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# **Cultural values of urban population**

## **Case study: Cultural values of the Romanians in the regions South-West Oltenia, South-Walachia and West**

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### **Abstract**

This article aims to present the relations between urban area and culture, to reveal the specific of urban values and examine traditional and current cultural values of urban population, emphasizing by choice representative values for Romanians in three development regions. The article initially focuses on getting a perspective of the contemporary values in urban cultural area, resulting from theoretical approaches from different fields. In the second part of the article we presented the investigative field research based on opinion survey and participative observation conducted on the urban population of three Romanian development regions: South-West Oltenia, South-Walachia and West. The research sought to identify the current values of the urban population, the level of knowledge of cultural infrastructure and the desire of cultural consumption of citizens in urban area, to learn the level of interest for cultural activities by measuring the frequency of participation in cultural events but also visits of cultural institutions, to know the level of trust in public institutions that the people comprised in the sample give, to highlight the conservation or superannuation of traditions in contemporary society and to identify the possibilities of access to cultural goods of cities.

**Keywords:** *cultural values; urban environment; field research; development regions; Romania.*

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### **1. The cultural process of urbanization**

The process of urbanization is often associated with development, modernization, industrialization. Sociologists say that urbanism is a way of life, which, under the influence of some codes of values, customs and behaviors may change. This threatening show of the change of the face of the planet is inextricably linked to an inevitable process, which began at the dawn of human civilization, knows today extremely fast pace, covering areas increasingly wider for individual countries as well as for the whole planet: urbanization (Abraham 1991: p. 7).

Robert Auzelle characterized the phenomenon of urbanization as population growth (in number and longevity), increased space needs (housing, industry, commerce, circulation, recreation), increased personal mobility, use of time, energy and land, all these against the background of technical progress acceleration” (Auzelle 1971: p. 29).

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Some authors consider industrialization as decisive factor that generated the modern process of urbanization. In addition to the economic, technical and social aspects, Miron Constantinescu compares this phenomenon to a "social restructuring process" or a "problem of dynamic social structure" (Constantinescu, Stahl and Drăgan 1974: p. 29).

The definition of the urban environment as being a densely populated area, in comparison with human density in other areas, is insufficient. The urbanization process requires implicitly the focus of attention both on the density of industrial environment, of population and also on the degree of development of services, businesses etc. Radu Ioanid illustrated in his work "The urbanization in Romania. Social-economic implications", the idea that industrialization actually appears as a process aimed at accelerating urbanization, a significant directive of "rational urbanization" (Ioanid 1978: p. 34).

Sociologists have theoretically classified the approaches of urbanization from two major perspectives: the theories of convergence and the theories of divergence of urban development. According to the theories of convergence, urbanization is universal and unique and evolution generally follows everywhere the same general pattern. On the other hand, according to the theories of divergence there isn't a single pattern in the approach of the urbanization process, it is carried out according to the social, political, economic contexts.

The extraordinary development of industry, agriculture, transport, science, etc. finds its counterpart in culture. Today we are witnessing an unprecedented development of culture in all areas. The last decades have made available a huge mass of cultural values, the statistics showing that annually and worldwide there appear hundreds of thousands of book titles, there are broadcasted an impressive number of radio and TV programs, there are paintings and theater plays as they have never been before (Niță 2013, pp. 25-46).

We have reached a cultural explosion, especially in manufacturing and distribution, the individual having easier access to all cultural goods, being able to opt in which way he wants to fulfill his cultural needs. Some cultural goods such as films, TV programs or books are designed to be just a result in an industrial production.

Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer designate the Kulturindustrie (Culture industry) concept, in *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (Dialectic of Enlightenment), as systematic and programmatic exploitation of "cultural property" for commercial purposes. Thus, we accept the definition of cultural industrialization as the process of producing cultural consumer goods according to the norms of cultural marketing and industrial rationality, identical to the ones in material production processes in developed economies. Cultural industry presents, from this perspective, the same reports and the same contradictions as material goods industry, except that, being an accomplice to the dominant ideology, its role is to mix and neutralize potential conflicts, especially those that might come from cultural backgrounds.

A substantial source of employment and implicitly of income is the branch of cultural industries in the European Union: publishing and printing, cinema and audiovisual, music or crafts. The European Union implements program platforms that support specific cultural spheres stimulating the community to pursue the benefits offered by the single market and current technologies.



Cultural industrialization developed via the mass media. Of course, it also had major advantages, but the trend of production and distribution of products led to self-consumption.

The process of urbanization has implicitly had effects on culture, creation and cultural consumption. Economic development has proved to be useful in understanding the mechanisms of culture. Since the years 1970-1980 it was developed in France, very rapidly, the economy of culture.

Regarding pretty diabolical alliance between culture and economy, it decided to respond fairly unanimous, in addition, it is remarkable to note that there is a great complicity between psychological and economic approach (Jofre 1997: p. 372).

From a modern sociological perspective on urbanization and lifestyles, Louis Wirth defined the city as a permanent rather wide community, characterized by a high density and heterogeneity (Wirth 1991: p. 128).

Peter Langer sees the city from two perspectives, arguing that it can be seen as a place of dirt, disease, crime, pollution, vice, poverty and other social problems or as a place of culture, art, wealth, work, vitality, spirituality and other social opportunities (Langer 1984: p. 100). The author classifies cities according to the structure and specific way of life that is found in urban areas in three categories: the bazaar city, the jungle city and car city (Langer 1984: p. 100).

## **2. The urbanization process in Romania**

In Romania, the urbanization process has been studied from different perspectives through different applied methods. There are explanations and approaches both in the vision of specialists in population geography, social sciences or economics.

Until 1912, urban population has remained somewhat in a constant balance, urban development knowing an average annual increase of 1.4%, so the city of Bucharest came to have at that time 17.6 % (Ioanid 1978: p. 49).

The period 1948 - 1966 is characterized by a rapid urbanization, "urban population increased during this period from 23.4% to 38.3%" (Abraham 1991: p. 208).

With the instauration of communism in Romania, industrialization was forcedly initiated, and according to the statistics provided by the National Institute of Statistics urban population increased dramatically in this period: 1960 - 5.9 million people, 1970 - 7.5 million people, 1989 - 10.2 million people, 1989 - 12.3 million.

In the past 30 years, the pace of the urbanization process has reduced significantly, more than that, a reversible phenomenon was found, individuals have started to migrate from rural to urban. Experts argue that this is largely due to the financial crisis, the lack of jobs and the undesirable living standards.

According to the population census conducted in Romania in 2011, in our country at that time, a percentage of 52.8% of the population lived in urban areas and 47.2% in rural areas (National Institute of Statistics 2012). Currently, according to data provided by European Commission, Romania has reached an urbanization rate of 54.69% in 2014 (European Commission 2015).

The United Nations, as a result of some research conducted, predicted the urbanization trends, so that in 2030 - 68% of the population of Romania will live in urban areas, while in 2050 this percentage will reach 77% (United Nations. Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Populations Division 2014).

The researches conducted in Romania reflect the social, cultural or economic aspects that proved difficult to quantify and which have a major impact on urban population involving the whole process.

The urbanization process in Romania was differently manifested, depending on the degree of industrialization and professional development opportunities that each region offered.

The whole range of services provided in urban areas is considerably superior to those found in the rural area. However, now it appears that in Romania, cities don't have a social, medical infrastructure etc., to reach the level of those in the powerful urban centers.

Besides this aspect, urbanization also requires the focus of individuals on new values and norms. Knowledge and appreciation of culture in the urban area is up to each person, compared to rural areas where, if a person depreciated tradition was morally sanctioned by the whole community.

Urbanization has manifested as a complex phenomenon and has had profound influences on the economic, political, social, cultural environment, etc. Human behavior has bended on new aspirations imposed by the urban area; there were created new lifestyles, new values, principles or concepts.

### **3. Cultural values of urban population in today's society**

Defined as "concepts, explicit or implicit, distinctive for an individual or characteristic for a group, on what is desirable, influencing the selection of the available modes, means and goals of action" (Kluckhohn 1951: p. 395), values are not independent, being induced by other values and inducing, in turn, other.

Values decisively influence the fundamental choices of individuals, practical and active attitudes, but also current responsibilities of the various specific demands of urban life. Each person lives according to some values, some as individual values, social values, we evolve facing values, we live, each one and all together, with value systems that closely communicate with one another (Diaconescu 1994: p. 13).

In light of some trends specific to contemporary urban societies, new values, norms that characterize different lifestyles have developed. These can bring individuals closer, but on the other hand if a person's value system is different from that assimilated by another person, sooner or later, the connection between the two begins to deteriorate. The existing approaches are, in most cases, strongly unilateral (Porumbescu, 2013: 189). With the emersion of these new values, others were diluted, coming today to disappear, to no longer exist for a great deal of the community.

Highlighting culture as central factor for the developing of contemporary societies is also favored by the globalization of economies and the rise of the production and communication means.

The XX<sup>th</sup> century led to radical changes in the sphere of culture, out of which we can highlight the great successes achieved in scientific knowledge, hence the great importance given to the values of science, the accelerating cultural changes, the crisis of traditional values, the increase in intensity of creation, the rapid integration of cultural values in the system of social activities through the mass media, the democratizing access to culture, the expanding mass culture, etc.

Crossing a period of mutual assimilation of national and European values, but also the permanent exercise of keeping local values belong to an old principle of preserving the verticality of national culture.

Social modernization came along with industrialization, urbanization, but also with the decrease of the role that religious institutions once had on society. Traditional authority has been replaced by legal authority. Industrialization brought along an increased need for manpower and, therefore, led to a greater female participation in the labor market (Voicu 2010: p 56). Thus, as a major effect on specific urban cultural values, roles were redistributed within households, other perspectives, other values or norms were sketched. Anthony Giddens showed that “democratization in the family context implies equality, mutual respect, autonomy, decision - making through communication and lack of violence” (Giddens 1998: p. 93). For these reasons, individuals are increasingly willing to support the values that underlie gender division in the family: a greater involvement of men in domestic activities and a greater participation of women in the labor market.

Regardless of the specific values, whether spiritual, personal, or social, whether they are found predominantly in the rural or urban area, they all have a historical determination. Only in historical perspective the man appears as a demiurge, as a spiritual force overcoming nature, at the same time overcoming himself (Diaconescu 1994: p. 13). An important factor that influences values is also the educational experience that promotes intellectual openness, flexibility and the size of essential perspective for self - orientation values.

The urbanization process and implicitly the modernization one provides development opportunities for the new social values, such as personal freedom, self - development, self - expression, creativity, equality and democracy (Ester, Halman and De Moor 1994: p. 8). Regardless of the society, they are all based on values such as respect, success, power, pleasure, etc., but they diversify and the platform of value orientations tends to bend over the aspirations and dreams of individuals. Values are present in all social processes and play a central role in establishing and maintaining the identity of individuals and collectivities.

Shalom H. Schwartz identified ten different value orientations from a motivational point of view and they are the result of people's thinking. In every society, no matter what time perspective it is regarded, there appear the ten values mentioned by the author, which are illustrated more strongly in urban communities (Schwartz 2005: p. 21). The ten values proposed by Schwartz are: Self - Orientation, Stimulation, Hedonism, Fulfillment, Power, Security, Conformity, Tradition, Benevolence and Universalism.

Rudolf Rezsöhazi classifies the values of contemporary societies, the ones characteristic for the period from the beginning of XXI<sup>st</sup> century, in four big categories: postmodern values, traditional values, central values and latent values. From the category of postmodern values the author included values such as individualism, freedom, honesty, intensity, hedonism, conviviality, spontaneity, fulfillment, relativity, tolerance, permissiveness, experimentation, present time and sexuality (Rezsöhazi 2008: p. 99). Values such as authority, moral rigor or work are enclosed by Rezsöhazi within traditional values, but they are also found in both rural and urban areas.

In the urban area, work is induced by personal fulfillment, which Rudolf Rezsóhazy said in “Sociology of values”, is conditioned by the satisfactions it acquires (Otovescu 2010: p. 261).

In the third group, the author mentions the central values, which he claims “are at the heart of our culture and are subject to general agreement” (Rezsóhazy 2008: p. 131). From the values such as love, family, friendship to those that refer to consumerism, leisure activities or professional success, all may change to a lesser or greater extent, they are found in all societies, but, however, have a different degree of intensity. Each community, each individual knows or lives by these values but they are treated differently depending on the importance they give and the principles they follow.

And finally, the last group of values, in René Rezsóhazy’s view, is the latent values which include: justice, kindness, solidarity and goodness.

Some values have a higher intensity in the countryside and others in urban environments. The ones in urban areas are constantly reforming, especially those which were formed in the last decades. The residence environment is just one of the factors that influence the individual to assume a certain value system, in addition to this there equally contribute the lived experiences, the education level etc., and for these reasons those in charge of studying and classifying values cannot delimitate them concretely.

#### **4. Methodological details used with the research**

As for any sociological research rigorously underlain, the project we conducted to develop the study, aimed at all key steps in such a research process: 1. Argument for choosing the theme; 2. Studying specialized literature; 3. Formulating the hypotheses and objectives of the research; 4. Establishing research methods; 5. Determining the study population; 6. Data collecting; 7. Analyzing the research results; 8. Formulating the conclusions (Mihăilescu 2003, pp. 32-35).

##### **Argument for choosing the theme**

Globalization is the phenomenon that causes significant structural changes in societies, involving a number of new processes like massive technological development, demographic aging or facilitating access to education, all these producing permanent changes of values, so that it became imminent the question: What cultural values dominate today and which of these will prevail in the future? In this context we have chosen to accomplish sociological research in Romania, aiming to analyze the cultural preferences of urban society, mainly focusing on value preferences, perceptions on cultural and social activities, the infrastructure of cultural sector.

##### **Studying specialized literature**

Because we have chosen to study the cultural values of urban population in our country, in the conceptual register of this research we have highlighted in the first part of our article the literature and statistics on the cultural process of urbanization and of the cultural values of urban population.

##### **Formulating the objectives of the research**

The objectives of the research can be summarized as follows:

- To identify the value preferences and orientations of the urban population;

- To identify the state of the cultural infrastructure in the West, South-Walachia and South-West Oltenia regions and the desire for cultural consumption of the citizens in these regions;
- To identify the degree of interest in cultural activities by measuring the frequency of participation in cultural events, but also the visits to cultural institutions;

**Establishing the research methods and techniques**

Because we have chosen as the main objectives the study of cultural values in urban areas, we have considered necessary to conduct a quantitative research that "allowed the examination of social facts through the traits expressed numerically" (Buzărnescu 2010, p. 140).

The opinion survey method was used, based on a questionnaire administered.

**Determining the study population**

The study on urban population values was performed on the adult population, with ages between 25 and 65 years in the regions South - West Oltenia, South - Walachia and West.

The sociological research was conducted, using quota sampling, considering the age and gender of the respondents, on a sample of 2.016 respondents, representative in regard with the number of urban population in the three regions. In choosing the sample of 2.016 persons, was achieved an investigation percentage of 0.1% of the total urban population (2.015.731 persons), divided in 978.370 men and 1.037.361 women, aged between 25 and 65 years (National Institute of Statistics 2013), respecting this percentage for each age category and gender.

The number of questionnaires applied in each region was distributed as follows:

**Table no. 1. Sampling by age and gender, based on the urban population of the three regions**

Age group \ Region		25 – 29	30 – 34	35 - 39	40 - 44	45 - 49	50 – 54	55 – 59	60 – 64	TOTAL
Urban population in South-Walachia	M	42.135	49.122	48.605	59.371	35.418	44.734	48.699	37.314	365.398
	F	40.049	47.820	49.272	64.739	39.720	50.285	54.118	42.968	388.971
Sample in South-Walachia	M	42	49	49	59	35	45	49	37	365
	F	40	48	49	65	40	50	54	43	389
Urban population in South-West Oltenia	M	34.789	39.417	38.221	45.353	29.497	36.816	35.650	26.083	285.826
	F	33.493	39.064	39.615	50.516	32.470	39.578	37.672	29.236	301.644
Sample in South-West	M	35	39	38	45	30	37	36	26	286
	F	33	39	40	51	32	40	38	29	302

<b>Oltenia</b>										
Urban population in West	M	40.809	44.495	43.988	52.376	32.545	38.945	41.353	32.635	327.146
	F	39.583	44.808	44.836	54.155	33.722	43.088	47.419	39.135	346.746
<b>Sample in West</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>327</b>
	<b>F</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>347</b>
Total urban population on the three regions	M	117.733	133.034	130.814	157.100	97.460	120.495	125.702	96.032	978.370
	F	113.125	131.692	133.723	169.410	105.912	132.951	139.209	111.339	1037.361
<b>Total sample divided by gender</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>978</b>
	<b>F</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>1.038</b>
<b>TOTAL sample</b>		<b>231</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>2.016</b>

### Data collecting

Data collection in the three development regions was conducted in the period in July- November 2015.

### Results of the research

As each individual lives in his own created space and shares common natural, political, economic or social conditions it is natural to identify similarities in many ways, but there still appear material, value, attitudinal and behavior distinctions (Vasile, 2010: p. 80).

Almost a quarter of the respondents said they are informed of such activities carried out in the locality where they live and only 17.7% said the opposite. Information can exert an effective influence over an individual's ideas or opinions and in order to choose or participate in the cultural life you have to own information.

**Table no. 2.** Answer of the question: In general, you consider yourself a person informed about the cultural and social activities in the locality where you presently live?

<b>Answer</b>	Yes	No	I cannot appreciate
<b>Percentage</b>	80.4%	17.7%	1.9%

The awareness of individuals can cause differentiation, but this can be adjusted according to the aspirations or possibilities of each: some people have easier access to information derived from the cultural sphere, but do not use them constructively, and others, although they aspire to a thorough knowledge of a cultural area, don't have financial or non - financial possibilities to acquire it.

**Table no. 3.** Answer of the question: The information on cultural activities in the locality, you get them, generally \_\_\_\_\_?

