

# Applied Social Sciences



Applied Social Sciences:  
Social Work

Edited by

Patricia-Luciana Runcan, Georgeta Rață,  
and Ștefan Cojocaru

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P U B L I S H I N G

Applied Social Sciences: Social Work,  
Edited by Patricia-Luciana Runcan, Georgeta Rață, and Ștefan Cojocaru

This book first published 2013

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data  
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN (10): 1-4438-4329-6, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-4329-4

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables.....	ix
List of Illustrations .....	xi
Foreword .....	xiii

## **Chapter One: Social Work: A Holistic Approach**

New Directions in Social Philanthropy: A Case Study (The Romanian Orthodox Parish of Livezeni I Petroșani, Romania) Felicia Andrioni and Lavinia-Elisabeta Popp.....	3
Unemployment: A Pluridimensional, Multidisciplinary Phenomenon Specific to Industrialised Societies Maria Bolea.....	11
History of Social Work in Banat and Transylvania: The Middle Ages Sorin Bulboacă.....	19
Understanding Supervision by Social Workers Adriana-Florentina Călăuz and Patricia-Luciana Runcan.....	27
Social Constructionism Applied in Social Work: Experimentation of Appreciative Supervision and Case Management Ștefan Cojocaru.....	35
Which Migration Theory Might Better Frame Medical Migration? Valeriu Dornescu and Elena-Teodora Manea.....	43
Social Work Counselling Loredana-Ileana Drobot.....	51
Communication in Social Workers' Professional Organisations: A Case Study Cosmin Goian.....	59

Developing Evidence-Based Practice Questionnaires: A Descriptive Analysis on a Sample of Romanian Social Workers Mihai-Bogdan Iovu .....	65
The Psychology of Place: <i>Akedia</i> and/or Phantasma of (Im)Migration Constantin-Eugen Jurca .....	71
Subjective Perception of the Quality of Life among Rural Inhabitants (Timiș County, Romania) Theofild-Andrei Lazăr .....	79
Quality Assessment of Social Services Provided by Experts from the D.G.A.S.P.C. Iași (Romania): Indirect Beneficiaries Perspective on Social Security Specialists Ana-Maria Lăzărescu .....	85
The Role of the School Social Worker in Preventing School Violence Carmen Palaghia .....	93
Chance, Hazard and Risk in Social work Viorel Prelici .....	101
Inequity Factors and Mechanisms in Vulnerable Groups Access to Healthcare Services Adina-Daniela Rebeleanu and Daniela-Tatiana Șoitu .....	109
Burnout among Socio-Medical Services Professionals Patricia-Luciana Runcan .....	117
The Relation between Workaholism and Work Engagement Loredana-Marcela Trancă .....	125

## **Chapter Two: Person and Family Protection**

Analysis of the Protection System of Children's Rights Based on the "Audit of Social Services for Children from Romania" Teodor-Mircea Alexiu .....	135
New Perspectives in Juvenile Offenders Rehabilitation Diana-Elena Arhire .....	141

Attachment among Children and Youth in Long-Term Foster Care Andreea-Georgiana Birneanu and Adrian Jinaru.....	149
Elements of Clinical Sociology of Intervention in Child Protection: Secondary Analysis of Data Clarifying Procedural and Historical Analysis Eugen Bucur and Venera-Margareta Bucur.....	155
Community Health Assistance: Integral Part of Medical Social Services for the Elderly Venera-Margareta Bucur, Eugen Bucur and Mihaela Iotu .....	161
Linking Fundamental Research with Social Work Practice: Applying the Principles of Existential Phenomenology in Interviewing Abused Children Adela Ciortuz.....	169
Corporal Punishment, Psychological Abuse and Positive Discipline Methods Used by Parents in Romania Ágnes Dávid-Kacsó, Imola Antal, Maria Roth and Corina Voicu .....	177
Vulnerability and Social Protection: Study of Children with Parents in Prison Cristina Gavriluță and Nina-Mihaela Mihalache.....	185
Social Inclusion of Young People through Employment in the F.Y.R.O.M. Bojana Jovanovska and Vladimir Ilievski .....	193
Social Policy and Quality of Life among Single-Parent Families in Romania Aniela Matei, Bertha Sănduleasa and Mihaela Ghența .....	201
Psychological Wellbeing and Professions: Women at Work Ana Muntean .....	209
Elements of Social Ecology of the Family (Child Disciplining and Parental Fighting) Ștefana-Georgiana Mutică.....	217

