Transylvania and Hungarian minority is very well represented). We can figure out that University of Oradea is rather a regional university but Partium Christian University is representative for Transylvanian counties with a large representation of ethnic Hungarians.

But as in the other university centers the graduates from Oradea have the tendency to live and work in Oradea after BA studies. From our data 53.5% from University of Oradea graduates and 64.6% from Partium Christian University graduates remain in Oradea after graduation and that means around 4200 graduates/year. We didn't have data in our sample from other two private universities (Emanuel University and Agora University) but we estimate that there are other 200 graduates/year that enter on the labor market of Oradea. That means that around 4400 graduates/year represents the demand which come from the university center of Oradea.

Table 2. The counties where Oradea's students finished their high schools
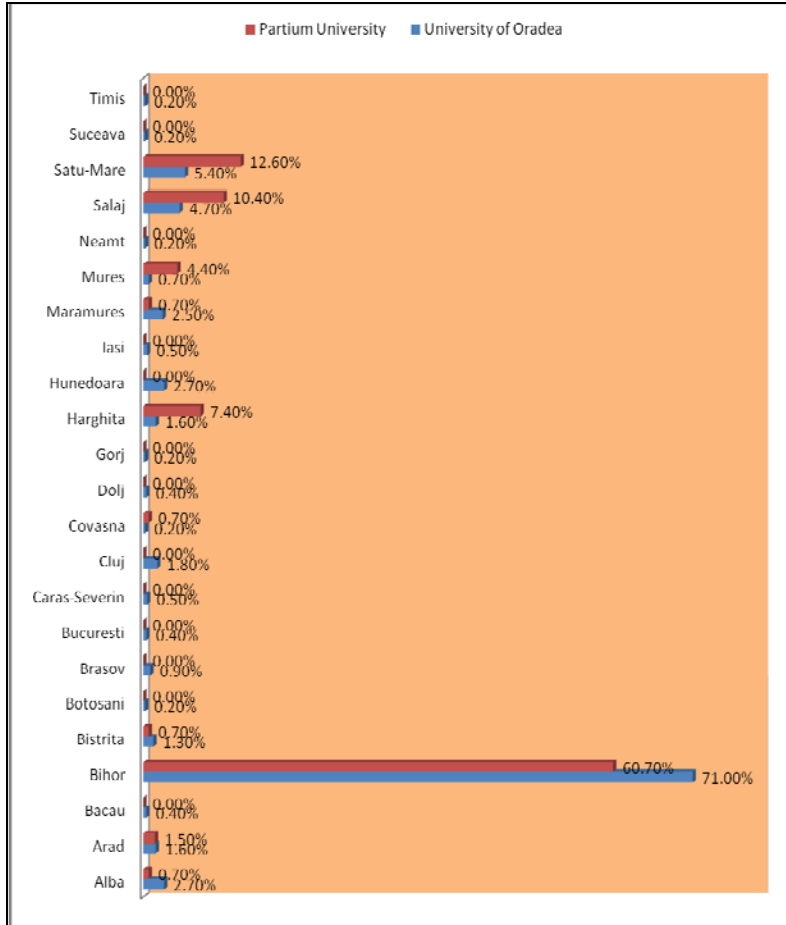
3.2.2. Getting a job after graduation

Another question is regarded to getting a job in Oradea. Is it rather difficult and takes a long time or is it rather an easy process?

As one could see in the Table 2 even if there are many similarities there are also few differences between University of Oradea and Partium Christian University graduates' chances of integration on the labor market.

There are around 75% of the total graduates from both universities who are employed and the time between graduation and employment is 5 months for the state university and 4 for the private university. But the main differences are the number of employers contacted before getting a job and the net salary of the first job. Concerning the first issue Partium Christian University graduates need just 4 months to get a job but during

this period they contact in average 18 employers when Oradea University graduates need 5 months and in this time they contact in average just 8 employers (so two times less). The first net salary is between 1000-1500 RON for state university graduates and between 800 and 1000RON.

How could we explain such differences? The answer is related probably to the way the graduates find the jobs, the types of organizations they try to contact and the difficulty of Partium Christian University graduates in using Romanian language. We have to add that most of the Partium Christian University graduates learn in Hungarian language starting from the primary school until they graduate the higher studies and live most of their life in the Hungarian language environments. That is why they have difficulties in using Romanian language and probably they search for organizations where they can use Hungarian language.

Table 3. Getting a Job in Oradea

|	**University of Oradea**	**Partium Christian University**
Average months necessary for getting a job	5	4
Average number of employers contacted before getting a job	8	18
Net salary of the first job	1001-1500RON	801-1000RON
Unemployed in the moment of the survey	8.3%	19%

Table 4. Number of jobs after graduation
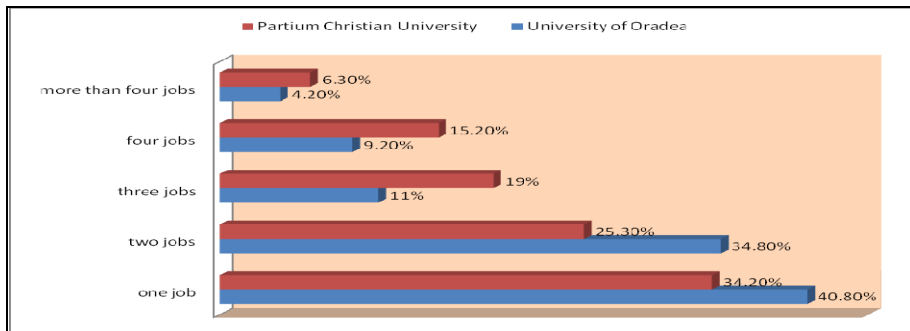
From this graph we can notice that state university graduates have a higher degree of stability of their job. If 75.60% from state university graduates declared they have had just one or two jobs since the graduation, around 22% from the private university in comparison with 13,40% from the state university have had three or four jobs. Probably the explanation is the fact that state university graduates have the tendency to

work for public institutions (15,30% in comparison with 10,60%) when the Hungarian graduates work mostly for private companies and NGOs (around 56% in comparison with 48,50%) as you can see in the table below.