<b>Answer</b>	From newspapers and magazines	From the local TV stations	From relatives/ friends/ neighbors	From radio	In a different way	I don't answer
<b>Percentage</b>	45.2%	32.1%	12.7%	6.2%	1.6%	2.2%

In a dynamic and ever changing world, such as the contemporary society, the information sources have diversified, each individual being able to properly manage the information he can get.

According to the 2011 Eurobarometer, published by the European Commission, the first source of information with an overwhelming proportion of 85% is the TV. Locally, newspapers and magazines outperform TV stations (32.1%), gathering a share of 45.2 %. Ranking at no. 3 are the relatives, friends and neighbors who are considered by 12.7 % a source of information on cultural activities taking place in their locality.

The TV stations existing locally are not so watched as the national ones and people in order to get information about the events taking place in their city turn to local newspapers and magazines. Radio can also be placed in the same context as a source of information: the ones who broadcast nationally make public large-scale events, rarely local cultural activities.

Each individual, after a solid experience, provides reliability to an information source or another; some occupy their time after the required working hours relaxing in front of the TV, while others prefer to spend it interacting with relatives and friends (Vasile 2010: p. 9). Individuals often choose information according to the area and cultural products they intend to consume in accordance with their already outlined habits.

Regarding the cultural sphere, infrastructure is one of the main landmarks in order to measure the cultural life in a society. A well equipped city in this regard may reflect on the degree of training and qualification of human resources. An interesting theoretical direction in the sociology of consumption consists in assessing the effects of the multiplication of complex commercial spaces that incorporate chain stores and multiple possibilities either of food, fashion and leisure (Vasile 2010: p. 11).

From the answer to the question “In the locality where you live are there ...? (\*Exhibition halls/ Cultural centers/ Museums/ Bookshops/ Libraries/ Cinemas/ Theatres/ Centers for audio - video rental/ Heritage objects\*)” we note that in the chapter of cultural infrastructure, the South - West Oltenia, South - Walachia and West regions are in a higher position. All 9 numbered indicators gathered over 67%, which confirms that the three regions provide opportunities for high access to cultural activities. The first three places are occupied by libraries, bookshops, but also community centers. Compared with other cultural institutions, the above mentioned are easier to maintain, but also financially more accessible.

A dynamic and in constant development society must respond promptly to all requirements imposed by the status it acquires. A society that claims to be evolved must integrate the necessary and efficient “equipment” to ensure a continuous and competitive cultural consumption.

**Table no. 4.** Answer of the question: In regard to your cultural needs and activities, what institutions do you consider would be more necessary in your locality?

Answer	Theaters	Cinemas	Museums	Philharmonic/ Opera halls	Polyvalent halls/ Sports centers	Exhibition halls	Libraries/ Bookstores	Others	I cannot appreciate
Percentage	22.2%	8.2%	5.3%	3.9%	3.9%	2.7%	1.7%	3.9%	48.2%

According to this study, nearly three quarters of the respondents chose "I cannot appreciate" when asked to name the institutions that they consider to be necessary in their locality, according to the cultural needs and activities. Respondents opted for this alternative response, either the locality where they live provides them with the necessary conditions to undertake cultural activities, either such activities are no longer a necessity for them.

However, 22.2% of respondents said theater was a necessary institution in their locality, 8.2% considered appropriate the presence of cinemas and only 5.3% said that, in regard to their cultural needs and activities, a museum would be necessary. The libraries, bookshops, exhibition halls, the philharmonic, opera or polyvalent halls, all these have gathered less than 4% each.

The weight of the expenses for culture from the total family budget shows the importance that individuals give to the cultural sector. Asked what percentage of the family income they have spent on cultural activities in the last month, nearly half of respondents could not appreciate this aspect, choosing the response "I cannot appreciate". Individuals are not concerned, in general, with planning a certain amount to spend on cultural activities, but become consumers of culture depending on the context. Although we frequently claim that we live in a postmodern society, the daily concerns of the individuals exclude the main condition of post modernity, life starts with a higher level for most people: the basic needs are assured, the people of the country are concerned with building themselves a beautiful life (Vasile 2010: p. 139).

According to Maslow's pyramid, individuals must first satisfy their physiological needs and then the security ones, but the contemporary Romanian society does not offer for many the possibility to reach the top of the pyramid (self-actualization). Although the budget for cultural activities is relatively low, 19.3% of respondents said they assign between 1% and 5% to these activities, 11.8% between 6 and 10 percent and 3.9% between 16 and 20 percent.

The lifestyle, defined as patterns of consumption, reflects a cultural model or cultural preference. But for these cultural social options to become manifested, individuals must have reached a certain level of material welfare so that the major concern of their life to have moved from the basic needs to the higher needs (Vasile 2010: p. 133).



**Table no. 5.** Answer of the question: In general, how often do you go to the theatre?

Answer	Several times a week	Several times a month	Once a month or less	Never
Percentage	0.7%	3.3%	64%	32%

Going to the theater remains a cultural activity that often involves a relatively small percentage of people, according to the barometer of Cultural Consumption conducted in late 2010. This trend is maintained and is available for the population studied in this research, thus only 0.7% of the respondents said they go to the theater several times a week and 3.3% confirm their presence in the theaters several times a month.

However, over half of the people in three sample said they go to the theater once a month or less, but, in contrast, are those who opted for the variant "Never", option that accumulated over a quarter of the total answers.

Going to the theater can be a means of leisure, but can be regarded as an effective addition to one's own culture. Today we find numerous leisure alternatives, but they depend on what each appreciates or what value they give to this institution.

**Table no. 6.** Answer of the question: In general, how often do you go to the opera?

Answer	Several times a week	Several times a month	Once a month or less	Never
Percentage	0.3%	2%	22.5%	75.2%

Over three quarters of the respondents mentioned they never go to the opera, a worrying thing for the activity of such institutions, but also for the community in general, and approximately a quarter of them said that once a month or less go to such performances. Only 2% of the respondents said they go to the opera few times a month and 0.3% attend the opera few times a week. Opera and operetta are considered cultural activities available especially to those with high incomes and this may be one of the reasons for which individuals give up going to such expensive shows.

**Table no. 7.** Answer of the question: In general, how often do you go to the cinema?

Answer	Several times a week	Several times a month	Once a month or less	Never
Percentage	0.3%	3.9%	60.1%	35.7%

Over half of the respondents said they go once a month or less to the cinema, but the opposite of 35.7 % said they never go. Approximately 4% of the interviewed people attend this institution several times a month or several times a week.

According to a study presented three years ago by MEDIA Salles at the Festival in Berlin, Romania is the country that registered the most spectacular growth throughout Europe for the number of spectators present in the cinemas, being in the top countries with the most spectacular jump.

**Table no. 8.** Answer of the question: In general, how often do you go to \_\_ museums / exhibitions?

<b>Answer</b>	Several times a week	Several times a month	Once a month or less	Never
<b>Percentage</b>	0.6%	3.7%	67.2%	28.5%

Cultural institutions such as museums and exhibition centers are attended once a month or less by 67.2% of persons comprised in the sample. On the other hand, 28.5% stated that they never visit museums and exhibitions and the percentage of those who are familiar with this type of cultural consumption is very low (below 5%).

**Table no. 9.** Answer of the question: In general, how often do you go to \_\_\_ shows / music concerts?

<b>Answer</b>	Several times a week	Several times a month	Once a month or less	Never
<b>Percentage</b>	0.3%	8.2%	79.2%	12.3%

Music, entertainment performances and local events are for most people a means of leisure, but also a way to participate in urban cultural life. Over 70% of the respondents said they participate in such performances once a month or less.

**Table no. 10.** Answer of the question: In general, how often do you go to \_\_\_ monasteries / churches?

<b>Answer</b>	Almost daily	Several times a week	Several times a month	Once a month or less	Never
<b>Percentage</b>	0.2%	7.6%	31.7%	53.2%	7.3%

Romania is a nation of believers, according to the latest statistics in the recent years, but we can speak of two types namely: people who believe in God and engage in church related activities, follow the practices and internalize the values promoted by it and believers who rarely go to church and do not necessarily take into account the traditions presented by the servants of this institution.

Between religion and the modern age there is an inevitable antagonism. The differentiation of social spheres and their specific operating norms produces a tension between social order and religion and in a modern society, man and his beliefs about individualism and autonomy act as a nucleus of a distinct religious culture (Durkheim 1973, p. 74).

According to this survey, over half of the respondents said they go to church or monasteries once a month or less and 31.7% several times a week. Only 7.3% of the people comprised in the sample never go to church / monasteries.

**Table no. 11.** Answer of the question: In general, how often do you go to hypermarkets / malls?

Answer	Almost daily	Several times a week	Several times a month	Once a month or less	Never
Percentage	9.3%	22.1%	47.1%	21.2%	0.3%

Visits to the mall or supermarkets seem to be more attractive than leisure at the opera or the theatre. Almost half of the urban respondents of the three regions: West, South-West Oltenia and South–Walachia, go several times a month to this kind of shopping centers. A worrying thing is that for nearly 9.3% walking through hypermakets or malls has become a daily routine and 22.1% have this activity several times a week.

Commercial complexes, especially malls, have become the attraction of those who live in urban areas, making it one of the most common social interactions. According to the Marxist theory, the new consumption spaces are designed to make individuals consume more than they need, both in terms of quantity of goods and also in terms of money; they are a form of social control (Vasile 2010: p. 95). Whether they go to buy a particular thing or just admire the windows of the big brands, individuals have made these services not only a utility but also an additional pleasure.

Rezsohazy stated in the “Sociology of values” that leisure activities have an important part in the value system of Europeans. Holiday periods give rhythm to the year. They become inviolable. Life stops. It is possible to mobilize people for a collective action (Otovescu 2010: p. 698).

**Table no. 12.** Answer of the question: If you had more leisure time, what would you like to do?

Answer	To read	To relax	To practice a sport	To register for training courses	To go to shows (opera, theatre etc.)	To spend more time with family	To repair/ make something in the house	To have fun with friends	To improve artistic skills	Something else
Percentage	16.5%	15.9%	15.1%	14.8%	12.7%	9.1%	7.3%	5%	1.5%	2.1%

Improving their artistic skills or attending specialty or training courses are activities that fall quite rarely in the free time program of the respondents in the three regions. Along with the redundancies in the last period the workloads of the persons engaged in the public system have multiplied, so the free time they can benefit from has been limited.

However, asked if they had more available free time, 16.5% of the respondents said that they would read, 15.9% would relax and 15.1% would practice a sport. At a very small difference from these activities we find spending time with family or going to shows. The manner in which people spend their leisure time is not the result of a free choice, but they are limited to some extent. The real needs of individuals are important and also how they can be met (Vasile 2010: p. 81).

The individual is characterized by a lifestyle and in order to know him in a coherent and deep manner it is not enough to analyze only the patterns of leisure or the specific of cultural consumption, but in the same measure there should be identified and correlated his interests and preferences.

**Table no. 13.** Answer of the request: In regard to the purposes and objectives that you have, please indicate the most important value for you, according to your priorities

Answer	Family	Money	Justice	Freedom	Power	Prestige	Career	Friends
Percentage	65.4%	13.4%	4.9%	3.9%	3.7%	3.6%	3.5%	1.6%

In order to find out what prevails regarding the purposes and objectives they have, urban respondents from the South-Walachia, South-West Oltenia and West regions were asked indicate the most important value for them, according to their priorities.

In the first place we find family which gathered 65.4% of respondents' answers, in second place with 13.4 percent we find money and the last place there is friends with 1,6%.

The perceived quality of life varies according to how they define the current situation and the projections they make about the future (Vasile 2010: p. 214). In times of recession, everyone's priorities change in order to resist demands promoted by society, but, however, family has always occupied a privileged place. Money or career, which ranked on the following positions are essential for supporting the whole family. Professional life is for many a very important part of existence, often occupying many hours every day, but it is a source of income.

## **5. Conclusions**

In a Romanian society in permanent transition from a social and value perspective and in an indefinite state of positioning cultural identity details, we disappointedly find that the superannuation of the population values in the urban area it is easily seen in the preferences of Romanians' extracted from cultural consumption. From the perspective of the theory of values and the theory of knowledge, the democratic age measures the width of structural changes at societal level with obvious accents of deterioration of creation and cultural analysis. The rethinking of values determined by the major social cultural changes has deepened national identity crisis into culture.

Strengthening the position of education is the main viable solution that can provide to every individual, as well as the nation he belongs to, the right to preserve his cultural memory and identity, without which we would be anonymous and irrelevant.

Values, intimate individual realities socially determined, shape attitudes and opinions, supporting each other and generating the choices that people make according on the context. They configure the structure and shape of society, social and professional relations, the organization of family, the state institutions.

And how in contemporary postmodern values circumscribe to the economics, the hedonism of urban population is increasing and contributes to the development of consumer society (centered on amusement, accumulation of material goods, travels, etc.), which is nothing but a clear effect of the development of capitalism. Thus, leisure, gender equality, corporate liability became the most promoted urban values.

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# **Impact of self esteem and marital status on the desire to attain economic empowerment among women in South West, Nigeria**

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## **Abstract**

This study assessed gender inequality in terms of access to education, the job market and reasons why high population of women lack economic empowerment in South West Nigeria. The descriptive survey multistage sampling technique with the use of questionnaires was adopted. A sample of 1200 female participants was selected from five study locations - Epe, Ikere, Ijebu-Ode, Ogbomosho and Osogbo. Two research instruments were used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data for the study. Self-designed Predictors of Economic Empowerment Questionnaire (PREQ) was used for the study, while the Index of Self-Esteem (ISE) by Hudson (1982) was adapted. In order to achieve the objectives of the study, two research questions and two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The data generated were statistically analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) tested at 0.05 level of significance, while Post Hoc Pair-wise Comparison was done. The result revealed that self-esteem and marital status have significant influence on women's economic empowerment. As a result of the findings, it was concluded that efforts should be made to reduce and contain the factors that inhibit women and girls' ability to achieve parity with their male counterparts in education. The findings further drew attention to the need for interventions aimed at promoting women's access to employment thus improving their earning capacity that has the potential of contributing to improved standard of living for the whole family.

**Keywords:** *self esteem; marital status; economic empowerment; women; Nigeria.*

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## **1. Introduction**

Women's education and access to job market are important factors necessary for the achievement of economic empowerment. Economic empowerment for women therefore can be defined as having control over income and other key economic resources, such as access to credit facilities, lands, information technology, decision-making; gaining more equality and control over their lives while contributing directly to their children's nutrition, health and education (Blumberg 2004: p.10). Some people see women's desire for economic empowerment as a threat to male dominance, while others see it as undesirable women liberation (Osisanya-Olumuyiwa 1998: p. 15).

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Obviously, a high proportion of women and girls constitute majority of those who lack access to basic education, found themselves exhibiting low self-esteem, spend most of the active adult life confined raising children and performing gender roles and family responsibilities within the household which are unpaid work (Abe 1997: p. 8). This makes them dependent on husbands for finance and usually results in poverty in old age. Furthermore, for the acquired education to transform women's lives there is the need to have unrestricted access to jobs and the capacity to build enduring careers. However, the concept of self comes largely from a person's ideas about her social roles, responsibilities and clarity of the expectations of these roles. Akinwumi (1997) on self-concept recounted that self-concept is important as it shows to others who we are and to ourselves who we think we are. Self-concept regulates how we behave, our aspirations because we always try to act in ways that are consistent with it. According to Bowman (2003), self is very important, he based some of his assumptions on the premise that self-actualization is critical for all round development in an individual. Self-concept has an energizing effect on behavior and this result in vigorous pursuit of goals that a person sets for herself or believes is worthwhile.

Healthy self-esteem or positive self-regard is about feeling competent and feeling "approved of". It involves the evaluation of the self-concept and is often unrelated to our true abilities. Plummer (2005) asserted that the difference between the perceived self (self-concept) and the "ideal" self gives an indication of self-esteem. Self-esteem can be described as a perception rather than a reality; it can be understood as how much value a person places on herself. David and Colleen (2005) opined that it affects or influences how a person experiences the world, one's aspirations and critical decisions in life.

## **2. Theory of devaluation of women by Sherry Ortner (1974)**

The theory states that women are devalued based on the value placed on them by the culture of their society. Ortner (1974) further posited that women's subordination is universal. In an attempt to provide a general explanation for the "universal devaluation of women", she explained that it is not biology as such that ascribes women to their status in society but the way in which every culture defines and evaluates female biology. Thus, if this universal evaluation changed, then the basis for female subordination would be removed. She observed further that in all societies a higher value is placed on culture than on nature. The universal evaluation of culture as superior to nature is the basic reason for the devaluation of women. This has led to undervaluing the female person, resulting in lower status and lack of economic power which universally is unevenly distributed between men and women. This situation made the education of girls unimportant for several centuries throughout the world.

## **3. Self-esteem**

Self-esteem may be understood as including the feelings and thoughts that an individual has about competence and self-worth, to make a difference through contributions to personal development, to treat self and others with respect. It guides actions and the outcome of the actions in turn affects self-belief. Self-esteem is thus the valuing, the feeling, and it is the person's judgment of self-concept formed whether it reaches personal standards and values. Generally individuals with strong positive self-



esteem do indeed manage their lives more successfully, have higher aspirations as well as more flexible problem-solving strategies (Zimmerman 2006: p.23).

On self-actualization, Thomas (1993) held that human nature is basically good and that people have a natural drive towards self-actualization, which means the achievement of their full potential. He believed that it is natural for human beings to strive for excellence just as plants strive to grow. Empathy, acceptance, active listening, support and authenticity are important to developing positive self-concept. Kleinfield (1992) stated that self-concept has an energizing effect on behavior and results in a vigorous pursuit of goals that the individual believes are worthwhile.