Quality and Cost Standards of Social Services Provided in Private Care Homes for the Elderly Paula-Cristina Nicoară and Adina-Daniela Rebeleanu.....	225
Systemic Approach in Intervention in Families in Need Claudia Oșvat and Judit Makai-Dimény.....	233
Consequences of Emotional Neglect on Child Development Ioana-Maria Rosetti .....	241
Retirement Effects in the Transition Period in Romania Mariana-Carmen Stanciu and Maria Bolea .....	247
Effects of Parents Migration on Children Left at Home Claudia-Eugenia Tășală.....	251
A Step Forward to the Better Social Inclusion of Delinquent Youth Mihaela-Alida Tomiță .....	257
Coping Strategies and the Experience of Work-Family Conflict: A Review of Theoretical Models and Typologies Maria-Nicoleta Turluc and Daniela Buliga .....	265
Contributors.....	275

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1-1. Answer averages of social workers to the statements in the questionnaire.....	30
Table 1-2. Statements with a high degree of reality for social workers concerning the supervision process (average < 3).....	31
Table 1-3. The perception of the objectives and functions of supervision in social work.....	32
Table 1-4. Representation of supervisors' competences in view of social workers.....	32
Table 1-5. Evolution of the average of decrease in child abandonment risk level.....	40
Table 1-6. Main Push/Pull factors in international migration of health workers.....	46
Table 1-7. Differences between psychological counselling and other forms of counselling.....	55
Table 1-8. Internal consistency of the Romanian version of the Reid-Gundlach scale.....	87
Table 1-9. Descriptive data on satisfaction among beneficiaries of services provided by the social workers of the D.G.A.S.P.C. Iași.....	88
Table 1-10. Respondents' professional features.....	128
Table 1-11. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences output with the result of the correlation between workaholism level and work engagement.....	130
Table 2-1. Measures and punishment stipulated by the Criminal Code and the New Criminal Code.....	145
Table 2-2. Aging.....	165
Table 2-3. Aging and dependency ratio.....	166
Table 2-4. Needs of community nurses and health visitors (Roma).....	167
Table 2-5. Prevalence of parental behaviours over the past year with children of different age groups.....	181
Table 2-6. Parental behaviours toward boys and girls of different age group.....	182
Table 2-7. Child's and adult's needs.....	187
Table 2-8. Data analysis.....	229
Table 2-9. Answers to the first question.....	253
Table 2-10. Answers to the second question.....	254



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1-1. Analysis diagram for the factors that contributed to the success of the Petroșani social philanthropic service.....	8
Figure 1-2. Present perception of life quality .....	81
Figure 1-3. Past present progress of life quality .....	82
Figure 1-4. Present future progress of life quality .....	83
Figure 1-5. Level of satisfaction regarding the quality of social services.....	89
Figure 1-6. Relevance of services provided by social workers.....	90
Figure 1-7. The impact of services provided by social workers .....	90
Figure 1-8. Gratifying of services provided by social workers .....	91
Figure 1-10. Specialists per lot.....	119
Figure 1-11. Level of education .....	119
Figure 1-12. Level of income .....	120
Figure 1-13. Social classes .....	121
Figure 1-14. Interpretation on the Pines Scale.....	121
Figure 1-15. State of fatigue.....	122
Figure 1-16. Job burnout .....	123
Figure 2-1. Attachment classification ratings.....	153
Figure 2-2. Civil status of single parents (%).....	203
Figure 2-3. Occupational status of single parents (%).....	204
Figure 2-4. The difficulty of keeping a job (%).....	205
Figure 2-5. Assignment of the family's budget (%).....	206
Figure 2-6. Comparison of answers to the questions “How do you see your parents?” and “How do your parents punish you when you behave badly?” ..	221
Figure 2-7. Comparison of answers to the questions “How often do your parents fight?” and “How often does it happen to be mad at your parents?” ..	221
Figure 2-8. Comparison of answers to the questions “How much time do you manage to spend with your children?” and “How often is your relationship with your children conflictual?” .....	222
Figure 2-9. Age of children interviewed .....	253
Figure 2-10. Age of children interviewed.....	255
Figure 2-10. Age of children interviewed.....	255



## FOREWORD

Information is power, the secret code to open horizons that provide one with another perspective on things and people, on the world, on one's own profession and even on oneself.