Table 5. The ownership form of the institution where graduate works
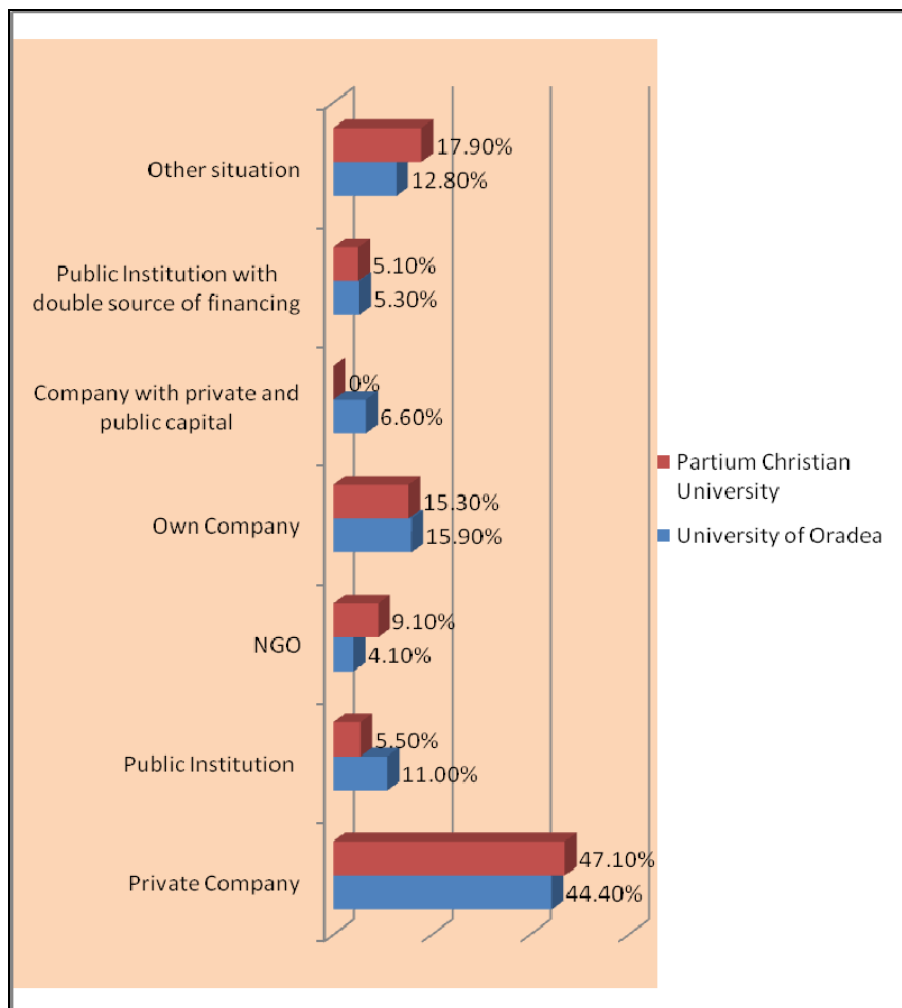
Another issue is the first type of contract of the graduates. We can see from the tables 7 and 8 that situation is rather complicate but usually the graduates from the specializations of Sport and Arts from state university work on the base of contract

with determined duration and the same we can say on Economics graduates from the private Hungarian university.

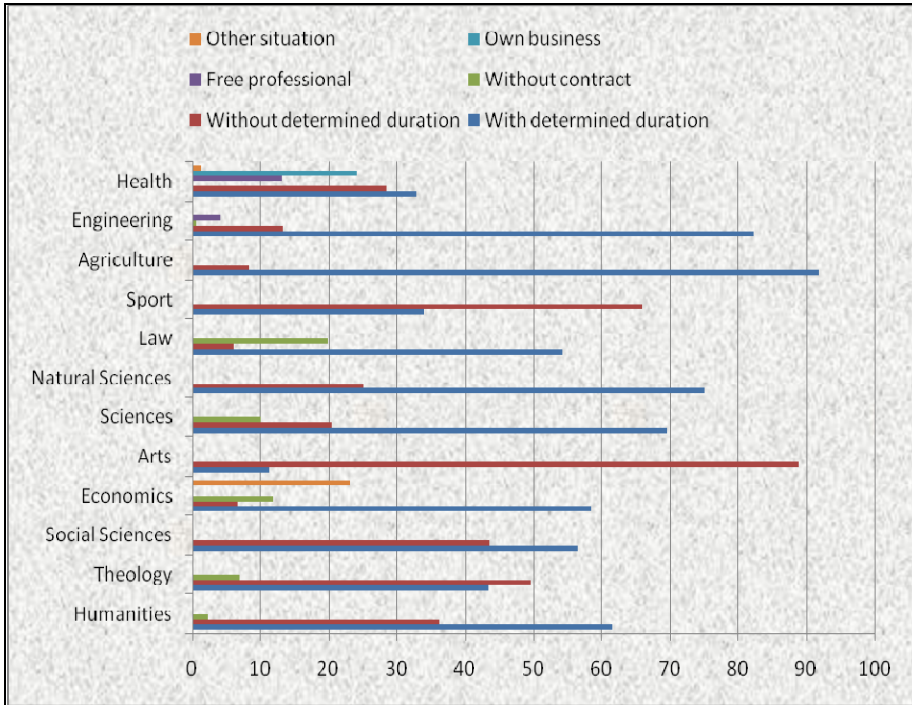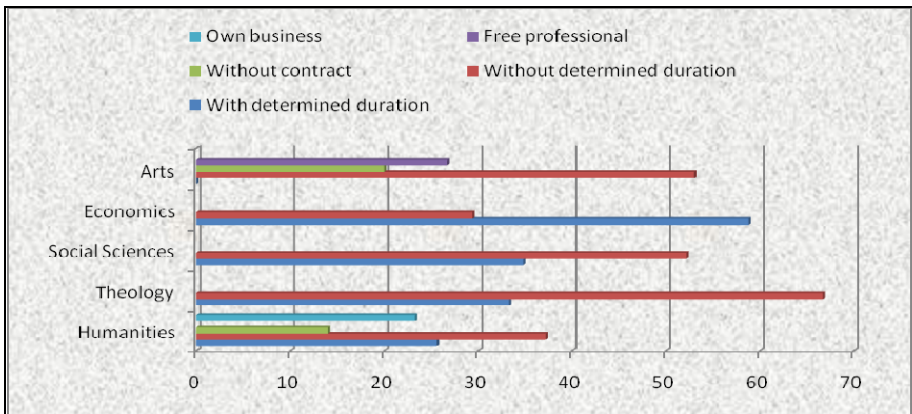**Table 6**. Type of contract and specialization of University of Oradea's graduates

Table 7. Type of contract and specialization of Christian Partium University graduates

3.2.3. Best strategies for getting a job

The graph below emphasizes the effective means and strategies for finding a job. Thus it can be seen that the most practical way of employment is considered to be one based on the help of family, friends and knowledge. 25,20% from graduates of Partium University and 18,80% from the state university considered this method to be the most effective. Such a perspective is an important argument regarding the situation on the labor market, noting that the purpose of starting personal career goals is dominant institutional diversification and human capital equally the activities. In a labor market which is expanding and developed the job offer is so diverse and dynamic that support family, friends and acquaintances is not necessary in such a great extent, reaching to secondary argument in getting a job employment.

