

Book review:

**Cristina Ilie Goga, Andreea Mihaela Niță, Alexandra Porumbescu, Emilia Maria Sorescu, Ionuț Șerban (eds.)
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Studying society requires, in this reviewer's opinion, a concerted effort to explore minute details while maintaining open relationships with the whole. With a view to the Forum's mission statement regarding the significance of connected communities (be they scientific) to globally researched society and, constructivist considerations aside (or not), this type of enterprise generates a block by block or, rather, meaning by meaning building process in replicating the inner workings and functions of human activity in an interplay between the subjective and the objective, between the socially evident or transparent and the socially incognizant, between the unit and the whole.

Explaining society, its temporalities and features, into the likes of a multi-cell, or more appropriately, plural-cell organism implies progressive understanding by means of rendering and organizing it in concepts, drawing criterion-based distinctness, representing its systemic complexity. And then, breaking through the divisions of comparted structure - the apparently isolated subject is nevertheless a referential actor, driving, mitigating or negotiating own construction and deconstruction. Groups, institutions and actions make up the larger picture of association, participation and social purpose. Whether meeting or shared ideas about the subject(s), respective beliefs, behaviour and benefits, can become mutually defining with a re-assembled social reality is for those who study society to say. So, what do they say?

Each paper brings a new and particular glimpse into society's mosaic, augmenting our knowledge of social realities, change and potential for both conservation and transformation. We learn about pressing needs, priorities and strategies, ongoing struggles for adjustment, adaptation, accommodation, integration, empowerment, or against prejudice, violence, misappropriation and injustice, we ascertain emergent scenarios for societal or group-specific risk, contemporary crises and socio-political and economic dilemmas, not least discovering new conditions in relation to cultural orientation and outlooks on the world in its environments. For instance, reading through the articles we could draw conceptual reciprocity or extension from likely overlappings of distinct topical areas, about forms of prerequisites to social comfort - and this, despite the fact that *social comfort* does not once bear mention in the contents of the volume, is potentially conducive of convergence and may be key to further analysis.

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In a way, this volume is not different to an object of social reality reflecting on social subjects, an embodiment as well as a release. Its coordinators make sense of it through its constitutive elements by prior criteria, process direction and ulterior consensus. The reviewer identifies patterns and elaborates a narrative on the imperatives, derivatives and alternatives. The reader decides relevance.

Let us consider the context lying before us and the included realities of this first edition of the Studies of Society endeavour.

The collective works of this volume, 29 papers, written by 38 authors from 8 countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Turkey), provide national and international insight, interpretation and perspective at the crossroads of discipline, domain, study case and practice, cumulatively outlining a diverse, yet distinctly self-consistent approach on seven main topical areas: Sociology and social work and services, Scientific Method and educational models, European Studies and democratic polity and development, Nationalism and Culture and identity policies, Global Society and migratory trends and flows, International Relations and diplomatic affairs, International Law and national regulatory frameworks.

This reviewer sees fit to introduce the papers in the form of central questions, directly or subtly addressed by authors. Hopefully, the reader shall turn area-specific inquiries into dialogue(s), trans-contextually. Thus, here is a brief and interrogative summary of the volume in 29 study-based, thought-provoking, cross-topical researched or follow-up questions, referenced by author, article and volume page:

Is interdisciplinary research a pre-requisite to advancing the study of past, present and future?¹ Is self-reflexivity the next normative dimension of (social) consciousness?² What are the (social) limitations to the (social) objectives of education?³ How to actively involve the family in its own education strategy?⁴ Can present day child protection regulations still range from inherently insensitive or neutral to culturally offset?⁵ Can civic action effectively combat youth marginalisation?⁶ What appeal does direct democracy still hold in relation to political agency and to what measurable effect?⁷ Is social media instrumental to the learning practice of social participation and responsibility?⁸ Can there be a sustainable approach to the education-labour expectation and employment equation instead of a trade-off?⁹ What does positing capital versus labour arguments in relation to the minimum wage prove?¹⁰ How does EU cohesion policy connect with Member-State development?¹¹

¹ Cristinel Trandafir, *The bases of scientific knowledge: history, sociology, philosophy*, pp. 211-215.

² Bogdan Popoveniuc, *The Fourth Person*, pp.234-245.

³ Elena Cocoş, *Romanian education: challenges, issues, disputes*, pp.290-296.

⁴ Maria Pescaru, *Family education - Guidelines and actual practice*, pp.198-202.

⁵ Emilia-Maria Sorescu, *Cultural and practical challenges for child protection*, pp.105-116.

⁶ Mihaela-Cristina Pârnu, *The role of civil society in fighting the exclusion of disadvantaged children in Romania*, pp.268-278.

⁷ Valentina Marinescu, *Practical aspects of direct democracy in Romania after 1989: Challenges for theory and research*, pp.176-187.

⁸ Margarita Kaleynska, *Teaching civic education through social media*, pp.246-253.