A teacher, a researcher or a practitioner in the field of social work can improve their professional status only through permanent, sustained documentation on social and psychological phenomena.

If, at the beginning of social work, research in the field relied more on life experience of specialists not trained as social workers, research in the field today relies on research methods and techniques that are accurate and scientifically appropriate; moreover, it is done by social workers that have started to valorise their status of researchers in social work.

There is a just and necessary complementarity between theory and practice in applied social sciences. Academics need to know practical aspects of social work and practitioners need to update and improve their theoretical background to be better prepared and more capable of facing increasingly difficult and complex cases. The essays contained in *Applied Social Sciences: Social Work* successfully illustrate both sides of social work; the academic and the practical.

Numerous academics and practitioners from Romania and overseas attended the International Conference of Applied Social Sciences (ISAA 2012) organised by the West University of Timișoara (WUT) (Romania) under the auspices of the Scientific Event "Two Decades of Education and Research in Social Work at the WUT"; they had the opportunity to better know each other, to improve their theoretical and practical knowledge, to present and/or attend presentations of scientific papers, and to see their presented papers published in the series Applied Social Sciences by Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

*Applied Social Sciences: Social Work* is a valuable and diversified collection of quantitative and qualitative studies. The approach is both holistic through assessment of social work, burnout, counselling, history of social work, migration, models of excellence in social work, unemployment, and workaholism; and atomistic, concerning child attachment, children's rights, coping strategies and the work-family conflict, emotional neglect, monoparental families, physical abuse,

positive child discipline, psychological abuse, rehabilitation of delinquent minors, and the social inclusion of youth.

This book will appeal to academic teaching staff, doctors, parents, psychologists, researchers, social workers, students, and teachers in the field of social work who wish to improve personally and professionally. It could also be useful to all those who interact, one way or another, with the human factor.

Through the distribution of *Applied Social Sciences: Social Work*, Romanian research in the field of social work will become more trustworthy at the global level, which will contribute to the progress of modern science and to the development of a sense of accomplishment.

*Patricia-Luciana RUNCAN*

**CHAPTER ONE**

**SOCIAL WORK:  
A HOLISTIC APPROACH**



# NEW DIRECTIONS IN SOCIAL PHILANTHROPY: A CASE STUDY (THE ROMANIAN ORTHODOX PARISH OF LIVEZENI I PETROȘANI, ROMANIA)

FELICIA ANDRIONI  
AND LAVINIA-ELISABETA POPP

## Introduction

The philanthropic model was the beginning of social sustainability actions for persons at risk. Social philanthropy represents, in the vision of Romania's Patriarch Daniel, a way of affirming human dignity in relation to those in need. Nowadays, considerable emphasis is laid on the usefulness of social philanthropic actions in the community as a form of social support. In this respect, this study aims at highlighting the role played by social philanthropy in social actions oriented towards the community. What does social philanthropy represent? What connotations does it have for modern reality? What directions of action are associated to it? What mechanisms of social response does it include? What role does the present Orthodox Church play in social philanthropy? These are only a few preliminary questions which encouraged us to conduct this study.

Social philanthropy represents "the charity actions performed in favour of the poor" (DEX 1998), compassion for fellow humans based on a profound spiritual experience correlated to the Christian teaching of doing righteous deeds for people to be well-liked by God. Etymologically, the word "philanthropy" comes from the association of the Greek words *philos* "friend" and *anthropos* "man," meaning "friendship or love for man" (Răduț Seliște 2005). Social philanthropy represents, in the Orthodox Christian perspective, "good deeds" or the chance to do well in favour of fellow people in need and the community.

In the vision of Răduț Seliște (2005), Christian philanthropy aims at salvaging the soul of the person support and does not presume to give to the poor what is required only to the body. The same writer remarks that we should not confuse the efforts of social work supported by governmental regulations with philanthropy, due to the fact that social

work “does not obligatorily rely on the love for fellow men. It was born from a strategy requiring society to develop, for the preservation of their own safety and security, a series of measures of social work for its less favoured members” (Răduț Seliște 2005).