Table 8. The most effective method of getting a job
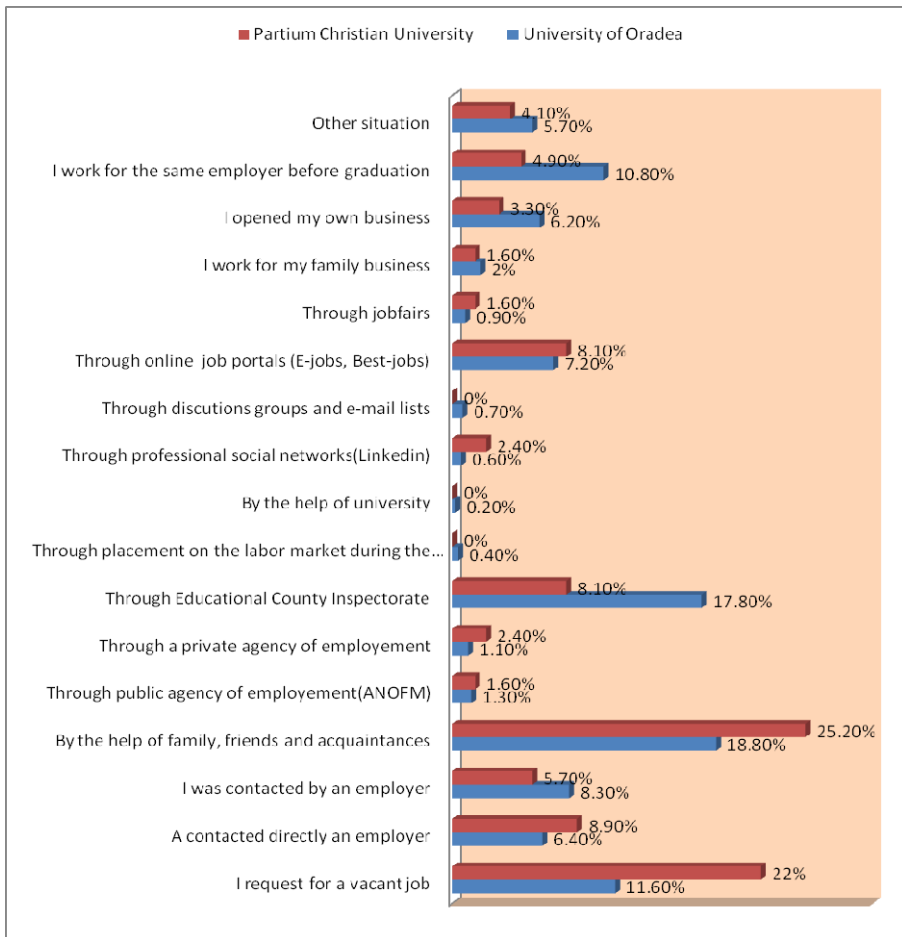
We also want to mention the low score obtained through the public placement labor agency (1.60% for the Hungarian university graduates and 1.30% for the state university graduates) and through job fairs (1.60% and 0,90%) that are considered by graduates as less effective means for finding a job . Also we note a weak link between universities and employers available for work. Only 0.20% of state university graduates believe that the university could be an effective means to access employment. We have to add that there are no jobs found with the help of Partium University.

3.2.4. The unemployement of the graduates

We also questioned what are the specializations with the highest rate of integration on the labor market and what are the specializations with the lowest rate of integration. As we can notice from the table nr 9 the best specializations from the University of Oradea seem to be Mathematics and Physics (1.1%), Natural Sciences (1.3%), Agriculture and Forestry (2.1%) and Sport (3.1%) where are the lowest percentage of unemployed and the worse situation seem to be that of Health (16.9%) and Engineering (36%). We can add that we reported this percentages at the sub-sample of unemployed graduates from the University of Oradea. It is not surprising that Economic Sciences and Social Sciences seem to have a middle position (8.9% and 8.6%). We have to add that the situation on the labor market is very changeable. Today we think that graduates from the faculties of Medicine and Pharmacy and few specializations from the Engineering (as Software Engineering) have better positions on the labor market. We also have to say that Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Sport graduates get probably the bar majority of jobs through the County Educational Inspectorate. There are teaching positions in rural and urban schools and high schools. There is a inertia in graduates mentality that for teaching positions once get a very low salary. But if we compare the teacher's wages with other wages from private and public companies we can understand that the difference is not so high. Teachers have also other advantages as holidays, a relative easier daily program with 4 or 5 hours of teaching/day.

At the Partium Christian University situation is better at Theology (2.5%) and surprisingly worse at Social Sciences (21,50%) and Economic Sciences (36.1%). Probably the explanation is again the using of Hungarian language in teaching and the fact the graduates of the Hungarian university have difficulties in using Romanian language.

We believe that the worse percentages of Economic Sciences graduates (8.9% and 36.1%) is explained by the fact that probably there have graduated too many economists in the last 20 years. At the beginning of the 90s it was a need of economists on the Romanian labor market and of course on Oradea labor market. This need was fulfilled by graduates from state and private universities. In the nineties all the private universities have had faculties of economics. All the universities from Oradea have economic specializations. The result is a rather higher percentage of unemployed graduates.

The situation is also worse at Social Sciences specializations. In the 1990s it was a lack of specialists in Sociology, Psychology and Social Work. After 25 years we conclude

that there are too many graduates at these specializations. I think that only Pedagogy seem to be in a better position because there is an offer of jobs for Education specialists especially in rural kindergartens and primary schools.

We can see a rather better situation at Visual Arts and it is surprising for us because this is not a common situation in all Europe. If someone wants to become a sculptor or a painter or graphic designer has to know that these are liberal professions and nobody can guarantee a place on the labor market. The success in the field of arts depends in large measure on artist's talent and his ability to create art for current public. But probably the explanation is the fact the most graduates work as drawing and painting teachers and get their jobs through the County Educational Inspectorate.

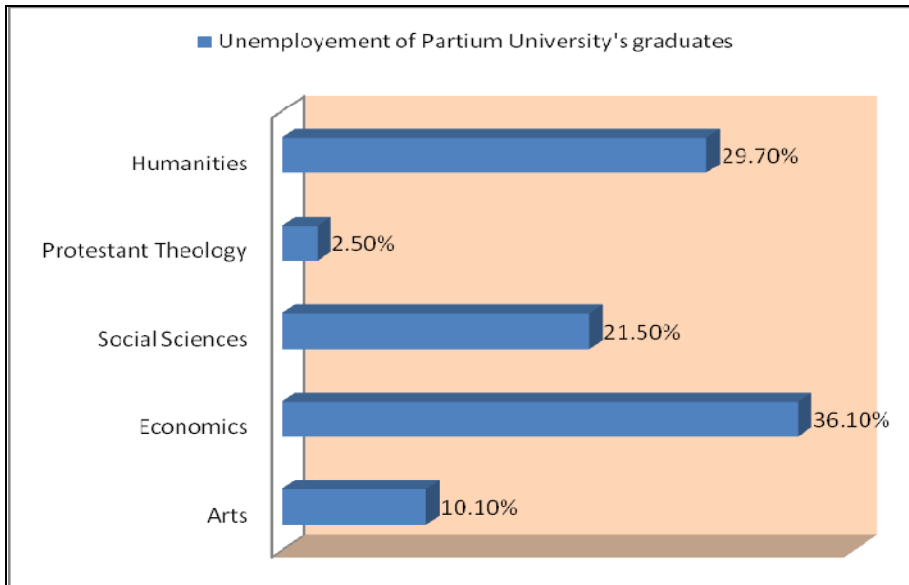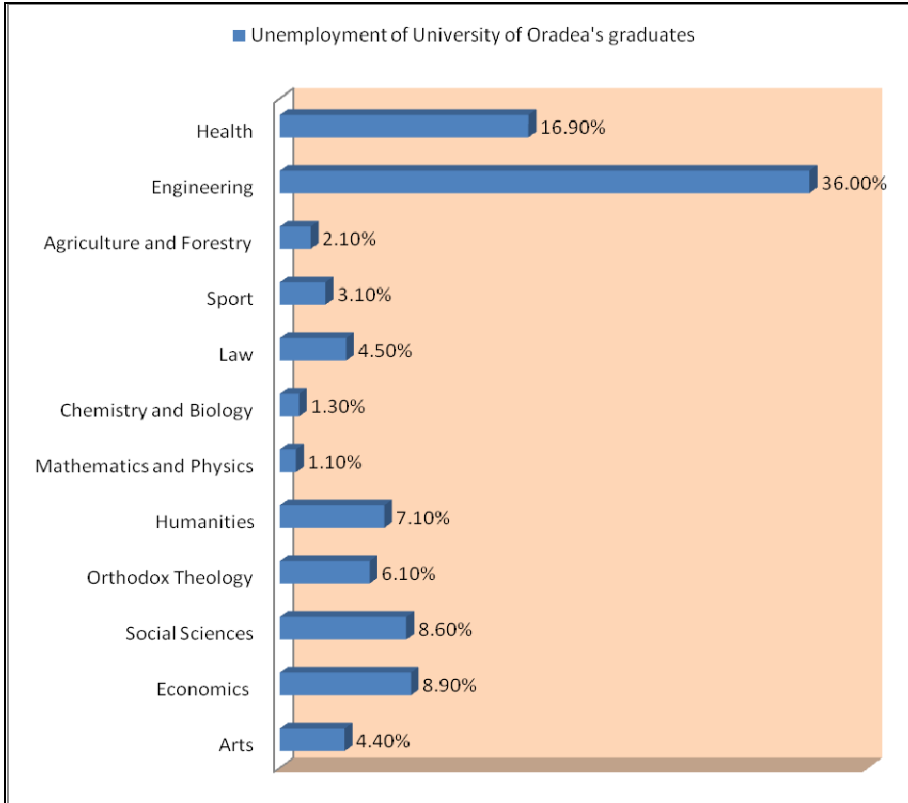**Table 9**. Unemployment rate of Partium Christian University's graduates