#### **4. Construct of self and self-image**

The construct of “self” is used to embrace all attributes of an individual. Oniye (2010), described self as the totality of what an individual can call his or hers. It includes among other things, a system of ideas, attitudes, values and commitments. The self is a person’s total subjective environment and also the distinctive centre of experience and significance. The self, constitutes a person’s inner world as distinguished from the outer world, consisting of all other people, things and events. It is also opined that self is that private picture each person has that reflects who we think we are, what we feel we can do, and how best we think we can do it in view of value clarification and success orientation. Self-image has a great effect on how an individual goes through life. It influences actual performance and achievement in both personal and professional life. The image we create of ourselves and the self-esteem generated from this image affects our approach to solving life’s problems and our success in life. This conception that we hold of ourselves as a result of interaction with significant others and which influence our behavior is known as self-concept (Metcalf 1990: p. 17).

However, Dansen (2000) pointed out that the self falls into the individual constituents, self-feelings and the action of self-seeking and self-preservation. Maduwesi (1997) identified three components of self-concept- structure, function and quality. The structure of self-concept implies that the terms like rigid or flexible, congruent, simple, or complex, broad or narrow are within his framework. The function of self-concept implies self-evaluation and prediction of success or failure. She found that positive relationship exists between success and social self-concept. An individual who exhibits positive self-concept thinks about successes achieved and good qualities possessed while a person who thinks more about the failures and inadequacies in his or her life may be said to exhibit negative self-concept (Oniye 2010: p.11).

#### **5. Gender and occupation**

Gender and occupation interact in such a way that they determine the barriers, constraints and opportunities that shape the standard of living of women throughout their life course. Gender roles affect women in such a way that even in old age, they are likely to be taking care of sick family members (unpaid job) while men are more likely to engage in economic activities that provide income. When women spent most of their adult lives doing domestic chores and caring for their family members without building career or keeping steady jobs outside the home, they are likely to be dependent on others for financial support and may be poor in old age. Invariably, occupational positions and career pathways shape the opportunities and constraints that women

encounter in the social structure, which affects resources available to them as they age (Moen, Kim and Hofmeister 2001: pp.11-12).

There are genuine reasons why education is the most important tool for the empowerment of women. Through education, women as well as men become liberated from superstitious, cultural and ignorant beliefs that keep them from taking bold steps to try out new things. Through education women acquire basic functional skills of numeracy and literacy to improve their trading for instance. Non-formal and formal education raises the intellectual capabilities of women and this leads to improvement in their emotional, physical and psychological wellbeing. Through the education of women, the cycle of illiteracy becomes weak and broken as children of educated women are likely to be educated. In the view of Osisanya-Olumuyiwa (1998), education helps women become more effective in performing their numerous roles and to make efficient choices about their roles and responsibilities. These policies continue to make considerable progress towards attaining parity in education but large gender disparities in educational attainment seem to exist and are of concern to sociologists of education, researchers and policy makers. However, beyond this, there has been little emphasis on the control of resources by women as a way to accelerate their status in the society and to reduce poverty. Some International documents such as the Beijing Declaration 1995 Platform for Action, highlights several areas of concern in women's lives, in particular "the advancement of women and the achievement of equality as a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice". The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW 1979) declared that globally:

- Two thirds of the world's illiterates are women
- More boys than girls attend schools
- Women do twice the amount of unpaid work
- Women's health concerns are often ignored
- Women are vastly underrepresented in politics (United Nations Report 2000: p.20).

Although, there are many international recommendations and policies which successive administrations in Nigeria have ratified to encourage equal opportunities for men and women (FGN 2003: p.16), women and girls still lag behind in education, earning capacities and access to finance.

## **6. Married women and the challenge of career building**

Marriage is a long term socially approved sexual union between two people. Marriage usually forms the basis of a family: two or more generations of people related by marriage, birth or adoption who live together and share economic resources (Kingdom 2002: p. 12). The marriage institution is one in which women play a major role and culturally, they are expected to give personal sacrifice to ensure survival of its members. Sex roles within marriage are changing. The stereotype of the wife doing the house work and cooking while the husband goes to work still obtains but is fast giving way to more women seeking paid employment outside the home. Women's expectation towards marriage appears to have changed over time; they expect better treatment in terms of equality and certain level of autonomy within their marriages.

In nearly all cultures, the usual practice is for young adults to look forward to and at some time in the future plan to get married and in most societies, this is the norm. By

making marriage "the norm", society puts pressure on those who may not want to get involved. Sociologists have over the years developed models and theories which attempt to explain the purpose and function of marriage. The decision to get married or remain single as an individual and most especially as a female in any society is yet to be personal and sometimes may be mandatory but feminists are of the opinion that it should be personal and may be circumstantial. Some women in order to be able to pursue a life that is uninterrupted by family responsibilities and personal commitment to building their careers in the past, and in present situations chose not to be involved in any form of marriage which should continue to be seen as a personal decision.

### **7. Statement of the problem**

It has been observed that women constitute a disadvantaged group in terms of access to education, securing employment and having sustained careers. This has led to many women living in poverty with low self-esteem. In spite of the fact that education had been well established in the South West Nigeria before the nineteenth century, women, compared to men appear to constitute the majority of those who lack basic education and thus, lack economic empowerment. Empowerment through education of women has emerged as an important developmental issue of global dimensions in the past decades (United Nations Report 2000: p. 20; Ezeigbo 1996: p. 23; United Nations Educational & Science Organization 2005: p. 58). Education, known to be an important factor in achieving economic empowerment, had been unavailable to so many women and girls because of cultural and economic factors for a very long time. This unfortunate situation requires concerted research efforts to turn the tide to address the issue of low self-esteem and lack of economic empowerment among women and girls.

### **8. Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study was to access the impact of low self esteem on the desire of women to attain economic empowerment in south west, Nigeria. Specifically, the following objectives were set to achieve this aim:

- Establish whether self-esteem has any relationship with women's desire to attain economic empowerment
- Ascertain whether any differences exist between marital status and women's economic empowerment

#### Research Questions

The study was designed to address the following research questions

1. Is there any relationship between self-esteem and women's economic empowerment?
2. Are there any differences between marital status and economic empowerment of women?

#### Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between self-esteem and women's economic empowerment
2. There is no significant difference in marital status and economic empowerment of women

## **9. Methodology**

### **Area of the study**

The study covered women who reside in the South West Nigeria. The six states that make up the region are Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Oyo and Osun.

### **Research design**

The study adopted a descriptive survey design involving the distribution of copies of the questionnaires for collecting quantitative data without manipulating any variable.

### **Population of the study**

The target population for the study comprised all women aged from less than 24 years to 55 years and above, literates and illiterates alike who reside in the South West Nigeria. The respondents within the age range were chosen in order to capture the reproductive years, their educational qualifications and work life period.

### **Sample and sampling technique**

The study adopted a multi-stage sampling technique. The first stage was the selection of the states using simple random sampling technique. The 6 states in the region were written on separate pieces of paper, wrapped, put in a box and selection was done through the hat and draw method. The following 5 states; Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Osun and Oyo were selected while the sixth state Ondo was used for the pilot study. The second stage of the sampling procedure involved random selection of one Local Government Area from each of the 5 States. All the Local Government Areas in each of the states were written down on pieces of paper wrapped and put in five separate boxes and one was randomly selected from each box. Thus, Ikere LGA in Ekiti State, Epe LGA in Lagos State, Ijebu-Ode from Ogun State, Osogbo from Osun State and Ogbomoso South LGA from Oyo state were selected. The third stage involved the selection of wards within the selected Local Government Area while the streets were selected through cluster sampling technique, from the streets; houses were selected through systematic sampling method. The rooms in the houses, which were mostly single rooms, were then randomly selected. For the interview schedule, both the literate and the illiterate respondents were selected through purposive sampling method. Of the one thousand, two hundred and twenty - nine (1229) copies of the questionnaires given out in the five states, about 1200 were fully completed from the respondents in all the study locations. This gave a good return rate of the questionnaires.

**Table no. 1: Distribution of Respondents by States in South West**

<b>States</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No of Questionnaires</b>	<b>Returned</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Ondo</b>	594	239	19.45	232 (7)		19.33
<b>Ogun</b>	642	246	20.02	242 (4)		20.17
<b>Oyo</b>	691	254	20.67	247 (7)		20.58
<b>Osun</b>	553	232	18.87	227 (5)		18.92
<b>Lagos</b>	725	258	20.99	252 (6)		21.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>3205</b>	<b>1229</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1200</b>		<b>100</b>

Table 1 shows the total number of respondents were 1200 from five States in South West Nigeria. Out of 1200 participants, 232 completed and returned the questionnaire from Ondo State, 242 completed and returned the questionnaire from Ogun State, 254 completed and returned the questionnaire from Oyo State, 232 completed and returned the questionnaire from Osun State while 258 completed and returned the questionnaires from Lagos State. However, the figures in bracket were the unreturned questionnaires.

### **Instrumentation**

#### **Predictors of Economic Empowerment Questionnaire - PREQ**

This was a 25-item researcher-designed questionnaire, used to elicit information on the impact of economic empowerment for women in the home. The instrument was in two parts; the first section focused on personal data, information was sought on respondents' marital status, and educational qualifications, occupations, and level, age, and family size. The second part required respondents to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with items along levels of strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree. Using Cronbach Alpha method, the PREQ has a reliability coefficient value of 0.71 when tested during the pilot study, as a result of its high coefficient; the instrument was found to be suitable and reliable for the study. The scoring of the instrument ranged from 4 to 1 for positively worded statements and in reverse order for negatively worded statements.

#### **Index of Self-Esteem - ISE**

The instrument was used to test relevant issues on the level of self-confidence. The ISE is an adopted 20-item version of the scale inventory developed by Hudson (1982) to measure the degree, severity or magnitude of problems associated with an individual's self-esteem. It correlates well with measures such as sense of identity, depression, happiness and scores on generalized contentment scale. Oniye (2010) provided its psychometric properties for Nigerian samples and obtained a concurrent validity of .90, in scale C inter personal sensitivity of .46; scale D - depression of .38 while Hudson, 1982 provided the original psychometric properties for American samples and obtained a co-efficient alpha of 0.93. During the pilot study, the Cronbach alpha value was 0.75, thus confirming the reliability and appropriateness of the instrument for the study. Sample of the items in ISE is presented below; 1 rarely or none of the time, 2- A little of the time 3 - A good part of the time and 4- Most of the time.

#### **Procedure for data collection**

A total of 35 participants were used in the pilot study. The research instruments were administered to the participants. At the end, the responses were collated and data were generated. The data were then subjected to Cronbach Alpha test of internal consistency. The result is presented in Table

**Table no. 2: Estimated Values of Cronbach Alpha Reliability of Instruments (N=35)**

Instruments	Number of Items	Crobach Alpha
PREQ	25	0.75
ISE	20	0.76

**Data Analysis**

The mean, standard deviation and other statistical procedures employed in the analysis of the data include Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation. Both hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The results obtained are presented below.

**Hypothesis one**

There is no significant relationship between women's self-esteem and economic empowerment.

The hypothesis was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The results are shown in Table 3 below.

**Table no. 3: Correlation Results of Relationship between Women' Self-Esteem and Economic Empowerment.**

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dv.	r-cal	r-tab	Decision
<b>Economic Empowerment</b>	1200	63.44	10.70	0.078	0.062	Significant
<b>Women's Self-esteem</b>	1200	52.25	7.26			

\*Significant at 0.05; df = 1198; r-cal =0.078; r-critical = 0.062

Evidence from Table 3, showed that the mean and standard deviation scores of economic empowerment were 63.44 and 10.70 respectively while the mean and standard deviation scores of women self-esteem were 52.25 and 7.26 respectively. The r-calculated value of 0.078 is greater than r-critical value of 0.062, at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore the null hypothesis was rejected which implied that there is a significant relationship between women's self-esteem and economic empowerment of women.

**Hypothesis Two**

There is no significant difference in marital status and economic empowerment of women.

Hypothesis three was tested using Analysis Variance and the results are presented in Tables 4, 5 and 6.

**Table no. 4. Marital Status and Economic Empowerment**

<b>Participants' Marital Status</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Scores of Economic Mean</b>	<b>Empowerment Standard Deviation</b>
<b>Married</b>	714	59.28	10.14
<b>Single</b>	210	69.69	8.27
<b>Divorced</b>	105	69.61	7.88
<b>Widowed</b>	72	68.44	8.75
<b>Separated</b>	99	69.30	8.37
<b>Total</b>	<b>1200</b>	<b>67.32</b>	<b>8.68</b>

Table 4 shows that out of 1200 respondents for the study, 99 of them were in the separated category had the mean and standard deviation score 69.30 and 8.37 for economic empowerment. 72 respondents who were widowed had the mean and standard deviation scores of 68.44 and 8.75. 105 respondents who were divorced had mean and standard deviation of 69.61 and 7.88 for economic empowerment for women, while 210 of those respondents who were single had the mean and standard deviation scores of 69.99 and 8.27. Also 714 of the respondents who were married had mean and standard deviation scores of 59.28 and 10.14. The data above shows generally that irrespective marital status of respondents, women desire for economic empowerment. However, the respondents that were single, divorced, separated, widowed had more drive towards economic empowerment and were able to seek for any job opportunity and work late hours without any spouse interference unlike those that were married. To ascertain whether marital status has significant influence on economic empowerment, an ANOVA test was conducted and the result of the analysis is presented in Table 5.

**Table no. 5: ANOVA Test between Marital Status of Women and Their Economic Empowerment**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	30544.37 <sup>a</sup>	4	7636.09	85.76	.00
Intercept	2856146.42	1	2856146.42	32075.87	.00
Marital Status	30544.37	4	7636.09	85.76	.00
Error	106406.94	1195	89.04		
<b>Corrected Total</b>	<b>136951.31</b>	<b>1199</b>			

Table 5 shows that marital status of women have influence on their economic empowerment (F-cal (85.76 P<0.05) given 4 and 1195 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, hypothesis 2 was rejected. This shows that there is a significant difference between marital status and women economic empowerment. Since there was significant difference between marital status and economic empowerment, Further Post Hoc analysis of data was done to determine which marital status group showed more significant influence on economic empowerment. The result is presented in Table 6.

**Table no. 6: Post-Hoc Analysis of Influence of Marital Status on Economic Empowerment**

(I) Status	Marital Scores of Economic Empowerment				
	(J) Marital Status	Married	Single	Divorced	Separated
Married	-	-10.71	-10.33	-9.16	-10.02
Single	10.71	-	.38	1.55	.68
Divorced	10.33	-.38	-	1.16	.31
Separated	9.16	-1.55	-1.16	-	-.86
Widowed	10.02	-.68	-.31	.85	-

Table 6 shows that significant influence was found between respondents who were married and those that were single, divorced, separated and widowed with mean difference of -10.71, -10.33, -9.16 and -10.02 ( $p < 0.05$ ). Also, significant difference was found between respondents that were single and those that were married, divorced, separated and widowed with a mean difference of 10.71, 0.38, 1.55 and 0.68 ( $p < 0.05$ ). Significant difference exists between respondents that were divorced and those that were married, single, separated and widowed with a mean difference of 10.33, -0.38, 1.16 and 0.31 ( $p < 0.05$ ). A significant difference was also found between respondent that were separated and those that were married, single, divorced and widowed with a mean difference of 9.16, -1.55, -1.16 and -0.86 ( $p < 0.05$ ). Also, a significant difference exists between respondents that were widowed and those that were married, single, divorced and separated ( $p < 0.05$ ). Based on the figures above, the result shows that respondents that were single divorced, separated and widowed had a higher economic drive than those who were married. Perhaps marital roles and husbands' demands contributed to married women's limited choices and movement.

## 10. Discussion of Findings

**Self-esteem:** The findings of the study revealed that self-esteem does have a significant relationship to women's ability to achieve economic empowerment. This could be as a result of self-esteem, self-determination exhibited by women who increase their interest to be empowered. This result supports the findings of Branden (1994) who argued that self-esteem comes from internal sources, such as self-responsibility, self-sufficiency and the knowledge of one's own competence and capacity to deal with obstacles regardless of what other people may think. High level of positive self-esteem leads to a more confident and independent person who will strive to attain economic empowerment. The study also is in agreement with the study of Eyben, Kabeer and Cornwall, (2008) who established that women may experience an increased ability to transform their choices into desired actions, which would lead to the emergence of economic, political, social, and psychological empowerment outcomes. When women build assets and achieve better economic status, they develop higher self-esteem, are more visible in their communities, more mobile, and their children are better fed and educated. On the other hand, it contradicts the findings of (Akinade 1990, Seligman



1995; Akponye 1999). The view of Blascovich and Tomaka (1991) supported the findings that self-esteem can also facilitate the empowerment process because it relates to an individual's sense of value or worth. This could be true because when an individual develops high self-esteem, there is possibility that the individual may have high desire for economic empowerment than those who have low self-esteem.

**Marital Status:** The result of the analysis revealed that a significant difference does exist among marital status of women and economic empowerment. From the findings it appears that most women who were in the category of single, divorced, widowed and separated had more economic drive than those who were married. This could be as a result of ability to make their decisions without having to seek spousal approval or permission. Having control over their time may also be a contributory factor. The findings are in agreement with the work of Aja-Okorie, (2013) who found out that marital status impacts on women's education and empowerment. In collaboration with this finding, Tomasevski (2005) and Maralani (2008) also found that women regardless of their marital status strive to attain economic empowerment. The result of the finding is also in line with Kumaran (1997) who found out that widows could easily move from one place to the other in search of better life. Hedayat, Marof and Asnarul (2010) also did a study and found out that divorced women have high level of economic empowerment compared to married and widow women. Their finding was based on socio-cultural structure (norms, beliefs, customs and values) of Iran which prevents married women from attending programs without their spouses. Thus, the divorced women have freedom to pursue any career or employment of choice, since they do not need the husband's permission. Therefore, there was a probability that the empowerment level of these women was higher than the married category.