On the other hand, the Romanian Orthodox Church admits the importance of the system of social work offered by the Orthodox Church “determined by the missionary and pastoral services of the Church and [that] has a *social and philanthropic* profile. Social work takes place in accordance with the stipulations of the Statute for the organisation and management of the Romanian Orthodox Church” (Romanian Patriarchy 2012).

The philanthropic activity is found, by the actions of authorized or non-authorized acts of social work offered to the population in the process of transmitting and acquiring the Evangelic teachings of care and service to fellow people, in the philanthropic units and NGOs operating under the aegis of the Romanian Orthodox Church (Duminiță 2010).

We chose this issue because we considered that social philanthropy represents a matter of interest for social reality and, according to Silverman (2005), on the basis of clear theoretical and practical imperatives, research will be oriented towards a direction revealing new perspectives on the issue so that the diversity and complexity of social issues bring new theoretic and methodological requirements before the profession of social work.

According to Buzducea (2005, 41), “social work should start with a stage of the religious communities’ involvement, such as churches and monasteries in the life of the community.” The evolution of social work was shaped over time from philanthropic and charitable actions to professionalised activities, and has continued to develop up to the present. Contemporary society supposes a re-evaluation of the assistential strategies within communities (Neamțu & Hurubean 2003), having a complex vision of the concept of social work: a number of institutions, programmes, measures, professional activities and specialised services (Zamfir & Zamfir 1995). The development of philanthropic services (part of the concept of social work) in Romania is an area of interest, triggering a general reaction from modern civil society. The beginnings of the social philanthropic practices can be identified several hundred years ago in the first forms of social events offered to people in need. The assistential actions from the dawn of Christianity until the nineteenth century were practised through charitable actions patronised by the church or initiated by private persons without intervention from the state (Neamțu 2003). In the aforementioned period, the practice of social philanthropic services

had no scientific ground, being concretised in spontaneous and isolated actions. The emergence of social work and, implicitly, the occurrence of various forms of social services as distinct forms of activity were concretised in the period of World War I, generating a change of view in the study of modern society's issues and a redefinition of the government's role in the management of social complexity. The development of social security systems and psychosocial intervention methods were determined by the social, political and cultural transformations of modern society. The actions within the framework of social philanthropic services have an old practice origin, but the appearance of a profession focused on scientific and systematic treatment is relatively recent.

### **Methods and Techniques**

In the study, we kept in mind several theoretical suppositions from which we started the investigation, formulated in the "positivist paradigm," i.e.: (a) social reality is directly observable and measurable; (b) the only acceptable form of knowledge relies on material and empirical examination of social deeds; (c) scientific understanding of social sciences and humanities is a rigorous and instrumental understanding (in accordance with the structure of natural sciences) (Neamțu 2003, 285). The "research objectives" focus, on: (a) the exploration of the importance of social philanthropic actions for the community and the organisational practice, and; (b) analysis of the action modalities in favour of the community by means of the philanthropic organisation The Romanian Orthodox Parish of Livezeni I Petroșani. The research was designed with the observance of the requirements of a descriptive evaluating research aimed at answering the following research questions: Were charity actions effective? What are the effects of the philanthropic intervention in the community? We analyse and describe the organisation and management of the social philanthropic service Social Centre of Petroșani, organised under the aegis of the Romanian Orthodox Parish of Livezeni I Petroșani, in view of identifying the factors that led to the success of this service in the community. The methodology used relied on case studies that reunited the use of different methods. These included a semi-structured interview applied to the legal representative of the philanthropic service, the observation of the formal and informal aspects of the service management and organisation, the analysis of the social service documents that took into account one hundred case files, progress reports of the service, professional documents, minutes of professionals' meetings with the beneficiaries, attendance charts, conclusive managerial reports for 2005 to

2008, and other administrative and managerial reports. The key analysis criteria were the target group and the beneficiaries' access to social services, the number of cases solved, the kinds of social actions provided, the relation between the personnel resources and beneficiaries, the relation between the material and financial resources, and the results recorded.