Table 10. Unemployment rate of University of Oradea's graduates

3.2.5. The correspondence between the specialization and the job content

But a better way of comparing the success rate of the graduates on the labor market is the correspondence between their program of study and their first workplace on the labor market.

We can notice studying the Table 12 that at the University of Oradea the worse position have the specializations from Economics (92,10%) , Social Sciences (85,20%), Engineering (75%) and Arts (73%) and in a better position seem to be Humanities (38,70%), Medicine and Pharmacy (53,50%), Orthodox Theology (53,30%) and Law (52,10%).

If we focus on Partium University graduates the worse situation is at Economics (77,40%), Social Sciences (74,10%) and Arts (71,40%) and a better position is that of Protestant Theology graduates (66,70%).

From these statistics we can understand that a young student who finish the high school should choose (in order to find a place on the labor market which correspond to his or her specialization) Law, Medicine and Pharmacy, Humanities or Theology. Of course a software engineer could also find easier a job in Oradea and the situation seem to be the same for this type of specialization in other urban areas of Romania and European Union. But in our statistics we analyzed all the polytechnic specializations in the same field (Engineering).

Table 11. The correspondence between the field of specialization and the first job for University of Oradea's graduates
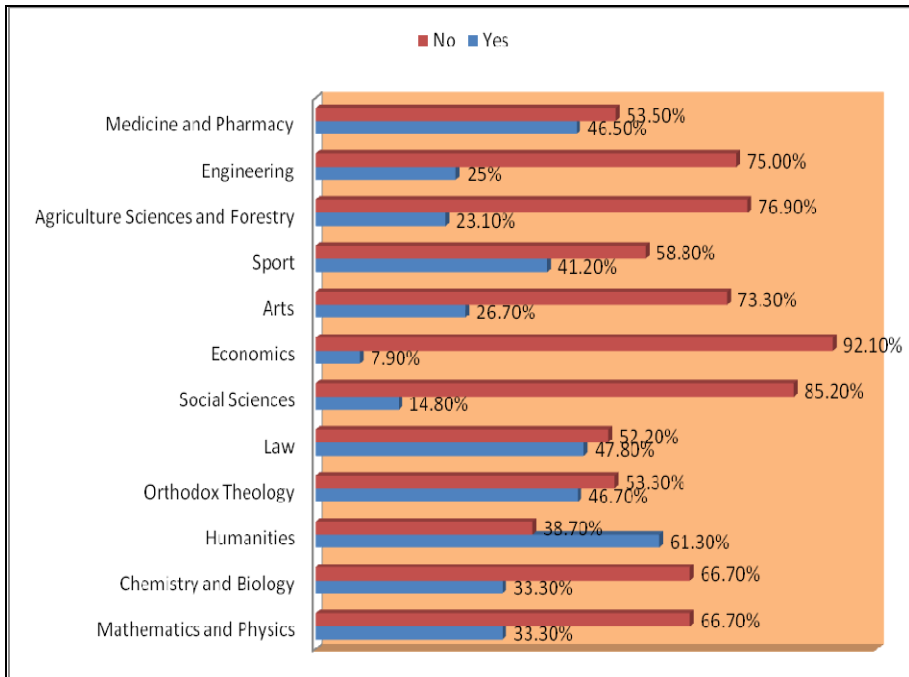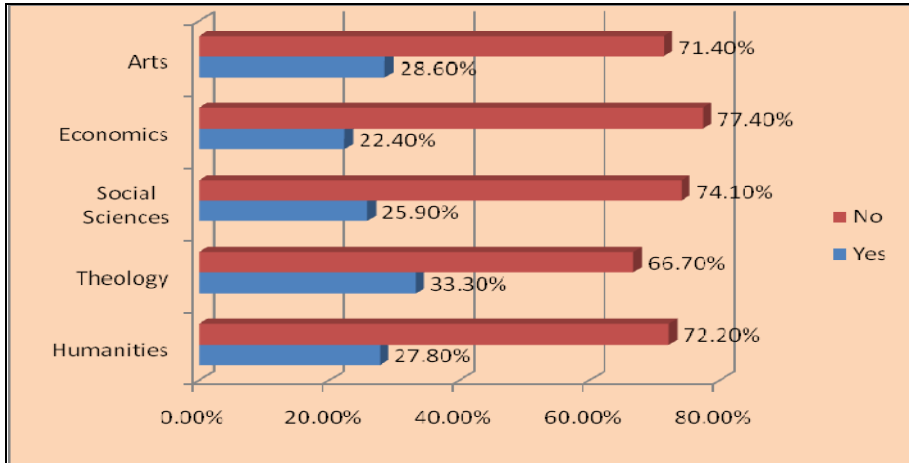
Table 12. The correspondence between the field of specialization and the first job for Partium University's graduates

By implementing of this study at University of Oradea and Partium Christian University, the institutions' management gained a clearer picture of the extent to which the University fails to meet the requirements of professional career, as well as addressing area that the graduates cover the labor market. A convincing argument in favor of a higher education institution is the work of its graduates. Competence in professional activities, the importance of positions in different institutional systems, the synthetic way that meet the needs of the social environment in which they live, are core objectives and achievements of our institution. The "graduates and the labor market" university helps to know these things better and to make known for the following generations.

Follow-up study of graduates of the University of Oradea insertion in the labor market is meant to provide information that can be divided into two levels: information on the demand on the labor market, which may lead to stimulating curriculum or authorization of specialization in line with market requirements. Getting information about the current labor market trends to reduce the maintenance burden of curricula for professional areas covered, which does not have a lack of qualified personnel. Programs of study (majors) are built on the undergraduate background of scientific and professional fields with real-life counterpart in various forms and dynamism required by the rules of economic competition. acquire information.

4. Conclusions

In this paper we analyzed the subtle and complex relations between higher education and labor market using the case of Oradea university center which is a relative young one in the Romanian higher education landscape.

We were wondering before exploring data how much the family and friendship connections do matter in the case of a local labor market for higher education graduates. Our students believe that this counts mostly on this labor market. But if we take a look on the data we figure out that only around 1 of 4 graduates get the job using this way. What they learn and how they learn during the study program is very important in order to get a job on the labor market.