### **11. Recommendations**

On the basis of the findings from the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Government as well as educational agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the media should intensify efforts to ensure that the education of women and girls especially higher education and science education, receive full support and encouragement to enable the nation record great success in women's education.

2. Women, men and the general public should be sensitized through awareness programs on the issue of women having control of their resources to support the idea as this will benefit all the family members. The issue of low self – esteem among women may be reduced through seminars and workshops and the Media to boost their self-confidence. This may help in raising their morale and increase their desire to achieve economic empowerment.

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# Partnership and trust building

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## Abstract

A normal functioning of the society involves mechanisms for conflicts regulation and institutions that favor the emergence of cooperative structures. "Partnership" is one of these structures. The term refers to relationships and agreements between individuals, firms and communities, from local to global scale. It is an instrument for solving issues of collective interest such as economic development, social cohesion, employment and risk sharing. Trust may be the result of a long term successful cooperation and risks sharing. In the former, pre-industrial societies, trust was generated in small groups by face-to-face interactions and spread from bottom-up. Then, the shared social virtues like honesty, reciprocity and the respect to commitments became the base of social capital and of intra- and intergroup cooperation. But in the last twenty years, a large number of researches found a deficit of trust in our societies, empirically translated by the breakup of families, the decreasing number of spontaneous associations and increased violence, crime and costs of cooperation. Trust diminishes our-days and this happens while the number of contacts and partnership agreements increase. Is it a paradox? In our complex and fluid world characterized more and more by risks and uncertainties trust could be rebuilt from up to bottom: from the stable states to a mobile society.

**Keywords:** *trust; mobility; network analysis; externalities.*

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## 1. Introduction

Social reality consists of all interactions that occur between individuals, groups and institutions. These interactions may be *cooperative* among some units and *conflicting* among others. The conflict arises because social resources are limited so that various groups must compete to obtain them. For a normal functioning of the society, we need mechanisms for conflicts regulation and institutions that favor the emergence of cooperative structures. "Partnership" is one of these structures. The term refers to relationships and agreements between individuals, firms and communities, from local to global scale. It is an instrument for solving issues of collective interest such as economic development, quality of life, social cohesion, employment and risk sharing.

In our complex and fluid world characterized more and more by risks and uncertainties, cooperative behaviors give rise to some social structures, norms and expectations. Co-operative structures can emerge as "institutions" defined as an "observed regularity in the behavior and/or actions of individuals or groups when they encounter a similar set of circumstances" (Witt 1987 cited in Vargas-Hernandez 2007: p. 67). Certain set of rules (i. e. *institution*) that structure human interaction and provide information about how people must behave under some circumstances, are recognized as legitimate and structure the strategic choice of actors so that the result can be

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accepted as equitable. (Vargas-Hernandez 2007) Most researchers observed that there is a positive relationship between trust and social capital – both related with cooperative structures - on one hand, and the political and economic success, on the other hand. Everybody knows what “trust” means but it seems that nobody can define it without rest. But all we need now is to consider “trust” a relevant concept in uncertain situations, comprising rational evaluations as well as personal dispositions.

**2. Trust, Rationality and Cooperation Games**

*Game 1:* In *Discours sur l’origine de l’inegalite*, J.J. Rousseau invites us to imagine a hunting trip in which the protagonists are two "good savages": hedonistic - seeking what they generally enjoy - and rational – they can conceive a proper plan to achieve their objective. So, one day, they decide to replace the rabbit meat from their daily menu (enough is enough!) with deer meat, much more tasty. But to hunt a deer they must associate because otherwise they have no chance. So, the wait begins but first rabbit passing around determine one of the two partners to quit: he rapidly changes his mind and decides that rabbit meat is good enough. He abandons the hunt. (Rousseau cited by Boudon 1990: pp. 165-168)

We have here the following situation: two rational people who know their personal and the common interests fail to act together and achieve their objective. For greater clarity, Boudon (1990: p. 167) formalizes this situation as follows:

		Hunter 2	
		<b>Cooperation</b>	<b>Betrayal</b>
Hunter 1	<b>Cooperation</b>	3 ; 3	0 ; 2
	<b>Betrayal</b>	2 ; 0	2 ; 2

There is of course, a 0.5 probability that any of the participants in hunting to adopt the “cooperation” strategy or the “abandonment” strategy. If Hunter1 will adopt a cooperative strategy, his benefit will be:  $(3 \times 0.5) + (0 \times 0.5) = 1.5$ . If he adopts the strategy of desertion then his win will be:  $(2 \times 0.5) + (2 \times 0.5) = 2$ . Clearly, the two hunters are motivated by the gains rather to abandon their original plan than to invest time and patience in following it - at least in this type of distribution of the gains. In this case, their desire to have deer meat at lunch will be not fulfilled. On Rousseau's footsteps, Boudon interprets this example like illustrating the necessity of certain regulations, different from a simple agreement between the two hunters. These regulations will have the main function to increase the costs of desertion from the association. Otherwise, everything that begins as a cooperation project that, under normal conditions presupposes *loyalty*, carries in itself, in most situations, the germs of desertion: “In other words, it is necessary that each of the two partners to engage that he will not abandon. Specifically, each has an interest to agree to be punished if he would be tempted to abandon” (Boudon 1990: p. 166). A whole sociological literature has debated and still does, the problem of regulations: what should be their nature? How to minimize the risks of desertion without increasing at the same time the costs of control?

*Game 2:* Here we have a classic case of “prisoner’s dilemma” as mentioned by Francis Fukuyama (1999/2002: p. 196): X and Y are in prison and conceive together a plan for escaping. If they work together, they will have important chances to escape. But if X respects the plan while Y “talks” to the guards, X will be severely punished. Vice versa, if X complies to the guards while Y will keep the secret then X will be rewarded and Y will be punished. If both will betray, no one is rewarded. It would be better for both to respect the original agreement but the risk of betrayal is too important: 50%. That’s why they both decide finally to cheat. Despite the mutual benefits of cooperation, X and Y prefer to minimize the risks of betrayal.

		Y	
		<b>Cooperation</b>	<b>Betrayal</b>
X	<b>Cooperation</b>	3 ; 3	-3 ; 1
	<b>Betrayal</b>	1 ; -3	0 ; 0

There are some similarities between the two games, such as: in both cases we have two rational individuals who are aware of their personal interests and of their common interest but fail to act together to achieve their common goal and miss the best possible result; both are "prisoner's dilemma" cooperative games in which rational behavior cannot be described as maximizing the expected utility (achieving the best result) but as minimizing the risks (*Nash equilibrium*); consequently, players choose the "sucker reward". There are, of course, also differences: in the first case, *the sucker reward* is provided by natural abundance and by chance, and cooperation depends primarily on personal characteristics of the partners and their shared values – an external authority is needed to reward cooperation; in the second case, an external authority keeps control and handles sanctions and rewards: in this case, authority has the interest to reward desertion. Thus the risks are much higher.

How is then rational to behave if the mutual benefit may be endangered by the risk of betrayal? The solution, called “Nash equilibrium” indicates as the best possible strategy (except cooperation that is unreliable) to minimize the risk of being caught in “the reward of the sucker”: the other betrays while you respect the agreement. In fact, this is the role that “the reward of sucker” plays: to hinder cooperation that otherwise would lead to an optimal outcome for the two prisoners.

From the two cases arise the idea that a mere simple agreement between two rational partners cannot work as long as there are quite high risks to confront with. Yet in the real world we often see the opposite: from functional partnerships between individuals to those between states. This is explained by the fact that neither individuals nor states do not play just one, isolated game, but repetitive series of games (iterative games or super-games) with the same partners. In the long term, there will be formed some interaction patterns that will allow an estimation of “trustworthiness” for different partners. In a “prisoner's dilemma” game, players have just one chance, they cannot have a trial and then to try again, they cannot learn. Therefore they choose to minimize risks and not to maximize expected utility.

Robert Axelrod (1984 cited in Fukuyama 1999/2002: p. 197) explained how the solution of cooperation can be achieved in an iterative game: applying a “tit for tat”

strategy in which the player responds by cooperation to cooperation and by betrayal to betrayal. Thus, each player can see that a long-term cooperation strategy brings a higher gain than the strategy of betrayal, and therefore is rationally optimal. Game theory provided many other strategies except those already mentioned, but the only stable solutions are born from iteration: a repetitive interaction teaches us that, on the long run, it is more profitable to play fair. This is the type of situation, Fukuyama states, in which the rule of *reciprocity* was born and a *good reputation* became an important asset.

### **3. Cooperation among individuals and among states**

For more than twenty years, a number of authors (Coleman 1990; Fukuyama 1995, 1999; Putnam 1995a, 1995b et al.) used the same variable - *trust* - to explain changes in the perceived quality of social life, and social behavior. *Trust*, generated by shared social virtues (honesty, reciprocity and the respect to commitments) is the base of social capital and of intra- and intergroup cooperation. It can be understood as a set of individual expectations towards the proper behavior of the Other. In its turn, the accumulation of *social capital* produces a visible increasing of the level of trust in a society. But a large number of researches found a deficit of trust in our societies, empirically translated by the breakup of families, the decreasing number of spontaneous associations and increased violence, crime and costs of cooperation. The correctness of this conclusion can hardly be disputed. But does this decrease represent a functional defect that can be removed, or is an inevitable feature of generalized interactions in "large number" industrial societies? We shall remind that in such societies mobility is also very high.

To understand this matter, let us imagine that the above two savages, knew each other for a long time or, in other words, they had a common history of interaction. Durkheim (1893/2001) described the small "societies" from the past as characterized by a strong common consciousness and by a "repressive law" that discouraged the non-compliant behavior. In such communities, members' ability to "monitor" each other by face - to - face interactions was essential: any deviation from norms could be promptly and effectively sanctioned. In other words, the social control was so powerful and so cheap that its members *internalized* common rules and the *reputation* was an important asset.

But today we live in societies of "big numbers and high mobility" in which most interactions are not direct but mediated, meaning that they occur among strangers who no longer share a common life experience. The mechanism described above still works, but only in small groups, as Michael Hechter (1987) noted, groups that generate solidarity easier than larger ones just because interactions are direct, the behavior of each member is visible to everyone else and easy to be positively or negatively sanctioned. But how is the cooperative behavior possible in the "big number" societies? Starting from George Homans' exchange theory, Peter Blau (1964/1993), answered that this happens because the associations between individuals tend to be organized in complex social structures which, becoming institutionalized, perpetuate themselves more over people's life. The whole social dynamics and the emerging forces that manifest themselves must be understood starting from the *social attraction*. It is the main force that stimulates contacts among people and exchange transactions in society. If this is the initial impulse of association, then rules limiting undesirable behaviors and

valuing the desirable ones are the glue that allows the functioning of large societies. Shared values enforced by social rules make possible different transactions among strangers.

But gradually, other changes emerged also: the self-consciousness of individuals expanded while the common consciousness was compressed, reducing the space of “shared values”. Now, another mechanism is needed to ensure cooperation and the achieving of more complex goals. This mechanism was called by Rousseau “social contract”. In other words, the power of control, reward and sanction was ceded to an external agent. The costs of control as well as the possibility of power abuse, increased; the weakening of traditional communities (family, neighborhood, church etc.) resulted in a weakening socialization process and a decreasing trust in institutions. We entered the era in which “a simple handshake”, as Fukuyama nostalgically writes, is no more enough to settle an arrangement. Behaviors as “abandonment” or “free rider” can be seen much more often, and the reputation is not so important when individuals can move so easily from an end of the planet to another. If altruism, solidarity and trust are falling in today's society - at least in certain parts of it - while personal interest (as attention centered solely on the own advantage) seems to be the main criteria in choosing the conduct of interaction, how is still possible the collective action, the coordination and cooperation? The question is valid both at the micro and macro level where cooperation involves organizations, regions or countries.

In *Network Dynamics and the Evolution of the International Cooperation* (2013), Brandon Kinne, uses network analysis to determine the conditions that make possible cooperation or, in other words, how can states overcome problems of coordination and collaboration to obtain benefits from the solving of common problems. Barriers for coordination between actions are, like in the case of individuals: the lack of mutual trust, fear of desertion or fear of being cheated, disagreements over the distribution of potential gains.

The analysis starts from the premise of “corporate” actors’ rationality which involves the trend of maximizing gains and minimizing risks. The author finds that any attempt of cooperation is influenced, beyond the particular characteristics of the actors, by a network of pre-existing agreements, which defines and limits somehow the possible actions.

Kinne examines one of the beneficial effects of the network on cooperative behavior, called *triadic closure*: when B and C have bilateral agreements with A, the likelihood to share agreements between them increases, due to the additional benefits offered by this “closing” of the triangle. The benefits are resulting from the functioning of some *information mechanisms* which bring information about the state's ability to comply with institutions, about its general trustworthiness and its usual preferences on gains distribution. Also important are *externalities mechanisms* which increase the costs of non-cooperation and the rewards of cooperation: Kinne mentioned for instance, the establishment of “reference groups” or “partners clubs”. These mechanisms represent partial solutions to “prisoner's dilemma” games in which, only the prior commitment of the partners to one another does not prevent behaviors like those implied in “Nash equilibrium” or “sucker reward”. However, they significantly reduce the risks of desertion. In fact, Kinne follows the observations of James Coleman (1990) who explained how rule of interaction could appear: when two individuals interact, there is a high probability that each will act according to the mood of the moment, no matter what



agreement they had, like the two savages of Rousseau. But when three individuals make a plan, the situation changes: the one who would like to break the deal can be now easily sanctioned by the other two. That is the way in which rules of cooperation can appear and survive.

#### **4. Final remarks**

Nothing important could be achieved without cooperation. *Trust* is an important pre-condition for engaging in different partnerships and for lowering the costs of interaction and, at the same time, could be a precious result of partnerships. Everybody agree with these common-places! Then why is the level of trust decreasing in our-days societies, while the number of partnership agreements between individuals or between states increase? A paradox!?! Just at first sight!

People have always traveled to find living resources or to escape persecutions. They peacefully settled down in some places or confronted the local population in others. After the Industrial Revolution that produced “indoor” and “outdoor” migration, in post-modern societies the mobility of people is even higher, thanks to increased possibilities of traveling and contacting other people. Under such conditions, it is more and more difficult to build *triadic closure* among such mobile individuals. A “hand shake” is no more enough!

*Trust* was built from bottom-up in former societies. It may be now a result of successful cooperation among states, in a process of iterated interactions in stable partnerships. A new culture of trust could be spread from up to bottom, finally.

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# **Detainees in Albania: their rights inside custody institutions**

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the perception of detainees about the rights inside custody institution monitoring the conditions of some detention centers in Albania. In this qualitative research, the focus was on understanding the experiences, habits, expectations and perspectives of participants in the respect of their rights. The researcher has used semi-structured interviews with detainees to accomplish the aim of the study. The study has come up with some findings and conclusions. Thus, the study showed that in our detention institutions the rights of detainees are very often violated, defiled and neglected. Based on this assessment, the paper give some recommendations, strategies and policies to improve the level of implementation of these norms and respect for human rights no matter where a person is and the reason why he is there.

**Keywords:** *detained person; custody; presumption of innocence, penal responsibility, human rights.*

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## **1. Introduction**

In many countries of the world detainees, compose the majority of the population in prisons. In Albania, the number of detainees is relatively higher than that of the convicts (Ombudsman 2012). Many detainees stay in prisons for many years before the judge process. In many cases, they declared themselves as innocent for the crime only to take the shorter period judicial system. The conditions of the prisons are much better than in custody. In other cases, the detainees stay in custody for periods longer than the sentence, give on the end of the judge process (Sykes 1958: p. 35). These actions not only violate fundamental human rights, but also significantly contribute to prison overcrowding, a problem that in itself is the source of many abuses.

In accordance with the presumption of innocence, the detainees should normally guarantee you the freedom to complete their judgment. Article 9 (3) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) provides that: “It shall not be the general rule that persons awaiting trial shall be detained in custody, but release may be subject to guarantees to appear for trial, at any other stage of the judicial proceedings, and, should occasion arise, for execution of the judgment”. In interpreting this provision, the Committee on Human Rights at the United Nations decided that the pre-trial detention should use only when it is lawful, reasonable and necessary. Necessity of this act defined as: “prevention of escape, followed by the actual data or repetition of

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the crime” or “the person associated with conditions constitutes a clear and serious threat to society which cannot prevent in any other way”.

The laws of many states, even if they are in written form, not always meet these criteria. Some states lack a mechanism that guarantees release before trial. In other countries, a large number of detainees - such as persons charged with drug crimes or other crimes of violence, or repeat - you deprived of the right to benefit from laws that provide for parole until the day of giving the decision by the panel. In some countries, even though this procedure recognized by the law given by the judge refused. Often this is due to a general fear that these defendants could perceive as criminals and can use this period of freedom to perform other dangerous crimes to society.

For our country, reforming penitentiary institutions has been and continues to be a very important aspect of democratization and civilization during the post-communist period. Until the 90s of XX century, Albania, as well as many countries in South – Eastern penitentiary system had an ideology based on prevailing conditions and self-treatment of detainees were almost inhuman (Sufaj 2000: p. 58). Detainees in this period suffered from scarcity of food, lack of medical supplies, forced labor and systematic violence.

Respect for the rights of detainees, their implementation and reform of laws and regulations governing the relations between inmates and staff members in prisons continues to be problematic. Therefore, reforming the justice system in general remains a challenge for our country in order to work its membership in the European Union (Ajdini 2011: p. 46).

## **1.2. Important definitions**

### **Detained**

In some countries, a large proportion of individuals arrested have not yet taken a final decision. Judicial process is often slow, even those found guilty, can perform a period longer than detention sentence they receive. This could mean that the complaint is legitimate and can affect the behavior of many detainees.

Different jurisdictions use different terms to describe these legal people. They may refer to people under investigation, under trial, awaiting trial or sitting in jail awaiting trial. For ease of reference, everybody is the study of these people are detained qualify.