The Romanian Orthodox Parish of Livezeni I Petroșani started the activity of the community social philanthropic service in January 2003. Its form of organisation is that of a social centre, and its service of community is a key character. The philanthropic social facility is located in Petroșani (Hunedoara County, Romania). At the beginning of the interview with the parish priest Octavian Pătrașcu of the Romanian Orthodox Parish of Livezeni I Petroșani, he stated that:

The Statute of the Romanian Orthodox Church stipulates non-profit and philanthropic activities with social character, and the Romanian Orthodox Parish of Livezeni got involved along time in the life of the community together with whom they passed through content and difficult moments ... If we watch the movie of events, in the year 1995, the Romanian Orthodox Church Livezeni built the church with the patron saint 'Saint Martyr Varvara' provided with a semi-basement, where one designed and then arranged a multifunctional centre with the purpose of granting material, educational, emotional and spiritual aid to the people in need of Petroșani, in order to help them to overcome the period of crisis.

(Interview P.O. Tape 1)

Based on the study of managerial documents (2005, 2–4; 2006, 3) of the social philanthropic service we found that this service appeared as a result of the “social-economic troubles” after December 1989, which generated serious problems and needs among the members of the Petroșani community. In this context, the Romanian Orthodox Parish of Livezeni adopted an attitude towards the difficulties of the community; as a result, they established in 2002 a pilot social centre financed by the Phare Ricop centre with free multidisciplinary activities meant to help 4,100 persons in difficult situations. For the first time, an Orthodox Church situated in the Jului Valley initiated and developed actions of social charity focused on the community's needs in parallel with different other actions at various levels: at the individual level by social, emotional and supportive assistance; at the relational group level; at the community level, mobilising the community to recover their own resources.

Considering that, in the town of Petroșani, until 2002, the provision of philanthropic social services was limited and inadequate and could not respond to the scope of the needs and social challenge of persons in

difficulty of this area, the establishment of this service was welcome for the solving of the problems of people in need. This service, situated at the semi-basement of the Church 'Saint Martyr Varvara' of Petroșani, helped eight times more beneficiaries compared to the originally estimated number due to the extremely high numbers of support requests of poor people in Petroșani.

(Interview with the legal representative P.O. tape 1)

The objectives of the philanthropic service are: to overcome the crisis situation of persons in difficulty; to improve the material condition of beneficiaries; to improve the health conditions of people in need, and; increase the informational and educational level of the service beneficiaries. The target group of the social service consists of: persons laid off by companies and their family members; persons in difficulty; children from families in risk situations (one or both parents unemployed, one parent with an invalidating chronic disease, poor orphans raised by grandparents, children with illiterate parents or a low level of education); disfavoured senior citizens; disfavoured women (single mothers with one or several children, abused women), and; other persons in emergency situations, without discrimination, who seek humanitarian assistance (managerial documents 2005, 2).

The co-ordination of the philanthropic service is done by the social worker responsible for the project who uses the managerial instruments that allow: the establishment of the steps that are to be taken, the efficient organisation of time, relation of actions with the existing budget, the control of results and prevention of dysfunctions or organisation that could occur in the implementation process.

(Report on the activities of the Petroșani Social Centre 10/2007)

In the opinion of the legal representative regarding the existing resources: "the service has human resources from pluridisciplinary fields, and there is a good co-operation among the members of the team [...]. There are also material resources: adequate endowment of the centre with appropriate equipment, and also of financial resources detained to ensure the functionality of the service" (Interview P.O. tape 1).

The results of the community service are also significant. According to the analysis of the database, focused on 4,100 beneficiaries, the main quantitative and qualitative results recorded in this social philanthropic service were the following: 2,215 persons benefited from the services of the social canteen (food packages and daily snacks); 1,410 persons benefited from medical and social consulting; 447 persons benefited from family therapy and group counselling; 115 persons benefited from group

counselling, and; the centre prevented malnutrition and other diseases generated by the lack of a correct diet. We witnessed the increase of the responsabilisation of beneficiaries in relation to the valuing of their own resources, and 144 senior citizens were directly supported by social work at home annually, with daily food being taken to their homes in hygienic conditions. One identified health problems for 373 beneficiaries, while the community as a whole was involved in volunteering, and the beneficiaries saw that their self-development and self-esteem needs were met.

## Results and Discussion

As for the factors contributing to the success of this philanthropic service, Figure 1-1 below presents the scheme of the factors identified as contributors to the success of the social service.