If state university graduates get more jobs in public institutions the Partium University graduates prefer to find a job in private companies and NGOs where they can speak in Hungarian. The problem is that unemployment rate of Partium University graduates is higher and especially in the case of Economics and Social Sciences graduates. We have to add that also the unemployment rate in the case of Engineering graduates from University of Oradea is high but the current trend is a better integration of the engineers on the labor market.

Another aspect is the correspondence between the specialization and the job the graduates got. The graduates from Economics and Social Sciences in both universities seem to be in a higher disadvantage in comparison with other fields of study. After 1989 it was a lack of economists, sociologists, psychologists and social workers and many universities begun and developed these specialties. Today we understand there are too many specialists in Economics and Social Sciences and in a relative small labor market as Oradea this could be a big issue. There is a mismatch between these type of fields of study and the local labor market.

If we take all the statistics we used in this study the graduates of university of Oradea seem to be advantaged in comparison with Partium University ones who have problems in using Romanian language. Here in Oradea there is the impression that speaking both Romanian and Hungarian is an advantage. This could be true. But speaking only Hungarian is clearly a disadvantage if someone wants a job on the local labor market. The problem of Partium University graduates is that they haven't too many opportunities to speak Romanian before trying to find a job on the labor market. They speak Hungarian in family, kindergarten, primary school, high school and university. Their friends and relatives are mostly Hungarians and they speak Romanian in very few contexts (for instance when they go for shopping).

What would be the solutions for a better integration of Oradea graduates on the labor market?

Firstly the Municipality leadership would have to do more efforts in order to attract foreign direct investments and to create on this way new jobs on the labor market.

But also universities have to change their politics regarding specializations, practical activities and involvement in their graduate's employment. Universities do great efforts in attracting students to study in their educational environments but do less efforts in the process of integration on the labor market.

Probably the more classes in Romanian language would be a solution for ethnic Hungarian graduates in order to be successful on the labor market.

The higher education should be considered as a time and money investment that could create better opportunities for a young man. Today the data show that Medicine, Pharmacy, Software engineering and Law seem to be the most successful specializations. I think that also the teacher's profession should be reconsidered because on a labor market as Oradea and the region of Bihor there are many jobs and the difference between teachers' wages and other professionals from NGOs and private companies is not as high as many people believe.

Of course everything depends on the abilities, talents, capacities and even ideals of a high school graduate who choose a program of study. But the young students and their parents should know all these information when choosing the best suited program of study. Because as in the case of other European countries in Romania there are many highly educated young men but in the wrong field.

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SOCIAL PROBLEMS REVEALED IN ART – THE BALKAN EXPRESSIONISM MOVEMENT[1]

Mirela ANGHEL**[2]**

Abstract: *The article tries to get a grasp of the Balkan expressionism movement that emerges in nowadays society. As it gets through the society, the artists render in their works the reality of life focusing on the problems that arise in society. As they offer poignant data on the society, they strive to achieve art that is representative for the Balkan area. More than any other human being, the artist is imprint by the influence of his surroundings to which he manages to manifest in a dissociative manner. He is imposing himself in society by the liberty to keep in balance and sometimes pendent certain impressions and the capacity to impose new correlations. The Balkan Expressionism Movement is just at its beginning. Time will tell whether this artistic movement will impact universal art as the previous art movements did.*

Keywords: *Balkan expressionism movement, social problems, culture, art movement*

Introducing and Defining the Terms

The artists during all times were the witnesses of the times they lived in. Through their work they stressed the times they were living and immortalized it in their work. As a heritage to people, artists were striving to render in their work as much as possible the reality of their social world. As it happens, much of the art nowadays offer the reality, as it is perceived by a creator's eye. The contemporary problems of every age correspond, in some respects, to the reality in art.

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The development of every society lies in the fact that we are constantly dealing with observation and it becomes imperiously necessary to wonder why a society developed in a certain way and why others shifted directions in their strive to deal with social issues. The human behaviour and individual emotions, basically all human manifestations, were transformed and conducted in a certain pathway due to self or extrinsic constrain.

Defining the term art we notice that "it derives from the Latin word *ars* (plural *artes*). The closest equivalent is in Greek *techrie*. In English, "art" has similar meanings in all civilized languages, as *Kunst* is in German." (Anghel, 2014: 25)

Civilization, as it is regarded nowadays, reached this stage due to the fact that people advanced in technology and communication. Civilization can be defined as doing whatever one desires so that the others are not disturbed.

Culture can be defined in many ways due to the fact that the usage of the word in too many common and frequent conversations led to the desire to define the concept in a systematic manner. It is an acknowledged fact that it is a set of principles that development of societal activities evolve. In other words, culture refers to the societal, behavioural and symbolic values that are mutually shared by the group members and based on these they interpret and enrich their experience and behaviour. Some researches regard culture as a set of principles that the entire activities of a society orbit around to. Culture is provided by "the total values and knowledge considered as being determined by a human community." (Boteanu, 2010: 19)

Every culture has got recommended and forbidden methods to reach the accepted values. In other words, each culture has got accepted methods in order to reach cultural goals. The methods to reach cultural goals imply shared agreements about the way people are expected to react.

There are alternative approaches to examine cultural processes. One approach is by glancing to the way a culture is functioning from within. Using this approach we focus to comprehend human behaviour from their perspective. Another approach is to compare one culture to another. By this approach, predetermined categories are used in order to examine the selected particular features of the studied culture. Put simply, the goal is not to understand cultures as their members do but to determine how cultures can be compared with reference to a particular quality. This is not a new distinction as Sapir previously used it in 1925. The distinction is also made by the linguist K. L. Pike in *Communication and Culture* (1966) using the terms "emic" (describing the society or culture in terms of internal elements and functioning rather than in terms of any existing external scheme) and "ethic" (relating to moral principles).

The artists communicate through their art as the artist reaches towards a performance that is not accessible to the common man i.e. the capacity to express himself and the others. On the other hand, the viewer/ reader manage to get into the inaccessible universe of the artwork and, therefore, succeed in feeling as belonging to the world. Arts are the humanity thesaurus of values. They arise from the ongoing spring of outstanding command in understanding human feelings, the way certain moments of existential possibilities are intuitively perceived in their outmost deep dwelling and

understanding when the most common petty interests of the confusing times settle with a composed serenity.

At the genesis of artwork, the creative stage, one can find reasons in order to place arts at the top of value theories. They embed the most poignant verdicts over experience values. They form a corpus of confessions that were barely comprehended by those people who tried to grasp value using practical psychology of interpretation and abstract ethical aridity. If we were devoid of art, most of our experiences could not be compared, and being devoid of comparison we can hardly grasp the hope that comes when we need to choose the exceptionally good experiences of life. Therefore, we should not delude ourselves by assimilating an ordinary point of view that the life of every person is a novel, as the novel does not exist unless it is written. In other words, art is not what we live but what we can express in a transformed form. The simple experiences, as a very cold bath in a metal tub or chasing a train can be compared, in a certain proportion, without using complicated manners of words. But there are friends who know each other exceptionally well and succeed in comparing the rudimentary experiences in every day talk.