### **Prisoners**

In some jurisdictions, such as the prisoners used only for people who have final decision. For ease of reference, this will be the definition of the prisoners in this study. Those who are in prison, but not with the final judge decision are considering as detainees.

### **Jail/prison**

The legislation of some countries used the word prison only to countries where an inmate with a final decision. Places where those persons who have not yet taken a decision referred to as places of detention. In this study, this will be the definition of the detention.

### **Presumption of innocence**

The most important principle in working with inmates is that they always should be presuming innocent. Unlike prisoners sentenced by final judgment, they are not in prison for punishment. This fact should be reflecting in their treatment. This is

important because while the detainees are awaiting trial, in many cases, they actually recognized as such by the court that hears.

### **1.3 The purpose of the study**

This study has used the stories of participants to explore the process of dealing with a new situation in their lives (Symon and Cassel 1998). A new situation was asking to evaluate based on rights that should be enjoying as human beings. It was used semi-structured interviews to explore this new experience for them. Interview questions were comprehensive (holistic). They related how the difference manifests itself in the process of thinking, to health, emotions, social life, relationships with others and themselves.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the perception of detainees about the rights inside custody institution monitoring the conditions of some detention centers in Albania.

## **2. Methodology**

In this research are included interviews with ten detainees who have been in this status during the period June-August 2013. In this qualitative study, the instrument used to collect data was the semi-structured interview.

### **2.1 Sampling**

Grinell and Williams (1990) proposed sampling as a process of selection of individuals who will participate in the study. Sampling involves trying to understand the target population, rather than describing it in itself, but seen as a representation of the basic characteristics of the population (Strydom and Venter 2002: p. 75).

A study is not base on the study sample, the results cannot generalized to a wider population, but the aim of this study is to understand in detail the uniqueness of the phenomenon being studied for those who were part of this study.

The study participants were interviewing by these detentions:

1. Detention 302 "Mine Peza" street
2. Detention 313 "JordanMisja" street
3. Vlora detention
4. Durres detention
5. Rrogozhina detention

These are not the only institutions penitentiary to which the law "On the treatment of detainees" knows. However, it should be said that the Albanian reality, there are still detainees held in police commiserate.

The research involved 10 detainees. All participants in the study were male. This does not mean that we do not have female detainees. On the five detentions of the study, only "Jordan Misja" detention in Tirana has the sector detention for women. The researcher, in consultation with contemporary literature and available options had decided to participate in the study only male detainees and the fact that they are about 4 times more that the women in Albanian detainees.

Considering these factors as criteria for the selection of detainees was decide that subjects have at least 3 months in detention. Once the researcher showed this condition,

detention staff, they presented a list of detainees. In a random way was select in all detention the numbers 17 and 47.

## **2.2 Design and development of interview**

In this study, design of instruments is base on the work of Holstein and Gubrium (1997). "Semi- structured interviews" are techniques focus on active and not completely structured questions. During the interviews held a format of questions constructed by the applicant in accordance with the purpose and objectives of this research. During the presentation of the study, the researcher has made clear the purpose of the interview and confidentiality issues for each of selected subject. Questions are designee in accordance with the logical line that interviews take between interviewer and interviewee. The purpose of the interview was to allow the interviewee to present his story with minimal interference from the interviewer.

Participants were interviewed only once for almost 55 minutes. They were asking to tell their story based on the key issues of the interview. Due to time constraints, the participants did not provide any feedback after the initial interview. Interviews are record after getting the permission of the participants. Respondents assured that their data will be stored and used only for study purposes: privacy and that their private live will not be affected.

## **2.3 Analysis of data**

In the qualitative study, the instrument used is the depth interviews with respondents. As a form of analyze is used the narrative of each interviews. Riessman (1993) mention, "narrative analysis - and here there is only one method - has to do with how things are interpreted form the participants and we can do after interpreting their systematic interpretations".

Narratives help us in the process of coding. In this study was used open coding process. The concepts are select and describe based on the dimensions and characteristics. In this study, the narratives are coded using sentences and paragraphs.

Initial categories were developing in connection with the causal circumstances, consequences, context, action and interaction and intervening factor. Finally, selective encryption is use in order to consolidate and integrate the main sections of the study.

The aspects that study address are:

- Legal rights inside detainees;
- Relations with other inmates, family, civilian staff and police officers;
- Violence inside the prison

## **3. Results and discussion**

### **3.1 Legal rights inside custody**

The transfer of the detention system by the Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of Justice is considering positive achievements in the field of protection of the rights of detainees. Although this process began in 2003, it became possible to finish only in June 2007.

Nevertheless, this study found that this task is not implementing correctly, because the rooms providing police authorities still held detainees against whom certain security measures are in prison custody. Detainees interviewed indicated that they had stayed in policy rooms when from the court was take security measure in detention institute. The

average sizes of one of this security room are 1.3 x 2.2 m. The participants consider that holding detainees in such rooms providing from the state police bodies comes in contradiction with the prisoner rights documents. At the same time, conclude that this action constitutes a violation of the rights of detainees, to the fact that these facilities have not required standards, have small area and some of them are without ventilation. In these cases are violated the rights of ventilation, lack of hygiene and sanitation, and security personnel in most cases is untrained to consider the rights and needs of detainees.

According to the Albanian Constitution, in Article 31 (d), states that “during the criminal process everyone has the right to defend himself or with the help of a legal counsel of his choice, to communicate freely and privately with as well as to ensure the free defense when the person does not have the financial means enough”. In addition, the Code of Criminal Procedure, Article 6 and 463/2, provides that “the defendant / petitioner has the right to defend himself or with the assistance of legal counsel. When a person does not have sufficient funds, he/she provided free legal defense”.

From interviews with detainees was found that meetings with lawyers have been regular in Tirana detainees while in the others custody some detainees did not have a lawyer and many times this right is denied. In addition, respondents complained about the free legal service that leaves much to be desired quality.

Not in all cases of detainees arrested are known with their rights. They are usually familiar with their rights after the meeting with counsel defense.

### **3.2 Relations with other inmates, family, civilian staff and police officers**

#### **3.2.1 Relations with family**

Detainees have the right to meet four times per month with their families and relatives. In one such meeting allowed minor children and three adults. Their relatives or family members should identify with such a tool that can allow the meeting with the detained. Ahead of the meeting, in one special room, the detainees and the relatives are check for security reasons.

Detainees interviewed indicate that their family is the most important institution for them. The family – for them - has protected, secure, provided psycho - social support. According to the detainees, relationships with family members have not changed, at least not in worse way, after there have been arrest. The biggest concern for the detainees about their members of the families is their health.

“I am very sorry that I couldn’t see my two little girls to grow up. I know that they feel my absence too”.

#### **3.2.2 Relations between inmates**

Life of a detainee or a prisoner has always been part of the interest of many researchers. Lot of studies has shown the impact of the prison life on the incarcerated person. They show us that inside the prison is develop a new life; new rules and new values. These elements are toughing by interaction with other prisoners. In this study, the author saw as important the exploration of these relations between prisoners. Respondents answered that try to keep good relations with each – other. However, nut usually they are involved in different quarrel which could generate up to violence.

“I don’t understand this regulation. It let us with each other in ventilation zone, but not when we're inside the cell”.

“Here have happened lots of quarrels. More than once, I have intervened to reconcile the detainees to each other. We all have lot of troubles and have no reason to add more”.

### **3.2.2.1 Relations with the civilian staff**

In general, studies show that detainees maintain good relationships with employees and civilian staff working in the detention centers. This is supported and by this study. Participants show that in general they try to maintain good relations with social worker, lowers, psychologists and educators.

“All the employers have good behavior with us. I deal with them very well. I respect them and they respect me. The others, those with uniform are the problem”.

“Social workers try to help me. They talk to me; they address my needs to the director, and take care for my social needs”.

### **3.2.2.2 Relations with police staff**

The study showed that the relationship between inmates and police officers were filled with contradictions and conflicts that often generate violence in their midst. One of the participants mention:

“The guardians come very often in the cell. Sometimes they go through rooms, destroy everything, break down sheets where we sleep and often they beat us. We are constantly threatened by them”.

## **3.3 Violence inside the prison**

The violence inside detention institution is an undeniable problem. This was confirmed not only by this study, but and from other studies in this area carried out by the Albanian Helsinki Council or the Albanian Ombudsman. Thus, if we refer to the number of notifications to the institution of “Ombudsman” we can notice that the number has increased.

The most evident case that was emerged in this study comes from Vlora detention. One of the participants testified that he had been a witness of inhuman violence exercised against him by a guardian.

“I was massacred from the guards. They shot me firstly in the right eye. After that, they placed the handcuffs. They hit me in different parts of body. What was the reason? I want to make a call to my mother. She was sick and I wanted to know more about her health conditions. They are bastards”.

Detainees have often-criminal charges for some detention institute. Thus, when study’s participants asked about the forms of violence that notice at their detention institute, they expressed that sexual violence was present. In Rrogozhina and Vlora detention respondents stated that juveniles were resting easier to abuse.

## **4. Conclusions and recommendations**

The detention structures in Albania do not fit very well with the standards and criteria that our country has signed. Violence, not friendly environment and time of detainees are some of problems in our detention institution regarding the respect of detainee’s rights.

The research recommends continuation of further studies in this field. Also invites Ministry of Justice, Ombudsman, General Directorate of Prison to develop a more



comprehensive reform in detention, where are guaranteed the rights of the detainees. Presumption of innocence must be key postulate of working with this category of prison population than.

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## **Women – Victims of violence in public sphere**

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### **Abstract**

The violence against women on the streets has always been a touchy subject for the present society as it emphasizes the lack of policies to deal with it. In the less civilized countries violence against women on the streets is widespread and the local services lack the programs to prevent and, more importantly, to protect women against such abuse. Street harassment is irritating and annoying. In some cases it can also be traumatizing and the feeling of helplessness and frailty is present. Whether this type of harassment is avoided and overlooked it might well be taken to a forward level i.e. more severe crimes such as stalking, rape, violent aggressions and even murder. The present article is based on a recent research on the topic.

**Keywords:** *street harassment; violence against women; social policies; research; culture; communication.*

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### **1. Literature review**

The violence against women on the streets has always been a touchy subject for the present society as it emphasizes the lack of policies to deal with it. In the less civilized countries violence against women on the streets is widespread and the local services lack the programs to prevent and, more importantly, to protect women against such abuse.

First and foremost we need to clarify what does “violence against women on the street represent”. Is it considered a mocking and rude word addressed to women on the street? Is it the random slap on the bottom? Is it the staring on the forms of women? Or is it the actual physical assault? Street harassment exists ever since ...well, roads were invented. It used to be a social problem in previous centuries and it continues to be today. Whether we are talking about the ladies who were travelling by carriage and were attacked by sneak thieves or just the modern lady who is walking on the streets is it appropriate to be catcalled at? Street harassment is irritating and annoying. In some cases it can also be traumatizing and the feeling of helplessness and frailty is present.

Whether this type of harassment is avoided and overlooked it might well be taken to a forward level i.e. more severe crimes such as stalking, rape, violent aggression and even murder. The idea of this topic came into my mind recently although I have been contemplating the subject for some time. While shopping for groceries at the local market I overheard a man that had just passed by uttering “You’re beautiful!”. Most certainly that was meant to flatter me, was it? And if I think about it I must admit that he used nice words. But why did it not feel right? Why did it trouble and upset me? It

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was not the first time men catcalled me on the street and this situation was one of the nice ones. “The reality of severe street harassment and the chance that “complementary” harassment can escalate into severe harassment must be taken into consideration; it reveals that overall street harassment is not as harmless as it appears if one only considers the stereotype of a man yelling, ”Hey, gorgeous!” out his car window to a woman in a skirt walking by. The sheer amount of harassment women experience also affects how they view it” (Kearl 2010: p. 94).

I witnessed an episode of harassment recently while waiting for a friend on a popular street near the centre of Bucharest. While talking on the phone I saw a young man firmly slapping the bottom of the girl that just passed by. I reacted instantly by telling him to back off. The girl continued her walk ashamed and most certainly terrified, another lady stopped irritated and amazed by the fact. The man, who was in his early 20s, looked at me with an obvious intent to attack me for interfering and I could see on his face the disappointment of not being able to conduct his assault as the street was quite populated and it was mid-day.

This is just one situation from thousands witnessed by females all around the globe. It was the most frustrating situation I witnessed in years. The inability to do anything, the poor system that lacks the proper policies of support, leads towards the acceptance of this vile behaviour.

Street harassment against women includes: groping, grasping, a more persistent push in the public transportation, a most uncomfortable leering, honking and/ or whistling, usage of improper words and vulgar gestures etc. Most of the women have dealt with street harassment at least once in their lifetime. It’s sad that at times it feels depressingly common. All that is left after such experience is disgust, fear, anger and depression. Victims of street harassment feel guilty and devaluated. The combination of these feelings could lead to a sense of helplessness by creating different types of trauma that would lead the victims to certain decisions when it comes to getting out of the house. They would choose proper hours, avoid less taken roads, avoid public transportation at late hours, etc. ”The idea of women’s inferiority has been analysed in literature, philosophy and religious works. For example, Aristotle said that “a woman is a woman in the virtue of lacking certain qualities. We need to consider the character of women as suffering from a natural imperfection”. Thomas d’Aquino perceived the woman as being a “failed man” and “a random being”. The sayings of the German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer is already famous stating about women as having “long skirt, small mind” (Rujoiu 2013: p. 14).

At European level, the gender differences and “the inferiority” or “the vulnerability” of the woman, it is a known and accepted issue and can be observed, even from the promotion of the principle of "gender equality", starting from the Treaty of Rome. But although, there have been many progresses in this area, we can see that today, there is still gender discrimination (Ilie Goga 2014: p. 204).

In the same time, there are authors who regard women differently as we notice from the following:

John Milton: The woman is a beautiful fault of nature.

Maxim Gorky: Out of love for women, the most beautiful things in the world emerged.

Napoleon Bonaparte: “A beautiful woman pleases the eye, a good woman pleases the heart; the first one is a jewel, the second is a treasure”.

Auguste Mere: Beauty is the first gift that nature offers to women and the first to ask back.

Alexander Dumas: There are two ways in proving your love for a woman: marrying her, if she's free, and respecting her if she's not.

Mark Twain (Samuel Langhorne Clemens) when asked how men would be without women he replied: First of all happy! Then, there will be less and less of them.

Xenofon: The women are not inferior to men except the lack of power.

Oscar Wilde: "Women are meant to be loved, not to be understood".

Camil Petrescu (Romanian writer): "If you have never seen a woman in love, then you have never seen a beautiful woman".

Petre Anghel (Romanian writer): "A woman is life in itself, it's the visible and tangible being of divine creation. She is the lullaby of life and permanent stimuli for her life partner. Apparently weak, she has got enormous physical and psychological resources. Strong when it comes to life troubles with an unparalleled force, she witnesses her competences in every human aspect: being a daughter, woman or mother. She is the most precious crown of the man".

Most likely, women are targeted to become victims of street harassment. Although the popular culture might not consider it being such an issue, the victims of street harassment totally disagree. As women are considered sensitive, there is obviously an enormous impact that street harassment is having on us. Most of the times, women's reaction towards this antisocial behaviour depends on the context that it occurred. Instinctively they try to protect themselves either by remaining silent, fleeing the scene, trying to get around other people that could protect them, respond fiercely – either verbally or physically, but that rarely happens – getting a deep sense of helplessness, feeling ashamed and inadequate. For some women, street harassment might not make them feel unsafe, but it causes a constant state of irritation.

Harassment isn't just annoying but it's also scary and traumatising. Most unfortunately this anti-social behaviour has been accepted as an everyday reality due to its daily occurrence. If action is not being taken, a gateway for perpetrators will be opened that would encourage them towards more serious expressions of violence (stalking, assault, rape etc.).

There is a constant need for people to get engaged together in order to reach the same goal, in this particular aspect, to raise awareness of this inappropriate anti-social behavior regarding women. "Human communication processes are indispensable in constituting each social group. The psycho-sociologists underlined that in team working, communication has an important part of individual efforts regulation and synchronization. It is difficult to imagine where human community would have reached – if it had reached – without such capacity of communication" (Anghel 2004: p. 5).

Due to exposure to street harassment some women could have a range of different feelings such as shame, anger, injustice, helplessness that could lead to a loss of self esteem, lack of trust in her social skills. Just as every citizen is entitled to walk freely, so are women's right to walk without having to be put in a position of vulnerability. Most of the aggressors might not be aware of what they are doing and only realise afterwards the consequences of their actions. Some of them become aggressors due to the fact that they might've experienced a similar behaviour from somebody else as they were growing up. Some might have had early childhood experiences that made them to

distrust women and treat them disrespectfully; therefore they are continuing their early experience in the adult life.

Studies have shown that the more permissive a parent's attitude towards aggression is, the more aggression is shown by the child. Sears, Maccoby and Levin showed that another important factor in aggressive behaviour was the extent to which children were punished for it. The parent may provide a model for aggressive behaviour: the child sees that when their parents become frustrated they hit out, and he may then decide to imitate them. Some children may be naturally aggressive and frustrate their parents to such an extent that they have to resort to physical punishment – the causation problem. Boys usually show more aggression than girls; this may be caused by differences in the way they are treated by their parents (Hardy and Heyes 1979: p. 154).

Due to the fact that women become more desirable, men might feel entitled to harass women, which is absolutely unfair. Women should feel free to get dressed in whatever they might choose without fearing the reactions of males on the streets.

Some women get harassed daily and other only a few times in their life. I assume this happens due to a number of contributing factors such as: if a woman lives in a community where everybody knows her, the chances to get harassed are quite slim; a woman in the rural areas will not be exposed to harassment as ladies in the urban areas as the chances to encounter strangers is limited; older women seem to get less street harassment than younger ones, maybe because they are seen as less vulnerable and are not sexually objectified; women who are in company of others experience less harassment; women who drive are less exposed to harassment, although there is a different type of harassment that she might encounter in traffic due to the fact that some men might feel that they are the only ones entitled to drive cars and they consider women as incapable of driving vehicles.