Legend: FPS1—Factors pertaining to the specialised personnel: trained and competent specialised staff; FPS2—Factors pertaining to the specialised personnel: intrinsically motivated personnel; FE3—Factors related to equipment: modern technology; FE4—Factors related to equipment; FC5—Factors regarding communication: efficient internal communication settled by the Regulation of Interior Order; FC6—Factors regarding communication: functional external communication (sufficient information about services, written communication, effective media communication); FR7—Factors related to regulations: methodology of organisation and management, action procedures in connection with beneficiaries; FR8—Factors related to regulations: legislative stipulations that favoured the continuity of service.

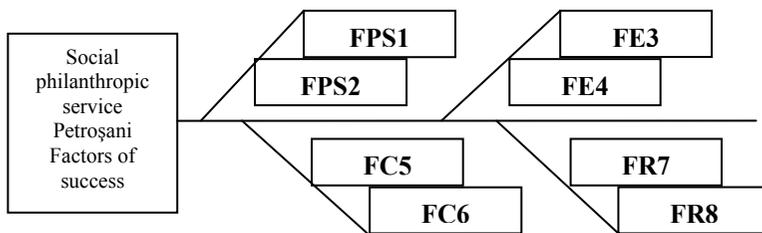


Figure 1-1. Analysis diagram for the factors that contributed to the success of the Petroșani social philanthropic service

In this case, the main factors generating the success of the social philanthropic service are those related to staff specialisation and qualification, existing equipment, communication, and regulations. As regards the personnel factor, we found that, based on repeated

observations, specialised personnel contribute to the optimisation of the social service, triggering a path of success of the social philanthropic service. The internal organisational communication or the interpersonal communication at the level of the multidisciplinary team, as well as external communication, are factors that contribute to the optimisation of that social philanthropic service. In addition, there are well-structured procedural or methodological documents and certain specific governmental regulations. All these elements facilitate the development and improvement of the social philanthropic actions in favour of the people in need or the community.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

One of the directions of current social philanthropy in relation to the members of the local community is the practice of social charity within philanthropic Orthodox organisations. In general, the Orthodox organisations of Romania have developed community social philanthropic practice and contributed to the support of the people in need and to the development of communities. Moreover, from the case study presented, we may identify various social philanthropic actions revealing new directions of action for the improvement of the process of assessing people in need, supplying a good practice model and additional information for the development of social policies and practices based on the direct experience of the aforementioned organisation in supplying individual and community supportive actions.

The social philanthropic service is a helping hand extended to people in need from the community, aid that is useful for the people which helps them to solve their problems and overcome risk situations. It may represent a replicable philanthropic model for other institutions of the Orthodox Church, and constitutes, from this perspective, a starting point for new directions of activity in contemporary social philanthropy.

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# UNEMPLOYMENT: A PLURIDIMENSIONAL, MULTIDISCIPLINARY PHENOMENON SPECIFIC TO INDUSTRIALISED SOCIETIES

MARIA BOLEA

## **Introduction**

Unemployment has been a recurring problem in industrialised countries in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries (Compston 1997; Free 2010). Due to its extent and complexity, it has involved researchers from different fields such as sociology, psychology, economics, pedagogy, politics, and social work. The major changes in the occupational system, and the increasing number of the jobs based on technology, automation, and information technology have eased and reduced physical effort, but have also brought about higher unemployment rates. According to Anthony Giddens:

The [International Labour Organisation]'s measure of unemployment refers to individuals who are without a job, who are available to start work within two weeks and who have attempted to look for a job within the previous month. Many economists think this standard unemployment rate should be supplemented by two other measures. 'Discouraged workers' are those who would like a job, but who despair of getting one and thus have given up looking. 'Involuntary part-time workers' are people who cannot find a full-time job even though they want one.

(Giddens 2009, 927)

Unemployment is widely seen as a negative phenomenon in the economic development of a country since it involves additional expenses for the social protection of the unemployed. The loss of jobs results in the loss of income necessary for the unemployed to support their families. If they are fifty or older and also have health issues, are handicapped or disabled, they

are not welcome on the labour market and therefore become vulnerable (i.e. exposed to marginalisation).

Unemployment is a “pluridimensional” phenomenon because it has a negative impact on such factors as social, economic, political, health-related, social security-related, and social work-related. In Romania, the County Agency for Labour Force Occupation implements the labour force employment policies developed by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection (Runcan 2009).