For most people, the subtle and obscure experiences cannot be communicated or described although the social conventions and the fear of loneliness might make us pretend is not so. The artist is that human being that can communicate better than our own life experiences. They render in art the most unique ways for such phenomena, as they were given a sensitive heart endowed with special discrimination. Our emotions serve us well, much of the time, by providing us with many kinds of enjoyment. Artists manage to express in art our out mostinner feelings. Somehow, they manage to render in art what the common man cannot name in real life. Art can be perceived as an emotional transfer from one mind to another. It is also true that in certain conditions the individual knowledge pass through similar experiences (such as adolescence, religious experiences, the loss of a loved one).

But the outmost gain following an experience is knowledge. Knowledge is indispensable to gain the outmost values. Art transfers knowledge when it meets the right recipient to fulfill. The effect of work art can be diverse from man to man. I remember the time when I visited the exhibition of impressionist painters at Musée d'Orsay in Paris. It was like floating while delighting my eyes in their painting. Whereas, the person I was with had not such a feeling at all. It is said that poetry has got the most complex and profound communication. I feel that painting can render the same communication.

More than any other human being, the artist is imprint by the influence of his surroundings to which he manages to manifest in a dissociative manner. He is imposing himself in society by the liberty to keep in balance and sometimes pendent certain impressions and the capacity to impose new correlations. For example, the poet can distinguish himself by the freedom, finesse and the order of connections accomplished amid his life experiences. This is a valuable asset that the artist possesses in order to communicate his work.

There may be times when the memory of an artist can be perceived more as a flaw rather than a quality as he manages to retain only that he can value through his art. The artist does not recollect an experience but, through his art, he manages to bring it to life again as an experience can be brought to life only if it gets the right stimuli. An artist cannot find peace easily. Even when he rests he still has got a spotlight on. An artist manages to organize facts, even though they might be confusing. The image of a borough, the reality of a working place can be chaotic and meaningless to a less disciplined eye, whereas for an artist these can represent an enormous source of inspiration.

The art movement that I shall focus on in this article is based on the expressionist movement that first occurred in Germany and Austria at the beginning of the 20th century. Expressionism in art is revealed by the practically universal indifference to colour theory, and as a Goethe puts it is a kind of "figured-bass system for painting, a total working theory, such as music offers".

Expressionism in Art

Expressionism is a "type of painting, sculpture or graphic art (also literature, cinema and dance) in which the artist tries through suggestive distortion of form, colour, space and other naturalistic qualities to destroy the external reality of a given situation and get its "truth" or emotional essence" (Myers, 1956:171) The expressionist art conveyed not a descriptive or visual but analytical and internal perspective in order to penetrate the form or subject so that the artist could lose himself in it and thus identifying with something greater or more powerful than himself. This type of art can be regarded as the artists' projection in identifying with the vastness of God, nature, cities, animals or a simply peasant. The expressionist artists use a lot of colour and light in order to emphasize drama and to penetrate form in order to create emotional projection and a sensation of violence, in contrast with impressionist artist that used light and movement just for their own sake. In comparison with the descriptive and analytical criteria of impressionism and cubism, the expressionist movement is more emotive and soul searching.

The expressionist movement was primarily set in central Europe being a movement that started in Germany and Austria. "There are three basic types of expressionism: the Brücke formulation stemming from Van Gogh, African sculpture and Fauvism which resulted in distorted but still representational and tangible forms; the Blue Rider or abstract variety which stems more from Gaugin, Delaunay and folk art and results in a rhythmic, even musical expression in which form penetrates form and colour penetrates colour; ant the Neue Sachlishkei, or New Objectivity, which is representational but very intense in mood and clinical in detail. The Brücke artists include Kirchner, Nolde, Pechstein, Mueller, Schmidt-Rottluff; the blue rider groups gives us Marc, Kandinsky, Klee, Campendonk, Jawlensky and, in certain aspects, Feininger, among others; in the New Objectivity category are Otto Dix, George Grosz, the early Max Beckmann, and a number of lesser figures." (Myers, 1956: 172)

Wilhelm Worringer was a historical figure whose works is mainly related to expressionism. He was born in the generation that would mature in the founding years

of Expressionism. His works indicate the fact that art had taken a new direction in the way it was conceived. As expected, his written work was promptly recognized by the contemporary art: "Recent developments in art make it very plain to me that my problem bears not only upon the historians who survey and evaluate the past but also on the new expressive goals of present-day artists." Wilhelm Worringer had a subjective view of art founded on intuition and that led to his anticipation of presenting the changing of art due to the fact that artists have different aspirations that the rest of people. Worringer understood that abstract art in principle is art of the masses – as well as that modern man living bereft of a true sense of "world". Modern man, like his primitive counterpart, realized "that the visible world in which we had been placed is the work of Maya, a conjuring act, an inessential figment of no duration, like a dream or a mirage; a veil about human consciousness, something about which it would be at once true and false to say that it is and yet is not." (Kultermann, 1993: 203) Expressionism sought to express historical evolution as a multidimensional reality.

One of the most poignant painters for the expressionist movement is Kandinsky. He was an outstanding painter, teacher and theorist of non-objective art and mainly associated with the abstract site of the German expressionism known as The Blue Rider. In 1901 he wrote and in 1912 he published *Concerning the spiritual in Art*, which has become one of the most influential of all books in art.

Social Problems in Art

By defining social problem, we mention the fact that it is a condition that:

1. Is widely regarded as undesirable or as a source of difficulties

2. Is caused by the actions or inactions of people or society

3. Affects or is thought to affect a large number of people (Farley, 1992: 3)

A social problem, to be regarded as such, must be widely recognised and regarded as undesirable. Public consciousness plays an important role in the definition of social problems. What actually emerges as a social problem depends not merely on scientific reality but on people's awareness of a condition and their values concerning that situation.

The artist can find inspiration anywhere without feeling connected to proletariat or bourgeoisie, nobility of people from the outskirts of the society as they all are, from artist's perspective, members of the same world, of an infinite universe filled with emotions and sensitivities.

As mentioned, artists also render the social reality of their times. The sensitivity of their work reveals social changes as they occur. The message art convey is send through the emotional state of the artist, his ideals and own judgment over the world. The artist possesses the required competencies in using a number of codes: alongside painting, the artist uses behavioural, societal codes as well as his own conceptions of the world. If the viewer is contemporary with the artist, the interpretation provides the required poignant signs that the artist conveys that set him in a certain art movement.

Disregarding that, it might feel meaningless. If the viewer is from another époque he realises that he beholds a different perception than of the artist, and the viewer becomes a critique based on a series of action control that imply setting art in its historic age. When considering art, one need to take into consideration the function it beholds. The colours used, the mixture of shades, settings could be the result of random hazard. Nonetheless, the message conveys different meanings according with the cultural background of each viewer. The process of artistic creation can be analysed by using a large diversity of materials, methods, presuppositions and purposes.

Social problems are revealed in art by a series of artists, such as painters, writers, musicians etc. in order to get the feeling of belonging to the society.

Art work is the secret, profound message send by the artist to the social groups. As society tends to be right less, the artist has an eager desire to show the truth as it is really shown in reality. Art conveys life, in certain extent, a social reality that provides the natural, inner and subjective world of the individual and they create art imitations.

The artist is a member of the society and he enjoys a certain social position. In most cases, he is highly appreciated by the society and, moreover, is rewarded not only due to the fact that his works are purchased but also the respect that the society provides due to his art. The artist has got a certain public, even though it's hypothetical, regardless of some artist's perspective that they mainly work for themselves. Art existed in all times. Literature, mainly, has got a social function that cannot be regarded as being only individual.