When we become aware that this is no longer acceptable, we should witness a change in public's perception over the issue. It all starts with taking action in dealing with the matter by stating bravely that this kind of behaviour is not acceptable. That might mean taking aggressive measures in public campaigns, changing in policies, passing serious laws and, basically, acknowledge the problem and trying to tackle with it. "Scientific research or different studies made in the social welfare area in order to acknowledge, understand and explain certain social phenomena need to respect certain conditions, to respect the professional principles and values in order to get viable, objective results" (Nistor 2012: p. 35).

As all people are free, we understand that by keeping the streets safe for women is mandatory. Each of us has the need to feel secure and that also involves eradicating harassment and assault on the streets. By being united in the same goal we can reach a stance when streets will become safe for everybody. This might involve taking revolutionary gestures in order to make a difference in the lives of millions. As Goethe said, "Whatever you can do, or dream you can do, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it. Begin it now".

## **2. Research methodology**

My research is based on a questionnaire of 21 questions. I have 141 respondents amid a week I posted online the questionnaire. Out of these, 130 are women, as somehow expected and 11 men. Below, I present the data of this research.

For the first question: What do you understand by street harassment? We got the following results:

**1.1** Nasty words addressed to women - 81,3% total agreement; 4,5% total disagreement

**1.2** Whistling towards a woman - 37% total agreement; 46% partial agreement; 11,8% partial agreement; 5,5% total disagreement

**1.3** Obscene gestures – 81,3% total agreement; 11,7% partial agreement; 2,7% partial disagreement: 4,5% total disagreement

**1.4** Physical aggression – touching, pushing, slapping, tickling, pinching – 94,7% total agreement; 4,5% total disagreement

**1.5** Persistent leering over women - 21,7% total agreement; 48,7% partial agreement; 24,4% partial disagreement; 5,5% total disagreement

**1.6** Persistence in them providing their name and asking for their phone number - 63,1% total agreement; 25,3% partial agreement; 10% partial disagreement; 1,9% total disagreement

**1.7** Accompanying them alongside the road without permission – 80,2% total agreement; 15,4% partial agreement; 1,9% partial disagreement; 2,8% total disagreement

**1.8** Honking – 38,4% total agreement; 41,1% partial agreement; 15,2% partial disagreement; 5,4% total disagreement.

For the second question “Do you consider street harassment as being a taboo topic in the society?” 84 respondents out of 114 agreed that the topic is being prohibited or restricted by social custom.

The third question tried to find out the reasons why women are subjected to street harassment. We offered a range of possible answers and these are the results we’ve received:

**3.1** due to provocative clothing – 27,7% total agreement; 40,4% partial agreement; 24,8% partial disagreement; 7,1% total disagreement.

**3.2** due to lack of education of the aggressors – 80,1% total agreement; 16,3% partial agreement; 3,55 partial disagreement; 0% total disagreement.

**3.3** they are considered vulnerable beings, therefore they cannot react – 35,5% total agreement; 48,9% partial agreement; 10,6% partial disagreement; 5% total disagreement.

**3.4** they are interested in establishing a relationship but they do not know how to do it - 7,8% total agreement; 44% partial agreement; 31,9% partial disagreement; 16% total disagreement.

**3.5** due to lack of punishment when it comes to these types of manifestations – 70,9% total agreement; 19% partial agreement; 7,8% partial disagreement; 1,4% total disagreement.

**3.6** the one that commits the aggression does not feel like his gesture is damnable – 40,4% total agreement; 46,1% partial agreement; 8,5% partial disagreement; 5% total disagreement.

For the 4<sup>th</sup> question in the questionnaire “What are the most often contexts where street harassment against women occur?” we received the following responses:

**4.1** on the streets – 96.5% total agreement; **4.2** in public transportation – 73% total agreement, 27% considered that does not happen; **4.3** at night, once it gets darker – 96.5% answered that this is a context that is prone to street harassment; **4.4** in less populated areas – 97.9% agreed to this statement; **4.5** in bars/ clubs – 80% agreed that this is a milieu where women might be considered targets; **4.6** in highly populated areas – half of the respondents agreed and the other half disagreed.

The 5<sup>th</sup> question tried to find out on how should women feel when they are street aggressed?

**5.1** they should feel complimented, considering ugly women/girls don't get to be whistled at – 97.9% totally disagreed that this should be the case;

**5.2** it is a normal thing for a man/boys to signal the presence of a beautiful girls/ woman on the street – 90.8% of respondents said this is a negative statement;

**5.3** it is humiliating for a woman/ girl – 73.8% agreed; 26.2% disagreed;

**5.4** it is not a big deal, it often happens – 89.4% disagreed; 10.6% agreed;

**5.5** women/ girls should feel offended and they should react accordingly – 69.5% agreed; 30.5% disagreed;

**5.6** total indifference – 44.7% agreed that this is how women should react when confronted to street harassment while 55.3% considered that this is not the case.

The 6<sup>th</sup> question referred to the reaction a woman/ girl should have to street harassment. **6.1** to respond to the aggressor's provocations – 71.6% totally disagreed and only one respondent considered that a reply should be provided towards the aggressor;

**6.2** ask for help from the relevant authorities – 62.4% were in total agreement that this should be the most appropriate reaction and only two respondents considered that this should not happen;

**6.3** ask for help from the passers-by/ witnesses – 51.1% were in total agreement on the fact; 39% partially agreed; 9.2% partially disagreed and 7.1% totally disagreed;

**6.4** to yell – 39.5% totally agreed; 31.9% partly agreed; 25.5% partially disagreed; and 10 respondents totally disagreed;

**6.5** to react violently by slapping the aggressor – 42.6% were in total disagreement that victims should react in this way; 27% partially disagreed; 19.15 partially agreed; 11.3% totally agreed.

**6.6** act as if nothing happened – 26.2% total agreement; 29.8% partial agreement; 21.3% partial disagreement; 22.7% total disagreement.

The 7<sup>th</sup> question focused on whether they think there is social involvement when a person is the victim of street harassment. 122 respondents considered there is no implication and only 19 respondents witnessed social involvement on such social cases.

The next question focused on what women/ girls should do in order to prevent street harassment:

**8.1** dress decorous – 26.2% considered is very important to pay attention to the way they get dressed; 30.5% considered this is a moderate concern and 10.6% regarded it as being not important;

**8.2** stay in at night – 41.1% considered that this is not important when it comes to preventing street harassment. Women consider themselves brave enough to go out regardless of the danger that might expect them when it comes to street harassment; 24.1% considered this is only a bit important; 27% considered this action as being a moderate one and only 2 respondents answered that this is a very important act to consider;

**8.3** wear long skirts and large pants – 64.5% considered this is not at all important; 22.7% think this is a bit important; 12.8% believe is a moderate action to consider; and there was no respondent to consider that this matter is of high importance;

**8.4** attend self defence classes – 27.7% believe this is a moderate response to prevent street harassment and only 11.3% considered that an investment in taking self defence classes is a good idea;

**8.5** to permanently have a accompanying person, either male or female – 32.6% considered this matter as being not at all important and only 14 respondents would choose the company of somebody else to prevent street harassment;

**8.6** avoid crowded places where nobody taken responsibility – 27% believe this is not important; 22.7% think this is just a bit important; 21.3% offered a moderate concern; 12.1% believe this as being important and 17% offer a very important consideration on this action.

The 9<sup>th</sup> question wanted to find out whether there might be a connection when it comes to the level of education and street harassment against women.

60.3% believe that it does not depend on the level of education.

39.7% considered that those who have a high level of education do not street harass women.

Question number 10 focused on the reasons the aggressors have when they choose to street harass women.

**10.1** They were harassed themselves, either by their colleagues or the family – 52.5% consider this is true; 47.5% consider it as false;

**10.2** They have no reason, they do it out of pleasure – 77.3% agree; 22.7% disagree;

**10.3** They want to show that they have the power and they express it on women/ girls – 92.9% agree; 7.1% disagree;

**10.4** They consider it as complementing – 59.6% agree; 40.4% disagree;

**10.5** They want to get into discussion and do not know how – 54.6% agree; 45.4% disagree.

The 11<sup>th</sup> question referred to the action the witnesses to street harassment should have:

To intervene – 95.5% agreed;

They pass by regardless, they cannot do anything anyway – 99.3% disagreed;

To alert the competent authorities – 93.6% agreed;

To respond to aggression with aggression – 91.5% disagreed;



To film/ take photos/ record the event - 64.5% agreed; 35.5% disagreed.

The next question referred to whether they consider street harassment as being specific to Romanian culture: 83% consider this is not specific to our culture and 17% believe that this is true.

The 13<sup>th</sup> question in my questionnaire focused on the knowledge the respondents have with regards to the law regarding street harassment: 75.9% have no knowledge on the laws regarding the matter; 24.1% have an idea of the law. The Romanian law consider street harassment, if proved, to be crime at a penal level; therefore the aggressors can get just a fine. The medical law doctors give the proofs that are required and approved. Basically, based on the doctor's psychical investigation, further police investigation takes place. Although, there are certain psychological trauma that need to be addressed to a certain specialist and, unfortunately, the law does not require the input of a psychologist. There are no specific Romanian policies that address directly to the problem of street harassment.

Further, I wanted to find out whether my respondents felt the need for studies/ research on street harassment. Not surprisingly, 90.1% totally agreed on this matter. 87.5% think that the research and studies should be focused on the street harassment victim and aggressors as well. In the same time, 62.4% believe that debates should take place on the topic of street harassment.

When asked how street aggressiveness can be eradicated, 98.6% believe that this can be done by a proper education in the family, 97.2% school education, 90.1% by continuous education, and 89.4% consider that by ample actions from the police, street harassment actions can be eradicated or at least prevented.

The 19<sup>th</sup> question was targeted on finding out whether the respondents have ever been the victim of violent street behaviour and 56% admitted being at least once in their lifetime in this situation and 44% claimed they have never been faced with such a anti-social behaviour.

Apparently, 88.7% believe that street harassment occurs mostly in the urban areas and less in the rural areas. Half of my respondents (50.4%) believe that law is punishing street harassment, but they do not know what the measures are from the authorities when it comes to actually tackling the problem. In the same time, 96.5% believe that the current law is not enough when it comes to punishing street harassment.

### **3. Conclusions**

The most important outlines in my study are related to the fact that there are no social policies to protect women against street harassment. In the same time, there is a cultural bias when it comes to actually admitting that street harassment occurred at an individual level. Additionally, it is noticeable that women do not feel comfortable being a victim of street harassment and even though unpleasant situations might occur, women's social life is not altered to what might happen on the streets. There is a stringent need for the society to admit that there are no social policies that would address the matter directly. Most of my respondents are not aware of the legal steps that need to follow when faced with street harassment.

Raising public awareness towards the topic is one of the most important steps that need to be taken when it comes to ending street harassment. This can be done by public campaigns, television debates, courses taken in schools and faculties, having a blog,

writing about it on social media, producing a documentary, sharing your story online or to friends, join an anti-street harassment group etc.

In order to raise awareness on street harassment there is also a need for male allies to address the issue of gender based street harassment. A better chance of succeeding in efforts to end it might be to get men involved as well, so they can bring different perspectives and men who do harass women might be more willing to listen to them. "In addition to educating men, empowering women, and raising awareness that street harassment is a problem, to help stop it we can trust it into an "issue" that organizations, groups, and individuals can work on in a cohesive, comprehensive way" (Kearl 2010: p. 186).

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# **The cohesion policy of the European Union: alternative funding mechanisms of the Romanian economy**

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## **Abstract**

Along with the internal market, as well with the Economic and Monetary Union, the economic and social cohesion is one of the main objectives of the European Union under the Treaty of Maastricht, respectively, to “promote social and economic progress and a high level of employability and the to achieve a balanced and sustainable development...” (Treaty on European Union - the Maastricht Treaty - 1992). In other words, economic and social cohesion would require the European Union population not to be disadvantaged, regardless of the region in which are living and/or working. This will depend very much on how it will be implemented, the cohesion policy by the European Union in cooperation with each Member State individually. This is the practical process of eliminating or at least reducing disparities in economic and social development of some Member States and/or their regions. European Union cohesion policy has three major dimensions: economic, social and territorial dimension size. The third dimension, size “territorial” (Lisbon Treaty 2007) was introduced by the Lisbon Treaty and refers to the recognition of territorial diversity and the need to build on this diversity to generate development. Thus, it can be said that, currently, the main purpose of the cohesion policy of the European Union is represented by alleviating economic disparity, social and territorial cohesion. As regards, the cohesion policy, which are used to achieve its objective, namely to reduce disparity and strengthening economic, social and territorial cohesion can say that they are the Structural Funds and the European Investment. These structural and investment funds practically represent true alternative of funding mechanisms in the economy of a Member State, with a number of advantages over traditional financing mechanisms. To those mentioned above in this article, the authors have proposed to emphasize the cohesion policy and their role as alternative funding mechanisms of the Romanian economy and their trends in 2014-2020.

**Keywords:** *Cohesion policy; European funds; regional development; cohesion policy instruments; economy; alternative funding mechanisms*

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## **1. Introduction**

The research topic on which we intend to analyze in this article is the impact of cohesion policy and its instruments on the Romanian economy. The reason why this theme was chosen is the current debate about the cohesion policy and regional development of Romania and the importance of increasing the absorption of European funds by Romania in the 2014-2020 programming period, to finance economy so as to

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ensure the fulfillment of the three new priorities set by the Europe 2020 strategy, namely “smart growth: developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation; Sustainable growth: promoting a more efficient economy in terms of resource use, greener and more competitive; Inclusive growth: promoting an economy with a high rate of employment, ensuring social and territorial cohesion.” (Communication from the European Commission 2010: p 3).

However, given the current social phenomenon economically tied wave “immigrants stemming largely from poor countries and those at war in the Middle East and Africa are moving towards the European Union”, which is a phenomenon that lately becomes the main priority in the agenda of the governments of the Member States and the European Commission, taking into account the very low degree of absorption of European funds by Romania for the period 2013-2014 (absorption rate is 63,48% at the end of February 2016)” (Capital newspaper 2016) and that Romania has greatly delayed launch of several funding programs for the period 2014-2020 for attracting European funds, we believe that analyzing the influence of EU cohesion policy, its role and its instruments for financing the Romanian economy is a highly debated issue deserves to be treated very carefully.

## **2. European Union cohesion policy: definition, role and evolution**

Taking account of membership of the European Union, Romania has benefited since 2007, the year it joined the European Union, by the Cohesion policy support thereof that aims under the provisions of the Treaty of Rome, a “harmonious development by reducing disparities between different regions and prevent backwardness of the least favored regions”(Treaty of Rome 1957).

It should be stressed that cohesion policy has evolved over time, meaning that it was adapted to the new challenges facing Europe in order to achieve its intended purpose. Thus, nowadays, referring to the EU's cohesion policy, we express to economic, social and territorial cohesion. Some authors even consider that cohesion policy has four types, namely “economic, social, territorial and political cohesion” (Tarschys 2003: p. 5). Cohesive policy means the process by which political parties form alliances achieve certain common objectives, at national and even at regional level. In terms of territorial cohesion, it should be noted that it has become one of the overall objectives of the cohesion policy of the European Union, alongside economic and social cohesion, with the signing of the Lisbon Treaty. By territorial cohesion we understand balanced development, consistent, harmonious, “polycentric development” (European Commission 1999: p.7), economically and socially in all geographic regions of the European Union. Territorial cohesion aims at reducing the disparities in development between urban and rural areas, between center and periphery, preventing extensive territorial disparities, this based on three fundamental principles ”concentration, namely overcoming differences in density Connecting territories and overcoming distance and cooperation, as well as overcoming the division” (Trașcă et. al. 2013: pp. 64-74).

With regard to *economic cohesion*, we consider that it involves the overall objective of each state, namely to achieve a high level of welfare of the State and its inhabitants, due to the implementation of an effective cohesion policy, a policy that is based on “financial solidarity” and serves as “a mechanism for payments, redistribution of budgetary contributions of Member States to reduce disparities in regional

development between them” (Drăgoi 2014: p. 6) in order to promote a high level of competitiveness and employment of labor, increasing the level of life for European citizens, sustainable and harmonious development of the European Union.

Regarding the *social cohesion* should be noted that, according to some authors in the field, it appeared as a separate policy that was aimed at reducing the differences between people, following the emergence of technological progress that has affected a number of social groups, either from being vulnerable (women, children, disabled, etc.) or from being affected by changes in the economy (unskilled). Social cohesion refers to managing those elements common societal or better manage the factors of division that exists in a society (ethnic, religious, cultural, welfare and social status differences, etc.) that can cause conflicts between individuals or groups of individuals that are inevitable in a society and even normal in a free market economy.