People registered as unemployed and wishing to work are guided towards services that facilitate their professional integration and insertion. These services consist of work mediation, professional guidance, professional counselling, and professional training adapted to the job offer on the labour market.

Law no. 76 from February 7, 2002 concerning the system of unemployment insurance and the stimulation of labour force employment (with later modifications and completions) defines, under Art. 5, point IV, that the unemployed satisfy the following criteria: they look for a job from sixteen until retirement age; their health and physical abilities allow them to work; they have no job, no income, and money gained from legally-authorized activities is below the unemployment insurance and labour force employment social reference indicator, and; they are capable of starting work immediately, provided they are offered a job. People registered as unemployed demonstrate these conditions and are registered at the labour force employment office in their home area or any other employment services supplier functioning within legal limits.

Romania is facing the consequences of the economic crisis. Thousands of jobs are lost because of the economic crisis, accompanied by the increase of the national debt, uncertainty, and taxes. The consequences of this precarious situation are independent licensing, collective licensing, technical unemployment, unpaid vacation, reduction of working time, and reduction of working days, all resulting in an increase of unemployment. Some benefit from unemployment indemnity, while others have no income. Unemployment is caused by economic dysfunctionalities that can only be regulated through labour market mechanisms without intervention from the State; they are meant to assist both employers and the unemployed, to increase employment level, and to encourage the creation of new, diversified jobs.

The present paper is an attempt to point out the ways in which social security measures (designed to prevent and control vulnerability situations resulting from unemployment) support social categories exposed to the risk of age-based employment discrimination by assisting social,

professional and professional insertion, and by supplying specific social services that ensure social functioning.

The labour market in Romania has known a wide range of changes during the transition period and a large number of problems related to: occupation, appropriate social security, support of economic organisations, and employees affected by restructuring processes. In the general context of the changing labour market, Romania also focuses on attracting and maintaining reduced-participation groups on the labour market, such as: young people (aged fifteen to twenty-four), older people (aged fifty-five to sixty-four), people living in rural areas, Roma people, and people with disabilities. We needed an integrated approach of the policies of promoting employment and social inclusion, focussing on ensuring job access to people at risk of social exclusion. To do so, we need effective cooperation of these institutions with central and local public authorities and social dialogue partners, as well as the promotion of some social policies that support initiative and efforts in: attracting and maintaining as many people as possible on the labour market; improving the adaptability of the organisations and employees; guidance of the labour force towards freelance economic activities as authorised physical persons, family associations, or individual enterprises; the development of citizens' capability of carrying out these activities; the increase of access to information, counselling, education and training services, and; the development of a market of flexible, inclusive labour through services usable by disadvantaged groups in their effort to increase employment chances and to access appropriate social services, educational services, and lifelong learning services.

We carried out the current research on unemployment in Timiș County, Romania, in the context of the financial crisis originating in 2008. The crisis unbalanced the labour market and affected economic enterprises. Thousands of jobs were lost and unemployment has become ubiquitous, with most unemployed people aged forty-five and over having tremendous difficulties in reintegrating with the labour force market.

Keywords are: licensing, unemployment, social protection, occupation services, active measures, labour market.

The general theme is the study of unemployment, its causes, its determining factors, its social, economic and political implications, its consequences, its context, its evolution, unemployment-preventive measures, ways of stimulating labour force employment and employers, facilities, anti-unemployment policies, strategies, and methods and techniques of unemployment control.

The general goal is the analysis of unemployment in Timiș County, Romania.

Specific goals are: (a) study of the economic and social impacts on people aged forty-five and over in the Timiș County; (b) analysis of the difficulties the target-group has to face in its attempts to reintegrate on the labour market.

## **Research Methodology**

To investigate unemployment and the way the economic crisis has affected economic activities, resulting in an increase of the unemployment rate, we studied legislation, mass media, statistics, and documentation in the field of social categories impacted by the crisis (loss of jobs, diminution of reemployment chances).

We conducted a pilot study on a representative sample of ten unemployed people aged forty-five and over, the sample being selected using a descriptive question-interview to determine if they fit inclusion in the study.

The sample consisted of fifty unemployed people aged forty-five and over from the Timiș County.