The relation between art and the society is closely connected as art expresses the living society. The reflection of art is provided by the society changes, actions, behaviours. It can focus on situations that common people regard as trivial and vague. It is nonetheless understandable that art focuses on certain aspects of life, it depicts moments of life that made an impression on the author. Life seemed to be a constant source of inspiration for artists as they inevitably convey own life experience and conceptions. Therefore, it can be falsely assumed that he conveys the entire and exhaustive conception on life.

Some artists provide accurate data on their times in their work. In most social critique works they seem to mark the artist's awareness on certain precise social aspects, such as the situation of proletariat that, somehow, need to share a certain ideological attitude of the critique. Though, there isn't a mechanical connection between the artist's political and ideological convictions and its representation in art. That does not mean betrayal. The artist can manifest himself in different ways: melancholic, romantic, angry, sad etc.

In order to understand an artist, one needs to bear in mind his entire work, as well as the context that it emerged. Some details can be extracted from the biographical documents such as social background, attitude and ideology. Besides being an artist, he was also a citizen of a certain society and there might be documents to explain how the artist's position on society influenced his status.

A piece of art is not an isolated work and in order to recognise it, accurate research needs to be fulfilled in order to explain the causes and motives that explain it. The artist

lives in a certain world, in a ruled form society that requires obedience to certain values and habits. Also, the artist can be taught in different schools and different mentors that imprint his creativity. Moreover, the artist bears in mind the targeted public to whom his art is aimed at. As he does so, his thinking is taking into consideration the feedback received from his public.

Each of us is a quiescence of elements: family background, education, traditions, ancestral fears, convictions, attitudes, sensitivities and experiences. For some sunrise can only mean the beginning of new day. For an artist it might mean the battle between light and darkness where light conquered darkness. There is an ancestral battle between light and darkness, good and evil, beauty and ugliness, the man and the beast lying dormant inside of each of us. For some reason, sunset still make some of us nostalgic, even though we are quite aware that it would rise again the following day. But regardless, we still have feelings similar to the one who felt the loss of battle against darkness. These are mythological battles that, even though are a myth, still haunt us even though dressed in disguise clothes (the battle between the rural and urban, for example). And myths are no stories. Even if they were, their reality is stronger than the tangible things. Marcel Detienne argues "is it a language, the primary language, the childhood of humankind, the naivety of ignorance or the initial word? The earth song or the nature's tragedy? The primitive and archaic discourse of the primitive societies?" (Detienne, 1997:10)

The cohesion does not come randomly; the material and spiritual life do not go along parallel with the society but are in constant conflict and contradiction. Contradiction – philosophical term – combined to the real present – reason accomplishment – represent the basic ontological basis of Hegel's work. George Lukas argues that the poignant protuberance of the contradictive character of the present époque is just the highest peak of the dialectic discourse where the inorganic nature has emerged from biology and society. (Lukas, 1982:196)

Obviously, the common man and the artist live in the same milieu and get in contact with the same reality, though the perception is different. For the artistic talented man the eye is a criterion to make a difference, all another functions are common to the rest of us. The consciousness of the reality emerges and develops in the inner artist due to visual senses. Eyesight evolves to a self preserved reality form in order to depict perception notions and representations that conclude in an artistic action. The importance of eyesight is crucial for the painter that portrays reality in art.

The History of Balkan Expressionism

Although deeply rooted into the art history, the expressionism imposed itself in the first part of the 20th century by defining itself as a continuum of elementary art but also a liberating, anti-academic vision, and against the Greek classicism considered as being worn out. Among the countries where the trend manifested – Spain, Germany, France – being situated in the Western Europe were the ones that provided a greater interest to the trend either by cultivating or challenging it. (Dictionary of General Esthetics, 1972: 118)

Up to the present, the Balkan expressionism was mostly studied randomly, in spite of the fact that this part of Europe – south and east – by its specificity has the most to do with expressionism. The aesthetic principles were appreciated, analysed or challenged by artists and important theoreticians of art such as W. Kandinski, W. Worringer, L. Blaga a.s.o. The belief of this movement can be summarized such as:

1. The art is an expression of inner self, of subjective emotional tension

2. The values they aspire to are the absolute and the living without boundaries

3. Achieving synthetic forms by synthesis and abstraction

4. Interest for archaic cultures, for eccentric and attraction towards the primary experiences

5. Nonconformist social attitude, anti-bourgeois, pacifism (Nicolaeva, 1972: 120)

In order to get a sense of the Balkan artists, I will present just a few of their works:

Paul Hitter

Born in 1982 in Bucharest. He had an early start as a painter as he started to paint at the age of five. He attended the high school in Bucharest. He leaves in München where he graduates from the University of Arts in 2011. In Germany, he develops his style that he called Balkan expressionism. He is inspired by the Balkan stories, music and the gypsies lifestyle. He has artwork exhibited in Germany, Italy, France, Czech Republic, and USA.

The paintings of the artist are similar to the medieval figures as the artist transforms the character in painting by using his character's attitude and the legend that stands behind his figure. His paintings are filled with symbols that require a specialised viewer to fully comprehend a painting. There is a story embedded in each of his paintings, a legend that in transformed in colours, patterns, symbols, texture, forms, and accurate details.

The characters used are notorious by their fame in society. He chooses characters with brave attitude that were known in their times due to the fact that they could not confirm to the society they lived in and that made them extraordinary. Therefore, his characters are criminals, famous thieves, fierce rulers, witches, writers, a.s.o. the urban slangs are often used in his paintings and the letters used take form of a special writing that resembles the medieval writing.

We are taken into a world of violent and almost hysterical colours, the background tells a story of the character. One might feel as if the persona is ready to get out of the painting and join us for a glass of wine. The reality of expression leaves no person indifferent to Hitter's paintings. Hitter's work is poignant and bold. You either like or totally dislike his work, because it takes a certain type of viewer to get in tune with the vivacity of his works.

The artist is known for his passion in painting. He is dubbed "the painting machine" as he gets restless when faced the canvas. Under his hands, the canvas gets alive and is ready to tell the world a new story. We all like good stories and Paul Hitter is an

extremely good story teller using canvas, brushes and colours. And one cannot forget the story once it reveals itself while delving into the vivacity of the painting.

"Paul Hitter's work is a unique production. Indeed, his work is the result of a whole life combining the most diverse things that sum up perfectly thanks to the passion and the sense the painter puts in it. A childhood in the Romanian eighties, a true sensibility and understanding for the Gypsy cause, a genuine love for Balkan music and culture, the pride of Romanian origins, influenced by the orthodox icons he studied, folklore, disappointments towards the non-existing values of our modern society... offer a bitter-sweet colorful picturing of our world in his eyes.

Through mainly oil paintings, sometimes drawings, he's illustrating what he calls «Balkan Expressionism»: a mix of naive art, orthodox icons, contemporary art, street art and German expressionism and of course, of his most sincere beliefs.

Paul Hitter is the ambassador of the mixed ethnicities found in the Balkans: Hungarian, Austrian, and Romanian. He was born in 1982 in Bucharest under the communist regime. While this period influenced the young generation of Romanians in a way they decided to cut all the bridges with their roots and culture, Paul kept the intensity of these days, changing into a powerful art, full of meanings and... celebrating the Balkan History and culture.

He went to several art schools where, among others, he achieved training in religious mural-painting, followed by studies at the Art Academy of München from which he graduated in 2011.