⁹ Andreea-Mihaela Niță, *The training impact on the labor market. Case Study: Mapping the labor market in Dolj County during 2015*, pp.83-93.

¹⁰ Abdilcelil Koç, *Minimum Wage Analysis in OECD Countries in the Neoliberal Era (1980-2014)*, pp.203-210.

Are there positive outcomes under deregulation for health insurance and social products competition?¹² What are the principles underlying a fair process of institutionalising care and care-giving practice for persons with disabilities?¹³ How does loneliness influence quality of life for the elderly?¹⁴ Do we know what elderly people with disabilities expect from social services and why this matters in terms of policy design?¹⁵ Which traits in the aggregate profile of persons with disabilities play a determinant role in the choice for care services?¹⁶ Is the goal of social responsibility better served by policies modelled on social entrepreneurship?¹⁷ What are the likely shortcomings and missing links between women empowerment and entrepreneurship?¹⁸ What kind of support and social emancipation is necessary to effectively combat gendered domestic violence?¹⁹ What are the plausible conditions and triggers for aggressive forms of reciprocal behaviour in domestic violence?²⁰ Are there stress-associated risks and effects in social work exposure?²¹ How well do teacher-steered mentoring schemes fare in the effective learning processes of prison detainees?²² What culture for detainee adaptation in penitentiary and what institutional culture for social re-integration?²³ Does public administration change with societal development in terms of governance models?²⁴ Is there a relationship between the modernization of society and the values behind the praxis of accountancy?²⁵ Can diplomatic, cultural relations survive and even trump ideological differences between states?²⁶ What is the significance of norm convergence between national regulation and

¹¹ Oana Maria Stepan, Dumitru Beldiman, *European Union cohesion policy and its role on the future development of Romania*, pp.279-289.

¹² Stela Stoyanova, *Evolution of social and health market in Bulgaria*, pp.136-142.

¹³ Songül Sallan Gül, Hüseyin Gül, *Disability and Home Care of Persons with Disability (PWDs) in Turkey*, pp.11-23.

¹⁴ Roxana Pleșa, *The impact of elderly loneliness on satisfaction with life*, pp.254- 267.

¹⁵ Milena Hristova Yorgova, *Social Services for Elderly People with Disabilities: Choices and Rights*, pp.94-104.

¹⁶ Yuliya Yordanova Pulova-Ganeva, *Social and demographic characteristics of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Bulgaria*, pp.216-233.

¹⁷ Teodora Todorova, *Social entrepreneurship – a social policy challenge*, pp.154-162.

¹⁸ Songül Sallan Gül, Ayşenur Örümcü, *Questioning Women Empowerment and Entrepreneurship in Turkey*, pp.72-82.

¹⁹ Ayşe Alican Şen, Songül Sallan Gül, *Combating domestic violence in Turkey*, pp.163-175.

²⁰ Valentin Fulger, *The reciprocity of the forms of conjugal violence. Case study Jiu Valley*, pp.24-34.

²¹ Sonya Budeva, *Professional deformations in social work: Burnout and Secondary traumatic stress*, pp.35-47.

²² Gert Hurkmans, Agnes Bocsok, Ahmet Yurdakul, Lya Manniste, Fabio Sozzi, Guglielmo Fera, Stamatis Spirou, Beatrice Crippa Muti, *Comparative analysis of existing methodologies of mentoring teachers in 7 European prison facilities with educational programs*, pp.56-64.

²³ Cristina Ilie Goga, *Adaptation strategies of inmates to prison environment. Theoretical and empirical evidence*, pp.48-55.

²⁴ Hüseyin Gül, *What kind of a public administration for Turkey*, pp.117-129.

²⁵ Petya Petrova, *Society changes Accountancy*, pp.188-197.

²⁶ Ionuț Virgil Șerban, *Diplomatic, cultural and political relations between Romania and Italy (1956-1959)*, pp.130-135.

international convention on carrier's liability?²⁷ Can we reconcile two apparently contradictory concepts, migrant (autonomy) and community (embeddedness) via the network argument?²⁸ What is falsifiable in the relation between migration (seen as problem) and identity preservation policies (seen as solution) as mediated by narratives of cultural justice?²⁹.

To conclude, the present volume is an open invitation to exercise a patient and steady focus and shift between the immediate and the (seemingly) distant (with)in society, between questions and answers, changing lens and attempting to close the gap between perception, observation, experimental research, explanatory models, societal values and goals and the results of interactive practice. We welcome the challenge and uphold the tenet of inter-disciplinary connection-making and design-matching logic to be continued in future editions.

²⁷ Sevastian Cercel, Ștefan Scurtu, *Carrier's liability in the Romanian Civil Code of 2009 and the Convention concerning International Carriage by Rail (COTIF)*, Berne, 1980, pp.143-153.

²⁸ Alexandra Porumbescu, *Theoretical approaches in the study of international migration. Migration networks*, pp.65-71.

²⁹ Călin Roșu, *Modern Age of great migrations: pragmatic solutions*, pp.297-301.