We believe that, in terms of the evolution of cohesion policy should be highlighted the next steps that contributed to the improvement and its reform, namely: the drafting of the Treaty of Rome on 25 March 1957, a document which was established by the European Economic Community (EEC) and which have been defined for the first time the principles of regional development policy. The establishment in 1958 of the European Social Fund and the European Fund for Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee which was focused on economic and social development at Community level. In 1975 the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), was created, which aims at reducing disparities between the levels of regional development in the Community space. In 1986 the Single European Act document was signed that sets the foundation of cohesion policy. In 1988, the European Council in Brussels restores the operation of the Solidarity Funds (Structural). On 7 February 1992 is signed the Maastricht Treaty, which entered into force on the same date. On 1 November 1993 the incurrence European Union which currently comprises 28 member states (at that time consisting of 12 countries: Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, UK Netherlands, Portugal and Spain, following along the time to join: in 1995: Finland, Austria and Sweden, in 2004: Latvia, Lithuania, Cyprus, Estonia, Malta, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Slovenia and Hungary, in 2007: Romania and Bulgaria in 2013 and Croatia). In 1993 it is created the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG). In 1999 it set up funding programs for Pre-Accession Instrument for Structural Policies (ISPA) and the Special Accession Program for Agriculture and Rural Development (SAPARD). In 2000, the policy takes the Lisbon objectives for growth and employment (objective of the Lisbon Strategy by 2010 was to make Europe “*the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy*”. In 2001, Strategy Lisbon has completed its objectives, including among new objectives “sustainable development”. In 2005 the European Commission presented the integrated Strategic lines for Growth and Jobs (bowing from the premise that the development of the EU economy will be based on a sustainable growth and employment). In 2007, occurs Cohesion Policy Reform (2007-2013 thus were established three objectives, which were included in the Community Strategic Guidelines 2007-2013, namely: “Europe: a more attractive to invest and work, improving knowledge and innovation for growth, more and better jobs”. (Communication from the Commission Europe 2010: p 4) in 2007-2013, cohesion policy contributes to “*convergence*” (Communication from the Commission Europe 2010: p 3) in the new programming period 2014-2020 according to the Strategy 2020, the new cohesion policy has three new priorities,

namely “smart growth: developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation, sustainable growth: promoting a more efficient economy in terms of resource use, greener and more competitive, increase inclusive growth: promoting an economy with a high rate of employment, ensuring social and territorial cohesion” (Communication from the Commission Europe 2010: p 3). As can be seen, European Union cohesion policy has undergone many changes over time to achieve its goal.

In our view, we believe that currently the cohesion policy continues to reform and redirect objective in view: the refugee crisis in the African and Middle East that “invades” the European Union. The lately position of Great Britain and Greece on the European Union that have sent signals recently regarding the intentions of leaving the community space, increasing terrorism in the European Union, etc. Thus, we consider that all the problems facing the European Union, have led to a crisis generalized across Europe, which we believe that can be overcome through the implementation of cohesion policy of solidarity conducive to the harmonious development of all Member States by reducing disparities in economic, social and territorial of all existing nations into the EU. American analyst Robert D. Kaplan believes that “It became, therefore, clear that the centralization imposed for decades by the European Union and bureaucracy distant, cataloged commonly as unrepresentative, and has led to the construction of a united Europe. On the contrary, triggered across the continent a shockwave, which the EU may only survive if he can find in the shortest time, the appropriate way to preserve legitimacy to the diversity of nations and opinions” (Vidu and Andrei 2016: p. 1). In the same article, it is mentioned that a role in amplifying the current crisis in the European Union plays Russia whose leader “knows that geography and raw power - military and economic - are still the starting point in asserting national interests” (Vidu and Andrei 2016: p. 1), while technocrats, respectively EU leaders see tackling the division of Europe into “social state and the common currency” (Vidu and Andrei 2016: p. 1).

Considering the allegations of the analyst Robert D. Kaplan in connection with the European Union, the question arises: Will cohesion policy through its instruments get out of the current crisis? According to the authors, the answer is YES, but only under certain conditions. One of those conditions, in our opinion, would be for cohesion policy through its instruments to provide greater concern for social cohesion, given the social phenomenon of the economy that has grown lately, namely the immigrant’s crisis. Thus the social cohesion policy needs to strengthened social security systems in the Member States for fighting poverty, migration management, encouraging social inclusion, etc. This was reported by experts in the field who have promoted the idea that “one of the main goals of social cohesion is to strengthen social security systems” (Androniceanu et. al. 2004: p. 5). New social cohesion policy should focus more on equal opportunities (focusing on the religious orientation of individuals who apparently recently sparked many conflicts within Europe and is believed to have influence also the refugee crisis), democracy, freedom and responsibility. On the situation of migrants in the European Union, Corina Cretu, the European Commissioner for regional policy said through a press release to Agerpres that “EU funds for cohesion policy can also be used to ensure effective integration of immigrants and asylum seekers” (Economica newspaper 2016). In other words, through the instruments used by cohesion policy, in particular the European Social Fund (ESF) and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Asylum, Migration and Integration (AMIF) and even through the

European Social Fund (ESF) will be able to finance invested by European funds to ensure social integration of immigrants. The second condition would orientation of cohesion policy instruments to finance funding programs that aim to invest in key growth sectors. We believe that the third condition is simplifying the implementation of cohesion policy for 2014-2020, raising absorption by all Member States of the European Union European funds allocated in this programming period in order to develop the economy, promote more efficient economy in terms of resource use, greener and more competitive economy and a high rate of employment and ensure social and territorial cohesion. The fourth condition would be to continue the introduction of the single currency “euro” across all Member States, which would represent a major step for the integration process that will lead to the achievement of economic and legal convergence. The single currency “euro” will provide greater security in transactions, particularly cross-border and higher profitability of the business (since there will be no costs related to currency exchange), will contribute to price stability, increase economic growth, financial market integration and not least, will contribute to more efficient single market by making it more powerful in the world’s economy.

### **3. The instruments of EU cohesion policy: source of financing for Romanian economy?**

As you know, the main funding mechanisms of the economy are: self-financing, bank credit and leasing, budgetary subsidy. Referring to alternative mechanisms for financing the economy can say that for Romania at the moment the most important alternative source of financing the economy are the main instruments of cohesion policy that provides solutions for financing from European funds, namely: European Structural and Investment Funds (FSIE), namely: European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Cohesion Fund (CF), European Social Fund (ESF), European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EARDF) and European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF).

European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) was established in 1975 and aims to reduce disparities between levels of regional development at Community level. European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) finances projects aimed at: reducing disparities between regions in the Community, the development of regions suffering from natural or demographic handicaps, development lagging regions, the conversion of industrial regions in decline, making investments that aim at growth and jobs, promoting and strengthening regional cooperation, sustainable development, etc.

Cohesion Fund (CF) was established in 1994 with the aim of contributing to projects in the environment and trans-European networks. Since 2007, the Cohesion Fund has begun to contribute to projects in fields related to sustainable development, energy efficiency and renewable energy. Cohesion Fund (CF) will finance in 2014-2020, projects in the following areas: environment, transport TENs. In order to obtain financing through the Cohesion Fund must meet certain eligibility conditions by the respective states namely gross national income (GNI) per capita is less than 90% of the EU average. Thus, in the 2014-2020 programming period, the Cohesion Fund will be available Romania.

European Social Fund (ESF) promotes economic, social and territorial cohesion, and is the main instrument of cohesion policy that makes investments in people.

European Social Fund (ESF) aims to create jobs for European citizens providing better education and protection of vulnerable groups. Regarding the 2014-2020 European Social Fund aims: fighting poverty, enhancing institutional capacity and efficient public administration, employment, improved education, social inclusion.

European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) aims to promote sustainable rural development throughout the European Union, contributing to the market supporting policies and the common agricultural policy. Concerning the programming period 2014-2020, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) has three objectives that are also among the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy and the objectives of the Common Agricultural Policy, namely: “increasing competitiveness of agriculture, ensure sustainable management of natural resources and combating climate change, promoting balanced territorial development of rural economies and communities including creating and maintaining jobs.”

European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) finances the European Union's policy of fisheries and maritime affairs respectively: creating new jobs, improving quality of life in coastal areas of Europe, helping operators transition to sustainable fisheries and support coastal communities to diversify their economies.

Apart from the above mentioned instruments, the European Union uses other tools that support only certain fields of interest, namely: the development of SMEs, culture, research, environment, research, education, etc. The most relevant and current instruments of this type are: Erasmus + - instrument that finances projects in areas such as: youth and sports, education, training, etc. The Creative Europe - an instrument which finances projects aimed at: transnational mobility, audience development, capacity building - education and training. The program Horizon 2020 is aimed at financing research projects, educational and social that are found in the “Europe 2020”. The Horizon 2020 is a tool to finance research. The Cosmos is a tool that funds the development of SMEs. Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) is a tool to finance infrastructure projects: roads, railways, gas pipelines, electricity networks and services for a digital single market.

In order to achieve the objectives of European Union cohesion policy as an instrument used to finance the economy and the European Investment Bank (EIB). This bank was established in 1958 in order to provide funding to projects that have as priorities: economic growth, jobs, climate change mitigation, etc. European Investment Bank finances these types of projects by granting loans and providing advice.

We believe that it should be noted that the effective use of the tools described above, cohesion policy of the European Union using instruments such as JASPERS technical assistance and JASMINE, along with financial assistance instruments such as JASMINE and JESSICA. Is JASPERS technical assistance facility that supports countries in preparing quality projects, to be financed from funds allocated through cohesion policy instruments? JASMINE is a tool for technical and financial assistance that are supported by non-bank micro-credit providers. Financial engineering is a tool which finances micro-enterprises and SMEs. JESSICA is a financial engineering instrument which finances investment in urban areas.

Considering the above, the question arises: Why cohesion policy instruments are considered a source of financing for Romanian economy particularly cost-effective? The answer according to the authors of this article appears by simple analysis of the funding mechanisms of classical economics mentioned above. Thus, the ideal funding



mechanism is the self-financing, which represents financing of the economy by using its own sources, a mechanism that does not involve costs being the most profitable, but the problem is that Romania currently has no cash on hand to finance the economy. In this case as funding mechanisms for the economy remain to be analyzed the credit and leasing for Romania and in some cases budgetary subsidy.

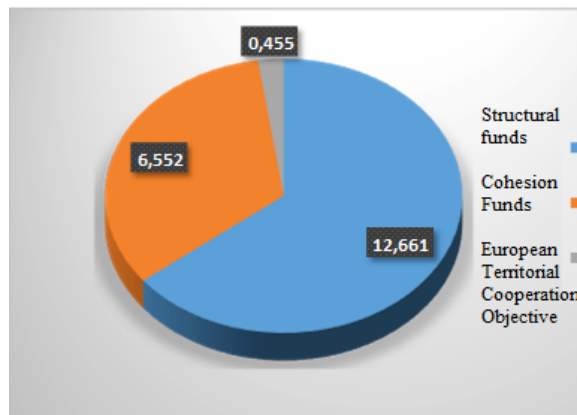
*The credit* is a form of financing most popular savings. But credit incur quite large banking institutions that are perceived as commission for the loan file analysis, commission of credit, borrowing, credit management fees, etc. *Leasing or loan bail* is a funding mechanism in the medium term (leasing movable) or long term (real estate leasing). This funding mechanism allows the exploitation of property without resorting to loans or equity to spend. Leasing is basically a lease of a movable or immovable property which contains a clause on the promise of sale at the end of the contract period based on the residual value. *The grant budget* is funding mechanism that allows financing from the state budget, specific companies or agencies in priority sectors of the state economy through financial subsidy policy. This mechanism is not common, is subject to availability of funding sources and be granted under certain conditions and for a certain period of time.

Therefore, we believe that it is very clear that cohesion policy instruments is the most cost-effective source of funding for the Romanian economy, given that European funds is not a process so costly as loan from a bank because many cases expenditure preparation of the European financing are eligible expenditures (recovered by the beneficiary from the European Union or partially by share non-refundable support established program funding), European funds does not involve fees award as assumed often grant credit, European funds does not involve the payment of installments or interest payments as a credit or assume a lease.

Given the advantages of cohesion policy instruments gives them Romanian economy above a second question that emerges: Why, during 2007-2013 Romania has made so little absorption of European funds, given the advantages they provide the cohesion policy? The answer according to the authors is as follows: the level is so low for the absorption rate of European funds by Romania in 2007-2013 was due to the following causes: weak institutional capacity administrative, not harmonized with EU legal framework, the authorities hired unqualified personnel management and intermediary bodies which managed EU funds on political criteria not based on competence, lack of effective strategy development, lack of experience in managing European funds, excessive bureaucracy, fraud with European funds, lack of involvement of banking institutions in the financial sustainability of the projects financed from European funds, poor inter-institutional cooperation, the staff lack of experience involved in writing projects, their evaluation, implementation and monitoring etc.

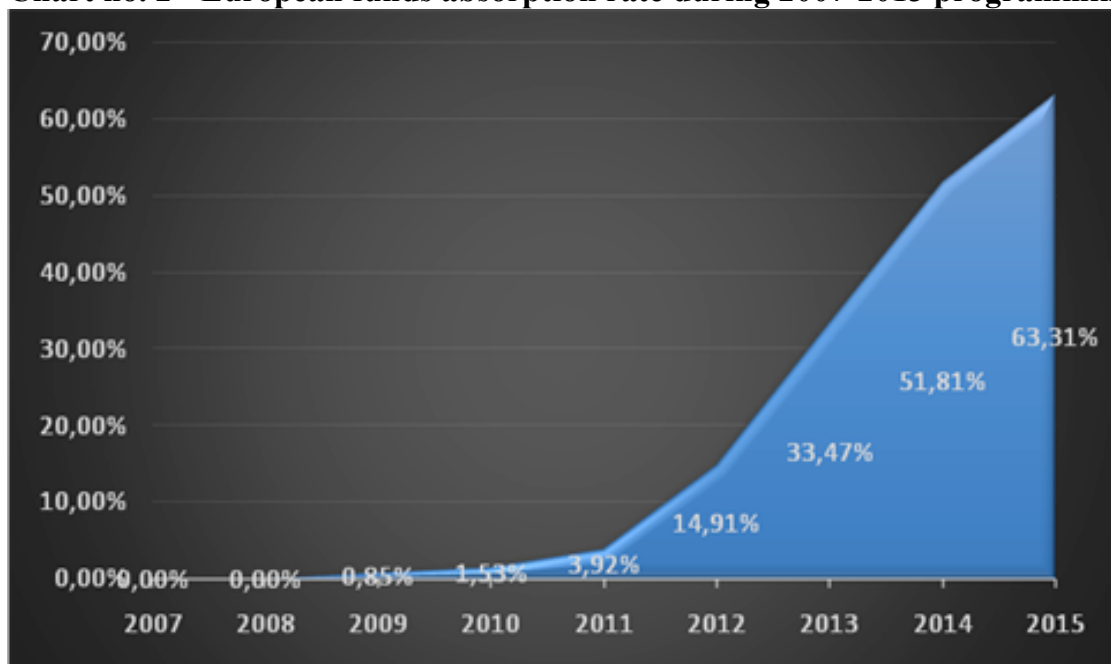
In 2007-2013, they were allocated to Romania through cohesion policy instruments 19.668 billion euro. The allocation of these European funds was divided as follows:

**Chart no. 1 - The allocation of European funds for Romania through the instruments of cohesion policy in 2007-2013**



*Source:* Developed by authors, according to data on the website of the European Commission (2016)

**Chart no. 2 - European funds absorption rate during 2007-2013 programming**



*Source:* developed by authors, according to data from the Ministry of European Funds - Structural and Cohesion Funds Absorption (2016)

According to the chart above, we can see that because of the obstacles mentioned above, the absorption rate of European funds in Romania, in the 2007-2013 programming period, was only 33.47% on 30.12.2013, representing approximately 5.1 billion Euro, rising to 51.81% in 2014, in 2015 to 63.31% and even 66% in April 2016.

#### 4. Conclusions

As conclusions on the instruments used by the EU cohesion policy, we can say that there are divided opinions on the effectiveness of cohesion policy to fulfill the purpose among specialists. Some specialists consider that the instruments used for economic

and social policy have a negative role, other considering that they have a positive role and contribute to achieving the objectives of cohesion policy. Opinion on the negative role of these instruments is based on the fact that these instruments by which European funding will teach applicants to fill out forms to finance investments and business, instead they make them study and seek funding mechanisms have basic economic principles and time-tested classics.

In the 2014-2020 programming period, Romania will have to take advantage of European funds allocated through cohesion policy instruments and absorb as much funding, given that, in our opinion, they represent the most cost effective solution to finance the economy and why not the most effective, given that through cohesion policy instruments are funded investments were selected on the basis of analyzes and strategies made by experts both at macroeconomic and microeconomic which were interrelated and aimed primarily sustainable development and economic growth.

Regarding Romania's economy, we appreciate that the cohesion policy will have a positive impact on the Romanian economy and contribute to its sustainable development, to increase employment, create better living conditions for the population, etc. but only by overcoming certain obstacles, which include: implementing a legal framework consistent with the European Union to develop programs / strategies for effective development, administrative capacity building, institutional distribution of European funds to sectors with growth potential, involvement of banking institutions in the implementation of projects with EU funding, preventing and eliminating fraud with EU funds, the implementation of efficient management of funding programs in all phases: programming, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, strengthening inter-institutional cooperation, eliminate excessive bureaucracy.

Authors' opinion is that the new cohesion policy will have to adapt tools used to overcome the current crisis facing the cohesion policy in the European Union and Romania, for the purposes of allocating more EU funds to instruments that fund social cohesion to solve the refugee crisis and terrorism. In addition, we believe that the cohesion policy will be administered and managed more effectively in order to attain the objectives set by the Europe 2020 strategy.

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## **Education of children: access to services, factors and conditions of exclusion**

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### **Abstract**

All children have the right to be helped to develop normally, to reach their maximum potential intellectually, but not all benefit from an optimal model of education that meets their individual needs and achieves balance between these and society. There are some issues to be tackled which require reflection: difficult communication/cooperation between institutions or between various specialists, stereotypes and old mentalities, discrimination, rigidity and complexity of Romanian bureaucracy, differences between educational institutions in urban and rural areas, training in professions which are not required on the labour market etc. Risk factors that lead to absenteeism and school dropout can be grouped by a number of variables: a. geographical area, community living and the dropout rate in the area: the level of development, infrastructure, unemployment, poverty, residence, ethnicity etc; b. family: socio-demographic structure, economic and social situation, education level of parents; c. relationships and psychosocial climate in family and community; d. the student performance and school results; e. various situations in which each student can learn. Qualitative research through secondary data analysis performed in this work highlights the problems facing children in Romania, poor development and operation of Social Services support from the disadvantaged communities, lack of specialists on the issue of child involved in preventing marginalization and social exclusion of education. Family, community involvement in the activities of educational institutions and social assistance, teamwork of professionals (teachers, psychologists, social workers, doctors etc.) is a required interdisciplinary approach to the problems of children.