Sampling was stratified depending on gender, social status, occupation, age, and environment. The study focused on the employed population aged forty-five to sixty as follows: sixteen respondents from the rural environment and thirty-four from the urban one; six have graduated from secondary schools, thirteen from professional schools, nineteen from high schools, nine from higher education institutions, two have no education at all, and one has benefited from other forms of education; forty-one have had different jobs, two come from family associations, two have had liberal professions, and five have graduated from different institutions of education; nine have worked in the constructions, three in the textile industry, three in the clothing and footwear industries, seven in the home appliances industry, three in the electronics and electrotechnics industries, nine in services and transport, two in the food industry, and twelve in other fields of activity.

We applied the questionnaire at the headquarters of the Timiș National Agency for Labour Force Occupation.

The period of application was April 15–30, 2010.

The period researched was January 2009 to April 2010.

## Methodology

In the quantitative research, we used the descriptive inquiry method (to test public opinion on the economic fluctuations caused by the financial crisis), a correlational study, and causal-comparative methods (investigation of the cause—effect relationship through the observation of the existing consequences of causal factors: financial crisis → economic unbalance → activity restrain, bankruptcy, liquidation, insolvency → collective licensing, individual licensing, reduction of working time and working week → increase of unemployment → reduction of employment rate → rise of labour force offer → reduction of labour force demand → increase of the unemployment rate → decrease of population's incomes → marginalisation risk social classes → risk of incapacity to earn one's living). To collect data, we used the questionnaire technique.

The research goal is to discover the economic and social impacts of unemployment on high unemployment-risk social classes—people aged forty-five and over in Timiș County.

The research objectives are to investigate the economic crisis through unemployment rates and structure; identify social classes often subjected to unemployment risk, through the analysis of the unemployed people's structure and stock; identify the best measures to prevent social exclusion, and; reintegrate the unemployed aged forty-five and over on the labour market through the analysis of unemployment causes.

The hypotheses of the research are the following: the more frequent the economic fluctuations are, the higher the labour market unbalance is, and there is growth of unemployment and reduction in the demand for labour force; the decrease of the labour force demand results in the emergence of social classes subjected to unemployment risk; unemployment compensation can be a beneficial form of social security or it can erect barriers in employing beneficiaries; supplementary measures of stimulating employers to create jobs adapted to the target-groups would increase the level of inclusion on the labour market and chances of a normal social life.

## Results

Research results show the following:

- The respondents lost their jobs because of economic difficulties (88%), because of the diminution of the production rate (44%), because of temporary activity arrest, reorganisation, restructuring (12%), because

of liquidation, dissolution, bankruptcy, operational closure or forced execution (24%).

- The lack of involvement of economic agents in the identification of alternative recovery methods resulted in economic fluctuations due to the increase of unemployment rates (70%).
- The unemployed come from different jobs (82%), and family associations and liberal professions (8%).
- Taxes and social security contributions have been a particularly heavy burden for employers (88%), and the kind most subjected to unemployment risk were people aged forty-five and over (60%).
- People with average education (39%) and with no education at all (35%) are the most subject to unemployment risk.
- People most subjected to unemployment risk have a single skill (28%) or have no skill at all (54%).
- The unemployed that used to have jobs (82%) come from the following fields: 19% from the constructions, 6% from the textile industry, 6% from light industries (clothing, footwear, consumption goods), 15% from the machine, equipment and home appliances industries, 6% from the electronics and electrotechnics industries, 19% from different services (commerce, tourism, food, maintenance, communications, and transports), 4% from the food-processing industry, and 25% from other fields of activity;
- Unemployment indemnity is a momentarily financial solution for 50% of the respondents, a permanent stress-causing environment for 36% people (who are facing considerable difficulty in identifying another job), and a long-term solution for 10% (who have decided to benefit from it for as long as possible);
- The main reasons why older people find it difficult to get a job are: their inability to find out about possible jobs in due time (23%), the new communication technologies they are not aware of or that they find difficult to use (47%), their inadaptability to the technological flow (13%), and other reasons (17%).
- As far as the methods and techniques of professional counselling are concerned: 36% of the respondents understand the information concerning the labour market and the evolution of the jobs; 26% are trained in finding jobs; 20% manage to develop self-confidence in looking for a future career; 10% manage to assess their own personality.
- The job bank that mediates the demand and offer of labour force and aims at supporting different social classes facing difficulties in identifying and valorizing employment opportunities (graduates,