His first personal exhibition was at held at the Muzeul Țăranului Român in 2010 and was entitled "EXIL". He then went to Italy with it, in Milano, then to France, in Marseille at the occasion of the Latcho Drom Festival, among others.

Faithful to his unconventional personality and art, Paul also innovated with unconventional exhibits. He appreciates when music and his work meet: being inspired by Balkan cultures and all it can include, a music band joining his visual art for the time of an evening is a full masterpiece, a travel to the authentic Balkan countries." (Eugene Al Pann - http://popartxpert.blogspot.ro/p/l-hitt.html)

Eugene Al Pann

He is a painter, illustrator, and curator. Born on 19 of June 1969 in Craiova, Romania. He attended the high school in Bucharest and he was privately tutored in painting. He attended the Faculty of Journalism at the University of Bucharest. In 1990, he founded the journal of culture and art entitled *Avanpost* and he was in charge of graphics and illustrations. Since 1995 he worked for various publishing houses as an illustrator. Since 1992 he exposed his paintings in various important art galleries in Bucharest (Avanpost Galleries). In 1995 he founded the *Saturnus* art gallery in Hamburg. In 1997 he moves into the USA, in Los Angeles where he continued his work in painting and art. He has art works exhibited in the following art collections: *ABB* Geneva, *Faye Grant, Warehouse Décor* Santa Monica – CA, *Ristorante Positano*, Beverly Hills – CA, *Faye Grant actress*, Los

Angeles; *Mr Fletcher Downey,* Los Angeles; City Hall in Bucharest, *KupurGalerie, Gent,* Belgia; *Fine Art Studios*, Santa Monica.

He is the most poignant representative of the Balkan expressionism. His painting is the most connected to the Balkan history. His works, which are grand in dimension, present the nostalgia of the inter-war expressionists, the cannons of the socialist realism, the unrresting capitalism culminating in the complexity of Balkan expressionism.

Matei Serban

Born in 1968 in Bucharest. His works are appreciated worldwide. Some of his works have the mural classicism incorporated. They seem simple. The lines are accurate, decisive cuts. The faces painted by Matei Şerban are excessively humane, as the painter has the inner happiness of life. Young or old, women or men, they have the strength to look straight in the viewer's eyes. The characters of Matei Şerban live no drama, they are not melancholic, they do not explode of happiness, and the frame is an integrated part of existence. Through his paintings, the postmodernism and post-post-modernism can say farewell to the artistic space. Matei Şerban proves that the real art lies in unity, construction, beauty and subtle suggestions.

Matei Şerban is a well defined distinguished personality as he constantly strives to express his own feelings and emotions. He is in constant quest of finding the best story to portray in art. His paintings have a deep influence of the medieval and byzantine times and his characters and the figment of profound meditation on nature and human condition. He is a devoted artist as he has got the quality of being extremely thorough and careful on the graphics, form and rigorous artistic creation. His paintings are abundant in symbols with regards to human condition, divinity, refined deriving ideas, style and taste and diverse range of sources by denoting to a class of ancient philosophers who did not belong to any recognized school of thought but selected doctrines from various schools of thought. He is a self taught man, devoted to God and life. Due to his sensitivity, he manages to render in art his outmost hidden thoughts and feelings. One cannot be left indifferent to his work, as once you witness his creation, a strong desire to see more emerges. Delving into his work is like delving in a world filled with meaning and creation. Due to his intellectual drive, we can say that he follows Leonardo da Vinci's motto: „pittura è unacosamentale".

Marina Obradovic

Born in France, with Yugoslavian origins. She studied Belle Arte in Paris, and she specialized in photography, painting, mural painting restoration, and decorations. In 2014, she had a joint exhibition with Paul Hitter where the artist Paul Hitter painted her photos. Their dual exhibition was a success, and this initiated her into the Balkan Expressionism. Her photos depict different portraits of people from Romania. She is mostly interested in the gypsy world and finds interesting themes in this colourful community. Her interests concern decors and her work with movie director Tony Gatlif (Swing) are mostly appreciated as she is the principal assistant on the set. Her

works are exhibited in different countries such as Italy, France, Belgium, Norway and Romania.

Her photographs are a parallel between two worlds: the image of youth and the image of elderly and the world of the last century and the world of the current century. The author favours the young diaphone faces in order to express the naïve and happiness, thus proving a great love for purity and adolescence.

There are strong colours that are abundant: such as ardent red. There are flowers in her photos, and they prove to be an excuse to fill in the space, either in close up shot or background. Her teenagers are at puberty, and one can hardly depict if they are boys or girls. There is something warm in her painting. It seems like the sun is about to burst, and it's similar to a spring morning, where everything seems to get to life: the grass, roads, and houses' roofs. All is enlightened and announces an apocalypse of the end. In general, she is not apocalyptic. On the contrary, she prefers the serenity. She is in love with white. Large spots of white express the sun and light, pureness and optimism.

In reality, her portraits are anthropologically Balkan i.e. they are Caucasian people between 10-20 years old. There is something interesting in the way family photos are mixed in collage – couples or members of the family. We might suggest the eternal family, the Balkan family as these types of photos can be found in pretty much every Balkan household: in Romania, Serbia, Montenegro, former Yugoslavia, etc.

It is crystal clear that she discovered this history of the Balkans starting from the memories that are present in every household of this Balkan space. What is interesting about her work is the lack of a thesis. She does not exaggerate or break the reality. She is not looking for a show at all costs. She does not drift into kitsch. She does not profane the history or the faces. She is a pure artist. She might be suspected of naivety, but her naivety is natural, is something that she looks for. It is not like the naïve painters that pretend they cannot paint and eventually what they paint is childlike.

At Marina Obradovic the faces are real, clean and contemporary to their life according with their lives and ideals. Their gaze is straightforward, serene; their smiles are as clear as spring mornings. There is remarkable joy in wanting to return over and over again to see her paintings/ photos. After a glimpse, the eye is eager to get back in order to analyse these faces with a classical allure such as a contemporary Madonna. There is a religious pattern that are a reminder of icons painted on glass from the Balkan area – a painting that wasn't practiced in other areas and, probably, is the creation of the painting studios that existed in the orthodox churches from Romania, Russia, Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece etc. The western monasteries have cultivated classicism. The eastern monasteries have cultivated naivety.

The Balkan expressionism has this feature of interpreting and discovering the past. Its premises is that beyond what we see, there is a reality and the reality is beyond what we see and in Marina's work there is a poignant feeling i.e. every photo requires to make a history of the person photographed, not of the photo it itself, although this should not be left aside as there is interesting to know where the photo was taken, why, what are the relations between the photographed people and members of the family. There is a

short story, if not an entire novel in every family photo. And there is also a challenge in every painting.

The Balkan Conclusion

Expressionism Movement is just at its beginning. Time will tell whether this artistic movement will impact universal art as the previous art movements did.

The Balkan expressionism movement arose and is making the world aware that the artists from the Balkans are ought not to be forgotten or left aside. There is a culture that is in a continuous development without forgetting the tradition. There is a pure outcry: we are here; we are worthy!

The Balkan artists pride in the confidence they have in their creative ideas as they find their inspiration in the Balkan folklore, the surrounding stories in the urban areas. There is a story behind every Balkan expressionism painting and one can wonder if the world is prepared to witness the emergence of a new art that combines life in reality in such a way that it trespasses times and ages.

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