**Keywords:** *child education; child social services; school dropout prevention; social policies*

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### **1. About children education in Romania**

All children have the right to be helped to develop normally, to reach their maximum potential intellectually, but not all benefit from an optimal model of education that meet their individual needs and achieve balance between these and society.

Education is a key factor in the development of human society and is an area where we must invest continuously, as it is a strong instrument we have to shape the future.

Not infrequently, solving the serious problems the Romanian society is facing we resort to education, the formation of personality or character modelling. Education is an ongoing process in a continuous way with distinct features according to age, socio-

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economic, historical moment or stage of scientific knowledge, as the existence of socio-human as a whole is continuously making.

Education is not a simple extension or continuation of the social system – it is a component of this system that differs qualitatively from other social phenomena through the structure, content, internal logic, and actors. In a socio-political context in continuous motion and change, more frequently solutions for the educational issues and especially the quality of educational services are being required.

With a new legislative framework governing educational activity, the concept of educational management and quality management in education is increasingly being invoked. Through education there are promoted universal values but also those related to our national specificities: the right to education, respect for tradition and national identity, dignity, democracy, equality, patriotism, educational pluralism, tolerance, freedom of opinion etc.

There are some issues to be tackled that require reflection: difficult communication/cooperation between institutions or between various specialists, stereotypes and old mentalities, discrimination, rigidity and complexity of Romanian bureaucracy, differences between educational institutions in urban and rural areas, training in professions which are not required on the labour market etc. “The essential social actions manifestation is communication. Communication is the basis of human understanding and it can facilitate or not the fulfilment of projects that support communication” (Anghel 2012: p. 128)

These problems must be solved by using technocrats, by political will and social policies, by a consistent educational strategy (Nistor 2012: p. 243). All children have the right to be helped to develop normally, to achieve their maximum potential intellectually, but not all benefit from an optimal model of education that meet their individual needs and achieve balance between them and society.

School dropout is found in all education systems, even in countries with well-defined educational systems is not a new social phenomenon, it exists and we are facing it more often. But we made a statement, the causes which generate the phenomenon are many and numerous factors specific to our society are responsible for it. Compared with the EU countries, expenditure on the education system in Romania are undersized, approximately 60% of spending to the levels recorded in other European countries in 2011. In 2010 accounted for 3.53 of GDP, falling to 3.05 in 2011, compared with the European average (EU 27) which they were 5.41-5.25 respectively, of GDP (Eurostat 2012).

Risk factors that lead to absenteeism and school dropout can be grouped by a number of variables:

- a. geographical area, community living and the dropout rate in the area: the level of development, infrastructure, unemployment, poverty, residence, ethnicity etc.;
- b. family: socio-demographic structure, economic and social situation, education level of parents;
- c. relationships and psychosocial climate in family and community;
- d. the student performance and school results;
- e. various situations in which each student can learn.

In recent years, according to data from the National Statistics Institute, the dropout rate in secondary education has increased. Analysing this data can be seen an upward

trend in recent years and in some areas approx. maintaining the same values for the 2011-2012 school year, as can be seen from Table no. 1.

**Table no.1: The dropout rate in secondary education 1999-2012 (%)**

<b>Form of education</b>	1999 - 2000	2000 - 2001	2001 - 2002	2002 - 2003	2003 - 2004	2004 - 2005	2005 - 2006	2007 - 2008	2008 - 2009	2009 - 2010	2010 - 2011	2011 - 2012
Primary and secondary education	<b>0.9</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>1.8</b>
<i>Primary education</i>	0.8	0.6	1	0.9	1.2	1.3	1.5	1.8	1.4	1.4	1.6	1.6
<i>Secondary education</i>	0.9	0.6	1.4	1.5	1.7	2	2.1	2.2	1.9	1.7	2.0	1.9
High school education	<b>3.8</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>4.2</b>
Post-secondary education and foremen (instructors)	<b>8.5</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>6.1</b>

Source: National Institute of Statistics 2015.

Compared to the levels of education, we can see that abandonment at primary and secondary education level increased continuously until the 2007-2008 school year, and then there was a slight decrease until 2011-2012, where comfort rate remains at 1.8%. At secondary school, between 2009 and 2012, the dropout rate has doubled, from 2.4 to 4.2%, a worrying fact for the authorities that requires action at educational social policies. By age groups and educational levels, dropout rates show (see NIS statistics) that for 2010 and 2012, rate at secondary level (age group 14-18) rose almost 50%, from 2.9% to 4.2% and for secondary schools remains high, by 2% and 1.9% for 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years. All these phenomena happen due to the decrease of the school population from year to year as fewer children and birth rates amid increasingly lower after the Revolution of '89.

## **2. Dropout rate in education for Roma children**

Dropout rate of enrolment in education of Roma (gipsy) children still remains at significantly higher values than the majority of the population: 78% of Roma children ranging from 7-15 years are enrolled in school compared with 98% enrolment of non-Roma children, emphasizing the high school percentage at school (four times smaller in adolescents compared to the majority population Roma) (UNDP / WB / EC 2011; World Bank 2014: p. 34). Romania has one of the lowest rates of compulsory secondary education for Roma children compared to countries in the same area: 12%

for boys and 6% for girls (World Bank 2014: p. 37). The gap is accentuated, further increasing all efforts in higher education of the Ministry of Education for providing special places for Roma students. Even if the increased number of Roma women who have completed higher education from 0.7% in 1998 to 1.6% in 2012 and the rate of men remained constant (1%) (World Bank 2014: p. 38), the number of those who complete studies remains very low compared with non-Roma population.

Micro data analysis (Varly *et. al.* 2014: p.45) showed that “sex, rural income and number of people in the household are factors in early school leaving Roma ... variable is significant even when poverty is taken into account”.

Another study (World Bank 2014: p.56) recommends investing in human capital among Roma women as a vector of change for future generations by increasing opportunities of integration into the labour market, leading to increased incomes and living standards, offering educational models both for girls and boys. Through access to education even early marriage is delayed, improving the health of mothers and children, reducing the number of children, and orienting the family budget towards education.

The low level of development of the community where the family lives, rural, isolated areas or shantytowns, poor supplies of home utilities, access roads and poor infrastructure area, major telecommunications etc. may be other risk factors in access to education, favouring dropout or early school leaving phenomenon. In this sense, the data in the table below are inconclusive:

**Table no. 2: Gross enrolment in primary and secondary education (%)**

	<b>2009-2010</b>	<b>2010-2011</b>	<b>2011-2012</b>	<b>2012-2013</b>	<b>2013-2014</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>98.3</b>	<b>97.5</b>	<b>94.2</b>	<b>90.6</b>	<b>90.7</b>
Urban	106.4	105.8	102.8	97,0	97.4
Rural	91.2	90.3	86.6	84.6	84.2
Female	97.5	96.7	93.1	89.3	89.9
Male	99.0	98.3	95.2	91.9	91.4

*Source:* Analysis of pre-university educational system in Romania from the perspective of statistical indicators. Educational policies based on data (Apostu *et al.*, 2015: p. 25).

Studies revolving around the concepts of success and failure in school also regard the access to education. There is a difference between students from different socio-familial elite and students belonging to disadvantaged social and family environments that do not have access to basic socio-cultural and economic resources to facilitate their academic success. This is the reason why the disadvantaged are often in the situation of school failure, absenteeism, poor school performance, early school leaving or dropout.

The second report of the UNICEF project “Supporting invisible children” (2014) which included the analysis of children in the six counties from North-East (Bacău, Botoşani, Iaşi, Neamţ, Suceava and Vaslui) and two counties from the Southeast region (Buzău and Vrancea) shows a significant representation of Roma (gipsy) children (51%



versus 42% of Romanian children) belonging to numerous poor families and precarious housing.

Distribution of social opportunities is related to school. Differences in social statuses consist of lifestyle, life chances, developed behaviours of subjects etc. (see Table no.3).

**Table no. 3: Romanian educational system - place of social reproduction**

The level of education of the most educated parent	Total population students
Without school	0.1%
Finished primary school	0,4%
Incomplete secondary school	0.2%
Full gymnasium	0.7%
Apprenticeship school (complementary)	0.5%
Vocational school	6.1%
Unfinished high school	2.3%
Finished high school	35.2%
Post secondary (high) school	10.2%
Unfinished faculty	1.8%
Faculty overseers or college	5.0%
Complete faculty	27.3%
Degree	8.0%
Doctorate	2.3%

*Source:* The quality of higher education in Romania: an institutional analysis of current trends (Păunescu, Vlăsceanu and Miroiu 2011: p. 22).

Conducted studies lead us to the idea that we have developed various programs such as Second Chance educational model, which enables those who have dropped out of school to resume training even if they are over chronological age for enrolment in that class (Minister of Education Order no. 5735 on 2005).

According to Oreopoulos (2006), “in Canada and the US, an extra year of school has a significant effect on reducing benefit dependency” (Varly *et al.* 2014: p. 64). The same study showed for 2012 (after different methods of analysis: a) family budgets and b) the EU survey on income and living conditions) that “a person with higher education can expect to earn 1.36 times more than a person with secondary education, which in turn can earn 1.17 times more than a person without secondary education” (Varly *et al.*

2014: p.56), and there are differences in lifespan, those with higher education increase with the time, while those with secondary education no longer grow.

A survey conducted in 2014 (Save the Children 2014) on a sample of 100 schools of 250 that implemented the program "Second Chance" revealed that there are few schools that have implemented this program compared with the large number of children who dropout, only 29% of students being involved. According to this report, there were out of the approximately 222.000 children aged between 10 and 17 years who were not attending school, were enrolled in this program in the school year 2012/2013 a total of 2.384 children (in total 10.166 persons). According to the legislation, a school can develop programs for both primary and secondary schools but not all can develop a program except only those accredited. Thus, for the school year 2012/2013, courses were accredited and conducted in a number of 254 schools, including 168 schools held classes for 176 primaries and lower secondary education. Referring to these positive aspects of the program, most of the respondents mention aspects connected to graduating the compulsory education and certain connected aspects that would offer no other possibility of social integration. The general appreciations towards the program highlight its utility for the targeted group. The difficulty that was mainly identified by most of the respondents refers to the school abandonment and class missing. The necessity of partnerships with social protection institutions is highlighted, and that would lead to support in monitoring children and offer social services that would contribute to keeping children in schools (Save the Children 2014: pp. 2-6).

Access to this program was done by promoting the school mediators in the community. Teachers' opinion for attending these courses refers to the awarding of material and social support for these children and young people, including social scholarships, school supplies, transportation etc. Over 85% of the teachers highlighted this need, which shows poor social and economic condition of the family and community that organizes courses.

Labour migration generates socio-economic and cultural changes, often causing significant changes in the adult personality, the way of life of the project life and relationship of those who leave, but also of those who stayed home. Migration affects the family, and primarily children, changing not only the structure but also some of its great features: lifestyle quality, emotional security and protection, logic of spatial, temporal attachment. Children left "home alone", whose parents left to work abroad, develop a series of social, behavioural or psychological problems, which in time can become chronic and/or lead to early school leaving and dropout, in psychiatric pathologies, sometimes extending to suicidal behaviours. Existing statistics show that the phenomenon of temporary labour migration, "euro-commuting" and one of its consequences, temporary separation, in the best case, of children and parents, is real and growing, requiring the adoption of social and educational emergency measures in order to reduce the effects of the system, as well as the individual or group.

**Table no. 4: Children with parents working abroad on 31.12.2014 at: (a) national level and (b) Bucharest and North-East****a. National level**

<b>The total number of families working abroad</b>	<b>62057</b>
<b>The total number of children whose parents are working abroad</b>	<b>82339</b>
Families with both parents working abroad	<b>15956</b>
The total number of children left at home with both parents working abroad	<b>22050</b>
Families with one parent working abroad	<b>37733</b>
The total number of children left at home with one parent working abroad	<b>49855</b>
A single parent family, working abroad, who supports the family	<b>8368</b>
The total number of children left at home with a single parent family, working abroad	<b>10434</b>

**b. Bucharest and North- East**

<b>Region/County</b>	<b>The total number of children whose parents are working abroad, of which:</b>			
	with both parents working abroad	with one parent working abroad	With a single parent family, working abroad	<b>Total</b>
<b>Total (national )</b>	<b>22050</b>	<b>49855</b>	<b>10434</b>	<b>82339</b>
<b>North-East</b>	<b>8606</b>	<b>17975</b>	<b>3227</b>	<b>29 808</b>
Bacău	2224	3602	892	6718
Botoşani	382	928	129	1439
Iaşi	940	2298	442	3680
Neamţ	1418	3328	617	5363
Suceava	2682	5704	826	9212
Vaslui	960	2115	321	3396
<b>South-Muntenia</b>	<b>2349</b>	<b>4701</b>	<b>1372</b>	<b>8422</b>
Argeş	390	1016	335	1741
Călăraşi	45	70	34	149
Dâmboviţa	1204	1624	510	3338
Giurgiu	48	136	30	214
Iaomiţa	139	445	136	720
Prahova	321	1214	264	1799

Teleorman	202	196	63	461
<b>Bucharest-Ilfov</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>416</b>

*Source:* Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection for the Elderly-ANPDCA with data from General Department of Social Work and Child Protection.

Based on regions, we notice significant differences: for example in the North East there are registered 29 808 children compared to, 8422 in South Muntenia, and we must not forget that these figures represent the number of children known by the Directorates for Social Assistance and Child Protection of Bucharest.

Measures required primarily for these children are based on a clear concern in the number of children who should be at school offered by the Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection at county level. Also other measures include closer supervision from the school by teachers, head teachers of classes, the school performances, and behavioural changes. Any change in schools, behavioural, social plan of the child must be known to the school counsellor or by other specialists and counselling programs to be initiated, and/or therapy, where appropriate.

Even if progress has been made in the development of preventive social services at community level, lack of resources or specialists hamper their operation (Pop and Stanculescu 2013: p. 16). Thus, in the Public Social Services (PSSAs) there is one social worker to 4,300 inhabitants, compared to Sweden where the ratio is 1 /300 or Italy, 1/1600 (Preda 2011 in Pop and Stanculescu 2013: p. 16) and the activity is based more on offering service benefits, only 24% of children receiving services, the rest receiving benefits, which can lead to a dependence on financial resources, or only partial resolution of psycho-social problems. The development of community social services is required, and we remember here the pilot project supporting children "invisible" funded by UNICEF in the poorest areas of the country (Bacau, Moldova region), which will provide a model for operating social services offered to families with children in need and activating communities in finding solutions, knowing that beneficial development of child in family is more beneficial and less expensive than in the social protection system, and consistent with children's rights.

Continuation and expansion of pilot programs that have had good results can lead to significant improvement of social conditions and occupational Roma (gipsy) children, the adult of tomorrow. We highlight here some of the studies and impact assessments of projects developed that should be continued and receive further support:

- Training school mediators, Ministry of Education, Phare Program 2002-2006;
- Program Monitoring to prevention and health status of Roma children, training of community health workers, health mediators Roma (gipsy) (Ministry of Health 2002; 2006; 2008);
- Inclusive education programs for preschool children: Ministry of Education, OvidiuRo organization, which included the 12 counties of the project 83% of the preschool population age; Ministry of Education, European Social Fund, "All in grander everyone in class" summer garden"school parents"; Ministry of Education, the World Bank, developing educational documents on social policies, good practice guides, guides methodological quality standards in inclusive preschool education child 1-3 years and 3-6/7 years (ECP pre-school);

- Educational programs “second chance”, school dropout prevention and early school leaving, which enables those who have dropped out of school to resume training even if they are over chronological age for enrolment in that class (Minister of Education Order no. 5735/2005); Statistics show growth of approx. 3 times in the number of those enrolled in these programs (more in the secondary than primary, source The World Bank 2014) and their further development;
- Programs to increase/stimulate employment nationally and internationally through various institutions, the National Agency for Roma etc.;
- Programs for the development of public policies on social inclusion: develop community services for social assistance programs for experts in social work which are aimed at Roma and in particular Roma children; incentive programs for social inclusion of those who have been deprived of their liberty; restorative justice programs;
- Supporting partnerships with civil society or conducted by civil society in various projects to prevent school dropout, gender discrimination, ethnicity, training professionals who may be involved in these activities on the long term: UNICEF, ESF, World Bank, World Vision, Save the Children saddle.

The school must provide a favourable environment for learning activity and development of children and adolescents, where young people are prepared for social life, to understand the world they live in, to acquire a system of desirable moral values, capacity to adapt to change, skills and problem-solving skills, all of which will contribute to reducing social balance and social dysfunctions.

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 (Anghel 2015: p. 105).

Family and community involvement in the activities of educational institutions and social assistance, teamwork of professionals (teachers, psychologists, social workers, doctors etc.) is a required interdisciplinary approach to the problems of children, based on mutual acceptance, communication, cooperation, for developing intervention strategies in child policies.

### **3. Conclusions**

In Romania, there are important differences between the developing regions, among the counties of these regions and among localities of these counties. An important differentiation criterion from the development point of view is the residential area. There are certain specific characteristics that, in Romania's case, emphasize the importance of such differentiation. This is targeting multiple aspects such as employment, education, and access to health services and the health and standard of living.

Overarching principles of non-discrimination, survival and development, protection and participation, have to be considered as a matter of priority. Vulnerable categories of children – children deprived from parental care, children that abandoned school, Roma children, children from poor families, children with disabilities, rural children – are particularly vulnerable and their situation requires examination and analysis. Finally, policy formulation and decision making processes in the areas of child

and family interest should be addressed. In that sense, the study is aimed to provide comprehensive analysis and evidence-relating respect of children's rights with particular emphasis on marginalized and socially excluded children and their participation in society.

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